

INFLUENCE OF PARENTAL PERSPECTIVE AND ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS ON
CHILD ABUSE AMONG LOWER PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS IN EKITI STATE
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Abstract

The study examines parental perspectives and Environmental factors as Correlates of Child abuse among lower primary school pupils. The study adopted correlation research design. The population for the study comprised of parents and teachers of lower primary schools in Ekiti State. The sample comprised of 200 parents and teachers of lower primary school pupils. Simple random sampling technique was adopted in selecting one state out of six states in Southwest Nigeria. Three validated research instruments were used to collect data which are; Questionnaire for Parental Perspectives on Child Abuse on Lower Primary School Pupils, Questionnaire on Environmental Factors on Child Abuse on Lower Primary School Pupils and Questionnaire on child abuse on lower primary school pupils with reliability coefficient of 0.81, 0.84 and 0.90 respectively. Data collected were analysed using percentage, frequency count, and multiple regression. Results showed that discipline style is the main parental perspective of child abuse. Also the results revealed that family conflict is the main factor affecting child abuse among lower primary school pupils in Ekiti State. Further result showed that there exists a linear relationship between the predictors (discipline style, affection, parent history of child abuse) on criterion variable (levels of child abuse). It is revealed that four predictors discipline style, $r = .523$, $t_{(200)} = -6.939$ $P < 0.05$, parent history of child abuse, $r = -.759$ $t_{(200)} = 8.784$ $P < 0.05$, family conflict $r = 1.226$, $t_{(200)} = -18.519$ $P < 0.05$, have significant influence in this prediction model. Based on the findings, it was concluded that

parental perspectives and environmental factors constitute child abuse in Ekiti

Keywords: Child, Child abuse, Parental perspectives, Environmental factors

Introduction

Children need adequate care at the early stage of life most especially in the area of adequate nutrition, good health, quality education, guided play and protection from harm, thus enabling them to stand the best chance of fulfilling their potential. Children therefore need to be nurtured and assisted to develop into responsible and productive adults. However, as children, they are physically, mentally and emotionally immature and therefore require special safeguards and care including protection which will enable them to have a full and balanced personalities within the family and environment. In actualising these potentials, children face challenges which may deprive them of achievement of their goals. Child abuse is one of the challenges children face which comes in different forms such as child marriage, molestation, child labour, kidnapping and neglect (Olusegun & Amos, 2016).

The term child abuse according to Axmaher (2000) is defined as a way by which children are being maltreated or neglected by either their parents, guardians, neighbors and other people around the child which may eventually result to inflicting injury on the child. Child welfare information gateway, 2022 defines child abuse as the intentional, unintentional or well intentional acts which endanger the physical health, emotional, moral and the educational welfare of

children. Child abuses in Nigeria are seen in various forms and degrees from sex and possessions of property. Female child is not allowed to possess land or landed property mostly in South Eastern Nigeria. This is because male counterparts are superior to female counterparts. Therefore, female is seen as not part of the family immediately after marriage and they are not trained in school like the male counterpart. The assumption is that the girl child education ends in the kitchen. Any money invested in training a woman is considered as a waste of resources.

Child abuse is a global problem with serious life-long consequences. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2018) explains that child abuse includes all forms of physical and/ or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment. It could also be commercial or other type 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. Although most people think first of physical abuse when they hear the term child abuse; physical abuse makes up only a small percentage of reported cases (William, 2018). Child abuse is an act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caregiver which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm and sexual abuse. (Child Help, 2012).

Queensland Government (2018) opines that child abuse is caused by isolation and lack of support where no family members, friends, partners or community support are available to help with the demand of parenting. Stress, through financial pressures, job, worries, medical problems or caring for a family member with a disability is a reason for child abuse. Unrealistic expectation is another cause of child abuse which occurs through lack of understanding about a child's developmental stages and behaviour. Also intellectual disability or mental illness which may make parents to be unable to adequately care for their child could cause child abuse. Lack of parenting skill in which parents may not know how to care for their child or may believe it is acceptable to use excessive physical force to discipline or punish a child can lead to child abuse. Drug, alcohol or gambling problem, addictions or substance abuse may affect a

parent's ability to meet their child's needs leading to child abuse.

