



 SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND AS DETERMINANTS OF CHILD MALTREATMENT IN EKITI STATE

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Abstract

This study investigated socio-economic background as determinants of child maltreatment in Ekiti State with particular focus on Ado Local Government Area of Ekiti State. The sample for the study consisted of two hundred (200) students randomly selected from five senior secondary schools. In carrying out the study, three null hypotheses were formulated. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire designed by the researchers. The data collected were analyzed using both one-way ANOVA and t-test statistics. The results were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The results revealed that there was a significant relationship between parental socio-economic background and child maltreatment. Parental occupation also significantly influenced maltreatment of a child among others. It was recommended that federal government education reforms should be extended to the state as well as local government areas in order to allow low income earners to educate their children.

Keywords: Socio-economic Background, Child Maltreatment, Determinants.

Introduction

Maltreatment appears to constitute dangers to the child health and academic performance and children are innocent victims of different atrocities perpetrated against them by adult members of the society. Observations show that from time immemorial, children are being maltreated or abused continually in number of ways, such as inadequate sleeping, neglect from parents to provide necessary needs, child abuse and child labour.

Child Maltreatment is the misuse or mistreat of a child. Child maltreatment appears to be one of the disturbing social menace hindering education and health at the primary and secondary school levels in Ado-Ekiti Local Government of Ekiti State. There is widespread practice of encouraging children below the age of thirteen (13) in street hawking especially in urban/rural areas as well as house-helps. Children

engage in hawking goods such as groundnut, plantain chips, eggs, sobo drinks, beverages, to mention but a few; in an unfavourable weather condition.

Audu, Geldman and Jarma (2009) observed that apart from the painful observation of the worthless wear in Naira value, another disheartening thing is their rag appearance and eagerness with which they go about plying their wares. Children are found in farms, sites and factories, working as labourers where most of them paid very ridiculous low wages or not paying at all. Ojo (2003) observed that children who disobey their parents or guardians are usually subjected to various forms of punishment such as battering, kneeling down and beating wards to the level of coma. Again, probably due to endemic poverty, a child may not have the basic needs of life not because the parents do not provide them, but



simply because they cannot afford to buy them. Bukoye (2004) reported that emotional abuse is quite common in Nigeria. This appears to reduce or destroy a child's self-esteem. Such abuse commonly include repeatedly verbal abuse of a child in form of shouting, threats and degrading or humiliating criticism. If parents are under duress, child maltreatment as highlighted above negates the right of the child (Liza and Robert, 2015).

All the afore-mentioned forms of maltreatment may happen due to socio-economic status of parents. Farley (2003); and, Eitzen and Smith (2003) pointed out that a family's socio-economic status is based on the parents' income and occupation. Farley (2003); and, Eitzen and Smith (2003) pointed out that parents of a high economic status have high incomes, highly respected occupations and well educated. Parents of a low socio-economic status have low incomes, unskilled or semi-skilled jobs and poorly educated. Parents of a middle socio-economic status have medium incomes, professional occupations and a good education.

Child maltreatment may have little or no meaning to many people especially those in rural areas or low income earners and particularly those who indulge in child labour, emotional abuse and child labour. These categories of people see their actions as normal way of bringing up children. These are tasks which endanger a child's safety or health, requirement for his education, keeping him from play and depriving him of necessary things for his development.

Adediran (2003) opined that parents believe that making to work for money is additional income to the household; whereas some of these activities might constitute maltreatment. Greenfield (2010) stated that some parents engage their children in excessive labour for long hours, deprived them of basic needs such as clothing, shelter, love and are starved and abandoned them because of their socio-economic status. Hess (2000) believed that children from the lower class are often identified in school as slow learners, aggressors and truants due to work load they have to carry out before or after school.

Olukoya (2013) and Akinola (2017) affirmed that children could be visited with violence when they make monetary demands for fees and the like, where parents are unable to meet such demands, aggressive behaviour or violence can easily be employed out of sheer frustration for not being able

to meet all their needs. Children appear to be more vulnerable in all forms of maltreatment because of their total dependence on parents and adults for food, shelter, protection and care.

Statement of the Problem

The influence of socio-economic background on child maltreatment needs to be properly and carefully addressed for a better society. A child from high socio-economic background may have advantages over the child from the low socio-economic status background. In a high class family, the basic facilities and opportunities that may facilitate maltreatment are provided for the child such as payment of school fees promptly, buying things needed for their physical and educational uplift. The child from low socio-economic class family is handicapped, working extra time to earn money, see nobody to attend to his/her need. Invariably, the situation contributes to the scourge of child maltreatment in the society. It also leads to anti-social behaviour, truancy, teenage pregnancy, stealing and smoking. It can also create inferiority complex and dwarfed personality among children. The series of cases of incessant rape of children, child prostitution, teenage pregnancy, stealing and child abandonment being reported daily in newspapers because of negligence of parents call for concern. Therefore, the researchers consider socio-economic status of parents as an issue that could probably have negative effects on their children; the urge calls for this investigation.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

1. There will be no significant relationship between child maltreatment and parents' socio-economic background.
2. There will be no significant difference between child maltreatment and parents' level of income.
3. There will be no significant difference between child maltreatment and parents' employment/occupation.

