



Teachers' Perception on Effects of Child Abuse on Academic Performance of Secondary School Students'

¹Babajide Olanipekun Olaojo Ph. D & ²Ayotunde Oyedele Oyediran Ph. D

¹Department of Social Studies
School of Arts and Social Sciences
Federal college of Education (Technical) Omoku, Rivers State, Nigeria
babajideolaojo@gmail.com

²Department of Educational Psychology and Counselling,
School of Education
Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, Erelu, Oyo, Oyo State, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to examine teachers' perception on effects of child abuse on academic performance of secondary school students. The study is a descriptive survey research design. The target population for the study was made up of all secondary school teachers in ONELGA, Rivers state. Out of the [population a sample size of one hundred and eighty (180) was used for the study, which was selected through the proportionate stratified random sampling technique. An instrument titled "Effects of Child Abuse on Academic Performance (ECAAP)" questionnaire was used. The instrument was validated using Cronbach's alpha ($r = 0.85$) and reliability coefficient ($r = 0.87$). The data was analyzed using simple percentage. Findings revealed that child abuse have significant impact on academic performance of students, social development and emotional development of the students are affected significantly. It was recommended that parents should encourage their wards by providing them with financial, moral and spiritual supports I aid of their academic pursuit.

Keywords: Child abuse, Child labour, academic performance, students

INTRODUCTION

Children occupy a special position in the life of many family or nation. The continuity and survival of any human society depends on the preservation and protection of children. It I no gain saying that in all societies children are the leaders of tomorrow and that is the more reason why the young ones should be provide with an enabling environment. The environment should be healthy to prevent poverty and provide adequate health to prevent poverty and provide adequate health care services and nutrition for children in order to ensure their physical, mental and emotional well-being. According to Bolanle (2018) child abuse is the non-accidental commission of any act by which a parent or caretaker upon a child under age eighteen (18) which causes or creates a substantial risk of physical or emotional injury or constitute a sexual offence under the law of common wealth or any contact between a parent/caretaker and a child under eighteen years.

Child Abuse means a practice of using the young children as slaves. Sometimes the children may be required to do certain jobs which maybe above their capacities, this is a common phenomenon in developing countries where children of tender age given materials to sell as hawkers (Abdullahi, 2019). These children are sometimes not properly fed and so exposed to a lot of danger. Mohammed and Khudair (2019) stressed that child abuse also known as child maltreatment, is a serious problem in the contemporary society around the world. Furthermore, abuse of students by teachers in schools is now a social problem locally and globally. Child abuse includes all types of (emotional and

psychological abuse, sexual abuser, neglector negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation), resulting in a real or possible hurt to the development of the child, well-being, dignity or survival in the frame work of association with responsibilities, power or trust.

Child abuse has far reaching effect on the progress and aspiration of both the children and youth of all land it determine how far student can benefit from school and how their life can be in great future, better homes, good government and community at large because any child that had been maltreated at the tender age can affect him/her and the society at large (Barker, 2019). In his own opinion, Philip (2017) stressed that child abuse can lead to any forms of abuse like physical abuse which can lead to loss of eye, hearing impairment, bruise, fracture, lacerations, dislocation of joint or life injury and also leads to emotional abuse which can leads to all these: isolating, terrorizing, ignoring and corruption. It may also lead to sexual abuse that can affect the student live by turning their life to another thing that is socially negative like prostitution, raping, unwanted pregnancy and host of others.

Child labour a broad term involving children in petty trading or hawking, dirty and unpleasant jobs at home or in manufacturing industries and making them secure as house helps (Olaajo, 2016). Children from poor family are usually put under-well-to do family to work as house maid while a petty sum of money is paid as monthly allowances. By doing this, the child does not receive all the love he deserves from his parents because he is not counted as a bonafide member of the family within which he/she lives. Richard and Mayer (2018) opined that some children are usually neglected deliberately and alienated from the member of the family, such children lack the affection they really need from their parents and some of their responsibilities and are solely championed by these children. Such children are found roaming the street begging for alms only to keep the body and soul together. Also, the abuse often take place while the father is reluctantly caring for the children. Ayomide (2018) stressed that abuse of alcohol is one of the cause of child abuse in the sense that the child and spouse committed by the father is often accompanied by excessive drinking. The vulnerabilities of the man to alcoholism is consistent with their psychodynamics.

