

Prevalence, Pattern of Child Abuse and Factors Influencing Child Physical Abuse among Working Class Parents in Samaru, Zaria, Kaduna State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Background: Child abuse by parents and guardians is a recognised public health and social problem both in developed and developing countries. Support, monitoring and discipline are central dimensions of parental behaviour that are linked with children's adjustment, development and well-being. Abused against children is rampant though underreported in Nigeria which may either due to the cultural justification of certain forms of abuse or reluctance of the children to speak about it from the fear of their assailant's threat or reaction of their parents. The study aims to assess the prevalence, forms of child abuse and factors influencing child physical abuse among working class parents.

Methodology: This was a cross-sectional study carried out among 129 working parents in Samaru, Zaria in 2016 using pretested, semi-structured and interviewer-administered questionnaires. The subjects were selected by multistage sampling method. Data analysed using IBM SPSS version 21.

Results: The prevalence of child abuse among working class parents was 42.6%. Multi-forms of child abuse in this study were found among the respondent. Educational level, nature of family, number of children and family size were statistically significantly associated ($p=0.001$, 0.001 , 0.003 and 0.008) with child physical abuse with the statistically respectively.

Conclusion: Child abuse was found to be prevalent among the working class parents despite parental educational status and socio-economic background. Factors associated with child physical abuse like family size and nature of family have statistical significance (p value < 0.05). There is urgent need for community-based educational programmes to increase awareness of the problem and action on changing parental attitudes and behaviour might also help to prevent this societal menace.

Keywords: Child abuse, working class parents, prevalence and factors

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INTRODUCTION

Child abuse also known as child maltreatment or violence against children is a global problem that affects both sexes, age and deeply rooted in cultural, economic, educational levels and social practices^[1]. The effects of child abuse often last a life time, preventing abused child from developing a healthy, trust-worthy relationship with adults, low self-esteem and impairment of healthy psycho-social development^[2]. The family is the most important and influential factor on education, therefore, this could be the first educational environment to the development of an individual^[3]. Support, monitoring and discipline are central dimensions of parental behaviour that are linked with children's adjustment, development, and well-being^[4]. Child abuse by parents or other guardians is a recognized public health and social problem both in developed and developing countries^[5].

World Health Organization (WHO) defines child abuse as all forms of physical, emotional or psychological and sexual abuse, neglect and exploitation that are leading to actual and potential damage to child's health and development^[6].

The WHO estimated that approximately 31000 children less than 15 years of age died due to homicide worldwide in 2002^[7]. A research conducted in Afghanistan and Sri Lanka on domestic violence against children reported a yearly prevalence of child abuse in some developed countries, where the prevalence of severe physical abuse varied from 4% to 16%^[8]. Population-based studies from developing countries show much higher prevalence rates of physical abuse^[8,9]. Every year more than 3 million reports of child abuse are made in the United states, it has one of the worst records among industrialized nations; losing on average between four (4) to seven (7) children

per day to child abuse and neglect with a report of child abuse made every 10 seconds^[10].

Abused in all its forms are daily reality for many Nigerian children with only a fraction ever receiving help^[11]. A survey report on Nigeria Violence Against Children conducted by National Population Commission with the support of the United States Centre for Diseases Control and UNICEF, revealed a high prevalence of violence against children across the states in Nigeria with approximately 6 in 10 children experienced some form of violence and 50 percent of all experienced physical violence^[12].

In Nigeria, abuse against children is rampant though underreported which may be due to cultural justification of certain forms of abuse or reluctance of the children to speak about it due to fear of their assailant's threat or reaction of their parents^[13].

It may also probably due to the emphasis placed on the more prevalent childhood problems of malnutrition and infection. Another possible reason is the general assumption that in every African society the extended family system always provides love, care and protection to all children^[14].

Parental attitudes towards corporal punishment as a method of child-rearing were found to be associated with child abuse^[15,16]. When parents' expectations are far beyond what is appropriate for the children, the resulting frustration caused by the children's non-compliance is believed to be a contributory factor to cause of child abuse^[17]. There is dearth of literature on prevalence of child abuse as a whole research among working class parents in Nigeria and the Northern part of the country, this may be due to the high expectations of best care due to their maximal support for the family or over assumption of child abuse being higher in low-

income or poor families. Hence, the basis for this study, to determine the prevalence, patterns of child abuse and factors influencing child physical abuse among the working class parents in this community.

