



An Appraisal of the Causes and Consequences of Child Abuse in Gwagwalada and its Implication on National Security and Development in Nigeria.

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Abstract

The study attempts to unravel the causes, consequences and possible remedies to child abuse in primary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. A sample of 175 Teachers was drawn from the public primary schools in the area council and questionnaires were administered to them as respondents. The data collected was analysed with the aid of SPSS version 23 software, and the mean percentage test, which was adopted in the study's analysis, indicated that excessive battering of a child by parents/teacher/guidance; broken homes, child hawking before and after school and uncondusive learning environment are all causes of child abuse. Also, it was found that child abuse negatively affects child's school performance and development; such abused children are vulnerable to early pregnancy, crimes and other vices. Ill treatment of children as well causes permanent and lifelong trauma, thereby making children develop low cognition to school subjects. Counseling and the preaching of good morals by religious leaders to the children, parents and guardians were part of the recommendations made in this study. Also, melting out punishment in form of fine on erring parents/guidance especially those forcing their children to hawk, and prevention from bad peer influence will help reduce to the barest minimum the incidence of child abuse in the society.

Keywords: Child, Child Abuse, Causes, Consequences, Security and Development.

Introduction

The delight of all parents is to bear children and nurture them to a stage where they will all realize their full potentials in life. But in a situation whereby children are not well taken care of by their parents and caregivers, those children are usually exposed to all forms of behaviours that tend to hinder their aspirations in life. Many of the children are usually being maltreated or abuse by their parents, caregivers and other people in their communities. Child abuse is therefore a practice whereby children are maltreated, battered or deprived of some basic needs in the home, street, religious houses or at school by the elderly. Child abuse could harm children physically, emotionally, sexually or could even lead to their death. Harmful behaviours of children's teachers, parents, peers, guardians, siblings, so-called mentors and the society in various forms could also lead to child abuse. Child abuse has for long been recorded in literature, in many parts of the world. Reports of infanticide, mutilation, abandonment and other forms of violence against children date back to

ancient civilizations (Ten Bensel et al, 1997). The record is also filled with reports of unkempt, weak and malnourished children cast out by families to fend for themselves and of children who have been sexually abused. Also, for long, there have existed charitable groups who are concerned with children's wellbeing and have advocated the protection of children. However, the problem did not receive extensive attention by the public until 1962, with the publication of a seminal work, 'The battered child syndrome', by Kempe (1962). The term "battered child syndrome" was coined to characterize the clinical manifestations of serious physical abuse in young children. Now, four decades later, there was clear evidence that child abuse is a global problem. It occurs in a variety of forms and is deeply rooted in cultural, economic and social practices. Solving this global problem, however, requires a much better understanding of its occurrence in a range of settings, as well as of its causes and consequences in these settings. Teachers are well positioned to identify possible cases of

child abuse and neglect given the amount of time they spend with students. Nonetheless, reports by teachers represent less than one-fifth of all annual maltreatment reports made (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2009). This low report rate may be a corollary to teachers' lack of confidence in their ability to accurately identify child abuse and neglect (Crenshaw et al, 1995; Kenny, 2004). These findings highlight the need to better understand how teachers perceive the impact of abuse and neglect on their students.

Teachers differ from other mandatory reporters in that they are more likely to have the opportunity to observe behavioral changes when maltreatment occurs. In a study comparing how physicians, nurses, and teachers identify child abuse, Turbett & O'Toole (1983) found that, although all three groups of mandatory reporters recognize physical signs such as bruises and appearance, teachers were unique in identifying changes in the child's behavior and academic performance. Teachers' recognition of behavioral change seems logical given their proximal view of the child and opportunity to observe day to day changes; consequently, teachers are in a unique position to identify child maltreatment.

