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**INFLUENCE OF CHILD ABUSE ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL
STUDENT IN KARU LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF NASARAWA STATE**

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Abstract

The study assessed the influence of child abuse on the academic performance of senior secondary schools in Karu local government area. In order to achieve the objective of the study, two questions were raised and discussed. The survey research design was used, and simple percentage analysis was used. The study revealed, among other things, that there's a significant influence of child abuse on the academic performance of senior students in Karu, a local government area of Nasarawa State. The study recommends among other things, that education policy forums should talk about child abuse and its effects on students. Also, parents should always treat their kids with love and care and make sure they have what they need.

Keywords: Child Abuse, Academic Performance, Senior Secondary School, Karu Local Government, Nasarawa State.

1. Introduction

A child's education is directly related to his or her life chances, income, and well-being (Battle and Lewis 2012). As a result, it is critical to understand what aids or hinders one's educational attainment. Education is commonly regarded as a means of socializing and integrating a child or adult into societal norms. It is also the process of transmitting a society's culture to learners in a formalized setting. It is unmistakably regarded as the foundation of any nation. For a country to grow and develop, high-level policies that allow for effective planning and implementation of educational programs must be in place.

Academic performance has been linked to a variety of factors Axmaher (2010). Most students in Nigeria's senior secondary schools face daily challenges in coping with academics while dealing with serious emotional strains caused by the long walk to school, poor school environment, and being taught by unmotivated teachers. In addition, parents frequently do not want to study because

they must work hard to support their families. These are not likely to bode well for academic success. The word "abuse" is any form of physical, psychological, social, emotional, or sexual maltreatment of a child whereby the survival, safety, self-esteem, growth, and development of the child are endangered (Alokan & Bimbola, 2010).

The level of a student's performance can be said to be determined by how well he meets the standards established by an institution, a teacher, or an external examination body established by the government or an independent organization. As a result, a Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSCE) candidate may be said to have passed or performed well in a core subject such as English language and mathematics if he or she received an average score of 70%, 60%, or even 50%, whereas another may be said to have failed if the score is significantly lower.

It has been observed of late that the academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in the state,

particularly in Karu Local Government Area, is becoming low. One wonders if such low academic performance is as a result of the maltreatment and child abuse students are exposed to. The study therefore seeks to find out if child abuse has any effect on the academic performance of senior high school students.

Students who exhibit anxiety, depression and passive or withdrawal behavior are observed at school. Some of the students engage in delinquent behavior that is aggressive, destructive, and appropriate. There are neglected children stealing or begging for food, students who do not come to school on a regular basis: and students who sleep almost all of the time during lessons. Some people look for inappropriate affection in offers. All of these types of negative behavior are common in the country and have a negative impact on students' academic performance. As a result, the study's goal is to discover how child abuse affects the grades of senior secondary school students in Nasarawa state's Karu local government area.

- i. What are the effects of child abuse on students' academic performance among secondary school students in Karu Local Government Area of Nasarawa State?
- ii. Is there a relationship between the teaching methods and students' academic performance in Karu Local Government Area of Nasarawa State?

The study's main goal is to determine the influence of child abuse on the academic performance of senior secondary school students in Karu Local Government Area of Nasarawa State. Other specific objectives are to:

- i. Investigate the effects of child abuse on academic performance among secondary school students in Nasarawa State's Karu Local Government Area.
- ii. Determine whether there are other factors that teachers and students perceive could influence students' academic performance in Karu Local Government Area of Nasarawa State.

Research Hypotheses

- H₀₁:** There is no significant relationship between child abuse and academic performance in senior secondary school students in Karu Local Government Area of Nasarawa State.
- H₀₂:** There is no significant relationship between the teaching methods and students' academic performance in senior secondary school in Karu Local Government Area of Nasarawa State.

2. Literature Review

Concept of Child Abuse: The maltreatment of children is deeply enmeshed in historical values and perspectives. The concept of child abuse has been defined and redefined throughout history. Society is slowly evolving from viewing children as property, subject to the whims of the family and society, to the recognition that children have rights of their own. Each period in history as well as each culture has a concept of how children should be treated.

The term "child abuse" is seen as the process by which children are exposed to maltreatment by their parents or guardians. Axmaher (2010) defined child abuse as any mistreatment or neglect of the child that result in non-accidental harm or injury and which cannot be reasonably explained. Obekpa (2011) views child abuse as any condition injurious to physical or emotional health that has been inflicted by parents, guardians, or other caretakers.

