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Child Abuse and Academic Achievement in Junior Secondary Schools in Okrika Local Government Area of Rivers State

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Abstract **Original Research Article**

This study investigated the influence of child abuse on academic achievement in Junior Secondary Schools in Okrika Local Government Area of Rivers State. The study adopted survey research design. A total of 240 J. S. 3 students and 80 teachers in Junior Secondary Schools in the Local Government were selected for the study, through stratified random sampling. Five research questions were formulated to guide the study and Likert scale or rating scale was designed and used to obtain data for the study. Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. A standard reference mean of 2.50 for a 4 - point rating scale was adopted for the purpose of decision making. Analysis of data showed that child abuse contributes to truancy, poor school attendance, poor participation in classroom learning activities, poor performance in examinations and lack of relevant learning materials, which results to poor performance of students in Junior Secondary Schools in Okirika Local Government Area of Rivers State. In the light of these findings, some recommendations were made which include; advising parents to love and care for their children, ensure that they pay their children school fees promptly and provide the basic learning materials for them. The study urged guidance counselors to organize regular counseling sessions for abused students, who are suffering various psychological, economic and social problems.

Keywords: Child abuse, Academic achievement, Junior secondary schools, Student academic performance, Okrika Local Government Area

1. Introduction

Child abuse is the reckless abandoning of the child and denial of his or her rights and privileges by parents or guardians. Child abuse in Nigeria, is so rampant or prominent that appropriate laws were enacted and enshrined into the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, to protect the rights and privileges of the Nigerian child. However, despite the penalties due to offenders, child abuse has persisted, ravaging the social sector of the nation and unleashing dangers to the educational, economic, political and health sectors of the Nation. According to (Amadi et al., 2022). Parents should be aware of the inherent dangers of child abuse among secondary school students which include: Effect of child abuse is truancy in school, poor attendance to school, poor participation in class room interaction and poor performance in examinations. These dangers to the child's educational career are due to inability of parents or guardians to care, nurtured and provide the basic learning materials for the child. children who are not motivated by their parents to study hard, also fail to perform well in academics.

It is important to remark that in Okrika Local Government Area, the desire for money, Street hawking, has made most parents or guardians to put to risk the lives of adolescents by engaging them in street hawking, an activity that could result to road accidents, child labour , stealing, smoking of hard drugs, joining gangs of violence and encouraging school drop outs leading to poor academic performance of students in secondary school. Hence

this study is set to investigate the effects of child abuse on academic achievement of students in secondary schools. Specifically, the study is set to investigate the contribution of child abuse to truancy in school, lack of learning materials among students, poor attendance to school, poor participation in classroom interaction and poor performance in examinations. (Iorfa et al., 2020)

Eze et al., (2023) stated that child abuse is prevalent among adolescents youths between the ages of 15 and 21. According to him, the dangers of child abuse among secondary school students has become a serious concern among educators and well-meaning parents. Most parents have expressed their dissatisfaction with the dehumanizing treatment meted to some reckless abandoned children, who are constantly engaged in street hawking while their mates are in school. It is important to remarked that such children grow up as school drop-outs, illiterates or educationally backward children. Every child has the innate potentials to achieve if given the right conditions and guidance. The alarming rate of armed robbery, militancy and other social vices can often be traced to the menace of reckless abandoned children, that lack societal culture and nurture. Hence the problem of the study is to examine whether child abuse contributes to:

1. Truancy among students in secondary school;
2. Poor school attendance among students;
3. Poor participation of students in classroom learning;
4. Poor performance of students in examinations;

Research Questions

1. To what extent does child abuse contribute to truancy among students in Junior Secondary Schools in Okrika Local Government Area of Rivers State?
2. To what extent does child abuse contribute to poor school attendance among students in Junior Secondary Schools in Okrika Local Government Area of Rivers State?
3. To what extent does child abuse contribute to poor participation of students in classroom learning in Junior Secondary Schools in Okrika Local Government Area of Rivers State?
4. To what extent does child abuse contribute to poor performance of students in examinations in Junior Secondary Schools in Okrika Local Government Area of Rivers State?

