

Child Abuse: Emotional, Physical, Neglect, Sexual and the Psychological Effects: A Case Scenario in Lagos State, Nigeria

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Abstract—Child abuse is a significant issue worldwide, affecting the socio-development and mental and physical health of young individuals. It is the maltreatment of a child by an adult or a child. This paper focuses on child abuse in Communities in Lagos State, Nigeria. The aim of this study is to investigate the extent of child abuse and its impact on the mood, social activities, self-worth, concentration, and academic performance of children in Communities in Lagos State. The primary research instrument used in this study was the interview (Forensic), which consisted of two sections. The first section gathered data on the details of the child and the forms and impacts of abuse experienced, while the second section focused on family structure and parental style. The study found that children who experienced various forms of abuse, such as emotional, neglect, physical, or sexual abuse, were hesitant to report it out of fear of threats or even death from the abuser. These abused children displayed withdrawn behaviour, depression, and low self-worth and underperformed academically compared to their peers who did not experience abuse. The findings align with socio-learning theory and intergenerational transmission of violence, which suggest that parents and caregivers who engage in child abuse often do so because they themselves experienced or witnessed abuse as children, thereby normalizing violence. The study highlights the prevalent issue of child abuse in Lagos State and emphasizes the need for advocacy programs and capacity building to raise awareness about child abuse and prevention. The distribution of the Child's Rights Act/Child's Right Law in various sectors is also recommended to underscore the importance of protecting the rights of children. Additionally, the inclusion of courses on child abuse in the school curriculum is proposed to ensure children are educated on recognizing and reporting abuse.

Keywords—Child abuse, physical ill-treatment, neglect, parental style, psychological effect, sexual offence, reporting.

I. INTRODUCTION

CHILDREN are individual beings like adults with rights and obligation that make them a fundamental part of the proper functioning of a country [1]. In the Declaration of the Rights of the Child drafted by UNICEF [2], the rights of a child are stated extensively. It is important that mothers, fathers, educators are aware of this recognition, since too many times, children's right are still violated in many parts of the world. Children are not to be ill-treated and being a minor does not make them less important or an object to their parents. The world leader's commitment, hope and vision regarding children birth the United Nations Convention on the

Right of the Child [3]. The Convention stated that the rights of children which were highlighted will allow children to grow and function appropriately. The convention rules out that the rights of all children should be the basic right that the society (including father, mother, teacher etc.) should embrace. The United Nation Convention on the Right of a Child defined a child as a person who has not reached 18 years of age [3]. The Protection of Children from sexual offences Act states that a child means any person below the age of eighteen years. This Act simply aims to protect children from sexual offences and harassment [4].

Child abuse and Child maltreatment are often used interchangeably. A physical, emotional, sexual maltreatment of a child by an adult or a child is child abuse. According to [5], child abuse is actions that cause life's threat to a child physical, emotional, sexual safety. Reference [6] defines "child abuse or child maltreatment as all forms of physical or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or neglectful action, or commercial or other mistreatment ensuing indefinite or possible harm to the child's health, continued existence, growth or self-esteem in the circumstance of a relationship, trust or authority". The perpetrators of child abuse are those responsible for the abuse, surprisingly, they are people close to the child such as parents, family members, caregivers, foster parents, acquaintances and neighbours [7].

Reference [8] explained that "possible reason as to why parents abuse their children is that they have been abused themselves as children. Parents who are going through socioeconomic hardship or due to accumulated stress from work, need to pay bills or has no help as well as single parents are more likely to abuse their children. Another factor that could lead to child abuse from parent is poor parenting style".

Child abuse is broken down into four different categories, i.e. physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect. Each of these forms of abuse is explained in detail. Physical abuse is the most visible form of child ill treatment. It is physical injuries that range from small bruises to brutal fractures or death as a result of punching, beating, kicking, biting, shaking, throwing, stabbing, choking, hitting with a hand, stick, strap or other object, burning or otherwise harming a child [9]. Emotional abuse is incidents where the child is isolated, publicly humiliated or not provided an appropriate and supportive environment which includes restriction of movement, blaming, threatening, frightening, and rejection [10, p.1]. Sexual abuse is when a child is involved in a sexual activity beyond his/her knowledge. Child

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sexual abuse involves making inappropriate touches or sexual interaction between a child and an older or more knowledgeable child or adult (stranger, siblings, parent, or caretaker) or when a child is being used as an object of gratification for the older child's or adult's need [11]. Neglect is defined as a pattern in which the child's basic needs, which include sufficient food, garments, security, sanitation, or care are denied [12].

A. Problem Statement

Child abuse is any inappropriate actions, behaviour, gestures by an adult or another child that cause considerable damage to a child. Compared to people with no history of child abuse victimization, parents/caregivers who have been abused as children are more likely to have high rate of unemployment, low education, low income, low economic status or have no major achievement in their life. These adults have the tendencies of committing crimes or experiencing physical violence in their homes [13].

Parents and caregivers with history of childhood abuse, mental illness, alcohol, substance abuse or those who do not understand the need of children or single parents with poor income, low education and socioeconomic hardship as well as those who have boyfriends, man friends or visitors living with them in the house have the tendencies of becoming child abusers. Family risk factors that contribute to child ill treatment are separation, domestic violence, poor parent child relationship. Community risk factor that increases the prevalence of child maltreatment includes high rate of unemployment, high consumption of alcohol or drugs, low community socioeconomic status, high crime rate [14]. Reference [8] posited that "when the abuse is accidentally discovered, for instance physical abuse, the abusers, caregivers relate it to an accident". Unprofessionalism in the assessment of cases of abuse pertaining to children allows child abusers to get away with their offense. Physically abused children still feel the effects of these abuse long term even after the wound has healed up, being injured could lead to serious physical or mental issues which include not doing well in school, depression and suicidal attempt [15].

