

Selected Socio-demographic Factors as a Correlates of Child Abuse and Neglect among Parents in Ibadan, Oyo State

B.O Ogundele* and R.A. Ojo**

**Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education, Faculty of Education,
University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria*

Telephone: 08033599073, Fax: 234-2-8106711, E-mail: benogundele@yahoo.com

***Department of Physical and Health Education, Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo,
Oyo State, Nigeria*

Telephone: 08034802875, E-mail: dr.ojoademola@yahoo.com.

KEYWORDS Family-status; factors; child maltreatment; abandonment

ABSTRACT This study examined four socio-demographic factors associated with child abuse among parents in Ibadan metropolis which include: economic status, large family size, parent's upbringing and single parenthood. The descriptive survey research design was used. Simple random sampling techniques was used to select two thousand and sixty three subjects from the five metropolitan local government areas in Ibadan viz: Ibadan North, Ibadan North East, Ibadan North West, Ibadan South East, Ibadan South West. Chi-square was used to test the four hypotheses set at 0.05 alpha level. The findings of the study established that factors examined contributed significantly to the incidence of child abuse among parents in various degrees. It was recommended that government at all levels should pursue their poverty reduction and eradication programmes with vigour to stop child abuse due to poverty; population and family life education is necessary for all citizens to create awareness on the need to control family size for improved quality life; religious institutions should concentrate attention on premarital counseling and organize conferences, seminars and workshops focused on acquisition of parenting skills so as to stop or at least reduce the cases of child abuse associated with poor patterns of child rearing.

INTRODUCTION

Procreation is a phenomenon that ensures the survival and continuity of a race. However the rearing pattern of the children that are products of wedlock is a crucial task that is significant in determining the quality of citizens that make up a particular society. It is disappointing to note that juvenile cases and other social vices that characterized our society today are traceable to bad child patterns of many homes. Children who have passed through such homes were either battered, abandoned, or abused in any other form. They were consequently toughened and eventually become liabilities to the community rather than assets.

The International Encyclopedia of Education (1991) while citing Korbin (1979) observed that abuse and neglect of children is a world wide phenomenon observed in cultures ranging from the primitive and poverty stricken to the highly industrialized and affluent. It is at once a shocking puzzling problem, whose complexities have only recently begin to be appreciated. The World Health Organization (WHO, 1999) declares child abuse a major health problem worldwide. A recent

estimate from WHO shows that 40,000,000 children aged 0 – 14 years around the world suffer from abuse and neglect and require health and social care.

In Nigeria today, the rate of child abuse has assumed a worrisome and alarming proportion (Semenitani 1998). It has started attracting the attention of the federal government. It has degenerated into a form of slave trade and the scenario has moved the wife of the Vice President into becoming a chairperson of a body crusading against women trafficking and child labour in Nigeria. There have been cases where policemen intercepted the child traffickers while they were trying to escape with lorry loads of children prepared for export to outside countries for sale into labour markets. According to Ariyo (2001) the phenomenon of child trafficking for forced or compulsory labour is growing so fast that most countries in Africa fit into one of these three categories viz: sending countries, transit countries and receiving countries. Child trafficking has become a very profitable multi-billion dollar business for the organized syndicates involved. They buy children for as little as 14 dollars a head and send them to slavery in Europe and the Gulf.

According to ILO – IPEC (2000) report, an estimated 60 percent of sex workers in Italy are from Nigeria. UNICEF (1999) estimates that 200,000 children from Western and Central Africa are sold into slavery each year notably for seasonal work such as harvesting cocoa and other cash crops.

In Ibadan metropolis, it is daily occurrence to see children below 14 hawking wears and other products along the road side (Ebigbo, 1995). School boys and girls run after vehicles to sell bread, sachet water, ice cream, popcorns etc. while some others walk about the nooks and cranny of the city hawking their items. Also at parties, children are always seen parking leftover of foods into nylon bags for their consumption. They also beg celebrants for food to eat and to take home. Similarly children are seen roaming the streets of the city begging for alms. Some of them even go about the market places stealing articles. All of these ugly sights are traceable to breakdown of homes, the starting point of every child.

