

EXPLORING CHILD ABUSE DYNAMICS, IMPACTS AND PREVENTIVE STRATEGIES IN SELECTED COMMUNITIES IN KOSOFE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF LAGOS STATE

Binuyo Biodun A.

Social Work Department, Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo, Ogun State, Nigeria.
binuyobi@babcock.edu.ng

Adesanya Ocheze Happiness

Babcock University Teaching Hospital, Ilishan Remo, Ogun State, Nigeria.
adesanyao@babcock.edu.ng

Obebe Pelumi

Social Work Department, Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo, Ogun State, Nigeria.
obebeolu@babcock.edu.ng

Ashaolu Adeola Kehinde

Social Work Department, Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo, Ogun State, Nigeria.
asaolu@babcock.edu.ng

Aikisoyinu Timilehin

Social Work Department, Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo, Ogun State, Nigeria.

Abstract

Incidences of child abuse are ubiquitous in Nigeria. Everywhere one can glare at the different forms of abuses that Nigerian children are subjected to, both the ones that are conspicuous and the inconspicuous ones. This study thus examined the dynamics of child abuses, its impacts and preventive strategies. The study was based on six research objectives and four research questions which employed a survey research design. The study was carried out in Kosofe Local Government, Lagos State and the sample comprised 316 respondents. Questionnaire was used as the research instrument and data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics and regression analysis at 5% level of significance. The results revealed that lack of awareness, inadequate implementation of child abuse laws, environmental background have led to an increase in cases of child abuse (mean: 2.52). Parents' education level (mean: 2.92) and parents' history of abuse (mean: 2.87) serve as a determining factor in child abuse incidence. Cultural practices are determinant factor in child abuse occurrence among children (mean: 2.67). Child abuse has negative effects on the victimized children (mean: 2.83). Parent education level has no significant effect on occurrence of child abuses (beta: 0.149, $p = 0.054$). Parent history with abuse has no significant effect on occurrence of child abuse (beta: -0.125, $p = 0.122$). Cultural practices have significant effect on the occurrence of child abuse (beta= 0.246, $p = 0.000$). Some preventive strategies include allocation of more resources to child protection agencies (mean: 3.15), promotion of awareness campaigns (mean: 2.78), policies and laws (mean: 2.62), and orientation programs for parents on parenting techniques (mean: 2.30). Based on the findings, the study recommended that governments and relevant authorities should prioritize the development and enforcement of comprehensive laws and policies specifically aimed at addressing cultural practices that contribute to child abuse. Large-scale awareness campaigns should be conducted to educate the general public about the detrimental effects of child abuse and the importance of creating a safe and nurturing environment for children.

Keywords: Child Abuse, Impacts, Preventive Strategies, Communities, Kosofe Local Government.

I. Statement of the Problem

The problem of child abuse in Nigeria persists, despite legal mandates outlined in the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1999) and the Child's Rights Act (2015) aimed at safeguarding children from various forms of abuse, including torture, inhuman treatment, and neglect, physical, sexual, and mental abuse. These forms of abuse

encompass forced or consensual child marriage and betrothal, cultural practices such as body modifications and tribal marks, neglect, maltreatment, financial withdrawal, child labor, and illicit sexual activity. However, the effective enforcement of these legal provisions remains lacking within Nigeria. Child abuse continues to prevail in the country, yet it has not garnered the requisite attention from key stakeholders, including the government, educators, administrators, social workers, counseling psychologists, sociologists, criminologists, and politicians (Momoh, Aigbomian & Longe, 2018; Imo, 2015).

Critical gap in the research landscape concerning child abuse in Nigeria is well highlighted the noticeable absence of representative studies on the escalating burden of child abuse and comprehensive exploration of its dynamics and impact on children, and its implications for preventive strategies. Notably, there is a dearth of published research on the child abuse of children in proportion to the scale of the problem in Nigeria. Child abuse remains significantly underreported, and few authors have delved into its intricate dynamics and the far-reaching impacts it has on children (Onyishi, 2022). This gap underscores the urgent need for comprehensive research and a more concerted effort to address child abuse dynamics in Kosofe Local Government area, Lagos State, Nigeria.

Objectives

The main objective of this study is to explore the child abuse dynamics, impacts and preventive strategies in the communities in Kosofe Local Government, Lagos State. Specific objectives are to:

Find out if there have been an increased or decreased number of child abuse cases in the past one year?

Examine if parents' education level serves as a determining factor in child abuse incidence among children?

Assess the impact of parents' history of abuse as a determinant in child abuse occurrences among children?

Examine the role of cultural practices as a determinant factor in child abuse occurrence among children?

Determine the impact of child abuse experience on the mental well-being of children who have been victimized?

