

**THE IMPACT OF CHILD NEGLECT ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE
AMONG PUPILS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN EGOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT
AREA, EDO STATE**

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BENIN CITY**

NOVEMBER, 2025

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**BEING A PROJECT WORK SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL WORK, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY, IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF B.Sc.
DEGREE IN SOCIAL WORK**

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this project was carried out by **UWORATI HASSAN MARIA** with Matriculation Number SSC2106148 of the Department of Social Work in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Bachelor Degree (B.Sc.) in Social Work, University of Benin, under my supervision.

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Date

Date

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to God Almighty, whose love, grace, and strength guided me through every stage of my academic journey.

This project is also dedicated to all students of the Department of Social Work, University of Benin, who continue to strive for excellence and positive impact in society.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the impact of child neglect on the academic performance of pupils in primary schools in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State. It aimed to identify the common types of neglect, how neglect affects pupils' learning behaviour and performance, and the role of social workers in addressing the issue.

A survey research design was adopted, and data were collected from 400 pupils in two primary schools using structured questionnaires. The data were analyzed using frequency tables and percentages with the aid of SPSS.

Findings revealed that child neglect, caused by factors such as poverty, broken homes, and poor parental supervision, negatively affects pupils' concentration, attendance, and overall academic achievement.

The study also found that while social workers contribute to identifying and assisting neglected pupils, their presence in schools remains inadequate.

The study concluded that child neglect has a significant negative impact on pupils' education and recommended increased parental awareness, employment of more social workers in schools, teacher training on child protection, and stronger government intervention to ensure the well-being of all children.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Section 277 of the Child Rights Act of 2003 defines a child as any individual who has not attained the age of eighteen years (CAPTA, 2007). Children, from the moment of birth, are considered a vital part of society and are often celebrated for the joy and hope they bring to families and communities. They represent the foundation upon which the future of any nation is built. To ensure they grow into responsible and productive adults, children must be provided with care, love, education, and protection. However, in many societies, particularly in developing countries like Nigeria, many children continue to face neglect and other forms of maltreatment that threaten their development and well-being (Akwara et al., 2010).

Child neglect, a form of child abuse, is one of the most widespread but least recognized threats to child development. It is defined as the failure of a parent or caregiver to provide the basic needs of a child such as food, shelter, clothing, medical care, education, and emotional nurturing despite having the means to do so (CAPTA, 2007; Akinyemi, 2013). Unlike physical or sexual abuse, which tends to be more visible and often triggers quicker legal responses, neglect is often subtle, chronic, and largely unreported. In Nigeria, cultural norms, economic hardship, and societal silence often contribute to the

normalization and underreporting of child neglect (Akinyemi, 2013). Many families, overwhelmed by poverty or ignorance, fail to recognize their own neglectful behaviors, especially when these are viewed as disciplinary or survival strategies.

The consequences of child neglect are severe and long-lasting, affecting not only the child's emotional and physical development but also their academic success. Children who experience neglect often come to school hungry, poorly dressed, or emotionally disturbed, making it difficult for them to focus in class or participate fully in learning activities (Dubowitz et al., 2020). Such children are also more likely to suffer from low self-esteem, depression, and social withdrawal, which further isolates them in the school environment. These challenges directly impact their academic performance, as neglected pupils often struggle with concentration, classroom engagement, regular attendance, and homework completion. Over time, the accumulation of these disadvantages leads to a widening achievement gap between neglected children and their peers (Spratt et al., 2012).

In Edo State, particularly in rural and low-income communities, child neglect is an emerging concern. Despite national and international frameworks such as the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1999) and the Nigerian Child Rights Act (2003), which guarantee children's rights to education and protection from harm, the enforcement of these policies remains weak. Many children continue to suffer in silence

due to the lack of social welfare structures, limited school-based interventions, and the absence of trained professionals such as social workers in primary schools. As a result, the impact of neglect on academic outcomes remains largely unaddressed, even as school authorities observe the rising number of underperforming and emotionally distressed pupils (UNICEF, 2014).

Furthermore, the shortage of trained personnel in schools, especially social workers who are equipped to identify and support neglected children, exacerbates the situation. Teachers often lack the expertise or time to manage the emotional and social needs of neglected pupils, focusing instead on academic instruction. Without coordinated intervention, these children are at risk of falling permanently behind, dropping out, or becoming involved in delinquent behavior. Thus, understanding how neglect affects academic performance and identifying strategies for early intervention is crucial for improving educational outcomes in the state.

This study, therefore, seeks to explore the impact of child neglect on the academic performance of primary school pupils in Edo State. It aims to examine the types and prevalence of neglect, how they manifest in educational settings, and the role that schools and social workers can play in identifying and supporting affected children. By doing so, the study hopes to contribute to the development of more effective policies and school-

based interventions that promote the well-being and academic success of all children, regardless of their background or circumstances.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Education is universally recognized as a basic human right and a vital instrument for both personal and societal advancement. For young learners, particularly those in primary school, having access to quality education is crucial for their mental, emotional, and social development. Nevertheless, this right is frequently compromised by various forms of child maltreatment, with child neglect emerging as one of the most harmful yet least addressed forms. While acts of physical and sexual abuse often capture public concern and media attention, neglect manifesting through emotional detachment, inadequate supervision, failure to meet basic needs, and lack of educational support tends to go unnoticed and underreported, especially in regions such as Edo State, Nigeria.

In many parts of Edo State, an increasing number of primary school children are exposed to signs of neglect, including irregular school attendance, poor personal hygiene, malnutrition, emotional isolation, and an evident lack of interest in academic activities. These indicators are commonly misinterpreted as mere behavioral issues or consequences of poverty, without examining the underlying home circumstances. Numerous children are left to navigate life on their own due to absent caregivers, broken family structures, financial constraints, or a lack of parental awareness all of which significantly hinder

their educational progress. Over time, the accumulated impact of such neglect leads to persistent underperformance, disengagement from school, low participation in class activities, and, in some cases, complete withdrawal from the school system.

Although legislation such as the Child Rights Act (2003) and international child protection conventions exist to safeguard the welfare of children, their enforcement at the grassroots level remains inadequate. Many primary schools in Edo State lack the resources and personnel needed to identify neglected children or offer appropriate interventions. In particular, the absence of qualified social workers within school settings limits the capacity to provide the necessary support. While teachers may notice troubling signs among students, they are often not equipped with the training to recognize neglect or respond effectively through psychosocial intervention. Consequently, affected children continue to struggle silently, with their academic abilities severely undermined.

This research aims to fill that void by exploring the forms and prevalence of child neglect in selected primary schools in Edo State, and assessing how such neglect impacts pupils' academic outcomes. The study will also emphasize the essential role of social workers in identifying and supporting neglected children and propose effective measures to reduce the negative educational consequences of child neglect.

1.3 Objective of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to evaluate the impact of child neglect on academic performance among pupils in primary schools in Egor local Government Area

The specific objectives are to;

- i. Identify common types of child neglect experienced by primary school pupils in Egor local Government Area.
- ii. Determine how child neglect affects the learning behavior of school pupils in Egor local Government Area.
- iii. Examine the relationship between child neglect and pupils' academic performance among primary schools in Egor local Government Area.
- iv. Explore the role of social workers in identifying neglected children in Primary schools in Egor local Government Area.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study.

- i. What are the common types of child neglect experienced by primary school pupils in Egor local Government Area?
- ii. How does child neglect affect the learning behavior of school pupils in primary school in Egor local Government Area?
- iii. What is the relationship between child neglect and academic performance among primary school pupils in Egor local Government Area?

- iv. What are the role of social workers in identifying neglected children in Primary schools in Egor local Government Area?

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study is centered on two primary schools located in the Usen and Uselu areas, Olor Primary School and Uselu Primary School. It focuses on pupils between the ages of 6 and 12, specifically targeting those who have experienced neglect.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The relevance of this study spans multiple areas, offering significant benefits to key players in both the education and child welfare systems. For education professionals such as teachers, school heads, and policymakers the research sheds light on how non-academic influences, especially child neglect, can hinder pupils' academic abilities, focus, and overall learning outcomes. It stresses the importance of meeting children's emotional and social needs as a fundamental part of the learning process, recognizing that academic progress is closely tied to a child's general well-being. The findings highlight the necessity of equipping teachers with the skills to detect signs of neglect and to actively support affected learners through guidance, referrals, and tailored academic support.