Study Area

The study was carried out in Samaru, Zaria, Sabon-Gari local government area of Kaduna state, North west Nigeria with population of about 54,000. It is situated on latitude 11°12'N and longitude 07°37'E at an altitude of 700m. it lies within the Northern Guinea Savannah zone and the climate zone is characterised by a dry season of 7 months duration from mid-October to mid-May and a wet season of 5 months from June to October with an annual rainfall of 1099.34mm. The soil is mainly accumulated clay lying between a depth of 36cm and 119cm Samaru-Zaria is a semi-urban University satellite town which comprises of many streets separated by minor roads, it is endowed with abundant basic amenities for live survival, job opportunities and generation of economic prosperity for the peasants and mobile men of the neighbouring villages. Samaru community is made up of different ethnic and religious group but the most predominantly ethnic groups are the Hausa / Fulani who are mainly Muslim. The community has primary, secondary and tertiary institutions and a host of commercial activities.

Study Population

It comprised of working-class parents with children less than 18 years of age. However, working class parents who resided in Samaru but were absent during the course of the study and those who were not willing and did not consent were excluded. Working class parents in this study were self-employed, apprentices and government workers

Ethical Approval

Ethical clearance was obtained from the Research Ethical Committee of Ahmadu Bello University Teaching Hospital (REC-ABUTH) and conducted base on the principle guiding the use of human subject for experimental research. The interviewer introduced herself, explained the objectives of the study and assured on the confidentiality of the information provided to the participants and a verbal consent was sought and obtained.

Sample size determination

The sample size was calculated using the formula below given the population size of Samaru were more than 10,000;

$$n = \frac{z^2 pq}{d^2}$$

n= minimum sample size required z=Standard normal deviate, given as 1.96.

p= prevalence of child abuse- substitute obtained in a previous study= 91.7% = 0.917^[15].

q= 1- p, i.e. 1-0.917= 0.083.

d = Degree of accuracy and is 0.05 at 95% which is the Confidence Interval.

$$n = \frac{1.96^2 \times 0.917 \times 0.083}{0.05^2}$$

$$= 116.96 \text{ approximately } 117$$

Assuming the non-respondents constitute 10% of the population, therefore an additional 10% of the sample (10) is required. Hence,

$$n = 117 + 11.7 = 128.7$$

Therefore, the sample size was 129

Sampling method and data collection

A multistage sampling method was done. Ten (10) streets were randomly selected using balloting from the lists of all the streets in Samaru community obtained from the community leader. On each street, the interviewer identified the first house on her right

side, numbered each house consecutively on that side and end on the other sides of the street and then household listing were done; houses with more than one household was randomly selected using balloting. In each household, only the head of the households who would be available during the course of the study were selected. From each house, the interviewer went to the next house consecutively on that side and end on the other sides of the street until maximum of fifteen (15) houses have been identified on each selected street. The process continued until the required number of participants were recruited

Data management

Three (3) trained research assistants (2 graduates of Federal College of Education (F.C.E), Zaria and 1 undergraduate student of ABU, Zaria.) administered the questionnaires under the supervision of the interviewer following a day training which was organized by the interviewer on data collection before commencement of the study. Data was collected from consenting eligible participants over a period 3 days (Friday to Sunday) so as to ensure those who would were not available during the working days but met the criteria were captured and about 45 respondents were interviewed per day. A set of an already pre-tested, semi-structured interviewer administered questionnaires for those parents with low level of literacy and self-administered for those that were literate were employed to obtain data from the respondents.

