



Child Abuse and Socio-Emotional Adjustments of in-School Adolescents in Cross River State, Nigeria

Dr. Glory Urinrin Akudihor
akudihorglory@yahoo.com
isaacglory.ig@gmail

A

Otu, Bernard Diwa Ph. D
Otubernard76@gmail.com
Otu_bernard@yahoo.com/
Bernardotu@unical.edu.ng
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6072-9619>

B

Department of Educational Psychology
Faculty of Educational Foundation Studies,
University of Calabar

Keywords

Abstract

Child abuse,
socio-emotional adjustments;
In-school adolescents

Correspondence Email:

akudihorglory@yahoo.com
isaacglory.ig@gmail

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.60787/jeate.vol9no1.59>

The main purpose of this study was to examine child abuse and socio-emotional adjustments of in-school adolescents in Cross River State, Nigeria. To achieve the purpose of this study two null hypotheses were generated to direct the study. Literature review was done according to the variables under study. Correlational research design was adopted for the study. A sample of six hundred and seven (607) respondents was randomly selected for the study. The selection was done through the stratified random sampling technique. The questionnaire was the main instrument used for data collection. The instrument was subjected to face validation by one expert from Educational Psychology and two experts in measurement and evaluation in the University of Calabar. The reliability estimate of the instrument was established through the Cronbach alpha reliability method. Regression analysis was the statistical analysis technique adopted to test the hypotheses under study. All hypotheses were subjected to testing at .05 level of significance. The results of the analysis revealed that, physical abuse and emotional abuse significantly contribute to socio-emotional adjustment of in-school adolescents in Cross River State, Nigeria. Based on the findings of the study it was recommended among others that Government should develop and implement programmes to prevent and intervene in cases of physical abuse and emotional abuse among adolescents.

INTRODUCTION

The problem of poor socio-emotional adjustments of in-school adolescents has over the years been a cause of concern to the researcher. The researcher being an educator has observed the problem of peer relationship like bullying and peer victimization, social exchange and negative peer influence. The researcher has also observed students' anxiety as a result of academic stress and pressure to succeed leading to emotional difficulties. The social media has also contributed to adjustment problem of adolescents as a result of social comparison leading to feeling of inadequacy, and low self-esteem. Trauma, abuse or neglect and lack of emotional support from teachers, family and peers can lead to students feeling unloved and invalidated.

The aforementioned problems have been a growing concern for researchers, psychologists, school counsellors, school administrators, and parents who have over the years made frantic efforts to alleviate/curb these problems of socio-emotional adjustment among in-school adolescents in Cross River State. Such noticeable efforts include establishing specific short-term goals on their curriculum and lessons to challenge students on positive social relationships.

The school on regular basis organizes counselling sessions with the students on emotional regulations strategies. Some agencies organize school competitions to make students feel potent socially, emotionally and academically. Debates, quiz competitions, essay writing and school plays are organized by schools to expose students to good social and communication skills.

In spite of the steps taken by various education stakeholders to help adolescents learn and nurture proper adjustment, the problem still persists. The study therefore intends to find out the influence of child abuse and mental well-being on socio-emotional adjustment of in-school adolescents in our secondary schools in Cross River State.

Therefore, the key question is, to what extent does child abuse and mental well-being influence socio-emotional adjustment of in-school adolescents?

Purpose of the study

- 1 Physical abuse on socio-emotional adjustments of in-school adolescents
- 2 Emotional abuse on socio-emotional adjustments of in-school adolescents

Research questions

- 1 How does physical abuse contribute to socio-emotional adjustment of in-school adolescents?
- 2 How does emotional abuse contribute to socio-emotional adjustment of in-school adolescents?

Statement of hypotheses

- 1 There is no significant contribution of physical abuse on socio-emotional adjustment of in-school adolescents.
- 2 Emotional abuse does not significantly contribute to socio-emotional adjustment of in-school adolescents.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Physical abuse and socio-emotional adjustment

Babamba and Ahman (2021).investigated Influence of Parents Physical Abuse on Emotional and Academic Adjustment of Secondary School Students in Ijumu Local Government Area of Kogi State Nigeria. The study aimed to investigate influence of parents' physical abuse on emotional and academic adjustment of secondary school students in Ijumu LGA of Kogi State, Nigeria. Correlational design was used for the study. A sample of fifty one (51) abused students was drawn from two public schools. Two research questions and two hypotheses were formulated. Statistical means was used to answer the research questions and inferential statistics of Pearson Product-Moment

Correlation (PPMC) was used in determining if or not a significant influence existed. Results showed that all the hypotheses 1 and 2 were rejected. Significant negative influence existed between parents physical abuse and emotional adjustment of students with ($r = -0.567$, $p = 0.000$), parents' physical abuse and academic adjustment of students with ($r = -0.769$, $p = 0.030$). The results of the study indicated that parents' physical abuse has negative influence on emotional and academic adjustment of students' in Secondary Schools. It was therefore recommended through Parent Teachers Association (PTA), that school counselors should continuously sensitize parents on the need to desist from physical abuse because of the negative influence it has on the emotional well being of students. Non-Governmental Organizations should invigorate their efforts on massive campaign against physical abuse. This will make parents to understand the implication of physical assault on their children such as kicking, pushing and torturing, as this produces fearfulness, anxiety, low self-esteem and academic adjustment difficulties. The National and all states' Houses of Assembly should deem it fit to pass the Child Rights Act. Hence, this will give protection to young secondary school students against physical abuse by parents and improved their emotional and academic adjustment.

