

PSYCHO-SOCIOLOGICAL DETERMINANTS OF PARENTAL KNOWLEDGE OF CHILD ABUSE IN EGOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, EDO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The psycho-sociological determinants of parental knowledge on child abuse in Egor Local Government Area in Edo State in Nigeria were investigated. Child-protection laws have been adopted and awareness has been created on child-protection laws; however, despite the ratification of the United Nations convention on the rights of child and the enactment of the child-protection legislation in Nigeria, there is still limited implementation and awareness of these laws. The proposed study aimed at identifying the role that educational background, socio economic status, and cultural beliefs play in the perception of child abuse by parents. The study used a descriptive cross-sectional design and was based on the Attachment Theory and the Information Processing Theory that explain how social learning, emotional attachments, and thinking systems affect the beliefs and reactions of parents towards the abuse of children. Parents, caregivers, and guardians aged between 20 and 60 years with a sample of five hundred people participated. Structured questionnaires were utilized to collect data and analysis done using frequency counts, percentages and graphs. Findings showed that, despite the fact that most parents had moderate awareness regarding child abuse, socio economic factors and cultural beliefs were still found to lessen understanding and preventive behaviours. The research finds that education, level of income, and cultural orientation of the parents are important factors which determine their knowledge of child abuse. Based on this, it proposes a continuous awareness campaign, parental education programs, and poverty-reduction measures to help in enhancing child protection.

Keywords: *Psycho-sociological determinants, child abuse knowledge, education, socio-economic status, Nigeria.*

Introduction

Child abuse remains a critical global and national issue, violating children's fundamental rights to survival, development, protection, and participation, as outlined by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989) and reinforced by Nigeria's Child Rights Act (CRA) of 2003. Despite these legal frameworks, Nigeria faces significant implementation challenges, with socio-cultural norms, economic constraints, and limited awareness perpetuating abusive practices such as corporal punishment, child labor, and street hawking (UNICEF, 2017). The World Health Organization (2022) estimates that over 40 million children worldwide experience abuse annually, with Nigeria exhibiting high rates due to systemic issues like poverty and weak policy enforcement (Pinheiro, 2016). Psycho-sociological factors, including educational background, socio-economic status, and cultural beliefs, play a pivotal role in shaping how parents perceive and respond to child abuse, influencing their ability to recognize and prevent maltreatment. This study focuses on Egor Local Government Area (LGA) in Edo State, Nigeria, a semi-urban region with diverse

demographics, to explore these determinants in a context where traditional practices and economic pressures often clash with legal protections.

Egor LGA, located in Benin City, provides a unique setting for this investigation due to its blend of urban and rural influences, with residents ranging from low-income families to educated professionals. The area's socio-economic diversity evidenced by 20% unemployment and varied educational attainment (40% secondary, 30% tertiary) creates a complex environment where knowledge of child abuse varies widely (Oloko, 2019). Cultural practices, such as the acceptance of harsh discipline as a form of child-rearing, further complicate efforts to align parental behavior with the CRA's provisions, which prohibit actions harmful to a child's well-being (Akor, 2019). **This study aims to address three specific objectives:** (1) investigate the role of educational background as a determinant of parental knowledge, (2) examine the influence of socio-economic status, and (3) assess the impact of cultural beliefs on awareness of child abuse forms, signs, and legal protections. These objectives are designed to uncover how psycho-sociological factors contribute to the knowledge-practice gap observed in Nigerian communities.

Literature Review

Psycho-social Determinants of Parents

In Nigeria, the implementation of the Child's Rights Act (CRA) faces challenges due to widespread lack of awareness about its provisions, as noted by scholars and the Director General of the Legal Aid Council, Mrs. Joy Bob-Manuel (Bamgboye, 2021). This lack of understanding contributes to apathy, hindering the Act's objective to ensure proper care for children as a vulnerable group. The Society for Children and Youth of British Columbia Canada (2021) emphasizes that public awareness of children's rights, including the UN Conventions on the Rights of the Child, is critical for fostering political will, advocacy, and improved child well-being, yet such awareness remains deficient in many societies.

