

## **Impact of Child Abuse On Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Geidam Local Government Area of Yobe State**

**Shettima Alhaji Umar**

Department of Social Development, Mai Idris Aloomo Polytechnic, Geidam, Yobe State.

### **Abstract**

*This study examines the Impact of Child Abuse on Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Geidam local government area of Yobe State, using four (4) Secondary Schools in Geidam. The four (4) Secondary Schools are: **Government Secondary school Geidam, Government Science and Technical College Geidam, Geidam Academy and Success Foundation Academy Geidam.** The study used both primary and secondary data (questionnaire and interview). 40 respondents were chosen as sample from both staff and students. Two hypotheses were tested with the aid of Chi-Square and the data collected were tabulated and analyzed using simple percentage. The result of the analysis revealed that there is a significant relation between child maltreatment and students' academic performance in secondary school in Yobe State. It also showed that there is a significant relationship between emotional abuse and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Yobe state. The study recommended that Government should employ more counselors to help and guide parent/guardians on how to treat their children/wards to avoid child maltreatment. Parents and guardians should adopt good parental care, love and concern for their children; this could help them to perform better in schools and among others.*

**Keywords:** Child Abuse, Child Maltreatment, Academic Performance, Secondary School, Students

## **Introduction**

Students' academic performance is determined by number of factors within and outside the classroom, which include home, environments and some circumstances like economic, culture etc (Ramez, Widom, Browne, Fergusson, Webb & Sinow 2009). Therefore, conducive home environments, economic stability and favorable cultural pattern of the child parent may enrich children's school experiences, while unconducive home environments, unstable economic and unfavorable cultural pattern of the child's parent may have detrimental effects on both students' academic performance and classroom behaviours. This means that students' home environment, economic status, cultural pattern either positive or negative, could have bearing on their academic performance. According to Ramez et al (2009), the most devastating of the environmental factors is child abuse.

Child abuse refers to any situation dangerous to physical or emotional health as a result of parents, guardian or other caretakers' behavior. (Obekpa, 2001). According to Taylor and Steward (2011), child abuse is any action or inaction on the part of a parent, guardian or caretaker that may result in death, serious physical or emotional injury, sexual abuse, or exploitation; or an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm. McCoy and Keen (2013) view child abuse as action or inaction of parent, guardian or caregiver that causes injury, death, emotional harm or risk of serious harm to a child. Child abuse, therefore, can be defined as any behavior displayed by the parent, guardian or caregiver, either intentionally or by the negligence of parents or guardians that can lead to loss of life, physical or psychological harm, sexual harassment and others to an innocent child.

The increasing rate of child abuse in our contemporary time is a thing of concern to the researchers, parents Government humanitarian organization and educationists. However, in most of Africa country children plays significant roles in the survival of their families; they assist their parent, guardian or caregiver in farming, and

hawking goods, cooking, washing and engage in other house activities according to Onyango (2013), children always work in the traditional African societies and that the notion of child abuse as a social problem, is a recent development. Nonetheless, child abuse is not peculiar to Nigeria or the study area. According to UNICEF (2013), every year more than 3 million reports of child abuse were reported in America alone.

There are different forms of child abuse ranging from physical, sexual, emotional, and mental neglect (Crosson, 2008). Physical abuse is any touch on the child's body such as pushing, hitting, beating and others which might result in an injury. Emotional abuse refers to the use of embarrassing words such as bastard, good for nothing, blocked head, constant condemnation by parent or caregiver which might be capable of causing the child serious cognitive, mental or behavioural disorders. Emotional abuse means constantly blaming the child, belittling or berating the child, being unconcerned about the child's welfare and overtly rejection of the child by parents or caretakers or caregivers (Mba, 2003).

Child abuse has become a global issue and it has been established that many children in the developed world, especially in America, are abused annually. This has extended to African countries like Nigeria (UNICEF, 2012). The researchers observed that most children in Makurdi metropolis are being used by parents/guardians in hawking goods like groundnuts, oranges, mangoes among others on the streets during school hours instead of being in school. Some of these children are seen looking pale, exhausted with scars on their bodies resulting from beatings meted on them by parents /guardians (UNICEF, 2012).

However, violation of child's rights in form of child abuse is under-reported and under-punished; resulted to high occurrence of child abuse. More so, the researchers observed that - studies have not been carried out on child abuse and academic performance in the Secondary schools in the study area. Hence, this study is

### ***Impact of Child Abuse On Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Geidam Local Government Area of Yobe State***

aimed at filling this research gap and specifically physical and emotional abuses on academic performance were considered. Parents' inability to adequately provide for the needs of some family members are heavy burden and leading to street hawking activity on their children which causes academic set back through repetition, withdrawal from school or dropout due to failure and shame which is another form of child abuse. While Nseabasi and Oluwabamide (2010) identified unemployment, poverty loss of parents among others as the major causes of child hawking, Udoh and Joseph (2012) found that poverty is the main cause of street hawking.