Still on Physical abuse and socio-emotional adjustments, Rode, Rode, Marganski, & Jadunsek (2019). Carried out a study on The Impact of Physical Abuse & Exposure to Parental intimate partner violence on Young Adolescents in Poland: a Clinical Assessment and Comparison of Psychological Outcomes. The study explores characteristics of youth who experienced domestic violence in Poland. Specifically, young adolescents who were victims of physical abuse perpetrated by parents and young adolescents who were exposed to parental intimate partner violence were studied to determine whether the groups had similar or different psychological outcomes. Additionally, the study looked into ways by which these youth cope with stress and demonstrate self-efficacy. Data was collected from

90 youth aged 11 to 14 years using quota sampling; 30 were victims of physical abuse, 30 were victims of exposure to parental intimate partner violence, and 30 were members of a comparison group. Parents gave written consent for participation while adolescents provided verbal assent and subsequently completed questionnaires. Analyses revealed that adolescents who experienced physical abuse showed higher levels of trait anxiety and outwardly directed anger, and a lower sense of self-efficacy, than adolescents exposed to IPV. In contrast, those exposed to parental IPV exhibited a lower level of trait anxiety, a higher level of inwardly directed anger, and a greater sense of strength and perseverance. No statistically significant differences existed between groups in terms of coping with stress. The findings suggest that adolescents experiencing different types of family violence victimization may have different outcomes, which could call for differential treatment. Future research should more closely examine victims of physical abuse and exposure to IPV in Poland to see if findings hold. This would help clinicians recognize outcomes associated with different experiences and tailor appropriate strategies.

Zhou, and Zhen (2022), carried out a study on how do physical and emotional abuse affect depression and problematic behaviors in adolescents? The roles of emotional regulation and anger. The authors used longitudinal data to examine the mechanisms underlying the effect of physical and emotional abuse on depression and problematic behaviors through emotional regulation and anger in Chinese adolescents. Participants were 1689 adolescents (with age ranging from 12 to 17 years) from junior and senior high schools in Zhejiang Province, China. By way of method, Participants completed a childhood trauma questionnaire and an emotion regulation strategies questionnaire at time 1 (T1), and they completed an anger scale, a depression scale, and a problematic behaviors questionnaire one year later (T2). Structural equation modeling was used to examine the research hypotheses. The result indicated that physical abuse had direct positive effects on

problematic behaviors but not on depression. However, emotional abuse had direct effects on depression and problematic behaviors, and indirect effects on both psychopathologies through expressive suppression and anger. The researchers concluded by stating that physical and emotional abuse had distinct effects and influencing mechanisms on adolescents' externalizing and internalizing problems. Compared with physical abuse, emotional abuse elicited more harms and subsequent psychopathologies.

In the same vein, Oladunmoye, Ashibi, and Roseann, (2024), carried out a study on Childhood Trauma and Adolescent Violent Behaviour: A Regression Analysis of Emotional, Physical Abuse, Neglect, and Witnessing Domestic Violence. Three research questions guided the study. This study adopted a quantitative correlational research design to examine the relationship between childhood trauma and adolescent violent behaviour in Uganda. Correlational designs are appropriate for exploring associations between variables without manipulating them. Regression analysis was used to determine how emotional abuse, physical abuse, neglect, and witnessing domestic violence predict violent behaviour. The sample comprised 214 adolescents (ages 12–18) from secondary schools and youth rehabilitation centres across Uganda. Participants were selected using a multi-stage sampling technique: districts were stratified by socio-economic status, schools and centres were randomly chosen, and adolescents were selected systematically. Inclusion criteria required adolescents to be enrolled in school or residing in a rehabilitation centre, with informed consent obtained from parents for minors. Two distinct measures were used in the study including; Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ) and Youth Self-report (YSR) Aggression Subscale. Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ): Childhood trauma was assessed using the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (Viola 2016). This validated instrument measures emotional abuse, physical abuse, neglect, and witnessing domestic violence, with items rated on a five-point Likert scale. Higher scores indicate greater

exposure to trauma, and the CTQ has demonstrated high reliability ($\alpha = 0.79\text{--}0.94$). Youth Self-Report (YSR) Aggression Subscale: Violent behaviour was measured using the aggression subscale of the Youth Self-Report (Kendall, 2020). This tool assesses the frequency of aggressive behaviours (e.g., fighting, bullying) over the past six months, with items rated on a three-point scale. The subscale has shown strong reliability ($\alpha > 0.85$). Data were collected over three months by trained research assistants. Participants completed the questionnaires in supervised settings to ensure confidentiality and accuracy. Ethical approval was obtained from the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST), and informed consent was secured from participants and parents where applicable.

