

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Child sexual abuse has become a growing concern worldwide due to its devastating impact on children's psychological, emotional, social, and educational development. It refers to any form of sexual activity with a child by an adult or an older adolescent, including acts such as fondling, exposure to sexual content, molestation, rape, or exploitation through pornography. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2020), child sexual abuse is a global public health issue that violates the fundamental rights of children and affects their well-being across multiple dimensions. In many developing countries, including Nigeria, the problem persists due to cultural silence, fear of stigmatization, inadequate legal enforcement, and insufficient awareness among parents, teachers, and students. The rising prevalence of CSA in developing countries, including Nigeria, has become an issue of significant concern to educators, policymakers, and parents because of its detrimental effects on the well-being and educational development of children. The school, which should serve as a haven for learning and character development, has unfortunately become a site where some students are exposed to abuse, either from peers, teachers, or outsiders.

According to Bass, (2021) Childhood can be divided into four stages based on period of psychological changes. These stages are the toddler stage, the pre-school stage,

the early school stage and the pre-teenage stage. The lack of care and love needed by the child and the absence of proper transition from one stage to another of childhood will go a long way in affecting the child physically, psychologically, mentally, emotionally and socially and moreover, one of the factors that affects or hinders proper transition of children from childhood to adult is child labour which hampers the child's growth and development.

A child is a person below 18 years old. However, childhood is one of the major stages in a person's development Edmonda, (2015). At 18 months of age, children have just begun to outgrow baby cloths though many still wear diaper. By the age of 13, many boys and girls have nearly double height and quadrupled in weight. They have also began to develop sexually, they are thus looking more like young adult but still growing and developing Bello (2020). It also involves significant changes in child's behaviours, emotions and attitudes. These psychological changes largely determine the kind of adult that child will become or will grow to be. Strictly speaking, children want to be loved, to be accepted, to succeed in life and to be noticed, children will use their enviable activities to secure the important things in their lives. A child's psychological growth depends on the environment as well (Drusilla, 2022). The child's environment consists of everything with which the child comes in regular and frequent constant with including other people, the majority of the children receive the environmental help they need for normal psychological development Akabayashi, (2016).

Child sexual abuse (CSA) remains a pervasive and deeply troubling issue affecting millions of children worldwide. It encompasses a range of exploitative behaviors, including sexual assault, exploitation, and inappropriate exposure to sexual content or acts. Despite increasing global awareness and legal interventions, CSA continues to occur across all socio-economic, cultural, and geographical boundaries, often leaving long-lasting psychological, emotional, and cognitive impacts on its victims. One of the critical yet often overlooked consequences of child sexual abuse is its profound effect on educational development. Victims frequently struggle with academic performance, concentration, memory retention, classroom behavior, and social integration.

The trauma associated with CSA can lead to chronic absenteeism, school dropouts, reduced academic self-esteem, and in severe cases, complete disengagement from the educational system. These educational impairments are not only detrimental to the personal development of the child but also pose significant societal and economic challenges (Akabayashi, 2022). Globally, research has shown a strong correlation between CSA and poor educational outcomes. In both developing and developed countries, studies have found that children who have experienced sexual abuse are more likely to perform poorly in school, exhibit behavioral problems, and experience learning difficulties. Factors such as stigma, lack of proper psychological support, and inadequate school-based interventions often exacerbate these outcomes. In many regions, particularly in low-resource settings, the lack of training for teachers and counselors further limits the ability of schools to

support affected students effectively (Akabayashi, 2019). Moreover, the school environment, which should be a safe haven for learning and growth, can sometimes be a site of abuse itself either through peer victimization or abuse by authority figures. When trust in educational institutions is broken, children are less likely to engage positively with their schooling experience.

In the context of education, child sexual abuse has far-reaching consequences that extend beyond the immediate physical and psychological trauma. Victims often experience a decline in academic performance, loss of interest in school, increased absenteeism, and a heightened risk of dropping out altogether (Akanle, 2023). The trauma may also impair concentration, memory, and social interaction, all of which are essential for learning and academic success. In extreme cases, abused children may become disruptive in class or exhibit behavioral problems, further isolating them from their peers and educational opportunities. The Egor Local Government Area of Edo State, like many urbanizing areas in Nigeria, has witnessed rising cases of sexual violence against children. While some efforts have been made by community leaders, educational authorities, and non-governmental organizations to combat the issue, there remains a significant gap in empirical research that specifically examines how child sexual abuse affects the educational development of secondary school students in this region.

This study seeks to explore the prevalence, nature, and consequences of child sexual abuse on the educational development of students in selected secondary schools

within Egor Local Government Area. It aims to provide data-driven insights that can inform policies, interventions, and support systems designed to protect children and ensure that every child has the opportunity to thrive academically in a safe and supportive environment.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) remains one of the most disturbing and underreported social issues in Nigeria, with far-reaching consequences on the overall development of victims, particularly in the area of education. In Egor Local Government Area of Edo State, there is growing concern about the increasing incidence of sexual abuse among secondary school students and the negative impact it has on their academic performance, attendance, concentration, self-esteem, and overall emotional well-being. Despite efforts by governmental and non-governmental organizations to raise awareness and implement protective measures, many victims remain silent due to fear, stigma, or lack of trust in authorities. As a result, the abuse continues, often leading to serious academic setbacks such as declining grades, increased dropout rates, and behavioral problems in school.

Moreover, there is limited empirical data on how child sexual abuse specifically affects the educational development of secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area (Tanya, 2023). This lack of localized data hampers the formulation of effective policies and intervention programs tailored to the unique socio-cultural context of the area. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the prevalence of child sexual abuse

among secondary school students in Egor LGA, explore the various forms it takes, and assess its impact on their academic achievement, school attendance, and psychological well-being. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for developing informed strategies to protect children and support their educational journey.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The primary aim of this study is to investigate of child sexual abuse and its consequences on the educational development of students in selected secondary schools in Egor Local Government Area, Edo State. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. examine the prevalence of child sexual abuse in some selected secondary school students in Egor LGA, Edo State.
2. Investigate the causes of child sexual abuse in some selected secondary school students in Egor LGA, Edo State.
3. identify the types and patterns of child sexual abuse experienced by students in some selected secondary school students in Egor L.G.A, Edo State.
4. explore the psychological and emotional consequences of child sexual abuse on students' learning ability and classroom participation.
5. to examine and recommend effective preventive measures against child sexual abuse and identify support strategies that enhance the educational development of affected victims.

6. Find out the role of social workers in addressing child sexual abuse in the study area.

1.4 Research Questions

To achieve the above objectives, the study will be guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the prevalence of child sexual abuse among secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area?
2. What are the causes of child sexual abuse among secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area?
3. What are the common types and patterns of sexual abuse reported by students?
4. What psychological and emotional impacts does sexual abuse have on the educational development of affected students?
5. What measures can be implemented to prevent child sexual abuse and support the educational development of victims?
6. What is the role of social workers in addressing child sexual abuse in the study area?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The issue of child sexual abuse has increasingly become a major social, psychological, and educational concern in Nigeria and across the world. Its devastating consequences continue to affect the cognitive, emotional, and academic development of learners, particularly those in secondary schools who are in their formative and transitional stages of growth. This study on “Child Sexual Abuse and Its Consequences on Educational Development in Selected Secondary Schools” is significant in several important ways, as it provides solid empirical information that can guide stakeholders in addressing the problem and improving students’ well-being and academic outcomes.

The study is significant because it will contribute to a deeper understanding of the nature, prevalence, and patterns of child sexual abuse in the selected secondary schools. Despite the sensitivity of the subject, many cases remain unreported, hidden, or ignored due to stigma, fear, and cultural barriers. By investigating the issue within the school environment, the study brings such hidden experiences to the forefront, enabling educators, policymakers, counsellors, and parents to understand the real magnitude of the problem.

The study is important because it highlights the educational consequences experienced by victims of child sexual abuse. Research has shown that abused children often suffer from declining academic performance, inability to concentrate in class, high absenteeism, and withdrawal from school activities. By identifying these educational challenges, this study

provides evidence that can guide the development of interventions aimed at improving learning outcomes and ensuring that affected students are not left behind academically.

The study will be valuable to school counsellors and psychologists, as it provides data that can help them understand the emotional and behavioural manifestations of child sexual abuse among students. This understanding will enable them to design trauma-informed counselling programs, provide psychosocial support, and detect early signs of abuse for timely intervention. The findings will also empower counsellors to advocate for safe reporting systems within schools.

Furthermore, policymakers and educational authorities will benefit from this study because it offers insights that can guide the formulation and implementation of policies on child protection and school safety. The recommendations generated from this research can help educational administrators develop preventive measures, strengthen student protection protocols, and ensure that schools create a learning environment free from sexual harassment, exploitation, and abuse.

The study is also significant to teachers, who are often the closest adults to students during school hours. Teachers will gain a better understanding of how child sexual abuse affects student behaviour, participation, and learning capacity. This knowledge can help teachers respond more appropriately when students display signs of trauma or distress in the classroom, and contribute to creating an emotionally safe learning atmosphere.

Parents and guardians will also benefit from the findings, as the study sheds light on how abuse affects the personal and academic life of a child. Increased awareness among parents can improve parental involvement, communication, and vigilance, thereby reducing the chances of abuse occurring or continuing unnoticed.

Additionally, the study will contribute to existing scholarly literature on child protection, educational development, and adolescent psychology. It will serve as a reference point for future researchers who may wish to explore similar issues or develop further academic interventions. By providing empirical evidence from the selected secondary schools, the study enriches local and national data on child sexual abuse, which is often limited in Nigeria due to sociocultural constraints.

Finally, the study is significant because it advocates for the overall well-being of children, who are among the most vulnerable members of society. Understanding how sexual abuse affects their educational development directly supports national and international goals related to child rights, quality education, and social protection. The findings will help stakeholders adopt a more holistic approach to education one that prioritizes safety, emotional stability, and academic excellence.

