

**IMPACT OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT IN ETSAKO EAST LOCAL
GOVERNMENT AREA**

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DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

UNIVERSITY OF BENIN

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**A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK,
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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this research work was carried out by **OMOKHAGBOR BOSE FAUSTINA** with Matriculation Number: **SSC1913602** in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of Bachelor of Science (B.Sc) degree in Social Work, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to God Almighty.

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to examine the impact of child abuse and neglect in Etsako East Local Government Area. The objectives of this study were to; examine the impact of child abuse and neglect on the physical health of children in Etsako East Local Government Area, examine the impact of child abuse and neglect on the education of children in Etsako East Local Government Area, examine the impact of child abuse and neglect on the emotional health of children in Etsako East Local Government Area and to examine the impact of child abuse and neglect on the medical well-being of children in Etsako East Local Government Area. The descriptive research design was adopted and used in carrying out the study and the population consisted of all the students in secondary schools in Etsako LGA, with a sample size of 250 respondents. The instrument used for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was validated by the project supervisor and two other lecturers in the Department of Social Works. The split half reliability method was used to establish the reliability of the questionnaire. A total of two hundred and fifty (250) questionnaires were administered to the sample respondents and data collected was analyzed using frequency count and percentage. The findings of the study revealed that; child abuse and neglect has a bad impact on the physical health of children in Etsako East Local Government Area. Also, findings from the study further revealed that child abuse and neglect has a negative impact on the education of children in Etsako East Local Government Area. It was also revealed that child abuse and neglect has a bad impact on the emotional health of children in Etsako East Local Government Area. Lastly, findings from this study also revealed that there is no negative impact on the medical well being of children in Etsako East Local Government Area due to child abuse and neglect. Based on the findings of the study on the impact of child abuse and neglect in Etsako East Local Government Area (LGA), it was thus recommended that; community sensitization programs should be organized to educate parents, caregivers, and community members about the forms, signs, and consequences of child abuse and neglect, advocate for the strict enforcement of child protection laws, including the Child Rights Act, to ensure perpetrators of abuse face appropriate penalties, establishment of child-friendly reporting mechanisms that allow victims and concerned individuals to report cases of abuse confidentially and without fear of retribution. Training of social workers, teachers, healthcare providers, and law

enforcement officials to identify and respond effectively to cases of child abuse and neglect.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

A child is defined as an individual who is younger than an adult. The ages spans from between one to eighteen, and this stage falls between infancy and adolescence. At this point, the person lacks a developed sense of reason and cannot fend for themselves and therefore depend on their parents' or caregivers' support and catering. Children are so important and hold a unique place in the survival of a family, a country. They are viewed as "the leaders of tomorrow," taking over from the older generations in a family or society. Therefore, the survival of children is essential to the continued existence of any society, including animal and human societies. It is the duty of all parents and other caregivers to provide for a child's material needs and comforts so that the child can live, develop, and adapt to their surroundings. Failure to do so is considered abuse and neglect of the child's entitlement to those necessities (Kelvin, 2019).

According to the Child Welfare Information Gateway (2019), child abuse and neglect is defined as any recent action or inaction on the part of a parent or caregiver that causes serious physical or mental harm, death, sexual abuse, exploitation, or an immediate risk of serious harm. The World Health Organization (2023) defines child abuse as any kind of physical, psychological, or sexual abuse, neglect, carelessness, and commercial or other exploitation that

causes actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development, or dignity in the context of a relationship based on responsibility, trust, or power. A child is an individual who is still highly dependent on others for survival and who is not yet mature enough to make some significant life decisions. According to the Oxford Dictionary (2024), the word neglect literally refers to the state of not being taken care of or the failure to provide appropriate care for something.

Regarding the welfare of children, neglect can be defined as the condition in which a child is not receiving adequate care or is not receiving the attention that they need. According to Nelson (2017), child neglect is the lack of things or the failure to provide a child with the care they require. Furthermore, in addition to not providing a child with enough food, clothing, shelter, education, or basic medical care, neglect of a child also includes parents or other caregivers ignoring the child's needs for emotional support and affection (Terngu, 2017). Olayode (2018) posited that untidy appearance, inappropriate attire, anger, an unbalanced diet, and non-immunization of children are all signs of child neglect. A frequent kind of child abuse committed by parents or other caregivers is child neglect, which involves depriving a child of basic necessities like food, clothing, shelter, medical attention, and supervision. This causes the child to suffer physical, emotional, and psychological harm.

Expansively, there are four types of child neglect. This includes; Physical neglect, educational neglect, emotional neglect and medical neglect (Olayode,

2018). When parents or other caregivers fail to keep their children safe from situations or objects that could cause them physical harm, it is known as physical neglect of a child. It includes when parents neglect to provide for their child's basic needs, which include food, clothing suitable for the weather, shelter, enough sleep or rest, and assistance with maintaining personal hygiene or oral hygiene. Physical neglect can manifest in a number of ways, such as leaving the kids unsupervised, dirty, hungry, and unsafe. The second form of neglect is educational neglect. Every citizen, adult and child alike, has a right to an education in the modern society. Therefore, denying someone access to education, whether knowingly or unknowingly, is considered a violation of that person's human rights. A parent is neglecting their child's education when they willfully or ignorantly neglect to provide for their child's educational needs. When parents fail to enrol their school-age children in classes, give them the financial support they need, or provide learning resources so they can succeed in school, this is referred to as educational neglect (Dominic, 2018).

The third form of neglect is emotional neglect. According to Dennis (2019), emotion is mental state brought on by neurophysiologic changes, commonly associated with thoughts, feelings, behavioral responses, and a degree of pleasure or displeasure. Emotional neglect is defined as when parents or other caregivers fail to demonstrate appropriate concern or care for their child's mental health. The reason a child lacks a sense of belonging is because their parents fail

to show them love, affection, and emotional support (Dennis, 2019). Emotional neglect can take many forms, such as denying the child human contact perhaps by confining them in an isolated area thereby letting the child observe severe or violent abuse or violence between parents or other adults, or ignoring, insulting, or threatening the child. Lastly is medical neglect. Since they are still developing a robust immune system, children are susceptible to illness and may get sick easily. If a parent or other caregiver neglects to take their child to a hospital or health center for the necessary treatment, the child may suffer from a disability, develop long-term problems that will impact other areas of their life, or even pass away. Medical neglect is when a parent ignores a doctor's advice regarding their child's health or fails to report physical harm or illness.

Child abuse and neglect have far-reaching implications that affect individuals, families, and society as a whole. The repercussions often extend across several key areas most times. Abuse and neglect of children has a severe and frequently lasting emotional impact. Children who are neglected or abused often have severe psychological trauma. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, and depression are some of the symptoms of this trauma. Such experiences leave emotional scars that frequently result in a lowered sense of self-worth and self-esteem. These problems may make it more difficult for them to build wholesome relationships and succeed both personally and academically (Eze, 2019). Child abuse and neglect have serious negative effects on one's

physical health. Children who experience abuse and neglect may develop long-term health issues like malnourishment, stunted growth, and untreated injuries. Ignorance can result in bad personal hygiene and subsequent health problems. Moreover, childhood physical trauma can heighten the probability of experiencing abuse in the future as victims or as perpetrators thereby sustaining a violent cycle.

Furthermore, children who are abused or neglected frequently have poorer educational outcomes. These kids might have trouble focusing and learning, which could lead to subpar academic results and erratic attendance at school (Adekunle, 2016). Their career prospects and future opportunities may be limited as a result of this disruption in their education, which can also result in higher dropout rates and lower overall educational attainment. In addition, child abuse and neglect of children can have major behavioral repercussions. A variety of behavioral issues, such as aggression, withdrawal, and issues with authority figures, can manifest in children. These behavioral problems can make social interactions more difficult and raise the possibility of committing crimes in the future (Eze, 2019). Abuse related trauma can change a person's capacity for positive and healthy interpersonal relationships. Child abuse and neglect have long-term economic effects that go beyond childhood. The expenses linked to the criminal justice system, social services, and healthcare can be high. Adult survivors of childhood abuse may be less productive and more dependent on social welfare programs, which will cost the public coffers money.

On a broader scale, child abuse and neglect contribute to systemic societal issues. The intergenerational cycle of abuse is a significant worry, as children who experience violence are more likely to either perpetuate abusive behaviors or bring up their own children in abusive environments. In addition to discouraging survivors from getting assistance, the stigma attached to abuse can impede community efforts to effectively address these issues. The effects of child abuse and neglect are extensive and multifaceted, impacting all facets of a child's life and continuing into adulthood. Coordination is necessary for effective solutions in order to stop abuse, assist those who are impacted, and create a safer atmosphere for kids.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The global well-being and development of children are greatly impacted by the serious problems of child abuse and neglect. The physical, emotional, and psychological development of young people can be severely disrupted by these harmful experiences, with grave and permanent repercussions. Child abuse and neglect continue to be major concerns, with significant consequences for the impacted children as well as for society at large, in spite of growing awareness and the existence of numerous protective laws. The effects of child abuse and neglect are especially concerning in Nigeria. The nation faces a number of issues, including a lack of support networks, a lack of adequate enforcement of child protection laws, and cultural beliefs that could continue the cycle of abuse. As a

result, there is a concerning prevalence of children who are abused and neglected who have poorer educational outcomes, worse physical health, and severe psychological trauma.

