

Relationship Between Child Neglect and Students Learning Attitude in Secondary Schools in Maiduguri Metropolitan Council of Borno State

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Abstract— This study investigated the relationship between child neglect and attitude to learning among Secondary School Students in Maiduguri Metropolitan Council of Borno State, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. A sample size of one hundred and twenty (120) was selected from ten (10) secondary schools using stratified random sampling technique consisting of forty (40) male students, forty (40) female students and forty (40) teachers respectively. Data was collected with the aid of a twenty (20) item child neglect inventory designed by the researchers and validated using Kuder-Richardson formula 21 and was found to be 0.86. Two null hypotheses were formulated. Apart from descriptive statistics of the demographic characteristics of the respondents, hypotheses were tested using chi-square statistical tool at 0.05 level of significance. The findings showed that there is a significant relationship between students gender and child neglect and also that there is a significant relationship between child neglect and students attitude.

Keywords— Child neglect, Gender, Learning Attitude.

I. INTRODUCTION

The issue of child abuse and neglect is a national issue that needs to be nipped in the bud by the involvement of all. These days, parent and guardians spend most of their time outside their homes, thus leaving their children to cater for themselves. The long absence from home coupled with non-provision of basic essential needs expose Children to peer and other negative influences Child neglect is defined as endangering the physical, mental and emotional condition of Children through improper care. It simply denotes the act of not taking proper care or not giving adequate attention to a child's welfare. This could either be through neglecting them to take care of themselves, abandoning the two relatives, aged parents or telling the housemaid to look after their welfare. Child neglect can be psychological, physical, medical care neglect, international drugging of the child and induced truancy from school on the child and lack of supervision (Miller, 1979).

Children working at construction sites, hawking during school hours or being used at domestic servants having been

neglect and cannot benefit from education. Education is recognized as an avenue through which a child can develop very well, hence the united nations, European union, African union and UNICEF have all joined hands in advocating for child right protection and well being of children.

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Many Nigerians are involved in neglecting children under their care. This ranges from parents, guardians, care givers, teachers and the entire society. Cases abound where fathers deliberately refuse to train their daughters in school and force them into early marriage, guardians or care givers giving out their wards to hawk during school hours, parents sending their sons to construction sites as labourers to earn money for the family or teachers using students as farm hands (Okafor, 2014).

Research shows that children who are exposed to poor family management practices are at a greater risk of developing abnormal and antisocial behavior. Consequences such as Juvenile delinquency, criminal activities, substance abuse and domestic violence occur due to child neglect (Bammeke, 2010).

This research therefore examine specifically the relationship between child neglect and students (male and female) learning attitude in secondary schools in Borno State.

The Result in table 1 Item I show 60 of the respondents representing (50.0%) were Male While 60 representing (50.02%) were Female item 2 in the table shows that majority of the respondents 50 representing (41.7%) falls within the age range 15-18 years 30 representing (25.0%) falls within 11-14 years 13 representing (10.8%) falls within 25.34 years, 1 representing (14.2%) falls within 35- 44 years while 10 representing (8.3%) are years and above items 3 show the occupation of the respondents 80 representing (66.7%) were students while 40 representing (33.3. %) were Teachers item 4 in the table shows that 41 of the respondent representing (34.2%) are living with parents 39 representing (32.5%) are

living with relatives while 40 representing (33.3 %) are self-accommodated.

