

Influence Of Psycho-Social Factors As Predictors Of Child Abuse Among Junior Secondary School Students In Kaduna Metropolis Of Kaduna State.

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Abstract: *The issue of child abuse has become fashionable in the Nigerian society and also other part of the world. Child abuse is a serious problem that can render a child to develop haphazardly, emotionally and academically. International organisations have expressed concerns about child abuse and have proved that abused children lack the potentials to contribute to the development of his or her society. It is against this background that the study investigated psychosocial factors as predictors of child abuse among junior secondary school students in Kaduna metropolis of Kaduna State. Descriptive research design of survey type was used in the study. Two hundred respondents were selected from five junior secondary schools in Kaduna metropolis of Kaduna State, Nigeria through simple random sampling technique. Two research questions were raised in the study. The respondents were measured with relevant standardized scale (instruments) with strong reliability coefficient which include; parental socio-economic status scale $\alpha = .89$, parenting style scale $\alpha = .92$ and child abuse scale $\alpha = .93$. The data obtained was analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC), Analysis of Variance and Multiple Regression Analysis statistical methods. The result showed that there was a positive significant relationship between parental socio-economic status and child abuse ($r = .241$; $P < 0.05$), parenting styles and child abuse ($r = .482$; $P < 0.05$). The two independent variables jointly accounted for 59.3% variance in predicting child abuse among junior secondary students. The independent variables made positive relative contribution to child abuse in the following order: parental socio-economic status ($\beta = 0.233$, $t = 3.898$, $P < 0.05$) followed by parenting styles ($\beta = -0.178$, $t = -2.513$, $P < 0.05$). It was concluded that if students move with peers who have negative influence in their lives, it could make such students to engage in abusing other students such as sexual abuse, physical, emotional to mention a few. On the strength of these findings, it was recommended that government should make a law on the issue of child abuse as anyone caught perpetrating this act should be dealt with and be made to face the wrath of the law. This will however serve as a deterrent to others who practice and/or who have the intention to also perpetrate this act.*

Keywords: Child, Psychosocial, Parental socio-economic status, Parenting styles, Child abuse

Introduction

For a long time, child abuse has been recorded in literature, art and science in many parts of the world. The ill-treatment of children by those who are supposed to care for them has been recognized as a major problem in child upbringing in the society. Child abuse is a prevalent problem all over the world and Nigeria is no exception (Ojo and Ogundele, 2007).

Child abuse can be described as a crime of harming a child physically, sexually, or emotionally (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 2009). Child abuse constitutes all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power (WHO, 2002). Child abuse can be referred to as the physical and mental injury, sexual abuse, negligent treatment, or maltreatment of a child under the age of 18 by a person who is responsible for the child's welfare under circumstances which indicate that the child's health or welfare is harmed or threatened (Imo, 2015). Child abuse is the maltreatment of children by parents, friends, caregivers, or other significant others.

World Health Organisation identifies four types of child abuse which are: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect. Physical abuse of a child is defined as those acts of commission by a parent/caregiver that cause actual physical harm or have the potential for harm. Sexual abuse can be defined as those acts where a parent/caregiver uses a child for sexual gratification. Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used for sexual purposes by an adult or adolescent. Emotional abuse includes the failure of a parent/caregiver to provide an appropriate and supportive environment, and includes acts that have an adverse effect on the emotional health and development of a child. Neglect refers to the failure of a parent/caregiver to provide for the development of the child where the parent/caregiver is in a position to do so in one or more of the following areas: health, education, emotional development, nutrition, shelter and safe living conditions.