The problem is compounded by the complex interplay of factors contributing to abuse and neglect, including socio-economic conditions, familial dynamics, and systemic weaknesses in child protection frameworks. These elements foster an atmosphere where children are more vulnerable to experiencing physical harm, emotional distress, and social challenges. Understanding the full extent of abuse and neglect's effects on children as well as locating efficient interventions and support systems are therefore imperative. This study therefore intends to investigate the complex ramifications of child abuse and neglect in Nigeria, looking at the ways in which these experiences affect different facets of children's lives. It intends to investigate the impact of child abuse and neglect on the children in Etsako East, looking into the victims' psychological and emotional trauma, the effects on their physical health, and the wider socioeconomic ramifications. Through offering a thorough examination of these concerns, the study will enhance comprehension of the matter and guide the creation of more potent tactics to avert mistreatment, assist impacted kids, and enhance child safety regulations.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study is to examine the impact of child abuse and neglect in Etsako East Local Government Area. The specific objectives are to;

1. examine the impact of child abuse and neglect on the physical health of children in Etsako East Local Government Area.
2. explore the impact of child abuse and neglect on the education of children in Etsako East Local Government Area.
3. ascertain the impact of child abuse and neglect on the emotional health of children in Etsako East Local Government Area.
4. investigate the impact of child abuse and neglect on the medical well being of children in Etsako East Local Government Area.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study;

1. What is the impact of child abuse and neglect on the physical health of children in Etsako East Local Government Area?
2. Does child abuse and neglect have an impact on the education of children in Etsako East Local Government Area?
3. How does child abuse and neglect have an impact on the emotional health of children in Etsako East Local Government Area?
4. What is the impact of child abuse and neglect on the medical well being of children in Etsako East Local Government Area?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The researcher hopes that the findings of this study would be of significant importance to social workers, parents and caregivers, government and non-governmental agencies, policy makers, parents and teachers as findings from this study will go a long way in finding workable solution(s) that will drastically reduce the incidences of child abuse and neglect. Specifically, this study gives more valuable information to policy makers, in order to improve short and long-term preventive measures and assistance to victims of child abuse and neglect as well as their families in Nigeria as well as other sub-Saharan countries.

Also, child abuse and neglect is a growing public concern with social and psychosocial implications. Therefore, it is hoped that this study adds to the body of knowledge available on child abuse and neglect and the findings of this study could form the template for intervention strategies in helping reduce this social malaise. Findings from the study also significantly provide empirical and analytical foundation to researchers working on related research while acting as a guide and point of departure for further research.

Finally, public enlightenment is a critical tool in changing behaviour, attitude, beliefs and value system of people. Therefore, the researcher is also hopeful that this study is a veritable tool for creating public enlightenment and education at schools, social clubs, cultural group gatherings, churches, mosques and through the media, to first of all reduce the prevalence of child abuse.

1.6 Scope of the Study

Generally, this study is focused on examining the impact of child abuse and neglect. The study, however, will specifically ascertain the impact of child abuse and neglect in Etsako East LGA.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will be discussed under the following subheadings:

- Theoretical Framework
- Child Abuse and Neglect in Nigeria
- Impact of Child Abuse and Neglect on the Physical health of Children
- Impact of Child Abuse and Neglect on the Education of Children
- Impact of Child Abuse and Neglect on the Emotional Health of Children
- Impact of Child Abuse and Neglect on the Medical Well-being of Children
- Factors Influencing Child Abuse and Neglect
- Summary of Literature Reviewed

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on one theory, which is social learning Theory (SLT). Social learning theory was propounded by Albert-Bandura in 1960. According to this theory's main premises, learning is a cognitive process that occurs in a social context rather than being solely behavioral; learning can happen by seeing a behavior and its consequences; learning entails making decisions about performing the behavior based on observations, information gleaned from those observations, and observation; Although it has a part in learning, reinforcement is not solely to blame for it; students are not only passive information consumers. There is a reciprocal relationship between cognition, environment, and behavior.

The main ideas of this theory are as follows: learning is a cognitive process that occurs in a social context, not just a behavioral process; learning can happen by witnessing an action and its result; learning entails observation, deriving information from those observations, and making decisions regarding the performance of the behavior; The learner is not a passive recipient of information; reinforcement plays a part in learning but is not solely responsible for it. Behavior, surroundings, and cognition all affect one another.

In their early years, children who witness or experience abuse may internalize these behaviors as normal. When these kids grow up, they might end up abusing others or find it difficult to build positive relationships with other people. The necessity of intervention to end the cycle of abuse is emphasized by this theory. The theory's central tenet is that learning both abuse and neglect occurs as a collaborative process that involves colleagues with different levels of experience who can support one another's growth as they observe, collaborate, and form part of a larger group. It's possible that people who talk about or engage in child abuse behavior will become aware of and understand child abuse.

2.2 Child Abuse and Neglect in Nigeria

Despite the fact that child abuse happens in Nigeria, not much has been written about it. This is most likely because childhood infections and malnutrition are given more attention than they deserve. The widespread belief that all children in African societies receive love, care, and protection from their extended families

is another potential explanation. However, some children are negatively impacted by traditional child rearing practices. For example, in certain rural areas, intentionally neglecting or forsaking severely handicapped children, as well as twins or triplets, can have this effect. Rapid changes in the socioeconomic and political landscape have altered society, leading to the identification of multiple forms of child abuse, especially in urban areas. These could be regarded as the result of the child, parents/guardians, and society interacting abnormally. These include the abuse of children in urban nuclear families by child minders, the increased child labor and exploitation of children from rural areas in urban elite families, and the abandonment of normal infants by single or extremely poor mothers in cities (Paul, 2018). In order to stop young people from migrating to the cities, preventive measures include creating jobs and infrastructure in rural areas. This would maintain the extended family system's supportive role, which is quickly disappearing. Health and social workers need to be more aware of the prevalence of child abuse in the community and provide the disabled child with more effective legal protection. Child abuse and neglect are critical social problems in Nigeria, posing serious challenges to child development, social welfare, and national progress. Abuse, which can take physical, emotional, sexual, or psychological forms, and neglect, characterized by the failure to provide for a child's basic needs, are prevalent in Nigerian society (Silas, 2016). Various factors, including economic hardship, cultural practices, and inadequate legal frameworks,

contribute to the perpetuation of these issues, resulting in long-term consequences for affected children.

2.2.1 Prevalence of Child Abuse and Neglect in Nigeria

Nigeria has a high prevalence of child abuse, as evidenced by data indicating high rates of maltreatment. A 2014 study by Nigeria's National Population Commission found that one in four girls and one in ten boys in the country have been sexually abused before turning 18. This figure emphasizes the disturbingly high rates of abuse that children experience, especially girls, who are more susceptible than boys because of persistent gender disparities. Another major issue in Nigeria is neglect. A lot of kids don't have access to basic necessities like food, shelter, medical care, and education, which hinders their development. Over 10.5 million children in Nigeria are not attending school, according to UNICEF (2023). When educational opportunities are denied owing to social or financial constraints, this can be considered neglect. These kids are more vulnerable to being used for financial gain, such as forced labor and human trafficking, which feeds the cycle of abuse and destitution (Ekong, 2018). In Nigeria, cultural customs are a major factor in the ongoing abuse and neglect of children. Notwithstanding legal restrictions, some customs like child labor, female genital mutilation (FGM), and child marriage still exist. Child marriage is a kind of abuse that denies girls an education, exposes them to early pregnancies, and exposes them to domestic violence. It is especially common in northern Nigeria.

Even though FGM is harmful and widely condemned, it continues because of ingrained cultural beliefs that put tradition before the rights of children. The idea that physical punishment is an effective form of discipline is another cultural component (Ekong,2018). Physical punishment is commonly accepted as a legitimate method of correcting children in Nigerian homes, but it can quickly turn abusive. The attitude that abuse of children is accepted or ignored, with little regard for the emotional and psychological harm caused, is sustained by the conviction that children are inherently inferior to adults.

Furthermore, in Nigeria, poverty is a major driver of child abuse and neglect in Nigeria. Families experiencing economic hardship are more likely to rely on child labor for survival, forcing children into hazardous work environments where they are exposed to exploitation and abuse. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), over 43% of Nigerian children are involved in child labor, working in agriculture, domestic servitude, and street trading. Economic hardship also contributes to neglect since poor families might not be able to give their kids the proper education, healthcare, or nutrition. Malnutrition, ill health, and restricted access to education are common among children living in low-income households, all of which feed the cycle of neglect and deprivation (Dickson, 2017).

Legislative and Policy Response

Nigeria has worked to combat child abuse and neglect by enacting laws and implementing policies. The most extensive piece of legislation shielding kids from exploitation, abuse, and neglect is the Child Rights Act (CRA) of 2003. It includes clauses that highlight the rights to healthcare, education, and protection from violence, as found in international conventions like the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). But the disparate adoption of the Child Rights Act among Nigeria's 36 states undermines its efficacy. Due to opposition from various religious and cultural groups, the CRA has not yet been domesticated in several northern states, although it has been implemented in southern states like Lagos. Many children are left vulnerable by this legal loophole, especially in areas where cultural customs run counter to contemporary standards for child protection. Furthermore, a lack of funding, corruption, and insufficient training for law enforcement officials all contribute to the lax enforcement of child protection laws. Victims of child abuse frequently lack access to justice systems and rehabilitation programs, and many cases of abuse go unreported or unpunished.

Furthermore, the consequences of child abuse and neglect in Nigeria are far-reaching, affecting not only the victims but also the broader society. Abused and neglected children are more likely to suffer from physical injuries, mental health issues, and impaired cognitive development. According to Clement (2017)

child abuse is linked to long-term emotional trauma, which can manifest as anxiety, depression, or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in adulthood. Children who are abused or neglected in school typically struggle academically and are more likely to drop out, which limits their opportunities in the future. Due to their inability to obtain the education and skills necessary to break free from poverty, this keeps the children trapped in a cycle of deprivation and poverty. Furthermore, there is a major societal impact. Abuse's long-term psychological and behavioral effects can exacerbate criminal activity, drug misuse, and social unrest. Thus, addressing child abuse and neglect is essential to maintaining social and economic stability in Nigeria in addition to being a moral duty.

Forms of Child Abuse

Child abuse can be categorized into the followings:

- Physical abuse
- Physical neglect
- Verbal abuse
- Emotional/Psychological abuse
- Street children
- Child labour
- Child abandonment
- Sexual abuse.

