

# Parents Educationists Perceptions on the Forms and Consequences of Child Sexual Abuse

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**Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) is a worldwide problem that has grievous consequences for its victims. The study examined parents-educationists' perceptions of the forms and consequences of CSA based on marital status and gender in Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria in 2014 contact. A cross-sectional study was carried out among teachers who are parents with different marital status; married 71.6%, single 23.2%, widow 2.8% widower 1% and divorcee 1.4%. A stratified sampling technique which considered gender, family and age was used to select a sample size of 303. The research instrument is a questionnaire. The instrument has a construct validity of 17.01 and content validity ranged of 0.51 to 0.74 for the forms of sexual abuse while for the consequences of CSA, construct validity is 43.79 and content validity range from 0.81 to 0.88. Forms of child sexual abuse yielded  $r$  of 0.93 and the consequences of CSA yielded 0.97. The whole instrument has  $r=0.98$  using Cronbach procedure. Mean score was used to assess respondents' perception of the prevalence of child sexual abuse while ANOVA and t-test statistical tools were used to test differences in respondents' perception based on gender and marital status. The results showed that there are no significant differences in perceptions of the respondents on the forms and consequences of child sexual abuse based on marital status and gender. There is a high prevalence of child sexual abuse as reported by parents' educationists. The views on forms of CSA and consequences of these parents were not different based marital status and gender. It was recommended that regular lectures should be organized for victims on how to outlive such experiences.**

**Key words:** Child sexual abuse, parent's-educationists, perceptions.

## INTRODUCTION

Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) is a serious problem affecting thousands of children (WHO, 2002). The rate and dimension of child sexual abuse are increasing geometrically. According to Crime and Misconduct Commission (2006), child sexual abuse occurs when an adult uses his or her power or authority to involve a child in sexual activity. This includes kissing, holding a child in a sexual manner, exposing a sexual parts of a child's body, sending obscene mobile text-messages or e-mails to a child, penetrating the child's vagina or anus by either the penis, finger or any other object, incest, among other forms. Additionally, Lalor (2014) noted that child sexual abuse includes child pornography, genital fondling oral sex, anal sex and rape.

Child sexual abuse, therefore, is defined as any action or inaction that predisposes minors to sexual activity by an adult through misuse, force, or trick (Eweniyi, 2000). The prevalence

of child sexual abuse is difficult to determine because, in most cases, the incidence is not reported; expert agree that the incidence is far greater than what is reported to authorities. The figures of child sexual abuse may not be known because some of the cases are not reported for fear of stigmatization. According to National Centre for victims of crime (2015), in every 5 girls and 20 boys, one and five respectively are victims of child sexual abuse. But Dunne, Purdue, Cook, Boyle and Najmar (2003) revealed that between one and five girls are sexually abused and that for boys, the range is between one and 10. The most vulnerable age for child sexual abuse is between seven to thirteen years. As they mature into adolescence, the percentage increases to 16-28%. Most studies of CSA prevalence show that girls are likely to be victims morethan boys (Finkelhor (1994). Rape is the most commonly practiced forms of child sexual abuse. Rape is

simply defined as forced or coerced sex. Edukugho (2014) defined rape as forcefully having sex with somebody against his/her wish or will especially by being violent. Presently in Nigeria, the issue of rape is almost becoming a daily occurrence. In the words of Ekunkunbor (2014), screaming headlines of ugly cases of rape jump at us from newspapers and the victims are mostly women and minors. Much as some non-governmental organizations such as Action Against Rape in Africa (ARA), Social Welfare Officers and the government are trying to stem this ugly tide, the incidents of forced sex seem to be on the increase with babies as young as 2 months and women as old as 70 years defiled recklessly.

