

Child Abuse and Its Impact on Students' Psychological Well-Being in NDU Municipality

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ABSTRACT

This study was designed to investigate “The Impact of Child Abuse on Students’ Psychological Well-being” in Ndu Municipality, North west Region of Cameroon. Specifically, the study seeks to investigate the impact of sexual, emotional abuse and child neglect on student’s psychological well-being in secondary schools in Ndu Municipality. A mixed-methods design was adopted for the study. Questionnaires for students and interview guide for teachers were used for the collection of data and a purposive sampling technique was used to select respondents. A sample of 150 students were selected and administered the questionnaire and 27 teachers were interviewed. Data was analyzed quantitatively with the aid of frequency count and percentages, hypothesis tested using Spearman Rho and Chi square. Qualitatively data was analysed using thematic analysis. Finally, findings were presented using frequency distribution tables and charts and inferential statistic was presented, 95% level of confidence interval with alpha at 0.05 levels accepting only 5% margin of errors. Findings affirmed the fact that there was a significant and positive relationship between sexual abuse and students’ psychological well-being ($P=0.000<0.001$, $R=0.170^{***}$). Similarly, the findings equally revealed that there was a significant and positive relationship between emotional abuse and students’ psychological well-being ($P=0.000<0.001$, $R=0.353^{***}$). Also, findings also showed that, there was a significant and positive relationship between child neglect and students’ psychological well-being ($P=0.000<0.001$, $R=0.346^{***}$). The findings indicated that, child abuse has an impact on students’ psychological well-being in Ndu Municipality. Based on the findings, some recommendations were made that government should ensure proper creation, implementation and dissemination of policies to address child abuse both in schools and homes. Also, parents should adopt positive values and show love towards their children in order to boost students’ psychological well-being.

How to cite this paper: Neba Vernat Neh | Lukong Evelyn Shulika "Child Abuse and Its Impact on Students' Psychological Well-Being in NDU Municipality" Published in International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development (ijtsrd), ISSN: 2456-6470, Volume-7 | Issue-6, December 2023, pp.411-429, URL: www.ijtsrd.com/papers/ijtsrd61212.pdf



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KEYWORDS: Child Abuse, physical, sexual and emotional abuse, Students' Psychological Well-being

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Students’ psychological wellbeing is determined by a number of factors which are physical health, exercise and nutrition, mental and emotional health, relation with self and self-acceptance and positive relationship with others. This therefore means that, a conducive environment which determines or promotes positive physical health, exercises and good nutrition, positive mental and emotional health and, high self-esteem and good relationship with others will lead to a

positive psychological wellbeing and vice versa. This means that students’ environment either positive or negative, could have bearing on their psychological wellbeing. According to Ramez et al (2009), the most devastating of the environmental factor is child abuse.

The increasing rate of child abuse in our contemporary time is a thing of concern to the researchers as in present days, there has been up rise on child abuse cases in many countries and Cameroon

in recent years has cried aloud due to the high rate of child abuse going on in secondary schools and in various forms. Journal du Cameroon (2020) in Neba (2021) published an article reviewing that, a 15-year-old form three student of the Government High school Nkolbisson in Yaounde, stabbed to death his mathematics teacher at the school premises. Yaboa, reported that a student was stabbed in Lycee Polyvalent on Tuesday October 13th 2015 and only survive after a successful surgery (Cameroon Tribune, 2015). Moreover, the Cameroon radio television (CRTV) on the 2nd of April 2019 reported a similar story that happened in GBHS Deido Douala of the stabbing to death of a form five student on the 29th of March 2019 at the school premises. Teachers are not left out in the perpetrating of abuses on students in Cameroon. Cameroon news agency (CAN) reveals the confession of a teacher who sodomised his 14-year-old student to death in Madja Bangante, West region of Cameroon (CNA, 2020).

Child abuse refers to any situation dangerous to physical or emotional health as a result of parents', guardians' or other care takers' behaviour (Obekpa, 2001). According to Taylor and Steward (2011), child abuse is any action or inaction on the part of a parent, guardian or caregiver that may result in death, serious physical or emotional injury, sexual abuse or exploitation, or an act or failure to act which present an imminent risk of serious harm. Mcloy and Keen (2013) viewed child abuse as action or inaction of parents, guardian or caregiver that causes injury, death, emotional harm or risk of serious harm to a child. Child abuse therefore can be defined as any behaviour displayed by the parents, guardian or caregiver, either intentionally or by the negligence of parents or guardians that can lead to loss of life, physical or psychological harm, sexual harassment and others to an innocent child. Child abuse includes all types of physical and or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect and commercial or other exploitation which results in actual or potential harm to the child. Child abuse can be physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and child neglect (Altafim & Linhares, 2016).