The following hypotheses guided the study:

Ho1: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of JSS3 students and teachers on the extent to which child abuse contribute to truancy among students in Junior Secondary Schools in Okrika Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Ho2: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of JSS3 students and teachers on the extent to which child abuse contribute to poor school attendance among students in Junior Secondary Schools in Okrika Local Government Area of Rivers State.

2. LITERATUR REVIEW

This section presents a review of relevant literature in order to sharpen the research focus and understand the state of art in this field of study. Issues reviewed as problems of child abuse and academic achievement in Junior Secondary Schools in Okirika Local Government Area of Rivers State, include; child abuse and truancy, child abuse and poor attendance to school, child abuse and poor participation in classroom interactions, child abuse and poor performance in examinations , child abuse and poor provision of learning materials and school fees.

Child Abuse and Truancy among Students in School

Nwankwo et al., (2022) remarked that students who are truancy in school have records of poor academic performance, examination malpractices and poor attendance to school. According to the him, truant children who are victims of child abuse are also

delinquent students, who disobeys school rules and regulations. He noted that such students do not take their studies seriously and are not steady in the classroom, hence they perform poorly in examinations. Ajayi & Olanrewaju (2019) noted that truancy promotes the activities of gangs of violence and inhibits rational thoughts that could lead to success in examinations. He noted that truant children are often school drop-outs, who could not withstand the demands or challenges of school training. According to him, acts of truancy in school include; loitering during official learning hours, leaving the school before official closing hour and returning late to class after break period each day.

Chukwuma & Ugwu(2021) opined that rational thoughts are products of an emotionally stable mind, hence they noted that truant students are emotionally unstable and lack the social dispositions that will trigger-off meaningful academic work. According to them, failure in school examinations among delinquent students, are as a result of lack of concentration and poor preparation. Hence, they advised that adequate home and school training should be given to delinquent children in order to reduce antisocial behaviours such as truancy, examination malpractices, fighting, stealing and disobedience to school rules among students.

Child Abuse and Poor School Attendance among Students

Adegoke et al., (2020) noted that teachers are expected to show love and care to students who are recklessly abandon by their parents or guardians, so that such students will feel free to confide in their teachers the problems they encounter in schooling. He remarked that cordial relationship between teachers and students is important in identifying students who do not attend school regularly due to lack of adequate parental care. He noted that such familiarity between teachers and students will help the teacher to understand the nature and peculiarities of each learner in the class, and give necessary advice and counseling to such learners. He pointed out that teachers should involve Parents-Teachers Association to solve problems of poor school attendance among students due to child abuse

Okafor et al., (2020) noted that close relationship between teachers and truant students helps the teacher to advise on the dangers of truancy and poor academic performance among students. He remarked that such truant students may be children who are afraid of school, or victims of child abuse, hence early detection will enable the teacher to evolve ways of restoring the irrational fear or dread of school environment which has captured the students and to usher in a new level of awareness depicting the objective values of education which is only attained through schooling.

Edeh et al., (2022)remarked that child abuse contributes to poor school attendance and poor academic performance of students in secondary schools. According to him, children who are recklessly abandon by parents quite early in life are fearful and fragile and may not open up to expose their problems to the teachers. In such situations, he noted that students are not regular in school, and are always late comers.

Obi et al.,(2021) cited that most students who do not attend school regularly are victims of child abuse. According to him, inadequate parental care tends to change students orientation and interest in academics and schooling to momentary profits and pleasures of street hawking.

Child Abuse and Poor Participation of Student in Classroom Learning

Asiegbu et al., (2018) noted that children who are not adequately cared for by parents lack the zeal to participate meaningfully in classroom interaction. According to him, it is important for teachers to pay attention to such weak or dull learners in the classroom who are victims of child abuse. He discouraged a situation where every attention of the teacher is focused on the intelligent students in the class while the weak students tend to shrink back to their shells. In such student-teacher relationship which is far from being described as cordial, he noted that students do not like listening to their teacher and may even prefer to be absent from school.