TABLE 1: Demographic information of the respondents
n=120

S/N	Items	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
1	Gender	Male	60	50
		Female	60	50
2	Age	11-14	30	25.0
		15-18	50	41.7
		25-34	13	10.8
		35-44	17	14.2
		45 and above	10	8.3
3	Occupation	Students	80	66.7
		Teachers	40	33.3
4	Accommodation	Parents	41	34.2
		Relatives	39	32.5
		Self	40	33.3

TABLE 2: Mean score of meaning and what constitute Child neglect

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	N	X	Remarks
5	Parent understands constitute child neglect	48	47	11	14	120	3.1	Accepted
6	Guardian understands what constitute child neglect	56	37	12	15	120	3.1	Accepted
7	Secondary School Students understands the meaning of child neglect	41	61	01	17	120	3.0	Accepted
8	Secondary School Teachers understands the meaning of Child neglect	59	45	06	10	120	3.3	Accepted

Table 2 shows that items 5,6,7 and 8 with mean scores of 3.1, 3.2, 3.0 and 3.3 respectively, were accepted by the respondents. This implies that parents, guardian, Secondary School Students and Teachers understand what constitute child neglect. From these results it can be inferred that the society understands the meaning and what constitute child neglect.

TABLE 3: Mean scores of the dimensions of Child neglect

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	N	X	Remarks
9	A abandoning children without providing for their care	55	31	14	20	120	3.0	Accepted
10	Inadequate nurturing or affection	09	07	86	18	120	2.1	Rejected
11	Failure to enroll a child in school	47	33	26	14	120	2.9	Accepted
12	Causing a child to miss too many days of school	42	56	09	13	120	3.0	Accepted

Table 3 shows that all the items in the research question were accepted, except item 10, meaning that abandoning children without care, failure to enroll a child in school and causing a child to miss many days of school are the

dimensions of child neglect. Item 10 received the lowest mean of 2.1 showing that inadequate nurturing or affection does not constitute child neglect. It can be inferred that secondary School students, prefer to be in school and do not care about nurturing and affection.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between student gender and child neglect.

TABLE 4: Chi-square analysis on significant relationship between student gender and child neglect.

Items	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL	df	Cal X ²	Cri X ²	Remarks
13	65	45	04	06	120	3	28.76	7.82	Rejected
14	11	15	54	40	120				
15	48	41	12	19	120				
16	10	16	67	27	120				
Total	134	117	137	92	480				

Table 4 shows that calculated chi-square (28.76) is greater than table value (7.82). Hence the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis accepted which means that there is a significant relationship between students' gender and child neglect.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between child neglect and Students' attitude to learning.

TABLE 5: Chi-square analysis on significant relationship between child neglect and secondary school Students attitude to learning

Items	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL	Df	Cal X ²	Cri X ²	Remark
17	52	55	05	08	120	3	34.06	7.82	Rejected
18	50	51	09	10	120				
19	04	06	60	50	120				
20	54	47	11	08	120				
Total	160	159	85	76	480				

Table 5: shows that calculated chi-square (34.06) is greater than table value (7.82). Hence the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted which means that there is a significant relationship between child neglect and Secondary school students' attitude to learning.

III. DISCUSSION

The finding of this study on the meaning and dimensions of child neglect showed that majority of the respondents made up of teachers, students parents and guardians understand what child neglect is all about. This is in line with the work of Okafor (2015) on the study of child abuse, neglect and their effect on primary school pupils in Anambra State where majority of this respondents revealed that they understand the meaning of child neglect and abuse. On the dimensions of child neglect, the finding of this study showed that majority of the respondents are of the view that abandoning children without providing for their care, failure to enroll a child in school and causing a child to miss too many days of school constitute child neglect. This study confirmed the work of Emorhievwunu and Emorhievwunu (2024) on the study of effect of child neglect on psycho-social wellbeing and academic life of children in secondary schools in Delta State

where the majority of the respondents agreed that the common forms of child neglect in our society are physical neglect, educational neglect, emotional neglect and medical neglect.

The result from hypothesis one shows that there is a significant relationship between gender and child neglect.

This result confirmed the assertion of Okpe (2022) that poverty, cultural beliefs and value in Nigeria are not favorable to the girl-child compared

to the boy child. When the family have no enough money, the girl child should step aside for the brother even if she is older or more intelligent, rather she has to work hard to support the brother in school. The girls are sent out to hawk items such as pure water; food items in the streets, bus stops or parks (Chinene 2017) to augment family income.

