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## **Note From the Editor-in-Chief**

**T**he outburst of information superhighway has sharpened the knowledge society, especially in the area of research, considering the critical role of research in the academic world. It has therefore become imperative for professionals in the academic world to adapt to the ICT bound environment with innovativeness in research, including the quality of research blue-print; its visibility and above all, the appropriateness of issues raised in addressing the problems in today's contemporary global society.

The International Journal of Vocational Education (IJOVED), an annual publication of the Department of Vocational Education publishes issue-based research in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and general education. This edition is unique, its quality and content leave no one in doubt, and purposes to build in the minds of would-be readers across academic disciplines and organisations factual knowledge that would further develop the academic community. I strongly recommend this publication to academic libraries within and outside vocational education.

Assoc. Professor Isaac Okeme  
Editor-in-Chief

## **Editor s Note**

**T**his edition of International Journal of Vocational Education (IJOVED), Volume 11, No. 1, November 2021 is unique, drawing contributions across institutions and across disciplines as well as across border. Of course, we are in an era where globalisation and digitalisation combine to ease research activities. Faculty members are therefore on advantage for collaborative research.

This Journal addresses concerns in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and other related disciplines in line with the demands of the 21st Century, home-grown demands of Nigeria's economy, institutional goals and individual aspirations in an era of global competitiveness. It is pertinent to draw the attention of our esteemed authors that they take responsibility of all rules and considerations pertaining to publication of this magnitude. Creative Commons copyright licenses and tools apply, thereby creating a balance in the traditional 'all right reserved' that copyright law creates, which is why all authors completed and returned the Creative Common open access license form.

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# INFLUENCE OF CHILD ABUSE ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN HOME ECONOMICS IN CALABAR SOUTH, CROSS RIVER STATE

Ann E. Dijeh  
Home Economics Education  
Department Of Vocational Education  
Faculty Of Vocational And Science Education

Mercy F. Emanson  
Home Economics Education  
Department Of Vocational Education  
Faculty Of Vocational And Science Education

## Abstract

This study investigated the influence of child abuse on the academic performance of students in Home Economics in Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State. The study achieved four objectives, where four research questions were raised and four null hypotheses tested at .05 levels of significance. The survey research design was adopted for the study carried out in Calabar South with a population of 1,215 junior secondary school students from seven public schools in Calabar South Local Government Area. Simple random sampling technique was used to select a sample of 200 respondents for the study. A 20-item questionnaire drawn on a four-point scale was used alongside a 20-item achievement test in Home Economics. Findings are that child neglect, child emotional abuse, child labour and child physical abuse significantly relate to students' academic performance in Home Economics. Based on the finding of the study, it was concluded that child neglect, physical abuse, child labour and emotional abuse are factors that can enhance academic performance. It is therefore recommended Cross River State Government should make provisions for children being abused and penalties to be meted on those involved in child abuse. This reduces the rate of child abuse and enhances

## Introduction

Children are the prime importance in the family throughout history and in all societies of the world. The family typically provides security and protection for the young children. Child abuse has become an apparent endless and vicious cycle that hurts the image of the country and the dignity of those involved. Child abuse can occur in the child's home or in the originations, schools or communities the child interacts with. There are untold stories of the varieties of violence against children like child emotional abuse, child neglect, physical abuse, ritual, torture, and infanticide and child solidarism. Others are child trafficking, labor and other forms of cruelties. It has also been observed that many malnourished, weak and unkempt children are traded away by parents for economic purposes or as a sheer means of getting rid of them.

According to the international journal of child abuse and neglect (2018), child abuse is any

recent act which result in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation, an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm". Therefore, child abuse can be caused by lack of parental care; other factors include unemployment, poverty, marital conflicts and polygamous homes. Denga (2015) also observed that child abuse is exposing children to painful and unwarranted suffering knowingly or unknowingly. She continues that both male and female are abused in some cases by their parents, guardians, teachers, peers and the society in various forms.