Examine the effect of child abuse experience on the physical well-being of children who have been victimized?

II. Literature Review

The cultural and economic conditions in which children grow up greatly influence their childhood experiences, making it impossible to provide a universal definition of childhood due to the enormous range of experiences observed among children internationally and throughout history. The term "the child" comprises the various relationships, settings, and legacies that influence and shape the concept of childhood. The concept of childhood is continuously being discussed and determined, encompassing the creative thoughts of grown-ups, societies, economies, past events, and the children themselves (Farley & Garlen, 2016). During the Convention negotiations, defining the start and end of childhood sparked significant debate. The initial proposal from the Polish Government, based on the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1959) Principle 1, lacked a specific childhood definition (Landsdown & Vaghri, 2022). Delegates emphasized the need for clarity, leading to a revision defining a child as a person from birth to 18 years, unless majority is reached earlier. However, consensus was elusive on when childhood begins—whether from conception or birth. To resolve the conflict, any reference to the start of childhood was ultimately omitted (Landsdown & Vaghri, 2022).

A child is legally defined as any individual under the age of eighteen, unless the specific laws relevant to that individual establish an earlier age of majority (UNICEF, 2018). The UN convention on the right of the child defines a child as any human being below the age of 18 years (Cosmus, 2015). This categorization recognizes that childhood, both in terms of the law and society, continues until the age of eighteen for the majority of persons.

Nevertheless, it acknowledges the possibility of discrepancies in legal definitions, hence permitting the inclusion of varying age thresholds depending on certain jurisdictions or situations. This concept highlights the significance of legal frameworks in establishing the point at which an individual changes from childhood to adulthood. It emphasizes the necessity of considering the various legal settings that can impact this age threshold.

Approximately 3 out of 4 children, equivalent to 300 million children aged 2–4 years, experience regular physical punishment and/or psychological violence from parents and caregivers (WHO, 2022). Abuse encompasses any intentional behavior or act aimed at asserting authority, intimidating, coercing, or causing harm to another person. It involves the misuse of authority, exploiting the connections of closeness, trust, and dependence to render the victim vulnerable (Fayaz, 2019). Abuse can manifest in various forms, including emotional, mental, financial, sexual, and physical, but it is not confined to these categories. It encompasses any exploitation, mishandling, or misuse of control with the intent to manipulate the behaviors, events, opinions, or thoughts of another person (Fayaz, 2019).

Forms of Child Abuse

Child abuse encompasses any form of harm, whether physical, sexual, mental, or psychological, that inflicts suffering onto a child and hinders their prospects of attaining a secured and wholesome transition into adulthood (Cosmus, 2015). Child abuse refers to any actions, behaviors, or gestures by an adult or child that result in significant harm to a child. Abuse can manifest in physical, sexual, or emotional forms, but it can also frequently stem from a deficiency in affection, care, and attention (Fayaz, 2019). Child abuse and neglect, also known as child maltreatment, encompasses various forms of physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse, neglect, or mistreatment resulting in actual or potential harm to a child's health, survival, development, or self-esteem within a relationship of responsibility, trust, or authority, as defined by WHO (2002). Venumadhava, Balaraddy and Mavarkar (2017) described child abuse as child as intentional actions by parents, careers, or other adults that deviate from acceptable behavior standards and can result in physical or emotional harm to a child.

The first edition of the Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action defines child protection as the prevention and response to "abuse," "neglect," "exploitation," and "violence" without specifying their precise meanings. Confusion is compounded by the tendency of academics, scholars, and practitioners to use terms like "abuse" or "violence" as umbrella terms encompassing various types of child maltreatment, including neglect, exploitation, and physical, sexual, and psychological violence. This complicates the identification of cases, measurement of incidence rates, and determination of appropriate protective measures (The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, 2019).

The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action (2019) outlined three defining elements of abuse: the relationship with the child, intent, and impact. Abuse encompasses acts of maltreatment committed by an individual – whether an adult or another child – who, due to their role, position, age, or stage of development, holds a position of responsibility, trust, or power over the victim. It is characterized as an act of commission, and the act of threatening harm is also considered abusive. Any incident intending or causing harm to a child is classified as abusive, "regardless of any justification or reason provided for the ill-treatment, including discipline, legal sanction, economic necessity, the child's own consent, or in the name of cultural and religious practices." Abuse may lead to actual or potential harm to a child's health, survival, development, or dignity.

III. Methodology

The data collection and analysis methods employed in this study elucidates the specific strategies and techniques applied to gather the necessary information and subsequently details the sources and methodologies harnessed to scrutinize and interpret the data. In this study, a survey research design was used. The preference for the survey method over other approaches was driven by its capacity to effectively measure human

attitudes and opinions. This method enabled to generate valid information from the samples of human elements comprising the questionnaire respondents.