Parental socio-economic status has been described as one of the psycho-social factors that influence child abuse. Socio-Economic Status (SES) is often measured as a combination of education, income and occupation, (Ezewu 2005). Socio-economic status (SES) can be high, average or low. It is observed that people of low socio-economic status often engage in child abuse and

neglect due to poverty, low income earnings, low educational background. Chen and Paterson (2006), posit that low socioeconomic status and its correlates, such as lower education, poverty, and poor health ultimately affect Nigerian children. Research indicates that socioeconomic status is the key factor that influences quality of life for children, youths and families. Socio-economic status affect human functioning in many ways including development across the life span, psychological health, physical health of a child which in turn brings about child abuse and neglect in the societies. Among low-income families, those with family exposure to substance use to exhibit the highest rates of child abuse and neglect (Brandley and Corwyn, 2002). Melki, Beydoun, Khogali, Tamim and Yenis (2004) stressed that low socio-economic status can be linked to domestic crowding, a condition which has negative consequences on children including higher psychological stress and poor health outcomes.

Parenting styles is seen as one of the psycho-social factors that influences child abuse. Parenting styles are ways or methods adopted by parents in raising their children or child. Parenting style refers to the ways or techniques parents employ in the upbringing of their children. Parenting style has also been referred to as a socialization approach to raising children through which parents teach their children norms, values, behaviour, and social skills (Deci, Eghrari, Patrick and Leone, 1994; Deci and Ryan, 1995; Utti 2006). There are dimensions of styles adopted by parent in raising their children namely, authoritative, authoritarian, permissive parenting styles (Baumrind, 1991; Yasmin, 2015). Authoritative parenting style is the type of parenting style in which the parents direct their children's activities in a rational, issue oriented manner, exercising control when necessary, but gives the children freedom to act independently and responsibly (Baumrind, 1991; Yasmin, 2015). Authoritarian parenting style refers to the situation whereby the children are required to follow rules without any explanations from the parents (Cherry, 2013).

Permissive parents are warm but not demanding; indulgent and passive. Such parents apparently believe that the way to prove their love is to allow their children to have all they desire, not minding the consequences, this would trigger the children to engage in some criminal act like bullying, sexual experimentation internet fraud to mention a few. If a parent is too strict to his/her child such as beating the child and inflicting injuries on him/her, it will affect the emotional development of the child as there is a high tendency that such child could adopt the same parenting style when he/she becomes a parent (Gisela and Carl, 2008).

Statement of the problem

For some decades now, the issue of child abuse has become fashionable in the Nigerian society and also other part of the world. Child abuse is a serious problem that can render a child to develop haphazardly, emotionally and academically. International organizations have expressed concerns about child abuse and have proved that abused children lack the potentials to contribute to the development of his or her society. Nigerian society is still plagued with incidences of child labour, child maltreatment, child marriage, child trafficking, neglect, and child prostitution. The effect of such abuses are many and varied including teenage pregnancies/mothers, youth restiveness and violence, cultism, youth decadence, joblessness, armed bandits, molestations, and school dropouts. Unfortunately, the rights of the child have not been protected by adult. Studies have revealed that adults in many cases do not regard some of their violent behaviours toward children as abusive, but perceived as corrective measures in the best interest of the child. These abuses are resultant influence of socio-economic status (low or high), parenting style and also peer pressure. Thus, the child may be battered, deprived, castigated or even abandoned in extreme cases by parents, guardians or caregivers when he or she misbehaves. Regrettably, despite governmental regulations, decrees, enactments and laws on child's right, child abuse and neglect still persist. It is against this backdrop that this study will investigate the effect of psycho-social factors on child abuse among junior secondary school students in Kaduna metropolis, Kaduna State.

Objective of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of psycho-social factors (parental socio-economic status, parenting styles and peer pressure) as predictors of child abuse among Junior Secondary School Students in Kaduna metropolis, Kaduna State, Nigeria. Specifically the objectives of the study are to:

- i. examine the relationship that exists between the independent variables (parental socio-economic status and parenting styles) and the dependent variable (child abuse) among Junior Secondary School Students in Kaduna metropolis, Kaduna State, Nigeria.
- ii. investigate the joint contribution of the independent variables (parental socio-economic status and parenting styles) to the prediction of the dependent variable (child abuse) among Junior Secondary School Students in Kaduna metropolis, Kaduna State, Nigeria.
- iii. establish the relative contribution of each of the independent variables (parental socio-economic status and parenting styles) to the prediction of the dependent variable (child abuse) among Junior Secondary School Students in Kaduna metropolis, Kaduna State, Nigeria.