Therefore, this study tried to investigate the parental socio – demographic factors associated with the incidence of child abuse and neglect among parents in Ibadan metropolis.

Hypotheses

The research specifically tested the following hypotheses:

1. Economic status of parents will not contribute significantly to the incidence of child abuse and neglect among parents in Ibadan metropolis
2. Large family size will not contribute significantly to the incidence of child abuse and neglect among parents in Ibadan metropolis.
3. Parent's upbringing will not contribute significantly to the incidence of child abuse and neglect among parents in Ibadan Metropolis.
4. Single parenthood will not contribute significantly to the incidence of child abuse and neglect among parents in Ibadan Metropolis.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design: The descriptive survey design was used for this study. This design, as supported by literature is appropriate when large samples are used.

Population: The population comprised all

parents (Literate and illiterates) in the five local government areas of Ibadan metropolis namely Ibadan North, Ibadan North East, Ibadan North West, Ibadan South East and Ibadan South West.

Sample and Sampling Techniques: The sample for the study was 2063 parents selected by means of simple random sampling technique. 450 questionnaire forms were administered in each of the five local governments and the returns were as follows: Ibadan South East (413); Ibadan North (415); Ibadan North East (408); Ibadan South West (416) and Ibadan North West (411) making a total of 2063 respondents.

Instrumentation: The main instrument for the study was a self-constructed validated questionnaire with a reliability co-efficient of 0.82. To obtain this co-efficient, a test-retest method was used during a pilot study involving the use of 20 literate and illiterate parent-subjects. The reliability co-efficient of the data generated was calculated using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) which gave 0.82. the modified four-point Likert Scale with close ended type of items were used for the study.

Procedure for Data Collection: The researchers and five-trained research assistants administered the questionnaires and collected them back immediately they were completed. The Yoruba language translated version of the questionnaire were used to collect information from the illiterate respondents. Out of the 2,200 copies administered, 2,063 copies were properly filled.

RESULTS

Hypothesis 1

Economic status of parents will not contribute significantly to the incidence of child abuse and neglect among parents in Ibadan metropolis.

The table shows that the observed χ^2 value of 34.10 is greater than the critical value of 12.59

Table 1: Chi-square analysis showing the responses of parents on economic status

Question No.	SA	A	D	SD	Total
Q1	267	239	97	85	
Q2	296	268	88	36	
Q3	254	300	71	62	
FO	817	807	256	183	2063
FE	515.75	515.75	515.75	515.75	2063

Critical χ^2 value = 12.59 df = 3; P<0.05; observed value 34.10.

at 3 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis which states that the economic status will not contribute significantly to the incidence of child abuse and neglect among parents in Ibadan metropolis is hereby rejected.

Hypothesis 2

Large family size will not contribute significantly to the incidence of child abuse and neglect among parents in Ibadan metropolis.

The table 2 above shows that the observed χ^2 value of 20.13 is greater than the critical value of 12.59 at 3 degree of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. Therefore the null hypothesis which states that the large family size will not contribute significantly to the incidence of child abuse and neglect among parents in Ibadan metropolis is hereby rejected.

Table 2: Chi-square analysis showing the responses of parents on economic status

Question No.	SA	A	D	SD	Total
Q4	214	287	97	63	
Q5	225	280	110	82	
Q6	245	224	123	95	
FO	711	791	321	240	2063
FE	515.75	515.75	515.75	515.75	2063

Critical χ^2 value = 12.59 df = 3; P<0.05; observed value 20.13

Hypothesis 3

Parent’s upbringing will not contribute significantly to the incidence of child abuse and neglect among parents in Ibadan metropolis.

The table 3 above shows that the observed χ^2 value of 12.59 is less than the calculated value of 73.26. thus providing the basis for rejecting the null hypothesis, which states that, the parents’ upbringing will not contribute significantly to the incidence of child abuse and neglect among parents in Ibadan metropolis.