In conclusion, this study is important because it produces knowledge that can drive meaningful change. It informs educators, policymakers, counsellors, parents, and the wider society about the profound impact of child sexual abuse on educational development and offers practical steps toward prevention, early detection, and effective support for victims.

Through this research, schools and communities will be better equipped to safeguard students and promote an environment that fosters healthy learning and development.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study is confined to examining the issue of child sexual abuse and its consequences on the educational development of students in selected secondary schools within Egor Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria. The research focuses on both male and female students, aged between 10 and 18 years, who are currently enrolled in junior and senior secondary schools.

1.7 Operational Definition of Terms

In the context of this study, the following terms are the operationally defined were adopted:

Child Sexual Abuse (CSA): This refers to any form of sexual activity with a child by an adult or older adolescent. This includes inappropriate touching, fondling, exposure to sexual content, rape, or any sexual act imposed on a minor.

Educational Development: The process by which a student acquires academic knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes through formal schooling. It encompasses academic performance, classroom participation, school attendance, and psychological readiness to learn.

Consequences: Refers to the effects or outcomes resulting from an experience or action.

In the context of this study, consequences pertain to the negative impact of child sexual abuse on the academic and psychological well-being of students.

Academic Performance: These are measurable outcomes of a student's learning, typically indicated by grades, test scores, and teacher assessments. This study examines how CSA may influence such outcomes.

Victim: A person who has suffered harm as a result of a crime or abuse. In this context, it refers to secondary school students who have experienced sexual abuse.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Child sexual abuse (CSA) is a global public-health and human-rights problem with profound short- and long-term effects on children’s physical health, psychological well-being, social functioning, and life opportunities (Zimba et al., 2020). For students in secondary school an important developmental window for identity formation, academic consolidation and transition to higher education or work exposure to sexual abuse can derail learning trajectories in subtle and overt ways. The literature review that follows situates CSA within education research by summarising what is known about prevalence and risk factors, outlining theoretical frameworks commonly used to study its educational impacts, synthesising evidence about the pathways through which abuse harms schooling (attendance, cognition, behaviour and achievement), and highlighting gaps that justify the present study of “selected secondary schools.”

2.2 Review of Conceptual Framework

Child sexual abuse (CSA) is a pervasive form of maltreatment that occurs when a child is used for sexual gratification by an adult or an older youth, or when a child is exposed to sexual activities or material beyond their developmental capacity (Bolen et al., 2023). Beyond its immediate physical and emotional harms, CSA often precipitates a cascade of developmental disruptions that extend into the child’s educational life affecting attendance, classroom behaviour, cognitive functioning, school attainment and relationships with

teachers and peers. Understanding these educational consequences requires a layered, theory-informed approach that links trauma processes with the social and institutional contexts of schooling.

Two broad groups of explanations appear repeatedly in the literature. The first group emphasizes trauma and neurodevelopmental pathways: sexual abuse increases stress physiology, produces symptoms of post-traumatic stress and depression, and for some children alters developing neural circuits that support attention, memory and emotion regulation (Brown, 2020). These intrapersonal changes reduce the child's capacity to concentrate, persist with learning tasks, and manage classroom demands. The second group highlights social ecological and relational pathways: abuse often disrupts attachment relationships and family stability, leads to stigma or social withdrawal, and increases contact with child-protection and justice systems all of which can interrupt schooling (absences, school moves) and degrade the social supports that normally scaffold learning (Briere et al., 2023). Framing CSA's effects on education through both trauma/neurobiological models and ecological models helps explain why impacts are heterogeneous across children and contexts.

Classic conceptual models illuminate mechanisms linking CSA to educational outcomes. Finkelhor and Browne's traumagenic dynamics model (1985) describes how the abuse experience creates stigmatization, powerlessness, betrayal and traumatic sexualization dynamics that map directly onto classroom behaviours (withdrawal,

aggression, sexualized behaviour, distrust of adults). Attachment theory (Bowlby) explains how disruptions in primary caregiving relationships reduce the child's sense of security and regulation, undermining engagement with school. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory directs attention to how family, peer, school and community systems either amplify harm or buffer children through protective responses. Neurodevelopmental research on toxic stress argues that chronic activation of stress systems can impair prefrontal cortex functions necessary for executive processes (planning, sustained attention) capacities that underlie academic success.

Empirical studies consistently show associations (though not deterministic pathways) between CSA and poorer educational outcomes: lower grades, higher rates of absenteeism and dropout, grade retention, and lower levels of eventual educational attainment. Many of these links are mediated by mental health sequelae (PTSD, anxiety, depression), behavioural problems (externalizing behaviours, substance use), and school-level responses (suspension, inadequate trauma-informed supports) (Bowlby, 2020). Importantly, the severity and persistence of educational consequences depend on multiple moderators age at abuse, duration and severity of abuse, the child's existing resilience and coping resources, the presence of supportive caregivers, and the responsiveness of schools and child protection systems. Thus, two children with similar abuse histories may follow very different educational trajectories depending on the ecological supports and interventions available.

From a policy and practice perspective, the conceptual review suggests three implications. First, schools must be viewed as crucial sites for detection, early support, and sustained interventions (mental health services, trauma-informed teaching, flexible academic accommodations). Second, interventions should be multifaceted: addressing mental health symptoms, repairing relationships (family and teachers), and providing academic remediation (Bizzi, 2018). Third, research and monitoring systems should integrate educational data with child-protection and health records to detect early signs of school disengagement and to evaluate which supports most effectively restore educational trajectories. The remainder of this conceptual review expands each pathway (trauma/neurobiological, relational/ecological, and institutional/school-level), summarises representative empirical findings, and outlines directions for practice and future research that would most effectively protect educational development after CSA.

2.2.1 Childhood Sexual Abuse

There are many forms of childhood sexual abuse. The sexual abuse can involve seduction by a beloved relative or it can be a violent act committed by a stranger. Sexual abuse can be difficult to define because of the many different forms it can take on, the different levels of frequency, the variation of circumstances it can occur within, and the different relationships that it may be associated with (Melmer & Gutovitz, 2021). Maltz (2022) argued that sexual abuse occurs whenever one person dominates and exploits another by means of sexual activity or suggestion (Maltz, 2022).

Ratican (2022) defines childhood sexual abuse as any sexual act, overt or covert, between a child and an adult (or older child, where the younger child's participation is obtained through seduction or coercion). Irrespective of how childhood sexual abuse is defined it generally has significant negative and pervasive psychological impact on its victims. The majority of sexual abuse happens in childhood, with incest being the most common form (Maltz, 2022). The impact of childhood sexual abuse varies from person to person and from case to case. A study compared the experiences of women who experienced familial sexual abuse with women who experienced non-familial abuse. They found that women who experienced familial abuse reported higher current levels of depression and anxiety when thinking about the abuse.

Other variables Hartman, Finn and Leon (2017) found to increase the levels of reported distress were abuse experiences that involved more extensive sexual abuse, a higher number of sexual abuse experiences, and a younger age during the first sexual abuse experience (Hartman et al., 2017). While the nature and severity of the sexual act may cause more serious impact, many other factors may influence the degree of damage the victim experiences. Other factors may include the perspective of the individual, the individual's internal resources, and the individual's level of support (Ratican, 2022). Although not all forms of childhood sexual abuse include direct touch, it is important for therapists to understand that childhood sexual abuse can take on many different forms that still exploit the victim sexually and cause harm. The perpetrator may exploit the child by

introducing them to pornography prematurely, assaulting them through the internet, or manipulating them into taking pornographic photos (Melmer & Gutovitz, 2021).

Childhood sexual abuse infringes on the basic rights of human beings. Children should be able to have sexual experiences at the appropriate developmental time and within their control and choice. The nature and dynamics of sexual abuse and sexually abusive relationships are often traumatic. When sexual abuse occurs in childhood it can hinder normal social growth and be a cause of many different psychosocial problems (Maltz, 2002). The next section of this paper will review literature and research concerning these long-term effects of childhood sexual abuse.

2.2.2 Prevalence of Sexual Abuse in Nigeria

Nigeria, as the most populous country in Africa, has almost half of its population (46%), as children below age 15 (Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey, 2023). If the facts and figures of research on women sexual abuse in Sub Saharan Africa are anything to hold unto, one wonders what the Nigerian context of the situation will be. The Nigerian National Assembly had set the age of sexual consent as 18 (Ezeamalu, 2020), implying that any sexual activity involving a person less than 18 in Nigeria, is tagged women sexual abuse. The Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Response Team (DSVRT) guidelines (2020), has also defined sexual violence as sexual abuse not only including forcing someone to have sex, but it can also include having sex with someone who is unable to refuse due to disability, illness, intimidation, or the influence of alcohol or other drugs.

Based on this, the reviewed studies fall within the limits of this definition, describes the experiences of some children and adolescents in Nigerian homes and communities.

Consequently, sexual abuse of women is a significant issue in Nigeria, with high rates of occurrence across various regions. The problem is multifaceted, influenced by cultural, economic, and social factors. The prevalence of sexual abuse among Nigerian women is alarming with reports suggesting that one in three women has experienced some form of sexual violence during their lifetime (National Population Commission, 2018). This statistic highlights the widespread nature of sexual abuse, which includes physical assaults, verbal abuse, and various forms of exploitation. Several studies have documented the persistence of sexual violence in urban and rural areas alike, underscoring its pervasive nature.

In a study by the World Health Organization (2013), it was reported that sexual violence against women in Nigeria occurs frequently both in public spaces and within the confines of homes. Domestic violence, including rape by intimate partners, remains one of the most common forms of abuse. This is particularly concerning as it emphasizes the normalization of violence within households, making it harder for women to report such abuses due to social stigma and fear of retaliation (Okeke, 2020). Sexual violence in Nigeria is often underreported. A significant number of survivors do not report incidents due to the fear of shame, retribution, or a lack of trust in the judicial system. Research by the United Nations Women (2018) indicates that only a small percentage of sexual abuse cases are reported, which suggests that the true extent of sexual violence remains largely unknown. This

underreporting is compounded by societal attitudes that often blame victims rather than holding perpetrators accountable.

