

# THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

## Effects of Physical and Psychological Abuse, Social Adjustment on Academic Performance of Junior Secondary School Students in Kebbi State, Nigeria

**Muza S.H.**

Assistant Lecturer, Department of Education,  
Kebbi State University of Science and Technology, Aliero, Nigeria

**H. S. Aliero,**

Senior Lecturer, Department of Education  
Kebbi State University of Science and Technology, Aliero, Nigeria

**K. Bashir**

Assistant Lecturer, Department of Education,  
Kebbi State University of Science and Technology, Aliero Nigeria

### **Abstract:**

*The study was set out to examine the effects of physical and psychological abuse, social adjustment on academic performance of junior secondary school students in Kebbi State Nigeria. Two research questions and two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The study employed descriptive survey design. The population of the study was made up of 1,270 JSS three (3) students selected from five (5) schools. A total of 254 physically and psychologically abused students were sampled using proportionate sampling technique. The researcher made use of an instrument adapted from that of Atiku, 2018. The three (3) instruments namely, Physically Abuse Questionnaire (PAQ), Psychologically Abuse Questionnaire (PAQ) and Social Adjustment Questionnaire (SAQ) were adapted and used for the study. It had a reliability coefficient of 0.81. The instrument had facial and content validity. The data generated from the field were collated and the mean score analysis was carried out in order to provide answer to the research questions raised in the study. The t-test statistics was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that significant difference existed between physically and psychologically abused students on their social adjustment ( $P = 0.016$ ) and also significant differences were found between physically and psychologically abused students in their academic performance ( $P = 0.026$ ). Base on the findings of this study, it was recommended that teachers and parents should be sensitized through media on the negative effect of physical and psychological abuse on social adjustment and academic performance among the junior secondary school students in order to boost their moral, socially and help in their cognitive development.*

**Keywords:** Physical abuse, psychological abuse, social adjustment and academic performance

### **1. Introduction**

The concept of child abuse was reviewed from various perspectives to give direction and establish focus for the work in order to achieve the stated objectives. Mukherjee (1978) stated that the definition of child abuse largely depends on the condition of the family to which the child belongs. If the parents of the victim are alcoholic or are known to have psychiatric problems, it can be assumed that they cannot adequately take care of the child. For this reason, such parents cannot be termed as abusers. Other definitions of child abuse, according to Gills (2009) defines child abuse and neglected acts as 'any acts of commission (abuse) or omission (neglect) and any condition resulting from such acts or inaction (consequences) which deprive children of equal rights and liberties and interfere with their optimal development'. Child abuse is any act by parents, teachers or caregivers that may expose a child to actual or potential harm such as total neglect at home, places of worship, schools and other individuals a child may interact with. It has become an international phenomenon; its menace has been given serious attention in many parts of the world like the United States of America, Asia and Africa (Atiku, 2017).

Mccloskey (2003) states that child abuse happens much more in the child's home than in organizations, schools or communities the child interacts with. Erick (2010) distinguishes four major forms of child abuse, namely; neglect, physical abuse, psychological or emotional abuse and sexual abuse. Different scholars have developed their own definitions of what constitutes child abuse for the purposes of removing a child from his or her family and/or prosecuting a criminal charge. Nigeria's Child Rights Act came into effect in 2003 as stated by UNICEF (2009), when the Convention reached its 20th anniversary, twenty out of thirty-six states of Nigeria had child rights laws that conformed to the act. These laws make it possible for states to protect children against all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and discrimination. On its part, the

Centres of Disease Control and Prevention (C.D.C.P.) views child abuse as maltreatment of any act or series of acts or commission or omission by a parent or another caregiver that results in harm, potential harm, or threat of harm to a child (Labeeb, 2008). Child abuse can therefore be seen as any act of physical or psychological mistreatment or neglect of a child by its parents, guardians, caregiver or other adults that may endanger the child's physical, psychological or emotional health and development.