Data was analyzed using SPSS version 27. Descriptive statistics summarized the sample characteristics and trauma exposure levels. Multiple regression analyses were conducted to assess the predictive power of the trauma indices on violent behaviour. Assumptions of linearity, normality, and multicollinearity were checked, and statistical significance was set at $p < .05$. Results revealed that two out of the three factors (emotional, physical abuse and witnessing domestic violence) are significant predictors of violence behaviour among adolescents in Kampala, Uganda while neglect is not a significant predictor. The most potent predictor is emotional physical abuse ($\beta=0.316$, $t=3.444$, $p<0.01$) and witnessing domestic violence ($\beta=0.185$, $t=2.084$, $p<0.05$) except neglect ($\beta=0.059$, $t=0.737$, $p>0.05$). This implies that emotional physical abuse and witnessing domestic violence will increase the tendency of violence behaviour among adolescents in Kampala, Uganda by 31.6% and 18.5% respectively.

Furthermore, Lättsch, Jachen, and Hümbelin (2016) carried out a study on Poly-Victimization and Its Relationship With Emotional and Social Adjustment in Adolescence: Evidence From a National Survey in Switzerland .The objective of the study was to

investigate for the first time in a wealthy country of Central Europe, the prevalence of poly-victimization (exposure to multiple forms of victimization within the past year) in an adolescent population. It further examines associations between single victimization types (such as sexual or physical assaults) with emotional and social functioning when poly-victimization is controlled for. Data from a large and near-representative national school survey in Switzerland (N = 6,749, 52.2% male, M age = 15.5 years) were examined using descriptive and multiple regression analysis. Results of the findings indicated that when poly-victimization was controlled for, individual victimization types showed largely diminished association with emotional and social functioning measures. Particularly weak associations were found for physical and sexual victimizations. By contrast, emotional assaults (including emotional bullying by peers and emotional abuse by parents) and maltreatment by parents retained the strongest links with levels of functioning. This general pattern of results held even when chronic individual victimization types were considered.

The authors concluded stating that many previous studies may have underestimated adolescents' capacities to cope with physical and sexual victimizations where these experiences happen in an otherwise functional environment. Meanwhile, concurrent exposure to multiple kinds of victimization serves as a strong indicator of declined emotional and social functioning. Taken together, the findings embolden practitioners in general to avoid the pitfalls of overspecialization and to promote holistic treatment approaches toward adolescent victims of violence. In the Swiss context, professionals working with vulnerable children and youth may feel encouraged to overcome the fragmentarization of services that currently characterizes the children and youth welfare system in this country.

Atiku, (2017) carried out a study on the relationship among physical and psychological abuse, social adjustment and academic performance of primary school pupils in Kaduna State, Nigeria. The study employed correlation design in investigating the relationship among physical and psychological abuse, social adjustment and academic performance of primary school pupils. The population of this study was made up of 8,002 Primary Five (5) pupils selected from Six (6) public schools. A total of 377 abused pupils were sampled using proportionate sampling technique and used for the study. Three (3) instruments namely, Physical Abuse Questionnaire (PAQ), Psychological Abuse Questionnaire (PAQ) and Social Adjustment Questionnaire (SAQ) were adopted and used for the study. The Data Collected was analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and t-test, all these were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Findings reveals that significant relationship existed between physical and social adjustment of abused pupils ($P = 0.001$), significant relationship existed between physical abuse and academic performance of abused pupils ($P = 0.001$), significant relationship existed between psychological abuse and social adjustment of abused pupils ($P = 0.001$), significant relationship existed between psychological abuse and academic performance of abused pupils ($P = 0.028$). Significant difference existed between physically and psychologically abused pupils on their social adjustment ($P = 0.004$) and also significant differences existed between physically and psychologically abused pupils in their academic performance ($P = 0.0027$). Base on the findings of this study, it was recommended that psychologists, counselors, teachers and head teachers, as well as parents should be sensitized through workshop, seminar, and conferences on the negative effect of physical and psychological abuse, on social adjustment and academic performance among the primary school pupils in order to boost their moral, socially and cognitive development in schools.

Emotional Abuse and Socio-emotional adjustment

Ishfaq & Kamal (2024) investigated Emotional Abuse to Delinquent Tendencies: Comparative Study on Juveniles and Students in Punjab, Pakistan. The study objectives were to explain the roles of physical and verbal aggression, emotional immaturity, and lying behavior in the predictive relationship between emotional abuse and delinquent tendencies among juveniles and students in Punjab, Pakistan. Data was collected from 232 juveniles incarcerated in the Borstal Jails of Faisalabad and Bahawalpur. A comparative sample of 276 students from government schools was collected through purposive sampling. The comparative sample was matched for socioeconomic status, gender, location, and age. Translated (Urdu) versions of the standardized scales were used to measure the respective constructs. Path analysis was conducted to determine the mediating effects of lying (as a personality trait), emotional immaturity, and physical-verbal aggression on the relationship between emotional abuse and delinquent tendencies. Multigroup analysis was performed to determine the strength and significance of each path for juveniles and students.

Result of the analysis indicated emotional abuse positively predicted delinquent tendencies and emotional maturity, lying as a personality trait, and physical-verbal aggression mediated this relationship among juveniles and students. A decline in emotional maturity was a stronger predictor of delinquent tendencies among juveniles, whereas physical-verbal aggression played a stronger role for students.

In a conclusive note, the study demonstrates the indirect effects of emotional abuse on delinquent tendencies. This study also highlights the intense effect of emotional abuse on juvenile delinquents' emotional maturity and supports the importance of utilizing positive methods when dealing with adolescents, especially school personnel and clinical psychologists who interact with adolescents with problematic behaviors.