According Igwe et al.,(2021) irrational fear or dread of school situation due to poor parental care and

affection has led to withdrawal of some young learners from school. He remarked that, most young learners are victims of child abuse are often delinquent, disobeying school rules and regulations. He noted that such students, especially those in Junior Secondary Schools do not participate actively in classroom learning.

Furthermore, child abuse contributes to poor classroom participation among Junior Secondary School students. He noted that such recklessly abandoned children are often victims of school bullying perpetrated by the older students in the school. Hence, such school bullying creates fear in the mind of such students which could lead to lack of concentration in their studies, resulting to poor performance in examinations. He pointed out that, students who are not adequately cared for by parents are often school drop-outs, and blamed their misfortune on the inhuman treatments accorded to them during early school days. Furthermore, he pointed out that if the school environment is dreadful, the less fortunate child that feels inferior to peers due to poor parental love, affection and protection manifests weakness in classroom participation which contributes to poor academic performance. (Okoye & Okeke, 2018)

Lawal et al.,(2022)remarked that the school environment tends to socially alienate a recklessly abandoned child and creates fear or emotional disturbances in him/her which culminates to failure in examination due to poor participation in group learning. He remarked that fear of failure reduces the effectiveness of retentive memory and evokes cognitive distortions leading to wrong response to signals. He advised that teachers should endeavour to counsel students who are victims of child abuse to develop good moral behaviours necessary for meaningful academic pursuit.

Child Abuse and Poor Performance of Students in Examinations

The mere fact that examinations are approaching triggers off tension and anxiety in students who are victims of child abuse. They remarked that the tension and anxiety generated in such students can be attributed to the fear of failing examinations, due to lack of adequate preparation and acquisition of relevant learning materials. According to them, child abuse contributes to lack of time to scheduled for students preparatory studies, rather some of these abused children are victims of child labour engaged in much domestic and street trading services that they rarely have time for themselves. This poor preparation for examination and class work contributes to poor academic achievement. (Bello et al., 2019)

Dike & Opara (2020)) noted that students who lack adequate parental care are on stable in school. According to him, such students may not have paid their school fees, hence the school authority might even drive them out of class. He remarked that such student is poor in class room participation, unable to do their assignments and often feel shy to seek for help in academic difficulties. According to him, some recklessly abandoned children who lack parental love, develop to become delinquent, violent and arrogant, hence their arrogance and poor human relationship do not allow them to listen to their teachers nor seek explanation from fellow students in concepts that they could not understand during classroom interaction with the teacher. And children who lack adequate parental care often face financial difficulties and lack of basic learning materials as a result of denial of such basic needs by their parents due to contempt and disregard for the rights and privileges of the child.

He noted that child abuse and child labour are major factors that contributes to poor concentration of the child on his or her studies, leading to failure in examination. (Ekpo et al., 2018)

Eke & Iweama, (2019) noted that children who are not properly nurtured and cared for by their parents are often victims of violation of school rules and regulations, which members of a school system are expected to obey, especially students. He remarked that the tension and anxiety in maintaining discipline in schools leads to fear and poor performance in examination among such children who are often victims of school discipline such as; suspension, corporal punishment or withdrawal from school.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study is a descriptive research, hence survey research design was adopted. All students and teachers in Junior Secondary Schools in Okirika Local Government Area of Rivers State constitute the population of this study. There are 12 Junior Secondary Schools in the Local Government Area, with a population of 5,040 students on enrolment and 456 teachers.

Okirika Local Government Area consists of four major towns which constitute the strata for sample selection. The names of the towns are; Okujaguama, Ogoloma, Organama and Georgeama. Stratified random sampling was used to select eight secondary schools for the study, two from each of the four major towns in the Local Government. A total of 240 basic nine students (J S 3) and 80 teachers were randomly selected for the study, 30 students and 10 teachers from each of the schools.

The instrument for data collection is a 25 - item questionnaire designed in rating scale for Junior secondary 3 (J S 3) students and teachers in Junior secondary schools in Okrika Local Government Area of Rivers State. The instrument is a 4 - point rating scale designed as follows; Strongly agree (4pts), Agree (3pts), Disagree (2pts) and Strongly Disagree (1pt). The instrument is attached as appendix to this study.