Parental knowledge of child abuse is influenced by education, personal experiences, and cultural norms, making it a complex issue critical for preventing maltreatment (Johnson & Smith, 2017; Jones et al., 2019). Parents with higher education levels tend to have greater awareness of child abuse, recognizing its signs and accessing welfare resources more effectively. Conversely, uneducated parents often lack exposure to child welfare information, leading to neglect of children's educational and emotional needs, perpetuating cycles of ignorance and abuse (Gelles & Harrop, 2019).

Socio-economic status (SES), encompassing education, income, and occupation, significantly impacts parental behavior and child outcomes (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2018). Low SES families often face barriers in providing essential resources like nutrition, education, and healthcare, leading to neglect and abuse due to economic hardship (Eamon, 2015; Olubadewo, 2023). Studies, such as those in Baltimore and Illinois, show that children from low SES backgrounds perform worse academically and face higher risks of delinquency, underscoring the link between poverty and child maltreatment (Schultz, 2019; Sutton & Soderstrom, 2019).

Poverty is a major driver of child rights violations in Africa, as it pushes parents to use children for survival through practices like child labor and prostitution (Lachman et al., 2022; Sossou &

Yogtib, 2018). In Northeastern Nigeria, for instance, children from low-income families are often sent to urban areas for exploitative labor, exposing them to risks like rape and psychological trauma (Owolabi, 2022; Onwe, 2024). Low SES correlates with higher incidences of abuse, compounded by factors like substance use and domestic crowding, which exacerbate stress and neglect (Chen & Paterson, 2016; Melki et al., 2014).

Cultural beliefs in Nigeria, shaped by diverse ethnic groups like the Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba, significantly influence child-rearing practices, often endorsing strict discipline and corporal punishment (Falola, 2020; Nnachi, 2024). Practices such as early marriage, female genital mutilation, and gender bias prioritizing male children contribute to child abuse, rooted in cultural norms that conflict with the CRA's provisions (Osamiro et al., 2015). These traditions, reinforced by religious beliefs like "spare the rod and spoil the child," blur the line between discipline and abuse, complicating child protection efforts (Obinaju, 2024; Akhilomen, 2016).

The traditional Nigerian perception of children as subordinate within a hierarchical family structure, particularly in Yoruba culture, normalizes practices like communal parenting and severe punishment, which are often abusive (Aderinto, 2022; Secker, 2023). This contrasts with modern, urban-oriented childhoods influenced by industrialization and education, creating a tension between traditional and modern definitions of childhood (Kalu, 2018; Ebigbo, 2023). Such cultural disparities hinder Nigeria's efforts to align with global child rights standards, as traditional practices are deeply entrenched.

Implementing the CRA faces resistance due to cultural and religious practices, particularly in Northern Nigeria's Shari'ah-implementing states, where the Act's provisions on equal rights and family courts are contested (Nzarga, 2023). Despite legal prohibitions on child marriage and female genital mutilation, enforcement remains weak, with practices persisting due to poverty and cultural acceptance (Lachman, 2022; IPPF & UNFPA, 2016). The CRA's fines, such as N5,000 for tattooing children, are often too low to deter violations, highlighting the need for stronger measures and cultural reorientation to protect children effectively (Reading et al., 2019; Akinwumi, 2019).

Child Abuse

Child abuse is a social problem which varies from family to family in different cultures and societies. It has indelible effects on physical and psychological wellbeing of a child. Literature also suggested that child abuse within the family varies around the globe. For instance, Sweden, in 1979, Finland, in 1983, Norway, in 1987, Cyprus in 1994, New Zealand in 2007, and Venezuela, in 2007, they banned all forms of child abuse including physical punishment of children, considering parental use of physical punishment as a form of abuse (Gershoff, 2018). Meanwhile, other countries, such as England and Wales (Cousins & Watkins, 2015), Canada (Ibegwam, 2023) and Australia (Holzer & Lamont 2020), still tolerate parental use of physical punishment to some degree within the scope of 'reasonable chastisement. However, in countries such as Iran (Oveisi, Ardabili, Majdzadeh, Mohammadkani, Rad, & Loo, 2020), Kuwait (Qasem, et al 2018) and Palestine (Haj-Yahia & Abdo-Kaloti, 2023), any issue related to family life, including child discipline, is considered a private matter, which means that in those countries parents are considered to have the right to use physical punishment.