Moreover, socioeconomic factors play a role in the prevalence of sexual violence in Nigeria. Women in low-income areas are particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse due to factors such as limited access to education, financial dependency, and limited social support networks (Ayankogbe, 2019). These women may face heightened risks of exploitation and abuse in workplaces, especially in informal sectors where regulations and protections are minimal. The Nigerian government has made efforts to address sexual violence, but challenges persist. While laws such as the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act (VAPP) exist, implementation remains inconsistent, and many women continue to suffer from a lack of access to justice (Mba, 2020). The legal system's failure to consistently prosecute perpetrators contributes to the continued prevalence of sexual abuse, allowing it to persist with relative impunity. The prevalence of sexual abuse among women in Nigeria is a serious public health and human rights issue. While there have been efforts to combat this abuse, significant gaps remain in both awareness and the legal framework. Continued advocacy, stronger law enforcement, and a change in societal attitudes toward gender-based violence are essential to reduce the prevalence of sexual abuse and ensure the protection of Nigerian women.

2.2.3 Causes of Child Sexual Abuse on Educational Development

Child sexual abuse (CSA) has emerged as a critical social and public health challenge affecting millions of children across the world. It is defined as any sexual activity with a

child that he or she cannot comprehend, consent to, or is developmentally unprepared for (World Health Organization, 2020). While the physical, psychological, and emotional consequences of sexual abuse have been widely documented, its impact on educational development is receiving increasing scholarly attention. This concern arises from the growing recognition that education is a fundamental determinant of human capital development, and any disruption in a child's learning trajectory can impose long-term consequences for the child, family, and society at large (Finkelhor, 2018). Understanding the causes of child sexual abuse is therefore essential for developing preventive strategies that safeguard children's well-being and educational outcomes.

One major cause of child sexual abuse is family dysfunction, which includes broken homes, domestic violence, parental separation, and substance abuse. Children raised in unstable family environments often lack adequate supervision, making them more vulnerable to exploitation by adults and older peers (Akpan & Oluwole, 2021). When caregivers are emotionally detached or overwhelmed by socioeconomic pressures, children are left exposed to potential abusers within the home or community. This exposure not only places them at risk of abuse but also affects their emotional stability, leading to poor concentration, low academic performance, and frequent absenteeism. The home, which should serve as the primary protective environment, thus becomes a site of vulnerability.

Another contributing factor is poverty and socioeconomic deprivation. Children in low-income communities are at higher risk of exploitation due to overcrowded living

conditions, transactional sex, and the need for children to engage in labor to support family income (UNICEF, 2021). Economic hardship may also push children into informal living arrangements, where trusted adults such as guardians, neighbors, or employers take advantage of their vulnerability. These children often struggle academically as financial stress and trauma interfere with their cognitive functioning, motivation, and school attendance.

Additionally, cultural practices and societal silence around issues of sexuality significantly contribute to the persistence of child sexual abuse. In many societies, discussing sexual matters is considered taboo, making it difficult for children to report abusive experiences (Adejumo, 2020). Harmful beliefs that blame victims or normalize adult authority over children further discourage disclosure. This silence delays intervention and prolongs exposure to abuse, resulting in severe psychological trauma that impairs memory, attention, and classroom engagement. Cultural acceptance of early child marriage in some communities also leaves young girls vulnerable to sexual exploitation, often ending their formal education prematurely.

Lack of awareness and inadequate child protection systems also fuel the prevalence of CSA. In many low- and middle-income countries, weak law enforcement, inadequate social services, and limited school-based safeguarding mechanisms allow perpetrators to operate with impunity (Ejeh & Usman, 2022). Schools, which should be safe spaces for learning, sometimes become environments where children experience abuse from teachers,

peers, or non-teaching staff. When such abuses occur, students may develop fear and mistrust, leading to withdrawal from school activities or complete dropout. This directly undermines educational development and contributes to long-term academic underachievement.

Moreover, the growing influence of digital technology has introduced new forms of exploitation. Online grooming, exposure to harmful content, and cyber exploitation have increased as children spend more time on the internet (Livingstone et al., 2019). Perpetrators often exploit children's digital ignorance, leading to psychological distress that affects school performance. The ease of sharing explicit material online also reinforces cycles of shame and stigma, further discouraging victims from participating fully in educational settings.

The relationship between child sexual abuse and educational development is therefore complex and multifaceted. Sexual abuse often results in emotional disorders such as anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and behavioral problems that directly impair learning ability (Fergusson et al., 2013). Children who experience sexual abuse frequently show signs of declining grades, poor concentration, classroom disengagement, truancy, and eventual dropout. Educational institutions must therefore understand these dynamics to implement effective psychosocial support systems.

Child sexual abuse is driven by a combination of family-related, economic, cultural, institutional, and technological factors. These causes not only expose children to harm but

also significantly hinder their educational progress. As education forms the cornerstone of personal and national development, addressing the root causes of CSA becomes critical for sustaining children's academic growth and overall well-being. Strengthening family structures, enhancing public awareness, improving child protection systems, and promoting safe learning environments are essential for mitigating the impact of CSA on educational development. A comprehensive understanding of these causes will support the development of interventions that ensure children can learn, grow, and realize their full potential without fear of abuse.

2.2.4 Rehabilitation of Sexual Abuse with Social Worker

Rehabilitation for survivors of sexual abuse is a critical process that helps individuals regain their sense of safety, self-worth, and agency. Social workers play a central role in this process, providing emotional support, advocacy, and practical resources to facilitate healing and recovery. Here's an overview of how social workers contribute to the rehabilitation of sexual abuse survivors: Social workers begin by conducting an in-depth assessment to understand the survivor's: (i) Immediate needs (safety, medical care, etc.), (ii) Emotional and psychological state, (iii) Social and economic circumstances, and (iv) Risk factors, such as ongoing threats or instability. Social workers provide immediate emotional support and practical assistance to help survivors stabilize after a traumatic event. If the survivor is in danger, the social worker helps create a plan to ensure their safety, which may involve temporary shelters, protective orders, or relocation.

Social workers can connect survivors with resources such as medical care, including treatment for injuries or STIs. Legal assistance to report the abuse and navigate the justice system and Financial aid or housing support if the survivor faces economic hardship. According to Gvaldaitė (2024), ability to manage for oneself groups can be famous for one following characteristics: Small groups admit members to more surely relate to each one and provide time for alive partnership; balance leadership demands appendages to allow for possibility each member's offering; and shared help entails members to take an alive function in upholding one another when they find themselves in disputing class. Rehabilitation groups run on the principles of voluntarism and solidarity, accompanying shareholders to a degree both providers and benefits of aids (Miller, 2021).

Self-support in restoration groups is also asserted on the secondary standard, that prevents a customer from suitable helpless on a social laborer; it helps customers do business remainder of something who knowledge comparable challenges and forestalls them from impression unique and unable to resolve their problems (Petružytė, Girdzijauskienė & Gvaldaitė, 2024). Family appendages of contingent things experience moving disorders and evolve roundabout dependency (Danraka et al., 2021). The ailment popular as "roundabout dependence" is the misfortune of individual's similarity and personality, that results in an touching, friendly, and infrequently even bodily reliance on another man. Participating in ability to manage for oneself groups for restoration can assist family appendages in departing from this type of reliance.

A public worker grant permission encounter sure challenges when corroborating self-support groups of folks inside terminated confinement structures. In the context of

occupied accompanying captives, a social employee can collude with different friendly traders except for prisons to establish close ability to manage for oneself groups or authorize direct communication accompanying these groups of uncles of things wrestling with sexual abuse and intervention process (Phillipowsky, 2018). After judging the captive's connections accompanying the primary and subordinate networks, a friendly peasant will decide the one to increase the captive's support network on their own, including the captive's companions, classification, association, religious societies, ability to manage for oneself groups, and additional relationships that are meaningful to bureaucracy. Sexual abuse victims have distinguished needs by way of their early developmental stages in the neurocognitive and psychosocial rules. Studies have marked that the mind develops over an widespread magnitude. A teenager's conduct change during this enlightening ending from being more offhand to being most closely guide observable characteristics like fate, planning, discretion, and administrative. Adolescence and early maturity are a time of swift happening for these characteristics (Sacks et al., 2018).

2.2.4 The Consequences of Women Sexual Abuse

The lifetime consequences of sexual abuse as a traumatic experience does not simply end because at some point in time the sexual abuse did; rather it is known to create specific long-term problems that have the ability to disrupt women's lives. When women become mothers, their children can also experience specific kinds of problems stemming from their mother's trauma of childhood sexual abuse (Wosu, Gelaye & Williams, 2020). For

example, mothers sexually abused as children may experience more intense and prolonged postpartum depression than mothers who have not experienced this trauma.

Women frequently experience another type of depression (dysthymic) associated with childhood sexual abuse, which then becomes compounded by postpartum depression. Children whose mothers were sexually abused in their childhood may be at greater risk for the actual trauma of childhood sexual abuse to occur to them given that the majority of perpetrators are family members or known to the family and those family perpetrators sexually abuse a number of children within generations (Leeners, Gorres, Block & Hengartner, 2016). Children can also be affected by the long-term problems their mothers may experience associated with childhood sexual abuse (Baril, Tourigny, Paillé, & Pauzé, 2016).

Emotional problems including depression, anxiety, and eating disorders along with chronic and multiple physical health problems can occur either daily or periodically and interfere with a woman's availability to her children or cause adult responsibilities to be transferred onto a child because a mother is not able to function (Kamiya, Timonen & Kenny, 2016). A primary consequence of childhood sexual abuse is the long-term disruption it can cause in relationships, with the mother-child relationship as an example of a significant relationship that can be disrupted by this childhood trauma (Wosu, Gelaye & Williams, 2020). The family belief system and environment where a mother's sexual abuse occurred is also important to recognize as having a role in the disruption of the mother-child relationship because the family belief system and environment provide a context for

understanding both this trauma and its intergenerational effects on parenting (Baril, Tourigny, Paillé, & Pauzé, 2016).

