

RELATIONSHIPS AMONG PHYSICAL ABUSE, PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF PRIMARY FIVE PUPILS IN KADUNA STATE

Atiku, Saadatu, Mohammed, A. I. and Balarabe, M.

Department of Educational Psychology and Counseling,
Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

Abstract

The paper investigated the Relationships among Physical Abuse, Psychological Abuse and Academic Performance of Primary Five Pupils in Kaduna State. A correlational survey design was adopted for the study. A total of 8,002 pupils were selected from six public Primary schools, considered for the study. Three Hundred and Seventy Seven abused pupils were sampled using proportionate sampling technique. Questionnaires were used to collect data on physical and psychological abuse, while academic performance of pupils were tested in English, Mathematics, Social Studies and Computer Science. Data collected were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The findings revealed that significant negative associations exist among physical abuse and academic performance ($P = 0.001$), psychological abuse and academic performance ($P = 0.028$). It was recommended that Psychologists, Counselors, Teachers and Parents should provide academic and social skills enhancement training in schools for physically and psychologically abused pupils to make them understand that when psychological/physical abuses increase, the academic performance of pupils decrease.

Keywords: Physical abuse, psychological abuse, academic performance, primary school pupils

1. Introduction

Education is linked to a range of issues like societal stability, gender equality, healthcare and employment. This implies that all children have a right to education as stated in article number twenty eight (28) of the Convention on the right of children (UNICEF, 2002). Cultural and moral values can be transmitted via formal education that assists an individual to be guided to make reasonable and informed decisions in a responsible manner and to co-exist with others in the society. Child abuse is any act by parents, teachers or caregivers that may expose a child to actual or potential harm such as total neglect at home, places of worship, schools and other individuals the child may interact with. Child abuse has become an international phenomenon; its menace has been given serious attention in many parts of the world like the United States of America, Asia and Africa.

Cicchetti (2015) declares physical and psychological abuse as common social problems globally. According to the impacts, physical child abuse range from minor injuries to severe brain damage and even death, while psychological impacts range from chronic low self-esteem to severe dissociative state. The cognitive effects range

from attention problems and learning disorders to severe organic brain syndromes. Behaviourally, the consequences of abuse range from poor peer relations and violent behaviours (Kempe, 2010).

For over 30 years, clinicians like medical doctors and other health workers have studied the effects of child abuse on the physical, psychological, cognitive, and behavioural development of children. In recent years, child abuse has been the object of attention, debates and studies at both international and national levels, on its immediate and long term negative impacts on the victims and the society at large (ANPPCAN, 2001). With respect to the calamities of children, the assembly of the United Nations declared the child welfare charter that frowns against child abuse. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights also states that the child shall be protected against all forms of abuse and neglect, cruelty and exploitation. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights further stated that for the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world, governments should protect the children against all forms of abuse and exploitation. The Global International Documentation of International Law states that the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child (DRC) should build upon the right to protection against child trafficking, exploitation and all forms of abuse (United Nations, 1971; 1999).

Summary of the United Nations (1999) declaration on the rights of the child states that the best interest of the child is that he or she be given the chance to express himself or herself and be given the right to education. The convention posited that for its purposes, therefore, the elimination of ignorance and illiteracy throughout the world is needed in order to facilitate the protection of the child and stop child abuse. A report by International Labour Organization (2002) estimated that about 246 million children were engaged in one form of abuse or another worldwide, with Africa and Asia being the most affected continents. These two continents accounted for 70% of the countries affected and 94% of the children that were abused in a survey of more than 100 countries in 1992. A recent UNICEF (2002) survey of households in 25 Sub-Saharan African countries indicated that 31% of children between the ages of 5 and 14 are engaged in various forms of child abuse that threaten them physically and psychologically; and affects their health and academic performance as well as their social wellbeing. However, a look at the Nigerian society shows that child abuse occurs not only at home but also in school thereby constituting a bottleneck to the attainment of sound academic performance and good social adjustment. Research has shown that this social scourge is on the increase while parents, schools and the society find it difficult to assess and come up with an effective intervention to deal with the situation. Studies have shown that when a child is physically and psychologically balanced, he or she has more motivation, better grades and higher achievement scores (Ebigbo, 2000).