Abject poverty, adverse economic environment, unemployment, massive retrenchment of workers, underemployment and the pared quality of life have made parents who would otherwise have been most caring and loving to neglect and even at times made them abuse their children (Darlington, 2015). The high incidence of child labor nowadays is directly attributed to poverty and unemployment of parents since these parents can no longer provide for themselves not to talk of their children and the alternatives available therefore is starvation and death. Raheem (2013) stressed that the children may be forced into the street with the aim of earning of a living for their unemployed parents through honest laborers, but some of them become exposed and end up a criminal. Timothy and Silver (2016) observed that among the educated group desire by both husband and wife to possess security results, in child abuse. Thus, nannies replace mummies and as result children generally to grow up to know their substitute mothers more than their real blood mothers. The nannies are sometimes no other person than those children of poverty-stricken parents who invariable offer their young ladies as housemaid incidentally these unfortunate house girls are maltreated by their employers either by not feeding them properly or afford their maternal affection.

Moreover, child misbehaviors and the need to maintain discipline may compel apparent to use cane, if not carefully use. The cane is a potentials weapon of batteries (Bello and Ajenifuja, 2017). This may manifest in skin lesion bruises and bone fractures. They stressed further that materials are in and crazy for wealth could also be accountable for child abuse. Some parents use their children to carry hard drugs and in some cases make such children to swallow the drugs so as to bent security checks and able when ought to be abandoned. Also, some group of girls go into prostitution or follow sugar daddies because of love for money and wealth, which is also traceable to lack of parental care. In his own view, Oluwaseyifunmi (2017) opined that some of the abuse of children has become social nuisance, they roaming the streets; they become armed robber, political thugs, while the girls among them become prostitutes which may lead to pre mature death through abortions. Child abuse and neglect can have physical, psychological, cognitive, behavioral and social consequences, which are often interrelated.

Each child has a right to be protected from harm and to sense secure in an educational environment. Children cannot learn if they are frightened about being abused or being the victims of violence (Mohammed and Khudair, 2019). Therefore, all schools should have planned procedures for children welfare and protection from abuse. Perception refers to the act of perceiving or the capacity to

understand, mental draw close of gadgets, characteristics by the senses, cognizance, comprehension, insight and instinct of the faculty for those information, knowledge obtained via perceiving a particular concept and influence by expectancies, wishes, unconscious thoughts, values and conflicts. The relationship established between teachers and their students can facilitate the identification of child abuse.

The incidence of child abuse action can affect children in negative way and it may also add problem to their academic performance (Bolanle, 2018). This act starts at the tender age where the child did not know anything and just started their lives journey. Furthermore, success within the academic environment is an important value instilled during childhood. Children who are able to gain academic success within their school years are more likely to have an overall sense of well-being throughout child of and into adulthood (King and Kurl, 2019). Child abuse is posing huge problems to students and teachers responsibility for those parents, who are psychologically insufficient in a few manners and abuse their children. Instructors are in a function to observe children on a day by day foundation and compare behavior with per norms and/or beyond conduct while school professionals are in a unique point to recognize and report child abuse. Though, school counselors and teachers in particular have been working relentlessly to provide solution to the problem of child abuse, several educationists had tried their possible best to reduce this act in our society because this problem had played a negative impact on our social, economic, political and academic lives of child abuser in all spheres of our society. This study therefore, examines the teachers' perception on effects of child abuse on academic performance of secondary school students.

Statement of the problem

The poor academic performance of students in schools is always attributed to the inadequacies of teachers or student's nonchalant attitude to study. To some extent this may be a wrong assumption that needs an investigation as we cannot lose sight of the drastic effect of student's background have on the academic performance of the child. It is so natural to see many average Nigerian's parent abuses their ward. This implies that, child abuse that is the commoner challenges facing the commonest families in a commoner society and it invariably have adverse effect on the student's academic performance in school and their social life. Thus, it is rare to see a family that does not abuse or maltreat their wards either directly or indirectly. There is direct link between early childhood intervention and increased social and cognitive ability. The student's characteristics have positive effects on child's learning outcomes. Therefore, research intends to examine the teachers' perception on effects of child abuse on academic performance of secondary school students.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. Does child abuse have significant impact on academic performance of students?
2. Does child abuse affect social development of students significantly?
3. Does child abuse affect emotional development of students significantly?