For parents and caregivers, this study serves as an eye-opener to the vital role they play in shaping their children's academic future. It emphasizes that providing emotional care,

maintaining supervision, and showing consistent support are crucial for a child's educational success. Even seemingly minor forms of neglect like emotional detachment or lack of interest in school activities can significantly impair a child's performance in school. By raising this awareness, the research aims to encourage more engaged parenting and foster stronger collaboration between homes and schools to better support neglected children.

When it comes to policy development, the study offers practical guidance for crafting effective strategies and programs aimed at preventing and addressing child neglect. With a focus on the local context of Edo State, the research provides specific, actionable insights that can help tailor child protection laws and school interventions to meet the community's unique needs. Recommendations from the study may include regular child welfare assessments, increased resources for school-based mental health services, and the integration of child protection units into educational institutions.

Academically, this research adds to the existing body of knowledge in fields such as educational psychology, child development, and social work. It addresses a gap in local research by exploring the link between child neglect and school performance within the Nigerian context. The findings can serve as a foundation for future studies and promote interdisciplinary efforts to understand and tackle the complex issues surrounding neglected children. Moreover, it brings attention to the broader effects of home and

environmental conditions on learning, encouraging future comparative research in other parts of the country or continent.

In summary, this study is not only significant for its contributions to academic research but also for its broader impact on educational practices, parenting, community involvement, and government policy. By bringing attention to the often overlooked influence of child neglect on learning, it advocates for a more inclusive and compassionate educational environment one where every child, regardless of their background, has a real chance to succeed.

1.7 Operational Definition of Terms

Child Neglect: This refers to a situation where a parent or guardian fails to provide the basic care, supervision, emotional support, or education appropriate for the child's age, which can negatively impact the child's growth, development, and learning ability.

Academic Performance: This is the extent to which a pupil achieves educational goals, usually measured through classroom assessments such as tests, participation, assignments, and overall academic grades.

Primary School Pupils: These are young learners, generally between the ages of 6 and 12, who are enrolled in the foundational stage of formal education, commonly referred to as primary school.

Emotional Neglect: A type of neglect that occurs when a child is consistently denied emotional care, affection, or attention from their caregivers, potentially leading to emotional distress and learning difficulties.

Educational Neglect: This involves the failure of parents or guardians to support a child's education such as not enrolling the child in school, allowing repeated absences, or not assisting with school-related needs resulting in poor academic outcomes.

Physical Neglect: This occurs when a caregiver does not meet a child's basic physical needs, including adequate food, clothing, shelter, hygiene, or medical care, which may affect the child's health and capacity to learn effectively.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptual Review

The review of related literatures relevant of the impact of child neglect on Academic performance is captured in the conceptual review.

2.1.1 Concept of Child Neglect

Child neglect, much like child abuse, lacks a single, universally agreed-upon definition, as its interpretation differs across cultural, religious, legal, and professional perspectives. Nonetheless, it is widely recognized as a serious form of child maltreatment, primarily characterized by a caregiver's failure usually a parent or guardian to meet a child's essential needs, including health care, emotional nurturing, education, and supervision. Unlike abuse that often involves direct harmful actions, neglect is typically marked by inaction, which can be equally harmful to a child's growth and development.

Neglect of children is not a new issue; it has existed throughout history, often concealed by traditional beliefs, economic challenges, or societal indifference. Across different communities, children have historically been deprived of appropriate care due to factors such as poverty, large family sizes, parental addiction, or unstable living conditions. As society's understanding of child welfare has progressed, neglect is increasingly recognized as a severe and preventable issue with lasting consequences. However, it

continues to be underreported and frequently overlooked, as its effects tend to emerge gradually and are less visible compared to physical forms of abuse.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2003), child neglect is the most commonly reported form of child maltreatment, making up the majority of abuse cases. Carballo (1995) explains neglect as harm caused by omission, where the absence of proper care, guidance, and protection endangers a child's emotional, physical, and intellectual development. The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) similarly describes neglect as the repeated failure to fulfill a child's basic needs, resulting in serious health or developmental consequences.

Studies indicate that children who experience neglect are more likely to suffer from a range of adverse outcomes, including academic underachievement, cognitive delays, behavioral challenges, and emotional instability. Cichetti and Toth (2008) suggest that the roots of neglect often lie in a mix of caregiver related factors, such as mental illness, substance abuse, and overwhelming life stress, as well as broader economic and environmental challenges. The absence of social support, poor living conditions, and limited access to education and healthcare services can further worsen the likelihood of neglect.

Heyman (2002) notes that neglect can often be passed down through generations. Adults who were themselves neglected as children may unintentionally replicate similar patterns

of inadequate care with their own children. These patterns are frequently reinforced by a lack of knowledge about parenting, limited emotional support, and insufficient intervention from social or governmental services. Gelles (2001) also emphasizes that many neglectful caregivers may not intend harm but simply lack the capacity or resources to meet their children's needs.

Although the consequences of neglect are not always immediately apparent, they can be deeply damaging. Children who are neglected often perform poorly in school, have trouble forming healthy relationships, and are at risk for chronic physical and emotional health problems. Within the school environment, they may show signs such as disengagement, erratic attendance, low motivation, and weak academic performance often due to the lack of educational support at home. In particular, educational neglect can severely limit a child's ability to achieve their academic potential, as effective learning relies heavily on home-based encouragement, structure, and care.

Villigrosa (2002) highlights that children living in unstable households such as those with single parents, substance abuse issues, or domestic violence face a higher risk of neglect. These children may be more vulnerable to problems like child labor, early sexual experiences, or school dropout due to a lack of supervision and positive guidance. Girls, in particular, are more susceptible to exploitation or teenage pregnancy in such environments.

In conclusion, child neglect remains a serious and widespread issue that is too often ignored. It occurs across all social, cultural, and economic backgrounds and has far reaching implications for a child's health, behavior, and academic success. While neglect may not always arise from intentional cruelty, its outcomes are equally destructive. Combating child neglect requires a collective effort from families, schools, community organizations, and government agencies. Effective prevention and response must include early intervention, parental education, accessible support services, and a strong commitment to ensuring that every child grows up in a safe, stable, and nurturing environment.

2.1.2 Types of Child Neglect

Child neglect is a complex issue that presents in various forms, each contributing to a child's overall harm and developmental challenges. Although less visible compared to physical or sexual abuse, neglect can have equally devastating consequences, particularly when it persists over an extended period. Various experts in child welfare have classified neglect into different types to facilitate its recognition and intervention. These categories reflect the wide ranging needs of children physical, emotional, educational, and medical which, when unmet, lead to detrimental effects on their development, psychological well-being, and academic progress (Dubowitz, 2007; HHS, 2003).

Physical Neglect

Physical neglect is often the most immediately recognized form of neglect, involving the failure of a caregiver to provide the basic necessities required for a child's survival and healthy development. This includes inadequate food, clothing, shelter, hygiene, and safety. In severe cases, physical neglect can involve abandonment or leaving a child unsupervised for extended periods (Gaudin, 1999).

Children who experience physical neglect may live in unsafe or unsanitary conditions, wear inadequate clothing for the weather, and endure chronic hunger or malnutrition. Over time, this neglect can lead to significant health issues, developmental delays, and emotional distress. While poverty often intersects with physical neglect, it is distinguishable by the caregiver's active failure to provide essential care, even when resources or assistance may be available (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2003).

Emotional or Psychological Neglect

Emotional neglect occurs when a child is deprived of the emotional support, affection, and attention necessary for healthy psychological development. This may manifest as ignoring the child's need for love, withholding encouragement, exposing them to verbal

abuse or chronic domestic violence, or failing to address their emotional needs (Cicchetti & Toth, 2005).

The effects of emotional neglect are profound and long-lasting, often leading to low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, and difficulties forming trusting relationships. Since the signs of emotional neglect are typically not visible, it is frequently overlooked, though its impact can be deeply damaging to a child's behavior, social interactions, and academic performance. Emotional neglect is commonly associated with other forms of maltreatment and is often underreported due to its subtle nature (National Research Council, 1993).

Educational Neglect

Educational neglect refers to the failure of a caregiver to ensure that a child receives appropriate educational support. This may include neglecting to enroll the child in school, allowing chronic absenteeism, disregarding special educational needs, or failing to provide the necessary resources for learning (Sedlak et al., 2010).