IV. Findings

Results of Analysis

Research Question 1: Have there been increased or decreased numbers of child abuse cases in the past one year?

Table 1. Increase of Cases of Child Abuse in the Past One Year

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean Score
Due to the lack of awareness there has been an increase in the number of child abuse cases in your neighborhood	51(16.1%)	124(39.2%)	123(38.9%)	18(5.7%)	2.65
The environment where a child is brought up contributes to the risk of child abuse	33(10.4%)	117(37%)	119(37.7%)	47(14.9%)	2.43
Child abuse laws and policies are not implemented in your neighborhood	61(19.3%)	90(28.5%)	124(39.2%)	41(13%)	2.54
Most child abuse cases are caused because of the ignorance of the parents or guardians	55(17.4%)	46(14.6%)	23(7.3%)	192(60.8%)	1.88
Cases are not treated with adequate severity and offenders are not punished adequately	173(54.7%)	55(17.4%)	40(12.7%)	48(15.2%)	3.11
Average Mean					2.52

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Decision rule: ≤ 1.00 : Strongly disagree; 1.01-2.29: Disagree; 2.30-3.69: Agree while ≥ 3.70 : Strongly Agree

Table 1 presents result on whether cases of child abuse have increased in the past one year. The majority of respondents agree that there has been an increase in child abuse cases due to factors such as lack of awareness (mean score: 2.65) and inadequate implementation of child abuse laws and policies (mean score: 2.54). Additionally, respondents express concerns about the environment in which children are raised contributing to the risk of abuse (mean score: 2.43). Interestingly, a significant portion of respondents strongly disagree that most child abuse cases are caused by parental or guardian ignorance (mean score: 1.88). Furthermore, the perception that cases are not treated with adequate severity and offenders are not adequately punished receives a high level of agreement (mean score: 3.11). The average mean score across all statements is 2.52, indicating a general tendency towards agreement regarding the issues surrounding increase in child abuse in the neighborhood.

Research Question 2: Does parents' education level serves as a determining factor in child abuse incidence among children?

Table 2. Parents' Educational Level as Determining Factor of Child Abuse Occurrence

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean Score

				ee	
Children from families with higher parental education are less likely to experience abuse	117(37%)	109(34.5%)	73(23.1%)	17(5.4%)	3.03
Education can empower parents with better coping mechanisms and problem-solving skills, reducing the risk of resorting to abuse	82(25.9%)	164(51.9%)	20(6.3%)	50(15.8%)	2.87
Education plays a crucial role in preventing child maltreatment.	105(33.2%)	71(22.5%)	123(38.9%)	17(5.4%)	2.83
Education can foster empathy and communication skills in parents, reducing the risk of child abuse during times of stress or frustration.	119(37.7%)	140(44.3%)	33(10.4%)	24(7.6%)	3.12
Parents with lower educational attainment may face additional stressors that contribute to abusive behaviors.	29(9.2%)	82(25.9%)	185(58.5%)	20(6.3%)	2.37
Lack of education may contribute increasing the likelihood of abusive behaviors	192(60.8%)	62(19.6%)	23(7.3%)	39(12.3%)	3.28
Average Mean					2.92

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Decision rule: ≤ 1.00 : Strongly disagree; 1.01-2.29: Disagree; 2.30-3.69: Agree while ≥ 3.70 : Strongly Agree

Table 2 shows result on parent educational level as a determinant of child abuse occurrence. The majority of respondents agree with the notion that children from families with higher parental education are less likely to experience abuse (mean score: 3.03), indicating a belief in the protective effect of education. Similarly, respondents acknowledge the potential of education to empower parents with coping mechanisms and problem-solving skills, thus reducing the risk of resorting to abuse (mean score: 2.87). Moreover, there is agreement that education plays a crucial role in preventing child maltreatment (mean score: 2.83) and fosters empathy and communication skills in parents, which can reduce the risk of abuse during times of stress or frustration (mean score: 3.12). Conversely, respondents also recognize that parents with lower educational attainment may face additional stressors contributing to abusive behaviors (mean score: 2.37) and that lack of education may increase the likelihood of abusive behaviors (mean score: 3.28). The average mean score across all statements (mean: 2.92) based on the decision rule, suggest a general agreement with the statements, indicating a perception that parents' education level indeed serves as a determining factor in child abuse incidence among children.

Research Question 3: To what extent does parents' history of abuse impact child abuse occurrence among children?