According to Febe (1994), child abuse, as a social problem, gained recognition of the Nigerian public only recently. Nigeria's human rights record remains poor and government officials at all levels continue to commit serious abuses. However, Nigeria has made serious improvements in the matter of human rights under the current constitution (Constitution of Nigeria 1999, as amended), item

2(a) of the fourth schedule to the constitution provides for the right of a child to compulsory, free, uniform and qualitative basic education throughout Nigeria. Donli (1988) pointed that some Nigerian States like Kaduna which has long been regarded as one of the most developed states and center of learning in the North Western Zone of Nigeria, could eradicate so many social problems associated with social, physical and psychological forms of abuse, this situation may likely manifests as a results of lack of provision of school necessary materials for learning, school fees, divorce among child's parents, abandoned children, street begging, child labour and physical assault. The consequences may include poor academic performance and massive failure, school dropout, criminal acts, prostitution, drug abuse and addiction among children (Kindiki, 2009).

Fafunwa (1974) stated that looking at the Nigerian child as a direct victim of the low purchasing power of his or her parents in which children are regarded as a source of joy to families and evaluation assets to the parents, children are supposed to be nurtured in family environment and grow up in an atmosphere of happiness, love, care and understanding. Besides, because of their peculiar needs for physical and mental development, children need special care in every aspect of their lives, particularly in the areas of their physical, mental, emotional and social developments and require legal protection in terms of freedom, dignity and security. They are not supposed to be maltreated, exploited, overworked or deprived of their right to education.

2. Statement of the Problem

Child abuse is taking place everywhere in Kaduna state and Nigeria at large as was highlighted by UNESCO (2003). Yet a large number of cases of child abuse go unreported (ANPPCAN, 2001). The breakdown of basic family structure is largely due to poverty and single parenting among others which leads to increased rate of children being physically, psychologically, verbally assaulted and neglected by their parents and teachers (Arnold, 2001). When such happenings occur in the school, the weak and vulnerable are worst affected and their academic achievements and performance likely to decrease. However, the psychological abuse on the other hand is increasing due to parental, teacher and peer neglect in schools, homes and society at large (ANPPCAN, 2001). Kaduna State is not an exception, as children attending public primary schools may likely experience some sorts of physical and psychological abuses. The study seeks to find out whether relationship exists between physical abuse, psychological abuse and academic performance of public primary schools in Kaduna state.

3. Objectives of the Study

In specific terms, the objectives of the study are to:

- i. Find out the relationship between physical abuse and academic performance of primary school pupils in Kaduna State, Nigeria.
- ii. Find out the relationship between psychological abuse and academic performance of primary school pupils in Kaduna State.

4. Research Questions

The research was guided by the following questions:

- i. What relationship exists between physical abuse and academic performance of primary school pupils in Kaduna State, Nigeria?
- ii. What relationship exists between psychological abuse and academic performance of primary school pupils in Kaduna State, Nigeria?

5. Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at $p < 0.05$ alpha level of significance.

HO₁: There is no significant relationship between physical abuse and academic performance of primary school pupils in Kaduna State, Nigeria.

HO₂: There is no significant relationship between psychological abuse and academic performance of primary school pupils in Kaduna State, Nigeria.

6. Methodology

This study adopted the correlational research design because it is a non-experimental design used to describe associations between and among variables. The correlation design provides and identifies analytical and statistical procedures needed to answer questions raised for the study.

The correlation research design also, gives an opportunity to foretell results and explain the associations among the variables. It also involves collection of data to determine whether, and to what degree, associations or relationship exist.