Similarly, Cohen and Thakur (2019) carried out a study on Developmental consequences of emotional abuse and neglect in vulnerable adolescents: A multi-informant, multi-wave study. The objective of the study was to examine how emotional abuse and emotional neglect-exposure in adolescence uniquely relate to psychological symptoms and social impairment. Participants were a sample of adolescents ($N = 657$; Age $M = 12.49$ at baseline) who were participating in a longitudinal study. The researchers employed a multi-informant approach to assess emotional abuse/neglect and mental health. Physical abuse and lifetime CWS contact represented covariates in growth curve models. Results showed emotional abuse predicted symptoms within informant, such that youth-reported emotional abuse predicted youth-reported internalizing, $\beta = 0.21$, $p = .001$, and externalizing, $\beta = 0.35$, $p = .001$, symptoms while parent-reported emotional abuse predicted parent-reported externalizing, $\beta = 0.30$, $p < .001$, and internalizing $\beta = 0.29$, $p < .001$, symptoms. Meanwhile, youth-reported emotional neglect predicted heightened self-reported internalizing symptoms, $\beta = 0.29$, $p < .001$, parent-reported externalizing symptoms, $\beta = 0.15$, $p = .002$ and social impairment across youth, $\beta = -0.17$, $p = .01$ and parent, $\beta = -0.24$, $p < .001$, report.

In conclusion the study shows the importance of distinguishing between the maltreatment subtypes in adolescence and provides measurement recommendations for future maltreatment research. The manuscript concludes by discussing adolescent emotional abuse and neglect-exposure as a maintenance, as opposed to causal risk, factors

Similarly, research by Khalid, (2023) emphasized the role of emotional abuse in fostering aggression, as prolonged exposure to verbal assaults and demeaning treatment can erode self-esteem and promote externalizing behaviours. The current study reinforces these findings, demonstrating that such abuse has a profound impact on adolescents in Kampala, potentially due to the lack of adequate mental health resources and social support

systems in the region. Witnessing domestic violence also plays a significant role in predicting violent behaviour, which is consistent with research by Eisner and Malti, (2015), who noted that children who observe violence within the home often internalize aggressive behaviours as normative. Nkadameng, (2024) further highlighted that children who witness domestic violence are at a higher risk of developing aggressive tendencies because they may view violence as an acceptable method of conflict resolution. The finding that witnessing domestic violence contributes to 18.5% of the variance in violent behaviour underscores the critical influence of family dynamics and the urgent need for interventions targeting family violence. In contrast, neglect did not significantly predict violent behaviour in this study, a result that diverges from some previous findings. Howe (2017) found that neglect contributes to behavioural problems, including aggression, albeit to a lesser extent than direct forms of abuse. The non-significant finding in the current study may reflect cultural or contextual factors unique to Kampala, where the effects of neglect could be mediated by other variables such as peer relationships or community influences. Alternatively, it may indicate that the forms of neglect experienced by the participants did not reach a threshold sufficient to provoke violent behaviour.

In addition, Singh, Sachdev & Singh (2017) conducted a study on Effects of Emotional Abuse on Attainment of Emotional Quotient, Adjustment Level and Reaction to Frustration. The study was designed to explore the effect of emotional abuse on emotional quotient, adjustment level, and reaction to frustration. The study was performed on 100 female subjects. Based on the emotional abuse level, the subjects were divided into five groups: very low, low level, moderate level, high level, and extremely high level of abuse. The parameters studied were emotional quotient, adjustment level, reaction to frustration (Aggression, Resignation, Fixation, and Regression).

Results showed that with the increase in emotional abuse, there was an increase in reaction to frustration and; a decrease in adjustment level and emotional quotient. Comparison between different groups for various parameters- emotional abuse, adjustment level, emotional quotient, and reaction to frustration exhibited statistically significant differences.

The researchers asserted that emotional Abuse has a deteriorative effect on emotional well-being. In a study conducted by Ting, Haung, Jiang, Mashutao, & Ma, (2023). On Childhood psychological abuse and relational aggression among adolescents: A moderated chain mediation model. The study constructed a moderated chain mediation model to investigate the influence of childhood psychological abuse on relational aggression among Chinese adolescents and its internal mechanism. Data from 1868 (923 male and 945 female, $M = 14.31$, $SD = 1.60$) Chinese adolescents in two full-time middle schools in Guangzhou were collected via a cross-sectional survey in 2020. Adolescents reported on childhood psychological abuse, relational aggression, rejection sensitivity, relational victimization and cognitive reappraisal.

The results demonstrated that: (1) childhood psychological abuse was significantly positively related to relational aggression; (2) childhood psychological abuse was significantly linked with adolescents' relational aggression through the separate mediating effects of rejection sensitivity and relational victimization, as well as through the chain mediating effects of rejection sensitivity and relational victimization; (3) the chain mediated effect of childhood psychological abuse on relational aggression through rejection sensitivity and relational victimization was moderated by cognitive reappraisal. The authors concluded stating the findings indicate childhood psychological abuse, as a kind of poor parenting style, has influence on adolescents' internal personality (rejection sensitivity) and external behavior development (relational victimization and relational

aggression). This study is helpful to demonstrate the protective effect of cognitive reappraisal and reveal the internal mechanism of childhood psychological abuse on relational aggression.