In Nigeria and other African countries, children born with mental or physical challenges are seen as bad luck. The physical and mentally challenged children may be hidden or kept at the back of the house out of view by visitors. They are usually denied their freedom of access to school and play as well as being seen and interacted with like other child in the home. It is a form of abuse, neglect and rejection of the child that cannot be bought from the market (Denga, 2017). Thus, the physically challenged child is not only stigmatized and discriminated by society but also psychologically and emotionally depressed.

Child abuse deprives a nation or community the opportunities of developing its citizens' full potential and benefiting from such talent for the need manpower necessary for national development. Many children who have been abused in any form develop some sort of psychological issue. These issues may include anxiety, depression, eating disorder, co-dependency or even lack of human connections. There is also a slight tendency for children who have been abused to become child abusers themselves. Hence, the greatest problem of child abuse is to deny the child the right to education for proper personality development. It is possible that those perpetuating the crimes in society at large may be ignorant and may not have the right perception of the problem of abuse and its effects on the academic performance of children. It is also possible that those who are enlightened (educated enough) may be taking in this practice, perhaps deliberately or ignorantly.

Many dimensions of child abuse are observed in Cross River state and this disturbs the mind of many people into feel that there is so much advancement in human civilization, therefore, child abuse should be a thing of the past. The researcher is therefore interested in studying the influence of child abuse on the academic performance of secondary school students in Home Economics in Calabar South Local Government Area, Cross River state, Nigeria.

A study as this is better understood when backed with theories; therefore, the "Family system theory" by Dr. Murray Bowen (1990) and the "Social learning theory" by Bundura (1977), Skinner (1997) and Paulon (1927) were reviewed in view of understanding their implications for handling child abuse and their academic performance in home economics. This theory explains that actions of a family member cannot be understood in isolation but must be examined within the context of the family. Many situations that take place within the family leads to strong abuse and should be resolved as soon as possible. Family that experience some of these severe life stressors such as enduring illness, unemployment, financial problems and relational problems within the family unit usually have a higher rate of child abuse than families without such stressors, Crosson-Towner (2014). Family system theory is significant to this study as it reveals that the challenges that persist in the family especially such that reduces the level of care from parents to children are tendencies

that may result to child neglect and abuse. The parents will to some extent expose their children to harsh environment and labour in quest to provide support to the family. This theory holds that family background determines the extent of child abuse in the society. Proponents of the social learning theory are of the view that human behaviour is as a result of interplay between the inner processes and the environmental forces. Bandura (1977) further opines that a part of what a person learns is through imitation or modelling and that learning takes place in a social situation. During interplay or interaction, an individual may learn to modify his behaviour as a result of how others in the group are responding. Thus, children watch carefully the behaviour of the adults, be their parents or other adults around them because these are their models. If child abuse is being practiced by their models, they will feel that abuse of children is a perfect way of life that must be followed.

Neglect is generally defined as an act of omission or negligence in meeting the basic needs of a child. It is the failure of a parent or caregiver to provide needed food, clothing, shelter, educational needs, medical care or supervision to the degree that the child's health, safety and well-being are threatened with harm. It is specifically the failure of a parent or other person legally responsible for a child's welfare to provide for the child's basic needs and proper level of care with respect to food, shelter, hygiene, medical attention or supervision (Uzozie, 20015). Onyeonu (2014) in his study on child neglect and academic performance used a sample of 150 students randomly selected through the simple random technique. A well validated instrument was used for data collection. Data collection was analyzed using Pearson product moment correlation analysis; from his findings, he supports the fact that lack of provision of materials for class work for the child is a form of child neglect. Many parents deny their children the right to material for class work and therefore causing them to perform poorly academically.

Child neglect is further categorised into psychological, educational, physical neglect. Psychological neglect is when the child doesn't get the nurture and stimulation he/she needs. This could be through ignoring, humiliating, intimidating or isolating them. Educational neglect involves the failure to provide adequate schooling such as special education need and allowing absences from school. Physical neglect includes not providing adequate food, clothing, medical care, supervision and child abandonment.