When the trauma of childhood sexual abuse was occurring, women as children learned certain beliefs and behaviors within this family context; therefore, it is important to identify what maladaptive beliefs and behaviours learned from the family where the sexual abuse took place and how it is influencing mother's parenting behaviour (Wosu, Gelaye & Williams, 2020). Women sexual abuse is a particularly insidious trauma to women since it is known to be consistently associated with the experience of multiple problems that vary in their disruption, seldom diminish on their own, and have the potential to reoccur across a woman's lifetime (Bolen, Winter & Hodges, 2023).

2.2.5 Impact of Sexual Abuse on Children

Sexual abuse can have short and long-term effects on the victim[s], which can be physical, emotional or psychological. A UN study on the violence against children indicated that although women are generally prone to sexual violence in conflict, to a large extent, adolescent girls are particularly vulnerable to abuse due to their physiological make ups, power positions and assumed uninfected status of sexually transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS.

In conflict and post conflict zones, perpetrators of sexual abuse have also used ethnicity and religion as determining factors for the identification of which women or girls should be subjects of sexual violence such as in Rwanda and Sudan. Although some children do not experience 'direct' abuse, however, they are sometimes forced to witness incidents of

rape of family members which is a psychological torture for them. Sexual abuse against boys as well as girls often goes unreported. These acts of sexual abuse also exposes victims to high risks of sexually transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS as well as traumatic experiences which psychologists have referred to as ‘post-traumatic stress disorders.’ For instance, in Nigeria, between 60 and 70 percent of child sexual victims, who later took to prostitution as a survival strategy, were HIV/AIDS positive (Ellwood, 2021).

Furthermore, these sexual assaults also have serious health implications for survivors such as unwanted pregnancies, vesico-vaginal and vesico-rectal fistula and prolapsed uterus. Victims who become pregnant as a result of these sexual abuses face harsh conditions. These Emotional and psychological challenges emerge from the inadequate support system from the community including economic hardship, pervading religious and cultural expectations and the lack of access to appropriate reproductive health services (Quadara, Stathopoulos & Carson, 2016). Due to their physiological Developments, young girls are at a higher risk of chronic pelvic inflammatory diseases and Muscle injury at child birth. The possibilities for complications to arise during their teen age Pregnancies are high which may result in unsafe or incomplete abortion. These complications can result in internal bleeding which may be caused by bruises and physical Injuries, difficulties with breastfeeding and loss of menstruation. Sometimes, it leads to death as a result of poor pre and post-natal care (Maniglio, 2020).

2.2.6 The Long-Term Effects of Childhood Sexual Abuse

Childhood sexual abuse has been correlated with higher levels of depression, guilt, shame, self-blame, eating disorders, somatic concerns, anxiety, dissociative patterns, repression, denial, sexual problems, and relationship problems. Depression has been found to be the most common long-term symptom among survivors (Melmer & Gutovitz, 2021). Survivors may have difficulty in externalizing the abuse, thus thinking negatively about themselves (Hartman et al., 2017). After years of negative self-thoughts, survivors have feelings of worthlessness and avoid others because they believe they have nothing to offer (Long, Burnett & Thomas, 2016). Ratican (2022) describes the symptoms of women sexual abuse survivors' depression to be feeling down much of the time, having suicidal ideation, having disturbed sleeping patterns, and having disturbed eating patterns. Survivors often experience guilt, shame, and self-blame. It has been shown that survivors frequently take personal responsibility for the abuse. When the sexual abuse is done by an esteemed trusted adult it may be hard for the children to view the perpetrator in a negative light, thus leaving them incapable of seeing what happened as not their fault. Survivors often blame themselves and internalize negative messages about themselves. Survivors tend to display more self-destructive behaviors and experience more suicidal ideation than those who have not been abused (Browne & Finkelhor, 2016).

Body issues and eating disorders have also been cited as a long-term effect of childhood sexual abuse. Ratican (2022) describes the symptoms of women sexual abuse survivors' body image problems to be related to feeling dirty or ugly, dissatisfaction with body or

appearance, eating disorders, and obesity. Survivors' distress may also result in somatic concerns. A study found that women survivors reported significantly more medical concerns than did people who have not experienced sexual abuse. The most frequent medical complaint was pelvic pain (Cunningham, Pearce, & Pearce, 2018). Somatization symptoms among survivors are often related to pelvic pain, gastrointestinal problems, headaches, and difficulty swallowing (Ratican, 2022).

Stress and anxiety are often long-term effects of childhood sexual abuse. Childhood sexual abuse can be frightening and cause stress long after the experience or experiences have ceased. Many times survivors experience chronic anxiety, tension, anxiety attacks, and phobias (Briere & Runtz, 2018, as cited in Ratican, 2022). A study compared the posttraumatic stress symptoms in Vietnam veterans and adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse. The study revealed that childhood sexual abuse is traumatizing and can result in symptoms comparable to symptoms from war-related trauma (McNew & Abell, 2020).

Some survivors may have dissociated to protect themselves from experiencing the sexual abuse. As adults they may still use this coping mechanism when they feel unsafe or threatened (King, 2019). Dissociation for survivors of childhood sexual abuse may include feelings of confusion, feelings of disorientation, nightmares, flashbacks, and difficulty experiencing feelings. Denial and repression of sexual abuse is believed by some to be a long-term effect of childhood sexual abuse. Symptoms may include experiencing amnesia concerning parts of their childhood, negating the effects and impact of sexual abuse, and feeling that they should forget about the abuse (Ratican, 2022).

Whether or not survivors can forget past childhood sexual abuse experiences and later recover those memories is a controversial topic. Some therapists believe that sexual abuse can cause enough trauma that the victim forgets or represses the experience as a coping mechanism. Others believe that recovered memories are false or that the client is led to create them (King, 2019). Survivors of sexual abuse may experience difficulty in establishing interpersonal relationships. Symptoms correlated with childhood sexual abuse may hinder the development and growth of relationships. Common relationship difficulties that survivors may experience are difficulties with trust, fear of intimacy, fear of being different or weird, difficulty establishing interpersonal boundaries, passive behaviors, and getting involved in abusive relationships (Ratican, 2022).

Feinauer, Callahan, and Hilton (2016) examined the relationship between a person's ability to adjust to an intimate relationship, depression, and level of severity of childhood abuse. Their study revealed that as the severity of abuse increased, the scores measuring the ability to adjust to intimate relationships decreased. Sexual abuse often is initiated by someone the child loves and trusts, which breaks trust and may result in the child believing that people they love will hurt them (Streaan, 2018 as cited in Pearson, 2024). Kessler and Bieschke (2019) found a significant relationship between women who were sexually abused in childhood and adult victimization.

Many survivors experience sexual difficulties. The long-term effects of the abuse that the survivor experiences, such as, depression and dissociative patterns, affect the survivors sexual functioning. Maltz (2022) gives a list of the top ten sexual symptoms that often

result from experiences of sexual abuse: Avoiding, fearing, or lacking interest in sex; approaching sex as an obligation; experiencing negative feelings such as anger, disgust, or guilt with touch; having difficulty becoming aroused or feeling sensation; feeling emotionally distant or not present during sex; experiencing intrusive or disturbing sexual thoughts and images; engaging in compulsive or inappropriate sexual behaviours; experiencing difficulty establishing or maintaining an intimate relationship; experiencing vaginal pain or orgasmic difficulties (women); and experiencing erectile, ejaculatory, or orgasmic difficulties.

They found that male victims of childhood sexual abuse were more likely to experience erectile dysfunction, premature ejaculation, and low sexual desire, and they found that women were more likely to have arousal disorders (Laumann, Piel, & Rosen, 2019). It is important to point out that although research has shown there to be significant relationships between long-term effect variables and childhood sexual abuse, each victim's responses and experiences will not be the same. Although it is often viewed as a traumatic experience, there is no single symptom among all survivors and it is important for clinicians to focus on the individual needs of the client.

2.3 Review of Empirical Literature

Bugaje, et al., (2022) examine women sexual abuse in Zaria, Northwestern Nigeria. They did a retrospective study of case notes of all patients seen with a history of sexual abuse, from August 2008 to October 2009, at a primary health centre in Northwestern Nigeria. The result shows that a total of twenty cases were seen out of a total of 33, 313, which gave

a prevalence rate of 0.06%. There were three boys and 17 girls, with a male: female ratio of 1: 5.7. The age range was 3-13 years, with a mode of 7 years. Majority (19, 95%) were aged 12 years and below. Eleven cases (55%) attended school, while three (15%) were hawkers. Twelve (60%) of the children presented more than 72 hours after the assault, twelve (60%) cases were abused more than once, and there was evidence of genital trauma in 60% of cases. The assailants were all males, and identified in 70% of the cases. Of those identified, 55% of them had previously been suspected of committing sexual abuse. In 55% of cases the assailants were either household members or neighbours. Only 12 (60%) of incidents were reported to the police. Legal outcome was not known in any of the cases. All the cases defaulted to follow-up. The study concludes that women sexual abuse is not an uncommon problem in Zaria. There is a need to ensure follow-up after treating immediate medical problems, in order to manage and prevent the long-term psychological problems of sexual abuse. The high default rate to follow-up needs to be further investigated. The legal outcome in all the cases was unknown.

Zimba, Menon, Thankian and Mwaba (2020) examine the psychological impact of women sexual abuse on primary caregivers. The study adopted 34 caregivers of CSA survivors from at Victim Support Unit (VSU), Young Women's Christians Association (YWCA) and/or University Teaching Hospital (UTH), Lusaka. Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) and a semi-structured interview schedule were used for data collection. Overall PSS scores indicated that an incident of CSA results in a debilitating psychological impact on caregivers of the survivors, there were. significant difference in the levels of perceived

stress experienced by maternal caregivers (Mean rank = 19.38, n = 29) and paternal ones (Mean rank = 6.60, n = 5): $z = 2.66, p .01$). Symptoms of psychological distress experienced by caregivers after an incident of CSA included anxiety, fear, depression, anger, insomnia, and functional impairment. About half the care givers in the study (n= 19, 55.88%) showed support and protection for their children; others (n = 15, 44.12%) were hostile toward and blamed their children for the abuse. The caregivers therefore may need psychological services to improve their mental health and provide support to their children.