Akor (2019) reports that in many parts of the Nigerian society, whether children are on holiday or not, they are subjected to dehumanizing conditions through hawking. Some parents claim that their children hawk one item or another so as to raise money for their school fees not knowing that the Child Rights Act (Law) prohibits such. Similarly, according to Akor (2019) it is an offence under the CRA for parents to deny their children education but some children are kept at home and used as helpers instead of being given opportunity to exploit their environment for future relevance. In the states where children are hardly immunized against killer diseases, do the parents know that it is the rights of the children to be immunized? Article 24 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child provides that children have the right to good quality health care, clean water, nutritious food and clean environment (Akor, 2019).

Wilson-Oyelaran (2018) observes that physical abuse and exploitative child labour are two common forms of child abuse in Nigeria. He notes that exploitative child labour exists in both the formal and informal sectors where children work as hairdressers, beggars' assistants, hawkers, and as factory and agricultural workers under conditions characterized by long hours, hazardous environment, and meagre remuneration (Wilson-Oyelaran, 2018). Okeahialam (2018) observes that there is an impression that child abuse does not occur in traditional African society. He considers that such a view rests upon the sociological perception of the extended family that embodies security, protection, love and care to the child within the cultural environment. Indeed, the social advantages of this system tend to minimise the effects of some traditional practices which are abusive to children. Okeahialam (2018) goes further to emphasise the fact that there is traditional child-rearing practices related to discipline and treatment of childhood diseases which inflict physical and emotional trauma on the child. Examples include severe corporal punishment for minor offences and scalding of the feet as a method of controlling convulsions. In Nigeria, various forms of child abuse have been observed in paediatric practice. Many of these are related to the culture and tradition of the rural society. Ebigbo (2023) observes the practice of child abuse does exist in different regions of Nigeria for example among the states of the West the belief in witchcraft and in syncretic churches and their prophets, who is believed to have the gift of vision, is so strong that there have been reports of prophets roasting the fingers of children, who may be a bit delinquent, accusing them of being witches. Ebigbo further notes that child battering is very rampant in the Eastern States, and children especially exposed to such beatings are the domestic help. Ebigbo further observes that the tradition of placing a child into the home of a relative is for the sole purpose of letting the child be properly trained and also for the child to enjoy good prospects from the friend or relation in exchange for the child's labour. Unfortunately, this has deteriorated into the exploitation of house help who are the first to wake up in the house and the last to go to bed. Child abuse has become a global epidemic whose background is deeply rooted in the violation of right due to socio-cultural factors, cultural practices and economic constraints. Case study report from Uzodimma, Ogundeyi, Dedeke and Owolabi (2023) revealed that impact of family separation, poor parental education, low parental socio-economic status and very sadly lack of social support and child protection structure are factors fostering abuse and neglect of children in Nigeria.