Teachers' assessment of behavior is important given that one of the most consistent findings across the child maltreatment literature demonstrates that abused and neglected children exhibit more emotional, behavioral, and academic problems than their non maltreated peers. Specifically, maltreated children are often more withdrawn, anxious, and depressed (Anthonysamy & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007; Bolger & Patterson, 2001; Dodge, 1994; Manly et al, 2001), but are also more likely to be overactive, impulsive, impatient, and noncompliant (Erickson et al, 1989). Maltreated children also tend to exhibit more disruptive classroom behaviors (Erickson et al., 1989) and are more aggressive and disrespectful (Anthonysamy & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007; Dodge et al, 1994; Manly et al., 2001). Furthermore, maltreated children are likely to exhibit poor academic performance compared to nonmaltreated children (Alokan & Olatunji, 2014). They tend to receive lower scores on standardized tests and lower grades and exhibit a greater risk for grade repetition (Dodge, 1993; Kendall-Tackett & Eckenrode, 1996; Veltman & Browne, 2001; Chiamaka & Adeniran, 2017).

The development and progress of any nation is hinged on the quality of its citizens. Child abuse deprives a nation or community the opportunities of developing its citizens' full potential and benefiting from such talent for the needed manpower necessary for national development. Many children who

have been abused in any form develop some sort of psychological issue. These issues may include anxiety, depression, eating disorders, co-dependency or even a lack of human connections. There is also a slight tendency for children who have been abused to become child abusers themselves. In the year 2013, in the United States of America, of the 294,000 reported child abuse cases only 81,124 received any sort of counseling or therapy (National Children's Alliance "National Statistics on Child Abuse", 2013). Treatment is greatly important for abused children. Thus, the greatest problem of child abuse is to deny the child right to education for proper personality development. It is also possible that those perpetuating the crimes in society may be ignorant and not having the right perception of the problem of abuse and its effect on the academic performance of the children. It is possible that, those who are enlightened may be taking in this practice perhaps ignorantly.

In the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja and Gwagwalada Area Council in particular, many dimensions of child abuse are observed, such as: child prostitution, sexual abuse, physical abuse, hawking, child labour/servitude, child trafficking, female circumcision, child rejection and neglect. This disturbs the minds of many who live in fear, anxiety and worries about the child future academically; and feel that there is so much advancement in human civilization. Therefore, the issue of child abuse in any form ought to be put to an end; to ensure that all live in peace and harmony in society with a focus on the basic needs of the child education being one of the main focus of the society and growth of its citizens, hence the resolve of this study.

Statement of the problem

Child abuse is one of the serious social problems that need the attention of the public. All over the world, there are children working like slaves, political thugs, they beg in the streets, toil under the sun in the field and work day and night in houses, shops and factories. Millions of children lose their lives; some are denied education and never experienced the joy of childhood due to the abuse they experienced at an early age, thereby constituting a serious threat to the child personality development and the security and development of their communities.

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 wellbeing throughout

childhood and into adulthood. Although it may be ideal for all children to perform well within the school environment, there are many outside factors that can hinder a child's potential for academic success.

The increasing number of Pupils and those out of school hawking and selling goods around the streets and school premises in urban/rural areas in Nigeria, Gwagwalada inclusive is alarming. Some of the children look so malnourished and sick, others in pain of being hurt by beatings and assaulted by gangsters (Ada & Anake, 2015). Some of these children are sent out there by their parents or caregivers, the interest of most parents is what the child can bring to the home by sells/hawking of goods or giving oneself for money; many leave school as early as primary school age to engage in prostitution while others are used as house helps and other menial jobs to bring in money to the family (Ada & Anake, 2015). The child is therefore a tool for profit making. As a result of the practices, the moral and social development of the child has no education base; their performance in school is affected which threatens the security and development of the society. It is against this background that the study is being carried out with a view to proffering lasting solutions.

Objectives of the Study

1. Examine the prevailing causes of child abuse at the primary education level in Gwagwalada Area Council.
2. Determine the effect of the child abuse on the child and general public.
3. Examine the consequences of child abuse on the child's educational performance.

Conceptual Framework

The Concept of Child Abuse

Child – abuse is a compound word formed from child and abuse. From English definition, child means an infant, one that is very young, a son or a daughter, offspring; and abuse simply means an improper treatment or employment of angry or violent attack in word melted on any one. Psychologically, the term child used to present that developmental state of man encompassing the early stages of development ranging from Neonate (few months after birth), early children (1-2 years), pre-school ages (first to five years and middle childhood (Pre-adolescence). Child in the present context is any one between the age of one to twenty years who is still largely dependent on a caretaker for duly

survival and maintenance. It is such dependency that makes the child susceptible to treatment that may be termed maltreatment from whoever the child is dependent on.