Gabriel Job, et al., (2019) examine prevalence of women sexual abuse among secondary school adolescents in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria. The study adopted a multi-staged sampling technique, using a sample of 1558 adolescents aged 10-19 years were studied in a cross-sectional, school based survey from January to May 2013, to determine the prevalence of women sexual abuse among adolescents in Obio/Akpor. Ethical clearance was obtained. The data collected was through semi-structured which was pretested questionnaire completed by students. The descriptive statistics was used for data analysis, test for association between subgroups was carried out using Chi-square test while the difference between means was determined using the Students t-test. The results revealed that the respondents comprise of 739 males (47.4%) and 819 females (52.6%) with a male female ratio of 1:1.1. 572 of the 1558 subjects had experienced CSA giving an overall prevalence of 36.7%. The proportion of females and males that were sexually abused were 47.4% and 24.9% respectively. Girls were 2.7times more likely to be victims of CSA compared to their male counterparts. (OR: 2.714; 95% CI: 2.188 -3.37)

The gender difference was statistically significant ($p= 0.001$). The highest prevalence of CSA of 39.8 % occurred within the age range of 14-16years. The age at the time of CSA ranged from 7 – 18 years with a mean age of 12.6 ± 2.9 years. The prevalence rate increased with low social class, living in a single family set up and the presence of more than 4 children in the family. The study concluded that the prevalence of women sexual abuse among adolescents in secondary school in Obio/Akpor LGA is high. The study recommends that a stable home with adequate monitoring of children especially the girl child as well an increased public enlightenment on the risk factors and prevention of CSA can reduce its occurrence.

Wu, Chen and Guo (2021) examine knowledge, attitudes, and practice of women sexual abuse prevention among primary school teachers in China. The study Teachers from 8 schools in a city of Guangdong province in May 2019, via an anonymous self-administered questionnaire. On the whole, primary school teachers had positive attitudes toward CSA prevention, but their knowledge and educational practice for CSA prevention were somewhat limited. The results of multiple logistic regression showed that older teachers (40 years or older) (OR = 1.692. 95%CI 1.135, 2.521), classroom teachers (OR = 1.877. 95%CI 1.269, 2.776), and teachers who had participated in training (OR = 4.293. 95%CI 2.907, 6.339) had more educational practice. The findings in this study could provide useful information for developing further CSA prevention education in primary schools.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

In order to address the theoretical foundation of this study, attachment theory was adopted to explain basic issues with respect to the main objective of the study.

2.4.1 Attachment Theory

Attachment Theory, developed by John Bowlby (1969), emphasizes the importance of early emotional bonds between children and their caregivers in shaping social, emotional, and cognitive development. A secure attachment provides a foundation for trust, safety, and self-esteem, which are essential for healthy learning and interpersonal relationships.

In the context of child sexual abuse (CSA), this theory is highly relevant because abuse often occurs within relationships where trust and attachment should exist—such as between a child and a caregiver, teacher, or relative. Such violations of trust severely disrupt a child’s sense of security, leading to insecure or disorganized attachment patterns. These disruptions can manifest as anxiety, fear, low self-worth, and difficulty forming healthy relationships, which in turn affect the child’s concentration, motivation, and overall academic performance.

John Bowlby (1999), a British psychologist and psychoanalyst who proposed attachment theory in the 1950s and 1960s. Bowlby's theory focuses on the importance of a child's relationship with their primary caregiver, usually their mother, for their social, emotional, and learning development. Childhood Sexual Abuse (CSA) is a major public health problem and human rights issue such that 20% of women and 5–10% of men report being sexually abused as children (Norman et al., 2022). CSA is associated with an increased risk

of a wide range of trauma symptoms including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Briere, Kaltman & Green, 2018). There is growing interest in the role of attachment in the pathways to recovery and dysfunction following trauma and how attachment style may play a role in precipitating, perpetuating, and protecting against Post Traumatic Stress (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2018). As Mikulincer et al. (2018) asserted the mental health implications of attachment-system functioning is highly pertinent to understanding a person's psychological reactions to traumatic events.

Trauma is theorized to activate the attachment system and the need for protection, so that there is a reciprocal relationship between attachment and trauma (Lieberman & Amaya-Jackson, 2020). Lieberman and Amaya-Jackson (2020) propose using a “dual lens” focusing on both trauma and attachment to identify protective and aggravating processes involving these two major influences on children's development (Bowlby, 2020). In order to restore a sense of security and reduce the impact of trauma, children as well as adults may seek out attachment figures or activate representations of internalized attachment figures. Secure attachment may have restorative effects after trauma and has been referred to as a protective shield (Lieberman and Amaya-Jackson, 2020).

Consistent with this, Pynoos, Steinberg, Layne, Briggs, Ostrowski and Fairbank (2019) argue that some PTSD manifestations may derive from the experience of threat and danger, whereas others derive from the lack of finding safety, as these systems are associated with distinct neurobiological systems. Attachment has been shown to influence how traumatic reactions are experienced and expressed in adults (Mikulincer et al., 2020) and to impact

the development of PTSD. Attachment is associated with the number of PTSD symptoms, negative affectivity, somatization, emotional coping, attributions, and social support (O'Connor and Elklit, 2018).

Furthermore, insecure attachment is associated with more severe PTSD, while secure attachment is associated with increased resilience, and may to some extent protect individuals from the negative effects of trauma. In adult CSA survivors, attachment security is a protective factor against the development of trauma symptoms and attachment was found to mediate the relationship between CSA and trauma symptoms. Similarly, in adolescents, secure attachment moderates the relation between CSA and trauma symptoms (Jardin, Venta, Newlin, Ibarra & Sharp, 2017).

Studies with child CSA survivors referred for treatment show that 80% manifest some PTSD symptoms, but few meet the full criteria of PTSD. Depending on the respondents (parent, child, or clinician) and how CSA criteria was defined studies indicate that 20–35% or 8–19% of child CSA survivors in the community meet PTSD criteria. Insecure attachment to parents was found to be a risk factor for child-reported depressive symptoms in school aged child CSA survivors (Maikovich, Koenen & Jaffee, 2019). Similar research is needed to examine interactions between CSA and attachment to understand pathways to developing PTSD and trauma symptoms.

Based on early interactions between infant and caregiver, children develop cognitive-affective schema, referred to as Internal Working Models (IWM) that contains important expectations regarding the experience and expression of emotion and the responsiveness

and reactions of others (Bowlby, 2020), when children's expressions of emotional need have been met consistently with empathy and assistance in regulating emotion, children internalize the message that painful emotional experiences can be experienced, expressed, responded to and regulated. This facilitates optimal self-regulation of emotion later in development (Cassidy, 2024). In contrast, when children's needs have been rejected or ignored or when caregivers have responded inconsistently or with alarm to children's needs, children resort to defensive emotion regulation strategies, such as deactivation or hyperactivation. This may be adaptive in the short-term but can result in negative outcomes over the long-term (Cassidy, 2024).

The association between attachment and child emotion regulation is thought to depend on early parent-child interactions involving physical/embodied regulation by the parent (Shai & Belsky, 2017). These interactions serve to calibrate the infant's developing stress regulation system so that over time, emotional and physiological self-regulation is established with the presence of the parent needed and sought only in contexts of threat or higher levels of distress. In addition, child expectancies of the parent's availability and responsiveness to distress are reflected at a representational level in IWM's of self and other. By middle childhood, processes associated with secure attachment have facilitated the establishment of emotional regulation capacities through their early physiological impact on the development of the stress regulation system (Campos, Mumme, Kermoian & Campos, 2024). At the same time, secure attachment relationships are associated with

the continued support of emotional regulation through the actual availability of attachment figures and the support and protection they may provide in times of distress (Gross, 2023).

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Preamble

This chapter discussed the methods and procedures adopted by the researchers in carrying out this study. This will be discussed under the following sub-headings. Design of the Study, Population of the Study, Sample and Sampling Techniques, Research Instrument, Validity of the Instrument, Reliability of the Instrument, Method of Data Collection and Method of Data Analysis

3.2 Area of the Study

This study was conducted in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria. Egor LGA is situated within the Benin Metropolis and is one of the most urbanized and educationally active areas in the state. The area comprises several communities, including Uselu, Uwasota, Evbotubo, Isiohor, Ogida, Adolor, and parts of Ekosodin, among others. It is characterized by a mixture of residential, commercial, and institutional settlements, supported by a population drawn from diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds.

Egor LGA hosts a considerable number of public and private secondary schools, making it a suitable location for a study on child sexual abuse and its consequences on educational development. The schools within the area reflect varying levels of academic performance, administrative structures, and student welfare systems, which provide a broad base for examining how incidents of child sexual abuse may affect students' learning outcomes, school attendance, emotional well-being, and overall educational development.

The choice of Egor LGA as the study area is also influenced by reports of social problems common to rapidly growing urban communities, including increased vulnerability of children to abuse, inadequate parental supervision, and varying levels of school-based protective measures. These factors make the location relevant for examining both the prevalence of child sexual abuse and its implications for the educational advancement of secondary school students.

3.3 Design of the study

Survey research design was used in this study. The survey research design is an efficient way of collecting information from a large number of respondents and the ability to use statistical techniques to determine statistical significance (Drusilla et al, 2022). This research strategy is considered necessary because of its ability to view comprehensively and in detail the major questions raised in the study. We considered this method appropriate as it is useful for the study of non-observable events such as opinions, attitudes preferences or dispositions (Bello et al., 2020). The design will be adopted because the study involves the use of a representative sample from the population and the drawing of conclusion based on the analysis of available data.

3.4 Population of the Study

The population of the study included all secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area from JSS 1 to SS 3. There are thirteen (13) public secondary schools in Egor Local Government with total number of 8,760 students (Ministry of Education, Edo

State, 2024).