Table 3: Chi-square analysis showing subjects’ responses of parents’ upbringing

Question No.	SA	A	D	SD	Total
Q7	308	243	71	66	
Q8	256	271	91	70	
Q9	211	214	151	111	
FO	775	728	313	247	2063
FE	515.75	515.75	515.75	515.75	2063

Critical χ^2 value = 12.59 df = 3; P<0.05; observed value 73.26

Hypothesis 4

Single parenthood will not contribute significantly to the incidence of child abuse and neglect among parents in Ibadan metropolis.

(The) Table 4 above shows that the observed χ^2 value of 30.44 is greater than the critical value of 12.59 at df 3 and 0.05 level of significance. Therefore the null hypothesis which states that single parenthood will not contribute significantly to the incidence of child abuse and neglect among parents is therefore rejected.

Table 4: Chi-square analysis showing responses of parents single parenthood

Question No.	SA	A	D	SD	Total
Q10	216	276	105	92	
Q11	273	268	87	60	
Q12	240	262	133	62	
FO	728	806	325	204	2063
FE	515.75	515.75	515.75	515.75	2063

Critical χ^2 value = 12.59 df = 3; P<0.05; observed value 30.44

DISCUSSION

The rejection of hypothesis one implies that economic status contributes significantly to the incidence of child abuse and neglect among parents. The findings corroborates the assertion of Vinolia and Fubara (1995) that low income parents more often than not engage their children in petty trading and street hawking to supplement the family income. It conforms with the submission of Global March Against Child Labour (2001) that parents in developing countries are relatively poor and subjected to economic strains, which compelled them to seek alternative source of income to their meager salaries to make both ends meet. Hence they involve their children in hawking snacks and allied products to augment their income. Similarly, it was also observed that both developing and developed countries are guilty of institutionalized child abuse as children are employed to render services in factories and industries for meager pay and at times no pay at all (ILO-IPEC, 1998).

The findings on table 2 indicated that observed χ^2 value 20.13 was greater than the critical value of 12.59, consequently hypothesis two was rejected which implies that the large family size contributes significantly to the incidence of child abuse and neglect among parents in Ibadan metropolis. The findings is in

line with Pearce's and Falola's (1994) assertions that a nation without a potent population policy lends its citizens to uncontrolled procreation that results in large family with excessive number of children that cannot be catered for. Such children are often denied their basic rights like quality education, proper feeding, health care and good clothing. They further observed that Nigeria population policy of 1988 which stipulates four children to a woman and that females should voluntarily begin childbirth only after the age 18, was not enforced one day and this has made it a mere paper work. BAOBAB(1991) also observed that child labour cannot be stopped in a community like Nigeria where citizens procreate as they like in spite of the low per capita income.

In table 3, the observed value of χ^2 of 73.26 was greater than the critical value is 12.59, which led to the rejection of hypothesis three which states that parents' upbringing will not contribute significantly to the incidence of child abuse and neglect among parents in Ibadan metropolis. However, by implication, parents' upbringing contribute significantly to the incidence of child abuse among parents' in Ibadan metropolis. The finding corroborates the WHO's (1997) claim that parents who are victim of physical abuses, family violence or sexual abuse while they were children have a high risk of becoming perpetrators of similar forms of abuse towards their own children. Similarly Henry et al. (1990) while citing Conger et al. (1979) asserted that many abusive parents experience abuse and rejection themselves as youngsters and seem to be perpetuating this pattern, especially when they are under stress and lack social support.

Table 4 shows the observed χ^2 value 30.44 and critical value of 12.59 hence hypothesis 4 was rejected which consequently means that single parenthood contribute significantly to the incidence of child abuse and neglect among parents in Ibadan metropolis. This finding is in line with the claim of WHO (1997) that an unwanted child, an unsupported single parent household and absence of other means of social support, financial pressure and/or unemployment are factors contributing to child abuse and neglect. In the same vein Agusiegbe (1998) observed that single parent household are always under financial stress in their attempt to cater for the children's basic needs like feeding, clothing and education, and their inability to meet up with these demands often results in frustrations and consequent abuses of children in various forms.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

From the various findings of this study it is established that economic status, large family size, parents' upbringing and single parenthood contribute significantly to the incidence of child abuse and neglect among parents in Ibadan metropolis.