Child neglect can have severe detrimental effects on children's physical health, psychological well-being, cognitive and academic abilities, and social development. The severity, timing and of neglect influence the extent to which children are negatively impacted. Children's development is cumulative in nature, such that children's ability to accomplish new developmental task builds upon achievement of previous milestones. Children with early experience of neglect can develop internalized (depression, withdrawal, lack of confidence) and externalized (impulsive, aggressive, acting out) behavioural problems in later periods (English et al., 2015). In addition, certain forms of disability in children can contribute to the risk of neglect. Disability that is associated with complex medical needs may increase the risk of child vulnerability to health neglect. Children with disabilities (physical, intellectual, mental or multiple impairments) are 4.6 times more exposed to neglect compared to children without disabilities (Jones et al., 2015).

Different factors related to the parent or guardians are associated with an increased risk of child neglect. Social isolation, negative experiences of parents in childhood, unemployment, low self-esteem, parental insensitivity to the child's physical and emotional needs, lack of parental knowledge and skills, the use of psychoactive substances, criminal activities, gambling, lack of social support, parental stress problem are just some of the parent's factors that increase the risk of child neglect. These factors affect parental abilities to understand the needs of the child, as well as establishing a stable and secure attachment which can result to neglect. Children whose parents are younger (adolescents) are at greater risk of being neglected due to limited life experience and skills, lack of finance and safe home environment (Parkinson et al., 2017).

Conclusively, child neglect is therefore a form of child abuse that may enhance child development negatively. It stands out as one of the suspects which could influence the academic performance of students (Egbe, 2014). The implications of child neglect on the students' academic performance is that, when the students are denied the basic materials that enhances learning like school uniform, text books and paying of school fees as of when due definitely influence the performance of students academically.

Physical abuse of a child is defined as the intentional use of physical force against a child that results in or has a high likelihood of causing harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity. Physical abuse includes hitting, beating, kicking, shaking, biting, strangling, scalding, burning, poisoning and suffocating. Much physical violence against children in the home is inflicted with the object of punishment. Physical abuse leaves a more profound impact on an individual, and it transforms into severe mental and physical health disorders. Childhood physical abuse is associated with short and long term psychological and physiological difficulties (Czaja et al., 2014). The short-term challenges include behaviour like running away, vandalism or hurting others, low self-esteem, nightmares and trouble sleeping, poor social function and social withdrawal/isolation, poor grades and skipping schools. The long-term correlates of childhood physical abuse include many adult mental health problems, including depression, anxiety disorders, eating disorders, sexual dysfunction, personality disorders, dissociative disorders, substance abuse, PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) and bipolar disorder.

The impact of child abuse on a child's life can be far-reaching. It is especially devastating when a parent, the person a child depends on for protection and safety, becomes a danger. Some children develop traumatic stress reactions. Children who have been physically abused may struggle with developing and maintaining friendships (Maia 2017). They tend not to trust authority figures. They do not feel good about themselves or see themselves as worthy. Many physically abused children become aggressive themselves or have other behavioural problems. Aggression and acting out are very common, but there are a wide range of reactions. Some children show few, if any, reactions. They do not seem to care anymore if they are hit; they have lost the normal fight or flight reactions built-in to protect us from danger. These children may also fail to react to other dangers. They may stop trying to make friends or succeed at school or plan for the future. Uzoezie further expresses those children physical abuse can lead a child to sustain open wounds, scars, bruises, fracture or can even stop growth. It can also lead to a severe situation involving loss of life. Isangedighi

(2016) points out that child physical abuse is a global phenomenon. In the United State of America (USA) for instance, about 14% of children are physically abused yearly and out of those who are abused, an average of 1000 to 5000 children dies each year in USA as a result of injuries arising from maltreatment. Thousands of children are sexually abused daily globally. Sexual abuse is seen as the worst kind of "gender-based violence" directed at children at the global level. Perpetrators of sexual abuse on children lack self-control of their mind to touch, fondle, kiss or actually have sex with the child no matter the tender age of the victims compared to theirs. Sexual abuse of children happen in the home, street, market place, store/shop, field, school and even church premises, (Denga and Denga, 2014). They further opine that, the sexual abuse result to unwanted pregnancies, abortions, termination of studies, marriage or even death of the victim. Sexually transmitted diseases may be deposited into the victim who may cause barrenness later in life. In some countries, especially in Nigeria, the practice of marrying underage children makes it inevitable for young teenage girls to be sexually abused under the name of marriage. Isangedighi (2016) reports that sexual abuse is not gender restricted in some areas of southern Asia like Pakistan. Under-aged boys are used as homosexual partners to older men. In some cases, Children are sexually violated by their own parents or family members. Child physical abuse according to Obinaju (2018) may result to improper education of the child, loss of opportunity in life, poor performance in school, dropping out of school, and even developing low self-esteem.