Emotional abuse is persisted or extreme thwarting of the child's basic emotional needs such as parental acts that are harmful because they are insensitive to the child's development (Bernette et al (1998). Emotional abuse unlike many other forms of violence is a non-physical attack that is common among school children. Emotional abuse impedes children's inability to express their own emotions clearly and to read others' emission accurately. It degrades self-worth and interferes with development and

productivity of a child. According to Glaser (2002), emotional abuse can be defined as a relationship between a child and a caregiver, which is characterized by a consistent pattern of harmful interactions for the child without including acts of physical or sexual abuse. Secondary school children are likely to experience emotional abuse in family and other social contexts, such as in their school.

According to Brandenburg (1997) sexual abuse involve subjecting someone to unwanted sexual attention. She further explains that the vulnerability of students to sexual abuse is particularly high and its potential effects on them are severe. UNICEF (2003) defines sexual abuse as contacts or interactions between a child and an older or more knowledgeable child or adult (a stranger, sibling or person in position of authority, a parent or caregiver), When the child is being used as an object of gratification for the older child's or adult sexual needs. These contacts or interactions are carried out against the child using trickery, bribes, threats or pressure.

Child neglect is another form of abuse looked at in this study. The Child Abuse and Prevention Treatment Act defines neglect as a failure to meet the child's basic needs e.g. not providing enough food, shelter or basic supervision, necessary medical or mental health treatment, adequate education. According to Logan-Greene and Samanchin Jones (2015), the in attention to neglect has been a problem pattern that has continued over many years.

Psychological wellbeing is viewed by different people in different ways. It's described as the quality of life of a person and it includes what lay people call happiness, peace, fulfilment and life satisfaction (Huppert et al., 2009). According to Joshanloo (2019) in Neba et.al (2023) the term well-being, refers to an optimal psychological state, is a construct that may be defined from two complementary perspectives. The hedonic perspective frames well-being as the positive assessment of one's own life, and it has been linked to a sense of satisfaction and emotional stability, as well as to subjective well-being. Eudemonic well-being, which corresponds to psychosocial well-being, emphasizes personal development, self-fulfillment, exploring one's own potential and planning for the future, and contributing to the well-being of others (Waterman, 2010; Adler & Seligman, 2016). They have also found temporal differences between these perspectives; over the long-term, psychological well-being, rather than subjective, is a more robust predictor of future well-being (Joshanloo, 2019). Here, psychosocial well-being is examined using the Ryff Scale of Measurement, which is based on Ryff's (1989) six-factor model with its dimensions of self-

acceptance, positive relations, autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, and purpose in life.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Students' psychological wellbeing entails knowing themselves and being able to face the problems that life throws at them. Schools and homes are excellent places to assist students in their psychological wellbeing by providing resources and conducive environment which will foster positive psychological growth in students. On the contrary, many homes and schools have turned out to be abusive and impact students' attitude and learning negatively. Since child abuse is usually perpetuated by parents, primary caregivers or others, children are often left with no one to turn to and they can experience traumatization as they might lack social and emotional support to cope with daily challenging situations. Individuals that grow up in abusive environment, mostly suffer from social dysfunction that prevents them from interpreting their environment with healthy coping skills. With psychological dependence, the individual may rely on the alcohol and drug to cope with problems. From observation in Ndu Municipality, many students have low self-esteem, unable to form positive relationships, lack knowledge about their environment, lack sense of purpose and meaningless life. This may result to frequent threats, bullying, disrespect for others, drop-out and alcohol and drug abuse. All these factors may exacerbate feelings of hopelessness or negative expectancies towards oneself and the future which have been associated with negative outcomes such as violence and depression. It is against this back drop that the researcher sought to investigate the impact of child abuse on the students' psychological wellbeing in some selected secondary schools in Ndu sub division.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Main objective

To investigate child abuse and its impact on students' psychological wellbeing.