The main purpose of this study is to examine the impact of child abuse on academic performance in secondary school students' in Geidam Local Government area of Yobe State. While the Specific objective of the study are:

- i. To determine the impact of physical abuse on academic performance of secondary school students in Geidam Local Government Area of Yobe state.
- ii. To determine the impact of emotional abuse on academic performance of secondary school students in Geidam Local Government Area of Yobe state.

### **Literature Review**

Child abuse is any act or failure to act on the part of a parent or guardian to provide basic need of the child such as food, shelter, clothing, health, safety and educational services which results in death, serious physical or emotional injury, sexual abuse or exploitation or an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm.

The form of child abuse different to each state since any state is responsible to provide its own definition, form and some laws to be adopted by the State. Most States recognize four major types of abuse that is physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, and emotional abuse. Additionally, many States identify abandonment, parental substance use, and human trafficking as abuse or neglect. Some of these types of abuse may be found separately, or in combination.

The term child abuse is considered as any maltreatment or neglect of the child by the parent or caregiver that result in non-accidental harm or injury and which cannot be easily identified (Axmaher 2004). According to (Crosson, 2008), the commonest consequences of child abuse is how it affects child's performance in school and interferes with the foundation a child needs to be achieved throughout his/her school career. The prolonged abuse could affect the child's overall development. Children who have been abused tend to perform lower than his/her peers with regard to cognitive capacity, language development, and academic achievement (Crosson, 2008). Hence, child abuse may have negative influence on the academic performance of an individual and as well disrupt the basis of his successful career development in the future.

Turton (2008) in his study revealed that negative influence of child abuse and poor academic performance and classroom functioning for school age children significantly affect the child future life chances.

Similarly, Staff (2013) viewed that the rate of continuous child abuse and neglect has been increasing within the Country. According to Asamaigbo (2004) children who have been physically abused might undergo a wide range of personality disorders such as increased fears, anxiety, anger, depression, hostility and aggression. Moreso Australian Childhood Foundation (2008), asserted that, child abuse is contributing to poor academic performance, high social disorder, substance abuse, and other behavioural problems that usually result in poor educational and economic outcomes later in life. People who experienced abuse were slightly less likely to participate in the labour force and to be employed full time, and slightly more likely to be unemployed or be employed part time.

According to a study by Tyler and Brownridge (2008) founded that child abuse increases the possibility of lower academic performance and poor school performance. Shonk and Cicchetti (2001) revealed that children who are constantly insulted, beaten, belittled among others usually scores poor grade in school, which is a sign of

### ***Impact of Child Abuse On Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Geidam Local Government Area of Yobe State***

poor academic performance. Similarly, Sladea and Wissow (2007) viewed that childhood maltreatment is related with emotional and behavioural problems throughout childhood which might result in unwanted academic result in school. Eweniyi (2003), Bukoye (2004) and Mba (2003) in their studies viewed that children who are emotionally abused could manifest increased depression, anger, hostility, aggression and may lack interest in school activities. These children might lack concentration in activities like reading and writing. These Challenges on children might have negative effect on their overall performance in school. Alokun and Olatunji (2014) in their study opined that abused children lack concentration in school activities which in turn may have negative effect on their performance.

However, the study is agreed on attachment theory propounded by Bowlby (1958). The theory stated that if a child was separated from his/her mother within the first five years of life, it could affect the child's emotional development and social difficulties in later life. The theory emphasizes the physical aspect of mother child bonding and sees the attachment as an instructive; genetically determine two ways and a symbolic process. The theory is related to this study because it encourages parents to love and care for their children, instead of humiliating and torturing their young minds with all sort of abuse. This will enable the child to interact freely, thereby improving their academic performance.

### **3 Methodology**

#### **Study Area**

Geidam is one of the seventeen (17) local Government areas of Yobe state. The Local Government was created in the year 1976 by the local Government act of 1976 during General Murtala Ramat Mohammed's regime. The local Government was among the eighteen (18) local Government areas of the former Borno state. The local government is located in the northern part of Yobe state, it bordered with Yunusari local Government to the north, Tarmuwa local government to the south, Bursari local

Government to the west and Gubio local Government of Borno state to the east. The local Government is about 180 km away from Damaturu the state capital of Yobe state. It covers an area of about 3892 kilometers squares with the population of about 157,295 people according to 2006 population census (NPC, Census 2006). The local government is made up of eleven (11) wards comprises of Asheikri, Kolori, Hausari, Gumsa, Kusur, Ma'anna-Dagamdi, Borko, Zuru-Ngulaiya, Dejina/Fukurdi, Futchimiram, Balle-Kelluri, and Jororo-Kalgeri.