Some abused children become anxious and fearful rather than numb and withdrawal. This happens frequently when the abuse has no predictable pattern. A child, who never knows when a caregiver will become physically violent, and never knows how far the caregiver will go, has no control. That child may become very anxious (Finzi et al., 2014).

In conclusion, physical abuse can have permanent effects on behaviour. It is quite dangerous and if practiced continuously, may lead to the child losing general interest in his/her academic activities and may even drop out of the school. For a child to perform well academically, he needs a stable mind. Child physical abuse can have a drastic consequence on the future life of the child. The implication of it is that students who developed low self-concept tends to develop poor learning attitudes hence, perform poorly in their studies.

According to business insider (2018), child labour entails work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally harmful to children and deprives them the opportunities for education and development. The following are some forms of child labour: Child trafficking: This is the illegal trading (buying, selling and movement) of children for labour or sexual exploitation. Children are trafficked for many reasons, including forced labour, prostitution and recruitment as child soldiers and beggars.

Debt bondage: This is forced labour where work is exchanged to pay off loans that people cannot pay off with money or goods. For example, a poor family may hand over their child to someone to pay off their debt, and that child will have to work for years until the debt is cleared.

Serfdom: Is when a person is forced to live and work on land belonging to another person, often with little or no pay.

**Forced labour:** This is when someone is made to work against their wishes. Example, children in armed conflict are forced to work as cooks, porters and messengers. These children are abused and exploited, often being forced to kill or maim other human beings.

**Sexual exploitation:** This is the mistreating, abusing and taking advantage of someone for personal gain and profit, by involving them in prostitution or commercial sexual activity. Children around the world, girls and boys are exploited sexually, used by adults for sex or used in sexual images (pornography) or performances. They may be bought and sold into marriages and slavery – in both developing and unindustrialised countries. Children are also kidnapped and then trafficked across borders and then sold in foreign counties.

This form of child labour has serious short- and long-term consequences. Children are at a high risk of physical abuse, malnutrition and sexually transmitted diseases. It is extremely difficult for children to get out of this situation and very hard for them to deal with what they have experienced physically and mentally. Scanlan et al., (2018) reports that in Bolivia, the poorest country in Latin America, over 445 of children works in the mine. These children work for long hours a day under high temperature most times. They carry mineral loads that are above their physical capacities. Besides, they usually come into contact with toxic subatomic such as nitrates and poisonous gassed. In Guatemala, more than 15 percent of children are engaged in forced labour. Some of them work in dangerous occupations like street vending, pyrotechnic production and refuse recycling. In every country, children are forced into the labour market, work for long hours a day but receive low salaries. Okpara (2017) describes child labour as an exploitation systematic process in which children are used for job that are either self-employed or waged earning, be it in the child's immediate family, extended family or completely outside the child's own family relationships. In many instances, these categories of children are made to grow prematurely and sad, instead of leading a care-free existence with their friends and peers during what should be the happiest days of their lives.

Okpara outlined the following as reasons why children work; poverty, family tradition, home condition and rural-urban migration. Aliyu (2015) laments concerning child labour in Nigeria in these words “The economic depression in the country had driven many children into many types of labour that are exploitative, hazardous and prejudicial to their welfare and development “. Such work is exploitative and injurious to the physical, social, cognitive and moral development of the child. These activities occupy the child throughout the day, which in most cases interfere with their educational pursuit or even deny them the opportunity for their necessary intellectual and moral development.