In contrast to people's belief, words can hurt and emotional abuse can severely damage a child's mental health or emotional development. It impairs a child's emotional development and self-worth. Children who have been emotionally abused or the ones who do not get adequate care and attention from their parents have serious issues maintaining basic or quality relationship with their parents and other people throughout their lives [16].

Child sexual abuse has grave consequences such as isolation, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, self-guilt and blame, suicidal thought [17]. Sexually abused children can be manipulated and threatened by their abusers to believe that the abuse is their fault. This will leave them to feeling guilty and ashamed and will keep them from telling anyone [17]. Child neglect is not easily noticeable. Reference [18] stated that "children who are often neglected or don't receive appropriate care and love from parents, develop mental

problems and will have poor relationship with others and even with their children throughout life time". These children exhibit withdrawn behaviour, post-traumatic stress disorder, anger, self-harm and suicidal behaviour. Due to the unclear signs of child abuse, many cases go unreported.

B. Research Question

To discover the impact of various forms of child ill treatment, the following research questions are raised:

- What will be the effect of child maltreatment on the child's involvement in social activities?
- What will be the consequence of child abuse on the child's self-worth?
- What will be the implication of child ill treatment on the child's glumly mood?
- What will be the effect of child abuse on the child's concentration and academic performance? [35, p.7]

C. Objectives of the Study

The study aims to investigate the psychological consequences of child's maltreatment of various forms in Lagos State. The objective is to identify the extent of the maltreatment and to gauge its impact on the following:

- a. The child's involvement in social activities.
- b. The effects of the abuse on child's self-worth
- c. The effects of the abuse on child's glumly mood
- d. The effects of the abuse on child's concentration and academic performance.

D. Research Hypotheses

To test the extent of child's maltreatment and its consequences on the abused children in Lagos State, the following hypotheses are posed:

- H1. Abused children will display withdrawn behaviour compared to their peers who did not experience abuse
- H2. Abused children will exhibit low self-worth compared to other children who did not experience abuse
- H3. Abused children will show glumly mood compared to their peers who did not experience abuse
- H4. Abused children will have low concentration and underperform academically compared to other children who did not experience abuse [35, p.8]

E. Significance of the Study

This study seeks to uncover various forms of child abuse and its psychological effects in communities in Lagos State. The study will investigate the extents of these abuse on the child's mood, social activities, self-worth, concentration and academic performance and how the parental style has impact on child ill treatment in Lagos State.

The study hopes to ensure that the Child Protection and Welfare Services would conduct more advocacy programs and increase capacity building to create awareness about the menace of child abuse and prevention.

This study hopes that Government agencies will be encouraged to distribute the Child's Right Act/Child's Right Law in various sectors (including firms, banks, hospital, churches, mosques etc.) to emphasize the importance of

protecting the rights of children.

This study also hopes to ensure that academia and governing boards of schools include courses on child abuse in the school curriculum to ensure that children are educated on recognizing abuse and reporting them.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Child abuse exposes children to factors that interfere with their general wellbeing and daily activities. Child abuse has adverse impacts on a child's emotional development because it leaves the child with feelings of grief, low self-confidence, fear, and guilt. A scientific study shows that childhood traumatic experiences such as bullying, sexual abuse, neglect, and physical abuse can alter the structure and chemistry of a developing brain, leading to depression and disruptive behaviour [19]. A research shows that child abuse can make the child display withdrawn behaviour [20, p.10]. Reference [20, p.15] says that "one of the effects of child abuse would be withdrawal, a student experience a shift in behaviour or attitude in relation to abuse".

Another research shows that abused children do have stress symptoms in relation to the form of abuse they have experienced. These signs and symptoms differ according to age group. It is important to note that most victims of abuse suffer abuse in more than one way and as such may show symptoms of more than one kind of maltreatment. Example of child abuse includes tendency to either avoid or overly please the abuser, poor school performance, crying more often or easily, spending more time alone, away from friends and family, expressing thoughts about hurting him or herself or others [13].

Research shows that students are always happy to engage and when abuse has occurred, students start coming late to school, they become quiet day after day, weeks after weeks, or even months. It is not just them being tired, it is them showing symptoms of withdrawn behaviour like loss of interest in activities, work they were doing drops, and so on [20, p.15].

A study [17] found that participants sexually abused more than twice likely to consider committing suicide than those who have not. Current statistics show that 1 in 5 girls and 1 in 20 boys experience sexual abuse at home, with 88% of children compelled to engage in unwanted sexual contacts by male adults [22] leaving the victims with gruesome consequences such as feeling of shame and low self-confidence. Indicators of sexual abuse may include physical and behavioural symptoms like sexually acting out, having difficulty walking or sitting, and pregnancy [23].

Emotional abuse is frequently used to manipulate children, and can be expressed in verbal intimidation, bullying, and shaming leading to feeling of worthlessness, the overall statistical evaluation of emotional aggression toward children is 36% globally [24]. Some research has also shown link between emotional abuse and self-isolation, feeling insecure, worthlessness and anger [16]. Indicators of emotional abuse are changes in affection, fears, suicidal thoughts, changes in sleep patterns depression, withdrawal, poor self-esteem, and mood swings.