From observation, most rapists are not strangers to their victims; rather they are the victims' next door neighbors, lesson teachers, pastors, family friends and close relations such as brothers, fathers, uncles, cousins, whom the child has trust for. Henslin (1993) noted that uncles are the most common offenders followed by first cousins, then fathers (step-fathers, especially), brothers and, finally, relatives ranging from brothers-in-law to step grandfathers. Chukwuma (2013) reported that Project Alert (a non-governmental organization) in collaboration with other organizations (FIDA, WRAPA) and zonal offices of the National Human Rights Commission carried out a survey on cases of violence against females and got a total of 159 cases in 2013 which cut across the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria. Chukwuma pointed out that 57% of the victims are children below 17 years. Still on the prevalence of rape, Edukugbo (2014) opined that there are 181 reported rape cases within 6 months in Lagos State.

Reports from the Bureau of Justice shows that 1.67% (i.e. sixteen out of every one thousand) of children between ages 12 and 17 years are victims of sexual assault. As these children as they mature into adolescence, the rate of abuse increases to 13.7%. Children from malfunctioned homes are prone to sexual abuse and the majority of penetrated children develop physical injuries. The effects of child sexual abuse may vary from one individual to the other and could be physical, psychological and emotional. Such effects could manifest in form of anxiety, sexual dysfunction, substance abuse and school problems. According to Sharon (2014), victims of sexual abuse display behavior problems and have difficulties with emotional stress, new anxiety and low-self-esteem while some other children experience depression, repeated sexualized behavior, self-loathing, aggressiveness and confused thoughts. Commenting on the impact of sexual abuse on victims, Daramola-Salako (2014) observed that ninety five (95%) of rape victims do not turn out right as adults and that it is either that they become frigid, nymphomaniacs or lesbians. Some

### Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference on parents-educationists' perceptions on the forms of CSA based on marital status.
2. There is no significant difference on parents-educationists' perceptions on the consequences of CSA based on marital status.
3. There is no significant difference on parents-educationists' perceptions on the forms of CSA based on gender.
4. There is no significant difference on parents-educationists' perceptions on the consequences of CSA based on gender.

other effects, according to Ogoemeke and Igwe (2012) are fear of intimacy with the opposite sex, high school dropout and negative self-esteem. Victorian Centers Against Sexual Assault (CASA) (2014) observed other effects to include engaging in personal risk behavior, difficulty in learning and concentration at school, difficulty in identifying and expressing their needs and confusion about their identity, their worth and their sexuality.

In this study, parents who are teachers form the population. This is because they occupy a pivotal position in the lives of individuals particularly during childhood. The effects these obnoxious acts have on their victims need resolution. The assumption is that the victims have the capacity to compliment, maintain the culture and ethos within the family and school setting irrespective of the painful effects of their experience. Hence it is necessary to assess parents' educationists' perceptions on the plight of the victims.

### Statement of Problem

The incidence of child sexual abuse is on the increase. Reports on the obnoxious acts form headlines in daily newspapers and magazines. The fear of stigmatization and the implications the act on the psychological, social and health lives of victims have become a thing of concern to people in helping profession such as counselors, social and health workers. To effectively assist these victims, it is necessary to investigate parents-educationists' views on the prevalence, forms and consequences of child sexual abuse. An understanding of parents-educationists views on this act will put the professionals on a pedestal that will predispose them on how to assist. The problem therefore, is what are the differences in the parents' educationists' views on the forms and consequences of CSA?

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the differences in the perceptions of parents-educationists on forms of CSA based on marital status?
2. What are the differences in perception of parents-educationists on the consequences of CSA based on marital status?
3. What are the differences in the perception of parents-educationists on the forms of CSA based on gender?
4. What are the differences in the perception of parents' educationists on the consequences of CSA based on gender?

### METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted is descriptive survey, which involves collection of data from a defined population to describe the condition of the population using the variables in the survey. The study examined the perceptions of parents' educationists on the forms and consequences of child sexual abuse based on marital status and gender. The target population was made up of sandwich students of 2014 cohort of Delta State University, who are parents and also teachers. Three hundred and three respondents were selected as sample using stratified random sampling technique. The researcher stratified the respondents into different groups on the basis of gender, age and marital status. The characteristics of the respondents are as follows: males constitute 38.60% while females were 60.60% of the sample. On marital status, married constitute 71.6%, while single, 23.2%, widow, 2.8%,

widower, 1% and finally divorcee 1.4%. Using their family type, 69.66% were monogamous while 30.34% were polygamous. The respondents who have the age bracket of 30-45 86.90%, while those above 45 were 13.10% of the sample.

The instrument for this study, which is self-generated questionnaire on child sexual abuse, was designed to elicit information from respondents on their perception of the forms and consequences of child sexual abuse. The instrument was divided into two sections; Section A solicited information on Personal Data which included respondents gender, marital status, type of family and age. Section B contained 26 items on a 4-point scoring scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The section was divided into 2 parts. Part 1 consisted of 10 items describing forms of sexual abuse on children. These items included pressurizing a child to engage in sexual activities by watching pornographic films as sexual abuse; adults' touch of a child's nipple with intent of gratifying their sexual urge as sexual abuse; display of pornographic pictures at home as sexual abuse; touching a child's vagina as a form of sexual abuse using instrument on a child's genitals as sexual abuse; repeated exposure of adults genitals to a child which can stir up wrong emotions in the child; enticing a child with gifts in order to have carnal knowledge of him/her as sexual abuse; using vulgar language by parents in the presence of their children as what encourages sexual activities; and touching a child's body unnecessarily as a form of sexual abuse.

In part one of section B with 10 items; the highest possible score is 40% ( $4 \times 10$ ) = 40. The lowest score is 10 ( $10 \times 1$ ). The average is 20 ( $40 - 10$ ) = 30 midpoints range =  $30/2 = 15$ . The cutoff point is therefore  $40 - 15 = 25$  (max score (midpoint) or minimum score + midpoint = 25. Part 2 contains 16 items which described the consequences of child sexual abuse. They are post-traumatic stress disorder, chronic vaginal pain, infection of the urinary tract, pregnancy, depression, HIV/AIDS, vaginal laceration, having multiple sexual partners, suicidal ideation, difficulty in trusting men; experience of loneliness, sexual dysfunction, fear of things associated with sexual abuse, experience of low self-esteem, negative flashbacks of the incidence and indulgence in self-blame. The second part of section B's maximum score on the consequences of CSA is 62. Minimum score = 16, mid-range = 24, cutoff point = 40 and above. The score, 40 above attest that consequences are grievous.

To determine the construct and content validity, principal component analysis was conducted. Component above value 1 was retained. Two components were extracted. They are different forms and consequences of child sexual

abuse. Component 1 (forms of child sexual abuse) had a construct validity of 17.1 and content validity range of 0.51 to 0.74. Component 2 (consequences of child sexual abuse) had a construct validity of 4.79 and content validity range from 0.81 to 0.88. Forms of child sexual abuse yielded a reliability index of 0.93 while that of consequences of child sexual abuse was 0.97. The whole instrument of child sexual abuse was reliable at  $\alpha = 0.98$ .

## PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

### Research question 1

What are the differences in the perceptions of parents-educationists on form of CSA based on marital status?

#### Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in parents' educationists' perceptions on the forms of CSA based on marital status.

Table I shows the mean responses of the respondents based on marital status: Married  $X = 31.62$ ,  $SD = 6.25$ , Single  $X = 30.65$ ,  $SD = 6.17$ , widow  $X = 32.00$ ,  $SD = 7.35$ , widower  $X = 28.00$ ,  $SD = 10.30$ , the divorcee,  $x = 28.75$ ,  $SD = 2.75$ ). The F ratio (4,299) is .815  $p = .517$ . The mean scores of all the respondents are above the midpoint of 25; the average mean of the respondents based on marital status is 31.30 which are very high. This shows that there is a high prevalence of child sexual abuse in our cultural setting. The hypothesis which says that there is no significant difference in parents' educationists' views on the forms of child sexual abuse based on marital status is therefore accepted. The views of respondents, irrespective of marital status, are same.