Table 3 Parents' History of Abuse and Impact on Child Abuse Occurrence

Client Violence	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean Score
Children with parents who have a history of abuse are more vulnerable to maltreatment.	100(31.6%)	155(49.1%)	21(6.6%)	40(12.7%)	2.99
Parents with a history of abuse may struggle with boundary setting and appropriate	78(24.7%)	79(25%)	103(32.6%)	56(17.7%)	2.56

discipline, increasing the risk of resorting to abusive behaviors					
Lack of effective coping mechanisms due to prior abuse could impact parenting thus making children vulnerable to abuses	95(30.1%)	140(44.3%)	40(12.7%)	41(13%)	2.91
Parents who have experienced abuse during their own childhood are more likely to perpetrate abuse against their own children.	76(24.1%)	162(51.3%)	60(19%)	18(5.7%)	2.93
A parent's history of abuse significantly influences the likelihood of child abuse	14(4.4%)	250(79.1%)	33(10.4%)	19(6%)	2.81
Childhood abuse survivors may resort to abusive behaviors as a way of coping with unresolved emotional pain or feelings of powerlessness.	153(48.4%)	41(13%)	109(34.5%)	13(4.1%)	3.05
Average Mean					2.87

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Decision rule: ≤ 1.00 : Strongly disagree; 1.01-2.29: Disagree; 2.30-3.69: Agree while ≥ 3.70 : Strongly Agree

Table 4.1.4 above shows the results on parents' history of abuse and its impact on child abuse occurrences. The majority of respondents agree that children with parents who have a history of abuse are more vulnerable to maltreatment (mean score: 2.99), indicating a recognition of the intergenerational cycle of abuse. Additionally, respondents acknowledge that parents with a history of abuse may struggle with boundary setting and appropriate discipline, thereby increasing the risk of resorting to abusive behaviors (mean score: 2.56). Furthermore, there is agreement that lack of effective coping mechanisms due to prior abuse could impact parenting, making children vulnerable to abuses (mean score: 2.91). Respondents also perceive that parents who have experienced abuse during their own childhood are more likely to perpetrate abuse against their own children (mean score: 2.93). Moreover, the perception that a parent's history of abuse significantly influences the likelihood of child abuse receives a high level of agreement (mean score: 2.81). Additionally, respondents recognize that childhood abuse survivors may resort to abusive behaviors as a way of coping with unresolved emotional pain or feelings of powerlessness (mean score: 3.05). The average mean score across all statements is 2.87, indicating a general tendency towards agreement with the statements.

Research Question 4: What is the role of cultural practices as a determinant factor in child abuse occurrence among children?

Table 4 Role of Cultural Practices in Child Abuse Occurrence

Client Violence	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean Score
Communities should engage with cultural leaders and elders to address harmful practices that contribute to child abuse.	132(41.8%)	38(12%)	137(43.4%)	9(2.8%)	2.91
Traditional beliefs about parental authority and discipline can sometimes	63(19.9%)	124(39.2%)	73(23.1%)	56(17.7%)	2.61

justify abusive behaviors towards children					
Traditional beliefs about discipline in some cultures may lead to an increased risk of child abuse.	86(27.2%)	61(19.3%)	100(32.6%)	66(20.9%)	2.52
Cultural rituals or practices that involve physical or emotional harm to children may perpetuate cycles of abuse within communities	3199.8%)	202(63.9%)	65(20.6%)	18(5.7%)	2.77
Education and awareness campaigns should be tailored to address cultural beliefs and practices related to child-rearing	60(19%)	93(29.4%)	59(18.7%)	104(32.9%)	2.34
Genital mutilation is justified by some cultures as a traditional process	106(33.5%)	125(39.6%)	18(5.7%)	67(21.2%)	2.85
Average Mean					2.67

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Decision rule: ≤ 1.00 : Strongly disagree; 1.01-2.29: Disagree; 2.30-3.69: Agree while ≥ 3.70 : Strongly Agree

Table 4 depicts the results on the role of cultural practices in child abuse occurrences. Respondents agree that communities should engage with cultural leaders and elders to address harmful practices contributing to child abuse (mean score: 2.91), indicating a recognition of the importance of cultural interventions. Additionally, there is acknowledgment that traditional beliefs on parental authority and discipline can sometimes justify abusive behaviors towards children (mean score: 2.61), suggesting a nuanced understanding of cultural norms and their potential impact on child welfare. Furthermore, respondents express concerns that traditional beliefs about discipline in some cultures may lead to an increased risk of child abuse (mean score: 2.52), highlighting the need for cultural sensitivity in child protection efforts. Moreover, the perception that cultural rituals or practices involving harm to children may perpetuate cycles of abuse within communities receives significant agreement (mean score: 2.77), underscoring the complex interplay between culture and child welfare. Additionally, respondents recognize the need for tailored education and awareness campaigns to address cultural beliefs and practices related to child-rearing (mean score: 2.34), emphasizing the importance of culturally competent interventions. Furthermore, respondents express concerns about genital mutilation being justified by some cultures as a traditional process (mean score: 2.85), indicating a recognition of harmful cultural practices affecting child welfare. The average mean score across all statements is 2.67, suggesting a general tendency towards agreement with the statements.