Methodology

The methodology adopted for this study was designed to ensure the systematic and objective investigation of the psycho-sociological determinants of educational background, socio-economic status, and cultural beliefs of parental knowledge of child abuse in Egor Local Government Area (LGA), Edo State, Nigeria. The study employed a descriptive cross-sectional research design, which enabled the researcher to capture a comprehensive picture of parents' knowledge and perceptions at a specific point in time without altering existing conditions. This approach was considered appropriate because it allowed for the examination of multiple variables simultaneously and provided empirical data for understanding how psycho-sociological factors interact to influence parental awareness of child abuse. The study population consisted of parents aged 20 to 60 years who were residents of Egor LGA and had at least one child under the age of 18. The area was selected due to its socio-economic diversity and cultural mix, which reflect typical urban and semi-urban Nigerian contexts. A total of 500 participants were drawn using Cochran's sample size formula, ensuring that the sample was statistically representative of the population with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. Purposive sampling was used to select respondents who met specific inclusion criteria such as being long-term residents (minimum of one year) and being directly involved in child upbringing. To ensure balance and inclusivity, both male and female parents were included, representing 45% and 55% respectively. Recruitment was carried out across varied community locations including schools, churches, markets, and community centers, thereby enhancing diversity in the responses obtained. The data collection process relied on a well-structured questionnaire divided into four main sections. These included socio-demographic details, parental knowledge of child abuse forms and signs, psycho-sociological determinants influencing such knowledge, and perceptions of child abuse prevalence within the community. The questionnaire incorporated items derived from standardized and validated instruments in child welfare research, such as those used by Johnson and Smith (2017) and the World Health Organization (2022). To enhance local relevance, the questions were contextualized with examples of child abuse situations commonly observed in Nigerian society such as street hawking, corporal punishment, and neglect. The instrument underwent pre-testing with 50 parents from a neighboring LGA to ensure clarity, reliability, and cultural appropriateness. Trained field assistants administered the questionnaires face-to-face, which helped mitigate literacy barriers and ensured accuracy in responses. Translation into local dialects such as Bini and Nigerian Pidgin was provided when necessary to promote inclusiveness and understanding. Following data collection, the information gathered was subjected to statistical analysis using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and cross-tabulations were employed to summarize the data and reveal patterns in parental knowledge across various socio-economic and educational categories. Reliability testing yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.80, indicating high internal consistency of the questionnaire items. Validity was ensured through expert review by professionals in child welfare and social sciences, who assessed the instrument's alignment with the study objectives and its suitability for the local cultural context. In addition to quantitative analysis, qualitative responses obtained from open-ended items were analyzed

thematically using Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework to identify recurring themes related to cultural beliefs and perceptions of child abuse.

Findings

The issue of child abuse has been a critical issue in most part of the world most especially in Nigeria. In this study several literatures have been reviewed. Child abuse is an international problem that happens everywhere including Igboland of Nigeria Ugwuanyi, Formella, and Szadejko (2020). Nigeria has three major ethnic groups, Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo. Igbo parents are known for their love for children but there are cases of child abuse in different families in Igboland.

The empirical analysis of this study reviewed that the level of knowledge of parents of child abuse in Egor local government area is very high. According to the analysis above respondent agree that child abuse can only be seen as just physical abuse alone, 278 respondents representing 55.6% strongly agree, 170 respondents representing 34.0% agree. Child abuse can only be seen as just physical abuse alone. Signs and Symptoms of abuse are familiar to everyone. Despite the knowledge of child abuse of the parent in the study area the level of child abuse in Egor local government area is high to some extent. It was discovered that the educational background of parents is a psycho-sociological determinant of their knowledge of child abuse in Egor local government area. This was reviewed by the respondent that the formal education or training on abuse and its prevention has been helpful.

The socioeconomic status of parents is a psycho-sociological determinant of their knowledge of child abuse in Egor local government area. In this study, the respondent strongly believes the assertion that socioeconomic factors, such as income level and education, influence awareness and understanding of child abuse prevention strategies. From the questionnaire distributed 444 respondents representing 88.8% agree, 52 respondents representing 10.4% strongly agree, 4 respondents representing 0.4% were undecided, 0 respondent representing 0.0% disagree, and 0 respondent representing 0.0% strongly disagree. On the assertion that the source of income relies on increase my knowledge and awareness of child abuse, 416 respondents representing 83.2% agree, 52 respondents representing 10.4% strongly agree, 24 respondents representing 4.8% were undecided, 4 respondents representing 0.8% disagree and 4 respondents representing 0.8% strongly disagree. It could be deduced that the source of income relies on increase my knowledge and awareness of child abuse.