Another study conducted by Olalekan and Oyekola (2024) on Childhood maltreatment and the development of social-emotional competence and character strengths among in-school adolescents in Ibadan. The authors aimed to explore the correlation between childhood maltreatment and the development of social-emotional competence and character strengths among in-school adolescents in Ibadan. A descriptive survey design was employed, and a sample of 350 participants (163 male and 187 female, aged between 12 and 20) was randomly selected from five public secondary schools in Ibadan metropolis. Data were collected using the Social Emotional Competence Questionnaire (SECQ), Childhood Maltreatment Questionnaire (CMQ), and VIA Character Strengths (Youth Version). Descriptive statistics, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC), and Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) were utilized for data analysis. The findings revealed a significant direct causal effect of childhood maltreatment on social-emotional competence (SEC) and character strengths among in-school adolescents in Ibadan metropolis. The recommendations based on these results include promoting parental education to reduce childhood maltreatment and implementing character strengths building interventions in schools to enhance the development of social-emotional competence among adolescents.

In addition, Marín, Pérez-Albéniz, Lucas-Molina, Valderrey, Fonseca-Pedrero (2022), carried out a study on Bullying in adolescence: Impact on socio-emotional and behavioral adjustment. The objective of the study was to analyze the association between school bullying and the socio-emotional and behavioral adjustment of adolescents involved in bullying situations as victims or as aggressors. To identify the groups under

study, the European Bullying Intervention Project Questionnaire (EBIP-Q) was administered. A sample selected by stratified random cluster sampling was made, consisting of 1777 (54, 1% women, $M = 15.71$ years, $SD = 1.26$). The dimensional model of two interrelated factors (victimization and aggression) showed a good fit to the data, as well as measurement invariance by gender. The omega coefficient of the victimization and aggression subscales has been .81 and .80, respectively. Statistically significant differences were found between victim and non-victim groups, and between victims and aggressors in self-esteem, symptoms of depression, and emotional and behavioral difficulties. The victims have obtained lower scores in self-esteem and higher scores in depression and emotional and behavioral difficulties than the victims or the aggressors. The bullies have more behavior problems than the non-bullies and a less prosocial behavior than the bullied students. These findings corroborate the negative implications in the socio-emotional and behavioral adjustment of bullying in adolescent victims and aggressors, and the adequate psychometric quality of the EBIP-Q scores as a tool for its evaluation.

In a related study, Alam,(2019) carried out a study on Impact of emotional abuse on adolescents' adjustment. The aim of the study was to measure the impact of emotional abuse on adjustment among adolescents and to learn if there is any difference in the impact of emotional abuse of male and female adolescents. The researchers adopted the correlation design aimed at investigating the impact of Emotional Abuse on adjustment among adolescents. The sample consists of 50 adolescent boys and 50 adolescent girls that are between the ages of 18 to 21 from Al Barkat Institute. The convenient sampling method was used to select the participants. Moreover, the tools used for this study was Emotional Abuse developed by Alam and Nasheen, and Adjustment Inventory developed by Kumar. The data was analyzed using t test and Pearson correlation. The statistical results revealed that there is an impact of emotional abuse on adjustment among adolescents and as

emotional abuse increases among male and female adjustment level decrease. The research implies that serious steps should be taken against emotional abuse, create awareness at societal level, to address the rising problem of abuse among adolescents and to examine interventions for the victims of emotional abuse.

Kovacs-Toth, Olah, Pepp & Szabo (2021) conducted a study on Assessing adverse childhood experiences, social, emotional, and behavioral symptoms, and subjective health complaints among Hungarian adolescents Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. A cross sectional questionnaire survey was conducted in a community sample of Hungarian adolescents to assess the frequency of ACEs and analyse their association with current social, emotional, and behavioural symptoms (SEB), and subjective health complaints (SHC). Demographic data, ACEs, SEB and SHC status of 516 adolescents aged 12 to 17 were collected. ACEs were assessed using the ACE Score Calculator; for SEB the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, and for SHC some specific items from the Health Behaviour of School Children questionnaire were employed. To analyse the relationship of ACEs to SEB and SHC logistic regression was performed.

The results showed that the frequency of ACEs, SEB and SHC is high among adolescents. One-fourth of the students reported ≥ 2 categories of childhood exposures, and 7.4% reported having experienced ≥ 4 types of ACEs. The most prevalent forms of child maltreatment were emotional neglect (15.5%) and emotional abuse (14.5%). The most frequent dysfunctional household condition was parental divorce or separation (23.8%), followed by household substance abuse (8.9%) and household mental illness (8.1%). Almost one-fifth of students (17.5%) reported SEB symptoms (peer relationship problems in 21.7%, emotional symptoms in 14.6%, conduct problems in 18.3%, hyperactivity in 15%). The prevalence of SHC was also high: more than half of the students experienced at least one subjective health complaint multiple times a week.

Significant associations were found between ACEs and the SEB/SHC reported by students.

