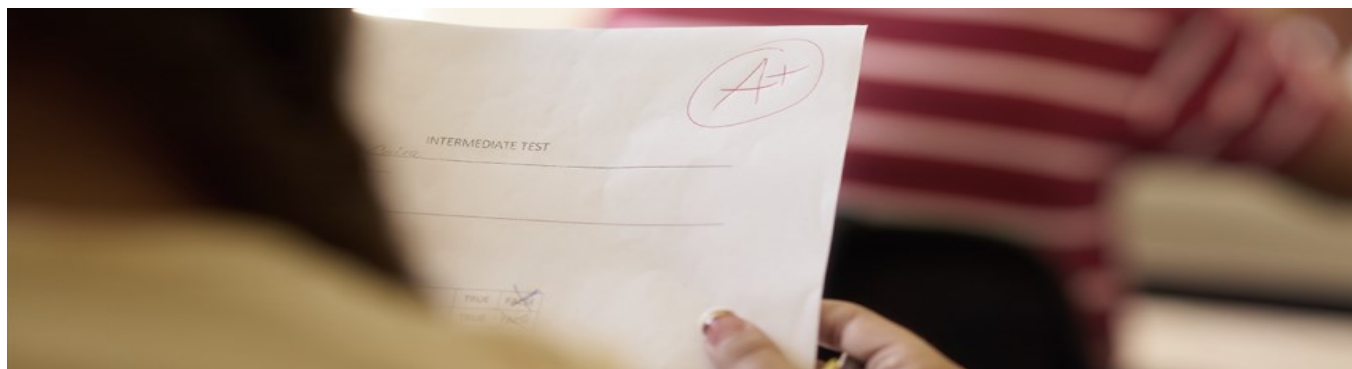


Attitude towards abuse and neglect among youth and it's effect on there acedemic performance in North – Eastern Nigeria



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ABSTRACT

The issue of abuse has been given serious attention in many parts of the world and Nigeria is not left out. Given this serious effort, one would have thought that this menace will not persist. Child abuse occurs not only at home but has found its way into the school system thus constituting a barrier to the interest and subsequent attainment of sound educational development in the country. The aim of the present study was to investigate youth attitudes towards abuse and their associate variables in Jalingo. The main focus was on their definition of abuse, most common abuse types they suffered from and what they think can help to reduce it. A sample of the youth population from Mallum (n=824), Nukkia (n=401), Sabon Gari (n=619), Bakasi (n=354) and other Neighbouring clad (n=326) participated in the study, Data was analyzed using mean standard deviation, descriptive statistics, and Chi square goodness of fit. The results showed that the definition of child abuse (in order of intensity) is sexual abuse, Physical punishment, blaming, inattention, frightening, and beating.

Considering the results of this study, there must be an urgent clarification of child abuse definition specifically the role of the victim along with a well organized policy in promoting parental education in terms of effective parenting which may enhance their learning skills and general performance.

KEYWORD:

Attitudes, child abuse, Jalingo Youth, Educational Performance;

I. INTRODUCTION

Crimes against children are perhaps the hardest to comprehend because Violence of any kind is hard for us to understand. Abusers may be any person with access to a child such as a parent, a guardian, a stepparent, a babysitter, a nanny or a child-care worker, a minister, a teacher, or a sibling or other relatives Moffatt, (2003). Children, young people, or adults, who have suffered some form of abuse in the past, always refer to emotional hurt and psychological pain before mentioning physical pain. Victims of abuse will almost always talk about fear, anxiety, loneliness, lack of emotional support and being ignored, degraded and humiliated, feeling unloved and unwanted, and being powerless when terrorized or tormented by parents Iwaniec, (2006). Although the welfare of children has been the concern in Africa for many years, it is important to note, in case of child sexual abuse, the issue often is considered a secret within families causing confusion and shame for victims. Victims are afraid of reporting even when they get the courage. Support, especially from parents, is important for sexually abused children. These children have both a sense of not being believed when they talk about the child sexual abuse incident. Strong support is needed to encourage children to talk about the incident (Back, et al., 2011). A child is said to be abused when the parents or care givers action leads to physical, emotional and sexual abuse of the child. It also involves failure of the parents to provide the necessary love and care for the child. An abuse according to Isanghede (2004) could be seen in three perspectives physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. To Apebende (2011), child abuse manifest in four main categories viz; physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect. Physical abuse refers to any contact with the body of the child, which may result in an injury. Such contact may involve beating, hitting, kicking, frightening, shaking, punching, biting or any act of omission that is not an accident but that which brings some injuries to the child's body.