#### **Research Design**

The survey focused on the staff/teachers and students of four (4) Secondary Schools in Geidam town namely: Government Secondary school Geidam, Government Science and Technical College Geidam, Geidam Academy and Success Foundation Academy Geidam which forms the population of this study. The Necessary data were collected to ascertain the extent of the Impact of Child Abuse on Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Geidam Local Government area of Yobe state. To achieve the objectives of the study, primary source of data was employed. The primary source data was based on the use of questionnaires distributed and collected from the Teachers/staff and the Students of the above mentioned Schools. The target population of study was all the Staff and Students of the above mentioned Schools. Since it is not possible to study the entire Population, a sample of 40 respondents was randomly selected and Administered questionnaires from the Schools studied. The sampling technique used for this study was stratified random sampling technique in selecting the Sample for empirical examination. The questionnaire was designed in such a way that alternatives were provided for the respondents to choose from and opinions of options were expected to be expressed. In the questionnaire, the Likert scale measurement of variables was used; this requires the respondents to indicate a degree of agreement or disagreement. A non-parametric statistics (Chi-square) was also employed in testing the hypothesis.

#### **Study Population and Sampling Procedure:**

### ***Impact of Child Abuse On Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Geidam Local Government Area of Yobe State***

The study population consists of Staff and Students of Government Secondary school Geidam, Government Science and Technical College Geidam, Geidam Academy and Success foundation Academy Geidam; that makes up of the population of this research.

### Research Questions:

The following research questions were used to help in conducting the research work:

- i. What are the impact of physical abuse on academic performance of secondary school students in Geidam Local Government Area of Yobe state?
- ii. What are the impact of emotional abuse on academic performance of secondary school students in Geidam Local Government Area of Yobe state?

### Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study at 0.05 alpha levels:

i. Physical abuse has no any impact on academic performance of secondary school students in Geidam Local Government Area of Yobe state.

ii. Emotional abuse has no any impact on academic performance of secondary school students in Geidam Local Government Area of Yobe state.

### Data Presentation and Analysis

#### Test of Hypothesis

The two hypotheses earlier formulated will be tested using the chi-square ( $X^2$ ) method.

#### Decision Criteria

The decision rule is that if the calculated values of  $X^2$  is greater than the tabulated value (or critical value), we accept the alternative hypotheses and reject the null hypotheses or vice versa.

#### Hypothesis One

**Ho<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between physical abuse and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Geidam.

**Table I**

| Alternatives      | Responses | Percentage (%) | Aggregate  |
|-------------------|-----------|----------------|------------|
| Strongly agree    | 22        | 55             | 80         |
| Agree             | 10        | 25             |            |
| Undecided         | 2         | 5              | 5          |
| Disagree          | 4         | 10             | 15         |
| Strongly disagree | 2         | 5              |            |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>40</b> | <b>100</b>     | <b>100</b> |

Source: Field Survey Report, 2022.

**Table II. Contingency Table**

| Alternatives             | O <sub>i</sub> | E <sub>i</sub> | O <sub>i</sub> -E <sub>i</sub> | (O <sub>i</sub> - E <sub>i</sub> ) <sup>2</sup> | (O <sub>i</sub> - E <sub>i</sub> ) <sup>2</sup> |
|--------------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
|                          |                |                |                                |                                                 | E <sub>i</sub>                                  |
| Strongly agree           | 22             | 8              | 14                             | 196                                             | 24.5                                            |
| Agree                    | 10             | 8              | 2                              | 4                                               | 0.5                                             |
| Undecided                | 2              | 8              | (6)                            | 36                                              | 4.5                                             |
| Disagree                 | 4              | 8              | (4)                            | 16                                              | 2                                               |
| Strongly disagree        | 2              | 8              | (6)                            | 36                                              | 4.5                                             |
| <b>X<sup>2</sup> cal</b> |                |                |                                |                                                 | <b>36</b>                                       |

## **Impact of Child Abuse On Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Geidam Local Government Area of Yobe State**

$E_f = \text{Total Frequency}$

Number of Responses

$$40/5 = 8$$

Level of significance ( $\alpha$ ) = 5% (0.05)

Critical Value =  $(\mu - 1), \alpha$

Where;  $\mu$  = No of options

$$= (5 - 1), 0.05$$

$$= 8 (0.05)$$

$$X^2 \text{ Tab} = 15.51$$

**Decision:** Since  $X^2$  calculated is greater than the  $X^2$  tabulated, ( $36 > 15.51$ ) we accept alternative

hypothesis and reject the null hypothesis. Hence, we conclude that there is significant relationship between physical abuse and students' academic performance in secondary Schools in Geidam. This entails that abuse seriously hinders students' academic performance.