METHODOLOGY

The research design used in this study was descriptive survey design. The target population for the study was made up of all secondary school teachers' in ONELGA, Rivers State. A sample size of hundred and eighty (180) was used for the study, which was selected through the proportionate stratified random sampling technique. The participants responded to a researcher's developed instrument, the "Effects of child Abuse on Academic Performance (ECAAP)". The face and content validity of the instrument was carried out and the instrument yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.85 which indicated a high content validity and a test – retest reliability of data were analyzed using simple percentages.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: *Does child abuse have significant impact on academic performance of students?*

Table 1: Teachers perception on Impact of child Abuse on Academic Performance of students

S/N	Questionnaire Items	Agree	Disagree
1.	Children that hawk before or after school hours do perform low	178 (98.9%)	2 (1.1%)
2.	Student poor family background to affect the academic performance of such children	175 (97.2%)	5 (16.7%)
3	Maltreatment do affect the child performance in school	150 (83.3%)	30 (16.7%)
4	Depriving children their right by parents contributed to low academic performance of the students.	165 (91.7%)	15 (8.3%)
5	Too much beaten do affect students in school	180 (100%)	0 (0%)
6	Bearing of many children by parents do affect students' academic performance	178 (98.9%)	2 (1.1%)
7.	Abusing children sexual affect their studies	178 (98.9%)	2 (1.1%)
8.	Child abuse contribute to students drop out in schools	150 (83.3%)	30 (16.7%)

From table 1, it shows that the child abuse has significant impact on academic performance of students as shown in the teachers' response to the questionnaire items.

Research Question 2: *Does child abuse affect social development of students significantly?*

Table 2: Teachers perception on how child abuse affects students' social development

S/N	Questionnaire Items	Agree	Disagree
9.	Parents who neglect their responsibilities over their children(s) should be punished by the law of the land	177 (98.3%)	3 (7%)
10.	Children suffering from abuse do not socialize in school	158 (100%)	22 (12.2%)
11.	Non-challant attitudes of some parents in the society can also contributes to child abuse.	180 (100%)	0 (0%)
12	Many abuse children are always on the street	180 (100%)	0 (0%)
13	Child abuse makes children to involve in social vices	178 (98.9%)	2 (1.1%)
14	Children that engaged in child labour usually have enough money to support their education	85 (47.2%)	95 (52.8%)
15	social interaction between parents and child can lead to child abuse.	177 (98.3%)	3 (1.7%)
16	Abuse of child is a social problem	180 (100%)	0 (0%)

The data on table 2 shows that the respondents agreed with items 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15 and 16 while they disagree that children that engaged in child labour usually have enough money to support their education. This means that child abuse effect social development of the child significantly as perceived by the teachers.

Research Question 3: Does child abuse affect emotional development of student’s significantly?

TABLE 3: Teachers’ Perception on how Child Abuse Affect Emotional Development of students

S/N	Questionnaire Items	Agree	Disagree
17.	Child abuse contribute immediately to high rate of drop outs in the society	178 (98.9%)	2 (1.1%)
18.	Abused child do think too much in school during classes	165 (91.7%)	15 (8.3%)
19.	Depriving children their rights by parents contributes to the cause of child abuse.	177 (98.3%)	3 (1.7%)
20.	Child abuse can make a student to isolate himself or herself	180 (100%)	0 (0%)

The data on table 3 shows that the respondents agreed with items 17,18,19 and 20. This means that the teachers agreed that child abuse do affect emotional development of students’ significantly.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Data analyzed in research question one revealed that child abuse have significant impact on academic performance of students, these findings are supported Akindunmade and Olufemi (2019) who stressed that child abuse is a practice of using young children as slaves and sometimes these children may be required to do certain jobs which may be above their capacities. It is a common phenomenon where children of tender age give materials to sell as hawkers and these children are sometimes not properly fed, so exposed to a lot of danger which do affect their academic performance in school. Akeda (2017) opined that the issue of abuse and neglect is not only affecting children education but also affecting by machinery of diseases due to the impact of poverty many Nigerian children die to preventable diseases, these are cares of high rate of infant mortality which are quite attribute to the cost of essential drugs and medical expenses of treating the sick children.