Emotional abuse is any act on the part of a parents or caregiver that has the potential for or has actually caused serious emotional cognitive, mental or behavioural disorders. Emotional abuse is evident when a parent or care giver uses abusive words such as blockhead, good for nothing, a mistake, on the child or when the child is locked up in a room, tired both hands and feet, or not allowed to make friends. Mba (2003) maintained that emotional abuse implies constantly blaming the child, belittling and or berating the child, being unconcerned about the child's welfare and overtly rejection of the child by parents or caretakers or caregivers. Sexual abuse occurs when a parent or care giver engages in appropriate sexual behaviours with the child. This may take the form of actual sexual intercourse, kissing, or fondling or genitals or either the abuser or the abused. According to Newton (2004) sexual abuse occurs when an adult or older person uses his or her power over a child. The abuse may trick, bribe, threaten and if possible force a child to take part in sexual activity. Neglect according to Obekpa (2001) include inadequate feeding, shelter and lack of supervision, inadequate body care, poor clothing, poor and denial of medicinal attention and inadequate provision of educational materials and supervision. The different forms of abuse affect the child in all spheres of life including academic attainment.

The process of acquiring communication skills is sometimes stressful for the children to bear. Some parents and care givers make the condition for acquiring these skills so difficult that the children may find it difficult to cope. The condition in which children are exposed to as they try to acquire the skills to become disciplined and hardworking individuals is where the problems lie. When these conditions become over-stretched it becomes an abuse. For instance, when a child is taught the skills of becoming a farmer, he is taken to the farm, he practice these skills and he is kept in the farm doing that same work from dawn to dusk, without any rest, or having a good meal, this becomes an abuse. Also it may be normal if a child is asked to hawk from morning to

evening or before school he continues until dusk. Child sexual abuse is particularly going to school he sales and immediately after controversial in all communities and for some, even attempts to discuss it may be offensive. For many individuals from Jalingo communities, such discussions result in feelings of embarrassment (shame). Meanwhile, some Muslims may see such discussion as contrary to haya (natural modesty). 'Sexual abuse' remains a concept, constructed through academic, professional and clinical discourses which have usually been in English and which have frequently explored the experiences of white children in North America, Western Europe and Australasia. This confirmed the impression that at least, child sexual abuse is under-reported in African communities and those African children and their families are probably less likely than their white counterparts to access appropriate services. At the same time, progress continues to be slow mainly because of lack of basic knowledge about child sexual abuse; lack of awareness of the existence and nature of the services available to respond to it, fear of public exposure, if child sexual abuse is disclosed, and fear of meeting culturally insensitive responses from professionals Gilligan et al., (2005). recently, there has been serious concern about the child with the realization that children play important part in the family and the society. It is generally agreed that children are the future generation, the leaders of tomorrow and the potential flag bearers of any nation.

To carry out these duties, the child therefore has certain rights that must be protected and not be trampled upon or denied. In recognition of the socio-cultural and educational dimension of the child, the United Nations, European Union, African Union, UNICEF and ANPPCAN have all joined efforts in advocating for protection of the right and well-being of children. Among other provisions, UNICEF and the National Policy on Children, grant children the following rights:

Protection against indecent and in human treatment like abuse and neglect, Provision of a conducive environment to promote early stimulation to learning for the child, Entitlement of every child (male/female) to receive compulsory basic education and equal opportunity for higher education and Promotion and encouragement of child-friendly principles in all relevant institutions.

The above provisions recognize the importance of education for the optimum development of the child thus advocating for compulsory basic education and the provision of conducive learning environment. In Nigeria, for instance, education is viewed as a means of building a free democratic, just and equalitarian society; a united strong and self-reliant nation; a land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004). Thus, Nigeria and his people need a change and growth in education so as to be in line with the developed nations.

Taking into considerations the rate of child abuse in our society and its attendant consequences one is bound to find out if it has some effect on the life's of the youths and of course their future.

Academically the youths absent themselves from school, fight and tell lies. In all, they become indisciplined and without discipline meaningful learning hardly takes place. Children abused at home most often than not exhibit behaviours that affect the effective training they receive at home and school.

II. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses were formulated as a guide to the study:

- 1) There is no significance difference between children physical and emotional Abuse, academic performance and association?
- 2) There is no significance difference between sexual abuse, students Academic Performance and Society.

Research Design

The design for this study is the ex-post factor survey design, this is because no variable of the study was manipulated but studied as they exist, the data collected was from high school students from Bakasi, Nunkia, Sabon gari, Mallum and Neighbouring clad.

Sample And Sampling Techniques

The sample for the study comprised of a total number of 2,524 teenagers from different areas of Jalingo, using convenient sampling students were asked to complete questionnaires and in addition, the use of oral interview was implored to cater for those who could not write with a view to determine the cause of child abuse and the effect it makes on their academics

Instrumentation

Variables assessed in this research made questionnaire on child abuse definitions (on a Ten-point Likert scale), most common child abuse types in jalingo, punishments teenagers themselves received as children, their preferred kinds of punishments to use with their own children, types of abuse they received by different people (family relatives, teachers -school staff, etc.), recommendation to siblings and friends in case of being sexually abused, perceived percentage of sexual child abuse and solutions in order to reduce child abuse rate.

The instrument produced the reliability coefficient $r=0.761$

III. METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

Mean standard deviation and chi-square goodness of fits was used to analyse the hypothesis for the study.

IV. RESULTS

Research Hypothesis One

There is no significance difference between children physical and emotional Abuse, academic performance and association?

Table 1: Mean rating and standard deviation of responses from respondents on effect Of student Physical and emotional abuse, their academic performance and Association in life

S/N	Item Description	SA	A	D	SD	Mean (X)	STD	Decision
1	frightening and betting constitutes abuse	185	171	31	13	2.89	0.98	Accepted
2	Rampant absenting of student from school can affect their academic performance	191	166	13	30	2.87	0.93	Accepted
3	Student will still cover up there course work despite a long stay out of school	32	15	152	171	2.40	0.88	Rejected
4	School teachers and parents cannot perform or deliver the goal of education satisfactorily	144	202	34	20	3.13	0.83	Accepted
5	Poor emotional management and teachers performance is also cursed by abuse	189	168	28	15	3.23	0.73	Accepted
	Cluster Mean					2.91	0.87	Accepted

The data presented on table 1 above shows that, the respondents rated all the items from 1 to 5 in the cluster well above the cut off points except item 3 that is rated below. There ratings of items 1 to 5 are 2.89, 2.87, 2.40, 3.13, 3.23 and 1.52 with corresponding standard deviation of 0.98, 0.93, 0.88, 0.83, 0.73 Based on the cut off points of 2.50, respondents rated items 1, 2, 4, and 5 are accepted while item 3 is rejected, the accepted indicate that physical child abuse like frightening, locking them in the room and betting, is one of the cause of child abuse. However punishment meet on such youths by their teachers affect their academic performance. The respondents also reported that school teachers and parents cannot perform or deliver the goal of education satisfactorily because of abuse. The respondent disagreed with the view that Student will still cover up there course work despite a long stay out of school. The cluster means is 2.91 while he standard deviation is 0.87 which indicate that the share the view that physical and emotional abuse affect their academic performance and association in life.

Research Hypothesis; Two

There is no significance difference between sexual abuse, students Academic Performance and Society.

Table 2: Mean rating and standard Deviation of Responses from Respondents on Sexual Abuses as it Affect students Academic Performance and Society

S/N	Item Description	SA	A	D	SD	Mean (X)	STD	Decision
6	Parents and teachers inaction when sexual abuse cases are reported can affect child academic performance	231	115	31	23	3.38	0.79	Accepted
7	There are discrimination between sexually abused and well nurtured individuals from the society	210	143	21	26	2.51	0.93	Accepted
8	The school curriculum are not well treated because of students low interest and concentration	170	200	20	10	2.77	0.79	Accepted
9	The quality of students/parent/teacher relationship is distorted for lack of trust	210	160	15	15	2.86	0.83	Accepted
10	Communication gap leads to failure in the prosecution of offenders	115	185	54	46	2.95	0.95	Accepted
	Cluster Mean					2.89	0.86	Accepted