Cicchetti (2015) observed that, physical and psychological abuses are common social problems globally. According to him, the impacts of physical child abuse range from minor injuries to severe brain damage and even death, while psychological impacts range from chronic low self-esteem to severe dissociative states. The cognitive effects on the other hand, range from attention problems and learning disorders to severe organic brain syndromes. Behaviorally, the consequences of abuse range from poor peer relations to extraordinarily violent behaviors (Kempe, 2010). Lehtinen et al. (2005) define social adjustment as an important functional dimension of human life that is indicative of mental health. It is essential to the wellbeing of individual and to his or her ability to perceive, comprehend and interpret the surrounding and to consequently adapt to it or change it if necessary. It is also essential for communication and successful social interactions among human beings. Children who experienced physical or psychological abuse or both were found to have poorer social adjustment when compared to non-abused children.

Browsard (2002) defined academic achievement as the overall academic performance of the students in the school assessed by the use of teachers' rating tests and examinations. United Nations (2010) postulated that academic achievement includes standardized test scores in subject areas such as reading, mathematics and language arts; grade point average (s); classroom test scores and other formal assessments.

The United Nations declaration on the rights of the child (1999) states that the best interest of the child is that he or she be given the chance to express himself or herself and be given the right to education. The convention posited that for its purposes, a child means every human being in particular, therefore, the elimination of ignorance and illiteracy throughout the world is needed in order to facilitate the protection of the child and stop child abuse.

However, a look at the Nigerian situation shows that child abuse occurs not only at home but also in school thereby constituting a bottleneck to the attainment of sound academic performance and good social adjustment. Researchers have shown that this social scourge is on the increase while parents, schools and the society find it difficult to assess and come up with an effective intervention to deal with the situation. Studies have shown that when a child is physically and psychologically balanced, he or she has more motivation, better grades and higher achievement scores (Ebigbo, 2000). Ugwu (2007) identified physical abuse, psychological abuse and child neglect as major forms of child abuse capable of affecting academic activities in Nigeria. Ibiam (2005) found that physical abuse, child neglect, child abandonment and child labour as forms of child abuse and discovered that boys were more physically abused.

Adejobi et al. (2013) research examined the effects of child maltreatment on the academic performance of senior secondary school students in Ibadan, result indicated that there was significant negative relationship between child maltreatment and academic performance. Ezenwa (2009) conducted a study on the influence of child abuse and parental support on children's interest in school attendance and achievement motivation among primary school pupils in Nsukka, the result also showed that physical and psychological abuse influence pupils' academic performance. Based on the findings, it was recommended that parents and guardians should consider beating, hitting, slapping, punching among others as physical abuse and should desist from using them as means of punishment.

The study concluded that if physical and psychological abuse were reduced to the barest minimum, pupils' academic performance in primary schools would be enhanced towards the development of other levels of education for national development. Similar study conducted by Kendall (2000) examined the effects of physical and psychological abuse on academic performance and school disciplinary problems for elementary, junior high and senior high students. The results revealed that the abused children performed less than their non-maltreated counterparts, having lower grades, more suspensions, more disciplinary referrals, and more grade repetitions. Psychological abuse alone was related to lower grades and more suspensions and abused students in junior high school had the highest number of grade repetitions. The number of disciplinary referrals continued to increase through senior high for both physically and psychologically abused students. Interestingly, the academic performance of all subjects dropped during junior high school.

This situation is manifested in cases of child labour and physical assault, divorce among couples, abandoned children, street begging, etc. The consequences of this scourge may include poor academic performance and massive failure, school dropout, criminal acts, prostitution, drug abuse and addiction among students. From the literatures reviewed, it can be deduced that physical and psychological abuse are universal problems that are deeply rooted in societies, thus the need for the present study. The study therefore seeks to find out the effects of physical and psychological abuse, social adjustment on academic performance of junior secondary school students in Kebbi state.