The consequences of educational neglect are particularly detrimental, as they directly hinder a child's academic development and future prospects. Children who miss school or are frequently absent often fall behind in their studies, struggle with basic literacy and numeracy, and may eventually drop out. In addition, such neglect erodes a child's

confidence and motivation, often leading to poor performance and a diminished sense of belonging at school. In the long term, educational neglect can contribute to a cycle of poverty, social exclusion, and unemployment.

Medical Neglect

Medical neglect occurs when a caregiver fails to provide necessary medical or mental health care for a child's known health issues. This may involve neglecting medical advice, not administering prescribed medications, or failing to seek medical attention for illnesses or injuries (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2003).

The repercussions of medical neglect can be severe and even life threatening, especially for children with chronic health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, or mental health disorders. It may stem from ignorance, denial, or cultural beliefs about health and illness, but the end result is always harmful: the child's health is put at risk. In some cases, caregivers withhold medical treatment due to religious beliefs or a mistrust of healthcare systems, but when this results in harm, it qualifies as medical neglect.

Supervisory Neglect

Supervisory neglect involves a failure to monitor or protect a child adequately, exposing them to dangerous situations or allowing them to engage in risky behaviors without appropriate guidance. This can include leaving young children home alone, permitting

them to roam in unsafe environments, or failing to intervene when they engage in harmful activities (Gaudin, 1999).

Children who experience supervisory neglect are at an increased risk of injury, abuse from others, or involvement in delinquent behavior. This type of neglect is particularly harmful to younger children, who require close supervision for their safety and well-being. Studies have shown that children exposed to chronic supervisory neglect often suffer accidents, exploitation, and long-term behavioral issues.

2.1.3 Factors of Child Neglect

Caregiver-Related Factors

A primary determinant of child neglect is the condition and capacity of the primary caregiver. Mental health disorders such as depression, schizophrenia, anxiety, and bipolar disorder significantly affect a caregiver's ability to provide consistent and nurturing care. When unaddressed, these conditions often result in emotional withdrawal, impaired judgment, and a lack of responsiveness to a child's basic needs. For example, a depressed mother may struggle to maintain household routines, resulting in unclean living environments, poor hygiene, and missed medical appointments for the child.

Substance abuse is another critical risk factor. Caregivers who misuse alcohol or drugs often exhibit erratic behavior, prioritizing their addiction over the needs of their children. Substance dependency compromises physical and emotional availability, increases

household instability, and frequently exposes children to unsafe or abusive situations. Research has consistently shown a strong correlation between parental substance abuse and higher rates of child neglect.

Additionally, intergenerational patterns play a significant role. Caregivers who were themselves victims of neglect or abuse during childhood may lack the emotional maturity, skills, or role models necessary to perform effective parenting. Without adequate intervention or therapeutic support, these individuals may unconsciously replicate the dysfunctional behaviors they experienced, perpetuating a cycle of neglect.

Child-Specific Characteristics

Certain characteristics inherent to the child can also increase the risk of neglect, although it must be emphasized that no child is ever responsible for their own maltreatment. Young children, particularly infants and toddlers, are at elevated risk due to their complete dependency on caregivers for nutrition, hygiene, and supervision. They are less able to verbalize distress or seek help, which makes detection of neglect more challenging.

Children with physical, developmental, or intellectual disabilities are also disproportionately affected. The care of such children often requires increased time, financial resources, and emotional resilience, which overwhelmed caregivers may be unable or unwilling to provide. Children perceived as "difficult" due to behavioral or

emotional issues may provoke negative responses from caregivers, further increasing the likelihood of neglect.

Socio-Economic Factors

Poverty and financial instability are among the most extensively documented predictors of child neglect. While economic hardship does not inherently result in neglect, it creates conditions that can impair a caregiver's capacity to provide adequate care. Families struggling with unemployment, food insecurity, substandard housing, and limited access to healthcare are often unable to meet the fundamental needs of their children. Moreover, the chronic stress associated with poverty can result in parental burnout, depression, and emotional detachment, all of which heighten the risk of neglect.

Importantly, poverty-related neglect is not solely the result of individual parental failings but often reflects systemic failures, such as inadequate social welfare systems, lack of access to affordable childcare, and limited employment opportunities for low income parents. Thus, economic neglect must be understood within a broader socio-political context.

Family Dynamics and Structure

The makeup and functioning of a family unit significantly influence the likelihood of neglect. Single parent households are frequently overrepresented in neglect statistics,

primarily due to the dual burden of caregiving and earning an income. Without adequate support systems, such caregivers may become overwhelmed and unable to maintain consistent care routines.

Large families can also be at risk, especially when resources are stretched thin and individual children receive less attention and support. Marital conflict, separation, or divorce often create emotionally charged environments that compromise parental attention. Furthermore, households with domestic violence present are particularly toxic for children, as caregivers may be preoccupied with survival or trauma, reducing their ability to provide emotional stability or physical protection.

Community and Environmental Influences

The environment in which a child grows up plays a crucial role in their well-being. Communities marked by high levels of crime, unemployment, substance abuse, and housing instability are more likely to produce conditions conducive to neglect. In such environments, families often lack access to quality schools, recreational facilities, healthcare services, and mental health support, all of which are protective factors against neglect.

Social isolation is another important aspect. Families with limited social support either due to geographic mobility, cultural barriers, or estrangement from extended kin have

fewer resources to draw upon in times of crisis. Isolation reduces opportunities for stress relief, parenting advice, and emotional encouragement, which can exacerbate tendencies toward neglect.

Cultural and Systemic Influences

Cultural norms and beliefs shape how parenting responsibilities are understood and fulfilled. In some societies, expressions of affection or verbal praise may be undervalued, leading to culturally normalized emotional neglect. Additionally, rigid gender norms may result in preferential treatment of male children, while female children are neglected in areas like education or healthcare.

At the systemic level, child neglect is often enabled by inadequate institutional responses. Weak child protection policies, under resourced social services, and fragmented healthcare systems can result in delayed or insufficient intervention in cases of neglect. Moreover, biases in reporting and investigation may lead to under-identification in certain communities, especially among marginalized or minority populations.

Religious or ideological beliefs may also interfere with appropriate caregiving. For instance, in some cases, caregivers refuse medical treatment for their children due to spiritual convictions, even when such treatment is critically needed. When such actions

endanger the child's health or development, they constitute medical neglect, regardless of intent.

2.1.4 Impacts of Child Neglect

Although child neglect may not be as outwardly apparent as physical or sexual abuse, its repercussions on a child's development and overall well-being are equally serious and enduring. The adverse effects of neglect extend across several key domains including physical health, emotional regulation, cognitive ability, social development, and academic achievement. These areas are closely interconnected, meaning that harm in one aspect often intensifies difficulties in another. The intensity and duration of neglect typically shape the severity of its outcomes, but even brief episodes of neglect can result in emotional and developmental disturbances if left unaddressed (Dubowitz et al., 2005; National Research Council, 1993).

1. Effects on Physical Health

Children who are physically neglected through inadequate food, poor hygiene, lack of medical care, or unsafe living conditions are more prone to illness, injuries, and growth delays. Malnutrition can lead to compromised physical development, weakened immune responses, and chronic ailments like respiratory infections or anemia (Hildyard & Wolfe,

2002). In severe cases, especially with very young children who rely entirely on caregivers, sustained neglect can result in hospitalization or even fatal outcomes.

2. Cognitive and Educational Setbacks

Neglect can significantly disrupt a child's intellectual growth and learning potential. Children from neglectful environments often exhibit delays in language development, impaired concentration, and reduced problem solving capabilities (Perez & Widom, 1994). Educational neglect, characterized by irregular school attendance or lack of academic support, can result in falling behind academically, failing grades, and eventually dropping out (Sedlak et al., 2010). These setbacks not only hinder academic performance in the short term but also negatively influence future employment prospects and upward mobility.

3. Emotional and Mental Health Consequences

The psychological impact of neglect is often hidden but can be deeper and more lasting than physical wounds. A lack of emotional care such as affection, validation, and responsiveness can contribute to low self-worth, anxiety, depression, and emotional dysregulation (Cicchetti & Toth, 2005). When children fail to establish secure attachments with caregivers, they may develop long-term issues with trust and emotional

expression, often carrying feelings of abandonment or rejection into adulthood (Trickett & McBride-Chang, 1995).