1.4 Research hypotheses

The following research hypotheses of this study are:

H0₁: There is no significant relationship between the independent variables (parental socio-economic status and parenting styles) on the dependent variable (child abuse) among Junior Secondary School Students in Kaduna metropolis, Kaduna State, Nigeria

H0₂: There is no significant joint influence of the independent variables (parental socio-economic status and parenting styles) on the dependent variable (child abuse) among Junior Secondary school Students in Kaduna metropolis, Kaduna State, Nigeria

H0₃: there is no significant relative contribution of the independent variables (parental socio-economic status and parenting styles) on the dependent variable (child abuse) among Junior Secondary School Students in Kaduna metropolis, Kaduna State, Nigeria.

Review of related literature

Escarce (2003) adds that due to residential stratification and segregation, low-income students usually attend schools with lower funding levels, have reduced achievement motivation and much higher risk of delinquent and abuse. When compared with their more affluent counterparts, low-income adolescents receive lower grades, earn lower scores on standardized test and are much more likely to drop out of school and engage in all sorts of behaviours that are aberrant such as street hawking, begging etc. A study conducted by Okioga (2013) on the influence of socio-economic status on child abuse among adolescents. The author noted that families with low socio-economic status lack the financial, social and educational supports that characterise families with high socio-economic status as this could breed abuse to adolescents. The result of the finding showed that financial status, educational background of parents had significant influence on child abuse. Considine and Zappala (2002), argued that the social and the economic components of the socio-economic status equation may have distinct and separate influences on child abuse among adolescents.

In a study of 2,582 parent/child dyads from the Dartmouth Prevention Project, McKee (2007) found that adolescent reports of parents' harsh physical and verbal discipline were associated with both child internalizing and externalizing psychopathology, even after accounting for the protective influences of positive parenting. Throughout the span of development, continued parental usage of corporal punishment (e.g. spanking, slapping) has been positively associated with children's aggressive and antisocial behaviour problems (Gershoff, 2002; Straus and Stewart, 2009). The author concluded that there was significant relationship between parenting style and child abuse among adolescents. Children who experience harsh parental discipline have been found to pursue hostile goals, have shown an increase in hostile attributions even in ambiguous situations, and subsequently choose more aggressive solutions while expecting positive consequences (Heidergerken, Hughes, Cavell and Wilson, 2004). Thus, children's highly aggressive behaviour, particularly when it emerges in early childhood, is a risk factor for many undesirable social outcomes, such as peer victimization and rejection (Keane and Calkins, 2004; Barker, 2008). When children's high levels of externalizing problems remain stable or increase across development, they often lead to serious forms of maladaptive behavior in later life, such as substance use and conduct disorders (White, Xie, Thompson, Loeber and Southamer-Loeber, 2001).

Chen (2010) found that Chinese mothers' authoritative attitudes were positively associated with low power parenting strategies, and negatively with high child abuse, whereas authoritarian attitudes showed the opposite pattern of association. Authoritative attitudes also were linked to a positive parent-child reunion after a separation and authoritarian attitudes were linked to child abuse. An expanding body of research has supported Chen's (2010) findings that authoritative parenting is associated with positive child adjustment in Chinese and Chinese-American populations. Lyons-Ruth and Block (2006), observed at-home interactions of low income mothers and their infants. Relative to mothers with benign or neglectful childhoods and mothers who witnessed violence in childhood, mothers with histories of sexual and/or physical abuse evidenced very low levels of maternal involvement and high levels of infant distress. Moreover, sexual abuse was found to be the strongest correlate of decreased maternal involvement with infants, with sexually abused mothers spending less time with their infants and exhibiting disengagement and flat affect while interacting with them.