Data analysis

Of 129 administered questionnaires, 115 were willing and consented to participate in the study. Only 105 questionnaires were correctly filled and completed with respond rate of 82%, 10 were discarded. Data entry was done under the

supervision of an experienced statistician using a computer software Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 21. Data cleaning was done to eliminate errors and analyzed using descriptive statistics and cross tabulations, findings were summarized in form of tables and results were considered statistically significant if p-value were 0.05

Socioeconomic status of the participants were assessed using the variables for wealth indices from the Demographic and Health survey which are household assets (radio, television, computer, furniture, mobile phone, bicycle, motorcycle, car & refrigerator), income spent for family up keeping per month (national minimum wage) and place of residence (own or rented house). 11 questions were asked and a score of 1 were assigned to correct response with total of 11 points and grade as follows: 0-3 = Poor class, 4-7= Middle class, 8-11= Rich class^[18]

Limitation

Due to the time frame for submission of the project work and finances, the study could not be conducted among all resident of Samaru, hence the selection of a sample large enough to be representative of the study population. Respondents were too keen on divulging information on such a sensitive subject matter such as child abuse due to cultural or religious inhibitions, hence were not objectively or freely express their views, hence a verbal consent were sought from the sought from the respondents. They were been biased in giving an honest opinion of their role in child abuse. Hence, the questionnaires were semi- structured and some questions were re modified to prevent socio-cultural insults. Due to the wideness of the topic; child abuse and also the subjects involved; working class parents, there was limited of literatures to review.

RESULTS

Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Majority of the respondents (66.6%) were within the age group 20-39 years and married (77.1%) with male preponderance (53.3%). Most of the respondents were civil servants (53.3%), have 1-2 children (47.6%) with medium family sized (46.7%), made up of nuclear family (64.8%) and stayed in a rented house (65.7%). One third of the respondents had poor socio-economic class (3.8%) (Table 1).

Prevalence of child abuse and forms of maltreatment by respondents

In this study, the prevalence of child abuse was found to be (47.6%) which indicated that the parents had ever abused their children (Figure 1). No specific patterns of child abuse among the respondents as all forms of child abuse were employed (Table 2). There was an established significant statistical association between child physical abuse and respondents' educational level, number of children, nature of family and family size with p value of 0.001, 0.003, 0.001 and 0.008 respectively and no significant statistical association was established between child physical abuse, place of residence and socioeconomic status of the respondents with p value of 0.61 and 0.82 respectively (Table 3)

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Variables (N=105)	Frequency (%)
Age (years)	
20-29	29 (27.6)
30-39	41 (39.0)
40-49	28 (26.7)
50-59	7 (6.7)
Sex	
Female	49 (46.7)
Male	56 (53.3)
Religion	
Islam	56 (53.3)
Christianity	49 (46.7)
Marital status	
Married	81 (77.1)
Not married	24 (22.9)
Tribe	
Hausa	40 (38.1)
Yoruba	25 (23.8)
Igbo	7 (6.7)
Others	33 (31.4)
Education level	
None	1 (1.0)
Non formal	13 (12.4)
Primary	6 (5.7)
Secondary	23 (21.9)
Tertiary	62 (59.0)
Occupation	
Sole trader	32 (30.5)
Civil servant	56 (53.3)
Health workers	17 (16.2)
Number of children	
1-2	50 (47.6)
3-4	42 (40.0)
5-6	13 (12.4)
Family size	
Small (1-5)	43 (41.0)
Medium (6-10)	49 (46.7)
Large (11-15)	13 (12.4)
Nature of family	
Nuclear	68 (64.8)
Polygamy	21 (20.7)
Extended	16 (12.2)
Residence	
Own house	29 (27.6)
Rent house	69 (65.7)
Relatives' house	7 (6.7)
Socioeconomic class	
Poor class	4 (3.8%)
Middle class	47 (44.8%)
Rich class	54 (51.4%)

Frequency and percentage of the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents

Table 2: Pattern of child abuse among respondent

Variables (N=105)	Frequency of pattern of child abuse (%)			
	Never	Often	Very Often	Always
Physical abuse	68 (64.8)	22 (21.0)	12 (11.4)	3 (2.9)
Sexual abuse	93 (88.6)	6 (5.7)	4 (3.8)	2 (1.9)
Psychological abuse	80 (76.2)	16 (15.2)	4 (3.8)	5 (4.8)
Child labour	78 (74.3)	9 (8.6)	17 (16.2)	1 (1.0)
Neglect	54 (51.4)	28 (26.7)	18 (17.1)	5 (4.8)