7. Population for the Study

The population for this research is made up of public primary school pupils in Kaduna State. The population sampled was primary five pupils from the three Senatorial zones in Kaduna State numbering 8002 comprising of Kaduna North with 3305, Kaduna Central with 3763, and Kaduna south with 934 pupils (School Census Report 2012/2013).

8. Sample and Sampling Techniques

Six public primary schools were selected using cluster sampling technique to ensure that each zone was represented in the sample. Each zone constituted a cluster in which two schools were randomly selected from the Senatorial Districts mentioned above. Going by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table for determining sample size, the sample size for 8002 is 367 abused pupils selected from six public primary schools in Kaduna State. Through administration of questionnaires on physical and psychological abuse, 182 pupils were identified to be physically abused while 197 pupils were identified to be psychologically abused. The questionnaires were marked and grouped into two i.e. those physically abused and those psychologically abused. Through proportionate sampling, each cluster has the same sampling fraction or ratio regardless of the differences in the population. Kaduna North thus, has 106 samples representing 28.1 %, Kaduna Central Zone has 213 representing 56.5% pupils while Kaduna South has a sample of 58 pupils representing 15.4%.

9. Instrumentation

Three questionnaires were used to gather information from the respondents. Two of the questionnaires contain both closed ended questions and open ended questions. The two questionnaires were rated on a five point Likert scale: SA (Strongly Agree), A (Agree), UD (Undecided), DA (Disagree), and SDA (Strongly Disagree). In addition, third term promotion examination result in four core subjects were used in order to assess respondents' academic performance. The instruments used for this study include:

1. Physical Abuse Questionnaire (PAQ1) - The instrument was adapted from Family Shelter Service (2018). The questionnaire consisted of 20 items that measure characteristics of physical abuse types ranging from corporal punishments, injuries, bites, burns. The scale was delineated on five point Likert scale, ranging from 1-5, with the scores indicative of greater physical abuse. Thus the respondents who obtained scores from 50-100 were considered as physically abused and those who obtained scores from 20-49 were considered not abused. This classification served as a guide for the scale of measurement.
2. Psychological Abuse Questionnaire (PAQ2): The instrument was adapted from Family Shelter Service (2018). The questionnaire consisted of 20 items that measure characteristics of psychological abuse types ranging from discriminations, rejection, aggression and intimidation. The scale was delineated on five point Likert scale, ranging from 1-5, with higher scores indicative of greater psychological abuse. Respondents are required to tick one of the five responses as applied. Thus the respondents who obtained scores from 50-100 were considered as psychologically abused and those who obtained scores from 20-49 were considered not abused. This classification served as a guide for the scale of measurement.
3. Academic Performance (AP) - Pupils' examination results in English Language, Mathematics, Social studies and Computer Science derived from their third term examination were obtained. Each subject was marked over hundred giving a total of four hundred. The scores were summed and divided by four to get average score and mean academic performance.

In order to provide clarity and relevance of measuring instrument and to assess appropriateness for measuring the variables purported to measure, content validity was carried out. The researcher conducted a pilot study in order to obtain the internal consistency of the instruments and to assure the content and cultural barrier is taken care of. The pilot study was conducted at Local Education Authority Model Primary School, Samaru, Sabon-Gari Local Government of Kaduna State in which 50 copies of questionnaires on physical abuse were distributed to 50 Primary Five pupils. The reliability of physical abuse instruments is at 0.80, while the psychological abuse is at 0.754. With respect to academic performance, the researcher explained the

nature of the research to the subject teachers of the six schools before the questionnaires were administered at the end of the term when the pupils are writing examinations because that was the surest way of getting them in the schools to collect data.

10. Procedure for Data Analysis

All the two Hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment correlation at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

Results

H0₁: That there is no significant relationship between physical abuse and the academic performance of abused pupils.