Finally, in a recent qualitative study, Kreklewetz and Piotrowski (2012), interviewed 16 incest survivors about the strategies that they employed to protect their preadolescent and adolescent daughters from victimization. It was found out that these mothers were often fearful and overprotective, heavily supervising and monitoring their daughters' activities at home and in social activities with peers. The authors concluded that parenting style predict sexual abuse among adolescents.

Methodology

This study adopted correlation survey design to integrate the different components of the study in a coherent and logical way. Correlational design was considered to be most suitable for the study since it involved collection of data on existing phenomenon and determining whether there is a relationship among the four quantifiable variables the researcher is interested in without any form of manipulation. Five (5) junior secondary schools were selected within Kaduna Metropolis. These schools are: Adeyemo College (40), Chris Ambassadors International College, (40), Federal Government College (40) and NTIC Kaduna (40) and Kaduna Poly Secondary School (40). A two stage sampling technique was adopted for this study and these are stratified and simple random sampling techniques due to the nature of the population being that all of them are not within the same class and age. Therefore, stratified sampling technique was first applied by grouping the students according to their class JSS1, JSS2 and JSS3. After which simple random sampling was used to select forty (40) students each from the five schools given a total two hundred (200) participants that were used for the study. A questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection. The questionnaire is titled "Psycho-social Child Abuse Scale" (PCAS). The questionnaire was structured into three sections. Section A examined the socio-demographic characteristics including gender, class and parental marital status. Section B measures the parental socio-economic status scale which consisted of twelve (10) items. Section C elicits information on parenting styles scale which comprised 15 items. While section D elicits information on child abuse and it consisted of 15 items. The content and face validation of the questionnaire was done by giving it to two experts in the field of test and measurement, University of Ibadan. The comments and corrections suggested were effected and in ensuring the reliability of the questionnaire, a pilot study was conducted. Questionnaire was administered on 30

junior secondary school students in Kano and the Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficients were reported as follows: parental socio-economic status ($\alpha = 0.89$), parenting styles ($\alpha = 0.92$) and child abuse ($\alpha = 0.93$). Two hundred Responses were got from the respondents which were later used for the data analysis. The data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The hypotheses were analysed using inferential statistics of Pearson's product moment correlation and regression with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS, 21) at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Demographic Characteristics		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	92	46.0
	Female	108	54.0
Age	9-12 years	89	44.5
	13-16 years	109	54.5
	17-20 years	2	1.0
Class	JSS1	43	21.5
	JSS2	58	29.0
	JSS3	99	49.5
Parents' marital status	Intact	186	93.0
	Separated	8	4.0
	divorced	6	3.0

Table 4.1 shows that 92 (46%) were males and the rest 108 (54%) were females. This means that both genders participated in the study but females participated more in the study than their male counterparts. It is also revealed that out of 200 participants who partook in the study, 89 (44.5%) were between the ages of 9-12 years, while 109 (54.5%) were between the ages of 13-16 years, and the remaining 2 (1%) were between the ages of 17-20 years. This means that respondents whose age fell between 13-16 years participated more in the study. 43 (21.5%) were in JSS1 while 58 (29%) were in JSS2 and the remaining 99 (49.5%) were in JSS3. This implies that respondents who are in JSS3 participated more in the study than their other counterparts. Also, 186 (93%) were married while 8 (4%) were separated and the remaining 6 (3%) were divorced. This means that respondents whose parents are married participated more in the study.