Research has also found links between physical abuse, depression and withdrawn behaviour [15]. In a Swedish school survey in 2011 of children between 15-16 years old, one-third of the children who reported to have been exposed at some point to more severe types of physical abuse such as rough beating with the hand and fist, fractured, burnt and almost strangled, kicked or beaten with an object equals 13.8%. In a study of child abuse case reported to the police in Sweden, the severe abuse cases recorded includes hitting the child with an object or against a surface, suffocating the child or beating up the child was 41%. There are reasons to believe that the more severe forms of abuse have greater consequences, because they tend to be more painful, more frightening, and therefore more psychologically traumatizing [25].

Signs of neglects are malnourishment, poor hygiene, poor skin conditions and improper adaptive aids. A research on recognizing child abuse and neglect includes behavioural changes, problems with concentration, a child being passive and withdrawn, a lack of physical contact between a child and a parent, and others [26]. The effects of abuse and neglect can, potentially, not just affect the physical and cognitive function of the brain, but it causes learning disability and difficulty in comprehension. According to [27] in their research on elementary school student's performance, the study shows that students with adverse childhood experiences do not meet grade-level standards in school subjects.

Reference [8] stated that "a study shows that 79.4% of child abusers were the parents, the less common perpetrators are strangers or acquaintances". A study of Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) on child abuse case report discovered prevalence instances of child maltreatment [21, p.2]. The MWCD study found that children aged between 5-12 are more at risk for child ill treatment. 69% of these abused children reported experience of physically abused out of which 54.68% were boys. The study also shows that 52.91% of boys and 47.095 of girls reported to have experienced abuse in their family homes. 88.6% of these children who have been abuse in the family setting reported that they were abused by their parents [21, p.2].

Another study also shows that parental style increases the likelihood that child maltreatment will occur. Poor and abusive parenting style is a great indicator that can cause maltreatment [28, p.20]. Turner did the study with his colleagues using 2,017 children, between two and nine years old. Nine measurements were used and correlations were obtained to get finding on the influence of parenting style on likelihood of maltreatment occurrence. Victimization, parenting behaviour, parent conflict, parental dysfunction, family adversity, residential stability, family risk index, trauma symptoms, and demographics were all measured. Based on the results, the highest perpetrators of child maltreatment were the parents [28, p.20].

American Humane Society [29] released the inaugural state of America's children research study to assess adults' perception of physical, emotional and situational threats to our nation's children. A research shows that Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) exposure is widespread in the United

States, the research says retrospective recall among a representative adult population using the ACE module of behavioural risk factor surveillance system found that 59% reported having one or more ACE with almost 9% reporting five or more ACE [30]. The 2011-12 National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH) added 9 items to examine ACE exposure in children between 0-17 years of age. NSCH, which uses parent report, found that 48% of children experienced one ACE and 22.6% experienced two or more ACE [31].

As the analysed literature indicates, studies have shown that the most frequently observed causes of child abuse and neglect derive from several risk factor domains [32]. Firstly, on family level, the causes of child abuse include single-parent families, large families, domestic violence, lack of social acceptance, poor income, and unhealthy family arrangement. The second risk factor is on parents' level, this includes poor parental history, mental illness/insanity, alcoholism, unemployment, substance abuse, history of childhood neglect and inadequate formal education. Third factor is on the child's level, for example birth defect, neuro or sensory problems are identifiable causes of child abuse [32].

III. THEORETICAL CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF CHILD MALTREATMENT

Reference [33] explained that "some theories help social work practice in the communities, it provides approaches for assessments and intervention to formulate strategies that eliminate bias and promote human right". Four theories relating to child maltreatment are explained below.

- *Behavioural Theories:* Theories relating to child abuse involve the behavioural or learning theory because it sees human behaviour as entirely determined through a learning process that takes place as a result of reinforcement of our behaviour by others or as a result of our observation of actions and gestures modelled by others [34]. Child abuse is a reflection of an acceptable behaviour in the household.
- *Attachment Theory:* This theory describes the relationship or bond between the child and their primary caregivers, i.e. father, mother and sometimes family member. The theory states that the bond is formed when the child receives adequate love, attention and care from these primary caregivers. However, when a child is being abused or neglected or does not get adequate attention and care, the attachment or bond is impaired and this refers to as poor attachment. Poor attachment can significantly affect the relationship that people have throughout their lives, including how they interact with their own children [18].
- *Social-learning Theory and the Intergenerational Transmission of Violence:* Socio-learning is an extension of behavioural theory; this theory demonstrates that aggressive behaviour could be learned through the observation and modelling of aggressive actors without the need for direct reinforcement. The intergenerational transmission of violence asserts that children grow up to repeat what they experienced and saw as children with

their own children. Social learning theory, as applied to the intergenerational transmission of violence, postulates that abusive behaviour is learned through the witnessing of abusive parenting and subsequent modelling of an abusive parent [10, p.2].

- *Self-Control Theory:* This theory posits that low self-control is not a result of poor socialization or learnt action but due to absence of training, affection or discipline, from a parent/guardian or caregiver. Child maltreatment which occurs due to poor parenting can hinder the child from having self-control and can possibly cause delinquent behaviour in adolescent and adult life [10, p.3].