A Pearson moment correlation test was run to determine the strength and direction of the relationship that exists between physical abuse and academic performance of abused pupils. The result is presented in Table 1

Table1: Correlation between physical abuse and academic performance of abused pupils

Variable	n	\bar{X}	Std.dev	df	Correlation index r	P
Physical Abuse	182	61.6667	7.86372			
				180	-0.999**	0.001
Academic Performance	182	61.5041	31.33275			

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Statistics in Table 1 showed that the calculated p value of 0.001 is lower than the 0.05 alpha level of significance with a negative correlation index, r, equal to -0.999 at df 180. This implied that when physical abuse increases, the academic performance decreases and *vice versa*. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between physical abuse and academic performance of physically abused pupils is rejected.

H0₂: There is no significant relationship between psychological abuse and the academic performance.

A Pearson moment correlation test was run to determine the strength and direction of the relationship that exists between psychological abuse and academic performance of pupils. The result is presented in Table 2

Table 2: Correlation between psychological abuse and the academic performance

Variables	n	\bar{X}	Std.dev	df	Correlation index r	P
Psychological Abuse	195	75.1783	15.16907	193	-0.635**	0.028
Academic Performance	195	49.1135	22.28936			

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Statistics in Table 2 showed that the calculated p value of 0.028 is lower than the 0.05 alpha level of significance with a negative correlation index, r, equal to -0.6350 at df 193. This implies that when psychological abuse increases, the academic performance decreases and *vice versa*. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between psychological abuse and academic performance of the psychologically abused pupils is rejected.

11. Discussion

The findings of this study show that physical abuse and psychological abuse have significant negative relationship with academic performance. The psychologically abused pupils were discovered to have poorer academic performance than their physically abused counterparts. These findings were in line with this study that both physical and psychological abuse might have low or negative relationship with the academic performance of the abused pupils. This shows that the relationship is directly proportional and this implies that the higher the physical abuse or psychological abuse, the lower the academic performance of the pupils and vice versa. Theoretically, the finding is supported by cognitive model of Beck (1979) in which 'Early Maladaptive Schemas' (EMSs) can lead to distress at different levels, including physical distress, strained and dysfunctional interpersonal relationships, and impaired academic performance. This is also in line with Adejobi, Osonwa, Iyam, Udonwa, and Osonwa (2013), who asserted that physically abused children score lower on cognitive measures and demonstrate lower school achievement when compared to their non-abused peers. This is because they are always inattentive, apathetic and have difficulties in concentrating on cognitive tasks. However, when a child is beaten often, over-used at home or in the farm, it will be difficult for him or her to concentrate and pay attention in class. An over-used child usually suffers from fatigue and is unable to stand academic challenges. This finding supports by Ba-Saddik and Hattab (2013) who reported that physical forms of abuse such as beating, slapping, giving a child too much domestic work, hitting and punching, negatively affect the academic performance of the child.

12. Conclusions

Based on the above findings from this study, it is concluded that physical and psychological abuse are negatively associated with academic performance of pupils attending public primary schools in Kaduna State of Nigeria. It is also concluded that

psychologically abused children score lower on cognitive measures and demonstrate lower school achievement when compared with physically-abused peers because they are always inattentive, apathetic and have difficulties in concentrating on cognitive tasks. It also presents a serious draw back on the child educational pursuits. Physical and psychological abuses are highly associated with school failure. This study also found that psychological abuse can result to negative impact on the child such as depression, anxiety disorders, poor self-esteem, aggressive, behaviour, suicide attempts, eating disorders and use of illicit drugs.

13. Recommendations

Based on the outcome of the study, it is recommended that:

1. Psychologists, counselors, teachers and parents should give proper educational support and counselling supervision to physically abused pupils. They should be made to understand that as physical abuse increases pupils academic performance decreases and *vice versa*. This can be achieved by increase in funding of educational inspectorate departments.
2. Psychologists, counselors, teachers and parents should provide academic and social skills enhancement training in schools for psychologically abused pupils. They should understand that when psychological abuse increases, the academic performance of pupils decreases.