The African Network for Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN, 2012) defines child abuse as "the intentional, unintentional, or well-intentioned acts which endanger the physical health, emotional, moral, and educational welfare of children." Child abuse can be seen as any act of omission or commission, physical or psychological mistreatment or neglect of a child by its parents, guardians, caregivers, or other adults that may endanger the child's physical, psychological, or emotional health and development. In this definition, wrongfully maltreating a child or selfishly making an unfair use of a child's services by adults responsible for the child constitutes child abuse. Thus, the adult may not be directly

related to the child, but a person in whose care the child is left can be an abuser. This may include educators, healthcare workers, daycare workers, or other responsible adults (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2013).

Legislations against Child Abuse and Neglect in Nigeria The Child's Right Act, 2003

In line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Child's Rights Act 2003 defines a child as a person who has not attained the age of 18. That means that any person from zero years old to 17 years old is a child, while a person 18 years and above is an adult. This definition, plausible as it is, is one major reason some states have refused to pass the Child's Rights Law. Since the Child's Rights Act, in line with the CRC, prohibits the betrothal and marriage of a child, some states see it as out of tune with their culture with respect to marriage to have someone as old as 15, 16, or 17 defined as "a child".

However, some states have passed the law but lowered the minimum age for the purposes of marriage. Some have put it at 16, that is, defining a child as anyone below the age of 16. Thus, within Nigeria, one who is a child in one state could be regarded as an adult in another state. That is the fallout from the concept of federalism, which Nigeria professes. The majority of the states that have passed the children's rights law have retained the international minimum age of 18. So, generally speaking, a child is any person under the age of 18 years, and we are taking that as the working definition here.

The Child's Rights Act, 2003, first and foremost, has adopted all the fundamental human rights set out in the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and subsequent constitutions or amendments thereto as rights also guaranteed to children. This means, therefore, that the Act protects the fundamental human rights of children. In addition, the Act also has specific rights specifically provided and protected for children. These rights include: the right to a good and meaningful name; the right to survival and protection; the right to dignity; the right to parental care, protection, and maintenance; the right to free, compulsory, and universal primary education; the

right to freedom from discrimination; the right to privacy and family; the right to freedom of movement; the right to freedom of association and peaceful assembly; the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; the right to religious freedom; and the right to religious freedom.

Concept of Academic Performance: To perform is to take a complex series of actions that integrate skills and knowledge to produce a valuable result (Elger, 2012). Academic achievement or performance is the end result of education; it is the extent to which a student, teacher, or institution has met their educational objectives (Von Stumm and Chamorro-Premuzic, 2011). Academic performance, according to the Cambridge University Report (2003), is frequently defined in terms of examination performance. In this study, academic performance is characterized by performance in tests and assessments and performance in examinations of primary school pupils.

Academic performance is commonly measured by examinations or continuous assessment, but there is no general agreement on how it is best tested or which aspects are most important; procedural knowledge such as skills or declarative knowledge such as facts (Bossaert and Doumen, 2011). According to Magnuson (2007), generally around the world, the performance of students is measured by the Academic Performance Index. However, there are some individual differences influencing academic performance.

Individual differences in academic performance have been linked to differences in intelligence and personality. Students with higher mental ability as demonstrated by IQ tests and those who are higher in conscientiousness (linked to effort and achievement motivation) tend to perform and achieve highly in academic settings. A recent meta-analysis suggested that mental curiosity (as measured by typical intellectual engagement) has an important influence on academic achievement in addition to intelligence and conscientiousness (Bossaert and Doumen, 2011).

Parents' academic socialization is a term describing the way parents influence students' academic achievement by

shaping students' skills, behaviors, and attitudes towards school. Parents influence students through the environment and discourse they have with their children. Academic socialization can be influenced by parents' socio-economic status. Highly educated parents tend to have more stimulating learning environments (Von Stumm and Chamorro-Premuzic, 2011). Children's first few years of life are crucial to the development of language and social skills. School preparedness in these areas helps students adjust to academic expectancies (Bossaert and Doumen, 2011).

2.1 Empirical Review

Oruche and Ezeiba (2021) investigated the influence of child abuse on the academic achievement of public secondary school students in Anambra State. Three research questions and three null hypotheses guided the study. Conceptual, theoretical, and empirical studies were reviewed. The study adopted the ex-post research design. The population of the study comprised 68,000 junior students in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The instruments were subjected to face and content validation. The acceptance rate for the research question was 2.50 and above, while 2.49 and below was rejected. The hypotheses formulated were tested using a paired sample t-test. The results of the study revealed, among other things, that child abuse influences students' academic achievement in the English language. Among the recommendations was that the school should create a good atmosphere where children can report their abusers at home and away, and that the living conditions of the students must be examined to make them conducive for human habitation.