Research Question 5: What is the impact of child abuse experience on the victimized children?

Table 5 Impact of Child Abuse on the Children

Client Violence	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean Score
The social life of both children and adults including their ability to communicate with others has been affected due to abuse	119(37.7%)	71(22.5%)	32(10.1%)	94(29.7%)	2.68

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is mostly associated with child abuse	126(39.9%)	117(37%)	41(13%)	32(10.1%)	3.06
Children find it difficult to build sustainable friendships with people due to the abuse they may have faced	55(17.4%)	33(10.4%)	124(39.2%)	104(32.9%)	2.12
Children who have experienced abuse often struggle with low self-esteem and feelings of worthlessness.	174(55.1%)	48(15.2%)	60(19%)	34(10.8%)	3.14
Most cases of depression and anxiety are usually linked to a history of abuse in both children and adults	92(29.1%)	37(11.7%)	37(11.7%)	150(47.5%)	2.22
Abuse can hinder a child's cognitive development and lead to learning disabilities.	117(37%)	33(10.4%)	145(45.9%)	21(6.6%)	2.77
Average Mean					2.83

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Decision rule: ≤ 1.00: Strongly disagree; 1.01-2.29: Disagree; 2.30-3.69: Agree while ≥3.70: Strongly Agree

Table 5 presents the results on the impact of child abuse on victimized children. The majority of respondents agree that the social lives of both children and adults, including their ability to communicate with others, have been affected due to abuse (mean score: 2.68), indicating a recognition of the pervasive nature of abuse's impact on interpersonal relationships. Additionally, respondents perceive that post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is mostly associated with child abuse (mean score: 3.06), highlighting the profound psychological consequences of abuse experiences. Furthermore, there is agreement that children who have experienced abuse often struggle with low self-esteem and feelings of worthlessness (mean score: 3.14), emphasizing the detrimental effects on mental well-being. Moreover, respondents agreed that abuse can hinder a child's cognitive development and lead to learning disabilities (mean score: 2.77), indicating broader implications for educational outcomes. However, there is disagreement regarding whether children find it difficult to build sustainable friendships due to the abuse they may have faced (mean score: 2.12). Additionally, respondents disagreed that most cases of depression and anxiety are usually linked to a history of abuse (mean score: 2.22). The average mean score across all statements is 2.83, indicating a general tendency towards agreement with the statements.

Research Question 6: What are the preventive measures to implement to curb child abuse occurrences?

Table 6. Preventive Measures to Curb Child Abuse Occurrence

Client Violence	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean Score
Governments should allocate more resources to support child protection services and agencies.	184(58.2%)	38(12%)	54(17.1%)	40(12.7%)	3.15

Providing accessible and affordable mental health services for parents can address underlying issues contributing to abusive behaviors	30(9.5%)	91(28.8%)	176(55.7%)	19(6%)	2.41
Communities should promote awareness campaigns about child abuse and resources for reporting	116(36.7%)	32(10.1%)	151(47.8%)	17(5.4%)	2.78
Education programs for parents on positive parenting techniques can help prevent child abuse	31(9.8%)	135(42.7%)	50(15.8%)	100(31.6%)	2.30
Policies and laws should be strengthened to ensure swift and severe punishment for perpetrators of child abuse.	70(22.2%)	75(23.7%)	152(48.1%)	19(6%)	2.62
Community-based support networks and resources can offer assistance and guidance to families in need, reducing stressors that may lead to abuse	88(27.8%)	152(51.3%)	15(4.7%)	51(16.1%)	2.90
Average Mean					2.69

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Decision rule: ≤ 1.00 : Strongly disagree; 1.01-2.29: Disagree; 2.30-3.69: Agree while ≥ 3.70 : Strongly Agree

Table 6 present results on possible measures that can be taken to curb incidences of child abuse. A significant majority of respondents agreed that governments should allocate more resources to support child protection services and agencies (mean score: 3.15), indicating a belief in the importance of robust institutional support. Additionally, there is agreement that providing accessible and affordable mental health services for parents can address underlying issues contributing to abusive behaviors (mean score: 2.41), emphasizing the significance of addressing parental mental health. Furthermore, respondents recognize the importance of promoting awareness campaigns about child abuse and resources for reporting within communities (mean score: 2.78). Education programs for parents on positive parenting techniques are also perceived as valuable preventive measures (mean score: 2.30), indicating a focus on proactive intervention strategies. Moreover, there is support for strengthening policies and laws to ensure swift and severe punishment for perpetrators of child abuse (mean score: 2.62), highlighting the importance of legal deterrents. Additionally, community-based support networks and resources are acknowledged as essential in offering assistance and guidance to families in need (mean score: 2.90), addressing underlying stressors that may lead to abuse. The average mean score across all statements is 2.69, suggesting a general tendency towards agreement with the proposed preventive measures.