### Hypothesis Two

**Ho<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between emotional abuse and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Yobe State.

**Table III**

| Alternatives      | Responses | Percentage (%) | Aggregate  |
|-------------------|-----------|----------------|------------|
| Strongly agree    | 14        | 35             | 75         |
| Agree             | 16        | 40             |            |
| Undecided         | 4         | 10             | 10         |
| Disagree          | 2         | 5              | 15         |
| Strongly disagree | 4         | 10             |            |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>40</b> | <b>100</b>     | <b>100</b> |

Source: Field Survey Report, 2022.

**Table IV: Contingency Table**

| Alternatives             | O <sub>i</sub> | E <sub>i</sub> | O <sub>i</sub> -E <sub>i</sub> | (O <sub>i</sub> - E <sub>i</sub> ) <sup>2</sup> | (O <sub>i</sub> - E <sub>i</sub> ) <sup>2</sup> |
|--------------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
|                          |                |                |                                |                                                 | E <sub>i</sub>                                  |
| Strongly agree           | 14             | 8              | 6                              | 36                                              | 4.5                                             |
| Agree                    | 16             | 8              | 8                              | 64                                              | 8                                               |
| Undecided                | 4              | 8              | (4)                            | 16                                              | 2                                               |
| Disagree                 | 2              | 8              | (6)                            | 36                                              | 4.5                                             |
| Strongly disagree        | 4              | 8              | (4)                            | 16                                              | 2                                               |
| <b>X<sup>2</sup> cal</b> |                |                |                                |                                                 | 21                                              |

$E_f = \text{Total Frequency}$

Number of Responses

$$40/5 = 8$$

Level of significance ( $\alpha$ ) = 5% (0.05)

Critical Value =  $(\mu - 1), \alpha$

Where;  $\mu$  = No of options

$$= (5 - 1), 0.05$$

$$= 8 (0.05)$$

$$X^2 \text{ Tab} = 15.51$$

**Decision:** Since  $X^2$  calculated is greater than the  $X^2$  tabulated, ( $21 > 15.51$ ) we accept and reject the null hypothesis. Hence, we conclude that there is significant relationship between

emotional child abuse and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Geidam, Yobe state. This entails that emotional child abuse seriously hinders students' academic performance.

### Findings

The first hypothesis showed significant relation between child abuse and students' academic performance in secondary school in Geidam, Yobe State. The finding is in agreement with some of the literature reviewed such as Asamaigbo and Asamaigbo in Akpende, Umuren and Ukpebi (2010) who agreed that children who

## **Impact of Child Abuse On Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Geidam Local Government Area of Yobe State**

have been abused might face a wide range of personality disorders, such as increased fears, anxiety, anger, depression, hostility and aggression. Alok and Olatunji (2014) are of the same line of thought, confirmed that child abuse result in lack concentration in the class; and as a result, it has a negative influence on students' academic performance.

The second hypothesis also showed significant relationship between emotional abuse and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Geidam, Yobe state. The finding is agreed with some of the studies of Eweniyi (2003), Mba (2003) and Bukoye (2004) who confirmed in their studies that children who are emotionally abused might lack concentration in academic activities such as reading and writing as a result of depression, anger, hostility and aggression. Crosson (2008) who stresses that those children who have been abused tend to score lower which turn to have negative effects on their academic performance. Australian Childhood Foundation (2008) confirmed that child abuse leads to poorer academic performance. These assertions are in tandem with the findings of this study.

### **Conclusion**

The study finally established that child Abuse has a serious negative influence on academic performance of secondary schools students of some selected schools in Geidam local Government area of Yobe State Nigeria. The researchers therefore concluded that, there is a negative or inverse relationship between child abuse and students' academic performance. Where the relationship entails; as child abuse increases so also the students' academic performance decline and vice versa

### **Recommendations**

In view of the study findings, the following recommendations were made by the researchers to address the impact of child abuse on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Geidam Local Government area of Yobe State. The recommendations are viz: Government should employ more counselors to help and guide parent on how to treat their children/wards to

avoid abuse. Parents and guardians should adopt a good parental care, love and concern for their children and wards; this could help them to perform better in schools and alternately reduces abuse. Head teachers should refer cases of child abuse to school counsellors for expertise action and if need arise to higher appropriate authorities. Government should also provide social amenities and infrastructures or improve on the existing ones so as to improve the standard of living of the people in order to reduce poverty which is the main cause of child abuse.

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