Ibok (2020) investigated the influence of child abuse on students' academic performance in Biology in the Calabar Municipality of Cross River State. The study was triggered off by the poor academic performance among SS2 students in Biology, the research area. Four null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The research design used was survey design. The literature related to the variables under study was reviewed according to the variables of the study. The research instruments used were a questionnaire and an achievement test in biology. The result of the

analysis using Pearson Product Moment Correlation shows that child emotional abuse, child neglect, physical abuse, and family marital status significantly relate to students' academic performance in Biology. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that the Cross River State Government should make provisions for these children being abused and penalties to be faced by their guardians as it will reduce the rate of child abuse and enhance students' academic achievement.

Zainab (2020) examines the impact of child abuse on the academic performance of junior students in some selected schools in Oshodi-Isole Local Government Area of Lagos State. The research raised pertinent questions on the issue of child abuse and provided relevant answers based on data collected from respondents. A structural questionnaire was used to obtain data from the respondents in the selected schools. Research shows that there is a relationship between child abuse and students' academic performance, as well as the rate of school dropout and cases of children involved in juvenile delinquencies. The research concluded by opined that child abuse goes a long way in affecting children's emotional states, thereby recommending the need for parents and guardians to pay close attention to their children in order to detect and understand factors that could affect their academic progress.

Nchor (2017) investigated the relationship between child labour and academic achievement among junior secondary school (JSS) students in the Ogoja Education Zone of Cross River State. An ex post-facto research design was adopted. A 30-item questionnaire and a 40-item achievement test were the instruments used to gather data for the study. A simple random sampling technique was used to select 610 students from 74 public secondary schools in the zone. Data gathered was analyzed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The result of the analysis revealed a negative significant relationship between child labour and the academic achievement of upper basic students in the Ogoja Education Zone of Cross River State. Based on the above findings, it is strongly established that students who are victims of one form of abuse or the other are likely to perform poorly academically. The above study differs from

the present study in the sense that the former surveyed only child labour as a predictor of child abuse, which was not in the present study.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Weiner's Model of Attributions

Attribution theory provides an important method for examining and understanding motivation in academic settings. It examines individuals' beliefs about why certain events occur and correlates those beliefs to subsequent motivation. The basic premise of this theory is that people want to understand their environment and, therefore, strive to understand why certain events happen. In the classroom, the understanding students have about the causes of past and present events influences their ability to control what happens to them in the future. For example, if students fail a test, they will probably attribute that failure to a specific cause, such as (i) lack of ability, (ii) lack of effort, or (iii) poor instruction, (iv) some environmental or social factors.

The study of attribution was initially associated with Fritz Heider (1896–1988). Later, Bernard Weiner (1935–1958) of the University of California at Los Angeles developed a more comprehensive and extensive model of human attributions. Weiner's model is particularly informative in research on student learning in school settings. In his model, Weiner outlined the processes through which learners form causal beliefs (Weiner 1985, 2005). A basic assumption of Weiner's model of attributions is that learners are affected by both environmental factors (e.g., characteristics of the students' home or school) and personal factors (e.g., prior experiences and prior knowledge). These background variables affect the types of attributions that individuals are likely to make.

One important feature of Weiner's theory is that the specific attribution being made (luck, effort, etc.) is less important than the characteristics of the attribution, which are classified along three causal dimensions: locus, stability, and controllability. These important dimensions affect learners' subsequent motivation toward the task or activity. The locus dimension refers to whether the cause of the event is perceived as internal to the individual or

external. If a learner believes that she failed an exam because she lacks ability, she is choosing an internal cause because ability is internal to the learner. In contrast, if a learner believes that he failed an exam because the teacher is incompetent, he is choosing an external cause because the teacher's incompetence is external to the student. The stability dimension refers to whether the cause is stable or unstable across time and situations. If a learner believes that he failed a science exam because he lacks ability in science, then his cause is stable, particularly if he believes that his lack of ability in science is a permanent quality. In contrast, if a learner believes that he failed the exam because he was ill at the time of the exam, then the cause is unstable in cases in which the illness is a temporary factor. When a student experiences success, attributions to stable causes lead to positive expectations for success in the future. In the face of failure, however, attributions to stable causes can result in low expectations for the future. The controllability dimension refers to whether the cause of the event is perceived as being under the control of the individual. If a runner believes that he lost a race because he did not get enough practice before the event, the cause is controllable because he could have decided to spend more time practicing. In contrast, if he feels that he lost the race because he simply lacks ability as a runner, then the cause is uncontrollable. By definition, only internal attributions can be considered controllable (Anderman and Anderman, 2009).