According to Hornby (2000), abuse is the use of something in a way that is wrong or harmful. Notably, Moss & Moss (1990) technically defined child abuse as any act of commission and omission on the part of the parent, guardian or caretaker that results in non-accidental physical or mental injury, or sex abuse. Youngson (1995) believed child abuse is a distasteful subject that attracts euphemism and doctors talk about non-accidental injury when they mean assault. Child abuse therefore refers to an unfair, cruel or violent treatment of a child in a physical, sexual or emotional way including child labour. The journal of child abuse and neglect, view it as “any recent act of caretaker which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation, an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm” (Ada & Anake, 2015). This abuse can occur in the child’s home, originations, schools or communities the child interacts with.

Some definitions focus on the behaviors or actions of adults while others consider abuse to take place if there is harm or the threat of harm to the child. The distinction between behavior regardless of the outcome and impact or harm is a potentially confusing one if parental intent forms part of the definition. Some experts consider as abused those children who have been inadvertently harmed through the actions of a parent, while others require that harm to the child be intended for the act to be defined as abusive. Some of the literature on child abuse explicitly includes violence against children in institutional or school settings (Shumba, 2001; Ketsela & Kedebe, 1997).

The definitions given above cover a broad spectrum of abuse. This focuses primarily on acts of commission and omission by parents or caregivers that result in harm to the child. It explores the prevalence, causes and consequences of the major forms of child maltreatment by caregivers, namely: Physical abuse; Sexual abuse; Emotional abuse; and Neglect (Gillham, 1998).

Physical abuse of a child is seen as those acts of commission by a caregiver that cause actual physical harm or have the potential for harm. Physical abuse is any accidental injury to a child. This involves physical aggression directed at a child by an adult. Most nations with child abuse laws considers the deliberate infliction of serious injuries or actions that place the child at obvious risk of serious injury or death to be illegal, bruises, scratches burns, broken bones,

lacerations, as well as repeated “mishaps” and rough treatment that could cause physical injury, can be physical abuse (Theoklitou et al, 2012).

Since 1979, 34 countries around the world (at 2013) have outlawed domestic corporal punishment of children (Global Initiative to End Corporal Punishment of Children - GITEACFOC). In Europe, 22 countries have banned the practice. Cultural norms about what constitutes abuse vary widely: among professionals as well as the wider public, people do not agree on what behaviours constitute abuse. Some professionals claim that cultural norms that sanction physical punishment are ones of the causes of child abuse, and have undertaken campaigns to redefine such norms (Noh, 1994). Isangedighi (2005) indicated that child physical abuse is a global phenomenon, in United States of America (USA) for instance about 14% of children are physically abused yearly and out of those who are abused an estimated 20,000 die as a result of the abuse. Averages of 1,000 to 5,000 children die each year in USA as a result of injuries arising from maltreatment. Child physical abuse may result to improper education of the child, loss of opportunities in life, poor performance in school, dropping out of school, fear, anxieties, depression and even develop in the affected child low self-esteem. These indices are negative indicators of good academic performance of students. The abused child can also suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder if they see someone else being abused.

Sexual abuse is viewed as those acts where children are forced or persuaded into sexual acts or situation by others for sexual gratification. Sexual abuse is passive in every part of the world. Child sexual abuse is one of the health and human right challenges in Nigeria (Chiamaka & Adeniran, 2017). The News Agency of Nigeria reported in 2013 that 1,200 girls were raped in Cross River State, a coastal state in south south Nigeria that shares a common border with Cameroon to the east (Vanguard News, 2013), thereby increasing their chances of contracting sexually transmitted disease. Yet cases reported by the Nigeria Police are less than unreported cases by parents or guidance of the victims.