The authors concluded stating that adverse childhood experiences, social, emotional, and behavioural symptoms, and SHC are common among Hungarian adolescents. The cumulation of ACEs is associated with a higher number of SEB and SHC symptoms. Therefore, prevention programmes, early recognition, risk reduction, and therapy are needed.

Rizvi and Najma (2017) undertook a study on Unseen Wounds: Understanding the Emotional and Behavioral Correlates of Psychological Abuse in Adolescents. The researchers aimed at analysing the relationship of psychological abuse with emotional and behavioral problems of adolescents. Sample consisted of 300 adolescents with age range 13 to 17 years from both private and public schools. Psychological Maltreatment Experience Scale (Petretic-Jackson, Betz, & Pitman, 1995) and Youth Self- Report Form (Achenbach & Rescorla, 2001) were used to assess study variables. It was hypothesized that psychologically abusive parenting will have significant positive relation with behavioral problems in adolescents. Findings indicated a significant positive correlation between adolescents' perception of psychological abuse (verbal abuse, withholding, terrorizing acts, neglectful, and exploitative acts) by both parents and their emotional behavioral problems. Regression analyses revealed that psychological abuse by both parents was found as significant predictors of internalizing, externalizing, and total problem behaviors. Present research may be a contribution in creating awareness among parents about the problem and may increase and complement the existing knowledge of professionals about damaging effect of parental abuse.

Similarly, Nesheen and Alam (2015) Investigated Emotional Abuse: Agony for Adolescents. The basic aim of the study was to explore the kinds of emotional abuse and

then suggest various strategies to overcome such aspects of life. The study reports a series of factors responsible for the torment among the emotionally abused adolescents or the excruciation they go through. The paper also highlights the role played by parents, teachers and peers in emotional abuse such as shame and humiliation, rejection and ignoring, terrorizing, isolating and corrupting etc. Studies during the last decades have consistently documented impaired cognitive abilities and poor academic achievement along with aggression, irritability, hyper vigilance, suicidal tendencies, paranoia and substance uses behavior among emotionally abused adolescents. If Emotional abuse remains a routine task in the life of an adolescent, it may have long term consequences at every walk of his/her life.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted for the study is correlational research design. Correlational research design is a systematic empirical enquiry in which the researcher tries to establish relationships of variables or establish the association between one variable and the other. The Area of study was Cross River State. Geographically, Cross River State is located in the rain forest of West. Africa. It is found between latitudes $5^{\circ} 53$ and $4^{\circ} 32$ North of the equator and longitude $7^{\circ} 50$ and $9^{\circ} 28$ East of the Greenwich meridian. The State is bounded by, Benue State in the North, in the South by the Atlantic Ocean, on the East by the Republic of Cameroun, and on the West by Abia, Ebonyi and Akwa Ibom States. The total populations of all senior secondary 2 students are 11,194. The sampling technique adopted for the study is the stratified sampling technique. The sample for the study was made up of 610 Senior secondary school two (2) students representing 5% of the population and 31 schools representing 11% of the population and eighteen (18) local government areas. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire designed by the researchers. The instrument titled Child abuse and socio-emotional adjustment

questionnaire (CASEAQ). The questionnaire have two sections. Section A dwelt on items of the sub-variables of child abuse. Section B dwell on items for socio-emotional adjustment. The respondents were required to tick according to His/her choice of response. Items on Likert four points scale was used to measure the different skills. Each item required the respondents to express their opinion under; Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD). The questionnaire was subjected to face and content validity by three experts from the department of Educational foundations. To determine the reliability of the instrument, and its sub-scale a trial testing was done on fifty respondents outside the study area using Cronbach Alpha method of reliability. The reliability estimates ranges from 71-.89. This indicates that the instrument was consistent in measuring what it was expected to measure. The questionnaire was administered in each of the sampled secondary schools. Out of 610 copies of questionnaire administered only six hundred and seven (607) were successfully completed and were used as sample for the study.

Presentation of result

In this section each hypothesis is re-stated, and the result of data analysis carried out to test it is presented. Each hypothesis of the study was tested at .05 level of significance.

Hypothesis one: There is no significant contribution of physical abuse on socio-emotional adjustment of in-school adolescents. The independent variable in this hypothesis is physical abuse; while the dependent variable is socio-emotional adjustment of in-school adolescents. Simple regression analysis was the employed to test this hypothesis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1
Simple regression result of the contribution of physical abuse on socio-emotional adjustment of in-school adolescents

Model	R	R. square	Adjusted R. square	Std error of the estimate		
1	.866(a)	.750	.750	2.25310		
Model	Sum of square	df	Mean square	F	p-value	
Regression	9211.281	1	9211.281	1814.505	.000(a)	
Residual	3071.266	605	5.076			
Total	12282.547	606				
Variables	Unstandardized regression weight B	Standardized regression weight	Beta weight	t	p-value	
(Constant)	5.648	1.155		4.888	.000	
Physical abuse	2.281	.054	.866	42.597	.000	

* Significant at .05 level.