Specific objectives

- To examine the impact of sexual abuse on students' psychological wellbeing.
- To find out the impact of child neglect on students' psychological wellbeing.
- To find out the impact of emotional abuse on students' psychological wellbeing.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Main Question

How does child abuse impact students' psychological wellbeing?

Specific Questions

- How does sexual abuse impact students' psychological wellbeing?
- What is the impact of emotional abuse on students' psychological wellbeing?
- How does child neglect impact students' psychological wellbeing?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptually five concepts grounded this study. The concept of adolescence, incivility, bullying, sexual harassment and psychological wellbeing.

The Concept of Child Abuse

According to Gilbert et al (2009), child abuse and neglect consist of any act of omission by a parent or caregiver that result in harm, potential for harm, or the threat of harm to a child (0-18 years of age) even if the harm is unintentional. In the same sense child abuse is defined as "act of omission carried out with intent to cause immediate harm to the victim". The abusers perceive the harm caused as the ultimate goal of their actions. A syndrome is created in surviving victims known as battered child syndrome. Child abuse is also known as child violence or violence against children. Violence is understood to be "the intentional use of force or physical power either by act or threat, against oneself, another person or a group or community, which causes or has substantial likelihood of causing injuries, death, psychological harm, developmental disruption, disturbances or deprivation, (WHO, 2002).

The center for Disease Control in the US (2013) defines child abuse as both acts of commission (abuse) which include words or overt actions that cause harm, potential harm or threat of harm to a child, and act of omission (neglect) meaning, "the failure to provide for a child's basic physical, emotional or educational needs or to protect a child from harm or potential harm". Axmaher (2004) opined that child abuse is considered as any maltreatment or neglect of the child by the parents or care giver that result in non-accidental harm or injury and which cannot be easily identified. In the same light, Park K, (2014) viewed child abuse as a parenting style in which parent hurt their children physically or emotionally through excessive corporal punishment or harsh language. Stuewig and McCloskey (2005) found that parenting in childhood (9 years old) increase parental rejection in adolescence (15 years old) and leads to an increase in depression in late adolescence (17 year old)

Child abuse according to the World Health Organization (W.H.O, 2020), is all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other

exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity, trust or power. It also says, "violence against children includes all forms of violence against people under 18 years old, whether perpetuated by parents or other caregivers, peers, and romantic partners or strangers". In the United States, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (C.D.C) refers to child abuse as both acts of commission (abuse) which includes words or overt actions that cause harm, potential harm or threat of harm to a child; and acts of omission (neglect), meaning the failure to provide for a child's basic physical, emotional or educational needs or to protect a child from harm or potential harm". The United States federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act defined Child abuse as "any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation" or "an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm" to a child., (National Child Abuse and Neglect Training and Publication Project, 2014). As indicators to this concept, the researcher proposes physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and child neglect as it will be conceptualized below.

Child abuse has a severe impact on a child's current and future functioning and development regarding his or her emotional, social, cognitive behavioural and physical well-being. Children who are abused are at greater risk developing negative long-term physical, mental, emotional and relational outcomes (Chitiyo & Pietrantoni, 2019; Kim et al, 2020). Research has linked child abuse to long-term negative physical and emotional health outcomes such as risk taking behaviours, chronic stress, anxiety and depression (Carr et al, 2018). Child abuse has also been associated with the development and diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder (P.T.S.D), (De Bellis & Thomas, (2003).

Stress, lack of parenting skills or family support make the pressure of caring for children overwhelming and can cause abuse. Early child bearing has been linked to an increased risk for child abuse (Connelly & Straus, 1992). Compared with other mothers for example, younger mothers are more likely to have children referred to Child Protective Services for abuse and neglect or circumstances suggestive of child abuse (Parish et al, 2011; Partnam-Hornsein & Needell, 2011). Brown & Colleagues (1997) found that the relative youth of a mother at child birth was a significant risk factor for child abuse.

Another related cause or risk factor for child abuse is that, parents who were abused or neglected during their childhood are likely going to abuse or neglect

their own children. This notion of intergenerational transmission was the premier development hypothesis in the field of abuse (Garborino and Gilliam, 1980). A number of studies have evidence to support a history of child abuse as a risk factor for perpetuation of abuse and neglect. Estimates are that, about one-third of individuals who were abused will abuse their own children with the proportion ranging from 25 to 35 percent (Jackson et al, 1999, Kaufman & Zigler, 1987).