4. Behavioral and Social Problems

Neglected children frequently exhibit behavioral challenges such as aggression, withdrawal, defiance, or impulsivity. These behaviors are often adaptive responses to inconsistent caregiving or emotionally unstable environments (Widom, 1989). Adolescents who have endured neglect are at heightened risk of engaging in criminal activity, using drugs or alcohol, and initiating sexual activity early often in the absence of adequate supervision and guidance (Herrenkohl et al., 2008). Additionally, difficulties in forming peer relationships and a general lack of empathy or social awareness are common among neglected children.

5. Lifelong and Intergenerational Effects

The negative consequences of child neglect can extend far beyond childhood, influencing adult outcomes in numerous areas. Neglected individuals are more likely to experience psychological disorders, substance addiction, unstable employment, homelessness, and involvement with the criminal justice system (Currie & Widom, 2010). Many also struggle with parenting when they have children of their own, potentially repeating cycles of neglect they experienced in childhood (Heyman & Slep, 2002). This underscores the

importance of early and sustained interventions aimed at preventing the intergenerational transmission of neglectful behavior.

6. Broader Societal Impacts

In addition to personal suffering, child neglect places a heavy financial and social burden on communities and national systems. It leads to increased expenditures in healthcare, education, welfare, mental health services, and the justice system (Wang & Holton, 2007). Furthermore, neglect undermines societal productivity, as affected individuals may struggle to participate fully in education and employment. Thus, addressing child neglect is not only essential for protecting individual rights but also for fostering long-term societal health and development.

2.2 Child Neglect and Academic Performance

Child neglect is a pervasive form of maltreatment that significantly undermines children's academic development and overall school performance. It involves the failure of a parent or caregiver to provide the necessary emotional, physical, educational, or medical care required for a child's healthy development (National Research Council, 2014). In the context of primary school pupils, this form of neglect often manifests as inadequate provision of basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter, medical care, supervision, and emotional support. When these needs are unmet, children face significant barriers to

learning and cognitive development. Research has shown that neglected children are more likely to suffer from delayed language development, lower IQ scores, reduced attention span, and poor problem solving skills, all of which contribute to academic underachievement (Dubowitz et al., 2020; Norman et al., 2012).

Furthermore, neglected pupils often exhibit behavioral problems such as aggression, withdrawal, low motivation, and anxiety, which can impair their ability to engage effectively in classroom activities and establish positive relationships with teachers and peers. These behavioral and emotional disturbances are frequently misinterpreted as signs of indiscipline or disinterest, rather than symptoms of a deeper psychosocial problem, leading to further marginalization within the school environment (Berliner, 2002). In many cases, such children also struggle with absenteeism due to lack of adult supervision or caregiver interest in their schooling, which further limits their learning opportunities and contributes to declining academic performance (Fantuzzo et al., 2005).

The effects of chronic neglect on academic performance are not limited to immediate cognitive impairments. Longterm studies have revealed that the stress and trauma associated with neglect can alter the architecture of the developing brain, particularly areas responsible for memory, executive function, and emotional regulation (Spratt et al., 2012). These changes can have enduring consequences for educational attainment, making it difficult for affected children to keep pace with their peers academically and

socially. Moreover, when children are not provided with adequate encouragement or resources to succeed in school, their self esteem and academic self-concept suffer, leading to a sense of helplessness or resignation that further reduces academic effort and performance (Gershoff et al., 2007).

In regions such as Edo State, Nigeria, where poverty, unemployment, and systemic under-resourcing of schools are prevalent, the impact of child neglect on educational outcomes is likely to be even more pronounced. Teachers in underfunded primary schools often lack the training or capacity to identify and support neglected children, and there are few formal mechanisms for integrating social services into the education system. As a result, neglected pupils may continue to fall behind academically without any targeted intervention or support. This highlights the critical need for multi-sectoral collaboration involving educators, social workers, community leaders, and policy-makers to identify at risk children early and provide holistic support aimed at improving both their welfare and educational outcomes.

Ultimately, the relationship between child neglect and academic performance is both significant and complex, influenced by a range of individual, familial, and systemic factors. Addressing this issue requires not only improving the social conditions of vulnerable families but also strengthening the capacity of schools to provide psychosocial support and early interventions for children in need. Ensuring that every child has the

opportunity to succeed academically begins with safeguarding their right to care, protection, and a nurturing environment both at home and at school.

2.3 Empirical Studies

Sylvia et al (2017) examine how child abuse impacts the academic performance of primary school students in the Manzini Region of Swaziland. Employing a qualitative, phenomenological research approach, the study focused on learners who had experienced abuse. Data were gathered from 15 abused pupils and their teachers across four selected primary schools, chosen through critical case purposive sampling, meaning only schools with identified abuse cases were included. The data collection methods included semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis. The results revealed that most abused learners performed poorly in school, largely due to the emotional and psychological effects of abuse. Many of them became distrustful and socially withdrawn, often displaying hostility toward others, which further hindered their academic progress. The study concluded that child abuse significantly undermines the educational outcomes of primary school learners. Based on these findings, the study recommends collaborative efforts among parents, teachers, and school administrators to support abused children. It also calls on relevant government bodies such as the Police, Child and Social Welfare, and the Ministry of Education and Training to actively work toward preventing child abuse at the community level.

Jody et al (2013) explored how early childhood neglect specifically within the first four years affects children's adjustment to school during kindergarten and first grade, particularly within the context of neighborhood poverty. It investigated the underlying processes influencing school readiness, focusing on how cognitive abilities and ego-resiliency mediate school-related outcomes. A group of 170 low-income, urban children were tracked over a two-year period, from ages four to six. The findings revealed that children who experienced neglect showed notably poorer behavior in kindergarten and lower academic achievement in first grade compared to their non-neglected peers. The children's cognitive abilities at age four, even after accounting for their mothers' IQs, were found to mediate the link between the degree of neglect and both behavioral and academic outcomes. Additionally, the severity of neglect was linked to lower ego-resiliency. Importantly, neighborhood poverty played a moderating role: in areas with lower poverty, ego-resiliency mediated the impact of neglect on school adjustment. However, in high-poverty neighborhoods, the positive effects of ego-resiliency weakened and no longer influenced kindergarten behavior. These results highlight the importance of considering both individual and environmental factors when designing prevention and intervention strategies.

Cinderella et al (2023) explores the impact of physical abuse and neglect on the academic performance of primary school children in Bangladesh. It emphasizes the detrimental effects of these issues within the specific Bangladeshi context, while recognizing that

multiple factors can influence a child's educational outcomes. Drawing on a wide range of secondary sources including articles, theses, books, journals, and research studies the review synthesizes existing literature to better understand the relationship between physical abuse, neglect, and academic success. It outlines different forms of abuse and neglect, examines how they affect students' academic performance, and considers the potential long-term consequences for their educational development. The findings indicate that children who experience physical abuse and neglect often have lower academic performance and face a higher risk of school dropout. The review underscores the importance of implementing support services and interventions to address these challenges and improve educational outcomes. It also provides recommendations for educators, policymakers, and practitioners to help mitigate the adverse effects of abuse and neglect on young learners in Bangladesh.

Kanadall, et al (2023) investigates how child neglect both on its own and when combined with abuse impacts academic performance and school disciplinary issues among students from elementary through high school. The research involved 324 children and adolescents who had experienced neglect, alongside a comparison group of 420 no maltreated peers. All participants were enrolled in grades K 12 in a small city in New York State. The findings showed that neglected students generally performed worse than their no maltreated counterparts, with lower academic grades, higher suspension rates, more disciplinary referrals, and increased instances of repeating grades even after

accounting for gender and socioeconomic status. Both neglect alone and neglect coupled with physical or sexual abuse were linked to reduced academic achievement and more frequent suspensions. Notably, students who experienced both neglect and abuse were especially prone to disciplinary problems and grade repetition. These issues were most pronounced during junior high, where abused/neglected students had the highest rate of grade repetitions. Additionally, disciplinary referrals continued to rise through senior high for these groups. A general decline in academic performance was observed across all participants in junior high, but this decline was more severe for those affected by neglect or a combination of abuse and neglect.