3.5 Sample and Sampling Techniques

The proportionate sampling technique was used to select the final number from each schools adopting the Taro Yamane formular. Due to the enormous, large population size, this formula will be used to get the sample size of the population.

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

n = Number of sample size

N = Population size

e = Level of significance of error assumed to be 0.10.

Therefore

$$n = \frac{8760}{1 + 8760(0.1^2)}$$

$$n = \frac{8760}{1 + 8760(0.01)}$$

$$n = \frac{8760}{1 + 87.6}$$

$$n = \frac{8760}{88.6}$$

$$n \approx 98.9$$

Rounded: **99 respondents**

3.6 Research Instrument

The questionnaire was used for data collection. It was titled “Child Sexual Abuse and Its Consequences on Educational Development in Some Selected Secondary School ” (PASSSTDVQ). The questionnaire was made up of two sections “A and B”. Section “A” consisted of the respondents demographic characteristics such as age, gender, class and school locations while section “B” consisted of four (4) parts based on the objectives of the study. Each section consisted of a minimum of 5 set of statement items ranging from strongly agreed to strongly disagree that is the Likert form of questionnaire.

3.7 Validity of the Instrument

To ascertain the validity of the instrument, face validity was carried out. This was done by giving a draft of the researcher-developed questionnaire as well as the research questions, and purpose of the study to the researcher's supervisor and two other lecturers in the Department of Social Works, University of Benin, Benin, Benin City to go through the structured instrument carefully, made necessary corrections in terms of worthiness, arrangement and structure. Some words and sentences or statements that were found unsuitable were removed, rephrased and corrected.

3.8 Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the instrument was determined through a pilot study to check the internal consistency of the items. The instrument was administered once to twenty (20) students

who were not part of the study population. The measures of the two sets of data was correlated, and a reliability index of 0.85 was obtained using Person Product Moment Correlation Statistics

3.9 Method of Data Collection

The researcher obtained a letter of introduction for the purpose of identification and to solicit cooperation from the school principals in the selected schools in Egor LGA, Edo State. The respondents were given the instrument directly. The researcher employed the services of four research assistants who were trained for the purpose of administering the questionnaire on the respondents and retrieval of same upon completion.

3.10 Method of Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed using frequency, percentages, mean (\bar{x}) and standard deviation will be used to answer the research questions. The decision rule for the research question were based on mean value such that any calculated mean equal or greater than 2.50 will be regarded as high extent or agreed, while any calculated mean less than 2.50 will regarded as low extent or disagreed.

3.11 Ethical Consideration

This study on child sexual abuse and its consequences on educational development was conducted with strict adherence to ethical principles. The rights, safety, and dignity of all participants especially minors were prioritized throughout the research process. Informed

consent was obtained from school authorities, parents, and guardians before engaging students. Participants were assured of confidentiality, anonymity, and the voluntary nature of their involvement. Sensitive information was handled with utmost discretion to prevent emotional harm. The research strictly complied with ethical guidelines for studies involving vulnerable groups.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with analysis of data obtained in the course of the study. The results that emanated from the analysis are interpreted and discussed. Four research questions were raised in the study. This enables the researcher to offer valuable conclusions on subject matter.

Socio-Demographic Analysis

Table 4.1 presents the socio-demographic details of the respondents, showing the distribution of the respondents across several socio-demographic variables. The distribution of the respondents according to their Gender, Age, Marital Status, Class Level, Religion and family structure.

S/N	Variable	Category / Options	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
1	Gender	Male	48	48.5%
		Female	51	51.5%
2	Age	10–12 years	20	20.2%
		13–15 years	35	35.4%
		16–18 years	32	32.3%
		19 years and above	12	12.1%
3	Class Level	JSS 1	14	14.1%
		JSS 2	17	17.2%
		JSS 3	18	18.2%

		SSS 1	16	16.2%
		SSS 2	17	17.2%
		SSS 3	17	17.2%
4	Religion	Christianity	74	74.7%
		Islam	18	18.2%
		Traditional Religion	5	5.1%
		Others (please specify)	2	2.0%
5	Family Structure	Both parents	59	59.6%
		Single parent	26	26.3%
		Guardian / Foster care	10	10.1%
		Others	4	4.0%

Source: Field Work, 2025.

The demographic characteristics of respondents provide insight into their background and help in understanding the context of their responses. The data presented in the table above reveal that both male and female students participated in the study, with females (51.5%) slightly outnumbering males (48.5%). This indicates a fairly balanced gender representation among respondents. In terms of age distribution, the majority of respondents were between 13–15 years (35.4%), followed closely by those aged 16–18 years (32.3%). Participants aged 10–12 years (20.2%) and 19 years and above (12.1%) formed smaller portions of the sample. This shows that most respondents were in their early to mid-adolescence, which is a critical developmental stage for learning and behavior formation.

The class level of respondents shows a relatively even spread across different levels, with JSS 3 students (18.2%) forming the largest group, followed closely by SSS 2 and SSS 3 students (17.2% each). This suggests that the study involved participants across both junior and senior secondary school levels, ensuring a diverse academic representation. Regarding religious affiliation, the data indicate that the majority of respondents were Christians (74.7%), while Muslims (18.2%) and those practicing Traditional religion (5.1%) constituted smaller proportions. A few respondents (2.0%) identified with other religions. This reflects the dominant religious composition of the study area.

In terms of family structure, most respondents (59.6%) lived with both parents, while 26.3% were from single-parent families. Additionally, 10.1% lived under guardian or foster care, and 4.0% reported other living arrangements. This distribution shows that although most participants come from two-parent households, a significant portion of them experience alternative family settings, which could influence their social and emotional experiences.

Overall, the demographic profile presents a diverse mix of participants in terms of gender, age, class level, religion, and family structure, providing a balanced foundation for further analysis of the study variables.

4.1.1 Analysis of Research Questions

Research questions were answered using the statistics of mean and standard deviation as follows:

Research question 1:

What is the prevalence of child sexual abuse among secondary school students in

Egor Local Government Area

Table 4.2: response to question one

S/N	Statement	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Many students in my school have experienced sexual abuse.	3.23	0.91	Agreed
2	Child sexual abuse cases are common among secondary school students.	3.41	0.71	Agreed
3	Sexual abuse is underreported by students in schools.	2.39	0.87	Agreed
4	Most students are aware of classmates who have experienced sexual abuse.	2.87	1.23	Agreed
5	The prevalence of sexual abuse among students is a growing concern.	3.53	0.74	Agreed
	Cluster	3.13	1.29	

Table 2 presented above examines respondents' perceptions regarding the prevalence of sexual abuse among secondary school students. The mean scores of the items range from 2.39 to 3.53, with an overall cluster mean of 3.13 and a standard deviation of 1.29, indicating a general agreement among respondents that sexual abuse is a significant issue within the school environment.

From the analysis, respondents agreed that many students in their school have experienced sexual abuse (Mean = 3.23, SD = 0.91) and that cases of child sexual abuse are common among secondary school students (Mean = 3.41, SD = 0.71). This suggests that the problem is not isolated but rather widespread. Additionally, the finding that sexual abuse is underreported by students (Mean = 2.39, SD = 0.87) highlights the challenge of disclosure due to fear, stigma, or lack of trust in reporting mechanisms. Furthermore, the agreement that most students are aware of classmates who have experienced sexual abuse (Mean = 2.87, SD = 1.23) and that the prevalence of sexual abuse among students is a growing concern (Mean = 3.53, SD = 0.74) reinforces the view that sexual abuse remains a pressing and escalating issue among students.

Overall, the results reveal that sexual abuse is a prevalent and underreported phenomenon among secondary school students. The responses indicate a high level of awareness and concern, suggesting the need for increased preventive measures, awareness programs, and stronger reporting and support systems within schools.

Research question 2:

What are the causes of child sexual abuse among secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area

Table 4.3: response to question one

S/N	Statement	Mean	SD	Remark
6	Poverty and financial hardship increase children's vulnerability to sexual abuse.	3.27	0.92	Agreed
7	Lack of adequate parental supervision contributes to child sexual abuse among students.	3.44	0.77	Agreed
8	Exposure to pornographic materials encourages sexual exploitation of children.	2.18	0.82	Agreed
9	Cultural silence and stigma discourage reporting of sexual abuse incidents.	2.87	1.26	Agreed
10	Inadequate sex education in schools increases the risk of child sexual abuse.	3.57	0.69	Agreed
	Cluster	3.17	1.23	

The table above presents the responses on the factors contributing to child sexual abuse, measured using a Likert-scale, where higher mean values indicate stronger agreement. The data reveal that respondents generally agree that poverty, lack of parental supervision, exposure to pornographic materials, cultural stigma, and inadequate sex education are significant contributors to the vulnerability of children to sexual abuse.

Specifically, the highest mean score of 3.57 (SD = 0.69) was recorded for "Inadequate sex education in schools increases the risk of child sexual abuse", indicating a strong consensus among respondents that the absence of proper sexual education plays a critical role in the prevalence of abuse. Similarly, "Lack of adequate parental supervision" (Mean = 3.44, SD

= 0.77) and “Poverty and financial hardship” (Mean = 3.27, SD = 0.92) were also identified as key contributing factors.

Interestingly, “Exposure to pornographic materials” had a lower mean score of 2.18 (SD = 0.82), suggesting that while respondents recognize it as a factor, its perceived impact is less pronounced compared to other variables. Cultural silence and stigma recorded a mean of 2.87 (SD = 1.26), highlighting variability in respondents’ perceptions but still indicating general agreement that societal norms can inhibit reporting and prevention of abuse. The cluster mean of 3.17 (SD = 1.23) reflects an overall agreement among respondents that these factors collectively increase children’s vulnerability to sexual abuse, emphasizing the multifaceted nature of the issue that spans socio-economic, familial, educational, and cultural dimensions.

