

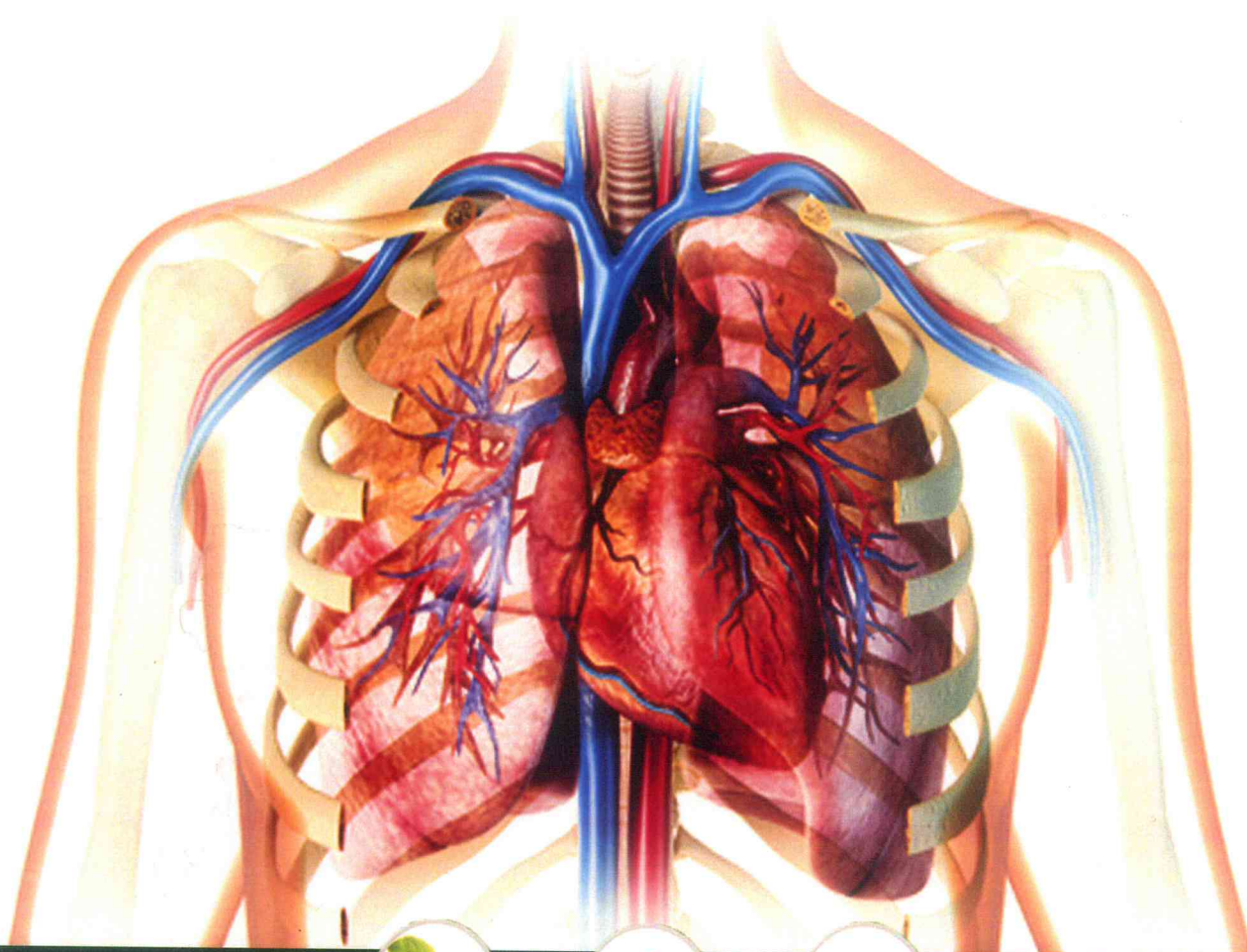


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TABLE OF CONTENTS

KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE OF ANTENATAL CARE SERVICES AMONG PREGNANT WOMEN IN ILORIN SOUTH LGA, KWARA STATE, NIGERIA Ologele Ibrahim, Abdul Mohammed, Olu Moses Gbemi, Dabiri-Adewumi, Azeezat Oluwatoyin and Ayub Akeem Olalekan	8
ASSESSMENT OF KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE OF STANDARD PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES AMONG HEALTH CARE WORKERS IN JALINGO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF TARABA STATE P.Babylon, D.S. Elkanah, K.U Muhammad, S. G. Ishaya, C.G. Azuchukwuene and N.F Amos	15
INVESTIGATION OF TEACHERS AND STUDENTS' USAGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE ATTAINMENT OF SECONDARY EDUCATION OBJECTIVES IN SABON GARI LOCAL GOVERNMENT, KADUNA STATE Shuaibu Garba and Omoniwa, Femi Adekunle (Ph.D)	26
PREDICTORS OF CHILD ABUSE IN SELECTED LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS OF LAGOS STATE NIGERIA Bello, M. O., Ologele Ibrahim, Babatunde, C. C. Pedro, U. A. & Yusuf T. B.	32
INFLUENCE OF SELF EFFICACY ON RETENTION ABILITY OF MALE AND FEMALE STUDENTS IN TRIGONOMETRY AMONG SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN KATSINA STATE, NIGERIA Umar Abdullahi, Maitama Yusuf Bello & Abubakar Sabo	40
ACADEMIC ABILITY, GOAL ORIENTATION AND SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN ECONOMICS IN ILORIN SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT, KWARA STATE Iyekolo, A.Olushola (Ph.D.), Badamas, O. Lasbat and Lawal, B. Moshood (Ph.D.)	49
SOCIO-ECONOMIC DETERMINANTS OF TEENAGE PREGNANCY AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL FEMALE STUDENTS IN ILORIN SOUTH, KWARA STATE Olorunmaiye, A. E., Helma, H., Atanda, T., Ochokwu, A., Abdullahi, M. B.	58
EFFECT OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ON PERFORMANCE AND RETENTION IN TRIGONOMETRY AMONG SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN KATSINA STATE, NIGERIA. Abdullahi, U., Sabo, A and Yakubu, S. I.	58
HEALTH EDUCATION INTERVENTION ON LIFESTYLE AND UPTAKE OF HUMAN PAPILLOMAVIRUS VACCINE AMONG FEMALE STAFF OF UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS Oluwayemi O. Banjoko & Habeeb L. Owolabi	65
NUTRITIONAL STATUS OF PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN IN BENUE STATE, AND ASSOCIATED SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS Emmanuel Kor, Targema Iorvaa, Jonathan Ngutyo Uever & Orfega Zwawua	77
PARENTAL SEPARATION AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF NCE STUDENTS IN FEDERAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION KATSINA Ladi Usman Abdu & Rose Onu (Ph.D)	88
CONSEQUENCES OF CHILD ABUSE AMONG STUDENTS AS PERCEIVED BY SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN OFFA LGA, KWARA STATE Ismaila Ibrahim Kperogi, Muhammed Bukola Abdullahi, Adoration Ebunoluwa Olorunmaiye and Abdul Mohammed	92

PREDICTORS OF CHILD ABUSE IN SELECTED LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS OF LAGOS STATE NIGERIA



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Abstract