The face and content validities of the research instrument were approved by the supervisor of this research work and two senior lecturers in the department, after careful reading and corrections.

The research instrument were administered to the sample audience or respondents (teachers and students) after a brief explanation of the purpose of the study. The respondents responded to the items with seriousness as they realize that the inventory seeks to offer solutions to an important problem such as child abuse and academic achievements in junior secondary schools.

Data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation and z- test. A standard reference mean of 2.50 was adopted for the purpose of determining the degree of acceptable attributes of child abuse that contributes to poor academic achievements of Junior secondary school students in Okrika Local Government Area of Rivers State. Standard deviations were computed in each item measured to determine the homogeneity in the responses of teachers and students in Junior Secondary Schools.

4. Results and Discussion of Findings

Research Question One: To what extent does child abuse contribute to truancy among students in Junior Secondary Schools in Okrika Local Government Area of Rivers State?

Table 1: JSS3 Students and Teachers' Responses on the extent to which child abuse contribute to truancy among students in Junior Secondary Schools in Okrika Local Government Area of Rivers State

Variables associated with truancy	JSS 3 Students		Total No. of JSS 3 students	Teachers'		Total No. of teachers'	Decision
	Mean $\bar{x}$	Std. dev. ð		Mean $\bar{x}$	Std. dev. ð		
Not steady in classroom	3.56	0.70	240	3.08	0.50	80	Agree
Loitering about during official hours							Agree

	2.95	0.67	240	3.03	0.74	80	
Coming late to class after break	2.94	0.52	240	3.21	0.63	80	Agree
Leaving the school before the official closing hour.	2.68	0.86	240	2.89	0.76	80	Agree
Grand mean	**3.03**	**0.70**		**3.05**	**0.66**		

Standard reference mean $\bar{x}$ = 2.50

Table 1 shows that mean responses of 3.56 for students and 3.08 for teachers which are greater than the standard reference mean of 2.50, indicates that both students and teachers were of the view that child abuse makes students not to be steady in classroom in secondary schools in Okrika Local Government Area of Rivers State. Mean responses of 2.95 for students and 3.03 for teachers which are greater than 2.50, indicates that both students and teachers were of the view that child abuse contributes to loitering about among students during official hours. Mean responses of 2.94 for students and 3.21 for teachers which are greater than 2.50, indicates that both students and teachers were of the view that child abuse contributes to lateness of students in returning back to class after break. Similarly, mean responses of 2.68 for students and 2.89 for teachers which are greater than 2.50, indicates that both students and teachers were of the view that child abuse contributes to students attitude in leaving the school before the official closing hour. The small values of standard deviations obtained, ie 0.70, 0.67, 0.52 and 0.86 for students respectively, and 0.50, 0.74, 0.63 and 0.76 for teachers respectively, indicates that both students and teachers were homogenous in their response.

Research Question Two: To what extent does child abuse contribute to poor school attendance among students in Junior Secondary Schools in Okrika Local Government Area of Rivers State?

Table 2: JSS3 Students and Teachers' Responses on the extent to which child abuse contribute to poor school attendance among students in Junior Secondary Schools in Okrika Local Government Area of Rivers State

Variables associated with poor school attendance	**JSS 3 Students**		**Total No. of JSS 3 students**	**Teachers'**		**Total No. of teachers'**	**Decision**
	Mean $\bar{x}$	**Std. dev.** **ð**		**Mean** $\bar{x}$	**Std. dev.** **ð**		
Not regular in school	2.88	0.61	240	3.13	0.62	80	Agree

Always a late comer	3.22	0.82	240	2.86	0.63	80	Agree
Absent from school without cogent reasons	3.14	0.60	240	3.06	0.75	80	Agree
Leaving the school before the official closing hour.	3.08	0.73	240	3.18	0.88	80	Agree
Grand mean	**3.08**	**0.69**		**3.06**	**0.72**		