### *1.1. Statement of the Problem*

The increase in the incidence of child abuse in the society has been a great concern to the government, parents, teachers and educationalists. The issue of child abuse has been persistent for many years. The problems of child abuse include street begging for parents' upkeep, hawking on the streets by kids where they can easily be exposed to dangers of being knocked down by speedy vehicles. Many children who are neglected by their parents are a times hooligans, robbers etc. while the female ones go into prostitution and other related cases, such as rape sexual harassment, drugs abuse and addiction which is a deviant behaviour in the society. Other negative influence are personality problems, high rate of crimes in our society, corruption, absenteeism, truancy and dropping out of school which is prevalent among the abused and the neglected children etc. it is against this background that this study is embarked upon in order to examine effects of

physical and psychological abuse, social adjustment on academic performance of junior secondary school students in Kebbi state.

### 1.2. Objectives of the Study

In specific terms, the objectives of the study are to:

- Find out the effects of social adjustments from physically and psychologically abused junior secondary school students in Kebbi State, Nigeria.
- Find out the effects between academic performances of physically and psychologically abused junior secondary school students in Kebbi State, Nigeria.

### 1.3. Research Questions

- Are there any different effects between the social adjustments of physically abused and psychologically abused junior secondary school students in Kebbi State, Nigeria?
- Are there any different effects between the academic performances of the physically abused and psychologically abused junior secondary school students in Kebbi State, Nigeria?

### 1.4. Hypotheses

- H01: There is no significant different between the social adjustment of the physically abused and the psychologically abused junior secondary school students in Kebbi State, Nigeria.
- H02: There is no significant different between the mean performance scores of physically abused and psychologically abused junior secondary school students in Kebbi State, Nigeria.

### 1.5. Significance of the Study

The importance of this study will help render counseling services effectively and efficiently to the pupils that are in dear need of help. It will also enlighten people on the different forms of abuse of children and some suggested solutions to the problems of child abuse in our society.

The study will also provide useful information and serve as a guide and nature of child abuse, the immediate and long-term consequences and aftermaths of this scourge on individuals, families and the society at large. Furthermore, it will provide effective and sustainable policies for child protection programmes. As a result, the study is significant and will assist classroom teachers in identifying physically and psychologically abused pupils in their classrooms.

## 2. Methodology and Research Procedure

This study adopted descriptive survey design. By using this approach Osuala (1987) noted the researcher could appropriately study representative samples, make inferences and generalization.

### 2.1. Population of the Study

The population for this research is made up of all JSS three (3) students in the five selected junior secondary schools in Kebbi State. The population was 1,270 as obtained from Kebbi State Ministry of Education (School Census Report 2012/2013). Below is the population distribution of the five schools selected for this study:

Zone	Name of School	Population
Argungu	Kanta College, Argungu	240
Birnin-Kebbi	Gov't Day Sec. Sch, Jega	350
Bunza	Gov't Sec. Sch. Bunza	100
Yauri	Abarshi Sec. Sch. Yauri	180
Zuru	Gov't Tech. College, Zuru	400
Total		1,270

Table 1: Distribution of Population of Students in Five Selected Junior Secondary Schools in Five Educational Zones of Kebbi State

Source: Primary Data

Table 1 above shows the population of the study consisting of 1,270 JSS3 students in Kebbi state.

### 2.2. Sample and Sampling Techniques

The sample was 254 abused students from selected junior secondary schools in Kebbi state. The five schools were selected using cluster sampling technique to ensure that each zone was represented in the sample. Simple random sampling technique was applied to draw 20% from each of the target population. Going by the Borg and Gall (1983) 20% of the target population is enough to measure representativeness. 254 abused respondents were selected for the study through the administration of questionnaires on physical abuse, psychological abuse and social adjustment. The questionnaires were marked and grouped into three i.e. physical abuse, psychological abuse and non-abused students. 48 samples (19 %) represent students in Argungu zone, 70 (28%) students represent Birnin Kebbi Zone, 20 (8%) represent

students in Bunza zone, 36 (14%) represent students in Yauri zone and 80 (31%) represent students in Zuru zone respectively.