References

- Adejobi, A. O., Osonwa, O., Iyam, M. A., Udonwa, R. E., & Osonwa, R. H. (2013). Child Maltreatment and Academic Performance of Senior Secondary School Students in Ibadan, Nigeria." *Journal of Educational and Social Research* 3 (2), pp. 175-183.
- ANPPCAN (2001). Child Rights and Child Protection in Kenya: Report of the Laikipia District Children's Advisory Committee Training of Trainers Workshop. Nairobi: ANPPCAN.
- Arnorldo, C.A. (2001). Child Abuse in the Internet: Ending the Silence. Paris: UNESCO Publishing/Beighalin Books.
- Asogwu, L.O. (2002). Parental Perception of Child Labour and its Incidence in Nsukka Education Zone in Enugu State. *Jowice* 6, pp.40 – 46.
- Ba-Saddik, A. S. & Hattab, A. S. (2013). Physical Abuse in Basic-Education Schools in Aden Governorate, Yemen: A Cross-sectional Study. *Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal*, 19 (4), pp. 333-339
- Beck, T. A. (1979). Cognitive theory. Retrieved from <http://cognitive theory Study on Violence against Children>. New York: UN.
- Cicchetti, D. (2015). The Effects of Maltreatment and Neuroendocrine Regulation on NBC <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov> > NCBI > Literature > PubMed Central (PMA)
- Constitution of Nigeria (1999). Amended constitution of 1999, item 2(a).
- Donli, H.N. (1988). Socio-Legal Consequences of Child Abuse. Owerri, Imo State. *Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal*, 18(10), p. 1011.

- Ebigbo, P.O. (2000). Psychological Aspect of Child Abuse and Neglect in Africa. Enugu: Nigeria. An Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation in French, University of Nigeria Nsukka.
- Fafunwa, A. B. (1974). *History of Education in Nigeria*. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd.
- Family Shelter Service (2018). Victims of Abuse. Retrieved from <http://www.familyshelter.org/what-is-abuse/victims-of-abuse/>
- Febe, R.A. (1994). Psychological, Educational and Behavioural Corrientes of Gender. *New Direction for Child Development*. Vol.65, pp. 19 – 34C.
- Gay, L. R. (2009). *Educational Research: Competences for Analysis and Applications* (9th Edition). New Jersey: Pearson Education.
- International Labour Organization (2002). Child and adolescent abuse and neglect research of African countries held in Uganda. Available on <https://www.britanica.com/.../international---1Feb2002---ilospecializedagency> of United Nations (UN)
- Kempe, R., (2010). *Child Abuse*. London: Fontana Open Books.
- Kindiki, J.N. (2009). Effectiveness of Communication on Students Discipline in Secondary Schools in Kenya. *Educational Research and Review* 4 (5), 252e – 259.67.
- Krejcie, R.V and Morgan, D.W. (1970). Statistical Package for Determining Samples size for Research Activities. *Educational and Psychological Measurements*, 30, 607-610.
- NSPCC (2006). *Protecting Disable Children*. Accessed on February 28, 2017. Retrieved from <http://www.nspc.org.uk>
- Onyango, P. P. M., & Kattambo, V. W. M. (2001). Kenya. In *Child Abuse: A Global View*, ed. B. M. Schwartz-Kenney, M. McCauley, and M. Epstein. Westport, CT: Greenwood.
- School Census Report (2012/2013) Kaduna State Ministry of Education Headquarters, Kaduna. UBEC.
- UNESCO (2003). *Strong Foundations; Early Childhood Education and Care*.
- UNESCO (2002). *The State of World's Children: Childhood Under Threat*. New York: UNICEF. Wolfe
- UNICEF (2009). *Nigeria Child Rights Act, 2003 convention*.
- United Nations (1971). *Right of the Child*. United Nations Office of Public Information.
- United Nations (1999). *Declaration of the Right of the Child*. United Nations Office of Public Information.