Millions of children around the world are suffering and need someone to speak up on their behalf. World Health Organization report in 2014 that one billion children aged 2–17 years experienced physical, sexual, emotional or multiple types of violence (UNICEF, 2016). A quarter of all adult's report having been physically abused as children. One in five women and one in 13 men is reported to have been sexually abused as a child (WHO, 2018). In 2014, children comprised 28 percent of detected trafficking victims. Every year, there are estimated 41,000 homicide deaths in children below 15 years of age. Similarly, Akin-Odanye, (2018) opines that the occurrence of child abuse is a global and widespread phenomenon where child sexual abuse is the third most common type of child maltreatment. World Health Organisation, (2018) report showed an annual global estimate of child sexual abuse at about 73 million for boys and 150 million for girls, affecting 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys before the age of 18 (World Health Organisation, 2018). In 2008, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that 772,000 children were abused or neglected all over the world, and approximately nine percent of them were sexually abused (National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, 2010).

Statement of the Problem

Nigeria has been struggling with numerous security crises in recent years including domestic violence, an insurgency by Islamist Boko Haram militants in the northeast and clashes between farmers and herdsmen in the north central, middle belt and southwest. Children suffer most of these violence and clashes which make them prone to abuses of various forms. Government at all levels (Federal, State and Local) in Nigeria have enacted various laws for the protection of the right of the child against child abuse. Also, various institutions like juvenile court, ministry of women affairs, orphanage home have been put in place to enforce the right of the child. Not only that, successive government in Nigeria has at various time initiated and established programmes, scheme and initiatives for the progressive realisation of child right.

Unfortunately, the right of the child has not been protected by adults around the child. Some violent behaviours towards the child are not seen as abuse but as corrective measure for the interest of the child. Thus the child may be battered, deprived, castigated or even be abandoned in extreme cases by parents, guardian, caregivers or any adults around the child when the child misbehaved. Regrettably, despite government regulations, decrees, enactments and laws on the right of the child, child abuse still persist in Nigeria, could parental perspectives and environmental factors be responsible for child abuse? What influence does parental perception and environmental factors have on incidence of child abuse? Hence, this study investigates the correlation between parental perspective and environmental factors on child abuse among lower primary school pupils in Ekiti State, Nigeria,

Purpose of the Study

The study determined the parental perspectives and environmental factors as correlates of child abuse among lower primary school pupils in southwestern Nigeria.

The specific objectives of the study are to;

- i. identify the most prominent parental perspective of child abuse among lower primary school pupils in Southwestern Nigeria;
- ii. examine the most prominent environmental factors influencing child abuse among lower primary school pupils in Southwestern Nigeria;
- iii. investigate the composite influence of parental perspectives (discipline style, material deprivation, affection, family stress and parent history of childhood abuse) and environmental factors (socio economic status, family conflict, insecurity, substance abuse) on child abuse among lower primary school pupils in Southwestern Nigeria; and

Research Questions

Two research questions guides this work; they are;

- I. What are the most prominent parental perspectives of child abuse among lower primary school pupils in Ekiti State?

- ii. What are the most prominent environmental factors affecting child abuse among lower primary school pupils in Ekiti State?

Hypothesis

- H₀₁ There is no significant influence of parental perspective (discipline style, affection, and parent history of childhood abuse) and environmental factors (family conflict, insecurity, substance abuse) on child abuse among lower primary school pupils in Ekiti state.

Methodology

The study adopted correlational research design. The population for this study comprised all parents and teachers of lower primary school pupils in Ekiti State. The sample size for the study consisted of 100 parents and 100 teachers of lower primary school pupils using simple random sampling technique One state is selected randomly from six states in Southwest. One senatorial district from the states and a Local Government Area (LGA) from the selected senatorial district using simple random technique. Ten (10) lower primary schools was randomly selected from the Local Government area. Five (5) teachers were randomly selected in the school, while (5) parents from the school's residential area were randomly selected.

The instruments used in this study are; Questionnaire for Parental Perspectives on Child Abuse on Lower Primary School Pupils (QPPCA), the purpose of collecting data on the parental perspective of child abuse in lower primary schools in Southwestern Nigeria. The questionnaire has two sections; A and B. Section A is the biodata of the respondents; name of school, respondent's gender, age, academic qualification, number of children, location, work experience, designation/job of respondents. Section B elicited information on parental perspective (parental affection, parental stress, material deprivation, parental history of child abuses and parental discipline style) on child abuse.

Questionnaire on Environmental Factors on Child Abuse on Lower Primary School Pupils

(QEFCA), The questionnaire has two sections; A and B. Section A is the biodata of the respondents; name of school, respondent's gender, age, academic qualification, number of children, location, work experience, designation/job of respondents. Section B elicited information on environmental factors (socio economic status, substance abuse, insecurity and family conflict) on child abuse. Questionnaire on Child Abuse on Lower Primary School Pupils (QCA).