Frequency and percentage of the pattern of child abuse among the respondents

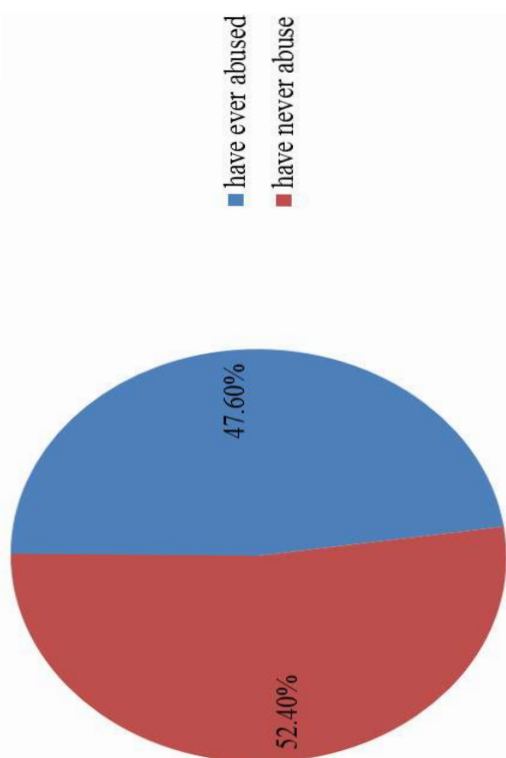


Figure 1: Prevalence of working class parents that have ever abused their children in Samaru, 2016

Table 3: Factors influencing child physical abuse among respondents

Variable (N= 105)	Frequency of physical abuse (%)				Statistical test					
	Never	Often	Very Often	Always	χ^2	df	P			
Age (years)										
20-29	22(32.3)	4(18.2)	3(25.0)	0(0)	13.1	9	0.16			
30-39	28(41.2)	7(31.8)	4(33.3)	2(66.7)						
40-49	15(22.1)	10(45.5)	3(25.0)	0(0)						
50-59	3(4.4)	1(4.5)	2(16.7)	1(33.3)						
Sex										
Female	30(44.1)	11(50.0)	7(58.3)	1(33.3)	1.2	3	0.77			
Male	38(55.9)	11(50.0)	5(41.7)	2(66.7)						
Marital										
Married	54(79.4)	14(63.3)	10(83.3)	2(66.7)	2.8	3	0.43			
Not married	14(20.6)	8(36.4)	2(16.7)	1(33.3)						
Educational level										
None	0(0)	1(4.5)	0(0)	0(0)	32.4	12	0.001			
Non formal	7(10.3)	2(9.1)	4(33.3)	0(0)						
Primary	3(4.4)	0(0)	2(16.7)	1(33.3)						
Secondary	9(13.2)	8(36.4)	4(33.3)	2(66.7)						
Tertiary	49(72.1)	11(50)	2(16.7)	0(0)						
Nuclear	46(67.7)	17(39.5)	5(23.8)	0(0)				22.1	6	0.001
Polygamy	13(19.1)	4(9.3)	4(19.1)	0(0)						
Extended	9(13.2)	22(51.2)	12(57.1)	3(100)						
Number of children										
1-2	39(57.4)	8(36.4)	3(25.0)	0(0)	20.2	6	0.003			
3-4	23(33.8)	9(40.9)	9(75.0)	1(33.3)						
5-6	6(8.8)	5(22.7)	0(0)	2(66.7)						
Family size										
Small size(1-5)	34(50.0)	6(27.3)	3(25.0)	0(0)	17.4	6	0.008			
Mediumsize(6-10)	27(39.7)	15(68.2)	6(50.0)	1(33.3)						
Large size(11-15)	7(10.3)	1(4.5)	3(25.0)	2(66.7)						
Place of residence										
Own house	19(27.9)	6(27.3)	5(41.7)	1(33.3)	4.5	6	0.61			
Rent house	46(67.7)	14(63.6)	5(41.7)	2(66.7)						
Relatives' house	3(4.4)	2(9.1)	2(16.6)	0(0)						
Socioeconomic class										
Poor class	3(4.4)	1(4.5)	0(0)	0(0)	2.91	6	0.82			
Middle class	32(47.1)	7(31.8)	6(50.0)	2(66.7)						
Rich class	33(48.5)	14(63.7)	6(50.0)	1(33.3)						

Cross tabulation and correlation with child physical abuse being the dependent variables.