3. Methodology

The research design used for the study is a survey design. The design is deemed appropriate since data was collected from the elements or subjects without imposing any conditions or treatments on them. The design allows the researcher to use the questionnaire and/or interview methods to collect data. Since the main objective of the study is to determine the influence of child abuse on the academic performance of senior secondary school students in Karu Local Government, the design enabled adequate control of variance and described the ways in which the factors that supported matters under investigation were supported (Angrist & Lavy, 2010). The population of the study is the 75 senior secondary school students in GSS

Gidan Zakara, GSS Uke, Government Secondary School Tudun Wada, Government Secondary School, Aso Pada, Mararaba and Baptist High School Secondary School Karu, all in the Karu Local Government Area of Nasarawa State listed in the 2019/2020 academic session.

The study adopts the probability sampling technique to be precise, the random sampling technique. This is because it gives all elements equal opportunities to be included in the sample. The researcher deemed it appropriate because the combination of selected schools in the local government will enhance the study to arrive at a synthesized result and findings. In this manner, the validity and reliability of the research findings are further enhanced.

Inferential statistics were used to analyze the data collected from respondents. A weighted mean was used and standard deviation technique of data analysis was used to analyse the data collected. A weighted average mean score was

Table 1: What are the effect of child abuse on student' academic performance among secondary school student in Karu Local Government Area of Nasarawa State?

The following abusive situations make my performances in assignments, tests, and terminal examinations to be poor.		A	D	UD
1	Unnecessary beating/bulling by teachers, parents/other care givers, and elderly mates/persons before or during assessments.	48	22	5
2	Insults, blaming and discouraging statements from parent/other caregiver and teachers that are over bearing emotionally.	52	17	6
3	When my parents/other care givers, teacher and elderly mates/persons makes inappropriate sexual attempts on me.	55	8	12
4	When I do not have adequate food, clothing and other vital material needs that makes life comfortable to live.	44	21	10

Source: Field Survey, (2022)

From the data available, 48 representing (64%) of the respondents agreed that Unnecessary beating/bulling by teachers, parents/other care givers, and elderly mates/persons before or during assessments while 22 representing (29.3%) of the respondents disagreed and 5 representing (6.6%) of the respondents were undecided

Responses on insults, blaming and discouraging statements from parent/other caregiver and teachers that are over bearing emotionally revealed that 52 representing (69.3%) of the respondents agreed while 17 representing (22.7%) of

used to test the hypothesis. The study used the following decision rule to accept or reject the hypothesis:

- When the weighted average mean score is equal to 2.50 and above, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted.
- But when the weighted average mean score is less than 2.50 and below, the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternative rejected.

The weighted average means score model is stated as:

$$= \frac{\sum \text{Total Weighed Score}}{\text{Total Number of Responses}}$$

4. Presentation and Discussion of Results

the respondents disagreed and 6 representing (8%) of the respondents were undecided.

Responses on when my parents/other care givers, teacher and elderly mates/persons makes inappropriate sexual attempts on me revealed 55 representing (73.3%) of the respondents agreed while 8 representing (10.6%) of the respondents disagreed and 12 representing (16%) of the respondents were undecided.

The respondents were asked to state whether adequate food, clothing and other vital material needs that makes life

comfortable to live enhanced their learning and performance, the data revealed 44 representing (58.7%) of the respondents agreed while 21 representing (28%) of the

respondents disagreed and 10 representing (13.3%) of the respondents were undecided.

Table 2: Is there a relationship between the teaching methods and student academic performance in Karu Local Government Area of Nasarawa State?

I observe that the following abusive situations make the pupils to find it very difficult to concentrate and actively participate in class activities during lessons.		A	D	UD
5.	When pupils are given unnecessary corporal punishments from their parents/other care givers and teacher with or without justifications	57	12	6
6.	When pupils are not allowed to make friends, belittled and treated inhumanly; making them to be ashamed of their selves.	48	17	10
7.	When pupils do not have the necessary study material such as uniform, books/others; and they are being harassed because of fees.	65	10	-
8	When pupils work too much at home without rest and find the class room conducive for their needed sleep.	58	9	8

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Responses on pupils given unnecessary corporal punishments from their parents/other care givers and teacher with or without justifications as abusive situations that make them to find it very difficult to concentrate and actively participate in class activities during lessons revealed 57 representing (76%) of the respondents agreed while 12 representing (16%) of the respondents disagreed and 6 representing (8%) of the respondents were undecided.