The questionnaire has two sections; A and B. Section A is the biodata of the respondents; name of school, respondent's gender, age, academic qualification, number of children, location, work experience, designation/job of respondents. Section B elicited information on child abuse

Data Analysis

The data collected from this was analysed using percentage, frequency and multiple regression.

Results

Research Question One

What are the most prominent parental perspectives of child abuse among lower primary school pupils in Ekiti State

To determine the most prominent parental perspectives of child abuse among lower primary school pupils in Ekiti State, data from QPPCA were subjected to descriptive analysis to find out the parental perspective of child abuse among lower primary school pupils Ekiti State. The result is presented in figure 1

Table 1

The Descriptive Analysis of Parental Perspectives of Child Abuse Among Lower Primary School Pupils in Ekiti State

		Parental perspective			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Discipline Style	120	60.0	60.0	60.0
	Affection	30	15.0	15.0	75.0
	Parenta History of Child Abuse	50	25.0	25.0	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	

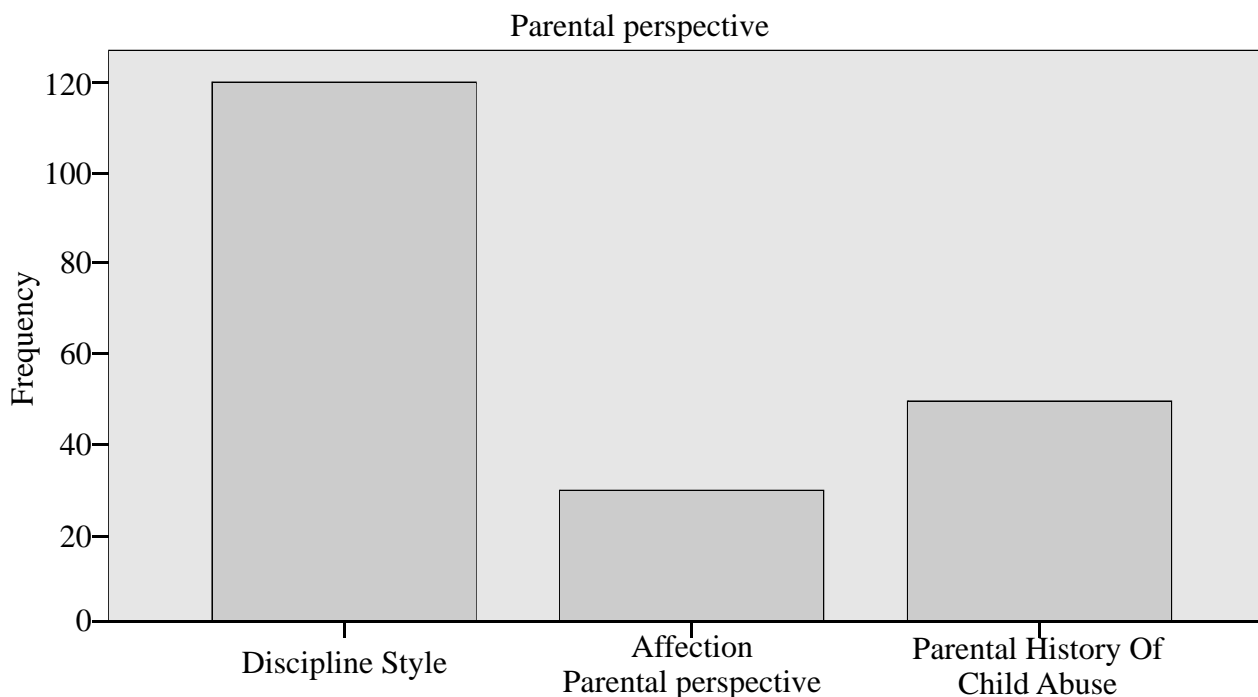


Figure 1 Bar chart showing the Parental Perspectives of Child Abuse among Lower Primary School Pupils in Southwestern Nigeria

The result in table 1 and figure 1 revealed that discipline style is the most prominent parental perspectives of child abuse among lower primary school pupils in Ekiti State with 36.0 % followed by parental history of child abuse 26%, material deprivation 14% and the least parental perspectives are affection and family stress with 12% each.