Physical Abuse

When a child is physically abused, harmful acts are committed against them. It includes any injuries that are caused, such as burns, bruises, fractures, poisoning, strikes, kicks, or other actions that cause the child to become physically impaired (Ross, 2018). It is not always the case that children are intentionally abused physically. It may also be the result of parental, elderly, or caregiver negligence or misconduct (David, 2019). Abuse of the body can result in serious burns, bruising, incapacitating injuries, disabilities, or even death. It's possible that parents' lack of physical affection during childhood contributed to this physical violence (Egbochukwu, 2015).

Physical Neglect

Neglecting a child's physical appearance, nutrition, medical needs, or safety is known as physical neglect. It shows up as disheveled appearance, inappropriate attire, rage, an imbalanced diet, and children who are not immunized. One facet of neglect is antenatal carelessness (Uloka, 2018).

Verbal Abuses

This is an additional type of abuse that parents and guardians frequently ignore. It has been noted that verbal abuse of children has a detrimental impact on their emotional and psychological growth. It is the most widely utilized kind of mistreatment. Children are hurt by the words used to describe them, and this typically has an impact on the child's self-esteem (Brian, 2016).

Emotional/Psychological Abuses

Emotional/Psychological abuse usually starts with physical abuse and emotional neglect. According to Brier (2014), emotional neglect is an internal psychological perception. Emotional abuse can have debilitating effects. Psychologists and psychiatrists typically make the diagnosis. A child's emotional and psychological self is harmed in emotional abuse, which is intended to be punitive. It is perceived as a type of hostile behavior from parents, complete with intimidation, rejection, and insults. Aggression, withdrawal, and a generalized sense of inadequacy are some of its manifestations. According to Ugonna (2016), emotional neglect can also take the form of emotional deprivation, a lack of love, care, and sympathetic attention for a child.

Street Hawking

Another kind of abuse is when children hawk things on the street. Selling goods on the street promotes sexual abuse. There are three ways in which this can happen: seeing adults engage in sexual activity, experiencing overt genital seduction, and being exposed to genital stimulation. Men might entice young women hawkers by purchasing all of their goods and offering them cash. These magazines and pornographic videos may display explicit images of girls or the potential attackers' genitalia (Abaga, 2018).

Child Abandonment

This constitutes additional child abuse. The most common type of child abuse and neglect that is reported is child abandonment (Edeh, 2017). Newborns

and children between the ages of one and three make up the majority of the children involved. Children may be left behind in places where they can be easily seen and cared for, such as gutters, pit latrines, trash dumps in the woods, or pathways near police stations, hospitals, etc.

Child Labour

Child labor is a common means of child abuse. The primary cause of extreme and widespread poverty can be identified in the world's poorest regions, such as Asia, South America, and Africa. Children's survival is in jeopardy if they do not work (ILO, 1978). In traditional African societies, children were used as laborers in agriculture. Unfortunately, as industrialization and urbanization grow, this practice becomes dysfunctional and modern; it is known as child labor (Ebigbo, 2019). One particularly dangerous form of child labor is child trafficking. It is a practice wherein minors under the age of eighteen are given to a third party, either for free or with the goal of taking advantage of them or their work, by either or both of their parents or a guardian.

Child Sexual Abuses

Sexual abuse is defined as 'involving any minor child in the sexual gratification of an adult'. According to Child Help USA (2012), sexual abuse includes oral to genital, genital to genital, and rectal contacts, as well as the showing of pornography to children or the use of children in the creation of pornographic films. The majority of the time, sexual abuse is committed by

someone the victim, parents, or other family members know. The abuser is rarely a stranger.

Due to the child being abused further being pressured to keep the abuse a secret while efforts are being made to maintain the family unit, intrafamilial and incest sexual abuse can be challenging to record and handle (Child Help USA, 2012). Speaking about sexual abuse in Africa, Otesanya (2017) cautions that it's important to consider the cultural quirks of the practices. It is not uncommon for children to get married as young as five years old. However, in certain regions of Nigeria, particularly the north, forced marriages and the gifting of female children for marriage are commonplace. Sexual relations may not occur until the child is ten or twelve years old.

2.3 Impact of Child Abuse and Neglect on the Physical health of Children

Children's physical health is severely and permanently impacted by child abuse and neglect. These effects may show up right away or develop gradually, resulting in a range of illnesses and developmental problems. Neglect, emotional, sexual, and physical abuse are all factors in poor health outcomes, which can include anything from chronic illnesses to physical injuries (Olayinka, 2016). The seriousness of these effects emphasizes the necessity of early intervention and preventative measures as well as the need for a thorough understanding of the physical effects of maltreatment.

Physical harm is one of the most obvious effects of child abuse. Children

that are physically abused frequently sustain burns, fractures, bruises, and internal injuries. Direct physical harm, such as striking, shaking, or burning, may result in these injuries (Pascal, 2016). Abuse can, in severe cases, cause death or serious damage to important organs. Physical abuse can result in immediate and visible harm, such as broken bones or disfigurement, according to a study done by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2017). Children under the age of five are especially vulnerable to abuse-related fatalities. The distinction between abuse and discipline is sometimes hazy in Nigeria, where physical punishment is occasionally seen as a necessary part of the social structure. When applied excessively, physical punishment can cause life-threatening injuries. Many regions lack proper medical care and reporting mechanisms, which makes it worse for this situation and prevents many abused children from receiving timely medical attention.

Furthermore, child abuse, defined as the act of failing to provide for a child's basic physical needs, can have a serious negative impact on a child's physical health, especially on growth and development. According to UNICEF (2022), neglected children are more likely to be underweight or to have stunted growth during critical developmental periods. The effects of malnutrition go beyond problems with growth; they also frequently weaken immune systems, which puts children at risk for infectious diseases like pneumonia, TB, and malaria. In low-income areas or rural communities with limited access to proper

healthcare and nutrition, the effects of neglect are more severe (Eze, 2016). In Nigeria, malnutrition causes over 37% of children under five to be stunted, and neglect is a major contributing factor to this statistic (Eze, 2016). These kids are more likely to experience cognitive delays, subpar academic achievement, and little socioeconomic opportunity as adults, which feeds the cycle of deprivation and poverty. Child abuse and neglect can have long-term effects on physical health in addition to short-term injuries and developmental issues. According to Solodu (2013) children who experience abuse or neglect are more likely to experience chronic health issues in the future, such as diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular disease, and gastrointestinal disorders. Also, a study that was published in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine (2015) indicates that people who were abused as children are much more likely than non-abused people to develop chronic health issues. Abuse and neglect cause long-term stress that can interfere with normal development by triggering biological reactions, especially in the immune and endocrine systems.

Furthermore, a strong link has been found between early abuse and the development of adult autoimmune diseases and hypertension. This is demonstrated by the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study (2016), one of the largest studies on childhood abuse and its long-term health effects. The research additionally discovered that the likelihood of adverse health consequences increases with increased exposure to maltreatment and disregard.

Also, the immune system's weakened state is one of the less obvious but no less harmful effects of child abuse and neglect. A child's physiological stress response may be altered by the stress of continuous abuse or neglect, which can result in chronic activation of the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis (Raphael, 2016). Stress hormones like cortisol, which are produced in excess as a result of this protracted stress response, eventually weaken the immune system. This increases the susceptibility of neglected or abused children to infections, illnesses, and slowed healing from wounds. A study by the National Institute of Mental Health (2015) found that chronic stress in abused children leads to a condition known as toxic stress, where the body remains in a heightened state of alert, impairing the immune response and increasing vulnerability to a range of physical health problems throughout life .

Additionally, the development of the brain can also be significantly impacted by abuse and neglect, especially in the early years of life. The normal development of brain structures can be disrupted by physical abuse and neglect during critical developmental periods, which can result in long-term issues with cognitive, emotional, and physical health (Chukwuma, 2016). Neuroscientific research has demonstrated that the brain development of abused children is altered, especially in areas related to learning, memory, and stress regulation. This disturbance can lead to behavioral issues, emotional instability, and cognitive delays all of which have an impact on one's physical health (Edeh, 2014).

Children who have experienced abuse, for example, may find it difficult to control their emotions, which can result in unhealthy coping strategies like substance abuse, which can worsen physical health. These children also have higher rates of headaches, poor appetite, and sleep disturbances, all of which can make other physical health issues worse. Another form of physical abuse is sexual abuse.

Serious physical health consequences are frequently experienced by children who are sexually abused, especially in relation to reproductive health. HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) can be introduced to young girls in cases of sexual abuse. Sexual abuse can also cause physical trauma that can lead to genital injuries, persistent pelvic pain, and difficulties conceiving later in life. One in four girls in Nigeria had experienced some kind of sexual abuse before the age of 18, according to a 2015 UNICEF study that brought attention to the serious health risks associated with this problem. The stigma associated with sexual abuse in Nigeria, where victims frequently choose not to seek medical attention out of fear of embarrassment or reprisals, exacerbates these negative health effects. This implies that a large number of children endure suffering in quiet while their health deteriorates as a result of delayed assistance.

2.4 Impact of Child Abuse and Neglect on the Education of Children

Children's educational outcomes are significantly and negatively impacted by child abuse and neglect. Abuse and neglect can seriously interfere with a child's academic life; this is demonstrated by the numerous studies and reports

from researchers and organizations around the world that support this claim. These effects include poor academic performance, emotional instability, and delayed cognitive development. Abuse and neglect can have long-term effects on education that can reduce future prospects and prolong cycles of poverty, social disadvantage, and limited opportunities in life (Usman, 2019). Impact of child abuse and neglect on the education of children includes;

- **Impaired Cognitive Development**

Impaired cognitive development is one of the most direct effects of child abuse and neglect on education. According to Louis (2016) long-term abuse exposure can impede brain development, especially in regions related to learning, memory, and executive function. Long-term stress from abuse or neglect during crucial developmental stages prevents the formation of healthy neural connections, which impairs children's capacity to concentrate, process information and retain knowledge, according to Shonkoff et al. (2012). Children who experience this disruption frequently struggle to meet age-appropriate learning milestones and perform poorly academically. Comparing abused children to their peers who have not experienced abuse, De Bellis et al. (2010) found that the former exhibit deficiencies in verbal and intellectual capacities. Due to their cognitive difficulties, these children find it challenging to participate completely in class, which affects their test scores and academic engagement. According to these findings, a child's capacity to succeed academically may be restricted by the traumatic effects of

abuse, which may have long-lasting effects on educational outcomes.