### Research question 2

What are the differences on the perception of parents' educationists on the consequences of sexual abuse based on marital status?

#### Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference on the perceptions of parents' educationists' on the consequences of sexual abuse based on marital status.

**Table 1**

Variables	MEAN (X)	STANDARD DEVIATION (SD)	STANDARD ERROR (STD Error)
Married	31.62	6.25	.43
Single	30.65	6.17	.69
Widow	32.00	7.35	2.60
Widower	28.00	10.30	5.15
Divorcee	28.75	2.75	1.38
Total	31.30	6.28	36

**ANOVA**

		Sum of Square	Df	Mean Square	f	Significant
Scores for forms of sexual abuse	Between groups	128.725	4	32.181	.815	.517
	Within groups	11813.432	299	39.510		
	Total	11942.158	303			

Sig. = .517

**Table 2:** Mean, Standard deviation, ANOVA on the differences in perception on the Consequences of Child Sexual Abuse Based on Marital Status

Variables	MEAN (X)	STANDARD DEVIATION (SD)	STD Error
Married	42.07	18.14	1.25
Single	43.83	18.83	2.13
Widow	50.13	17.00	6.01
Widower	44.75	29.07	14.53
Divorcee	22.00	25.87	12.94
Total	42.503	18.611	1.067

**ANOVA**

	Sum of Square	Df	Mean Square	f	Significant
Between groups	2340.96	4	585.24	1.71	.149
Within groups	11813.432	299	39.510		
Total	11942.158	303			

An independent-sample of ANOVA was conducted to compare the perception of respondents on consequences of child sexual abuse scores based on marital status. There was no significant difference in scores for married (X=42.07, SD=18.14), Single (X=43.83, SD=18.83), widow (X=50.13, SD=17.00), widower (X=44.75, SD=29.07) and Divorcee (X=22.00, SD=25.87); F (4,299)=1.71 p=.149. The divorcee score on the consequence is below the cutoff of 40.

There is no significant difference in the perception of respondents on the consequences of child sexual abuse based on marital status. The null hypothesis is, therefore, accepted.

**Research Question 3**

What is the difference in perception of parents-educationists on forms of child sexual abuse based on gender?

**Hypothesis 3**

There is no significance difference in perception of teachers of the forms of child sexual abuse based on gender.

**Table 3:** Mean, Standard deviation and t-test on the parents-educationists perception of forms of child sexual abuse based on gender

Variable	N	Mean	Std Dev.	M.D.	t	P
Male	117	30.14	6.86	-1.89	-2.59	.350
Female	186	32.03	5.75			

The result shows that there is a difference in the views of respondents' on child sexual abuse based on gender. Independent sample t-test was conducted to compare respondents' perception of the forms of child sexual abuse practiced in our cultural setting. There was no significant difference in mean scores of males (X=30.14, SD=6.86) and females (X=32.03, SD=5.75; t) -2.59, p=.350 two – tailed). The magnitude of the differences in the means is (n =-1.89). The null hypothesis is accepted.

**Research Question 4**

What is the difference in perception of parents-educationists on consequences of child sexual abuse based on gender?

**Hypothesis 4**

There is no significant difference in perception of parents-educationists on the consequences of child sexual abuse based on gender.

**Table 4:** Mean, Standard Deviation and t-test on the perception of parent educationist on child sexual abuse

Variable	N	Mean (X)	Standard Deviation	Mean Difference (M.D)	t	P
Male	117	41.180	16.88	-1.15	-.524	.143
Female	186	42.95	19.45			
Total						

There is no difference in the perception of respondents on the consequences of child sexual abuse based on gender.