V. Discussion of Findings

In line with the first research question, the results from the analysis showed that factors and instances such as lack of awareness, inadequate implementation of child abuse laws, environmental background, have all contributed to the increase in child abuse cases in the past one year. This finding shows that if these factors are not corrected child abuse may remain a recurring issue in Nigeria. In regard to the second question, the results revealed that level of education of parents is a determining factor in occurrence of child abuse cases.

Hence, the results specifically revealed that children from families with parents with higher education are less likely to experience such abuses, since attainment of such education equips the parents with the right coping strategies and mechanism to deter them from resorting to abuse of their children. Thus education is considered to encourage empathy and communication among such parents thus reducing the risk of child abuse. Thus lack of education was opined to contribute and increase the chances of abusive behaviors. This finding is supported by the study of Rafaiee, Mohseni and Akbarian (2021) which also found that fathers' level of education contribute to physical child abuse among elementary school students in Iran.

In answering the third research question, the evidence from the analysis pointed to the fact that parents' history with abuse themselves is a determining factor of the occurrence of abuse of their own children also. The results showed that parents with history of abuse are susceptible to maltreating their own children also; more so, such parents find it difficult to set boundaries and exercise appropriate disciplinary methods on their children, thus making them resort to abusive behaviors. This finding is supported by the study of Ehrensaft, et al (2014) which also found that some fathers and mothers with a history of abuse may suffer from emotional disengagement. Hence, the need for interventions that will help address disengagement issues among such parents was recommended.

For the fourth research question, the results also indicated that cultural practices such as traditional belief on parental authority, traditional method of discipline in some cultural, cultural behavior such as genital mutilation, etc. can also serve as contributory factors to occurrence of child abuses incidences. This result is reaffirmed by the study of Nnam (2021) which also noted that cultural practices in Nigeria contribute immensely to the difference of child abuse in the Nigeria context. The author submitted that abuses such as child hawking, physical punishment, sexual abuse (child marriage), genital mutilation, etc. are all, directly or indirectly, to cultural orientation and beliefs of the people.

In regard to the fifth research question, the results revealed that child abuses have numerous impacts on the wellbeing of victimized children, such as lack of communication skills, low self-esteem, lack of social skill, experience of PTSD, feeling of worthlessness, learning disabilities, etc. All this shows that child abuse has negative effects on the wellbeing of children. This finding is supported by the study of Fayaz (2019) which noted also that abuses have different negative effects on both the mental, social and physical wellbeing of children. Some of the preventive measures identified to curb incidences of child abuse included allocation of resources to support child protection services and agencies, provision of accessible and affordable health services to victims, formulation of necessary policies and laws, creation of community-based networks to offer assistance to children and families in need.

Results from the tested objectives showed that parent education level has no significant effect on the child abuse incidence. This could mean that there are other factors in place which could be influencing occurrence of child abuse cases, such as income level of the families, age of the children, etc. This finding is contrary to the study of Khosravan, et al (2018) which concluded that education has significant impact on incidence of child abuse among abusive parents. The results likewise showed that parent history also has no significant effect on the occurrence of child abuses. However, the result indicated that cultural practices have a significant effect on the occurrence of child abuses. This finding is in line with the study of Shafe and Hutchinson (2014) which also found that cultural practices have contributed to persistent rise in the occurrence of child abuse globally.

VI. Conclusion

Considering the research findings, it is observed that cultural practices have a significant influence on the occurrence of child abuse. The study highlights the need for increased awareness, stronger implementation of child abuse laws, and addressing environmental factors, as these were identified as contributing factors to the rise in child abuse cases. While parents' education level and history with abuse did not show statistically

significant effects, the study suggests that preventive strategies should focus on allocating more resources to child protection agencies, promoting awareness campaigns, strengthening policies and laws, and providing orientation programs for parents on effective parenting techniques.

VII. Recommendations

Governments and relevant authorities should prioritize the development and enforcement of comprehensive laws and policies specifically aimed at addressing cultural practices that contribute to child abuse. Substantial resources must be allocated to child protection agencies and organizations to enhance their capacity to investigate cases, provide support services to victims, and implement prevention programs. Large-scale awareness campaigns should be conducted to educate the general public about the detrimental effects of child abuse and the importance of creating a safe and nurturing environment for children.