Standard reference mean $\bar{x}$ = 2.50

Table 2 shows that mean responses of 2.88 for students and 3.13 for teachers which are greater than the standard reference mean of 2.50, indicates that both students and teachers were of the view that child abuse makes students not to attend school regularly. Mean responses of 3.14 for students and 2.86 for teachers which are greater than 2.50, indicates that both students and teachers were of the view that child abuse contributes to lateness of students to school. Mean responses of 3.22 for students and 3.06 for teachers which are greater than 2.50, indicates that both students and teachers were of the view that child abuse contributes to absence of students from school without cogent reasons. Similarly, mean responses of 3.08 for students and 3.18 for teachers, which are greater than 2.50, indicates that both students and teachers were of the view that child abuse contributes to poor record of school attendance which is usually less than half of the total attendance for the term. The small values of standard deviations obtained, ie 0.61, 0.60, 0.82 and 0.73 for students respectively, and 0.62, 0.63, 0.75 and 0.88 for teachers respectively, indicates that both students and teachers were homogenous in their response.

Research Question Three: To what extent does child abuse contribute to poor participation of students in classroom learning in Junior Secondary Schools in Okrika Local Government Area of Rivers State?

Table 3: JSS3 Students and Teachers' Responses on the extent to which child abuse contribute to poor participation of students in classroom learning in Junior Secondary Schools in Okrika Local Government Area of Rivers State

Variables associated with poor participation of students in classroom learning	**JSS 3 Students**		**Total No. of JSS 3 students**	**Teachers'**		**Total No. of teachers'**	**Decision**
	Mean $\bar{x}$	**Std. dev.** **ð**		**Mean** $\bar{x}$	**Std. dev.** **ð**		
Abused students do not ask questions for	2.68	0.86	240	2.89	0.76	80	Agree

clarifications							
Abused students do not answers questions posed by the teacher	2.89	0.66	240	2.85	0.71	80	Agree
They are dull in the class	3.18	0.82	240	3.02	0.74	80	Agree
They feel inferior in interacting with peers in the classroom	2.93	0.59	240	2.84	0.75	80	Agree
Grand mean	**2.92**	**0.73**		**2.90**	**0.74**		

Standard reference mean $\bar{x}$ = 2.50

Table 3 shows that mean responses of 2.68 for students and 2.89 for teachers which are greater than the standard reference mean of 2.50, indicates that both students and teachers were of the view that abused students do not ask questions in the classroom for clarifications. Mean responses of 2.89 for students and 2.85 for teachers which are greater than 2.50, indicates that both students and teachers were of the view that students who are victims of child abuse do not participate in answering classroom questions posed by the teacher. Mean responses of 3.18 for students and 3.02 for teachers which are greater than 2.50, indicates that both students and teachers were of the view that child abuse contributes to dullness among students in the class. Similarly, mean responses of 2.93 for students and 2.84 for teachers, which are greater than 2.50, indicates that both students and teachers were of the view that abused students manifests feelings of inferiority in classroom interaction with peers. The small values of standard deviations obtained, ie 0.86, 0.66, 0.82 and 0.59 for students respectively, and 0.76, 0.71, 0.74 and 0.75 for teachers respectively, indicates that both students and teachers were homogenous in their response.

Research Question Four: To what extent does child abuse contribute to poor performance of students in examinations in Junior Secondary Schools in Okrika Local Government Area of Rivers State?

Table 4: JSS3 Students and Teachers' Responses on the extent to which child abuse contribute to poor performance of students in examinations among students in Junior Secondary Schools in Okrika Local Government Area of Rivers State

Variables associated with poor performance of students in examinations	**JSS 3 Students**		**Total No. of JSS 3 students**	**Teachers'**		**Total No. of teachers'**	**Decision**
	Mean $\bar{x}$	**Std. dev. ð**		**Mean** $\bar{x}$	**Std. dev. ð**		
Abused students are	3.42	0.80	240	3.01	0.70	80	Agree

emotionally unstable for retention and recall of relevant concepts taught							
They are afraid of examination	2.94	0.52	240	3.22	0.63	80	Agree
They perform poorly in termly examinations and class work	2.77	0.94	240	3.06	0.66	80	Agree
They lack the basic understanding of concept.	3.02	0.65	240	2.90	0.78	80	Agree
Grand mean	**3.04**	**0.73**		**3.05**	**0.69**		