DISCUSSION

With the expectations of high parental influence placed on working class as regard to parental welfare and guidance has overshadowed child abuse among working class parent. The study revealed that the prevalence of child abuse among working class parents in Samaru was 47.6%. This was similar to a study done in South-East, Nigeria where the overall prevalence and the one-time prevalence rates of sexual abuse among adolescents in South-East was 40.0%^[16]. This may be because the prevalence gotten from this study was generally on child abuse irrespective of the pattern of abuse performed. The findings was against a National survey done in 2017 by NOIPolls on prevalence of child abuse alarmingly high in Nigeria which showed prevalent of 92%^[19]. The discrepancy might be due to the increment in the demography being a National survey and a high prevalent of child abuse in the country.

There were no specific patterns of child abuse among the respondents, these findings may be due to the cultural beliefs among all ethnic groups residing in Samaru. This is similar to the findings in a study done in Limmu Gnet High School, Ethiopia which found various types of abuse and violence to be committed against school children in different settings as some of the different types of violence were interrelated affecting the school children in multiple ways^[20].

The study also found that the factors influencing child physical abuse among working class parents in Samaru; as majority of the respondents (59.0%) has tertiary level of education with a significant statistical association between child physical abuse and respondents' level of educations ($X^2=32.4$, $df=12$, $p=0.001$). This finding may be due to the knowledge and better understanding on child physical abuse or other patterns and parenting

guidelines as educated beings are more enlightened than the non-educated. This is similar to the findings in a study done among the parents Ilorin on opinion and attitude towards child abuse and neglect which showed that low education level were predictive of physical abuse (beating a child) to correct child's unwanted behaviour^[21].

About half of the respondents had 1-2 children (47.6%) with an established significant statistical association between the number of children and child physical abuse ($X^2=20.2$, $df=6$, $p=0.003$). This indicates that the more the number of children, the more the chances of physical violence from the elders in the family. It is similar to a population study done in Bangladesh which showed that the most common family size was with two (2) children^[22].

Majority of the respondents (64.8%) were made up nuclear family with an established statistical significant between the child physical abuse and the nature family ($X^2= 22.1$, $df=6$, $p=0.001$) This agreed to a survey done in Agege, Lagos state, Nigeria which found that 66% of their respondents came from monogamy family type^[23]. The nature of family in this study may be due to the impact of westernization on marriage system and also with large family are greater responsibilities and expenditures. The finding is also similar to a study done in semi-urban area of Delhi, India which showed that 80.1% of the respondents were from nuclear family^[24].

Also, a statistically significant association was established between family size and child physical abuse ($X^2= 17.4$, $df= 6$ and $p= 0.008$) among the respondents. This means that the larger the family size, the higher the chances of child abuse which may be as a result of presence of both parents, high number of children with more responsibilities and higher expectations. This agreed with another study

done on factor influencing child abuse among institutional children which showed that child physical abuse to be significantly high in large sized family^[25].

Moreover, findings from this study also revealed that about half of the respondents belong to the rich class (54.1%) with no established statistical significant association ($X= 2.91$, $df= 6$, $p= 0.82$) between the socioeconomic status and child physical abuse. The high socio-economic class in Samaru community may be due to the availability of infrastructures like; roads, market, electricity and pipe borne water, availability of institutions in both private and public sectors with high job opportunities for the residents of Samaru community.

CONCLUSION

Child abuse is common among the working class parents in Samaru despite being in the rich socio-economic class and their highest level of educations. This thus requires an intense awareness of child abuse and its consequences on child development and society and access to free education and also parents should develop good attitudes toward child parenting.

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Conflict of interests

The authors declare that no conflicting interest occur in this research work

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