It has been observed that a lot of Children are out of School in Nigeria as a result of Child abuse cause by cultural practices, Parent's level of Education, Child Gender and single Parenthood. This study therefore, investigates the Cultural factors as predictors of Child abuse in selected Local Government Areas of Lagos State, Nigeria. The descriptive survey research was used for the study. Random sampling technique was used to select sixty Parents (60) from each of the 30 Local Government Areas selected in Lagos State, Nigeria. A self develop Questionnaire of 0.0671 reliability level was used for data collection. Three hypotheses were tested while Chi-Square statistics was used to test the hypotheses at $P < 0.05$ alpha level. The findings revealed all the hypotheses were rejected meaning that Parents level of Education, single Parenthood and Child Gender are predictors of Child abuse in Lagos State, Nigeria.. Based on these finding, recommendations were made on how Government at all levels should enact laws which will make Child abuse an illegal act, create more awareness through Television and Radio stations, Town criers etc on the risk of Child abuse and ways to prevent/control it.

Keywords: Child gender, Single parenthood, Parent's level of Education, Lagos State, Nigeria.

Introduction

Children make up that subdivision of a Community which is the most weak, susceptible, and wholly dependent on Adults. It is the mistake of Adults when Children end up in areas of natural disasters and catastrophes or zones of military combat operations and become the hostages and victims of physical, sexual, and emotional violence (Alekseeva 2007).

Child abuse is prevalent in every segment of the Society and is witnessed in all Social, Ethnic, Religious and Professional strata (Rosen Abigail et al (2018)). Rosen Abigail et al (2018) defines Child abuse and neglect as "Every kind of physical, sexual, emotional abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, 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" (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2018)

Childhood maltreatment can be linked to later physical, psychological, and behavioral consequences as well as costs to Society as a whole. These consequences may be independent of each other, but they also may be interrelated e.g. abuse or neglect may stunt physical development of the Child's brain and lead to psychological problems, such as low self-esteem, which could later lead to high-risk behaviors, such as substance use. The outcomes for each Child may vary widely and are affected by a combination of factors, including the Child's age and developmental status when the maltreatment occurred; the type, frequency, duration, and severity of the maltreatment; and the relationship between the Child and the perpetrator. Additionally, Children who experience maltreatment often are affected by other adverse experiences (e.g., Parental substance use, domestic violence, poverty), which can make it difficult to separate the unique effects of maltreatment (Rosen, Handley, Cicchetti, & Rogosch, 2018).