Responses on pupils are not allowed to make friends, belittled and treated inhumanly; making them to be ashamed of their selves as abusive situations that make them to find it very difficult to concentrate and actively participate in class activities during lessons revealed 48 representing (64%) of the respondents agreed while 17 representing (22.7%) of the respondent disagreed and 10 representing (13.3%) of the respondents were undecided.

When pupils do not have the necessary study material such as uniform, books/others; and they are being harassed because of fees as abusive situations that make them to find it very difficult to concentrate and actively participate in class activities during lessons revealed 65 representing

(86.7%) of the respondents agreed while 10 representing (13.3%) of the respondents disagreed.

When pupils work too much at home without rest and find the class room conducive for their needed sleep as abusive situations that make them to find it very difficult to concentrate and actively participate in class activities during lessons revealed 58 representing (77.3%) of the respondents agreed while 9 representing (12%) of the respondents disagreed and 8 representing (10.7%) of the respondents were undecided.

Hypothesis One

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between child abuse and academic performance in senior secondary school students in Karu Local Government Area of Nasarawa State.

Insults, blaming and discouraging statements from parent/other caregiver and teachers that are over bearing emotionally as abusive situations make my performances in assignments, tests, and terminal examinations to be poor.

Table 3: Calculation of Critical Value of Weighted Means Score

Variable	Agreed	Disagreed	Undecided	Total Number of Respondents/Score	Weighted Mean
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Responses	52	17	6	75	¹⁹⁶ / ₇₅
Grading	3	2	1	-	-
Total Value	156	34	6	¹⁹⁶ / ₇₅	2.61
Decision	-	-	-	-	Accepted

Source: Research Data, 2022

Table above show the result of the calculated value of weighted means score at 2.61. This means that, the calculated value is scientifically significant because, it is more than 2.50. We will therefore reject the research hypothesis which stated that, there is no significant relationship between child abuse and academic performance in senior secondary school students in Karu Local Government Area of Nasarawa State and accept alternative hypothesis which shows that, there is significant relationship between child abuse and academic performance in senior secondary school students in Karu Local Government Area of Nasarawa State. This means that, child abuse have influence on academic performance in senior secondary school students in Karu Local Government Area of Nasarawa State.

Hypothesis Two

H0₂: There is no significant relationship between the teaching methods and students' academic performance in senior secondary school in Karu Local Government Area of Nasarawa State.

Unnecessary beating/bulling by teachers, and parents/other care givers as teaching methods during assessments as abusive situations make my performances in assignments, tests, and terminal examinations to be poor

Table 4: Calculation of Critical Value of Weighted Means Score

Variable	Agreed	Disagreed	Undecided	Total Number of Respondents/Score	Weighted Mean
Responses	48	22	5	75	¹⁹³ / ₇₅
Grading	3	2	1	-	-
Total Value	144	44	5	¹⁹³ / ₇₅	2.57
Decision	-	-	-	-	Accepted

Source: Research Data, 2022

Table above show the result of the calculated value of weighted means score at 2.57. This means that, the calculated value is scientifically significant because, it is more than to 2.50. We will therefore reject the research hypothesis which stated that, there is no significant relationship between the teaching methods and students' academic performance in senior secondary school in Karu Local Government Area of Nasarawa State and accept alternative hypothesis which shows that, there is significant relationship between the teaching methods and students' academic performance in senior secondary school in Karu Local Government Area of Nasarawa State. This means that, Unnecessary beating/bulling by teachers, and parents/other care givers as teaching methods during assessments is abusive situations that makes student

performances in assignments, tests, and terminal examinations poor

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

In the study, the researchers tried to investigate the influence of child abuse on the academic performance of senior secondary school students in Karu Local Government Area of Nasarawa State. This was done through an investigation of the personal characteristics of pupils and teachers in public secondary schools and the influence of child abuse on students' academic and their participation in class, which were identified as measures of the academic performance of secondary school students in Karu Local Government Area of Nasarawa State.

The statistical analysis reveals that child abuse has a significant influence on students' academic performance among secondary school students in Karu Local Government Area of Nasarawa State. Based on this, the research therefore concludes that child abuse has a significant influence on academic performance among secondary school students in Karu Local Government Area of Nasarawa State.

Based on the findings, the research recommends the following:

- i. Education policy forums should talk about child abuse and its effects on students. Also, parents should always treat their kids with love and care and make sure they have what they need.
- ii. Teachers and caregivers should try to avoid physical punishment as much as possible because it teaches kids that violence is the best way to keep control and makes them more likely to hit other kids.

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