Children are also involved in other crimes as defined in national laws, such as buying stolen goods, shoplifting, robbery, hijacking cars, theft and burglary. They may be forced with threats and violence to take part in criminal activities, or be under pressure to find money for survival and that of their family. Street children, runaways or children living in poverty are also used in organized beggary. Children are sometimes even intentionally disfigured to attract more money passers-by, and they may be beaten if they do not manage to collect enough money.

Child labour has physical and psychological consequences. Physical consequences of child labour include poor nutrition, stunted growth and various diseases due to heavy labour,

exposure to harmful substances or toxic agents, and lengthy hours of working in hazardous conditions (Togunde and Carter, 2016). Child labour deprive children the opportunity of obtaining education at a crucial age and they suffer psychological scars that may never heal and may prevent them from functioning in the society as they mature. Working as labourers could make children face years without family life and may suffer pain from work-related injuries (Orset, Krutiova and Shelly, 2017). All of these types of work interfere with a child's education as most children have neither the time nor the energy to attend school.

Emotional abuse, also referred to as psychological abuse, or mental abuse, is a form of abuse characterized by a person subjecting or exposing another to behaviour that may result in psychological trauma, including anxiety, chronic depression, or post-traumatic stress disorder. It is also defined as "any act including confinement, isolation, verbal assault, humiliation, intimidation, 'infantilisation', or any other treatment which may diminish the sense of identity, dignity, and self-worth (Aluede, 2014).

Like other forms of violence in relationships, emotional abuse is based on power and control. Emotional abuse accompanies other forms of abuse. However, it may also occur on its own. No form of abuse, whether neglect, physical, sexual or financial, can occur without psychological consequences. It is in consideration of these psychological impacts that we say that emotional abuse is present in all forms of abuse. Therefore, all abuses contain elements of emotional abuse. Emotional abuse can be thought of as the non-physical abuse of self and spirit which degrades self-worth and interferes with human development and productivity. It is carried out with words, gestures and policies. This type of abuse takes place in relationships, families, workplace and educational institutions and in any arena where non-physical assaults can be made on individuals or groups, children or adults (Nesbit & Philpot, 2018). It carries its own capacity to mutilate the human spirit and lower the self-esteem of children.

Children who are emotionally abused are more likely to be abusive to others or to seek out people who are abusive; because this is the relationship dynamic they grew up with. Therefore, they may become victims or perpetrators of abuse in the future. This is known as the intergenerational cycle of violence. In the school setting, where teaching and learning take place, the importance of children's mental health should not be underestimated. Excessive emotional abuse from teachers can negatively affect children and may have adverse effects on their learning. A student's relationship with their teacher is a key part of their schooling experience. Positive interactions with teacher contribute positively to this experience negative toned interactions can lead to detrimental impacts on the student's social and emotional adjustment (Stenseng and Wichstrom, 2015). According to McEvoy (2016), when a teacher incites fear instead of respect, students perceive them as threats to be avoided or be escaped from. Teachers inflict emotional abuse on children through intimidating, threats, degrading, rejection, verbal assaulting, terrorising, dominating, isolation, humiliation and discrimination. Discriminating in the classroom can be perpetrated by teachers, when they are very selective in assigning tasks to students. It can also occur when; during the conduct of lessons, attention is paid to students who are considered to be intelligent and poor achievers are neglected. This not only breaks the trust that should characterise a student-teacher relationship, but also leads to a decline in the connection that students should feel with their school. This loss of connection from their

academic environment sets in, negative consequences like poor academic performance, social withdrawal and dropping out of school are often observed.

Emotional abuse can lead to lower motivation for school attendance, incompleteness of academic assignments and negative student-teacher interactions (Hyman and Snook, 2015). Students who experience emotional abuse in the classroom display behavioural problems in school. They may become rebellious and belligerent towards teachers or display impulsive aggressive behaviour (hitting and fighting) towards other students. They are often seen picking fights with peers and many at times act cold and hard (Gootman, 2014).