Nigeria as a country is made up of different ethnic groups and cultural practices with the dominant group being Hausas, Igbos and Yoruba. It was perceived that some of the cultural practices have contributed to the abuse of Children, currently as observed in the Country. The cultural practices, religion belief, desire for large Family and preference for Male Children, early marriage, and Female Genital mutilation. Early Marriage has to do with Marriage of persons below 18 years. This is practiced in different parts of Nigeria but more in Northern part of the Country where the young Girl child is given into Marriage for various reasons, which could include maintenance of family name (United Nations International Children Education Fund, 2001).

Early Marriage is considered as abuse because the Girl's consent is not sought for, this exposes the Girls into various social, health and psychological problems. Ceballo, (2007) found out in their study that Females are more likely to be sexually assaulted than Male but show distinction in the type of sexual acts they perpetrate. Female genital mutilation is another cultural practice that can lead to abuse. This involves the partial or total removal of the external Genital or injury to the Female Genital organs either for cultural or any none therapeutically reason (UNICEF, 2007). This process may lead to divorce putting the Children in psychological state and if the Mother cannot cope with the Family. Patrick and Robert (2000) opined that Children whose Parents have divorced are usually the victims of abuse and neglect; they also exhibit more Health problems as well as behavioural and emotional problems. The 'role of the Father in Child rearing in the Family cannot be over emphasized, as the roles of the Mother on Child too, cannot be under estimated.

Patrick and Robert (2000) stressed that Parents should be committed to the Education of their Children both Male and Female without discrimination. Children should be properly trained to at least Secondary School level before going into trade, if they so desired. Informal Education should not also be withheld from the Children in order to avoid them from acquiring negative behavior which comes along with lack of having home training. Non-governmental bodies should embark on enlightenment of the masses against Child abuse. They should ensure Children are catered for. Young Parents especially Women should be discouraged from abandoning their Babies.

Statement of the Problem

An abused Child suffers through acts of commission or omission of the Parents/legal Guardians, frequency of problems which varies from Culture to Culture in Nigeria. Child abuse occur to some extent in every community, Society, Local Government Areas, states and as a Country as a whole. Cultural background can at times determine if Child abuse is cultural misunderstanding or traditional practices that can sometimes be harmful.

At times, cultural standard or values or care in the Community, poverty, negligent, ignorant, illiterate, single Parents, and lack of understanding of Child right / law may be contributing factors of Child abuse. Individual Culture and Religious practice may contribute to Child abuse. Culture may be a factor that determines Child separation from their Families and how they are being taken care of. Therefore, this study was embarked upon to investigate cultural factors as predictors of Child abuse in selected Local Government Areas of Lagos state, Nigeria.

Hypotheses

The following Hypotheses which guided the study were tested at 0.05 level of significant

- H0₁: Parents level of Education of Child right will not be a predictor of Child abuse in selected Local Government Areas of Lagos state, Nigeria.
- H0₂: Child Gender will not be a predictor of Child abuse in selected Local Government areas of Lagos state, Nigeria.
- H0₃: Single Parenthood will not be a predictor of Child abuse in selected Local Government Areas of Lagos state, Nigeria.

Methods and Materials

The design of the study was descriptive survey research. The utilization of the design was hinged on the fact that it is suitable for gathering data from a relatively large number of cases at a particular time. The population of the study comprises of Parents in selected Local Government Areas of Lagos state, Nigeria since they are in the habits of making Children to hawk in order to make both ends meet for their Family. The sample was made of a total of 1800 Teachers/Parents selected through random sampling technique. It involved selection of thirty Schools. Sixty (60) Parents (Teachers) were drawn from each of the thirty schools in the Local Government Areas in Lagos State, Nigeria. The research instrument was researcher designed modified Likert type Questionnaire with strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed. The instrument was validated by three experts and found it suitable for the collection of the data for the study. Fifty Parents (Teachers) were used for the pilot test in Apapa Local Government Area of Lagos State, Cronbach Alpha was used to test the internal consistency of the instrument which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.0671. The Questionnaire forms were administered by the researcher in various schools in the three Local Government Areas of Lagos state, the analysis of the data utilized descriptive statistics of frequency count and percentage as well as Chi-Square inferential statistics at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

The results are presented in table 1 -3 in line with the hypotheses tested.

Hypothesis 1: Parents level of Education will not be a predictor of Child abuse among Parents in selected local Government Areas of Lagos state, Nigeria.