In his own opinion Olanipekun (2018) affirm that child abuse and neglect can affect all domains of development physical, psychological, cognitive, behavioural and social which are often interrelated. Education of the children and young ones are affected by abuse and neglect in many ways. Olaajo (2014) stressed that apart from low academic performance, the risk of more serious adverse out-comes increase risk factors that may contribute to poorer outcomes for children exposed to abuse and neglect include, isolation, socio-economic disadvantages, large families, disability and host of others. Trauma caused by experience of child abuse can have serious effects on the developing brain increasing the risks of psychological problems. Exposure to complex and chronic trauma can result in persistent psychological problems. Complex trauma affects the developing brain and may interfere with child’s capacity to integrate sensory which has to do with academic performance. Strong associations have been made between child abuse and learning difficulties or poor academic achievement (Thompson and Reign, 2016). Abuse of child can seriously affect academic capability of a child.

From table 2, it was revealed that child abuse affects social development of students significantly. This findings is in line with the submission of Timothy and silver (2016) that some of the abused children have become social nuisance. They roam on the streets and become armed rubber, political things while girls among them become prostitutes and neglect their education. Abdullahi (2019) stated that the broad consequences of disregarding children in any society is the problem of the child becoming a deviants, which means the child showing behaviors that are considered violation of societal norms and values. Deviance between include drug addicts, political extremist, prude girls wear make-ups commensism, alcoholics and reckless. Coupled with it are deviance behavior, burglary, kidnapping, assaults and vagrancy. Semi-illiterate is also of one of the side effects of child abuse in sense that the child that parents abuse may not have the opportunity to finish education because of tiredness and non-challant attitude of his/her parents towards his/her success and by that become drop-out.

Children exposed to maltreatment may emerge unscathed due to protective factors that strengthen their resilience. Olaajo,(2014) affirms that babies and young infants exposed to abuse and neglect are more likely to experience insecure or disorganized attachment are extremely important for child's early emotional and social development. Without the security and support from parents, children may find it difficult to trust others when in distress, which may lead to persistent experiences of anxiety or anger. Insecure attachment alters the normal developmental process for children, which can severely affect a child's ability to communicate and interacts with others and form healthy relationship throughout their life (Darlington, 2015).

Data analyzed in search question 3 revealed that child abuse affect emotional development of students' significantly. This finding agrees with Banker (2019) which argues that child abuse can have serious effect on the social development of a child. It crystal clear that child abuse is a situation in which a child is suffering from serious social, physical, emotion, and psychological injury inflicted by someone and not accidental. According to Akpan (2016) victims of abuse are affected in all aspects of life. Children encounter difficulties socially, educationally, physically mentally. The social consequences of disregarding or abuse children in any society is the problem of the child becoming a deviant, while means the child showing behaviors that are considered violation of societal norms and values. The severity of maltreatment of the child, the greater the severity of abuse or neglect, the higher the likelihood of negative outcomes. Reginal (2018) opined that emotional problem caused by experiences of child abuse appears to have serious effects on the aspect of life and may affect the educationally or socially.

CONCLUSION

Child abuse may lead to a wide range of adverse consequences for children and adolescents. The findings of the study showed that:

1. Child abuse have significant impact on academic performance of students.
2. The child abuse affects social development of the child significantly.
3. Child abuse to affect emotional development of students significantly.