The simple regression analysis of the contribution of physical abuse on the socio-emotional adjustment of in-school adolescents yielded a coefficient of multiple regression (R) of .8662 and a multiple regression R-square (R^2) of .750 and an adjusted R^2 of .750. The adjusted R^2 of .750 indicated that the Physical abuses account for 75.0 % of the variance in socio-emotional adjustment of in-school adolescents in the study area. This finding is a critical indication that physical abuses are relatively high in the area of the study. The F-value of the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) obtained from the regression table was $F = 1814.505$ and the sig. value of .000 (or $p < .05$) at the degree of freedom (df) 1 and 605. The implication of this result is that physical abuse is a significant relate to socio-emotional adjustment of in-school adolescents. The identified equation to understand this relationship was that socio-emotional adjustment of in-school adolescents = $5.648 + 2.281$ (physical abuse).

Hypothesis two: Emotional abuse does not significantly contribute to socio-emotional adjustment of in-school adolescents. The independent variable in this hypothesis is

emotional abuse; while the dependent variable is socio-emotional adjustment of in-school adolescents. Simple regression analysis was employed to test this hypothesis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2
Simple regression result of the contribution of emotional abuse on socio-emotional adjustment of in-school adolescents

Model	R	R. square	Adjusted R. Square	Std error of the estimate		
1	.872(a)	.760	.759	2.20849		
Model	Sum of square	df	Mean square	F	p-value	
Regression	9331.705	1	9331.705	1913.244	.000(a)	
Residual	2950.842	605	4.877			
Total	12282.547	606				
Variables	Unstandardized regression weight B	Standardized regression weight	Beta weight	t	p-value	
(Constant)		4.485	1.152	3.894	.000	
Emotional abuse		2.336	.053	.872	43.741	.000

* Significant at .05 level.

The simple regression analysis of the contribution of emotional abuse on the socio-emotional adjustment of in-school adolescents yielded a coefficient of multiple regression (R) of .872 and a multiple regression R-square (R^2) of .760 and an adjusted R^2 of .759. The adjusted R^2 of .759 indicated that the emotional abuse accounted for 75.9 % of the variance in socio-emotional adjustment of in-school adolescents in the study area. This finding is a critical indication that emotional abuse is relatively high in the area of the study. The F-value of the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) obtained from the regression table was $F = 1913.244$ and the sig. value of .000 (or $p < .05$) at the degree of freedom (df) 1 and 605. The implication of this result is that emotional abuse is significant relate to socio-emotional adjustment of in-school adolescents. The identified equation to understand this relationship was that socio-emotional adjustment of in-school adolescents = $4.485 + 2.336$ (emotional abuse).

Discussion of findings

The result of the first hypothesis revealed that there is a significant contribution of physical abuse on socio-emotional adjustment of in-school adolescents. The finding of this hypothesis is in line with the view of Babamba and Ahman (2021) who showed that all the hypotheses 1 and 2 were rejected. Significant negative influence existed between parents physical abuse and emotional adjustment of students with ($r = -0.567$, $p = 0.000$), parents' physical abuse and academic adjustment of students with ($r = -0.769$, $p = 0.030$). The results of the study indicated that parents' physical abuse has negative influence on emotional and academic adjustment of students' in Secondary Schools. It was therefore recommended through Parent Teachers Association (PTA), that school counselors should continuously sensitize parents on the need to desist from physical abuse because of the negative influence it has on the emotional well being of students. Non-Governmental Organizations should invigorate their efforts on massive campaign against physical abuse. This will make parents to understand the implication of physical assault on their children such as kicking, pushing and torturing, as this produces fearfulness, anxiety, low self-esteem and academic adjustment difficulties. The National and all states' Houses of Assembly should deem it fit to pass the Child Rights Act. Hence, this will give protection to young secondary school students against physical abuse by parents and improved their emotional and academic adjustment.

The result of the second hypothesis revealed that there is a significant contribution of emotional abuse on socio-emotional adjustment of in-school adolescents. The finding of this hypothesis is in line with view of Ishfaq & Kamal (2024) who indicated emotional abuse positively predicted delinquent tendencies and emotional maturity, lying as a personality trait, and physical-verbal aggression mediated this relationship among juveniles and students. A decline in emotional maturity was a stronger predictor of

delinquent tendencies among juveniles, whereas physical-verbal aggression played a stronger role for students. In a conclusive note, the study demonstrates the indirect effects of emotional abuse on delinquent tendencies. This study also highlights the intense effect of emotional abuse on juvenile delinquents' emotional maturity and supports the importance of utilizing positive methods when dealing with adolescents, especially school personnel and clinical psychologists who interact with adolescents with problematic behaviors.

Conclusion

This study provides conclusive evidence that various forms of child maltreatment, including physical abuse and emotional abuse, have a significant impact on the socio-emotional adjustment of in-school adolescents in Cross River State, Nigeria. The findings suggest that these negative experiences can lead to difficulties in socio-emotional adjustment, including increased emotional distress, behavioral problems, and difficulties in forming and maintaining healthy relationships.

This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on child maltreatment and socio-emotional adjustment among adolescents. The findings provide valuable insights for stakeholders seeking to develop effective interventions and programmes to support the socio-emotional adjustment of adolescents who have experienced maltreatment.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made to promote socio-emotional adjustment among in-school adolescents in Cross River State, Nigeria:

- 1 Government should develop and implement programmes to prevent and intervene in cases of physical abuse and emotional abuse among adolescents.

- 2 Government should establish and strengthen social support systems, such as peer support groups, mentorship programmes, and counseling services, to provide adolescents with a safe and supportive environment.
- 3 Government should provide education on healthy relationships, boundaries, and consent to adolescents to promote healthy relationships and prevent abuse.