The data presented on table 2 above shows that, the respondents are unanimous in all the items as regards to how child sexual abuse affect academic performance and society, the respondent mean rating of the items 6 to 10 in this cluster are 3.38, 2.51, 2.77, 2.86, 2.95 with corresponding standard deviation of 0.79, 0.93, 0.79, 0.83, 0.95. Base on the cut off points of 2.50, respondents rated all the items as accepted. Based on the data presented above the responded agree that Parents and teachers inaction when sexual abuse cases are reported can affect child academic performance, There are discrimination between sexually abused and well nurtured individuals from the society, More so The school curriculum are not well treated because of students low interest and concentration. The respondent agreed that the quality of students/parent/teacher relationship is distorted for lack of trust. Finally, Communication gap leads to failure in the prosecution of offenders. The cluster mean is 2.89 and standard deviation 0.86 was accepted as well above cut off point of 2.50. This implies that Sexual Abuses affect youth academic performance and society.

Table 3: Chi square test of effects of physical and emotional Abuse on student Academic performance and associations

Opinions	Observed	Expected	Df	X ^{2-cal}	X ^{2-tab}	Sig	Decision
	Frequency	Frequency					
No impact	85(21%)	189	1	37.76	3.76	0.00	Significant
Impact	315(79%)	211					
Total	400	400					

Value in parenthesis are percentages ($X^2=37.76$, $df=1$, $P=0.05>0.000$)

On table 3 the descriptive and inferential statistics of percentages and chi-square were used to test the hypotheses. The result showed that 79% of the respondent agreed that physical and emotional Abuse significantly affects their academic performance and association in life as against 21% responded who disagreed. The calculated X² value of 37.76 is greater than the critical value of 3.76 at 0.05 level of significant with one as the degree of freedom. The null hypothesis is therefore accepted implying that physical and emotional Abuse significantly affects their academic performance and association in life.

Table 4: Chi square Test of Sexual Abuses with students Academic Performance And the society

Opinions	Observed	expected	Df	X ^{2-cal}	X ^{2-tab}	Sig	Decision
	Frequency	Frequency					
No impact	61(15.3%)	189	1	48.76	3.76	0.00	Significant
Impact	339(84.8%)	211					
Total	400	400					

Value in parenthesis are percentages ($X^2=37.76$, $df=1$, $P=0.05>0.000$)

On table 4 the descriptive and inferential statistics of percentages and chi-square were used to test the hypotheses. The result showed that 84% of the respondent agreed that sexual Abuse significantly affects their academic performance and society as against 15% respondent who disagreed. The calculated X² value of 48.76 is greater than the critical value of 3.76 at 0.05 level of significant with one as the degree of freedom. The null hypothesis is therefore accepted implying that sexual abuse significantly affects their academic performance and the society.

V. DISCUSSION

The first finding shows that child physical and emotional abuses affect the academic performance and association in the life of students. The result agrees with the view of Fatimah (2011) decries that recent trends in both child physical and emotional abuse where in a paradoxical increase in compliant, with abused children, violence, neglect and other forms of revolutionary behaviours in Nigeria industrial set up. This has almost assumed an endemic proportion. He feels that trust and secrecy between parent, teachers and as well as between child right law enforcement agency are the best conditions for protecting our children from further abuse.

The second findings show that child sexual abuses significantly affect their academic performance and there subsequent interactions with the larger society, this signifies that the results are corroborative of earlier reports of Apebende (2010) who observed that sexually abused children showed increase depression ,anger ,hostility, aggression and do not have the desire for schooling. They may lack concentration, and may not have the desire to achieve basic learning skill such as reading and writing instead he would be pre-occupied with worries about their condition which may lead to poor academic attainments.

VI. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings that children physical, emotional and sexual abuse affect their academic performance and associations in life, the following conclusions are reached since not all children show sign of distress, educating them on programs that promote social and emotional competence and teaching adaptive strategies for conflict resolution may serve to curb the menace. The component of successful prevention program must include teaching children to identify and resist inappropriate touching, reassuring them that it is not their fault if they become target of physical emotional and sexual abuse and this can be done with children of up to three years of age.

VII. RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Parents and teachers should adequately understand that frightening ,beating and blaming are physical abuse and not a way of discipline and so learn important skills in communicating with the children so in return inform them of attempts abuse
2. Clinician and social workers or those who work with children play important roles in recognizing and identifying children who are abused so report suspected abuse to child protection agencies.

VIII. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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