References

- Alaka, M. (2015). Basic causes of child abuse and its impact: An overview. *Indian Journal of Research*, 4(5).
- Alokan, F. B., & Olatunji, I. C. (2014). Influence of child abuse on classroom behaviour and academic performance among primary and secondary school students. *European Scientific Journal*, 10(10), 131–140.
- American Humane Society. (n.d.). Child neglect. <http://www.americanhumane.org/children/stop-child-abuse/fact-sheets/childneglect.html>
- Azi, A., & Saluhu, A. (2016). The effect of child abuse on the academic performance of school children: Implication on the Nigerian economy. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education, Arts and Sciences*, 3(3), 23–27.
- Bada, S. O. (2015). Parents' perception of the causes and effects of child abuse in Ondo State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Academic Research in Psychology*, 2(1), 53–62.
- Bensel, W. (2016). Children in a world of violence: The roots of child maltreatment. In M. E. Helfer, R. S. Kempe, & R. D. Krugman (Eds.), *The battered child* (pp. 3–28). University of Chicago Press.
- Betcherman, G. (2016). Child labor, education, and children's rights. *Social Protection Discussion Paper Series*, No. 0412.
- Child Help USA. (2012). Child abuse prevention: National child abuse hotline. <http://childabuse.com>
- Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2019). What factors contribute to child abuse and neglect? <http://www.childwelfare.gov/can/factorscontribute/cfm>
- Chinawa, J. M. (2023). Prevalence and pattern of sexual abuse among children attending Ebonyi State University Teaching Hospital, Abakaliki, Ebonyi State. *Nigerian Journal of Paediatrics*, 40(3), 227–231.
- Cosmus, G. M. (2015). *Child rights and child protection*. Author.
- David, N., Ezechi, O., Wapmuk, A., Gbajabiamila, T., Ohihoin, A., Herbertson, E., & Odeyemi, K. (2018). Child sexual abuse and disclosure in South-Western Nigeria: A community-based study. *African Health Sciences*, 18(2), 199–208.

- Del Vecchio, T., Erlanger, A. C. E., & Slep, A. M. S. (2012). Theories of child abuse. In M. A. Fine & F. D. Fincham (Eds.), *Handbook of family theories: A content-based approach*. Taylor and Francis/Routledge.
- Dodson, D. (1997). *Child abuse prevention: New partnerships for protecting children and supporting families*. Seminar Report, U.S. House of Representatives.
- Doek, J. E. (2018). The human rights of children: An introduction. In *International human rights of children* (pp. 3–29). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-4184-6_1
- Ehrensaft, M. K., Knous-Westfall, H. M., Cohen, P., & Chen, H. (2015). How does child abuse history influence parenting of the next generation? *Psychology of Violence*, 5(1), 16–25. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0036080>
- Ek, S. (Ed.). (2017). *Legislative history of the Convention on the Rights of the Child*. United Nations Office of the High Commissioner & Save the Children.
- Farley, L., & Garlen, J. C. (2016). The child in question: Childhood texts, cultures, and curricula. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 46(3), 221–229.
- Fayaz, I. (2019). Child abuse: Effects and preventive measures. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 7(2). <https://doi.org/10.25215/0702.105>
- Finkelhor, D. (2023). Epidemiological factors in the clinical identification of child sexual abuse. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 17(1), 67–70.
- Gilbert, R., Widom, C. S., Browne, K., Fergusson, D., Webb, E., & Janson, S. (2019). Burden and consequences of child maltreatment in high-income countries. *The Lancet*, 373(9657), 68–81.
- Herrenkohl, T., Jung, H., & Kim, M. (n.d.). Effects of child maltreatment, cumulative victimization experiences, and proximal life stress on adult crime and antisocial behavior. National Criminal Justice Reference Service.
- ILO & Inter-Parliamentary Union. (n.d.). *Handbook for Parliamentarians: Eliminating the worst forms of child labour – A practical guide to ILO Convention No. 182* (No. 3).
- Karlsson, J. (2023). Identification of child maltreatment: A systematic literature review on professionals' identification of child maltreatment and the influencing factors that affect their ability to act [Master's thesis].
- Kayode, A. O. (2016). *Child abuse among secondary school students in Ilorin: Prevalence and pattern of abuse and behavioural disorders in victims* [Postgraduate dissertation, National Postgraduate Medical College of Nigeria].
- Kerber-Ganse, W. (2015). Eglantyne Jebb – A pioneer of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. *International Journal of Children's Rights*, 23(2), 272–282.
- Khosravan, S., Sajjadi, M., Moshari, J., & Barzegar Shoorab Sofla, F. (2018). The effect of education on the attitude and child abuse behaviors of mothers with 3–6-year-old children: A randomized controlled trial study. *International Journal of Community Based Nursing and Midwifery*, 6(3), 227–238.
- Kolo, J., & Gyong, J. (2015). Factors responsible for child maltreatment among students of secondary schools in Niger State-Nigeria. *American International Journal of Social Science*, 4(5).
- Kozcu, S. (2021). Child abuse and neglect. In *Family Writings 3: Ministry and Research Institute Science Series* (5th ed., pp. 379–390).