Emotional and psychological abuse includes the failure of a caregiver to provide an appropriate and supportive environment, and includes acts that have an adverse effect on the emotional health and development of a child. Such acts include restricting a child’s movements, denigration, ridicule, threats and intimidation, discrimination, rejection and other nonphysical forms of hostile treatment. Cultural factors appear strongly to influence the non-physical techniques that parents choose to discipline their children – some of which may

be regarded by people from other cultural backgrounds as psychologically harmful. Defining psychological abuse is therefore very difficult. The consequences of psychological abuse, however defined, are likely to differ greatly depending on the context and the age of the child. There is evidence to suggest that shouting at children is a common response by parents across many countries. Cursing children and calling them names appears to vary more greatly. Limited data from the World SAFE project suggest that the majority of parents use non-violent disciplinary practices. These include explaining to children why their behaviour was wrong and telling them to stop, withdrawing privileges and using other nonviolent methods to change problem behavior (Youssef et al, 1998; Lopez, 2000).

Child neglect refers to the failure of a parent/guidance to provide for the development of the child whereas; the parent is in a position to do so in the following areas: health, education, emotional development, nutrition, shelter and safe living conditions. Neglect is thus distinguished from circumstances of poverty in that neglect can occur only in cases where reasonable resources are available to the family or caregiver. Many researchers include neglect or harm caused by a lack of care on the part of parents or other caregivers as part of the definition of abuse (Menick, 2001; Wolfe, 1999). There exist many manifestations of child neglect, including non-compliance with health care recommendations, failure to seek appropriate health care, deprivation of food resulting in hunger, and the failure of a child physically to thrive. Other causes for concern include the exposure of children to drugs and inadequate protection from environmental dangers, abandonment, inadequate supervision, poor hygiene and being deprived of an education have all been considered as evidence of neglect (Youssef et al, 1998).

Therefore, child abuse is seen as a variety of harmful behaviors directed against children. Child abuse is an act of inflicting serious, physical injury and emotional torture on a child or person, which is intentional or unintentional and could endanger the physical, health, emotional, social, moral and educational development of the child. The possible contributing factors to child abuse are identified as: Adults that were abused as children, Broken Home, Frustration, Financial Peril, Parent Inexperience and children with difficult behaviors (Leonard, 2010; Chalk et al, 2002).

Effect of Child Abuse on Child's Education, National Security and Development

One of the most destructive consequences of child abuse may be detrimental effect on the child's school performance. Research indicates that abused children demonstrate reduced intellectual functioning and perform very poorly in school. These behaviours in turn increase the risk of long – term decreased productivity, long term economic dependence and generally lowers levels of satisfaction with life as adults. Abused children may display the following:

- i.** Lower overall school performance test scores and lower language, reading and Math's scores.
- ii.** Grades repetitions, disciplinary referrals and a high number of suspensions.
- iii.** Working and learning at below average level.
- iv.** Weaker orientation to future: vocational and educational goals compared to non-maltreated (Alokan & Olatunji, 2014).

Child abuse and neglect have been shown, in some cases, to cause important regions of the brain to fail to form or grow properly, resulting in impaired development. These alterations in brain maturation have long-term consequences for cognitive, language, and academic abilities. The immediate emotional effects of abuse and neglect isolation, fear, and an inability to trust can translate into lifelong consequences, including low self-esteem, depression, and relationship difficulties (Christina et al, 2010).

A long scan study found a relationship between substantiated child maltreatment and poor academic performance and classroom functioning for school-age children (Chiamaka & Adeniran, 2017).

Children who experience rejection or neglect are more likely to develop antisocial traits as they grow up. Abused children were 11 times more likely to be arrested for criminal behavior as a juvenile, 2.7 times more likely to be arrested for violent and criminal behavior as an adult, and 3.1 times more likely to be arrested for one of many forms of violent crime (juvenile or adult) (Becker-Blease & Freyd, 2008). The abused children will likely smoke cigarettes, abuse alcohol, or take illicit drugs during their lifetime which is a threat the security of the society.

Consequently, Society as a whole, pays a price for child abuse in terms of costs associated with maintaining a child welfare system to investigate and respond to allegations of child abuse, expenditures by the judicial, law enforcement, health, and mental health systems as well as costs associated with juvenile and

adult criminal activity, mental illness, substance abuse, and domestic violence. This could also include loss of productivity due to unemployment and underemployment, the cost of special education services, and increased use of the health care system (Erickson et al, 1989).