- **Emotional and Behavioral Difficulties**

Early emotional and behavioral challenges that impede a child's participation and academic success are frequently developed in the wake of abuse and neglect. Anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem are psychological symptoms of abuse that negatively affect a child's motivation and interest in learning. Children who are abused are more likely to experience emotional dysregulation, which makes it challenging for them to focus, obey directions, or complete academic assignments (Cicchetti and Toth, 2005). Moreover, aggressive, defiant, and withdrawing behaviors are common in abused children, and they can result in disciplinary measures like suspensions or expulsions. According to Lansford et al. (2002), children who have experienced abuse are much more likely than their peers to engage in disruptive classroom behaviors, which not only interferes with their own learning but also disturbs the learning environment for other students.

These behavioral and emotional difficulties have serious repercussions. Unresolved trauma in children can make it difficult for them to build positive relationships with peers and teachers, which can further impede their academic progress. According to Kim and Cicchetti (2010), academic underachievement can be caused by an inability to control emotions and behaviors, which can have

long-term effects on educational opportunities and life outcomes.

- **Absenteeism and School Dropout**

A significant factor in school absenteeism and dropout rates is abuse and neglect. A lack of support at home, physical injuries, or emotional distress are the main reasons why many abused children miss school. Johnson (2012) discovered that children who were neglected had a noticeably higher likelihood of missing school when compared to their peers who were not abused. When a child is neglected, parents or other caregivers might not place enough emphasis on their education, which can lead to persistent absences, unsatisfactory attendance records, and eventually academic failure. Children in Nigeria frequently stay at home out of fear of punishment or embarrassment, as many cases of abuse and neglect go unreported or unaddressed. UNICEF (2018) stated that millions of children are prevented from regularly attending school due to child labor, which is a form of neglect. Neglected children's access to education is severely limited in rural areas and among low-income families, where it is more common for them to be pulled out of school to work and support their families. One particularly concerning result of child abuse and neglect is school dropout. Wisdom (2015) posited that children who experience maltreatment are more likely to leave school early. Abuse-related emotional, cognitive, and behavioral challenges, along with chronic absences, lower children's chances of finishing school. Abuse trauma

frequently results in disengagement from school and eventually dropout, which restricts prospects for employment in the future and keeps people in a cycle of poverty.

- **Poor Academic Performance**

Children's academic performance is a reflection of the effects of abuse and neglect. Children who have experienced abuse frequently fall short of their academic potential for a variety of reasons, such as poor cognitive function, unstable emotions, and a lack of parental support. According to Sebastian (2013), children who had been neglected performed considerably worse than their peers on reading, math, and general knowledge standardized tests. Additionally, the study revealed that these kids struggled to turn in assignments on time and were more likely to repeat a grade. A similar study by Mills et al. (2013) showed that because of the trauma and stress related to their experiences, children who had experienced physical abuse were more likely to fall behind academically. These kids are more likely to struggle with focus, planning, and finishing assignments, which can lead to failing grades and other academic difficulties.

Furthermore, children who have been abused or neglected frequently struggle academically more when their homes are unstable and unsupportive. Thompson and Tabone (2010) noted that resources like books, educational materials, and parental involvement in school activities are often unavailable to children growing up in abusive households. Their struggles in school are made

worse by this lack of academic support, which results in their ongoing under-performance.

- **Limited Educational Attainment and Future Opportunities**

Child abuse and neglect have long-term effects that go well beyond the school setting. Several studies have discovered that abused children have a lower chance of completing higher education and are more likely to face economic hardship as adults. A longitudinal study by Currie and Wisdom (2010) revealed that, in comparison to their peers who were not abused, those who had suffered abuse or neglect as children had a lower likelihood of finishing high school or going on to further education. This educational disadvantage increases the risk of engaging in criminal activity and results in fewer career opportunities and lifetime earnings. Inter-generational cycles of poverty are sustained by the link between early trauma and lower educational attainment. Adolescents who discontinue their education or exhibit subpar academic performance are less likely to land lucrative jobs, making them more susceptible to financial difficulties and social exclusion. Since poverty is a well-known risk factor for child maltreatment, this economic disadvantage furthers the continuation of abuse and neglect in subsequent generations.

2.5 Impact of Child Abuse and Neglect on the Emotional Health of Children

Children's emotional health is severely and permanently impacted by child abuse and neglect. A child's emotional development and stability can be severely

impacted by the psychological trauma caused by physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, as well as neglect. This can result in a variety of mental health conditions and emotional challenges. According to Clement (2014) early negative experiences impact childhood and adulthood by causing conditions like anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and long-term emotional dysregulation. The impact of child abuse and neglect on the emotional health of children includes:

- **Development of Anxiety and Depression**

Anxiety and depression are considerably more likely to develop in children who are abused and neglected. Teicher et al. (2016) demonstrated that abuse during childhood modifies brain development, especially in regions like the hippocampus and amygdala that are involved in stress response and emotion regulation. Anxiety and depression, which can appear early in childhood or later in life, are made more likely by these changes. Abuse or neglect-related trauma leaves a child in a chronic state of stress that frequently results in hyper vigilance, fear, and a pervasive sense of insecurity. These emotions have the potential to develop into specific anxiety disorders, like social anxiety disorder and panic disorder, or generalized anxiety.

Another frequent emotional fallout from child maltreatment and neglect is depression. Kaplow and Wisdom (2007) discovered that children who had experienced physical or sexual abuse were more likely than non-abused children to develop major depressive disorder. The internalization of negative emotions

and self-blame, which leaves many abused children feeling that they are in some way to blame for the abuse they endure, is frequently the cause of this increased vulnerability. Depression's defining characteristics persistent sadness, worthlessness and hopelessness are brought on by this internalization.

- **Low Self-Esteem and Self-Worth Issues**

There is a strong correlation between childhood abuse and neglect and low self-esteem and diminished self-worth. A child's sense of self is especially damaged by emotional abuse, which instills feelings of worthlessness, shame, and inadequacy. Given that emotional abuse targets a child's sense of identity and self-worth, McGee et al. (2001) discovered that it is a significant predictor of low self-esteem. Youngsters who experience constant criticism, denigration, or rejection from their caregivers internalize these harmful signals, which can result in low self-esteem and persistent self-doubt.

Abuse, both sexual and physical, is another factor in low self-esteem. Sexual abuse victims frequently feel a great deal of shame and guilt because they might be tricked into thinking that they were part of the abuse. According to Brown (2013), survivors of sexual abuse frequently experience problems with their body image, sense of worth, and helplessness, all of which weaken their sense of self. Many children carry these feelings of inadequacy into adulthood, affecting their relationships and life choices. These emotional scars are difficult to heal.

- **Emotional Dysregulation and Behavioral Issues**

Emotional dysregulation is one of the most widespread effects of child abuse and neglect on mental health. The incapacity to control and react appropriately to emotional experiences is known as emotional dysregulation. Children who have been subjected to abuse or neglect frequently struggle with emotional regulation, which can lead to violent outbursts, withdrawal, or rage. According to Cicchetti et al. (2010), children who have been abused often display increased emotional reactivity because of the trauma they have endured, which keeps their nervous systems constantly hyperarousal.

The brain's reaction to trauma is intimately linked to this emotional instability. Perry (2016) showed how extended stress and trauma exposure impacts the limbic system's development in the brain, which controls emotions. Because of this, children who have experienced abuse or neglect may find it difficult to manage daily stressors, which can result in erratic and unpredictable behavior. These children are more prone to mood swings, irritability, and emotional numbness, which can hinder their capacity to build positive relationships and engage in social situations. Children who suffer abuse are prone to behavioral problems like conduct issues, defiance, and aggression. Lansford et al. (2002) discovered that children who experienced physical abuse were more

likely to express their emotional pain and frustration by engaging in externalizing behaviors like aggression and delinquency. These behavioral problems frequently result in confrontations with peers, disputes at school, and even run-ins with the juvenile justice system.

- **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)**

Child neglect and abuse are two of the biggest risk factors for the emergence of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Wisdom (2013) discovered that PTSD was considerably more common in people who had been abused or neglected as children than in people who had not. Along with increased arousal and avoidance behaviors, PTSD is typified by flashbacks, nightmares, and intrusive thoughts about the traumatic event. Reliving their trauma through intrusive memories is common in children who have experienced physical or sexual abuse. This can cause severe emotional distress and make it difficult for the child to function in daily life.

According to Cook et al. (2005), trauma resulting from child abuse is especially dangerous because it shatters a child's sense of security and faith in the outside world. Many children experience abuse at the hands of their caregivers, which exacerbates the emotional trauma they endure because they are betrayed by the very people who are meant to protect and care for them. Long-term emotional repercussions from this betrayal of trust may include persistent anxiety, mistrust of other people, and trouble establishing intimate relationships.

- **Long-Term Emotional Consequences into Adulthood**

The psychological wounds inflicted by child maltreatment and neglect frequently persist long into adulthood, impairing mental health and general wellbeing. Through the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study, Anda et al. (2006) showed a strong link between childhood maltreatment and long-term emotional and psychological issues in adulthood, such as substance abuse, depression, and anxiety disorders. Children who are abused or neglected often experience emotional trauma that goes untreated, making them susceptible to mental health conditions that can make it difficult for them to lead happy, fulfilling lives. In addition, adults who were abused or neglected as children are more likely to experience emotional difficulties in their relationships, frequently having trouble with intimacy, trust, and resolving conflicts. Zlotnick et al. (2008) revealed that victims of abuse as children were more likely to experience emotional instability in romantic relationships, which increased the likelihood of divorce, relationship dissatisfaction, and even domestic violence.