Testing of hypotheses

H0₁: There is no significant relationship between the independent variables (parental socio-economic status and parenting styles) on the dependent variable (child abuse) among Junior Secondary School Students in Kaduna metropolis, Kaduna State, Nigeria

Table 2: Correlation matrix showing the relationship between study variables

Variables	Child abuse	Parental socio-economic status	Parenting styles	Peer pressure	Mean	Standard deviation
Child abuse	1				94.9800	10.8229
Parental socio-economic status	.241**	1			39.5867	5.0677
Parenting styles	.482**	.355**	1		49.8700	4.8540

** Significant at $p < 0.01$ (2 tailed) *significant at $p < 0.05$ (2 tailed)

Result from Table 2 shows that all the independent variables (parental socio-economic status and parenting styles) have significant positive relationship with the dependent variable (child abuse). Parental socio-economic status and child abuse is significant: $r(198) = .241$, $p < 0.05$, parenting styles and child abuse is significant: $r(198) = .482$, $p < 0.05$, and peer pressure and child abuse is also significant: $r(198) = .321$, $p < 0.05$.

This implies that the higher the parental socio-economic status, the lower the rate of child abuse. The more parents are able to adopt the appropriate parenting styles, the lower the rate of child abuse.

H0₂: There is no significant joint influence of the independent variables (parental socio-economic status and parenting styles) on the dependent variable (child abuse) among Junior Secondary school Students in Kaduna metropolis, Kaduna State, Nigeria.

<p>R = 0.718 R² = 0.599 Adj R² = 0.593 Std. error = 6.72750</p>
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Model	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F- Ratio	Sig	P
Regression	7394.620	2	3697.31	60.965	.000 ^b	<.05
Residual	11946.455	197	60.641			
Total	19341.075	199				

Table 3 reveals the significant joint contribution of the independent variables (parental socio-economic status and parenting styles) to the prediction of child abuse. The result yielded a coefficient of multiple regressions $R = 0.718$ and multiple R -square = 0.599. This suggests that the three factors combined accounted for 59.3% ($Adj.R^2 = .593$) variance in the prediction of child abuse. The other factors accounting for the remaining variance are beyond the scope of this study. The ANOVA result from the regression analysis shows that there was a significant effect of the independent variables on child abuse, $F_{(2, 197)} = 60.965$, $P < 0.05$.

H_03 : there is no significant relative contribution of the independent variables (parental socio-economic status and parenting styles) on the dependent variable (child abuse) among Junior Secondary School Students in Kaduna metropolis, Kaduna State, Nigeria.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	117.255	9.828		11.931	.000
	Parental socio-economic status	.166	.043	.233	3.898	.005
	Parenting styles	-.892	.355	-.178	-2.513	.013

Table 4 shows that the three predictors (parental socio-economic status and parenting styles) are potent predictors of child abuse. The most potent factor was parental socio-economic status ($Beta = .233$, $t = 3.898$, $P < 0.05$) followed by parenting styles ($Beta = -.178$, $t = -2.513$, $P < 0.05$). This implies that parenting styles will increase the rate of child abuse by 17.8%, while increase in parental socio-economic status will reduce the rate of child abuse by 23.3%.

Discussion

Result from hypothesis one showed there was significant relationship between socio-economic status and parenting styles on child abuse. On the relationship that existed between parental socio-economic status and child abuse, the finding supports Okioga (2013) who found that families with low socio-economic status lack the financial, social and educational supports that characterise families with high socio-economic status as this could breed abuse to adolescents. The finding of Oni (2007) and Omoegun (2007) also goes in line with the finding of this study, the authors surmised that there is significant relationship between the rates of child abuse among students from high and low socio-economic statuses. The authors further pointed that children from low socio-economic status are more exposed to abuse in the sense that their parents could send them to hawk in order to augment the family's financial purse. On the relationship that existed between parenting styles and child abuse, the finding corroborates Snyder, Cramer, Afrank and Patterson, (2005) who found that adverse parenting practices such as corporal punishment and restrictive discipline have predicted a plethora of maladaptive child outcomes later in life, including aggression, conduct disorders, and delinquency and substance abuse. The finding of this study as goes in line with McKee (2007) who surmised that adolescent reports of parents' harsh physical and verbal discipline were associated with both child internalizing and externalizing psychopathology, even after accounting for the protective influences of positive parenting. Throughout the span of development, continued parental usage of corporal punishment (e.g. spanking, slapping) has been positively associated with children's aggressive and antisocial behaviour problems.