Research Question Two

What are the most prominent environmental factors affecting child abuse among lower primary school pupils in Ekiti State

In determining the most prominent environmental factors affecting child abuse among lower primary school pupils in Ekiti State, data from QEFCA were subjected to descriptive analysis. To find out the most prominent environmental factors affecting child abuse among lower primary school pupils in Ekiti State. The result is presented in Table 2 and figure 2 percentage and frequency count were used in order to ascertain the most prominent environmental factors affecting child abuse among lower primary school pupils in Ekiti State.

Table 2

Descriptive Analysis of the Most Prominent Environmental Factors Affecting Child Abuse Among Lower Primary School Pupils in Ekiti State.

	Environmental Factors			
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Family Conflict	97	48.5	48.5	48.5
Substance Abuse	68	34.0	34.0	82.5
Insecurity	35	17.5	17.5	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

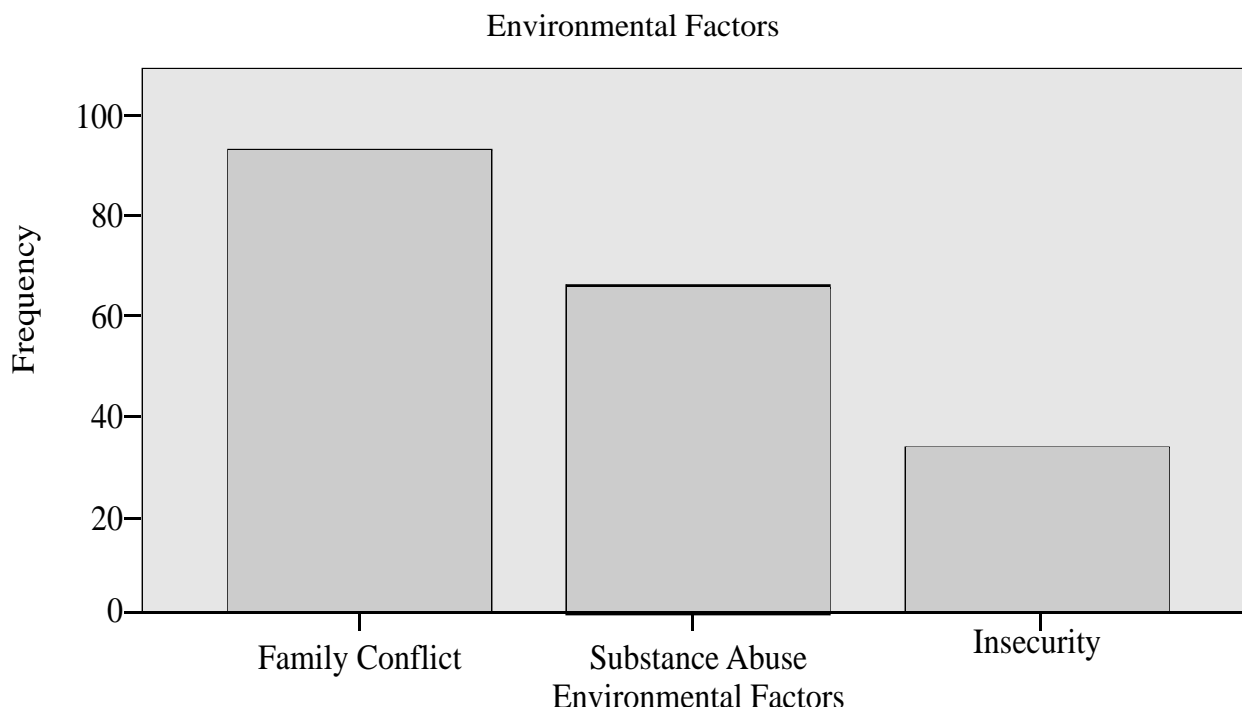


Figure 2 Bar chart for the most prominent environmental factors influencing child abuse among lower primary school pupils in Southwestern Nigeria.

In the study on environmental factors affecting child abuse it was revealed that the environment children live has great effect on the child proximity to child abuse. The environment may be the child house; school, church and other area surrounded by the child. The result of the study showed that family conflict is the main environmental factor affecting child abuse among lower primary school pupils in Ekiti state with 48.5 % follow by substance abuse 34.0% and insecurity with 17.5%.

perspective (discipline style, affection, and parent history of childhood abuse) and environmental factors (family conflict, insecurity, substance abuse) on child abuse among lower primary school pupils in Ekiti State. In ascertaining the influence of parental perspective and environmental factors on child abuse among lower primary school pupils in Ekiti State, data from QPPA, QEFCA and QCA were subjected to multiple regression analysis, to find out the influence of parental perspective and environmental factors on child abuse in Ekiti State.