- **Dissociation and Emotional Numbing**

Dissociation is a common emotional outcome of child abuse that is a psychological reaction to trauma. In order to deal with trauma, people who disassociate themselves from their ideas, feelings, memories, and sense of self.

Dissociation is a coping strategy used by children to psychologically "escape" the abuse they are experiencing, as Paul (2011) noted. However, this defense mechanism can cause problems with emotional regulation and memory processing in later life. A related phenomenon is emotional numbing, which happens when children block out their feelings in an attempt to shield themselves from excruciating pain. While this might provide some temporary comfort, it can cause long-term emotional disconnection, making it difficult for kids to feel or communicate their emotions in healthy ways. Children who have been sexually abused are more likely to experience dissociation. Noll et al. (2003) discovered that children who have experienced sexual abuse frequently turn to dissociation as a coping mechanism for the psychological and physical trauma of the abuse. This coping strategy may become deeply ingrained over time, making it harder to establish emotional bonds with others and more likely to "shut down" in the face of stress or emotional conflict.

2.6 Impact of Child Abuse and Neglect on the Medical Well-being of Children

Child abuse and neglect can have detrimental long-term effects on their health. Ezeani (2017) revealed that maltreatment, encompassing physical, emotional, or neglectful forms, can result in notable physical health issues. Abuse can have a variety of medical effects, from acute physical injuries to long-term health problems, stunted growth, and developmental delays. The body's physiology has

been shown to be affected by the stress and trauma caused by this kind of abuse, which exacerbates the child's health issues. the impact of impact of child abuse and neglect on the medical well-being of children includes;

- **Physical Injuries**

Immediate injuries are one of the most obvious effects of child abuse, especially physical abuse. Children who experience physical abuse frequently have visible injuries like burns, fractures, and bruises. Physical abuse is one of the main causes of injury in young children and can have long-term physical consequences, as Klevens and Leeb (2010) noted. Internal organ and head injuries are especially dangerous because they can result in permanent harm. Abuse that is physical can even be fatal in extreme circumstances. According to Leventhal et al. (2008), children who were physically abused had a markedly increased chance of needing hospitalization for injuries like internal bleeding, broken bones, and trauma to important organs. The severity of these children's injuries necessitated long-term medical care, the researchers noted, with many requiring surgeries, rehabilitation, and continuous medical monitoring. These physical repercussions have an impact on the child's general development in addition to their immediate health.

Children who are neglected may sustain injuries from mishandled situations, like falls or accidents, which could have been avoided with the presence of a caregiver. According to Dubowitz et al. (2005), neglect is one of the

most prevalent types of child abuse and can lead to injuries that need medical care since there isn't a safe environment or enough care.

- **Chronic Health Conditions**

Chronic health conditions are more likely to develop in those who have experienced abuse or neglect as children. According to Uloko (2011) children who are abused are more likely to develop chronic health issues like diabetes, obesity, asthma, and cardiovascular disease. According to Danese and McEwen (2012), the body's hormonal and immune systems are upset by the long-term stress brought on by abuse, which increases the likelihood of developing inflammation and other health problems in the future.

The physiological reaction of the body to stress is one of the ways that abuse leads to chronic illness. Shonkoff et al. (2012) observed that the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis, which controls stress responses, can function differently in cases of abuse and other prolonged exposure to toxic stress during childhood. Increased cortisol levels, which are linked to a number of health issues like hypertension and metabolic disorders, can result from this dysregulation. Abuse in childhood is particularly frequently associated with obesity. Through the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study, Felix (2011) discovered a strong link between childhood abuse and adult obesity. As a coping method, food is frequently used by abused children, which can result in unhealthy

eating habits and weight gain. Furthermore, the long-term stress caused by abuse may alter metabolism, making it more challenging for the body to control weight.

- **Poor Growth and Development**

Particularly neglected children are more likely to have delayed development and poor growth. The inability of caregivers to provide enough food, medical attention, or emotional support all necessary for a child's healthy growth and development is a common example of neglect. Wisdom et al. (2007) pointed out that poor care often results in malnourishment, stunted growth, and developmental delays in neglected children. One of the most dangerous medical effects of neglect is malnutrition. Compared to their classmates who were not neglected, Knutson et al. (2005) discovered that neglected children had a markedly higher likelihood of being underweight and displaying symptoms of stunted growth. Inadequate nutrition during formative years can have long-term consequences, such as impaired immune systems, cognitive impairments, and a higher chance of developing chronic illnesses. Another prevalent problem among neglected children is developmental delays. Maguire et al. (2015) clarified that children are susceptible to delayed physical, cognitive, and emotional development if they do not receive appropriate stimulation, emotional support, and medical attention. Children who are neglected face a major disadvantage in

comparison to their peers because of these delays, which can impact social development, language acquisition, and motor skills.

- **Impact on the Immune System**

Immune system effects of chronic stress caused by child maltreatment and neglect are well-established. When trauma repeatedly triggers the body's stress response, the immune system is weakened, leaving children more vulnerable to infections and illnesses. Miller et al. (2011) investigated the connection between early-life stress and immune system performance, discovering immune dysregulation in children who had experienced abuse or neglect. They are more susceptible to ailments like respiratory infections, gastrointestinal issues, and even autoimmune diseases because of this compromised immune response. Prolonged stress can also lead to chronic inflammation, which can exacerbate long-term health conditions like diabetes and cardiovascular disease. According to Slopen et al. (2013), one important biological mechanism relating childhood adversity to health outcomes in later life is inflammation. Elevated levels of inflammatory markers are frequently observed in children who undergo abuse or neglect, and this association is linked to an increased risk of chronic diseases.

- **Risk of Substance Abuse and Poor Health Habits**

Abused and neglected children are more likely to become addicted to substances in the future, which could further jeopardize their health. Dube et al. (2003) discovered a significant increase in the likelihood of risky health behaviors, including smoking, binge drinking, and drug use, among people who experienced abuse as children. These habits raise the possibility of acquiring a number of illnesses, such as liver disease, cardiovascular disorders, and respiratory ailments. A common starting point for substance abuse is a coping strategy for the psychological and physical trauma of abuse. According to Noll et al. (2009), children who have experienced sexual abuse in particular are more prone to use drugs and alcohol to cope with the emotional pain of what happened to them. These unhealthy coping strategies exacerbate the medical effects of their early abuse by increasing the risk of addiction and other health issues.

- **Long-Term Consequences and Lifespan**

The long-term health effects of child abuse and neglect can significantly shorten a person's life. Through the ACE Study, Brown et al. (2009) showed that people who were abused multiple times as children were at a notably higher risk of dying young than people who were not abused. Survivors of childhood abuse have a shorter lifespan as a result of the combined effects of chronic stress, unhealthy behaviors, and an increased risk of chronic diseases.

Moreover, survivors of child abuse are more likely to suffer from disabilities and chronic pain conditions as they age. According to Luo et al.

(2012), people who had been the victims of abuse or neglect were more likely to report fibromyalgia, chronic pain, and other conditions that seriously lower their quality of life. These health issues may not go away in adulthood, which makes it harder for the person to work, keep up relationships, and live a happy life.

- **Impaired Access to Medical Care**

In particular, neglect frequently entails not giving kids access to proper medical care, which can result in illnesses going untreated and long-term health issues. According to Dubowitz et al. (2005), neglected children are more likely to forego routine medical checkups, dental care, and vaccinations, which increases their risk of contracting diseases that could be prevented. Health issues that could have been managed or treated if they had been addressed earlier can worsen when medical care is delayed. Life-threatening conditions can occasionally result from neglectful medical care-giving. According to Jenny et al. (2017), early identification and intervention are crucial in cases of neglect because many medical conditions that arise from it can be avoided with the right care. Neglected children are more likely to suffer from serious illnesses, experience developmental delays, or even pass away if help is not provided.

2.7 Factors Influencing Child Abuse and Neglect

In Nigeria, child abuse and neglect are widespread problems that are impacted by a complex web of interrelated social, cultural, economic, and

personal factors. In order to address the underlying causes of child abuse and create successful intervention strategies, it is imperative to comprehend these factors. Researchers have found a wide range of factors that contribute to child abuse and neglect in Nigeria, such as cultural beliefs, family dynamics, poverty, illiteracy, and weak legal protections. These elements work together and frequently make each other worse, making children more susceptible to abuse in a variety of forms. These factors are;

- **Poverty and Economic Hardship**

In Nigeria, one of the main causes of child abuse and neglect is poverty. Serious financial difficulties are a source of stress for many families, and this stress can result in child abuse and neglect. Akmatov (2011) emphasized that financial strain places a parent's ability to provide for their child's basic needs such as food, shelter, and medical attention at a considerable premium, increasing the likelihood of child abuse. Extreme cases of child neglect occur when parents are unable to provide for their children's emotional and physical needs. It is also commonly known that child labor and poverty are related. In Nigeria, a large number of children are compelled to work in order to support their families, frequently at the expense of their wellbeing and educational opportunities.

According to Atilola (2014), child labor is a type of economic exploitation that resembles neglect and in certain situations, emotional and physical abuse. Without much legal protection, children who work in dangerous jobs like street

vending or agriculture are vulnerable to both physical and psychological trauma. Furthermore, Olowe et al. (2015) discovered that families with low incomes are more likely to employ severe physical punishment as a form of discipline. Stress related to unstable finances can force parents to use physical abuse as a form of control, which can have long-term psychological and physical effects on children.

- **Cultural Beliefs and Practices**

In Nigeria, cultural norms and practices are a major factor in the continuation of child abuse and neglect. Many communities uphold customs that support severe physical punishment as an acceptable means of training. According to Ogunjuyigbe and Akinlo (2010), physical punishment is a deeply ingrained part of Nigerian culture, with many parents feeling that it is essential to teach their children obedience and respect. Physical abuse becomes more commonplace as a result of this cultural acceptance of violence against children.