Hypothesis two revealed that there was significant joint contribution of the independent variables (parental socio-economic status and parenting styles) on the dependent variable (child abuse) among Junior Secondary school Students in Kaduna metropolis

and the two independent variables jointly contributed 59.3% in the prediction of child abuse. On the joint contribution of parental socio-economic status to the prediction of child abuse, the finding supports Considine and Zappala (2002) who found that social and the economic components of the socio-economic status equation may have distinct and separate influences on child abuse among adolescents. The finding also corroborates Escarce (2003), who found that due to residential stratification and segregation, low-income students usually attend schools with lower funding levels, have reduced achievement motivation and much higher risk of delinquent and abuse. When compared with their more affluent counterparts, low-income adolescents receive lower grades, earn lower scores on standardized test and are much more likely to drop out of school and engage in all sorts of behaviours that are aberrant such as street hawking, begging. On the joint contribution of parenting styles to the prediction of child abuse, the finding corroborates Chen (2010) who found that mothers' authoritative attitudes were positively associated with low power parenting strategies, and negatively with high child abuse, whereas authoritarian attitudes showed the opposite pattern of association. Authoritative attitudes also were linked to a positive parent-child reunion after a separation and authoritarian attitudes were linked to child abuse.

Hypothesis three showed that there was significant relative influence on the two independent variables on child abuse. On the relative contribution of parenting styles to the prediction of child abuse, the finding is in line with Eisenberg, (2005) who found that parental warmth and positive expressivity during middle elementary school predicted lower levels of adolescent externalization by means of increases in child executive functioning. The finding also supports Lyons-Ruth and Block (2006), who found that relative to mothers with benign or neglectful childhoods and mothers who witnessed violence in childhood, mothers with histories of sexual and/or physical abuse evidenced very low levels of maternal involvement and high levels of infant distress. Moreover, sexual abuse was found to be the strongest predictor of decreased maternal involvement with infants, with sexually abused mothers spending less time with their infants and exhibiting disengagement and flat affect while interacting with them.

Conclusion and Recommendations

It was concluded that if students move with peers who have negative influence in their lives, it could make such students to engage in abusing other students such as sexual abuse, physical, emotional to mention a few. Also, if parents find it difficult to meet the need of their children and wards and/or fail to apply the apposite child rearing practices, such children could possibly be neglected and/or such children could be forced to engage in street hawking as this could affect the emotional development of such child. It is therefore recommended that:

- Parents without formal education as well as those with primary and secondary education should be given some form of orientation about what constitute child abuse and neglect. This may help them protect their children against any form of child abuse such as physical, emotional.
- Parents and caregivers should adopt the appropriate parenting style in the bringing up of their children and ward as this would make them to inculcate great values in their children without any form of abuse.
- Government should make a law on the issue of child abuse as anyone caught perpetrating this act should be dealt with and be made to face the wrath of the law. This will however serve as a deterrent to others who practice and/or who have the intention to also perpetrate this act.
- Regular and timely sensitisation of members of the public on both electronic and print media using the official language of Nigeria (English) and 'Pidgin English' (popularly known as Broken) as well as indigenous languages or dialects such as Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, among others will certainly reduce the incidence of child abuse in the country to a large extent.
- To ensure effectiveness of these laws and to decrease the prevalence of child abuse, issues such as poverty, cultural attitudes, corruption, lack of implementation of laws, and attitude of parents need to be addressed. Laws and policies, despite their importance, cannot eliminate child abuse solely on their own.

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