Zone	Name of School	Population	Sample-size	Percentage (%)
Argungu	Kanta College, Argungu	240	48	19
Birnin-Kebbi	Gov't Day Sec. Sch, Jega	350	70	28
Bunza	Gov't Tech. College, Bunza	100	20	8
Yauri	Abarshi Sec. Sch. Yauri	180	36	14
Zuru	Gov't Tech. College, Zuru	400	80	31
Total		1,270	254	100

Table 2: Below Shows the Distribution of Educational Zones, Schools Selected, Population, Sample-Size and Percentage of Respondents

Table 2 above, shows the five schools selected and the distribution sample of 254 physically and psychologically abused respondents.

### 2.3. Instrumentation

Three questionnaires were used to gather information from the respondents. All the three questionnaires contained both closed ended and open ended questions. All the three questionnaires were rated on a five point Likert scale. SA (Strongly Agree), A (Agree), UD (Undecided), DA (Disagree), and SDA (Strongly Disagree). In addition, firstterm standardized examination result in three core subjects were used in order to assess respondents' academic performance.

### 2.4. Procedure for Data Analysis

All questionnaires administered to students were collected, marked and scored in percentages for onward statistical analysis. The Bio - data was analyzed using frequencies and percentages distributions of items per variable. Hypotheses were tested using inferential statistics of independent t-test to determine whether or not significant effects existed between the two independent samples.

All the two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance. The t-test was chosen because it was appropriate statistical test for determining significance effects between means of two groups. Physical and psychological abused, social and academic performance of junior secondary school students (Cohen 2007).

## 3. Findings

### 3.1. Hypotheses Testing

- $H_{01}$ : There is no significant effect between the social adjustment of the physically abused and the psychologically abused students of junior secondary schools.

Variables	Statue	N	X	SD	SE	Df	t	P
Social Adjustment	Physically abused	127	57.58	22.65	1.20	252	2.001	0.016
	Psychologically Abused	127	56.55	22.01	2.56			

Table 3: Independent T-Test Distribution of Social Adjustment of the Physically Abused and the Psychologically Abused Students of Junior Secondary Schools Significant at  $p \leq 0.05$  level

The results in Table 3 showed that the calculated p value of 0.016 is lower than the 0.05 alpha level of significance, with a mean difference of 1.03 in favour of the physically abused. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the social adjustment of the physically abused and the psychologically abused students is rejected.

- $H_{02}$ : There is no significant difference between the academic performance of the physically abused and the psychologically abused students of junior secondary schools.

Variables	Statue	N	X	SD	SE	Df	t	P
Academic Performance	Physically abused	127	47.58	45.65	2.60	252	2.31	0.026
	Psychologically Abused	127	47.20	54.54	6.56			

Table 4: Independent T-Test Statistics of Academic Performance of the Physically and Psychologically Abused Students of Junior Secondary Schools Significant at  $P \leq 0.05$  Level

The results in table 4.4 showed that the calculated p value of 0.026 is lower than the 0.05 alpha level of significance, with a mean difference of 0.38 in favour of the physically abused. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the academic performance of the physically abused and the psychologically abused students is rejected.

#### 4. Discussions of Findings

One of the major findings of this study showed that physical abuse negatively affects the social adjustment of students of junior secondary schools. The finding is in line with the initial assumption of this study that physical abuse might have high or low relationship with the social adjustment of junior secondary school students. The finding is also in line with Mukherjee (1978) and Gelles (2009) who stated that the more children received physical aggression from their parents or teachers the more likely they have low social adjustment and are also likely to engage in physical aggression like fighting with other children at home or school.

Ba-Saddik and Hattab (2013) similarly observed that physical abuse has long lasting effects on the mental health and social adjustment of young children leading to social isolation, criminal behaviours, drug and alcoholism, risky sexual behaviour and even obesity; and all these behaviours if not addressed can persist up to adulthood. Finkelhor (2008) maintained that physical abuse of children leads to low social adjustment, and as a result, the victims showed aggressive behaviour, emotional and behavioural problems, and educational difficulties.