Table 1: chi- square analysis on parents' Level of Education

Response	Observed	%	Df	Calculated value	Table value	Decision
Agreed	1680	93.3	3	2,488.98	7.82	Rejected
Disagreed	120	6.7				
Total	18000	100				

$$X^2 = 2,488.98 \text{ df}=3, p<0.05$$

Table 1 shows that one thousand, six hundred and eighty (1680) Parents (Teachers) representing 93.3% of the respondents agreed to the claim that Parents level of Education on Child right. While 120 Parents representing 6.7% of the respondents disagreed by the assertion. The calculated x^2 value of 2,488.98 with $df=3$ at $P < 0.05$ is statistically significant when compared with the table value of 7.82, indicating that the null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

Hypothesis 2: Child Gender will not be a predictor of Child abuse among Parents in selected Local Government Area of Lagos state, Nigeria.

Table2: Chi- Square analysis on Parents' level of Education

Response	Frequency	%	Df	Calculated value	Table value	Decision
Agreed	996	55.3	3	1172.33	7.82	Rejected
Disagreed	804	44.7				
Total	1800	100				

$\chi^2 = 1172.33$, Df= 3 $P < 0.05$

Table 2 shows that nine hundred and ninety-six (996) parents representing 55.3% of the respondents agreed to the claim that Child Gender would not be a significant factor of Child abuse in selected Local Government Areas of Lagos State, while eight hundred and four (804) parents representing 44.7% disagreed by not affirming the assertion. The calculated χ^2 value of 1172.33 with df=3 at $P < 0.05$ is statistically significant when compared with the value of 7.82, indicating that the null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

Hypothesis 3: Single Parenthood will not be a predictor of Child abuse among Parents in selected Local Government Areas of Lagos State, Nigeria.

Table3: Chi- Square analysis on single Parenthood.

Response	Frequency	%	Df	Calculated value	Table value	Decision
Agreed	1383	76.8	3	1031.32	7.82	Rejected
Disagreed	417	23.2				
Total	600	100				

$\chi^2 = 1031.32$, Df= 3 $P < 0.05$

Table 3 shows that one thousand three hundred and eighty three(1383) Parents representing 76.8% of the respondents agreed to the claim that single Parenthood is not a factor of Child abuse, while four hundred and seventeen (417) Parents representing 23.2% of the respondents disagreed. The calculated value χ^2 of 1031.32 with df= 3, at $P < 0.05$ is statistically significant when compared with the table value of 7.82, indicating that the null hypothesis was rejected.

Discussion

The first hypothesis, which stated that Parents' level of Education will not significantly be a cultural predictor of Child abuse among Parents in selected Local Government Areas in Lagos State, Nigeria was rejected. This indicates that Parent's level of Education was a cultural predictor of child abuse among Parents in Lagos State. The result is in line with Aekseeva (2002) report which stated that Mothers who had higher educational level had a more negative attitude toward Child abuse. The finding was also in agreement with Ceballo(2007) who believed that Parental attitude and knowledge have important role in Parenting behavior and Parenting styles. Ashton (2001), also discovered that Educated Parents threaten and force their Children to completely do their command as such Child abuse and Parents should be given the necessary knowledge about abuse and the way out.

The second hypothesis which states that Child Gender will be a cultural predictor for child abuse among Parents in selected Local Government Areas of Lagos state, Nigeria was rejected. This indicates that Child's Gender was a cultural predictor of Child abuse among Parents in Lagos State. The result is in line with Dorathy and Clearwater (2012) who stated that sexual abuse of Boys is far more common than generally believed. Ceballo, (2007) also found that Female are more likely to be sexually abused than Males but show a distinction in the type of sexual act they perpetrate.

The last hypothesis which stated that single Parenthood will not be a cultural predictor of Child abuse among Parents in selected Local Government Areas of Lagos state, Nigeria was rejected. This implies that single Parenthood was a cultural predictor of Child abuse among Parents in selected Local government Areas of Lagos state, Nigeria. In line with Patrick (2000), stated that Children whose Parents have divorced are more likely to be victims of Child abuse and neglect and they also exhibit more Health problems as well as behavioural and emotional problems.

Conclusion

In view of the findings of this study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Parents level of Education would be a cultural predictor of Child abuse among Parents in the local Government Areas of Lagos State
2. Child Gender would be a cultural predictor of Child abuse among Parents in the Local government areas of Lagos State
3. Single Parenthood would be a cultural predictor of child abuse among Parents in the Local Government Areas of Lagos State

Recommendations

The findings and conclusions of this study have prompted the following recommendations:

1. Government at all levels should enact laws which make Child abuse an illegal act in our Society.
2. Government should create more awareness through Television, Town cries, Radios etc., on the risk of Child abuse and ways to prevent and control it.
3. Government should have Population Education to create awareness on the need for Citizen to Control Family size thereby improving quality of life.

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