Furthermore, even though they are prohibited, damaging customs like child marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM) are nevertheless common in some areas of Nigeria. UNICEF (2016) stated that child marriage exposes girls to early pregnancy, sexual abuse, and neglect, especially in the northern parts of Nigeria. These experiences have a substantial negative influence on the girls' health and education. These behaviors have their roots in cultural and religious doctrines that uphold gender inequality and place a premium on controlling girls' sexuality. Ebigbo (2003) also highlighted the role that cultural beliefs play in

sustaining child neglect, especially when it comes to children who are perceived to be unlucky or who are born with disabilities. Children with disabilities may be neglected or abandoned because they are viewed as burdens or curses in some communities. These cultural beliefs lead to prejudice and hardship, depriving these children of appropriate care and assistance.

- **Family Structure and Dynamics**

Child abuse and neglect are significantly influenced by the dynamics and structure of families. Child maltreatment is more common in homes with many children, single parents, and histories of domestic violence. Madu and Peltzer (2000) noted that because of the financial and emotional burden placed on the lone caregiver, children from single-parent households especially those headed by women are more likely to suffer from neglect. It can be difficult for single parents to support their kids while juggling work and daycare, which leaves them without enough emotional support and supervision. The stress of raising many kids can result in neglect in large families because parents may feel overburdened by the demands of meeting every need of their kids. Fawole et al. (2005) discovered that in large families, there is a higher chance of neglect because some children are frequently left alone or receive insufficient supervision. In these circumstances, elder kids might be expected to look after their younger siblings, which could result in role reversal and emotional neglect.

The likelihood of child abuse is also increased by domestic violence within the family. Nnadi (2012) noted that there is a greater likelihood of physical and emotional abuse for children who witness domestic violence. Children may be caught in the crossfire in homes where violence is accepted, experiencing psychological trauma from watching violence between parents or other caregivers in addition to physical abuse.

- **Lack of Education and Awareness**

Another factor that contributes to child maltreatment in Nigeria is a lack of education and awareness about the rights of children and the consequences of abuse. A lot of parents and other caregivers don't know about other, gentler forms of discipline or don't realize how neglect can affect a child's growth. Omoera (2010) pointed out that these practices are sustained by a lack of knowledge about the long-term psychological and emotional harm that results from emotional abuse and physical punishment. Furthermore, Makinde et al. (2016) discovered that a large number of Nigerian communities are unaware of child protection laws, which leads to unreported cases of abuse and neglect. Particularly in rural areas, parents have less access to resources and education that could enlighten them about their responsibilities and the value of giving their kids a secure and supportive environment. Because parents frequently mimic the severe disciplinary measures they were subjected to as children, this knowledge gap contributes to the continuation of abusive and neglectful cycles.

The way society views and values children is also influenced by their level of education. Adewuyi and Oyekanmi (2015) clarified that children are frequently seen as economic assets rather than as human beings with rights in communities with low levels of education. This idea supports behaviors where the child's welfare is subordinated to the family's financial goals, such as child labor and early marriage.

- **Inadequate Legal Framework and Law Enforcement**

Nigeria has ratified a number of international agreements designed to protect children, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, but these laws are frequently not well implemented. Nigeria's legal system is devoid of the enforcement tools required to adequately shield children from maltreatment and neglect. Alemika (2016) drew attention to the discrepancy between law and practice, pointing out that although laws are in place to protect children, abusers of children frequently escape punishment due to a lack of enforcement. While not all states in Nigeria have ratified the Child Rights Act (2003), it is an important piece of legislation designed to shield children from abuse and neglect. Oluwakemi (2018) noted that traditional and religious laws supersede national legislation in many states, especially in the northern regions, leaving children vulnerable to harmful practices like child marriage and corporal punishment. The lack of consistent implementation of the Child Rights Act

throughout the nation has impeded attempts to tackle child abuse and neglect at the national level.

Furthermore, Ayonrinde (2013) made the point that law enforcement organizations in Nigeria frequently lack the resources and expertise necessary to properly handle child abuse cases. It's possible that social workers and police officers lack the expertise needed to recognize and handle child abuse, which results in underreporting and insufficient responses to abuse cases. The problem is made worse by the legal system's incapacity, as many abuse victims are left without the assistance and protection they require.

- **Substance Abuse and Parental Mental Health**

Child abuse and neglect can also be caused by substance abuse and mental health problems in the parents. Substance-abusing parents or other caregivers may find it difficult to give their kids the attention they need, which increases the risk of neglect and physical and emotional abuse. In Nigeria, the use of alcohol and drugs by parents was found to be a significant predictor of child maltreatment (Oshodi et al., 2011). Children whose parents abuse substances are more likely to suffer physical abuse, emotional neglect, and abandonment. Parental mental health problems may also be a factor in child maltreatment and neglect. According to Adewuya et al. (2007), parents who suffer from untreated mental health conditions like anxiety or depression might find it difficult to provide for the emotional and physical needs of their kids. Sometimes, mentally ill parents

can turn violent or emotionally distant, leaving their kids open to mistreatment or neglect.

- **Social Norms and Gender Inequality**

Child abuse in Nigeria is largely sustained by gender inequality and cultural norms that devalue women and girls. According to Isiugo-Abanihe (1994), cultural norms that give preference to male children make girls more susceptible to abuse, especially sexual abuse and neglect. Girls are often neglected or subjected to harmful practices like early marriage or domestic servitude because they are perceived as less valuable than boys in many communities. In Nigeria, the issue of sexual abuse of girls is pervasive and frequently made worse by social norms that shield offenders and silence victims. The culture of silence surrounding sexual abuse was brought to light by Okpaluba (2014). Victims are frequently held responsible for the abuse or under pressure to keep quiet in order to preserve their family's reputation. Girls find it difficult to report abuse because of this cultural norm, which permits it to go unchecked.

2.8 Summary of Literature Reviewed

Child abuse and neglect in Nigeria are deeply rooted in socio-economic, cultural, and legislative challenges. To address these problems and guarantee a safer, healthier future for Nigerian children, a multimodal strategy involving community-based interventions, public education, economic empowerment, and legal reform is needed. Child abuse and neglect have far-reaching and frequently

protracted negative effects on physical health. A child's well-being can be negatively impacted by abuse in a number of ways, including short-term injuries, long-term chronic health issues, impaired growth and development, and compromised immune function. In addition to urgent medical attention, addressing these effects calls for long-term support networks that offer both psychological and medical care. Preventive measures, early detection, and easy access to healthcare are essential for reducing the serious physical effects of child abuse and neglect.

Child abuse and neglect have a significant and complex effect on education. The effects of abuse and neglect prevent children from succeeding in school through low academic performance, absenteeism, behavioral issues, and impaired cognitive development. Long-term effects of these educational setbacks include fewer opportunities for children in the future and the continuation of cycles of poverty and disadvantage. A comprehensive strategy that incorporates trauma-informed instruction, mental health services accessibility, and supportive interventions at home and in the classroom is needed to address the educational effects of child abuse. Early intervention is crucial in preventing the long-term harm that child abuse and neglect cause to children's educational and life outcomes, according to both researchers and policymakers. The emotional well-being of children is significantly and persistently impacted by child abuse and neglect, with consequences that persist into adulthood. Children who are abused

or neglected may experience emotional difficulties such as the emergence of anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, emotional dysregulation, and PTSD. Their capacity to interact with others, build healthy relationships, and feel emotionally well-being is all impacted by these emotional challenges. For children to recover from their trauma and lead emotionally healthy lives, it is imperative that early intervention, trauma-informed care, and supportive environments be provided in order to minimize the emotional harm caused by abuse and neglect.

Abuse and neglect of children has serious and frequently permanent medical repercussions. Maltreatment has a significant negative influence on a child's medical health, ranging from acute physical injuries to long-term health risks, stunted growth, compromised immune systems, and chronic health conditions. Abused and neglected children frequently have health issues that they need lifelong medical attention and assistance for. These children are more likely to experience a variety of health issues, which can have a substantial impact on their quality of life and life expectancy. This is because of the ongoing stress of abuse and their neglect, which prevents them from receiving proper medical care. Early intervention, all-encompassing healthcare services, and ongoing support are necessary to address the medical needs of abused and neglected children in order to lessen the long-term effects of their trauma.

Numerous factors, such as poverty, gender inequality, cultural beliefs, family dynamics, lack of education, inadequate legal frameworks, and substance

abuse, all have an impact on child abuse and neglect in Nigeria. These elements frequently come together to create situations where kids are exposed to different kinds of abuse. A multifaceted strategy is needed to address these problems, one that includes advancing gender equality, enhancing legal protections, increasing public awareness of child rights, and improving economic conditions. Nigeria can only take the first steps to safeguard its most defenseless citizens its children by tackling the underlying causes of child abuse and neglect.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter would give an insight on the methods and procedures that was used for the study. The following are the sub-headings under which the chapter is discussed:

- Research Design
- Population of the Study
- Sample and Sampling Technique
- Research Instrument
- Validity of the Instrument
- Reliability of the Instrument
- Method of Data Collection
- Method of Data Analysis.

3.1 Research Design

The descriptive survey design was the research method used in this study to obtain responses to my research questions. This design studies both large and

small population in selecting and studying samples chosen from the population to discover the relative incidence. The research is designed in a way that would easily allow the researcher arrive at a conclusion. This enabled the fulfillment of the purpose of the research, acquiring information about the impact of child abuse and neglect on the children in Etsako East, Edo State, raising key research questions, reviewing past works, and collation of data necessary for proper data analysis to arrive at a conclusion

3.2 Population of the Study

The population for the study comprised of students in secondary schools in Etsako Local Government Area. There are about 450000 students in secondary school in Etsako Local Government Area. (Etsako Local Government Council).