Chalk, Gibbons & Scarupa, (2002) opined that child abuse negatively affects the child physically, psychologically and behaviourally. Physical problems can lead to delay in cognitive development which could affect the abused child academically and ultimately the economy. Shonk & Cicchetti (2001) in their study corroborate this view by disclosing that children who are maltreated usually get low grades in school and do not excel in the society, which slows down the economy. Therefore, the menace of child abuse deadens the future of the child, family and society.

Theoretical Framework

Bowlby's attachment theory (1958) and Bandura's social learning theory (1977) form the bases of this work. Bowlby's intra-theory stated that if a child was separated from its mother within the first five years of life, it could affect the child's emotional development and social difficulties in later life. The theory emphasizes the physical aspect of mother child bonding and sees the attachment as an instructive; genetically determine two ways and a symbolic process. The implication of this theory to this study is that, parents should love and care for their children, instead of humiliating and torturing their young minds with all sort of abuse. This will enable the child to interact freely, thereby improving their academic performance and societal development.

Bandura's social learning theory (1977) emphasizes that part of what a person learns is through imitation or modeling and that learning takes place in a social situation. During interaction an individual may learn to modify his behavior as result of how others in the group are responding. He believed that children learn through observation or copying and watching carefully the behaviour of adults; parents, caregivers or others around them, as their models. Thus, where their models perceived abuse of children as a perfect way of life that must be practice. Likewise children who watch parents or caregivers practice physical abuse as corrective measures, may grow up to practice correcting issues with the child through beating, plucking the ears, drawing the hair, kneeling for long hours and withdrawing of essential needs when needed. As a result they learn the art of neglect and would not provide of their educational needs or even sow love

and affection to others. Those who grow up under such brutal conditions seem to practice same; see human beings as tool of oppression and satisfaction of personal desires. The relevant of this theory is based on the emphasis that attention, care, love, protection should be given to the child to help motivate positive behaviours and learning outcome.

METHODOLOGY

The study was a school-based descriptive study, within the scope of public primary schools in Gwagwalada Area Council of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. The study targeted teachers in the primary schools as respondents. The population comprised of (889) Teachers serving in the primary schools, but the researcher used 175 respondents as the sample population. Random sampling technique was used to pick the respondents after clustering to delineate the population of the study into three (3) zones; Gwagwalada, Zuba and Dobi as follow:

Table 1: Sample Population

S/no	School	Sample
1	Gwagwalada Zone	75
2	Zuba Zone	50
3	Dobi Zone	50
Total		175

Survey: 2017

A structured questionnaire was used to elicit data from the respondents. The Likert 4-point type format was used to express the respondents' level of agreement to the questionnaire items. The instrument was administered to the respondents personally by hand, and was collected on the spot by research assistants to ensure high return rate.

The Micro soft Excel and Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 software were employed in analyzing the data, and the result was presented on frequency percentages tables with explanation. The mean scores were adopted to answer the research questions. A mean percentage above 50 (2.5) was accepted, while below 50 (2.5) was rejected.

Discussion of Results

The results of the data analysis are presented below with its interpretation.

Demographic Data

Table 3: Sex Distributions of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	87	49.7
Female	88	50.3
Total	175	100

Survey: 2017

Results from table 3 on the sex distribution of the respondents revealed fair representation between the males and the females' respondents with 49.7% and 50.3% respectively. This therefore, takes care of gender prejudice.

Table 4: Qualification of Respondents

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
SSCE/TC II	29	16.8
NCE	49	28.0
HND/1 st Degree	89	50.9
Master	8	4.6
PhD	0	0
Total	175	100

Survey: 2017

Information on table 4 shows that most of the respondents (over 80%) in the study were very educated considering their level of qualifications. This could be an indication of their being knowledgeable of the things that influence pupils' characters or behaviours in the society.