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research instrument used in this study was the interview (Forensic) which consisted of two sections. The first section captured the age, sex of the child, form and impact of abuse experienced, while the second section focused on the parental style and family structure. A descriptive approach was used for this study. *Forensic interview* is defined as an investigative procedure for obtaining facts of an abusive situation or incident from a victim(s) or witness. In order to get the facts right, the interviewer (a Social Welfare Officer) created rapport and made the child feel comfortable, asked questions, listened to the child, informed the child the need to take notes and answered questions (refer to Appendix C).

The cases of abuse were obtained directly, through mandated reporters, concerned citizens, child's parent, hospitals, from child's school, churches/mosques, child's neighbours, factories, and through social media. Interviews (forensic) for this study were conducted in the Office (of researcher), hospitals, workplace (parents), churches/mosques, schools/homes of the survivors and their parents/caregivers in quiet, safe and confidential places. A sample size of 100 respondents was obtained and drawn from the five administrative division of Lagos State as follows: Ikeja, Badagry, Ikorodu, Lagos Island and Epe. This study utilized the Chi-square test. Chi-square is considered the most relevant statistical tool to test the hypotheses posed, reason being that, it helps in knowing the extent of effects or impacts of one or more variable(s) over another or other variables.

Field Work Challenge/Resolution

A total of 100 abused children and their parents/guardians were interviewed; getting the children ready for the interview was the most challenging experience as majority of them were not opening up easily which made the interviewer schedule another day for most of the victims, some wanted to watch cartoon, play alone with their toys or have their granny sit next to them. For some of the children who are slow at learning and cannot easily comprehend, interview questions were repeated over and over until they understood. Also, some of the parents/caregivers were a bit hostile, few of them tried to cover up the incident and some blamed the child for the abuse. The parents were counselled on the importance of protecting the rights of their children.

V. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

This chapter presents and analyses the results obtained from the interview conducted on the abused children and their parents/guardians. It includes the general information of the respondents/parents that were under the study. The data were analysed and presented in frequencies and converted into percentages and thereafter presented into tabular forms. 100 abused children and their parents/guardians were interviewed in the study.

A. Children Interview: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

TABLE I
GENDER DISTRIBUTION

	Frequency	Percentage
Male	45	45.0
Female	55	55.0
Total	100	100.0

Table I shows that 45.0% of the respondents are male and the remaining 55.0% are female which means there are more female respondents than male respondents.

TABLE II
AGE DISTRIBUTION

	Frequency	Percentage
3-6 yrs	15	15.0
7- 10 yrs	36	36.0
11 -14 yrs	38	38.0
15 -17yrs	11	11.0
Total	100	100.0

Table II shows that 15.0% of the respondents are between 3 and 6 years of age, 36.0% are between the ages of 7 and 10 years, 38.0% are between the ages of 11 and 14 years and the remaining 11.0% are between the ages of 15 and 17 years.

TABLE III
DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY FORMS OF ABUSE

	Frequency	Percentage
Emotional	21	21.0
Physical	25	25.0
Sexual	11	11.0
Neglect	43	43.0
Total	100	100.0

Table III shows that 21.0% of respondents suffer emotional abuse, 25.0% of them suffer physical abuse, 11.0% of them suffer sexual abuse and the remaining 43.0% of them suffer neglect abuse.

TABLE IV
LOCATION OF ABUSE

	Frequency	Percentage
Ikeja	29	29.0
Badagry	12	12.0
Ikorodu	17	17.0
Lagos Island	26	26.0
Epe	16	16.6
Total	100	100.0

Table IV shows that 29.0% of respondents were abused in

Ikeja, 12.0% of the respondents were abused in Badagry, 17.0% of the respondents were abused in Ikorodu, 26.0% of the respondents were abused in Lagos Island and the remaining 16.0% of the respondents were abused in Epe.

TABLE V
PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF ABUSE ON RESPONDENTS

	Frequency	Percentage
Withdrawn behaviour	33	33.0
Low Self-worth	50	50.0
Depression	39	39.0
Academic underperformance/Lack of concentration	9	9.0
Total	100	100.0

Table V shows that 33.0% of the respondents displayed withdrawn behaviour as a result of abuse, 50.0% of the respondents show low self-worth behaviour as a result of abuse, 39.0% of the respondents are in depression as a result of abuse and the remaining 9.0% of the respondents exhibited low academic performance/lack of concentration as a result of abuse.

B. Parents Interview: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Parents/Guardians

TABLE VI
GENDER DISTRIBUTION

	Frequency	Percentage
Male	42	42.0
Female	58	58.0
Total	100	100.0

Table VI shows that 42.0% of the parents/guardians are male and the remaining 58.0% are female which means there are more female parents/guardians than the male.

TABLE VII
AGE DISTRIBUTION

	Frequency	Percentage
Below 30 years	6	6.0
30-34 yrs	22	22.0
35-39 yrs	35	35.0
40 yrs and above	37	37.0
Total	100	100.0

Table VII shows that 6.0% of the parents/guardians are below 30 years of age, 22.0% are between the ages of 30 and 34 years, 35.0% are between the ages of 35 and 39 years and the remaining 37.0% are 40 years and above.

TABLE VIII
OCCUPATION

	Frequency	Percentage
Civil Servant	0	0
Entrepreneur	26	26.0
Other	74	74.0
Total	100	100.0

Table VIII shows that none of the parents/guardian are Civil Servants, 26.0% of them are Entrepreneur, and 74.0% majority of the parents/guardians are either Teachers, Traders, Farmers, Marketers, sellers of Furniture and Brick layer,

Surveyor etc.