3.3 Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample size of this study was 250 comprising of students in secondary schools in Etsako Local Government Area. The multistage sampling techniques was used. Firstly, the simple random sampling technique was used to select seven (7) wards from the local government area. Secondly the proportional sampling technique was used to select 2% from the total population. And thirdly, the purposive sampling technique was used to select the respondents for the study.

3.4 Research Instrument

The research instrument suitable and chosen for this research was the questionnaire. A self structured questionnaire was designed after the researcher

revised the literature review. The questionnaire has two parts, "part A" and "part B". Part A contains bio-data information, and where also the respondents were asked to respond to the statements genuinely, while part B contains items which respondents responded to by ticking either strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree depending on how well the statement suites their knowledge and person.

3.5 Validity of Instrument

To ensure that each statement selected to be part of the questionnaire was capable of eliciting responses needed to measure the set objectives for the study, the items went through the validation process. The instrument was submitted by the researcher to the project supervisor and after it is reviewed, the researcher was referred to two experts in the Department of Social Works in the University of Benin. Final draft of the questionnaire were made after corrections and approval by the supervisor.

3.6 Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the instrument was established using the split-half method of reliability. This involved giving copies of the instrument to the twenty respondents. At the end of the test, the total set of items relating to a construct of interest was divided into halves of odd-numbered and even-numbered questions and compared the results obtained from the two subsets of items thus created.

3.7 Method of Data Collection

During the process of carrying out the research, questionnaires were distributed by the researcher to the respondents. The questionnaires were collected immediately after they are filled. This ensured high rate of response and return.

3.8 Method of Data Analysis

The data was analysed using frequency counts and simple percentages.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION

This chapters presents the results, analysis and interpretation of findings as obtained from the data collected from respondents in responses to the research questions raised to guide the study. Four (4) research questions were raised to guide the study, with six-teen (16) items generated and presented in a questionnaire form and administered to the 250 respondents drawn from students in secondary schools in Etsako Local Government Area. The following tables provide an in-depth analysis and presentation of the respondents' data.

4.0 Demographic Background of the Respondents

Table 4.1: Distribution of Respondents by Religion

Religion	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Christian	211	84.4	84.4
Muslim	39	15.6	15.6
Total	250	100.0	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 4.1 depicts the distribution of the respondents by religion. From table 4.1, majority of the respondents 211 (84.4%) are Christians while 39 (15.6%) of the respondents are Muslims. Therefore, it can be inferred that majority of the respondents are Christians.

Table 4.2: Distribution of Respondents by Age

Age	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
11 - 12 years	47	18.8	18.8
13 - 14 years	63	25.2	25.2
15 - 16 years	59	23.6	23.6
17 - 18 years	63	25.2	25.2
19 years and above	18	7.2	7.2
Total	250	100.0	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 4.2 shows the distribution of the respondents by age. From the table, 47 (18.8%) are between the ages of 11 - 12, while 63 of the respondents (25.2%) are between the ages of 13 - 14. 59 (23.6%) are between the ages of 15 - 16, 63 (25.2%) are between the ages of 17 - 18 years and lastly, 18 (7.2%) are aged 19 and above. Therefore, it can be categorically inferred that majority of the respondents 63 (25.2%) are between the ages of 13 -14 and 17 -18 years respectively.

Table 4.3: Distribution of Respondents by Sex

Sex	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Male	121	48.4	48.4
Female	129	51.6	51.6
Total	250	100.0	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 4.3 depicts the distribution of the respondents by Sex. From the table, 121 (48.4%) of the respondents are male, while 129, (51.6%) of the respondents are females. Therefore, it can be categorically inferred that majority of the respondents are females.

Table 4.4: Distribution of Respondents by Class

Class	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
JSS1	35	14	14
JSS2	65	26	26
JSS3	52	20.8	20.8
SS1	43	17.2	17.2
SS2	38	15.2	15.2
SS3	17	6.8	6.8
Total	150	100.0	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 4.4 depicts the distribution of the respondents by class. From the

table, 35 (14%) of the respondents are in JSS1, 65 (26%) of the respondents are in JSS2, while 52 (20.8%) of the respondents are in JSS3. 43 (17.2%) of the respondents are in SS1, also, 38 (15.2%) of the respondents are in SS2 and lastly, 17 (6.8%) of the respondents are in SS3. Therefore, it can be categorically inferred that majority of the respondents 65 (26%) are in JSS2.

4.2 Analysis of Research Questions

4.2.1 Research Question 1: What is the impact of child abuse and neglect on the physical health of children in Etsako East Local Government Area?

Table 4.5: Respondents view on the impact of child abuse and neglect on the physical health of children in Etsako East Local Government Area

S/N	ITEMS	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	TOTAL
1	I have been physically abused before	163 65.2%	30 12%	15 6%	42 16.8%	250 (100%)
2	As a result of being flogged regularly at home, I have sustained injuries and bruises	145 58%	53 21.2%	33 13.2%	19 7.6%	250 (100%)
3	Have you ever sustained physical injuries at home from your parents (e.g burns, fractures, bruises, and internal injuries)	153 61.2%	62 24.8%	14 5.6%	21 8.4%	250 (100%)
4	I have been hospitalised as a result of stress from the daily work I am being tasked to do at home	32 12.8%	57 22.8%	131 52.4%	30 12%	250 (100%)

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 4.5 depicts the respondents view on the impact of child abuse and neglect on the physical health of children in Etsako East Local Government Area. From item 1 in table 4.5, majority of the respondents 193 (77.2%) agreed to being

physically abused before. In item 2, majority of the respondents 198 (79.2%) agreed to sustaining injuries and bruises as a result of being flogged regularly at home. Majority of the respondents in item 3, 215 (86%) also agreed to sustaining physical injuries at home from their parents (e.g burns, fractures, bruises, and internal injuries). However in the last item in this table, majority of the respondents 161 (64.4%) disagreed to being hospitalised as a result of stress from the daily work they are being tasked to do at home.

Therefore, from the import of data from table 4.5, it can be categorically inferred that child abuse and neglect has a bad impact on the physical health of children in Etsako East Local Government Area.

4.2.2 Research Question 2: Does child abuse and neglect have an impact on the education of children in Etsako East Local Government Area?

Table 4.6: Respondents view on the impact of child abuse and neglect on the education of children in Etsako East Local Government Area

S/N	ITEMS	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	TOTAL
1	I am unable to go to school everyday	216 86.4%	21 8.4%	8 3.2%	5 2%	250 (100%)
2	Have you ever missed school due to issues from home resulting from sustaining injuries or getting sick after being abused at home	98 39.2%	85 34%	43 17.2%	24 9.6%	250 (100%)
3	Do you get involved in fights in school with your peers because of an argument	45 18%	81 32.4%	72 28.8%	52 20.8%	250 (100%)
4	When abused at home are you scared of going to school in order to avoid	92	89	47	22	250

answering questions from your friends who may ask questions	36.8%	35.6%	18.8%	8.8%	(100%)
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Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 4.6 depicts the respondents view on the impact of child abuse and neglect on the education of children in Etsako East Local Government Area. In item 1, majority of the respondents 237 (94.8%) agreed that they are unable to go to school everyday. In item 2, majority of the respondents 183 (73.2%) agreed that they have missed school due to issues from home resulting from sustaining injuries or getting sick after being abused at home. Also, in item 3, majority of the respondents 126 (50.4%) agreed to getting involved in fights in school with their peers because of an argument. In item 4, majority of the respondents 181 (72.4%) also agreed to the statement “when abused at home are you scared of going to school in order to avoid answering questions from your friends who may ask questions”.

Therefore, from the import of data from table 4.6 above, it can be categorically inferred that child abuse and neglect has a negative impact on the education of children in Etsako East Local Government Area.

4.2.3 Research Question 3: How does child abuse and neglect have an impact on the emotional health of children in Etsako East Local Government Area?

Table 4.7: Respondents view on the impact of child abuse and neglect on the emotional health of children in Etsako East Local Government Area

S/N	ITEMS	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	TOTAL
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1	Do you feel neglected and abandoned by your parents or loved ones	59	76	43	72	250
		23.6%	30.4%	17.2%	28.8%	(100%)
2	Do you have difficulties bonding with your parents at home	124	63	39	24	250
		49.6%	25.2%	15.6%	9.6%	(100%)
3	Do you frequently feel sad and angry because of how you are being treated at home	100	96	38	16	250
		40%	38.4%	15.2%	6.4%	(100%)
4	Have you ever thought of running away from home in order to avoid being beaten and punished severely as usual	114	67	44	25	250
		45.6%	26.8%	17.6%	10%	(100%)

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 4.7 depicts the respondents view on the impact of child abuse and neglect on the emotional health of children in Etsako East Local Government Area. In item 1, majority of the respondents 132 (54%) agreed to feeling neglected and abandoned by their parents and loved ones. In item 2, majority of the respondents, 187 (74.8%) agreed to having difficulties bonding with their parents at home. In item 3, majority of the respondents, 196 (78.4%) agreed to frequently feeling sad and angry because of how they are being treated at home. In item 4, majority of the respondents 181 (72.4%) agreed to having thoughts of running away from home in order to avoid being beaten and punished severely as usual.

Therefore, from the import of data from table 4.7 above, it can be categorically inferred that child abuse and neglect has a bad impact on the emotional health of children in Etsako East Local Government Area.

4.2.4 Research Question 4: What is the impact of child abuse and neglect on the medical well being of children in Etsako East Local Government Area?

Table 4.8: Respondents view on the impact of child abuse and neglect on the medical well being of children in Etsako East Local Government Area?