REFERENCES

- Achenbach, N. & Rescorla, N.** (2001). The Development of Self-Acceptance in Adolescents (Descriptive Study of Grade XI High School Student in Subang) G-COUNS: *Journal Bimbingan dan Konseling* 8 (1) 506
- Alam, F. E. (2019). The Impact of Parental Treatment On Resilience In Adolescents. *Journal of Education and Social Sciences*, 15, (1)
- Atiku, E.R. (2017). Child and Adolescents Socio-Emotional Development within the Context of School *Child and Adolescent Mental Health* 11. (1) Retrieved from www.acamh.onlinelibrary.wiley.com on the 8/8/2024
- Baiba, M. 1, Stokenberga L., Damberga L., Inga S. Simões, C. Lebre A. Canha, L. Santos, M. Santos, A., Fonseca, A. M., Santos, D., Gaspar de Matos, M. Conte, E. Agliati, A. Cavioni V., Gandellini, S. Grazzani, I. Ornaghi V, & Camilleri, L. (2023). Adolescent social emotional skills, resilience and behavioral problems during the COVID-19 pandemic: A longitudinal study in three European Countries Retrieved from *Frontiers in Psychiatry* 1;13:942692. doi: 10.3389/fpsy.2022.942692E12/5/2025 on the 12/3/2025
- Cohen, J. R. & Thakur, H., (2019). Developmental consequences of emotional abuse and neglect in vulnerable adolescents: A multi-informant, multi-wave study. *Child Abuse and Neglect* 125,(10) 1-13
- Howe, K. (2017). Recognizing Types of Child Abuse and How to Respond. Retrieved from www.healthline.com/health/mental health on the 24/8/2024
- Ishfaq, N., & Anila K., (2024) Emotional Abuse to Delinquent Tendencies: Comparative Study on Juveniles and Students in Punjab, Pakistan. *Korean Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*; 36(1): 36-46
- Khalid, K. A., (2023). Child abuse and automatic emotion regulation in children and adolescents. *Development and Psychopathology* 35,(1) 157-167
- Lätsch, D. C., Nett, J. C., & Oliver, H. O. (2020). Poly-Victimization and Its Relationship with Emotional and Social Adjustment in Adolescence: Evidence from a National Survey in Switzerland. *Psychology of Violence*, 7,(1)1-11
- Marín, I, A. Pérez-Albéniz, A. Beatriz Lucas-Molina, B. Valderrey, V. M, & Fonseca-Pedrero, E. (2022). Bullying in adolescence: Impact on socioemotional and behavioral adjustment. *Asian Journal of Basic Science & Research (AJBSR)* Vo 1, (1) 27-35,
- Nesheen, F., & Alam, S., (2015), Emotional Abuse: Agony for Adolescents *The International Journal of Indian Psychology* 2, (3) 2349-3429
- Oladunmoye, E. O., Sashimi, J. E. & Roseann, M. (2024). Childhood Trauma and Adolescents violent Behaviour: A Regression Analysis of Emotional, Physical

- Abuse, Neglect, and Witnessing Domestic Violence. *ISAR journal of multidisciplinary Research and studies*, 2(12),1-7
- Omoponle, H. E., & Dwarika, V. (2024). Improving Psychological Adjustment of the Sexually Abused In-school Adolescents in Nigeria: The Roles of Emotional Stability, Social Anxiety, and Self-Esteem. *E-Journal of Humanities, Arts and*
- Peterson, T. (2021). What Is Mental Wellbeing? Definition and Examples, Healthy Place. Retrieved on Retrieved on from <https://www.healthyplace.com/self-help/self-help-information/what-mental-wellbeing-definition-and-examples> On the 19/8/2024
- Rizvi, M. B., Connects, G. P., & Rabiner, J. (2023). New York State Child Abuse, Maltreatment, and Neglect *Pakistan Journal of Psychological Research*, 32,(2)2525-543
- Rode, D. Rode. & Januszek., (2019)The Impact of Physical Abuse & Exposure to Parental IPV on Young Adolescents in Poland: a Clinical Assessment and Comparison of Psychological Outcomes. *Journal of Family* 34, 435–447
- Su, Y., Meng, X., & D'Arcy, C. (2022).The relationship between childhood maltreatment and mental health problems: coping strategies and social support act as mediators *BMCPsychiatry* 22, (359).
- Taylor, R. D., Oberle, E., Durlak, J. A., & Weissberg, R. P. (2017). Promoting positive youth development through school-based social and emotional learning interventions: a meta-analysis of follow-up effects. *Child Dev.* 88, 1156–1171. doi: 10.1111/cdev.12864.
- Thangavel T. (2021). A study on adolescents emotional adjustment in Perambalur District. Retrieved from: on the 1/7/2025.
- Vladimír, L. Petriková F. & Žiaková E.(2021).Adolescents self-concept in the context of risk behaviour and self-care *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth* 26,(1) 57-70.
- Zhou, X. & Zhen, R. (2022). How do physical and emotional abuse affect depression and problematic behaviors in adolescents? The roles of emotional regulation and anger *International Journal of Science and Research (IJSR)* 5 (10).