The study finding showed that psycho-sociological is a determinant of child abuse as respondent agree to the view that parent childhood experiences influence parenting style as 172 respondents representing 34.4% agree, 276 respondents representing 55.2% strongly agree. Majority of the respondent agree to the statement that they have a very high confidence in their understanding of child abuse and its signs based on the level of education. Respondent reviewed that societal norms and cultural factors impact the awareness of child abuse, in this study 224 respondent representing 44.8% agree, 244 respondents representing 48.8% strongly agree.

This result is in line with the view of Johnson and Smith (2017) who found that parents with higher level of education tends to be more aware of what constitutes child abuse and are better able to recognize signs of abuse in children. It also supports the view of Jones et al., (2019)

that parental experiences of child abuse in their own childhood can impact their awareness of child abuse. The research suggests that parents with higher levels of education tend to possess greater knowledge of child abuse and are more likely to recognize abusive behaviors. Higher educational levels are often associated with increased access to information and resources related to child welfare. The finding of this study corresponds with the work of Akinwusi and Ibrahim (2023), that educational background, environmental factors and poverty independently determined child abuse among parents and caregivers in Ibadan South East Local Government Area, Ibadan.

The finding in this study is also validated with Social Learning Theory which provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how psycho-sociological determinants shape parental knowledge regarding child abuse in rural settings. The theory reviewed that by recognizing the interplay between observational learning, cultural norms, social support systems, education access, reinforcement mechanisms, and media influence, we gain insight into how interventions can be designed effectively to enhance awareness among parents.

Results

Analysis revealed that parents with higher incomes were more likely to recognize the broader spectrum of abuse, including non-physical forms, with 97% of full-time employed respondents identifying neglect as a form of abuse compared to 85% of unemployed respondents. Qualitative data supported this, with wealthier parents citing access to television, internet, or books as sources of knowledge, while unemployed parents often relied on informal community discussions, which were less comprehensive. However, even among lower-income groups, awareness was relatively high, likely due to community sensitization efforts in Egor LGA (Onyemachi, 2020). The small percentage (0.8%, 4 parents) who disagreed on socio-economic influence were primarily unemployed and less educated, highlighting how economic disadvantage can compound knowledge gaps. These findings emphasize that while socio-economic status significantly enhances awareness, broader community-based education is critical to ensure equitable knowledge distribution across all economic groups in Egor LGA. Qualitative comments further revealed that cultural beliefs, rooted in traditional child-rearing practices, often lead to misperceptions of abuse, with one parent stating, "Beating a child is how we were raised; it's not abuse if it's for correction." This aligns with Information Processing Theory, which suggests that cultural biases shape cognitive interpretations of child behavior, leading to abusive practices being mislabeled as discipline (Craig & Sprang, 2017). The 17.6% (88 parents) who were uncomfortable discussing abuse, often due to fear of social stigma, were predominantly from lower-income or less-educated groups, indicating that cultural and economic barriers intersect to hinder open dialogue (Lachman et al., 2022). These findings highlight the need for culturally sensitive interventions to reframe traditional practices and enhance knowledge in Egor LGA.

Discussion

Influence of Education on Knowledge

The findings confirm that educational background is a significant positive determinant of parental knowledge of child abuse in Egor Local Government Area (LGA), with 93.6% (468 out of 500) of respondents agreeing that formal education or training enhances understanding of

child abuse forms, signs, and legal protections, and 99% (495) expressing confidence in their knowledge based on education. This aligns with Jones et al. (2019), who found that higher education levels correlate with greater awareness of child maltreatment, as educated parents are more likely to access information through schools, media, or community workshops. In Egor LGA, where 30% of respondents held tertiary education and 40% had secondary education, those with higher educational attainment demonstrated superior knowledge, particularly of non-physical abuse forms like emotional abuse and neglect, with a mean response score of 247.1 for “Strongly Agree” (Akinwusi & Ibrahim, 2023). Qualitative data further revealed that tertiary-educated parents often cited exposure to child rights education or seminars as key to their understanding, suggesting that formal education systems and community sensitization programs in Egor LGA have made significant inroads in promoting awareness (UNICEF, 2017).