An independent sample t-test was conducted to compare parents' educationists' perception of the consequences of child sexual abuse in our cultural setting based on gender. The result shows that there is no significant difference in their perception on the consequences of child sexual abuse based on gender. There were no significant differences in scores of males ( $X=41.18$ ,  $SD=16.88$ ) and females ( $X=42.95$ ,  $SD = 19.45$ ;  $t(2,301) = -.524$ ,  $p=.143$  two tailed).

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this study is to find out the perception of parents' educationists, forms and consequences of child sexual abuse based on marital status and gender. The mean scores show high prevalence of CSA based on the perceptions of respondents. This result of the study shows that there is a high rate of child sexual abuse despite the identified consequences. It is evident from the study that sexual abuse is of two forms which are penetration and non-penetration. This finding is in line with the report of Lalor (2014) that identified that pornography, rape; obnoxious text messages abuse the emotions and cognition of the receivers. Prolonged exposure to these abuses creates a feeling of worthlessness, negative and distorted view of sex and interpersonal relationship in the victim.

### Perception of forms of Child Sexual Abuse based on Marital Status

The finding of the study revealed that respondents, irrespective of marital status, acknowledged forms of child sexual abuse to include touching a child unnecessarily, touching a child's vagina, use of instruments on a child's genitals, oral or anal sex, unsolicited sexual intercourse, use of vulgar language, exposure to pornographic films. Equally, parents who are educationists acknowledge the utilization, penetration and non-penetration forms of child sexual abuse by abusers. Some of the parents may have interacted with victims who have explained to them the way they have been abused. Some of the abusers are familiar persons in a victim's environment. Newspapers have revealed how abusers use gifts, unsolicited touching and praise to entice their victims.

### Perception of consequences of Child Sexual Abuse based on Marital Status

Respondents, irrespective of marital status, also acknowledged that the consequences of child sexual abuse have negative effects on the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of the victims. These manifest in their faulty interpersonal skills, distorted cognitive functioning and inadequate utilization of motor skills. This finding agrees with the view of Victorian Centre for Sexual Assault (2014) which opined that victims of sexual abuse have difficulty in learning and concentrating in academic activities. Also, they have difficulty in expressing their needs and are confusion with their identity.

### Perception of forms of Child Sexual Abuse based on Gender

Results on the third research question and hypothesis revealed that parents' educationists, irrespective of gender, have similar responses on the forms of child sexual abuse utilized by abusers. The respondents live in the same environment, watch television, and listen to news, read reports in daily newspapers and magazines. So they are used to the methods utilized by perpetrators of child sexual abuse, hence, the similarity in their response.

### Perception of consequences of Child Sexual Abuse based on Gender

Hypothesis four and research question four revealed that the consequence of CSA is not gender-specific. The experience leaves the victim with the situation of powerlessness which results to sexual dysfunction, fear of the things associated with sexual abuse, vaginal laceration, pregnancy, post-traumatic stress disorder, experience of low self-esteem negative flashbacks of the incidence among other associated suicidal ideation. The finding agrees with Shanta, Dube, Whitefield (2005) whose research revealed that victims of child sexual abuse engage in internalizing behaviors (suicide ideation, disordered eating) and externalizing behaviors such as delinquency.

Also, these parents' educationists have similar responses towards the consequences of CSA on the victims because of the compassion towards these children. They help to support the victims emotionally, physically and health wise, they also assist them to resolve the challenges arising from victims' experience. The succor provided by these social translators helps the victims develop positive attitude which forms the foundation for developing productive identity relationship and intimacy.

## COUNSELING IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study have a number of counseling implications.

- First, victims have serious health and behavioral problems which also affects their social development.
- The victims exhibited behavioral problems that should be assisted by guidance counselors.
- School counselors should be empowered by stakeholders in education to help individuals who are identified as victims.
- Regular series of lectures should be given by counselors to victims on ways of outliving their experiences.
- Family and community counseling centers should be set up in the communities.
- Counseling Association of Nigeria (CASSON) should put up a framework where victims or threatened individuals come to for help.

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