### Statement of the problem

The breakdown of basic social structures (families) due to poverty and single parenting among others has increased the number of children being physically, verbally assaulted and neglected by their parents and significant others. Despite all these, there are still high incidences of the problem of child abuse in Nigeria. There are prevalent cases of violent physical abuse which sometimes lead to death of the child, child sexual abuse, child labour, emotional abuse and child neglect. In the media, there are reports of incest, child prostitution, child trafficking, and street children. Children abound on the streets hawking their wares looking so malnourished and sick, others in pain of being hurt by beatings, accidents and assaulted by gangsters. Some of these children are sent out there by their parents or caregivers, the interest of most parents is what the child can bring to the home through sells or giving oneself for money; many leave school as early as primary school at age 12 they engage in prostitution while others are used as house helps and other menial jobs to bring money to the family. As a result, the moral and social development of the child has no education base; their performance in school is affected. The child therefore is a tool for profit making.

In adverse effects, physical child abuse can result in shaken baby disorder, messed up development of a kid's brain, awful physical fitness, low telomerase, and illegal activities (Girgira et al., 2014). The negative effects of psychological child abuse result in psychiatric problems as a child matures. Emotional abuse is also prevalent where parents inflict emotional defects on children. Emotional exploitation is inflicted through criticism and mockery. It involves inflicting social and/or psychological defects on a child by being rude, arrogant, harsh, or yelling at a child. As a result, children may run away from home, or isolate themselves. Excessive emotional child abuse may result in depression, withdrawals, and criminal behaviour in the future of the children. The cost of child abuse is dire to both the children, healthcare organizations, parents, and the government. The impacts of child abuse vary based on the type of child abuse. Children bear the highest percentage of the cost of child abuse. As the victims of various forms of abuse, children experience the effects at first hand. For example, neglected children may lack basic needs such as food, water, shelter, and education. In addition, they may lack parental warmth and guidance in their lives. In the same way, children who are physically abused suffer bodily pain and harm (Sansen et al., 2014). Cases of destroyed sex organs have been reported because of child sexual abuse (McCullough & Shaffer, 2014). A child's genitals may be physically injured, their uterus may be destroyed, and their genitalia may be destroyed in the process of sexual exploitation. Through emotional abuse, children end up suffering the emotional consequence of the abuse. In the end, psychologically abused

children end up suffering from depression or becoming criminals in the future. As a result, children cannot concentrate in class or socialise with others.

Child abuse has a number of effects on how people behave, develop their abilities, and comprehend their duties (Moylan et al., 2015). It causes many behavioural problems. It is on account of this that the researcher has undertaken this study to unveil the influence of child abuse on students' academic performance in junior secondary school in Nigeria using selected schools in Calabar South L.G.A. of Cross River State. It is hope that this study goes a long way to address the issue and cases of child abuse in our country (Nigeria).

#### Objectives of the study

1. Investigate the influence of child neglect on the academic performance of students.
2. Find out the influence of physical abuse on the academic performance of students.
3. Ascertain the influence of child labour on the academic performance of students.
4. Examine the influence of emotional abuse on the academic performance of students.

#### Research questions

1. To what extent does child neglect affect the academic performance of students in Home Economics in Calabar South Area?
2. What is the significant relationship between physical abuse and the academic performance of students in Home Economics in Calabar South Local Government Area?
3. How does child labour influence the academic performance of students in Home Economics in Calabar South Local Government Area?
4. To what extent does emotional abuse affect the academic performance of students in Home Economics?

#### Statement of hypotheses

H01 There is no significant relationship between child neglect and the academic performance of secondary school students in Home Economics.

H02 There is no significant relationship between physical abuse and the academic performance of secondary students in Home Economics.

H03 There is no significant relationship between child labour and the academic performance of students in Home Economics.

H04 There is no significant relationship between emotional abuse and the academic performance of students in Home Economics.

#### Research methods

The research design adopted for this study was Survey research design. Survey research design involves the collection of information from a sample of individuals through their responses to questions, therefore, allows for a variety of methods to recruit participant, collect data, and utilize various methods of instrumentation. Survey research can use quantitative research strategies (e.g; using questionnaires with numerically rated items), qualitative research strategies (e.g; using open-ended questions), or both strategies. As it is often used to describe and explore human behaviours. This study employs the use of this design to obtain a picture of the present conditions of child abuse prevalence in the society (Check and schutt, 2015).