Therefore, child abuse take different form which apply in various ways to devastate the sustainable educational development. Hence, child abuse has really affected the educational sector.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study and the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are made:

1. The school authorities in conjunction with the ministry of education should provide necessary materials needed by each school to take proper care of both students from rich and poor homes.
2. Parents should encourage their wards by providing them with financial, moral and spiritual supports in aid of their academic pursuit.
3. Less privilege parents should not sit finger crossed believing that there is no way-out because they have poor parents but rather they should shun poor academic performance by summoning courage and put extra effort.
4. The children should have a strong mind to become great in life in spite of all the socio-economic problems.
5. Conclusive environment should be established at home and parent should make sure that the domestic work does not disturb the learning of their children.
6. Parents should endeavour to arrange extra coaching classes for their children after school hours instead of hawking. They should allow them to study under conclusive environment.

REFERENCES

- Abdullahi, R. Y. (2019). Causes and effects of child abuse on primary school learning outcomes in Kano State, Nigeria. *Social Science Journal* 14(2) 214-221.
- Adekola, G. N. (2017). Childhood sexual abuse, adolescent sexual coercion and early pregnancy among homeless female adolescents. *Journal of Family Issues* 34(1) 258-269.
- Akindunmade, O. S. and Olufemi, E. M. (2019). Psychological implication of child abuse on pre-service teachers in Ogun State. *Health Issues*. 21, 192-201.

- Akpan, W. A. (2016). Childhood sexual abuse and incidence of unwanted pregnancy. *Psychological Perspectives* 22(3) 110-121.
- Ayomide, R. S. (2018). Student's perception of causes and effect of teacher's psychological abuse in primary school in Lagos State. *International Journal of Child Development and Child Abuse*. 16(2) 168-177.
- Barker, A. L. (2019). Emotion, Social, Psychological and child abuse as a correlate of pre-service teacher's academic performance. Retrieved from [www.http://edu_psycho.info478214.pdf](http://edu_psycho.info478214.pdf) on 25th March, 2020.
- Bello, A. A. and Ajenifuja, L. R. (2017). Parental responsibilities and its impact on child upbringing. *Social Perspectives* 9(5) 72-81.
- Bolanle, B. A. (2018). Child abuse and its impact on emotional development of the child. *Journal of Educational Psychology* 44(3) 184-193.
- Darlinton, C. B. (2015). Knowledge and attitude of parents on child rearing and development. *International Journal of Health Sciences*, 8(2) 215-222.
- Kings, S. C. and Kurl, T. S. (2019). Child abuse and primary school pupils' academic achievement. *Journal of Children Perspectives*. 7(1) 186-192.
- Mayer, I. A. (2018). Incidence of physical abuse, sexual assault and emotional disturbance of adolescents. *Educational Review*, 38(1) 294-302.
- Mohammed, S. M. AND Khudiar, F. W. (2019). Teacher's perception and attitudes toward child abuse of secondary school in Najaf city. *Journal of Pharmaceutical Sciences and Research*, 11(4) 1510-1515. Retrieved from www.jpsr.pharmainfo.in.pdf on 14th April 2020.
- Olanipekun, S. A. (2018). Violence among married couples and its impact on child upbringing. *Educational Issues* 16(2) 334-342.
- Olaajo, B. O. (2014). Adverse experiences and suicidal ideation in adolescence and its impact on adolescent development *Educational Issues* 14(2) 98-112.
- Olaajo, B. O. (2016). Evaluation of incidence of child abuse and sexual assault in secondary school students' as perceived by married literates in Oyo State, Nigeria. *Psychological Perspectives* 21(3) 247-255.
- Oluwaseyifunmi, O. E. (2017). Parental negligence and its impact on child's future: Counseling Implications. *Journal of Childhood Development*. 13(3) 118-126.
- Philip, D. F. (2017). An investigation into child abuse/child neglect on secondary school dropout. *Educational Review*, 15(1) 87-96.
- Raheem, B. T. (2013). Perception of teachers towards the use of punishment and its impacts on academic performance of secondary school students. *International Journal of Child Development*. 12(1) 324-332.
- Reginal, H. S. (2018). The science of early childhood development and duties of parents in child upbringing. *Social Maladjustment Research* 12(40) 47-62.
- Thompson, A. L. and Reign, M. S. (2016). Child maltreatment and academic performance of secondary school students. *International Journal of Social Vices* 18(2) 228-236.
- Timothy, E. H. and Silver, G. K. (2016). Impacts of child abuse on child development. *International Journal of Child Development*. 17(2) 221-230.