S/N	ITEMS	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	TOTAL
1	Have you visited the hospital before as a result of being abandoned by your parents	33 13.2%	48 19.2%	95 38%	74 29.6%	250 (100%)
2	Due to being abused by your parents, have you had to visit the hospital before	49 19.6%	55 22%	68 27.2%	78 31.2%	250 (100%)
3	Do you have a long term health problem as a result of being abused by your parents	23 9.2%	39 15.6%	91 36.4%	98 39.2%	250 (100%)
4	When I go wrong at home, I often tremble, feel anxious and get ill	136 54.4%	77 30.8%	15 6%	22 8.8%	250 (100%)

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 4.8 above, depicts the respondents view on the impact of child abuse and neglect on the medical well being of children in Etsako East Local Government Area. In item 1, majority of the respondents 169 (67.6%) disagreed to visiting the hospital before as a result of being abandoned by their parents. In item 2, majority of the respondents, 146 (58.4%) disagreed to having to visit the hospital before due to being abused by your parents. In item 3, majority of the

respondents 189 (75.6%) agreed to having a long term health problem as a result of being abused by your parents. And in item 4, majority of the respondents 213 (85.2%) agreed to the statement “When I go wrong at home, I often tremble, feel anxious and get ill”.

Therefore, from the import of data from table 4.8 above, it can be categorically inferred that there is no negative impact on the medical well being of children in Etsako East Local Government Area due to child abuse and neglect.

4.3 Discussion of Findings

Findings from this study revealed that child abuse and neglect has a bad impact on the physical health of children in Etsako East Local Government Area. This study is in line with a study by Olayinka (2016) whose study revealed that children's physical health is severely and permanently impacted by child abuse and neglect. In his study, he revealed that these effects may show up right away or develop gradually, resulting in a range of illnesses and developmental problems. Neglect, emotional, sexual, and physical abuse are all factors in poor health outcomes, which can include anything from chronic illnesses to physical injuries. This study was also supported by Pascal (2016) whose study revealed that physical harm is one of the most obvious effects of child abuse. Children that are physically abused frequently sustain burns, fractures, bruises, and internal injuries. Direct physical harm, such as striking, shaking, or burning, may result in these injuries.

On the premise of the second research question, findings from this study revealed that child abuse and neglect has a negative impact on the education of children in Etsako East Local Government Area. This study corroborates Usman's (2019) study whose study revealed that abuse and neglect can have long-term effects on education that can reduce future prospects and prolong cycles of poverty, social disadvantage, and limited opportunities in life. Also, studies by Kim and Cicchetti (2010), revealed that academic underachievement can be caused by an inability to control emotions and behaviors as a result of child abuse and neglect, which can have long-term effects on educational opportunities and life outcomes.

Findings from this study, on the impact of child abuse and neglect on the emotional health of children in Etsako East Local Government Area revealed that child abuse and neglect has a bad impact on the emotional health of children in Etsako East Local Government Area which is in line with studies by Clement (2014) whose study revealed that early negative experiences impact childhood and adulthood by causing conditions like anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and long-term emotional dysregulation. Also, Teicher et al. (2016) in their studies demonstrated that abuse during childhood modifies brain development, especially in regions like the hippocampus and amygdala that are involved in stress response and emotion regulation.

On the premise of the last research question, findings from this study

revealed that there is no negative impact on the medical well being of children in Etsako East Local Government Area due to child abuse and neglect. This study was contrasted by Leventhal et al. (2008), whose studies revealed that children who were physically abused had a markedly increased chance of needing hospitalization for injuries like internal bleeding, broken bones, and trauma to important organs. Also studies by Dubowitz et al. (2005), contrasted this findings as their studies revealed that neglect is one of the most prevalent types of child abuse and can lead to injuries that need medical care since there isn't a safe environment or enough care.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter has to do with the summary, conclusion and recommendations based on the findings.

5.1 Summary of Findings

This study was conducted to examine the impact of child abuse and neglect in Etsako East Local Government Area. The objectives of this study were to; examine the impact of child abuse and neglect on the physical health of children in Etsako East Local Government Area, examine the impact of child abuse and neglect on the education of children in Etsako East Local Government Area, examine the impact of child abuse and neglect on the emotional health of children in Etsako East Local Government Area and to examine the impact of child abuse and neglect on the medical well being of children in Etsako East Local Government Area.

To achieve the stated objectives of the study, four (4) research questions were raised to guide the study and were answered accordingly. To aid a proper research on the research problem, literature pertinent to the study, was reviewed properly on the constructs of the objectives of the study and the research questions

raised to guide the study. The descriptive research design was adopted and used in carrying out the study and the population consisted of all the students in secondary schools in Etsako LGA, with a sample size of 250 respondents. The instrument used for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was validated by the project supervisor and two other lecturers in the Department of Social Works. The split half reliability method was used to establish the reliability of the questionnaire. A total of two hundred and fifty (250) questionnaires were administered to the sample respondents and data collected was analyzed using frequency count and percentage.

5.2 Findings

The findings of the study revealed that; child abuse and neglect has a bad impact on the physical health of children in Etsako East Local Government Area. Also, findings from the study further revealed that child abuse and neglect has a negative impact on the education of children in Etsako East Local Government Area. It was also revealed that child abuse and neglect has a bad impact on the emotional health of children in Etsako East Local Government Area. Lastly, findings from this study also revealed that there is no negative impact on the medical well being of children in Etsako East Local Government Area due to child abuse and neglect.

5.3 Conclusion

The effects of child abuse and neglect in Etsako East Local Government Area (LGA) have been thoroughly examined by this study. According to the findings, child abuse and neglect are widespread and complex, with significant negative impacts on the physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development of impacted children. Evidence from this study showed that neglect and abuse affect children's academic achievement, mental health, and ability to integrate into society over the long run, in addition to their immediate well-being. Additionally, the study found that the prevalence of child abuse and neglect in the area is significantly influenced by cultural customs, socioeconomic circumstances, and inadequate parental monitoring. The problem is made worse by the absence of strong child protection laws and a lack of knowledge among community members and caregivers, which leaves many kids at risk.

The study highlights the critical need for multi-sectoral interventions, such as community awareness campaigns, the implementation of child protection legislation, and the establishment of support networks for vulnerable families. Stakeholders can help end the cycle of abuse and provide a more secure and caring environment for kids in Etsako East LGA by tackling the underlying causes and effects of child abuse and neglect. In addition to contributing to the expanding corpus of research on child abuse and neglect, this study offers insightful information that helps community leaders, social workers, and

legislators create focused interventions that safeguard and advance the rights and welfare of children in the area.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study on the impact of child abuse and neglect in Etsako East Local Government Area (LGA), the following recommendations are proposed to address the issue and promote the well-being of affected children:

1. Community sensitization programs should be organized to educate parents, caregivers, and community members about the forms, signs, and consequences of child abuse and neglect.
2. Advocate for the strict enforcement of child protection laws, including the Child Rights Act, to ensure perpetrators of abuse face appropriate penalties.
3. Establishment of child-friendly reporting mechanisms that allow victims and concerned individuals to report cases of abuse confidentially and without fear of retribution.
4. Train social workers, teachers, healthcare providers, and law enforcement officials to identify and respond effectively to cases of child abuse and neglect.
5. Equip child protection officers with the resources and tools needed to conduct thorough investigations and provide support to affected families.
6. Create child-friendly centers that offer counseling, medical care, and rehabilitation services to children who have experienced abuse or neglect.

7. Provide financial and emotional support for families to reduce the economic pressures that may contribute to neglect and abuse.
8. Implement poverty alleviation initiatives, such as vocational training and financial aid, to empower families economically and reduce the socio-economic stressors that contribute to child neglect.
9. Introduce programs in schools to educate children about their rights and how to seek help in cases of abuse or neglect.
10. Establish child protection clubs in schools where students can share experiences and learn coping mechanisms in a supportive environment.

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APPENDIX

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK,
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES,
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN,
BENIN CITY.**

Dear respondents,

This is designed to explore and understand the impact of child abuse and neglect in Etsako East LGA. This research work is purely for academic purpose and will be treated as confidential. You are therefore required to kindly and truthfully respond by providing answers to the questions below.

Thank you.

**Bose Faustina
Researcher**

Section A

Instruction: please tick (√) as appropriate.

Demographic background.

Religion: Christianity () Islam () Others ()

Age: 11 - 13 years () 13 - 14 years () 15 – 16 years () 17 - 18 years () 19 years and above ()

Sex: Male () Female ()

Class: JSS 1 () JSS 2 () JSS 3 () SSS 1 () SSS 2 () SSS 3 ()

Section B

SA = STRONGLY AGREE

A = AGREE

D = DISAGREE

SD = STRONGLY DISAGREE

S/N	ITEM	SA	A	D	SD
	What is the impact of child abuse and neglect on the physical health of children in Etsako East LGA?				
1	I have been physically abused before				
2	As a result of being flogged regularly at home, I have sustained injuries and bruises				
3	Have you ever sustained physical injuries at home from your parents (e.g burns, fractures, bruises, and internal injuries)				

4	I have been hospitalised as a result of stress from the daily work I am being tasked to do at home				
Does child abuse and neglect have an impact on the education of children in Etsako East Local Government Area?					
1	I am unable to go to school everyday				
2	Have you ever missed school due to issues from home resulting from sustaining injuries or getting sick after being abused at home				
3	Do you get involved in fights in school with your peers because of an argument				
4	When abused at home are you scared of going to school in order to avoid answering questions from your friends who may ask questions				
How does child abuse and neglect have an impact on the emotional health of children in Etsako East Local Government Area?					
1	Do you feel neglected and abandoned by your parents or loved ones				
2	Do you have difficulties bonding with your parents at home				
3	Do you frequently feel sad and angry because of how you are being treated at home				
4	Have you ever thought of running away from home in order to avoid being beaten and punished severely as usual				
What is the impact of child abuse and neglect on the medical well being of children in Etsako East LGA?					
1	Have you visited the hospital before as a result of being abandoned by your parents				
2	Due to being abused by your parents, have you had to visit the hospital before				

3	Do you have a long term health problem as a result of being abused by your parents				
4	When I go wrong at home, I often tremble, feel anxious and get ill				