The population of this study consists of 1,215 JSS 2 students in seven public schools in Calabar South Local Government Area, Cross River State. The use of public schools is due to the fact that most abused children only have the opportunity of attending public school in quest for affordable fees and to easily meet up with school demands which may not be so easy in private school. The sampling technique adopted for this study is the simple random sampling technique, where 200 respondents were selected.

This study involved the use of two instruments duly validated by experts: “Child abuse rating scale questionnaire (CARSQ)” and “2021/2022 students' academic performance” in Home Economics (SAPH). The questionnaire was developed based on the main variables; Child neglect, Physical abuse, Child labour and Emotional abuse on students' academic performance in Home Economics. The instrument consisted on two sections (A and B). Section A was designed to elicit information on the respondents' demography (such as school name, school location, sex and age). While section B on the other hand, is a twenty (20) item questionnaire consisting of statements to which respondents were meant to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement based on the 4-point Likert type scale designed to measure students' abuse and their academic performance in Junior Secondary schools in Calabar South Local Government Area. The 4-point Likert scale adopted is as follows; strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), strongly disagree (SD), Disagree (D). To measure students' academic performance in Home Economics, the score of individual students were averaged and entered for the students. The reliability of the instrument involved a trial-testing using 40 respondents which were not part of the study. The test yielded reliability co-efficient .80. Pearson product moment correlation coefficient analysis was used to analyse data.

## Results

### Hypotheses one

There is no significant relationship between child neglect and students' academic performance in Home Economics. This hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The result obtained from the analysis is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis of the relationship between child neglect and students' academic performance in Home Economics

Variables	$\sum x$	$\sum y$	$\sum xy$	r-cal
Child neglect	921	341190	20012	0.02*
Students' academic performance	324	400120		

Significant at 0.05 level,  $df = 198$ ,  $r\text{-cal} = 0.20$ , Crit.  $r = 0.138$

The result of the analysis as presented in Table 1 indicated that the calculated  $r$  –value at 0.20 is higher than critical  $r$ -value – .138 at .05 levels of significance with 198 degree of freedom, proving that the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternate hypothesis was retained. This implies that child neglect has a significant influence on students' academic performance in Home Economics.

### Hypotheses two

There is no significant relationship between child physical abuse and students' academic performance in Home Economics. This hypothesis was tested at .05 level of significance using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The result obtained from the analysis is presented below in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis of the relationship between child physical abuse and students' academic performance in Home Economics.

Variables	$\sum(x - \bar{x})(y - \bar{y})$	$\sum(x - \bar{x})^2$	$\sum(y - \bar{y})^2$	$\sum xy$	r-cal
Child physical abuse	214	881	1400		
				55214	0.56*
Students' academic performance	411	662	102		

Significant at 0.05 level,  $df = 198$ ,  $r\text{-cal} = 0.56$ , Crit.  $r = 0.138$

The result of the analysis as presented in Table 2 shows that the calculated r-value of .56 is higher than the critical r-value of .138 at .05 levels of significance with 198 degree of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected, while the alternate hypothesis was retained. Therefore, this implies that child physical abuse has a significant relationship on students' academic performance in Home Economics.

### Hypotheses three

There is no significant relationship between child labour and students' academic performance in Home Economics. This hypothesis was tested at .05 level of significance using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The result obtained from the analysis is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis of the relationship between child labour and students' academic performance in Home Economics.

Variables	$\sum(x - \bar{x})(y - \bar{y})$	$\sum(x - \bar{x})^2$	$\sum(y - \bar{y})^2$	$\sum xy$	r-cal
Child labour	532	911	320		
				21881	0.31*
Students' academic performance	331	833	290		

Significant at .05 level,  $df = 198$ ,  $r\text{-cal} = .31$ , Crit.  $r = .138$

The result of the analysis as presented in Table 3 shows that the calculated r-value of .31 is higher than the critical r-value of .138 at .05 levels of significance with 198 degree of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected, while the alternate hypothesis was retained. Therefore, this implies that Child labour has a significant relationship on students' academic performance in Home Economics.