H₀1 There is no significant influence of parental

Table 3
Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.811	.657	.647	.96267

a. Predictors: (Constant), Insecurity, Discipline Style, Affection, Family conflict, Substance abuse, Parental history of child abuse

Table 4
Regression ANOVA

Model	Sum of Square	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	343.139	6	57.190	61.711	.000 ^b
Residual	178.861	193	.927		
Total	522.000	199			

Predictors: (Constant), Insecurity, Discipline style, Affection, Family conflict, Substance abuse, Parental history of child abuse

Table 5
Regression coefficient

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-29.101	4.242		-6.860	.000
	Discipline style	-.390	.056	-.523	-6.939	.000
	Affection	-.066	0.44	-.100	-1.516	.131
	Parental history of child abuse	1.115	.127	.759	8.784	.000
	Family conflict	.889	.048	1.226	18.519	.000
	Substance abuse	.517	.059	.698	8.691	.000
	Insecurity	-.090	.065	-.110	-1.383	.168

Result in table 4 revealed the multiple regression coefficient (R) which indicates that a liner relationship exists between the predictors (discipline style, affection, parent history of

child abuse, family conflict, insecurity, substance abuse) and the criterion variable (child abuse). In this model, they significantly predict the criterion variables. ($F_{(6, 199)} = 61.711$;

$p < 0.05$) and jointly account for 81.1 % observed variance on child abuse..

Further result in table 5 shows that four predictors, discipline style, $\beta = -.523$, $t_{(200)} = -6.939$ $P < 0.05$, parent history of child abuse, $\beta = .759$ $t_{(200)} = 8.784$ $P < 0.05$, family conflict $\beta = 1.226$, $t_{(200)} = -18.519$ $P < 0.05$), substance on criterion variable have significant influence in this prediction model. This implies that each and all of them are related variables each and all do allow significant prediction of child abuse. However material deprivation and insecurity did not contribute significantly to this particular model.

Discursion of Findings

The study found out that discipline style is the most prominent parental perspective of child abuse. The investigation on parent perspective of child abuse revealed that parents have different opinion about child abuse, most parent still agreed that some factors are responsible for child abuse in our society. This result is consistent with the findings from the previous studies which investigated on parent perspectives on child abuse. The study of Jamaan et al (2017) on Parents' perspectives about child abuse and their impact on physical and emotional child abuse revealed that parents who were more likely to use physical means of punishment were 5 years younger on an average than those who used a nonphysical means of punishment. The study also revealed that parents who had a childhood history of abuse were more likely to hit rather than resolving issues with their children by nonphysical means

The study on environmental factors affecting child abuse revealed that the environment children lives has great effect on the child proximity to child abuse. The environment may be the child house; school, church and other area surrounded by the child. The result of the study showed that family conflict is the main environmental factor affecting child abuse among lower primary school pupils in Ekiti State with 34.0 % follow by substance abuse 28% and socioeconomic status 20% and the least factor is insecurity 18%. This result agreed with the study of Hecht and Hansen (2006) which examined the

complexity of hypothesized pathways to poor adjustment after physical and sexual abuse. Also, the article examines the impact of major risk factors associated with maltreatment. The study is an attempt to better understand the potential contributions of environmental risk factors on the development of psychopathology in physically and sexually abused children.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it was observed that there is a linear relationship between parental perspectives, environmental factors and child abuse. Discipline style is the main parental perspective of child abuse, followed by parent history of child abuse and material deprivation. It was also concluded that family conflict is the main environmental factor that affect child abuse followed by substance abuse and socio economic status. Also, the study concluded that the level of child abuse among lower primary school pupils Ekiti State is high. In addition, the finding concluded that the parental perception and environmental factors have relationship with child abuse

Recommendations

Based on the outcome of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Parents and teachers of lower primary school pupils are advised to study the children's behaviour before taking action on the type of discipline
2. Parents should make the home environment conducive for children to reduce the rate of child abuse in the home.
3. Teachers should make the school environment friendly and safe for children
4. Parents need to be careful and sensitive to the kind of people in their neighbourhood.
5. Children should not be allowed to move with strangers Parents should be friendly with the children so that they will be able to tell them whatever they are passing through

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