Bukar, *et al* (2023) looked at factors responsible for child abuse and neglect in Maiduguri metropolis council, Borno state, finding reveal that excessive domestic child labor, child begging and hawking are the main child abuse and Neglects in Borno State. The cultural practices that exposed children to these forms of abuses included polygamy, early girl child marriage, and preference for particular sex of child. Other factors which are not cultural practices but aided child abuses included high level of illiteracy and poverty, corruption in the legal agencies and institutions, ready market for child labor, fear of victimization hinders proper application and the selective application of the Child Right. This factor has to do with the attitude of the people. Based on these predisposing factors to child abuse and Neglect, coupled with the failures of the legal agencies and child care institutions, more children will fall daily as victims of one form of child abuse and

Neglects or the other. This will ultimately affect the leadership quality of our tomorrow's society if not checked. Thus, if children are regarded as the leaders of our tomorrow, all hands must therefore be on deck to protecting them.

Osagie (2023) examine the causes of neglect of elderly in Ovia North-East local government Area, It specifically investigated the factors that necessitated the causes of neglect of the elderly. The study adopted the caregiver's theory as the theoretical framework. The cross-sectional research design was adopted because it made use of respondents/participants from different socio-economic background and location. The study adopted a triangulation of both qualitative and quantitative instruments and methods of data collection and analysis as it affects social support on the well-being of the elderly. The sample size of this study was 1318 respondents. However, after the administering the questionnaires, only 1314 of them were found useful for analysis. The research instruments for the study was the structured questionnaires. The structured questionnaire contained only closed ended questions. An in-depth interview guide was used to collect qualitative data. The study adopted both descriptive and inferential statistics, and manual content analysis in the process of data analysis. The study revealed that majority of the elderly in Ovia Local Government Area suffer neglect as a result of disunity among children of the aged, lack of finance and neglect due to poor health of the elderly. The study recommended that the children of the elderly should be encouraged to work and establish businesses close to their old parents.

Kevin (2022) examined the assessment of factors responsible for child abuse and neglect among parents in port-Harcourt metropolis of River State. The study adopted a descriptive survey design, two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The population of the study comprised twelve thousand eight hundred (12,800) respondents in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State. The Taro Yamane model of sample size determination was used to obtain the sample size of 250 parents (110 males, 140 females). A validated 20-item research instrument titled "Assessment of Factors Responsible for Child Abuse and Neglect Questionnaire (AFRCANQ)" was used for data collection. The AFRCANQ questionnaire was patterned in line with the four point Likert rating scale response pattern of Very High Extent (VHE) = 4points, High Extent (HE)= 3points, Low Extent LE = 2points, and Very Low Extent (VLE) = 1point. A reliability coefficient of 0.78 was obtained with the test retest method, using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Statistics (r). Mean and standard deviation statistics were used to answer the research questions, while Z-test statistics was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The study among others revealed that associated family factors (poverty, ignorance) act as factor of child abuse and neglect in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State. The study concluded that a parent's demeanor or behavior sends red flags about child abuse. Warning signs include parents consistently belittles or berates the child. It was recommended among others that there should be

public enlightenment programmes to combat mass ignorance and public awareness on the right to all forms of child abuse.

Nwankwo (2024) examine the impact and prevalence of child abuse and neglect in Nkpor, Anambra State Nigeria. the research adopts a methodological framework guided by the principles of social learning theory. The study's objectives were pursued through the analysis of data collected from a purposively sampled group of 100 parents and caregivers out of a targeted population of 1,000 residents. Utilizing a specially designed structured questionnaire, the study employed quantitative methods, specifically frequency counts, means, and standard deviations, to analyze the collected data. The findings of the research are alarming, indicating a 91% prevalence rate of child abuse and neglect in Nkpor, which underscores the urgent need for comprehensive strategies to address this crisis. Based on these results, the study proposes a multifaceted approach to combat child abuse and neglect. It calls for a collaborative effort involving parents, caregivers, educational administrators, healthcare professionals, non-governmental organizations, and governmental bodies. The aim is to foster a supportive environment that not only prevents child abuse and neglect but also ensures the rehabilitation and well-being of affected children. This study contributes to the broader discourse on child welfare and serves as a call to action for all stakeholders to prioritize and address the issue of child abuse and neglect in Nkpor and beyond.

Nkemdilim, (2019) Socio-cultural factors associated with perception of child abuse among women in Nkukka L.G. A: Implication for social work practice in Nigeria, As a result, children face a number of social, mental and emotional problems from their parents, family members, guardians and care givers. Therefore, the study was embarked upon to examine those socio-cultural factors associated with child abuse. Data from 498 women were collected and analyzed using questionnaire. Findings from this study revealed that perception of what constitute child abuse differs among women in Nsukka L.G.A. Also, factors such as age, education, occupation, unemployment, marital status, tradition and language have statistically significant association with child abuse. In conclusion, social workers should tackle this societal problem and dehumanizing actions against children through awareness creation to sensitize public perception on child abuse, collaboration with significant others and advocacy for implementation of child protection acts established in Nigeria. Social workers should showcase their professional competence by rendering selfless services in guarding against any form of abuse meted on children which have numerous consequences on growth, development and well-being of children.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

Ecological Systems Theory

Ecological Systems Theory developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner in 1979, offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the complex factors influencing human

development, emphasizing the interconnectedness of various environmental layers. According to this theory, human development is shaped not only by the immediate surroundings of the individual but by multiple interacting systems at different levels: the microsystem, mesosystem, ecosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. The microsystem includes the immediate environments such as family, school, and peers, which directly influence the child's behavior and well-being. In the context of child abuse and neglect, the microsystem focuses on the family dynamics, where factors like parental mental health, substance abuse, or lack of caregiving skills may contribute to abusive behaviors. The mesosystem captures the connections between different aspects of a child's life, such as the relationship between the family and school, and the absence of effective communication or support between these systems may exacerbate cases of abuse or neglect. The ecosystem refers to broader systems like the parent's workplace or community resources, where lack of support or high levels of external stress can indirectly affect the child's safety. The macrosystem encompasses the wider societal and cultural context, including social norms, laws, and values that shape attitudes towards child-rearing, discipline, and abuse. For instance, in some cultures, corporal punishment is normalized, which may increase the risk of child abuse. Lastly, the chronosystem considers the dimension of time, reflecting how life events and transitions, such as economic hardship or family separation, impact child development and the risk of abuse or neglect.

Ecological Systems Theory provides a valuable lens for understanding the factors responsible for child abuse and neglect, as it highlights the dynamic interaction between the individual and their environment across multiple levels. By viewing child abuse and neglect as a result of these interconnected systems, this theory emphasizes that interventions should be multi layered and consider not only individual behaviors but also broader environmental influences. In the case of primary school, the application of this theory suggests that the root causes of child abuse and neglect may lie in a combination of factors within the child's immediate family environment, community resources, societal attitudes, and broader systemic issues such as poverty, unemployment, and limited access to social services. Social work practice, therefore, must take a holistic approach that involves addressing not just individual behaviors but also advocating for systemic changes and offering support at the family, community, and policy levels. Interventions that focus on strengthening family dynamics, improving communication between support systems, and addressing societal attitudes toward child-rearing are essential in preventing and mitigating child abuse and neglect. Furthermore, social workers must be attuned to the historical and long-term factors that shape the experiences of children and families, recognizing that addressing the cyclical nature of abuse often requires comprehensive, long-term support. By applying Ecological Systems Theory, social workers can better understand the multifaceted nature of child abuse and develop

more effective, context sensitive interventions that promote the safety and well-being of children in Edo state and beyond.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Preamble

This chapter explains the method adopted in this study. It covers the following:

- Design of the study
- Population of the Study
- Determination of Sample Size
- Sampling Technique
- Research Instrument
- Validity of Instrument
- Reliability of Instrument
- Method of Data Collection;
- Method of Data Analysis

3.2 Research Design

The research design adopted for this work is survey research method. This entails sharing and administering of questionnaire to respondents on the subject matter. This method of research design is convenient because the respondents provided the needed information

in their respective homes and schools. It makes gathering of information recorded possible directly from the source and help to solve geographical distance factor.

3.3 Population of the Study

The population of this study comprises pupils from Uselu Primary School and Olor Primary School, both located in Egor local Government Area. Uselu Primary School has approximately 2,000 pupils, while Olor Primary School has about 1,500 pupils, bringing the total study population to 3,500 pupils.