#### Hypotheses four

There is no significant relationship between child emotional abuse and students' academic performance in Home Economics. This hypothesis was tested at .05 level of significance using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The result obtained from the analysis is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis of the relationship between emotional abuse and students' academic performance in Home Economics

VARIABLE		$\sum x(\sum y)$	$\sum x^2(\sum y^2)$	$\sum xy$	r-cal
Child emotional abuse		311	911732	54421	0.76*
Students' academic performance		117	941002		

Significant at .05 level,  $df = 198$ ,  $r\text{-cal} = .76$ , Crit.  $r = .138$

The result of the analysis as presented in the table above shows that the calculated r-value of .76 is higher than the critical r-value of 0.138 at 0.05 levels or significance with 198 degree of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis has been rejected and the alternative was retained. This therefore implies that there is a significant relationship between Emotional abuse and students' academic performance in Home Economics.

#### Summary of findings

1. There is a significant relationship between Child neglect and students' academic performance in Home Economics in Calabar South.
2. There is significant relationship between Child physical abuse and students' academic performance in Home Economics in Calabar South.
3. There is a significant relationship between Child labour and students' academic performance in Home Economics in Calabar South.
4. There is a significant relationship between Emotional abuse and students' academic performance in Home Economics in Calabar South.

#### Discussion of findings

The result of the statistical analysis of data collected with respect to test of null hypothesis one indicates that the null hypothesis be rejected because the calculated value was found to be greater than the tabulated. By implication, child neglect has a significant relationship on students' academic performance in the research area. The findings from test of hypothesis one agreed with Onyeonu (2014) in his study on child neglect and academic performance using a sample of 150 randomly selected through the simple random technique, where Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis, from his findings, he supports the fact that child neglect is significant in students' academic performance. Child neglect can have severe detrimental effects on children's physical health, psychological well-being, cognitive and academic abilities, and social development.

The findings from test of null hypothesis two further affirm those of earlier authors. For instance, Czaja, Bently and Johnson, (2014) reported that childhood physical abuse is associated with short and long term psychological and physiological difficulties. Children

who have been physically abused may struggle with developing and maintaining friendships (Maia 2017).

Finding from test of null hypothesis three that there is a significant relationship between physical abuse and students' academic performance in the research area was in line with business insider (2018) who refers to child labour as work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally harmful to children and deprives them the opportunities for education and development. Physical consequences of child labour include poor nutrition, stunted growth and various diseases due to heavy labour, exposure to harmful substances or toxic agents, and lengthy hours of working in hazardous conditions (Togunde and Carter, 2016). Finding arising from test of null hypothesis four was not a distant from earlier findings by other authors. Emotional abuse accompanies other forms of abuse. This type of abuse takes place in relationships, families, workplace and educational institutions and in any arena where non-physical assaults can be made on individuals or groups, children or adults (Nesbit and Philpot, 2018). It carries its own capacity to mutilate the human spirit and lower the self-esteem of children. Emotional abuse can lead to lower motivation for school attendance, incompleteness of academic assignments and negative student-teacher interactions (Hyman and Snook, 2015). Students who experience emotional abuse in the class room display behavioural problems in school. They may become rebellious and belligerent towards teachers or display impulsive aggressive behaviour (hitting and fighting) towards other students. They are often seen picking fight with peers and many at times act cold and hard.

## Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that child neglect, physical abuse, child's labour and emotional abuse are anti-academic experience that are already found in the school system with grave consequence on students' academic performance. It is also concluded these ills can be kept under control with concerted efforts of stakeholders in the entire school system.

## Recommendations

Based on the conclusion drawn, recommendations are that:

1. The child's Right Act should be interpreted and enforced in all facets of the society. The Cross River State Government should make provisions for these children being abused and penalties to be faced by their guardians.
2. Government should institute free and compulsory primary and secondary school education to assist neglect children to gain access to education.
3. Government should provide employment opportunities as a means of empowering them toward proper care of their children.
4. Teachers in the classroom should look out for this children and report to the rightful authorities. They should also stop abusing children and such teachers should be brought to book.

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