Table 6: Respondents' Perception of the Causes of Child Abuse

S/n	Statement	SA		A		D		SD		MEAN	DECISION
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
1.	The death of a parent can lead to child abuse	100	57.1	62	35.4	11	6.3	2	1.1	3.50	Accepted
2.	Battering of a child by parents/teacher/guidance causes child abuse	43	24.6	109	62.3	12	6.9	11	6.3	3.10	Accepted

3.	Broken homes lead to physical abuse of the child	80	45.7	80	45.7	13	7.4	2	1.1	3.40	Accepted
4.	Child hawking before and after school causes child abuse	75	42.9	91	52.0	5	2.9	4	2.3	3.40	Accepted
5.	Unconducive learning environment leads to child abuse	56	32.0	72	41.1	36	20.6	11	6.3	3.00	Accepted
	Overall Mean									3.30	Accepted

Survey: 2017

From the table above (6) regarding the causes of child abuse in the study area, it revealed that most respondents believed the death of a parent can lead to child abuse; 162 (92.5%) agreed to the item, as against 13 (7.4%) who disagreed. 152 (86.9%) agreed that battering of a child by parents/teacher/guidance leads to child abuse, while only 23 (13.1%) disagreed with the statement. Similarly, 160 (91.4%) professed that broken homes lead to physical abuse of the child, as against 15 (8.5%) that disagreed. As to whether child hawking before and after school causes child abuse, 166 (94.9%) agreed while the remainder 9 (5.2%) disagreed with the statement. 128 (73.1%) also agreed that unconducive learning environment leads to child abuse, as against 47 (26.9%) who did not agree. Thus, a total sectional mean rating observed for the response (3.3) indicates an acceptance of the fact that all the questionnaire items (1, 2, 3, 4, and 5) causes child abuse.

Table 7: Respondents' Perception of the Effects of Child Abuse

S/n	Statement	SA		A		D		SD		MEAN	DECISION
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
6.	Child abuse negatively affects child's school performance	111	63.4	44	25.1	8	4.6	12	6.9	3.50	Accepted
7.	Children who contribute to the sustenance of their family economy have less time to read their books	58	33.5	84	48.6	18	10.4	13	7.5	3.10	Accepted
8.	Early motherhood negatively affect child upbringing	45	25.7	95	54.3	30	17.1	5	2.9	3.00	Accepted

9.	Child abuse causes permanent and lifelong trauma	43	24.6	106	60.6	17	9.7	9	5.1	3.00	Accepted
10	Abused children develop low cognition to school subjects	74	42.3	82	46.9	11	6.3	8	4.6	3.30	Accepted
Overall Mean										3.20	Accepted

Survey: 2017

Regarding the effects of child abuse, table 7 shown that majority respondents believed child abuse negatively affects child's school performance; 155 (88.5%) agreed to the item 6, as against 20 (11.5%) that disagreed. 142 (82.1%) agreed that children who contribute to the sustenance of their family economy have less time to read their books, while only 31 (17.9%) disagreed with the item 7. Similarly, 140 (80%) also professed that early motherhood negatively affect child upbringing as against 35 (20%) that disagreed with the item 8.

As to whether child abuse causes permanent and lifelong trauma, 149 (85.2%) says Yes while the remainder 26 (14.8%) says No. 156 (89.2%) also agreed that abused children develop low cognition to school subjects, as against 19 (10.8%) that says No. Thus, a total sectional mean rating observed for the response (3.2) indicates an acceptance of the fact that all the questionnaire items (6, 7, 8, 9, and 10) are effects of child abuse.

Table 8; Respondents' Perception of the Consequences of child abuse

S/n	Statements	SA		A		D		SD		MEAN	DECISION
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
11.	Abused children behave badly in school	50	28.5	91	52.0	26	14.9	8	4.6	3.40	Accepted
12.	Abused children are prone to psychological distress	85	48.6	74	42.3	9	5.1	7	4.0	3.40	Accepted
13.	Neglect of children by parents leads them astray	84	48.0	64	36.6	21	12.0	6	3.4	3.30	Accepted
14.	Parents inexperience can as well lead their children to teenage pregnancy	73	41.7	63	36.0	21	12.0	18	10.3	3.10	Accepted

15.	Abused children lacks punctuality to school attendance	71	40.6	75	42.9	23	13.1	6	3.4	3.20	Accepted
	Overall Mean									3.30	Accepted

Survey: 2017

From the table (8) above, it is seen that majority of the respondents believed that abused children behave badly in school; 141 (80.5%) agreed to the item as against 34 (23%) that disagreed. 159 (90.9%) agreed that abused children are prone to psychological distress while only 16 (9.1%) did not agree to the item. 148 (84.6%) also professed that neglect of children by parents leads them astray as against 27 (15.4%) that disagreed with the item. As to whether Parents inexperience can as well lead their children to teenage pregnancy, 136 (77.7%) says Yes while the remainder 39 (22.3%) disagreed. In the same vein, 146 (83.5%) also agreed that abused children lacks punctuality to school attendance, as against 29 (16.5%) who disagreed with the statement.