In the same vein Njoku cited in Okpe (2022) expressed that in the northern part of Nigeria particularly in the North-East and North West, many people have been deprived the adolescence period though biologically they pass through it. The girls can marry as early as 11 years. This gender based traditional practice hinders the advancement of the girl child socially, politically and economically.

Hypothesis two results show that there is a significant relationship between child neglect and secondary school students' attitude to learning. This result is in line with Langsford et-al cited in Palmeri (2016). They asserted that children who are maltreated and neglected in school, have higher absenteeism, lower grades, lower test scores and are more likely to drop out of school than children who are not maltreated. This result agreed with the opinion of Durojaiye cited in Adedayo and Elegbede (2014) which emphasizes that parents play a vital role in academic concentration of learners in school. Good and cordial interaction between parents and their wards is a great factor that can promote students' academic interest and positive learning attitude in school. Furthermore, Kampe (2010) opined that parental neglect remains one of the major factors that causes behavioural problem of most students such as depression, low self-esteem, distrust, anxiety, isolation and indulging in risky behaviors and activities.

IV. CONCLUSION

It is very disheartening to know and see how children are being neglected in different forms and shapes constantly by parents, family members, relatives and teachers. Success within the academic environment is an important value instilled during childhood. Child neglect has effect on the physical, psychological, social and academic life of children. It contributes to low academic achievement and total drop out from school. Child neglect present problems not only for the government but also for the society at large. The place of children (boy or girl) in the overall development of any society cannot be over emphasized. Any society that favours one gender at the detriment of the other could endanger the entire society.

It is hereby concluded that child neglect has effect on secondary school students, learning attitudes, and gender plays a significant role in child neglect.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are hereby made:

1. Government should enact adequate legislation against child neglect as enshrined in the 2003 child right protection charter which should be strictly adhered to.
2. Secondary schools should have a working guidance and counseling's unit to offer services to neglected children, their parents and guardians. This will help parents and guardians to be alive to their responsibilities
3. Government and non-governmental organizations should handle child welfare issues with the seriousness it deserves. Offenders should be made to face the established laws.
4. Girl child education should be encouraged at all levels of education. This will help to mitigate against gender disparity.
5. The society should be educated on the dangers of child neglect through enlightenment programmes in the media, churches and mosques.

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APPENDIX

Child Neglect inventory (CNI) Questionnaire

Introduction:

I am an academic staff of UIIECEST, Bama conducting a research on the “Relationship between Child Neglect and Students learning attitude in secondary schools in Borno-State”.

I solicit your assistance to fill out this questionnaire by ticking (√) as appropriate in the options provided.

Yours sincerely,
Increase Adigwe

Personal Data

1. Gender Male () Female ()
2. Age range: 11-14 () 15-18 () 25-34 () 35-44 () 45 and above ()
3. Occupation Teachers () Student ()
4. Accommodation Parents () Self () Relatives ()

NB: SA = Strongly Agree, A=Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree
Meaning and what constitute child neglect.

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
5	Parents understanding constitute child neglect				
6	Guardians understand what constitute child neglect				
7	Secondary school students understand the meaning of child neglect				
8	Secondary school teachers understand the meaning of child neglect				

Dimensions of Child Neglect

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
9	Abandoning children without providing for their care				
10	Inadequate nurturing or affection				
11	Failure to enroll a child in school				
12	Causing a child to miss too many days of school				

Child Neglect and Gender

S/N	ITEM	SA	A	D	SD
13	Female Children are more liable to child neglect				
14	Male children are more liable to child neglect				
15	Female children are removed from school and given out for Marriage				
16	Male children are removed from School and given out as House help				

Child Neglect and Students attitude to learning

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
17	It lead to drop out of School				
18	Lack of interest in School work				
19	Disruptive during Classes and engage in stealing				
20	Student become aggressive and withdraw in the School				

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