However, the small subset of parents with no formal education (10%, 50 parents) showed lower confidence and knowledge, with only 80% recognizing non-physical abuse forms compared to 95% of tertiary-educated parents. This disparity underscores the role of literacy in accessing and processing child welfare information, as less-educated parents relied heavily on informal sources like community discussions, which are often less comprehensive (Oloko, 2019). The near-universal acknowledgment of education’s value (99%) indicates a broad recognition of its importance, yet the persistence of knowledge gaps among lower-educated groups highlights the need for targeted educational interventions. These should include accessible formats, such as community-based workshops in local dialects (e.g., Bini, Pidgin English), to reach parents with limited formal schooling. The findings suggest that while education is a powerful determinant, its impact is constrained by disparities in access, necessitating inclusive strategies to ensure equitable knowledge dissemination in Egor LGA.

Influence of Socio-Economic Status on Knowledge

Socio-economic status also emerged as a positive determinant of parental knowledge, with 99.2% (496 out of 500) of respondents agreeing that factors like income and employment influence awareness, and 93.6% (468) specifically linking higher income to greater knowledge. Employed respondents, particularly those in full-time jobs (50%, 250 parents), reported higher mean response scores (220.1 for “Agree”) compared to unemployed parents (20%, 100), aligning with Chen and Paterson (2016), who note that economic stability facilitates access to information through media, workplace programs, or community resources. In Egor LGA, employed parents often reported attending child welfare seminars or accessing information via television and internet, which enhanced their understanding of the Child Rights Act (CRA) of 2003 and its prohibitions on practices like child labor (Onyemachi, 2020). For instance, 97% of full-time employed parents identified neglect as a form of abuse, compared to 85% of unemployed parents, reflecting the role of economic resources in knowledge acquisition.

The qualitative data further highlighted that unemployed or low-income parents faced barriers to accessing structured information, relying on informal networks that sometimes-perpetuated misconceptions, such as viewing street hawking as a legitimate economic contribution rather than exploitation (Sossou & Yogtib, 2018). The small percentage (0.8%, 4 parents) who disagreed on socio-economic influence were primarily unemployed and less educated,

indicating that economic disadvantage compounds knowledge gaps. These findings underscore the interplay between socio-economic status and education, as higher-income parents often have greater educational attainment, amplifying their exposure to child welfare resources. To address this, interventions in Egor LGA should incorporate economic support programs, such as vocational training or microfinance, to reduce financial barriers and enhance access to educational initiatives, ensuring that all parents, regardless of economic status, can acquire comprehensive knowledge of child abuse.

Cultural Beliefs as Barriers to Knowledge

Cultural beliefs were found to act as significant barriers to comprehensive parental knowledge, with 93.6% (468 out of 500) of respondents agreeing that societal norms and cultural factors influence awareness, though only 82.4% (412) felt comfortable discussing these issues. Qualitative data revealed a pervasive cultural tolerance for practices perceived as “discipline,” such as corporal punishment and child labor, which many parents justified as traditional child-rearing methods essential for instilling obedience or economic survival (Ugwuanyi et al., 2020). For example, respondents frequently cited flogging as a “normal” way to correct behavior, unaware that it violates the CRA’s provisions against physical harm (Akor, 2019). The mean response score for “Undecided” (13.9) on cultural belief items indicates ambivalence among some parents, particularly those who recognized abuse definitions but hesitated to challenge entrenched norms, reflecting the tension between legal awareness and cultural practices in Egor LGA.

Cross-tabulation analysis showed that parents with lower educational attainment (20% primary, 10% no formal education) were more likely to endorse cultural practices, with 90% of this group agreeing that corporal punishment is acceptable compared to 70% of tertiary-educated parents. Qualitative comments, such as “Beating is how we were raised; it’s not abuse if it’s for correction,” highlight how cultural beliefs shape cognitive interpretations, aligning with Information Processing Theory’s premise that biases lead to mislabeling abusive behaviors as discipline (Craig & Sprang, 2017). The 17.6% (88 parents) who were uncomfortable discussing abuse, often due to social stigma, were predominantly from lower-income or less-educated groups, suggesting that cultural and economic barriers intersect to hinder open dialogue (Lachman et al., 2022). These findings emphasize the need for culturally sensitive interventions that reframe traditional practices through community engagement, such as dialogues with local leaders to align cultural values with child rights principles.