TABLE IX
MARITAL STATUS

	Frequency	Percentage
Single	16	16.0
Married	36	36.0
Divorced/Separated	37	37.0
Widow	11	11.0
Total	100	100.0

Table IX shows that 16.0% of the parents/guardians are single, 36.0% of them are married, 37.0% of them are either divorced or separated and the remaining 11.0% of them are widows.

TABLE X
FAMILY STRUCTURE

	Frequency	Percentage
Nuclear family	17	17.0
Single parent family	26	26.0
Step-family	22	22.0
Extended family	35	35.0
Total	100	100.0

Table X shows that 17.0% of the parents/guardians are of nuclear/small family, 26.0% of them are of single-parent family, 22.0% of them are of step-family and the remaining 35.0% are of large/extended family.

TABLE XI
PARENTAL STYLE

	Frequency	Percentage
Authoritative	16	16.0
Permissive	20	20.0
Neglectful	42	42.0
Authoritarian	22	22.0
Total	100	100.0

Table XI shows that 16.0% of the parents/guardians practice Authoritative parenting style, 20.0% of them are Permissive, 42.0% of the parents/guardians are Neglectful while the remaining 22.0% practice Authoritarian parenting style.

TABLE XII
LEVEL OF EDUCATION

	Frequency	Percentage
Secondary School	43	43.0
Ordinary National Diploma	7	7.0
BSc	28	28.0
MSc/Professional	22	22.0
Total	100	100.0

Table XII shows that 43.0% of the parents/guardians had education to Secondary School level, 7.0% of them had ordinary national diploma, 28.0% of the parents/guardians had education to BSc level while the remaining 22.0% had MSc/Professional level of education.

Table XIII shows that 44.0% of the parents/guardians have 1-2 number of children, 36.0% of them have between 3-4 number of children while the remaining 20.0% of them have 5

and above number of children.

TABLE XIII
NO OF CHILDREN

	Frequency	Percentage
1-2	44	44.0
3-4	36	36.0
5 and above	20	20.0
Total	100	100.0

VI. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES ON THE ABUSED CHILDREN AND THEIR PARENTS/GUARDIANS BASED ON STUDY VARIABLES

A. Children's Response

i. Emotional Abuse

Question 1: I see you are quiet, tell me why are you quiet?

The summary of findings for question 1 indicated that the children were quiet because they experienced emotional abuse. About 88.0% of them were hesitant to speak as it took a while to get their attention. These abused children displayed withdrawn behaviour, were moody, they did not show interest in social activities. Majority of these children indicated that they are not appreciated for the efforts they put in tasks assigned to them and felt unloved. Some of these abused children displayed the consequences which includes attempting to jump off a fence, throwing tantrums, breaking items and attempt to drink poisonous substance (insecticide).

Question 2: I heard that someone might have done something that wasn't right tell me everything about that?

The summary of findings for question 2 showed that the abused children experienced public scolding, most especially in front of their peer/class mate, name calling, tagging, making jest, comparing to others and threatening them to do something. The abusers include those close to the children such as their parents/guardians, uncles, teachers and friends.

Question 3: What happened after until you went to bed that night?

The summary of findings for question 3 indicated that these children (about 65.0%) experience further abuse even at bed time by those same abusers, the abusers see their actions as a way of brushing up a child to become smart whereas these actions do more harm to the child than good. These rather made the children sink further into depression.

Question 4: How did that make you feel?

The summary of findings for question 4 showed that the effect of the abuse made them (100% of the respondents) feel unloved, worthless, unappreciated and rejected.

ii. Physical Abuse

Question 5: Why are you crying?

The summary of findings for question 5 showed that the children (97.0%) were crying and not willing to speak. The impact of the abuse made the children cry, majority of them were deeply pained as they had experienced the abuse

consistently.

Question 6: Tell me everything that happened to you from beginning to the end?

The summary of findings for question 6 shows that majority of the children (82.0%) were beaten with whip by the abuser and had several marks on their bodies, some were punched and kicked, few indicated that they were chained to a place like the generator and had their hands swollen.

Question 7: What do you think will happen if you tell anyone?

The summary of findings for question 7 indicated that majority of these children (78.0%) were threatened with punishment by their abusers if they report to anyone, some of the children were made to realize that they were going through a corrective measure for their wrong doings rather than an abuse. Hence, they refrain from telling anyone.

Question 8: What Did You Feel When It Happened?

The summary of findings for question 8 showed that majority of these children (91.0% of them) felt unworthy, some of them were deeply hurt due to the injury they sustained especially from their loved ones. Some of these children were troubled and afraid of the abusers.

iii. Sexual Abuse

Question 9: Tell me did someone hit you or did someone touch you?

The summary of findings for question 9 showed that the children (66.0% of them) were either touch inappropriately, sexually assaulted or forcefully taken advantage of.

Question 10: Describe how it happened.

The summary of findings for question 10 indicated that the abuser stripped children (63.0%) of their clothing, some stated that they were approached with sexual talks and advances. Most of the abuse occurred when the children came back from school and during holidays when no one is in the house. These abused children stated that the abuser which includes a father, an uncle or guardian will invite them to their rooms or go to meet the children in their rooms and lock the door.

Question 11: Where did it happen?

The summary of findings for question 11 indicated that the children (66.0% of them) experienced the abuse mostly in the house; either in the bed room, living room and the kitchen.

Question 12: What did this person do to you?