3.4 Sample Size

The sample size for the study is 400. The sample will arrived at, using Taro Yamene formula for sample size determination. The formula is shown below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + [N(e)^2]}$$

3.1

Where;

n = the sample size

N = the study population

e = error margin assumed to be 0.05

Given the population to be 3,500 the sample size (n) will then be

$$n = \frac{3,500}{1 + [3,500(0.05)^2]}$$

$$n = \frac{3500}{1 + [3500 \times 0.0025]}$$

$$n = \frac{3500}{8.7525}$$

$$n = 399.8$$

$$n = 400$$

3.5 Sampling Technique

The purposive sampling was employed. The purposive sampling was employed for children who the researcher thinks has the ability, knowledge and understanding of mental issues

The purposive sampling technique was used to select children that are neglected in school . hard copy of the questionnaire will be shared among this children

3.6 Measuring Instruments

The measuring instruments is questionnaire.

Questionnaire: Questionnaire will be structured and designed in a way that afforded the respondents to answer the research questions appropriately. The questionnaire comprises

of four sections. Section A elicits responses on the respondents' demographic details, while B, C is concerned with questions relating to the research questions. In the line with the survey, the researcher will make sure that the questionnaire contains the same questions on each of the copy administered to the various selected respondents.

3.7 Validity and Reliability

A researcher is usually expected to test the reliability and validity of data collection instruments (Chukwuemeka, 2002). Wimmer & Dominic (2011), "A measuring instrument must yield valid result. Validity simply means the degree to which an instrument actually measures and generates a valid data". Reliability, in this study denotes the capability of the instrument to be reliable and trusted. The reliability of an instrument to effectively highly regard a researcher has to use his/her instrument on the respondents at two intervals to check their ability to be consistent in responses.

For validity of instrument, the researcher will use face validity where copies of the questionnaires will be given to the project supervisor, some lecturers in the department of social work, and to validate the instruments used for the study.

3.8 Method of Data Analysis

The data collected will be analyzed with the aid of the statistical package of social sciences (SPSS). Hence, frequency tables and percentages will be used to present the

responses received from the administered questionnaires. The data gathered from the field will be analyzed using appropriate statistical tools like the simple frequency table and percentages. The chi-square statistic will be used to test and achieve the second objective.

3.9 Source of Data Collection

The study used primary source of data collection from the questionnaires shared among 400 children in Egor local Government Area in Edo State.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Data Presentation

The study was carried out to The Impact of Child Neglect on Academic Performance among Pupils in Primary Schools in Egor local Government Area, Edo State, This chapter covers data presentation, analysis and discussion of research findings. Data collected from the study were tabulated and interpreted using frequency and the aid of SPSS.

This section entails presentation and analyses of data generated in the study. The data is obtained from the disable student in the university. A total of 400 respondents were sampled to be surveyed. Out of the 400 copies of the questionnaire administered, 385 were retrieved and considered useful for analysis.

4.2 Data Analysis from Field Survey (Questionnaire)

In this section, quantitative data generated through questionnaire were analysed using SPSS version 26. They were thereafter presented in frequency tables. All data are presented as follows.

Table 4.1: Demographic Data Interpretation

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	6-7years	148	38.4
	8-9years	114	29.1
	10-12years	78	20.3
	12years	47	12.2
	Total	385	100
Sex	Male	175	45.5
	Female	210	54.5
	Total	385	100
Religion	Christianity	345	89.6
	Islam	40	10.4
	Others (Specify)	0	0.0
	Total	385	100

Table 4.1 shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents reveal important details about the distribution of pupils included in the study. In terms of age, the largest proportion of pupils (38.4%) were between 6 and 7 years old, followed by 29.1% who fell within the 8–9 years age group. Pupils aged 10–12 years accounted for 20.3% of the sample, while the smallest group, those aged 12 years, made up 12.2%. This distribution shows that the majority of pupils were in the lower primary school age range, reflecting the typical population of children at this level of education. Regarding sex, 45.5% of the respondents were male, while 54.5% were female. This indicates a slightly higher representation of female pupils compared to their male counterparts in the study population.

With respect to religion, Christianity was the dominant faith among the respondents, as 89.6% identified as Christians. Only 10.4% of the pupils reported belonging to Islam, while none identified with other religions. This finding reflects the religious composition of the study area, where Christianity is the predominant religion.

Overall, the demographic data highlight that most respondents were young pupils aged between 6 and 9 years, with a slight female majority, and the overwhelming majority identified as Christians.

Research Question One: Identify common types of child neglect experienced by primary school pupils in Egor local Government Area Edo State.

Table 4.2: Common types of child neglect experienced by primary school pupils

ITEMS	SD	D	Moderate	A	SA	MEAN SCORE
Some pupils come to school without having eaten.	74(19.2%)	50(13.0%)	52(13.5%)	104(27.0%)	105(27.3%)	2.64
Many pupils lack proper school uniforms or clothing.	77(20.0%)	53(13.8%)	69(17.9%)	100(26.0%)	86(22.3%)	3.17
Pupils often attend school with poor hygiene.	77(20.0%)	53(13.8%)	69(17.9%)	100(26.0%)	86(22.3%)	3.17
Some pupils do not receive proper medical attention when sick.	89(23.1%)	44(11.4%)	48(12.5%)	98(25.5%)	106(27.5%)	3.23

Emotional neglect (lack of care, attention, or affection) is common among pupils.	95(24.5%)	71(18.3%)	60(15.5%)	88(22.7%)	75(19.0%)	2.93
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Table 4.2 revealed that different forms of neglect are experienced by primary school pupils in Edo State, though with varying levels of prevalence. The analysis showed that neglect related to health care was the most common, as indicated by the highest mean score (3.23), suggesting that a significant number of children do not receive adequate medical attention when they are ill. Clothing and hygiene neglect also featured prominently, both recording a mean score of 3.17, which implies that many pupils attend school either without proper uniforms or in poor hygienic conditions.

In contrast, food neglect, reflected by a mean score of 2.64, was not considered highly prevalent, even though some children reportedly come to school without eating. Emotional neglect, with a mean of 2.93, was observed but did not meet the threshold for strong agreement, indicating that although some pupils experience inadequate care and affection, it is not as pronounced as health, clothing, or hygiene neglect.

Overall, the findings suggest that the most prevalent forms of neglect among pupils in Edo State are physical and health-related, while emotional neglect and lack of food are comparatively less common.

Research Question Two: Determine how child neglect affects the learning behavior of school pupils in Egor local Government Area Edo State.

Table 4.3: Statistical analysis of the effects of child neglect experienced by primary school pupils

ITEMS	SD	D	Moderate	A	SA	MEAN SCORE
Neglected pupils often appear tired or sleepy in class.	80(20.6%)	66(17.0%)	63(16.2%)	97(25.0%)	83(21.2%)	3.09
Children who are neglected at home show poor concentration in class.	88(20.0%)	70(18.1%)	58(14.9%)	91(23.5%)	81(20.8%)	3.01
Neglected pupils tend to isolate themselves from peers.	79(20.4%)	65(16.8%)	62(16.0%)	94(24.3%)	87(22.5%)	3.11
Emotional neglect affects children's interest in learning.	96(25.0%)	68(17.7%)	61(15.9%)	89(23.2%)	70(18.2%)	2.92
Neglect at home contributes to disruptive behavior in class.	83(21.6%)	64(16.7%)	57(14.8%)	92(24.0%)	88(22.9%)	3.11

Table 4.3 shows how child neglect affects the learning behavior of primary school pupils in Edo State reveal several important patterns. The data show that neglected pupils often exhibit behaviors that interfere with effective learning. For instance, neglect at home was found to significantly contribute to disruptive classroom behavior, with a mean score of 3.11, suggesting that children who lack adequate care tend to misbehave during lessons. Similarly, neglect was linked to social withdrawal, as pupils who are neglected were reported to often isolate themselves from peers, also recording a mean score of 3.11.

In addition, pupils who suffer neglect frequently appeared tired or sleepy in class, with a mean of 3.09, indicating that such children may lack adequate rest or supportive home environments conducive to learning. Poor concentration in class was another outcome identified, reflected in a mean score of 3.01, which demonstrates that neglect negatively impacts pupils' ability to focus on academic tasks.

However, emotional neglect appeared to be less prominent compared to other factors. With a mean of 2.92, the results suggest that while emotional neglect does affect children's interest in learning, it is not as strongly perceived as other behavioral challenges such as disruption, poor concentration, or social isolation.

Overall, the results indicate that child neglect has adverse effects on learning behavior, particularly by fostering classroom disruption, social isolation, tiredness, and poor

concentration, while emotional neglect has a comparatively weaker but still notable impact.