Therefore, a total sectional mean rating observed for the response (3.3) indicates an acceptance of the fact that majority of the items/ factors such as behaving badly in school, psychological distress and children going astray are consequences of child abuse. The mean is high enough to justify that child abuse leads students to indulge in anti social activities and make them vulnerable to social maltreatment such as rape, trafficking etc.

Discussion of Findings

A close examination of table 6 shows that all items were ranked above 50% in the agreed category than those in the disagreed category. Thus, it means that the death of a parent can lead to child abuse; excessive battering of a child by parents/teacher/guidance; broken homes, child hawking before and after school and unconducive learning environment are all causes of child abuse. Kempe (2003) and Ten Bensel (1997) corroborated this position by singling out the factors as instrumental to child abuse in their works.

Observation also showed a higher percentage response rate for the agreed category (Table 7), majority attest to the effects of child abuse as follows: child abuse negatively affects child's school performance, such abused children have less time to read or rather concentrate on their studies, tends to get pregnant early due to inexperience; causes permanent and lifelong trauma, and develop

low cognition to school subjects, which consequently affect their academic performance in school. This position is upheld in Chiamaka & Adeniran (2017) reporting that sexual abuse predisposes people to posttraumatic stress disorder, depression, loss of concentration and low grades in class assessment and makes victims drop out of school. Collaborating this view, Ada & Anake (2015) state that, child physical abuse and sexual abuse were statistically related to students' academic performance in the society. Also, Chalk et al (2002) opined that child abuse negatively affects the child physically, psychologically and behaviourally. However, it is not possible to discuss them individually in real world situation.

Similarly, most of the respondents were of the opinion that abused children behave badly in school, children are prone to psychological distress, and neglect of children by parents leads them astray. This is supported in the work of Christina, Lisa & Freyd (2010) whereby, Teachers reported that maltreatment outcomes manifest in academic difficulties, attention-deficit, disruptive and internalizing behaviors, and other maltreatment related cry. Teachers reported more negative consequences from attention-deficit and disruptive behaviors on classroom behavior compared to all other maltreatment outcomes combined. Alokun & Olatunji (2014) confirmed the findings by revealing a significant relationship between child abuse and children's attention span in class. The result also showed that there is a significant relationship between child's active involvement in parent's business and his/her attitude to class work.

Conclusion

The study attributed the prevailing causes of child abuse to the death of parent, broken homes, excessive battering of children by parents/teacher/guidance, child hawking and unconducive learning environment at the basic educational level. It also revealed that child abuse negatively affects child's development as such abused children have less time to concentrate on their studies, which consequently affect their academic performance, development and gives lifelong trauma. The study conclude that, adequate guidance and counseling services, teaching of morals by religious bodies, punishment of erring parents/guidance and preventing children from associating with bad friends or peers as the practical measures to curb the issue of child abuse in the area.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of our study, the following recommendations have been made on how best to avert the incidence of child abuse, considering its negative brunt on the child's academic and the society:

1. Government should intensify efforts on reducing the high rate of poverty as this has been known to be a major cause of the hard labour children of primary school age are subjected to.
2. The religious leaders, both in the churches and mosques should persistently preach good morals that will help parents and guidance desist from the act of using their children or wards as subject of economic livelihood.
3. The media and counseling Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) should intensify campaign against child abuse. Greater awareness of maltreatment could lead teachers to respond more effectively to students who appear to have poor motivation, perform inconsistently on assignments, or are behaviorally difficult. Educational Implications

Schools should be better prepared to help maltreated children through formalized intervention and support. The paper recommends broadly targeted school-based prevention strategies such as creation of specialized service interventions for maltreated children or for any child who experiences negative effects from past or ongoing traumas.

Suggestions for Further Study

The main challenges to intervention are the difficulty of getting children and adolescents to use intervention services and the difficulty of obtaining financing for services through collaborations. Therefore, how to set up financing systems that encourage inter agency collaboration is an interesting topic for future study.

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