The summary of findings for question 12 showed that the abusers touched majority of the abused victims in their private parts, some of these children indicated that they were raped and few of them stated that the abuser lured and took advantage of them.

Question 13: Who did you tell when it happened?

The summary of findings for question 13 showed that all of the children (100%) were scared to tell anyone because they have been threatened by the abusers, more so, some parents of

the abused victims often cover up the story to avoid issues with neighbours and stigmatization.

iv. Neglect

Question 14: Tell me about the people who live with you.

The summary of findings for question 14 indicated that the parents of most of these children (77.0%) do not show them enough attention and care, they are rather more concerned about handling their children to strangers in exchange for financial gain. They neglect their child's basic need.

Question 15: Tell me something you like or do not like about people you live with.

The summary of findings for question 15 indicated that the children (87.0%) do not like the fact that they are left unattended to by their guardians, some very young ones go to school and return back home themselves without any adult supervision. Few of the abused children indicated that the people they live with subject them to hard labour and hawking instead of enrolling them in school.

Question 16: Who helps you get ready for bed?

The summary of findings for question 16 showed that the children (81.0%) are left unattended to as they have to look out for themselves during bed times. The family structure and styles are not favourable for most of these children.

B. Parents' Response

i. Emotional Abuse

Q1 How do you correct your children when they do anything wrong?

The summary of findings for question 1 showed that the parents/guardian's methods of correcting their children such as flogging, starving, cursing, threatening, public scolding or carrying heavy objects are forms of child abuse.

Q2 What do you understand by abuse while growing up?

The summary of findings for question 2 showed that these parents/guardians did not realize that the kind of situation they experience with their own parents while growing up e.g. flogging, whipping, slapping, name calling and doing heavy task are all types of child abuse.

Q3 How will you know if your child has been abused?

The summary of findings for question 3 revealed that majority of these parents do not know what child abuse is and as such cannot identify abuse except the types of abuse that can be seen physically.

ii. Physical Abuse

Q4 What led to this abuse?

The summary of findings for question 4 showed that most parents do not know and could not state what led to the abuse, they were rather making excuses that they were not home when it happened, they are the busy type, they took the child to the hospital and that their children were in the custody of other person(s) such as a family member, sister or uncle when

the abused occurred.

Q5 What did you do to stop the abuse?

The summary of findings for question 5 revealed that the parents/guardians of these children could not prevent the abuse as most of them claimed they do not know when the incident occurred, some of these parents who were potential abusers themselves said that they will improve on their parental skills. These parents could not stop the abuse because they themselves could not even identify what an abuse is.

Q6 What do you understand by child abuse and position of the law regarding child abuse?

The summary of findings for questions 6 indicated that majority of these parents/guardians do not know what child abuse is and position of the law regarding child abuse.

iii. Sexual Abuse

Q7 Who is the perpetrator (parent or a third party)?

The summary of findings for question 7 showed that perpetrators of these abuse are close relations, neighbours and boyfriends of these parents and as such, these parents do not want the matter reported. Parent(s) did not encourage reporting of the abuse which according to them is a way to avoid stigmatization.

Q8 When did the abuse occur?

The summary of findings for question 8 showed that most parents/guardians could not state when the abuse occurred which indicates that most of these parents are neglectful when it comes to matters regarding their children.

Q9 Where was the abuse committed?

The summary of findings for question 9 showed that most of these parents do not know where the abuse took place, while some indicated that it happened when they were not at home.

Q10 What steps or measures did you take after the abuse occurred?

The summary of findings for question 10 revealed that most of these parents did not take any drastic measures against the offender, rather they wanted to cover up the incident in order to keep family bond. Some of these parents have indicated that they took their wards/children to hospital after the abuse occurred while just very few especially the very educated ones reported the matter and ensured that the abused child got adequate justice.

iv. Neglect

Q11 How do you show love and care to your children?

The summary of findings for question 11 showed that most parents/guardians do not give enough care to their children, some claimed they visit their wards during school hours and open days. Few of the parents have also indicated that they create time to play games and take their children out.

Q12 How do you establish relationship between you and your children?

The summary of findings for question 12 showed that parents/guardians who established relationship and bond with their children tend to improve the social development and confidence level of the child.

VII. TEST OF HYPOTHESES

Hypothesis One

- H0: Abused Children will not display withdrawn behaviour compared to their peers who did not experience abuse
- H1: Abused Children will display withdrawn behaviour compared to their peers who did not experience abuse

TABLE XIV
 CHI-SQUARE TEST VALUE, MEAN AND P. VALUE OF RESULT FOR HYPOTHESES ONE

Chi Sq	55.121a
Df	3
Asy p. Sig.	.000
Mean	1.67

The value of the mean was 1.67 which is approximately 2. The value of 2 indicates “agree” to the research question. The Chi-Square test is 55.121 with P. value of 0.000. The P. value is below the 5% level of significance for this study. Therefore, the study rejects the null hypothesis and accepts alternative hypothesis. The study therefore concludes that abused children will display withdrawn behaviour compared to their peers who did not experience abuse.

Hypothesis Two

- H0: Abused Children will not display low self-worth compared to their peers who did not experience abuse
- H1: Abused Children will display low self-worth compared to their peers who did not experience abuse

TABLE XV
 CHI-SQUARE TEST VALUE, MEAN AND P. VALUE OF RESULT FOR HYPOTHESES TWO

Chi Sq	77.711 ^a
Df	3
Asym p. Sig.	.000
Mean	1.91

The value of the mean was 1.91 which is approximately 2. The value of 2 indicates “agree” to the research question. The Chi-Square test is 77.711 with P. value of 0.000. The P. value is below the 5% level of significance for this study. Therefore, the study rejects the null hypothesis and accepts alternative hypothesis. The study therefore concludes that abused children will display low self-worth compared to their peers who did not experience abuse.