Based on the findings therefore, the following recommendations were made:

- (i) That government of Nigeria at all levels should pursue with vigour their poverty reduction and eradication programmes and focus on job creation for the unemployed youths in the country so that they can as well become responsible parents.
- (ii) Government should also come out with workable economic and fiscal policies that will boost economic growth in Nigeria and increase the per capita income of the citizens for enhanced take home package of workers to ensure an improved standard of living.
- (iii) Government should take population education of the citizens seriously using both print and electronic media to create awareness on the need to control their family size for an improved quality of life.
- (iv) There is also the need for federal government to formulate workable national population policy for the country and set out modalities for enforcing the policy to ensure compliance of all citizens so that efforts to control population growth in the country can record the expected success.
- (v) Religious institutions should show high level of commitment to pre - marital counseling and constantly organise conferences, seminars and workshops focused on having manageable family size and acquisition of good parenting skills to eradicate or at least reduce child abuse cases due to family size and bad child rearing practices of parents.
- (vi) The government should also consider the introduction of sex and family life education into Nigeria secondary education system so that our children can integrate sex education into their lives early enough to facilitate their becoming responsible adults parents – who will be skilled in parenting to forestall cases of child abuse.
- (vii) There is also the need for government at all levels in Nigeria to educate citizens the through printing and electronic media on

child's rights to curtail abuses due to its ignorance, and device as well the modalities for punishing reported cases of child abuse to serve as deterrent to others.

- (viii) Government should formulate policy aimed at assisting widows and widowers so as to reduce socio – economic financial stress they normally experience due to sudden death of their spouses.

REFERENCES

- Agusinghe, G.O. 1998. "Single Parent Households. A challenge Reproductive and Health Education." *An Unpublished Conference Paper*.
- Ariyo, D. 2001. "The Future Lost: The Economic and Social Consequences of Child Abuse in Africa." *Unite Against Abuse Newsletter*.
- BAOBAB 1991. "China Today: Nigeria Tomorrow." *BAOBAB Press*, 1 (27).
- Ebigbo, P.O. 1995. "Situation Analysis on Child Abuse and Neglect in Nigeria". *Proceedings of the First International Workshop on Child Abuse in Africa*, 219-221.
- Henry, M.P., C. J. Janeway, K. Jerome and H. A. Carol. 1990. *Development and Personality*. New York: Harper and Row Publishers.
- International Encyclopedia of Education*, 1991. Torsten Hussen and T. Neville Prstlethwaite Perganon Press Oxford University Vol. 2.
- ILO-IPEC, 1998. *A Comprehensive Report of the Situation of Child Labour in Thailand*. Geneva: ILO-IPEC
- ILO-IPEC 2000. *Combating Trafficking in Children for Labour Exploitation in West and Central Africa: Child Trafficking in Nigeria, the State of the Art*. Geneva.
- ILO-IPEC. Official Home page of Global March Against Child Labour, 2001. Retrieved April 16, 2001, from <http://www.childlabour.news.infol>.
- Pearce, T.O. and T. Falola. 1994. *Child Health in Nigeria*. England: Ashgate Publishing Limited.
- Semenitari, I. 1998. "Children of Lesser Grade." *Tell Magazine*, Weekly, June 1, 1998. pp. 10-11.
- UNICEF. 1999. *The State of World's Children*. New York: Oxford Univ. Pub.
- Vinolia, N.S. and M. S. W. Fubara. 1995. "Street Hawking as an Aspect of Child Abuse and Neglect." *Proceedings of the First Intentional Workshop on Child Abuse in Africa*, pp. 64-70.
- WHO Home Page of Child Abuse and Neglect 1997. Retrieved December 5, 1997, from <http://www.who.ch>
- WHO Home Page of WHO Recognises Child Abuse as a Major Public Health Problem. 1999. Retrieved June 5, 2002, from <http://www.who.ch>