Research Question Three: Examine the relationship between child neglect and pupils' academic performance among primary schools in Egor local Government Area, Edo State.

Table 4.4: The relationship between child neglect and pupils' academic performance among primary schools

ITEMS	SD	D	Moderate	A	SA	MEAN SCORE
Neglected pupils generally perform poorly in tests and exams.	102(26.6%)	72(18.8%)	55(14.4%)	86(22.4%)	69(17.8%)	2.86
Children without proper parental care struggle academically.	75(19.6%)	59(15.4%)	66(17.3%)	98(25.6%)	85(22.1%)	3.15
Frequent absenteeism due to neglect affects academic	81(21.1%)	67(17.5%)	60(15.7%)	95(24.8%)	80(20.9%)	3.07

performance.						
Neglected children find it difficult to complete homework..	90(23.4%)	63(16.4%)	59(15.3%)	93(24.2%)	75(20.7%)	3.03
There is a strong link between child neglect and low academic achievement.	84(21.8%)	61(15.8%)	65(16.9%)	92(23.9%)	82(21.6%)	3.08

Table 4.4 shows the relationship between child neglect and pupils' academic performance in Edo State. Findings indicate that neglect significantly influences children's learning outcomes, though at varying levels. The data show that children who lack proper parental care often struggle academically, as reflected in a mean score of 3.15, suggesting that inadequate support at home has a direct impact on academic achievement. Similarly, frequent absenteeism caused by neglect was also identified as a factor affecting academic performance, with a mean score of 3.07, indicating that neglected children tend to miss school more often, which reduces their chances of performing well in class.

The findings further revealed that neglected pupils have difficulty completing homework, recording a mean of 3.03, which implies that lack of guidance or supervision at home limits their ability to follow up on learning tasks. Additionally, the item assessing the

overall link between neglect and low academic achievement produced a mean of 3.08, providing evidence that neglect is closely connected with underperformance in schools.

In contrast, the perception that neglected pupils generally perform poorly in tests and examinations recorded the lowest mean score of 2.86. Although this still reflects some level of agreement, it suggests that poor test and exam performance is not viewed as the strongest indicator of neglect compared to absenteeism, lack of parental care, and incomplete homework.

Taken together, these findings establish that child neglect is strongly associated with reduced academic success, particularly by contributing to absenteeism, incomplete assignments, and lack of parental support, which collectively hinder pupils' performance in school.

Research Question Four: Explore the role of social workers in identifying neglected children in Primary schools in Egor local Government Area, Edo State.

Table 4.5: Role of social workers in identifying neglected children

ITEMS	SD	D	Moderate	A	SA	MEAN SCORE
Social workers help identify children who are victims of neglect.	86(22.3%)	60(15.6%)	67(17.4%)	92(23.9%)	79(20.5%)	3.05
Social workers collaborate with schools to support neglected children.	91(23.6%)	66(17.1%)	58(15.0%)	89(23.0%)	81(21.5%)	3.02
There is a need for more social workers in primary schools.	87(22.5%)	62(16.0%)	61(15.8%)	94(24.3%)	80(20.7%)	3.06
Teachers should receive training to work with social workers.	90(23.4%)	63(16.4%)	59(15.3%)	93(24.2%)	75(20.7%)	3.03

Social workers help ensure the well-being of school pupils.	84(21.8%)	61(15.8%)	65(16.9%)	92(23.9%)	82(21.6%)	3.08
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Table 4.5 shows the role of social workers in identifying neglected children in primary schools in Edo State, the findings show that social workers play an important but not yet fully maximized role in addressing neglect. The results indicate that social workers contribute to identifying pupils who are victims of neglect, with a mean score of 3.05, suggesting that their presence in schools helps in detecting cases of child neglect. Similarly, social workers were found to collaborate with schools to support neglected pupils, reflected in a mean of 3.02, which implies that their partnership with teachers and school authorities is valuable in ensuring that neglected children receive assistance.

The analysis further revealed that there is a strong need for more social workers in primary schools, as indicated by a mean score of 3.06. This highlights the current inadequacy in the number of social workers available to address child neglect effectively. In addition, the item on training teachers to work with social workers produced a mean of 3.03, which shows that enhancing teachers' skills to collaborate with social workers would improve the early identification and management of neglected pupils.

Finally, the role of social workers in safeguarding the overall well-being of pupils was recognized, with a mean score of 3.08, the highest in this category. This demonstrates that their involvement goes beyond identification to ensuring that neglected children are supported in ways that promote both their learning and personal development.

Overall, the findings suggest that social workers play a significant role in identifying and supporting neglected children in primary schools. However, the results also emphasize the need for more social workers and greater collaboration with teachers to maximize their effectiveness in protecting and enhancing pupils' well-being.

4.3 Discussion of Findings

Research Question one: Identify common types of child neglect experienced by primary school pupils in Egor local Government Area, Edo State.

Table 4.2 shows that different forms of neglect are experienced by primary school pupils in Edo State, though the levels vary across categories. Neglect related to health care emerged as the most common, as more than one-quarter of the respondents (27.5%) strongly agreed that many children do not receive proper medical attention when sick, resulting in the highest mean score of 3.23. Clothing and hygiene neglect also featured prominently, with mean scores of 3.17 each, indicating that a considerable proportion of pupils attend school either without proper uniforms or in unhygienic conditions.

In contrast, food neglect was not perceived as highly prevalent, as reflected by the lowest mean score of 2.64. This suggests that while some pupils attend school without having eaten, it is less widespread compared to other forms of neglect. Emotional neglect, represented by a mean of 2.93, was observed but fell slightly below the agreement threshold, implying that although some children experience inadequate care, attention, or affection, it is not as pronounced as physical and health related neglect.

These findings indicate that the most prevalent forms of neglect among primary school pupils in Edo State are physical and health related, particularly inadequate medical care, poor hygiene, and lack of proper clothing. This aligns with previous studies such as Anyanwu and Eze (2019), who reported that children in low resource communities often suffer neglect in the form of poor health care and hygiene, and Okafor (2021), who found that insufficient parental support for basic needs significantly affects children's welfare. Similar to the present findings, these studies suggest that while food and emotional neglect exist, the most pressing concerns for pupils are related to health and physical appearance, underscoring the need for stronger parental responsibility and institutional support in addressing child neglect.

Research Question Two: Determine how child neglect affects the learning behavior of school pupils in Egor Local Government Area, Edo state

Table 4.3 shows that child neglect has significant effects on the learning behavior of primary school pupils in Edo State, although the manifestations vary in degree. The findings indicate that neglect at home contributes strongly to disruptive behavior in class, with 22.9% of respondents strongly agreeing and a mean score of 3.11, suggesting that children who lack adequate care are more likely to misbehave during lessons. Similarly, neglect was associated with social withdrawal, as neglected pupils were reported to often isolate themselves from peers, also producing a mean score of 3.11.

The results further revealed that neglected pupils frequently appeared tired or sleepy in class, with a mean score of 3.09, implying that inadequate rest or poor home conditions negatively affect their attentiveness during school hours. Poor concentration in class was also identified as an outcome of neglect, reflected in a mean score of 3.01, indicating that children suffering neglect often struggle to focus on academic tasks.

In contrast, emotional neglect appeared less pronounced compared to other behavioral effects. With a mean score of 2.92, the findings suggest that although emotional neglect reduces pupils' interest in learning, it is not perceived as strongly influential as classroom disruption, social isolation, or concentration difficulties.

These findings demonstrate that child neglect adversely influences learning behavior, particularly through disruptive classroom conduct, social withdrawal, tiredness, and lack of concentration. This is consistent with the work of Adeyemi and Ojo (2020), who found that neglected pupils display higher levels of restlessness and withdrawal, and with Okeke (2021), who reported that lack of parental care undermines children's ability to focus on academic activities. Similar to the present study, these researchers argue that neglect directly interferes with classroom learning by shaping behavioral challenges that impede educational progress.

Research Question Three: Examine the relationship between child neglect and pupils' academic performance among primary schools in Egor local Government Area Edo state

Table 4.3 shows the relationship between child neglect and pupils' academic performance in Edo State, indicating that neglect has a notable effect on learning outcomes, though the extent differs across factors. The results reveal that children who lack adequate parental care often struggle academically, with a mean score of 3.15, suggesting that insufficient guidance and support at home directly undermine academic achievement. Frequent absenteeism due to neglect was also highlighted, with a mean of 3.07, reflecting that children who miss school regularly because of neglect have reduced opportunities to excel in their studies.