Hypothesis Three

- H0: Abused Children will not experience depression compared to their peers who did not experience abuse.
- H1: Abused Children will experience depression compared to their peers who did not experience abuse.

TABLE XVI
 CHI-SQUARE TEST VALUE, MEAN AND P. VALUE OF RESULT FOR HYPOTHESES THREE

Chi Sq	50.921 ^a
Df	3
Asym p. Sig.	.000
Mean	1.97

The value of the mean was 1.97 which is approximately 2. The value of 2 indicates “agree” to the research question. The Chi-Square test is 50.921 with P. value of 0.000. The P. value is below the 5% level of significance for this study. Therefore, the study rejects the null hypothesis and accepts alternative hypothesis. The study therefore concludes that abused children will experience depression compared to their peers who did not experience abuse.

Hypothesis Four

H0: Abused children will not have low concentration and underperform academically compared to their peers who did not experience abuse.

H1: Abused children will have low concentration and underperform academically compared to their peers who did not experience abuse.

TABLE XVII
 CHI-SQUARE TEST VALUE, MEAN AND P. VALUE OF RESULT FOR HYPOTHESES FOUR

Chi Sq	55.331 ^a
Df	3
Asym p. Sig.	.000
Mean	1.63

The value of the mean was 1.63 which is approximately 2. The value of 2 indicates “agree” to the research question. The Chi-Square test is 55.331 with P. value of 0.000. The P. value is below the 5% level of significance for this study. Therefore, the study rejects the null hypothesis and accepts alternative hypothesis. The study therefore concludes that abused children will have low concentration and underperform academically compared to their peers who did not experience abuse.

XIX. CONCLUSION

Our goal in this article was to examine the psychological consequences of child maltreatment in communities in Lagos State. Precisely, we sought to investigate if child maltreatment has effects on the child’s mood, social activities, self-worth, concentration and academic performance and how the parental style contributes to this abuse. Overall, the results confirm that child abuse has psychological consequences on the victims. Majority of the abused children had low self-worth and showed symptoms of depression while some displayed withdrawn behaviour and underperformed academically. Results also shows that parents to a large extent are the abusers just as literature analysed. The reason is linked to poverty, single-parent families, history of parental neglect, insufficient education, unemployment, large families, low social support, domestic violence [32]. This study agrees with

Socio-learning and Intergenerational Transmission of Violence Theories which posits that parents who have been exposed to violence or abused as children, viewed violence as acceptable behaviour and passed it on to their children. Basically, some parents who had modelled this abusive behaviour as children reflected it through abusive parenting style, some referred to their actions as a way of training and disciplining a child.

Suggestion for Further Research

Most of the parents/guardians covered up the incident and gave impression that the abuse did not occur while the abuse children did not report due to fear of threats from the abusers. From this review, it is suggested that further research should be conducted on “Child Abuse: Underreported cases and Assumption that it did not occur”.

Recommendation

Based on the above conclusion and suggestion, the following recommendations are highlighted:

- I. Mandated reporters, concerned citizens, teachers, civil servant, and others should be able to identify signs and symptoms of an abused child and not assume that the child might have fallen or that it is a mere accident.
- II. Child Protection and Welfare Services should conduct more advocacy programs and increase capacity building to create awareness about child abuse and prevention.
- III. Government agencies should distribute the Child’s Right Act in various sectors to emphasize the importance of protecting the rights of children.
- IV. Academia and governing boards of schools should include courses on child abuse in the school curriculum to ensure that children are educated on recognizing abuse and reporting them. Gallardo, (Personal Communication, October 19, 2015) posited that students should be educated on what child abuse is and how harmful it is as many of the children who have not reported or indicated that they have been abused will find the confidence to speak up.

APPENDIX A

A. Child Interview Questions

i. Emotional Abuse

1. I see you are quiet, tell me why are you quiet?
2. I heard that someone might have done something that wasn’t right tell me everything about that?
3. What happened after until you went to bed that night?
4. How did that make you feel?

ii. Physical Abuse

5. Why are you crying?
6. Tell me everything that happened to you from beginning to the end?
7. What do you think will happen if you tell anyone?
8. What did you feel when it happened?

iii. Sexual Abuse

9. Tell me did someone hit you or did someone touch you?

10. Describe how it happened?
 11. Where did it happened?
 12. What did this person do to you?
 13. Who did you tell when it happened?
- iv. Neglect
14. Tell me about the people who live with you?
 15. Tell me something you like or don't like about people you live with?
 16. Who helps you get ready for bed?

APPENDIX B

A. Parent Interview Questions

i. Emotional Abuse

1. How do you correct your children when they do anything wrong?
2. What do you understand by abuse while growing up?
3. How will you know if your child has been abused?

ii. Physical Abuse

4. What led to this abuse?
5. What did you do to stop the abuse?
6. What do you understand by child abuse and position of the law regarding child abuse?

iii. Sexual Abuse

7. Who is the perpetrator (parent or a third party)?
8. When did the abuse occur?
9. Where was the abuse committed?
10. What steps or measures did you take after the abuse occurred?

iv. Neglect

11. How do you show love and care to your children?
12. How do you establish relationship between you and your children?

APPENDIX C

A. Case Scenario

John, a 12-year-old student wanted to jump off the cliff but was stopped by his fellow classmates who quickly informed their teacher. John complains that his parents, especially his father does not appreciate the efforts he put in his school subjects but rather scolds and calls him good for nothing and threatens not to pay his school fees if he does not take first position in class. John throws tantrums, fights his peers each time he fails a task or does not get the full mark in a subject, he does not make friends nor participate in school activities.