Scope of the Study

The study covered Ado-Ekiti Local Government Area of Ekiti State and involved senior secondary school students.



Methodology

The study adopted descriptive research design of the survey type. The population consisted of all senior secondary school students in Ado-Ekiti Local Government Area of Ekiti State. The sample used for this study was five senior secondary schools in Ado-Ekiti. Twenty male students and twenty female students were selected from each of the five schools. It implied that forty students were selected from each of the five schools; totalling two hundred students. The sample was selected using simple random sampling technique. A self-directed questionnaire titled Socio-economic Background and Child Maltreatment Questionnaire (SOBACHMAQ) was used for the study. The questionnaire had sections A and B. Section A contained items eliciting the bio-data of the respondents. Section B contained twenty items on socio-economic background and child maltreatment using Likert modified scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). In order to ensure face and content validity of the instrument, it was given to three experts in the department of Arts and Social Science Education, College of Education, Veritas University, Abuja. Their observation and corrections yielded final

draft used for the study. Test re-test reliability was done to ensure the consistency of the instrument. The instrument was first administered to twenty students outside the sample. The same instrument was administered to the same set of students after two weeks' interval. The two sets of data collected from the instrument were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient Analysis. The correlation co-efficient of 0.74 correlation co-efficient was got which was high enough to determine the reliability of the instrument. The administration of the instrument was undertaken by the researchers with the aid of research assistants in order to avoid loss. The data collected were analyzed using inferential statistics. Hypothesis one was tested with one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) while hypotheses two and three were tested using t-test. The entire hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Hypothesis 1: There will be no significant relationship between child maltreatment and parents' socio-economic background

Table 1: One-way ANOVA showing the Relationship between Child Maltreatment and Parents' Socio-economic Background

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F _{cal}	F _{tab}	Significant
Between Groups	232.66	2	116.33			
Within Groups	6231.49	197	34.17	3.42	3.05	P>0.05
Total	6964.15	199	150.50			

Table 1 showed that the value of F-calculated (3.42) is higher than the value of F-tabulated (3.05) given 2 and 197 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Since the value of F_{cal} is greater than the value of F_{tab}, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between

child maltreatment and parents' socio-economic background.

Hypothesis 2: There will be no significant difference between child maltreatment and parents' level of income

Table 2: t-test Analysis Showing the Difference between Child Maltreatment and Parents' Level of Income

Level of Income	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Df	t _{cal}	t _{tab}	Remarks
High	-	59.28	12.37				
Low	-	55.11	11.76	198	2.62	1.96	Reject H ₀

P>0.05



Table 2 revealed that the value of t-calculated (2.62) is higher than the value of t-tabulated (1.96) given 198 degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Since the value of t_{-cal} is greater than the value of t_{-tab} , the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is

a significant difference between child maltreatment and parents' level of income.

Hypothesis 3: There will be no significant difference between child maltreatment and parents' employment/occupation



Table 3: t-test Analysis Showing the Difference between Child Maltreatment and Parents' Employment/Occupation

Employment Status	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Df	t _{-cal}	t _{-tab}	Remarks
Government-employed	68	62.22	10.52	198	3.15	1.96	Reject H ₀
Self-employed	132	57.09	11.63				

P>0.05

Table 3 indicated that the value of t-calculated (3.15) is higher than the value of t-tabulated (1.96) given 198 degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Since the value of t_{-cal} is greater than the value of t_{-tab}, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant difference between child maltreatment and parents' employment/occupation.

Discussion

The finding has shown that there is a significant relationship between child maltreatment and parents' socio-economic background. The result corroborated the findings of Adediran (2003) that compared parenting styles and family. He reported that parents believe that making a child to work for money is additional income to the household and this might constitute maltreatment.

In addition, the finding revealed that there is a significant difference between child maltreatment and parents' level of income. The finding agreed with Hees (2000) and Akinola (2017) pointed out that children could be treated with violence when they make monetary demand; especially low income earners. In the same vein, Farley (2003); and, Eitzen and Smith (2003) reported that a family's socio-economic status is based on the parents' income and education.

Owing to this, the finding revealed that there is a significant difference between child maltreatment and parents' employment/occupation. The self-employed parents engaged their children in child labour and sexual abuse. The finding is in agreement with Audu, Geldman and Jarman (2009) reported children hawking is worthless is Naira value. He stated further that the children have rag appearance.

Conclusion

The researchers concluded on the basis of the findings that socio-economic background of parents determines child maltreatment. With respect to parents' socio-economic status as a variable of the research, it can be said that the lower the status, the more poverty prone a family can become. It then

follows that the level of poverty can be a source of frustration to parents on the issue of child maltreatment. In a bid to build up their economic resources, parents may force their children to hawk goods or get married early. When parents are unable to meet monetary demands of their children, they exhibit aggressive behaviour of violence which may lead to emotional maltreatment.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Federal government reforms and policy on grants and scholarship to the state and local government areas should be given regularly to allow low income earners to educate their children.
2. Educationists (Social Studies, Economics and Business) should embark on public awareness programmes on what constitutes maltreatment of a child; especially in Ekiti State. This can be done through public talks, seminars, mass media and palace/community meetings.
3. Federal and state government should create employment opportunities for parents who are employed and those who are looking for better jobs to improve their socio-economic status.

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