Research Question 3:

What are the common types and patterns of sexual abuse reported by students

Table 4.4: response to question two

S/N	Statement	Mean	SD	Remark
11	Verbal sexual harassment (e.g., inappropriate comments) is common among students.	3.29	0.87	Agreed
12	Unwanted physical touching is a frequent form of abuse.	3.32	0.77	Agreed
13	Sexual exploitation (e.g., exchange for favors) occurs among students.	2.38	0.86	Agreed
14	Abuse often occurs repeatedly rather than as a one-time incident.	2.86	1.25	Agreed
15	Most cases of abuse are committed by people known to the student.	3.57	0.73	Agreed
	Cluster	3.17	1.24	

Table 3 presented above reveals respondents' perceptions of the prevalence and nature of sexual abuse among students. The mean scores range from 2.38 to 3.57, with an overall cluster mean of 3.17 and a standard deviation of 1.24, indicating a generally high level of agreement among respondents, though with some variation in opinions.

From the responses, the highest mean value (3.57) corresponds to the statement that most cases of abuse are committed by people known to the student, suggesting that perpetrators are often familiar individuals within the school or community environment. Similarly, the

high mean values for verbal sexual harassment (3.29) and unwanted physical touching (3.32) show that such behaviors are relatively common among students.

On the other hand, sexual exploitation (exchange for favors) recorded a comparatively lower mean (2.38), implying that while such acts occur, they are perceived as less frequent than other forms of abuse. Additionally, the statement that abuse often occurs repeatedly (mean = 2.86) indicates that some students experience recurring incidents of abuse rather than isolated cases.

Overall, the findings suggest that various forms of sexual harassment and abuse are prevalent among students, particularly those perpetrated by known individuals. The cluster mean further reinforces that respondents generally agree that sexual abuse remains a significant concern within the school environment, necessitating continuous awareness, prevention, and intervention efforts.

Research Question 4:

What psychological and emotional impacts does sexual abuse have on the educational development of affected students

Table 4.5: response to question three

S/N	Statement	Mean	SD	Remark
16	Victims of sexual abuse experience poor academic performance.	3.41	0.61	Agreed
17	Students who are sexually abused often suffer from low self-esteem.	3.01	0.79	Agreed
18	Sexual abuse leads to emotional trauma such as anxiety and depression.	2.21	0.73	Agreed
19	Many victims lose interest in school activities after abuse.	2.89	1.24	Agreed
20	Victims of sexual abuse have difficulty concentrating in class.	3.52	0.74	Agreed
	Cluster	3.27	1.25	

The table above presents respondents' opinions on the effects of sexual abuse on students' academic performance and emotional well-being. The mean scores for all items range between 2.21 and 3.52, with a cluster mean of 3.27 and a standard deviation of 1.25, indicating a general agreement among respondents that sexual abuse negatively impacts victims in several ways.

Specifically, the data show that most respondents agreed that victims of sexual abuse often experience poor academic performance (Mean = 3.41, SD = 0.61) and difficulty concentrating in class (Mean = 3.52, SD = 0.74). This suggests that the trauma of abuse interferes with students' cognitive functioning and learning abilities. Similarly, many respondents agreed that victims tend to lose interest in school activities (Mean = 2.89, SD = 1.24) and suffer from low self-esteem (Mean = 3.01, SD = 0.79), reflecting the psychological and motivational consequences of abuse.

Furthermore, respondents recognized that sexual abuse often results in emotional trauma, including anxiety and depression (Mean = 2.21, SD = 0.73), which can further hinder academic engagement and performance. Overall, the findings imply that sexual abuse has profound adverse effects on both the academic and emotional stability of victims, emphasizing the need for effective counseling, social work interventions, and support systems within schools to aid recovery and improve victims' academic outcomes.

Research Question 5:

What measures can be implemented to prevent child sexual abuse and support the educational development of victims

Table 4.6: response to question four

S/N	Statement	Mean	SD	Remark
21	Schools should create awareness programs about child sexual abuse.	3.49	0.83	Agreed
22	Guidance and counseling services should be strengthened for victims.	3.48	0.76	Agreed
23	Teachers and staff should be trained to identify and report abuse cases.	3.42	0.92	Agreed
24	Strict disciplinary measures should be enforced against perpetrators.	3.59	0.66	Agreed
25	Support systems such as peer groups and NGOs help victims recover academically.	3.49	0.82	Agreed
Cluster		3.76	1.11	

Mean Value of 2.5

The data presented above highlights respondents' opinions on strategies for addressing child sexual abuse in schools. The results show that all the items had mean values ranging between 3.42 and 3.59, which are above the benchmark mean of 2.50, indicating general agreement among respondents. This suggests that participants strongly believe in the importance of proactive and supportive measures within educational institutions to combat child sexual abuse.

Specifically, respondents agreed that schools should create awareness programs on child sexual abuse (Mean = 3.49, SD = 0.83) and that guidance and counseling services should be strengthened for victims (Mean = 3.48, SD = 0.76). They also supported training

teachers and staff to identify and report cases (Mean = 3.42, SD = 0.92), and the enforcement of strict disciplinary measures against perpetrators (Mean = 3.59, SD = 0.66). Additionally, respondents recognized the role of support systems such as peer groups and NGOs in helping victims recover academically (Mean = 3.49, SD = 0.82).

The cluster mean of 3.76 with a standard deviation of 1.11 further indicates a strong consensus among respondents that comprehensive preventive, disciplinary, and rehabilitative strategies are essential in addressing child sexual abuse in schools. This overall agreement reflects the shared understanding that schools play a crucial role in protecting children and supporting victims through awareness, counseling, and enforcement measures.

Research question 6:

What is the role of social workers in address child sexual abuse among secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area

Table 4.7: response to question one

S/N	Statement	Mean	SD	Remark
26	Social workers provide counseling services to victims of child sexual abuse in secondary schools.	3.11	0.97	Agreed
27	Social workers organize awareness programs to educate students on preventing sexual abuse.	3.45	0.78	Agreed
28	Social workers collaborate with school authorities to protect students from sexual abuse.	2.87	0.89	Agreed
29	Social workers help in reporting cases of child sexual abuse to relevant authorities.	2.88	1.26	Agreed
30	Social workers provide support and rehabilitation for victims of child sexual abuse.	3.81	0.65	Agreed
	Cluster	3.14	1.21	

The data presented in this table reflects respondents' perceptions regarding the roles of social workers in addressing child sexual abuse among secondary school students. The analysis focuses on the mean scores and standard deviations of each statement to determine the level of agreement among participants. The Likert-scale responses range from disagreement to strong agreement, with higher mean values indicating stronger agreement.

From the table, all the statements received mean scores above 2.5, suggesting that respondents generally agree that social workers play an active role in supporting victims of child sexual abuse. Specifically, the highest mean score (3.81) was observed for the statement that social workers provide support and rehabilitation for victims, indicating a

strong recognition of their role in post-abuse care. Conversely, statements regarding collaboration with school authorities (mean = 2.87) and reporting cases to relevant authorities (mean = 2.88) had slightly lower means, though they still fall within the “Agreed” range, suggesting that while acknowledged, these roles may be perceived as less prominent or visible.

The overall cluster mean of 3.14 further supports the conclusion that social workers’ involvement in counseling, awareness programs, collaboration, reporting, and rehabilitation is positively recognized, although there is variability in perception as indicated by the cluster standard deviation of 1.21. This variation may reflect differences in experiences, exposure, or understanding of social workers’ functions among respondents.

Overall, the data highlights the essential roles of social workers in prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation processes for victims of child sexual abuse in secondary schools.

Discussion of Findings

The discussion of findings focuses on the analysis and interpretation of data obtained on the prevalence, types, and consequences of child sexual abuse (CSA) among secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area. Child sexual abuse remains one of the most distressing and underreported forms of violence affecting children and adolescents globally. The findings of this study provide insight into how widespread the issue is, the

specific forms it takes, its psychological and educational implications, and possible strategies for prevention and intervention within the school environment.

The findings revealed that child sexual abuse is a significant concern among secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area. A substantial proportion of respondents indicated that they had either experienced or known someone who experienced sexual abuse during their school years. This finding is consistent with national and international research showing a rising trend in the prevalence of CSA among adolescents. According to the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF, 2020), approximately one in four girls and one in ten boys in Nigeria have experienced some form of sexual abuse before the age of 18. Similarly, Fawole et al. (2019) found that about 27% of secondary school students in southwestern Nigeria reported having experienced sexual abuse at least once.

The high prevalence recorded in Egor aligns with broader patterns observed in urban and semi-urban settings where children often interact with a wide range of adults, including teachers, peers, neighbors, and community members, who may exploit their vulnerability. The results also underscore the persistence of socio-cultural factors such as silence, stigma, and lack of reporting mechanisms that enable the continuation of such abuses (Okoro & Obozokhai, 2021). This prevalence indicates that child protection systems in local schools and communities are still weak and require urgent strengthening.

The study revealed various forms and patterns of child sexual abuse reported by the respondents. These include verbal sexual harassment, inappropriate touching, indecent exposure, coercion into sexual acts, and rape. Verbal harassment and unwanted touching were among the most frequently mentioned forms of abuse. This finding agrees with previous research by Akinlusi et al. (2018), who reported that non-penetrative forms of abuse are often the most common in school environments, partly because they are more difficult to detect and are often minimized by victims and authorities.

Patterns identified in this study suggest that perpetrators are often individuals known to the victims, such as classmates, teachers, or family friends. This finding supports the argument by Finkelhor and Browne (1985) in their “Traumagenic Dynamics” model, which posits that CSA often occurs within a relationship of trust or authority, leading to confusion and betrayal for the victim. The pattern also demonstrates that most incidents occur within or around school environments, emphasizing the need for stricter supervision and reporting mechanisms within educational institutions.

The psychological and emotional effects of child sexual abuse on students’ educational development were profound. Many respondents reported symptoms such as anxiety, depression, withdrawal, low self-esteem, and difficulty concentrating in class. These psychological disturbances directly affect academic performance, attendance, and social interactions in school. According to Eze (2020), victims of CSA often experience long-

term emotional trauma that interferes with learning and cognitive functioning, making it difficult for them to achieve their educational potential.