The study also noted that physical abuse has significant negative relationship with academic performance. The study found that physical abuse might have low relationship with the academic performance of physically abused students. This showed that the relationship is directly proportional and this implies that the higher the physical abuse, the lower the academic performance of the physically abused students, and vice versa. The study is similar to the finding of Adejobi et al. (2013) who asserted that physically abused children score lower on cognitive measures and demonstrate lower school achievement when compared to non-abused peers. This is because they are always inattentive, apathetic and have difficulties in concentrating on cognitive tasks.

Another finding showed that psychological abuse has significant negative relationship with social adjustment. The relationship is directly proportional and this implied that the higher the psychological abuse, the lower the social adjustment of the psychologically abused pupils, and vice versa. Theoretically, this is in line with Erickson (1968) conception that psychologically abused children have low social adjustments with cognitive pattern characterized by the expectation of social rejection known as rejection sensitivity. This pattern of thinking includes being defensive, expecting anxiety or anger and rejection from others. This implied that a child who is psychologically abused will become abusive because he learns from his abusive parents, teachers or peers and which can lead to low social adjustments. Briere and Runtz (1988) found that psychologically abused pupils have low social adjustment and this is likely to have impact on their intrapersonal thoughts, feelings, and behaviours, demonstrating problems of depression, anxiety, impaired self-esteem, negative outlook on life, and negative cognitive styles.

It was also found that psychological abuse has significant negative relationship with academic performance. This is in line with the initial assumption of this study that psychological abuse might have low relationship with the academic performance of psychologically abused students. The relationship is directly proportional and this implied that the higher the psychological abuse, the lower the academic performance of the psychologically abused students, and vice versa. Supporting the above, Onyango and Kattambo (2001) noted that in the traditional African setting, child training was the prerogative of parents and community members, but the advent of Western education made parents to hand over their training responsibility to the school with more demands on the basic functions to the school. Consequently, the teachers' tasks have become enormous leading to all kinds of maltreatment and neglect of students on daily basis and has been established that most teachers are not familiar with psychological abuse and how to identify its signs.

Asogwu (2002) opined that psychologically abused children experience poor academic consequences and have malnourished and sick appearance. The child therefore finds it difficult to concentrate and pay attention in the class. This leads to poor academic performance and makes many children to leave school at early ages, this will affect the moral, social development and lead the child to have poor academic performance at school.

#### 5. Conclusions

Based on the above findings, the study concluded that physical and psychological forms of abuse have negative association with low social adjustment and poor academic performance among students. In addition, the psychologically abused students are found to have lower social adjustment and poor academic performance than their physically abused counterparts.

#### 6. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the study recommends that:

- Teachers and parents should be sensitized through the media on the negative effect of physical and psychological abuse on social adjustment and academic performances of their wards.
- Teachers and parents should understand that, when physical and psychological abuse increases then the students' social adjustment and academic performance decreases and vice versa.