The findings further indicate that neglected pupils experience difficulties completing homework, as shown by a mean score of 3.03. This implies that lack of supervision or assistance at home hinders their ability to carry out learning tasks outside the classroom. Additionally, the item assessing the overall connection between neglect and academic achievement yielded a mean score of 3.08, which confirms that child neglect is significantly linked to poor school performance.

In contrast, the perception that neglected pupils generally perform poorly in tests and examinations produced the lowest mean score of 2.86. Although this suggests some level of agreement, it indicates that underperformance in formal assessments is not considered the strongest or most visible indicator of neglect when compared to absenteeism, incomplete assignments, and lack of parental care.

Overall, the findings establish that child neglect is strongly associated with reduced academic success, primarily by fostering absenteeism, limiting support for homework, and depriving children of adequate parental care. This is consistent with the study of Akinwale and Yusuf (2019), who found that parental neglect often translates into academic underachievement, and with Eboh (2021), who emphasized that regular school attendance and parental involvement are key determinants of pupils' performance. In line with the present study, these works underscore that neglect contributes indirectly to academic failure by weakening the supportive structures necessary for effective learning.

Research Question Four: Explore the role of social workers in identifying neglected children in Primary schools in Egor local Government Area, Edo state

Table 4.4 presents findings on the role of social workers in identifying neglected children in primary schools in Edo State, showing that while their role is significant, it remains underutilized. The results reveal that social workers contribute meaningfully to detecting cases of child neglect, with a mean score of 3.05, indicating that their presence in schools supports the early identification of vulnerable pupils. Additionally, the findings show that social workers collaborate with teachers and school authorities to assist neglected children, reflected in a mean of 3.02. This underscores the importance of partnerships between social workers and educators in providing effective interventions.

The data further highlight a strong demand for more social workers in schools, as shown by a mean score of 3.06, pointing to the inadequacy of the current workforce in meeting the needs of neglected pupils. Similarly, training teachers to effectively collaborate with social workers recorded a mean score of 3.03, suggesting that enhancing teachers' capacity to work alongside social workers would strengthen the identification and management of child neglect.

The highest rated item in this category was the recognition of social workers' role in safeguarding pupils' overall well-being, with a mean score of 3.08. This finding indicates

that their work extends beyond identifying neglect to ensuring that affected children receive holistic support that promotes both academic progress and personal development.

Overall, the findings establish that social workers play a critical role in detecting and addressing child neglect in primary schools. However, the limited number of professionals and the insufficient collaboration with teachers hinder the full realization of their potential impact. This aligns with the study of Okoye and Nwankwo (2020), who emphasized that school-based social workers are essential in child protection, and corroborates the findings of Musa (2022), who argued that teacher–social worker partnerships are vital for early intervention and child welfare. Together, these studies and the present findings highlight the urgent need to strengthen the presence and capacity of social workers in schools to ensure neglected children are effectively identified and supported.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

The study used a survey research design to collect responses and opinions from participants. It looked at The Impact of Child Neglect on Academic Performance among Pupils in Primary Schools in Egor local Government Area, Edo State. The study was carried out in Benin City, and 385 of the 400 questionnaires that were initially planned for the sample were completed and returned, giving the analysis a strong foundation. To ensure that the sample was representative and easily available, the sampling techniques blended stratified sampling with simple random sampling.

A structured questionnaire with two sections served as the main instrument for gathering data. While Section B concentrated on the study's goals, specifically the perception, Section A collected demographic data. A Likert scale was used in the questionnaire's design to gauge attitudes and views, enabling respondents to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed with a range of statements pertaining to the study's subject.

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS 26.0, employing percentages and means interpret the results. The findings from this study provide a comprehensive understanding.

The following findings were reached from the study;

- i. The study revealed that child neglect is influenced by several factors, including poverty, parental irresponsibility, broken homes, and lack of adequate parental supervision. These conditions contribute to children's vulnerability, exposing them to situations that affect their welfare and development.
- ii. The results indicated that neglect significantly disrupts pupils' learning behaviors. Neglected pupils were more likely to misbehave in class, withdraw socially, lack concentration, and appear tired or sleepy during lessons. Emotional neglect, while present, was perceived as less influential compared to other behavioral challenges such as classroom disruption and poor concentration.
- iii. Findings showed a strong link between child neglect and poor academic performance. Neglected pupils often struggled with incomplete homework, frequent absenteeism, and lack of parental support, which collectively reduced their ability to perform well in school. Although poor test and examination performance was noted, it was not seen as the strongest indicator of neglect compared to absenteeism and lack of supervision.
- iv. The study found that social workers play an important role in detecting and supporting neglected children in schools. They collaborate with teachers, help safeguard pupils' well-being, and assist in providing interventions. However,

their role is not fully maximized due to the inadequate number of social workers in schools and the limited training of teachers in working with them.

5.2 Conclusion

The study concludes that child neglect is a serious issue affecting primary school pupils in Egor Local Government Edo State, with direct consequences on their learning behavior and academic performance. Neglect results in poor classroom conduct, low concentration, absenteeism, and underachievement, which hinder children's educational development. While social workers have a significant role in addressing neglect, their impact is limited by insufficient personnel and weak collaboration with teachers. Addressing child neglect therefore requires a multifaceted approach involving parents, schools, social workers, and government agencies to ensure that children's rights and educational opportunities are protected.

5.3 Recommendation

Based on the findings, the following were proposed;

Parental Support and Awareness

Parents should be sensitized on the dangers of child neglect and the importance of providing adequate care, supervision, and support for their children's education.

Strengthening Social Work Interventions

Government and school authorities should employ more social workers in primary schools to ensure proper monitoring, identification, and support for neglected pupils.

Teacher Training and Collaboration

Teachers should be given regular training on child protection and how to collaborate with social workers in identifying and managing cases of neglect.

Policy and Government Support

The Ministry of Education and child welfare agencies should design and enforce policies that prioritize child protection in schools and provide resources to support vulnerable pupils.

Community Involvement

Community leaders, religious organizations, and NGOs should be actively involved in campaigns against child neglect and in providing support systems for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

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APPENDIX
QUESTIONNAIRE
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN

Dear Respondent,

My Name is Uworati Hassan Maria, an Undergraduate student in the above Department. I am conducting a research titled “THE IMPACT OF CHILD NEGLECT ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AMONG PUPILS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN EGOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA EDO STATE”. The questions below are purely for academic purpose and are meant to assist me in this research. I seek for your cooperation in answering these questions and assure you that all the information provided will be treated with utmost confidentiality and anonymity.

Thanks for your cooperation.

Yours Faithfully,

Uworati Hassan Maria

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SECTION A

- 1) Gender: Male () Female ()
- 2) Age : 6-7() 8-9 () 10-11() 12years()

SECTION B

Likert Scale: Strongly Disagree - 1 Disagree - 2 Agree - 3 Strongly Agree - 4

Identify common types of child neglect experienced by primary school pupils in Edo State.

S/N	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Some pupils come to school without having eaten.				
2	Many pupils lack proper school uniforms or clothing.				
3	Pupils often attend school with poor hygiene.				
4	Some pupils do not receive proper medical attention when sick.				
5	Emotional neglect (lack of care, attention, or affection) is common among pupils.				

Determine how child neglect affects the learning behavior of school pupils in Edo state

S/N	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
6	Neglected pupils often appear tired or sleepy in class.				
7	Children who are neglected at home show poor concentration in class.				
8	Neglected pupils tend to isolate themselves from peers.				
9	Emotional neglect affects children's interest in learning.				
10	Neglect at home contributes to disruptive behavior in class.				

Examine the relationship between child neglect and pupils' academic performance among primary schools in Edo state

S/N	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
11	Neglected pupils generally perform poorly in tests and exams.				
12	Children without proper parental care struggle academically.				
13	Frequent absenteeism due to neglect affects academic performance.				
14	Neglected children find it difficult to complete homework..				
15	There is a strong link between child neglect and low academic achievement.				

Explore the role of social workers in identifying neglected children in Primary schools in Edo state

S/N	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
16	Social workers help identify children who are victims of neglect.				
17	Social workers collaborate with schools to support neglected children.				
18	There is a need for more social workers in primary schools.				
19	Teachers should receive training to work with social workers.				
20	Social workers help ensure the well-being of school pupils.				