Standard reference mean $\bar{x}$ = 2.50

Table 4 shows that mean responses of 3.42 for students and 3.01 for teachers which are greater than the standard reference mean of 2.50, indicates that both students and teachers were of the view that abused students are emotionally unstable for retention and recall of relevant concepts taught in school. Mean responses of 2.94 for students and 3.22 for teachers which are greater than 2.50, indicates that both students and teachers were of the view that abused students are afraid of examination. Mean responses of 2.77 for students and 3.06 for teachers which are greater than 2.50, indicates that both students and teachers were of the view that abused students perform poorly in termly examinations and class work. Similarly, mean responses of 3.02 for students and 2.90 for teachers, which are greater than 2.50, indicates that both students and teachers were of the view that abused students lack the basic understanding of concepts taught in school, which leads to poor performance in examination. The small values of standard deviations obtained, ie 0.80, 0.52, 0.94 and 0.65 for students respectively, and 0.70, 0.63, 0.66 and 0.78 for teachers respectively, indicates that both students and teachers were homogenous in their response.

Research Hypotheses

Research Hypotheses One: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of JSS3 students and teachers on the extent to which child abuse contribute to truancy among students in Junior Secondary Schools in Okrika Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Table 5: Z-Test of Differences in the Mean Responses of JSS 3 Students and Teachers on the extent to which child abuse contribute to truancy among students in Junior Secondary Schools in Okrika Local Government Area of Rivers State

Group	Mean	Std. dev	N	Df	Std. error	Z_{cal}	Z_{table} □=0.05	Decision
JSS 3 Student	3.03	0.70	240					
Teachers	3.05	0.66	80	318	0.087	0.23	1.96	H_0 accepted

Table 5 shows that the null hypothesis on Z-test of difference in the mean responses of JSS3 students and teachers on the extent to which child abuse contribute to truancy among students in Junior Secondary Schools in Okrika Local Government Area of Rivers State, was accepted at 5% level of significance, where the degree of freedom (318) is at infinity (∞), because the critical or tabular value of Z (1.96) is greater than the calculated value of Z (0.23).

Research Hypotheses Two: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of JSS3 students and teachers on the extent to which child abuse contribute to poor school attendance among students in Junior Secondary Schools in Okrika Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Table 5: Z-Test of Differences in the Mean Responses of JSS 3 Students and Teachers on the extent to which child abuse contribute to poor school attendance among students in Junior Secondary Schools in Okrika Local Government Area of Rivers State

Group	Mean	Std. dev	N	Df	Std. error	Z_{cal}	Z_{table} □=0.05	Decision
JSS 3 Student	3.08	0.69	240	318	0.092	0.22	1.96	H_0 accepted
Teachers	3.06	0.72	80					

Table 5 shows that the null hypothesis on Z-test of difference in the mean responses of JSS3 students and teachers on the extent to which child abuse contribute to poor school attendance among students in Junior Secondary Schools in Okrika Local Government Area of Rivers State, was accepted at 5% level of significance, where the degree of freedom (318) is at infinity (∞), because the critical or tabular value of Z (1.96) is greater than the calculated value of Z (0.22).

Discussion of Findings

Analysis of research question one and hypothesis one showed that both students and teachers were of the view that child abuse contributes to truancy among students in junior secondary schools in Okrika Local Government Area of Rivers State**.** Such variables of truancy which are common among abused students include; not steady in classroom, loitering about during official hours, coming late to class after break and leaving the school before the official closing hour. This finding supports the remarks of Okorie et al.,(2023) that abused students are often truants and school drop-outs.