## 7. References

- i. Adejobi, A. O., Osonwa, O., Iyam, M. A., Udonwa, R. E., and Osonwa, R. H. (2013). Child Maltreatment and Academic Performance of Senior Secondary School Students in Ibadan, Nigeria. *Journal of Educational and Social Research* 3 (2), pp. 175-183.
- ii. Asogwu, L.O. (2002). Parental Perception of Child Labour and its Incidence in Nsukka Education Zone in Enugu State. *Jowice* 6, pp.40 – 46.
- iv. Atiku, S. (2017) Relationships among Physical and Psychological Abuse, Social Adjustment and Academic Performance of Primary School Pupils in Kaduna State. PhD Thesis, Department of Educational Psychology and Counselling Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, Nigeria
- v. Ba-Saddik, A. S. and Hattab, A. S. (2013). Physical Abuse in Basic-Education Schools in Aden Governorate, Yemen: A Cross-sectional Study. *Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal*, 19 (4), pp. 333-339.
- vi. Bong, W. R, and Gall, D. (1983). Educational Research. Longman, Network.
- viii. Brassard, M. R. Germain, R. and Hart, S. N., eds. (1987). Psychological Maltreatment of Children and Youth. New York: Pergamon.
- ix. Briere, J., and Runtz, M. (1988). Multivariate Correlates of Childhood Psychological and Physical Maltreatment among University Women. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, pp. 12, 331-341.
- x. Browsard, Z. (2002). Causes of Poor Achievement in WAEC Mathematics Examination in River State Secondary Schools Nigeria. *International Journal of Mathematics Education*, 21(3), pp. 110-120.
- xii. Cicchetti, D. (2015). The Effects of Maltreatment and Neuroendocrine Regulation on...-NBC
- xiii. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov> > NCBI > Literature > PubMed Central (PMA)
- xiv. Cohen, L. (2007). *Research Methods in Education (6 Edition)*. New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis
- xv. Group
- xvi. Ebigbo, P.O. (2000) *Child Trafficking in Nigeria Currare* 23, 173-186
- xvii. Erick, F. (2010). *Clearing House on Educational Management*. A Handbook for Collaboration Between
- xviii. Schools and Social Services: Vol. 5.
- xix. Erickson, E.H. (1968). *Childhood and Society*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. New York, Norton.
- xx. Ezenwa, G. M. (2009). Influence of Child Labour and Parental Support on Children's Achievement in
- xxi. School Attendance and Achievement Motivation among Primary School Pupils in Nsukka.
- xxii. Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
- xxiii. Finkelhor, D. (2008). *Childhood Victimization: Violence, Crime and Abuse in the Lives of Young*
- xxiv. *People*. Oxford: University Press.
- xxv. Gelles, R.J. (2015). *Family Violence*. Introduction to Social Problems. Eds. Craig Calhoun and George
- xxvi. Ruzer. New York: Mc. Graw – Hill.
- xxvii. Gills, D. G. (2009). *Violence against Children*. Harvard: University Press.
- xxviii. Ibiam, J. U. (2005). Incidence of Child Abuse in Primary School Children in Abakaliki Urban. *Journal of*
- xxix. *Educational Systems Research and Development*.
- xxx. Kempe, R., (2010). *Child Abuse*. London: Fontana Open Books.
- xxxi. Kendall, K. A. (2000). The Long-Term Health Effects of Victimization. *Joining Forces* 5(1):1-4
- xxxii. Labeeb, T. (2008). *Child Maltreatment*; Centre for Disease Control. California: University of California
- xxxiii. Press.
- xxxiv. Lehtinen, V., Ozamiz, A., Underwood, L., and Weiss, M. (2005). *The intrinsic value of mental health*.
- xxxv. Eds. H. Herrman, S. Saxena and Moodie, R. *Promoting Mental Health: Concepts, Emerging Evidence,*
- xxxvi. *Practice*. Geneva: World Health Organisation, Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse, pp.
- xxxvii. 46-57.
- xxxviii. McCloskey, A. (2003). Post-Traumatic Stress in Children Exposed to Family Violence and Single Even
- xxxix. Trauma. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry* Vol. 39, pp. 108 –115.
- xl. Mukherjee, A. (1978). *Educational Psychology for Teachers, Students and Parents*. India: K.P. Basu Publishing Co.
- xli. Onyango, P. P. M., and Kattambo, V. W. M. (2001). In *Child Abuse: A Global View*, ed. B. M.
- xlii. Schwartz-Kenney, M. McCauley, and M. Epstein. Westport, CT: Greenwood.
- xliii. Osuala, E.C. (1987). *Introduction to Research Methodology*. The Millennium edition. Enugu: Cheston Agency Ltd
- xliv. Ugwu, G. C. (2007). Forms of Child Abuse and Neglect in Primary Schools in Nsukka Education Zone.
- xlv. An Unpublished M.Ed. Project, Department of Educational Foundations, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
- xlvi. UNICEF (2009). *Nigeria Child Rights Act, 2003 convention*.
- xlvii. United Nations (1999). *Declaration of the Right of the Child*. United Nations Office of Public Information.