B. The Process of Forensic Interview

Key note 1- Interviewer create rapport and makes the child feel comfortable.

Key note 2- Interviewer introduces herself to the child, explains her job and role.

Key note 3- Interviewer explains the process to the child.

Key note 4- Interviewer tells the child why she needs to take note.

Key note 5- Interviewer gives the child the permission to correct her if she makes any mistake or said anything wrong.

Key note 6- Interviewer asked the child to say I don't know if she asks any question the child does not know.

Key note 7- Interviewer informs the child if she needs to change the question.

Key note 8- Interviewer asked the child to inform her whenever she wants her to stop talking or if she needs a break.

Key note 9- Interviewer asks follow up questions for the child to elaborate more on what happened.

Key note 10- Interviewer thanks the child for the information.

i. Interview with John 'M' 12 year-old

Interviewer: Would you like to have some biscuits, drinks, snacks, chocolates?

John: "Yes, Chocolate"

Interviewer: Before we get started tell me your best colour and your best friend in class?

John: "colour Blue...., I have not thought about having friends"

Interviewer: Okay, my name is Ololade, I am a Social Worker and my job is to talk with children about things that have happened to them and help make things right.

Interviewer: After talking with you and I discover something happened, I will find out why it happened and will make a report and present to the Court on your behalf so that things can get better.

Interviewer: I will be taking note of everything we are going to talk about today so that I can remember

Interviewer: I don't know what has happened because I was not there, so I need you to tell me what has happened.

John: "My Daddy usually shouts on me if I don't get all mark in school, he will say that he is working so hard to pay me and my sister's school fees. My Daddy says I am useless and good for nothing"

Interviewer: I am sorry to hear that John. It sounds like you have had a tough time at home.

Interviewer: John, please tell me when I make any mistake or said anything wrong and if I ask you any question and you don't know, don't guess, just say I don't know.

Interviewer: What happens after until you go to bed at night?

John: "When my Daddy comes back from work, he will check me and my sister's book. I don't like my Daddy he is too harsh. He usually tells me that he will not pay my school fees if I didn't get first position in my class. Last term Chris came first and Sandra came second and I was third in class but my daddy was not happy with me. I am afraid that my daddy will not pay my school fees again because I now failed four subjects"

Interviewer: How does that make you feel?

John: "I feel my daddy does not like me and I am good for nothing"

Interviewer: Now that you have talked about what happened, I will like to ask you about the relationship between your Mum and Dad. Tell me what is the relationship like?

John: “My Mummy and my Daddy are fighting. My Daddy does not allow my mummy to take me and my sister to school. My mummy comes to our school during break time, gives us snacks and tell us to read our book”

Interviewer: John, please tell me when you want me to stop talking or if you need a break!

John: “Okay”

Interviewer: You told me your Dad scolds you a lot and threatens not to pay your school fees if you don't get all the mark, tell me everything you remember about the last time he scolded you?

John: “The day my daddy came back from work early, he asked me to bring my school bag and checked all my subjects, but when he saw that I had five out of ten marks in my verbal reasoning class exercise, he shouted at me, gave me small food. He called me good for nothing, bought ice cream and chocolate for my sister and said he would not pay my school fees again”

Interviewer: John, I know that was difficult for you to say. Thank you for giving me the information.

ii. Interview with John's Father; Mr. Luis, a 42-year-old Surveyor, Raised by a Single-Parent (Mother)

Interviewer: Good morning Mr. Luis How are you today and how is work going?

Mr. Luis: “Very well, thank you”

Interviewer: Okay, my name is Ololade, I am a Social Worker and my job is to talk with children about things that have happened to them and help make things right.

Interviewer: I will like to speak with you on account of the incident of your son attempting to jump off the cliff in school before he was stopped by his class mates! Please tell me Mr. Luis, how do you correct your children?

Mr. Luis: “Well, I don't know why my boy will want to do that, I correct my children with love, I train them to be the best they can be! I was raised by a single mother, we are three boys and my mother would tell us to be ahead of others in everything. My mother would not take no for an answer”

Interviewer: I appreciate you telling me that Mr. Luis, but what method do you use to correct your children?

Mr. Luis: I sometimes scold them, if they don't perform well as they ought to because I want them to be ahead in life.

Interviewer: Okay, what do you understand by abuse while growing up and how will you know if your child has been abused?

Mr. Luis: I didn't experience abuse while growing up, though my mother was very strict. My children will inform me if anyone abuse them.

Interviewer: Mr. Luis tell me; do you know if your son has been emotionally abused due to constant scolding?

Mr. Luis: I don't know that I only observed that he is quiet, he no longer plays with his sister and his grade has dropped in school.

Interviewer: Thank you for the information. It is no doubt that your son John is going through an emotional abuse by the constant scolding he receives from home. This has affected him so much that he keeps to himself and want to hurt himself.

This is inappropriate and it can damage his self-esteem for life.

Interviewer: The right and protection of children from abuse is everyone's concern and it includes you the parent. Children are to be corrected in love.

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