- Lansdown, G., & Vaghri, Z. (2022). Article 1: Definition of a child. In *Monitoring state compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Children Wellbeing: Indicator*.
- Momoh, S., Aigbomian, O., & Longe, B. (2015). Students' perception of the prevalence, forms and causes of child abuse in Edo State, Nigeria. *Investigaciones-REOP*, 19(1), 5–11.
- Moody, G., Cannings-John, R., Hood, K., Kemp, A., & Robling, M. (2018). Establishing the international prevalence of self-reported child maltreatment: A systematic review by maltreatment type and gender. *BMC Public Health*, 18, 1164.
- National Human Rights Commission. (2015). *The state of human rights in Nigeria 2009–2010*. Homec Global Ltd.
- Nnam, M. C. (2021). Culture and the crime of child abuse in Nigeria: Revisiting the old and new perspectives. *Journal of Educational Research and Policy Studies*, 1(3).
- Nnam, M. U. (2015). Culture as a determinant of child abuse in Nigeria: A criminological standpoint. *International Journal of Research in Arts & Social Sciences*, 8(2), 204–215.
- Okocha, D., & Okpor, S. (2022). Utilisation of social media for child abuse prevention in Nigeria. In *Handbook of Research on Digital Violence and Discrimination Studies* (pp. [chapter range]). IGI Global. <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-6684-5426-8.ch006>
- Olayode, T. E. (2015). *Child abuse and neglect: Effects on social security (A case study of Abeokuta North Local Government Area of Ogun State)* [Undergraduate thesis].
- Olusegun, O. O., & Idowu, A. A. (2016). Child abuse in Nigeria: Dimension, reasons for its persistence and probable. *Child and Family Law Journal*, 4(1), Article 2.
- Oluwatoyin Akin-Odanye, E. (2018). Prevalence and management of child sexual abuse cases presented at Nigerian hospitals: A systematic review. *Journal of Health and Social Sciences*.
- Onyishi, C. N. (2022). Prevalence and psychological outcomes of child sexual abuse in Nigeria. *International Journal of Health Sciences*, 460–477.
- Orakwe, E. C. (2019). Cultural determination of child abuses in urban Nigeria: A sociological perspective. *International Journal of Arts and Social Science*, 2(6).
- Owenvbiugie, R. O. (2016). Kidnapping: A threat to entrepreneurship in Nigeria. *Journal of Education, Health and Technology Research*, 67.
- Rafaiee, R., Mohseni, F., & Akbarian, N. (2021). Prevalence of child abuse and correlations with family factors among elementary school-aged children. *International Journal of High Risk Behaviors and Addiction*. <https://doi.org/10.5812/ijhrba.108823>
- Sarka, S. W. (2021). An appraisal of the causes and consequences of child abuse in Gwagwalada and its implication on national security and development in Nigeria. *African Scholar Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 23(6).
- Shafe, S., & Hutchinson, G. (2014). Continuous influence of cultural practices and sexual abuse: A review. *West Indian Medical Journal*, 63(6). <https://doi.org/10.7727/wimj.2013.246>
- Shrivastava, A. K., Karia, S. B., Sonavane, S. S., & De Sousa, A. A. (2017). Child sexual abuse and the development of psychiatric disorders: A neurobiological trajectory of pathogenesis. *Industrial Psychiatry Journal*, 26(1), 4–12.

The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action. (2019). Review of existing definitions and explanations of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence against children.

UNICEF. (2009). Handbook on the optional protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.

UNICEF. (2017). UNICEF annual report for Nigeria. <https://www.unicef.org/reports/unicef-annual-report-2017>

United Nations. (1989). Convention on the Rights of the Child. https://downloads.unicef.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/UNCRC_united_nations_convention_on_the_rights_of_the_child.pdf

Venumadhava, G., Balaraddy, V., & Mavarkar, A. (2017). Child abuse. North Asian International Research Journal of Social Science and Humanities, 3(12).

Victoria State Government. (2022). Identify child abuse. <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/childprotection/Pages/identify.aspx>

World Health Organization. (2016). World health statistics 2016: Monitoring health for SDGs.

World Health Organization. (2022). Child maltreatment. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/child-maltreatment>