Analysis of Research Question two and hypothesis two showed that both students and teachers were of the view that child abuse contributes to poor school attendance among students. Such variables of poor school attendance common among abused students include; not being regular in school, always a late comer, absent from school without cogent reasons and poor record of school attendance which is usually less than half of the total attendance for the term. This finding supports the remarks of Olaitan et al., (2020), that Parents should be involved in solving problems of poor school attendance among students due to child abuse.

Analysis of Research Question three showed that both students and teachers were of the view that child abuse contributes to poor participation of students in classroom learning in Junior Secondary schools in Okrika Local Government Area of Rivers State**.** Such variables of poor participation of students in classroom learning common among abused students include; inability to ask questions for clarifications, inability to answers questions posed by the teacher during classroom interactions, dullness of students

in the class and feelings of inferiority in classroom interacting with peers. This findings supports the comment of Mbachu et al., (2019)that children who are not adequately cared for by parents lack the zeal to participate meaningfully in classroom interaction.

Analysis of Research Question four showed that both students and teachers were of the view that child abuse contributes to poor performance of students in examinations**,** in Junior Secondary schools in Okrika Local Government Area of Rivers State**.** Such variables of poor academic performance common among abused students include; unstable emotion for retention and recall of relevant concepts taught in school, fear of examination, poor performance in termly examinations and class work and lack of basic understanding of concepts. This finding supports the remarks of Adeyinka et al., (2021) that child abuse and child labour are major factors that contributes to poor concentration of students on their studies, leading to failure in examination.

Analysis of Research Question five showed that both students and teachers were of the view that child abuse contributes to lack of acquisition of relevant learning materials among students in Junior Secondary Schools in Okrika Local Government Area of Rivers State**.** Such variables of poor provision of learning materials common among abused students include; lack relevant textbooks and other learning materials for studies, non-payment of school fees and lack enthusiasm in school activities due to non- acquisition of relevant learning materials. This finding supports the remarks of Anene et al.,(2020)) that the degree to which students a able to learn may depend on their level of involvement and participation in classroom interaction, hence he advised that parents should pay their children school fees promptly and provide all the necessary learning material for the students to engage in creative academic activities.

CONCLUSIONANDRECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

Child abuse contributes to poor academic achievement among students in Junior Secondary Schools in Okrika Local Government Area of Rivers State. Factors associated with child abuse that contributes to poor academic achievement among students include: truancy, poor school attendance, poor participation in classroom learning activities, poor performance in examinations and lack of relevant learning materials.

Implications

The findings of this study offer a lot to parents who often neglect their responsibilities to their children, especially in teaching them good moral conduct and providing the basic learning materials for their studies. It is a call to parents to endeavor to train up their children in a disciplined manner and encourage them in their academic pursuit by paying their school fees promptly and providing the basic learning materials for use in classroom interactions. The findings of this study is a challenge to guidance counselors and the government to evolve ways of restoring the abused children psychologically and providing the basic materials and finances for their education. The study offers a lot of challenges to school administrators and teachers to be loving and caring in response to the psychological, social and economic problems of abused students which leads to their poor academic performance in Junior Secondary schools.

Recommendations

The findings of this research and its consequent implications to psychological, economical and social wellbeing of abused students in Junior Secondary Schools in Okrika Local Government Area of Rivers State, makes the following recommendations necessary;

1. Parent should endeavor to train up their children to be morally upright in behaviour, and provide the basic financial and material needs for their education.
2. Guidance counsellor and other social workers should organize seminars and workshops to enlighten parents on the dangers on child abuse, especially as it affects the academic performance of the abused students.

3. Guidance counsellors should organize regular counseling sessions for abused students, who are suffering various psychological, economic and social problems.
4. Government should empower jobless parents in the local government area to avoid child abuse and child labour which affects the academic performance of the abused students.
5. Couples should love each other and shun acts that may lead to divorce or broken homes, which often result to child abuse and child labour.
6. Government should enact laws prohibiting child abuse and child labour.
7. Government should provide free education at primary and junior secondary levels, so that abused students can be given the opportunity to acquire the basic education which is offered at junior secondary level.
8. Teachers should utilize appropriate teaching strategies to manage the social and psychological problems which affects the academic performance of abused students.

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