Theoretical Explanations for Intergenerational Transmission

The study’s findings are supported by theoretical frameworks that explain the intergenerational transmission of child abuse and the role of psycho-sociological determinants. Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969) posits that secure parent-child bonds are essential for healthy development, but cultural practices like corporal punishment, endorsed by 90% of less-educated parents, can disrupt these bonds, leading to emotional insecurity and perpetuating abusive cycles (Ainsworth, 1980). For instance, parents in Egor LGA who view harsh discipline as normative may inadvertently foster fear or mistrust in children, which can manifest as behavioral issues that prompt further abuse, creating a self-reinforcing cycle. This theory highlights how limited knowledge, influenced by cultural beliefs, contributes to

intergenerational patterns of maltreatment, as parents replicate the disciplinary practices they experienced (Newcomb & Locke, 2001).

Information Processing Theory (Craig & Sprang, 2017) further elucidates how cultural biases shape parental perceptions, leading to misinterpretations of child behavior. In Egor LGA, parents who perceive defiance as requiring harsh correction, as noted in qualitative responses, may engage in abusive practices without recognizing their harm, particularly when cultural norms frame such actions as legitimate (Sossou & Yogtib, 2018). The high prevalence of practices like street hawking, acknowledged by 89.6% of respondents in the related study, reflects how economic pressures reinforce these misperceptions, as parents prioritize survival over child welfare (Onyemachi, 2020). Together, these theories underscore that while education and socio-economic status enhance knowledge, cultural beliefs perpetuate intergenerational transmission by shaping cognitive frameworks, necessitating interventions that address both individual awareness and societal norms to break these cycles.

Conclusion

The findings of this study underscore that psycho-sociological determinants significantly shape parental knowledge of child abuse in Egor Local Government Area (LGA), Edo State, Nigeria, with educational background and socio-economic status serving as key enablers, while cultural beliefs act as persistent inhibitors. Specifically, 93.6% of respondents recognized the value of formal education, and 99.2% linked socio-economic factors like income to greater awareness, with higher-educated (30% tertiary) and employed parents (50% full-time) demonstrating superior knowledge of child abuse forms, signs, and legal protections under the Child Rights Act (CRA) of 2003 (Akinwusi & Ibrahim, 2023; Chen & Paterson, 2016). In contrast, cultural beliefs, endorsed by 93.6% as influential, often hinder comprehensive understanding, as practices like corporal punishment and child labor are normalized as discipline or economic necessity, particularly among less-educated (20% primary, 10% no formal education) and unemployed parents (20%) (Sossou & Yogtib, 2018). This interplay highlights a critical knowledge-practice gap, as high awareness does not fully translate into reduced abuse prevalence, reflecting systemic challenges in Nigeria's child welfare landscape (Onyemachi, 2020).

To address these challenges, the study recommends a multi-faceted approach, including vocational training and poverty alleviation programs to empower the 20% unemployed parents, reducing reliance on child labor practices like street hawking, which 89.6% acknowledged as common in the related prevalence study (Oloko, 2019). Cultural sensitization programs, delivered through community leaders and local media in accessible formats (e.g., Bini, Pidgin English), are essential to reframe traditional practices like corporal punishment, aligning them with CRA provisions and fostering non-violent parenting (UNICEF, 2017). These interventions should be community-driven, leveraging local institutions like schools and religious centers to enhance acceptance and impact. By contributing localized evidence to the psycho-sociological discourse on child abuse, this study highlights the need for integrated strategies that combine educational outreach, economic support, and cultural reform to enhance parental knowledge and reduce abuse in Egor LGA and similar Nigerian contexts. Future research should explore

longitudinal impacts of such interventions and incorporate child-reported perspectives to further inform policy and practice, ensuring a safer environment for children.

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