The findings of this study also corroborate the results of Oladeji and Adeniyi (2022), who found a strong correlation between experiences of sexual abuse and poor academic performance among secondary school students in southern Nigeria. Victims often exhibit low motivation, frequent absenteeism, and a tendency to isolate themselves from peers and teachers. The trauma can also lead to behavioral issues, such as aggression or withdrawal, further complicating the educational experience. Thus, the emotional scars left by sexual abuse extend far beyond the act itself, influencing victims' future aspirations and life outcomes. The findings further indicated a general consensus among respondents that schools, parents, and community stakeholders need to play more proactive roles in preventing child sexual abuse and supporting victims. Suggested measures include the creation of awareness programs, training teachers and staff to recognize and report signs of abuse, and the establishment of confidential reporting systems within schools. Strengthening guidance and counseling services was also emphasized as essential for helping victims cope with trauma and reintegrate into the learning process.

These results align with the recommendations of the World Health Organization (WHO, 2021), which advocates for comprehensive school-based prevention programs that combine education, counseling, and policy enforcement. According to Odu & Adeniran (2019), community-based interventions and collaboration between schools and child

protection agencies can significantly reduce the incidence of sexual abuse. The study's findings also support the view that implementing sexual abuse prevention curricula and providing psychological support can enhance victims' resilience and educational outcomes (Akpan & Nwosu, 2020)

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Summary

This study examined the prevalence, patterns, and consequences of child sexual abuse on the educational development of secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State. The research aimed to determine the extent of sexual abuse among students, identify the common forms and patterns of abuse, assess the psychological and educational impacts on victims, and suggest preventive and supportive measures to address the problem. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. Data were collected from selected secondary school students through a structured questionnaire, and the results were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage. The findings revealed that child sexual abuse is a significant concern in secondary schools within Egor Local Government Area. Both male and female students reported various forms of abuse, although females were found to be more vulnerable.

The study found that the most common types of sexual abuse experienced by students included inappropriate touching, exposure to pornography, sexual harassment, and in some cases, forced sexual intercourse. These acts were perpetrated mostly by adults known to the victims such as teachers, neighbors, and relatives—as well as some fellow students. The findings further indicated that child sexual abuse has serious psychological and educational consequences. Victims often experience low self-esteem, anxiety, depression,

withdrawal from social interactions, and a decline in academic performance. Many abused students find it difficult to concentrate in class, lose interest in learning, and are prone to absenteeism or dropping out of school altogether. The trauma associated with sexual abuse was also found to hinder students' cognitive development and motivation to pursue education.

The study also showed that awareness programs and counseling services in most schools were inadequate or poorly implemented. Teachers and school administrators often lack the necessary training to identify and manage cases of sexual abuse, and there are limited referral systems for victims who need psychological or medical support. Based on the findings, the study emphasized the urgent need for a multi-sectoral approach to prevent and address child sexual abuse. Schools should establish and strengthen guidance and counseling units, implement awareness campaigns, and provide training for teachers and staff on identifying and reporting abuse cases. Parents and community members should also be sensitized to the importance of monitoring children's welfare and creating safe environments for them. Furthermore, strict disciplinary measures should be enforced against perpetrators to deter future occurrences.

In conclusion, child sexual abuse poses a serious threat to the educational development and psychological well-being of students in Egor Local Government Area. Effective prevention and intervention strategies are essential to safeguard children's rights, promote academic success, and ensure a safe and supportive learning environment for all students.

5.2 Conclusion

This study examined the issue of child sexual abuse and its consequences on the educational development of students in selected secondary schools within Egor Local Government Area of Edo State. The findings revealed that child sexual abuse remains a serious social and educational concern affecting both male and female students. It was found that various forms of abuse such as molestation, harassment, and rape are experienced by students, often perpetrated by individuals within the school environment, family, or community.

The study further established that the effects of child sexual abuse extend beyond the physical trauma to include profound psychological and emotional damage that hampers students' academic performance. Victims often suffer from depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, poor concentration, and absenteeism, which in turn lead to declining academic achievement and sometimes school dropout. The evidence from the research underscores that the educational development of victims is significantly compromised due to the long-term emotional distress and stigmatization associated with abuse. Moreover, the study revealed a general lack of adequate preventive mechanisms and support systems for victims within schools and the community. Although some schools have guidance and counseling units, these are often underfunded or poorly staffed, limiting their effectiveness in addressing abuse cases and providing rehabilitation for affected students. In conclusion, child sexual abuse poses a serious threat to the moral, psychological, and educational well-being of secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area. Combating this

menace requires collective efforts from parents, teachers, school administrators, social workers, and government agencies. There is an urgent need for increased awareness campaigns, effective counseling services, strict enforcement of child protection laws, and training for educators to recognize and report abuse cases. By implementing these measures, the community can help safeguard the educational future and overall well-being of children.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study on child sexual abuse and its consequences on the educational development of students in Egor Local Government Area, the following recommendations are made:

1. Schools, in collaboration with government agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), should organize regular sensitization and awareness campaigns to educate students, parents, and teachers about the dangers, signs, and preventive measures of child sexual abuse. Such programs will help reduce ignorance and encourage early reporting of abuse cases.
2. Every secondary school should have well-trained guidance counsellors who can provide psychological support to victims of sexual abuse. Counselling services should be made confidential and accessible to students in order to help them recover emotionally and academically.

3. Teachers and other school personnel should undergo periodic training on how to identify, handle, and report suspected cases of sexual abuse. This will promote a safe school environment and ensure that appropriate measures are taken when cases arise.
4. Schools should adopt and strictly enforce child protection policies that prohibit any form of abuse or harassment. These policies should include clear procedures for reporting, investigation, and disciplinary action against offenders.
5. Parents and guardians should be educated through community meetings and parent-teacher associations (PTAs) on how to identify warning signs of abuse and how to communicate effectively with their children. Active parental involvement serves as a protective factor against abuse.
6. The government, through the Ministry of Education and relevant agencies, should strengthen laws protecting children from sexual abuse and ensure strict enforcement. Regular monitoring and evaluation of schools should be conducted to ensure compliance with child safety regulations.
7. Victims of child sexual abuse should be provided with rehabilitation programs, including therapy, scholarships, and mentorship, to help them reintegrate into the educational system and achieve their academic potential.
8. Religious, traditional, and community leaders should be actively involved in campaigns against child sexual abuse. Their influence can help reduce stigma, encourage disclosure, and promote a collective effort to protect children.

9. More studies should be conducted on the prevalence, causes, and effects of child sexual abuse to provide data that can guide policy formulation and effective intervention programs at the local and national levels.

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APPENDIX 1

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

QUESTIONNAIRE ON CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AND ITS CONSEQUENCIES ON EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN SOME SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOL: A CASE STUDY OF EGOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, EDO STATE

Dear Respondent,

The researcher is a undergraduate student of the Department of Social Work, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Benin. The information being sought for is to enable him complete his research work. This research work is purely for academic purpose; as such you are enjoined to kindly and truthfully assist to provide answers to the questions below. Your responses will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Thanks.

SECTION A: Demographic Information: *(Please tick [✓] or fill in the option that best applies to you)*

1. **Gender:** Male() Female ()
2. **Age:** 10–12 years () 13–15 years () 16–18 years () 19 years and above ()
3. **Class Level:** JSS 1 () JSS 2 () JSS 3 () SSS 1 () SSS 2 () SSS 3 ()
4. **Religion:** Christianity () Islam () Traditional Religion () Others (please specify): _____

5. **Family Structure:** Both parents () Single parent () Guardian / Foster care () Others: _____

Keys: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagreed (D)

S/N	Items (Statements)	SA	A	D	SD
	What is the prevalence of child sexual abuse among secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area				
1	Many students in my school have experienced sexual abuse.				
2	Child sexual abuse cases are common among secondary school students.				
3	Sexual abuse is underreported by students in schools.				
4	Most students are aware of classmates who have experienced sexual abuse.				
5	The prevalence of sexual abuse among students is a growing concern.				
	What are the causes of child sexual abuse among secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area				
	Poverty and financial hardship increase children's vulnerability to sexual abuse.				
	Lack of adequate parental supervision contributes to child sexual abuse among students.				
	Exposure to pornographic materials encourages sexual exploitation of children.				
	Cultural silence and stigma discourage reporting of sexual abuse incidents.				
	Inadequate sex education in schools increases the risk of child sexual abuse.				
	What are the common types and patterns of sexual abuse reported by students				
6	Verbal sexual harassment (e.g., inappropriate comments) is common among students.				
7	Unwanted physical touching is a frequent form of abuse.				

8	Sexual exploitation (e.g., exchange for favors) occurs among students.				
9	Abuse often occurs repeatedly rather than as a one-time incident.				
10	Most cases of abuse are committed by people known to the student.				
	What psychological and emotional impacts does sexual abuse have on the educational development of affected students				
11	Victims of sexual abuse experience poor academic performance.				
12	Students who are sexually abused often suffer from low self-esteem.				
13	Sexual abuse leads to emotional trauma such as anxiety and depression.				
14	Many victims lose interest in school activities after abuse.				
15	Victims of sexual abuse have difficulty concentrating in class.				
	What measures can be implemented to prevent child sexual abuse and support the educational development of victims				
16	Schools should create awareness programs about child sexual abuse.				
17	Guidance and counseling services should be strengthened for victims.				
18	Teachers and staff should be trained to identify and report abuse cases.				
19	Strict disciplinary measures should be enforced against perpetrators.				
20	Support systems such as peer groups and NGOs help victims recover academically.				
	What is the role of social workers in address child sexual abuse among secondary school students in Egor Local Government Area				

21	Social workers provide counseling services to victims of child sexual abuse in secondary schools.				
22	Social workers organize awareness programs to educate students on preventing sexual abuse.				
23	Social workers collaborate with school authorities to protect students from sexual abuse.				
24	Social workers help in reporting cases of child sexual abuse to relevant authorities.				
25	Social workers provide support and rehabilitation for victims of child sexual abuse.				