The World Health Organisation (2020), defines child abuse as all forms of physical and or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse and neglect resulting to actual or potential harm to a child. This definition gives four categories of child abuse namely; physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and child neglect.

The Concept of Sexual Abuse

As to Finkelhor, (1979), Russel, (1983), Timnick, (1985), child sexual abuse is any sexual experience between a child, (usually under 16 years and an adult of at least 5 years older than the child. It is any penetration, nor matter how light of the vagina or anus with any body parts or objects or oral sex, penetration by a sex organ of another person without the concern of the victim.

According to the sexual Harrassment Awareness and Prevention Education Manual (2020), Sexual abuse generally includes a repeated, unwanted verbal, behavioural sexual advances, sexually explicit or derogatory remarks, pictures, jokes or other non-verbal matter and or statements that are sexually offensive. Peters, Wyatt, and Finkelhol, (1986) adds that, Sexual abuse refers to any unwanted or coerced or tricked sexual interaction with a child. Such unwanted sexual interaction may include; kissing, fondling, oral sex, anal sex, sodomy and intercourse.

Effects of Sexual Abuse

According to the study by Stack, Bell, Boyer and Connell (1997), adolescent girls who had been sexually abused are more likely than non-abused girls to be sexually active and to engage in risky sexual behaviours. Child sexual abuse remains a significant public health concern according to Maikovich-Fong (2010), its consequences are devastating as sexually abused victims show many internalized behavioural, emotional and cognitive problems during childhood and adulthood (Crome LD, Glodsmith Re (2010).

Research studies by Garnefski and Arends (1998), Garnefski and Diekstra (1997) et al have consistently found that adolescent survivors of sexual abuse report greater depression and general psychological distress, more conduct problems and aggression, lower self-esteem, and more substance abuse problems. This

reflects that, the adolescents' psychological well-being is affected.

Forms or Categories of Sexual Abuse

Child sexual abuse is classified into type one (contact abuse), type two (noncontact abuse) as Peters classification. Type one involves penetration abuse like rape and sodomy as well as touching and fondling of genitals, etc. Type two involves exposing the child to pornography, talking sexually explicit things and exhibition in front of the child (Barth J., Bermetzl, 2013).

Causes of Sexual Abuse

Although sexual abuse has been observed to exist more in homes and school (Mfonobong and Umobong, 2016), work and religious places (Gesinde and Abiodun, 2013), it is more prevalent in families affected by complex socio-economic factors including unemployment and poverty (Cry, C, Euser, et al, 2010). Some parents and caregivers lack the resources needed to provide basic needs for their children and wards (Donna Wynd, 2013). Sometimes, this leads to neglect and child labour and consequently makes the child vulnerable to sexual exploitation (Cry, C, Euser, et al, 2010). More so, low educational attainment of parents and caregiver has been linked with less understanding of issues associated with parenting, (Donna Wynd, 2013).

Other risk factors which could predispose children to being sexually abused includes living in a dysfunctional home, domestic violence and assault as well as single parenting (Goodyear-Brown, 2012), inappropriate relationships and child trafficking (NSPCC, 2013) use of social media including internet and web forum without parental guide and supervision (Leonard, 2010), and certain cultural practices such as child marriage, use of daughters or wife for sexual entertainment of guests, culturally accepted child sex and beliefs which posit that sexual contact with virgin cures impotence and other diseases like Human Immune Deficiency Virus (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS), Cromer LD, Goldsmith RE, 2010).

The Concept of Emotional Abuse

Emotional child abuse refers to acts such as ridiculing a child, threatening to harm a child or other emotional abuses (Mc Guigan and Pratt, 2001). In the same light, as to Goodwin (2012), "constantly belittling, threatening or ignoring children can be as damaging to their mental health as physical or sexual abuse". It means constantly blaming the child, belittling or berating the child, being unconcerned about the child's welfare and overtly rejection of child by parents or caregivers (Mba, 2003). Health Canada

(1996) defines emotional abuse as including rejecting, degrading, terrorizing, isolating, corrupting/exploiting and denying emotional responsiveness of someone. It is about one person maintaining power or control over another person (Health Direct, n.d). It frequently occurs between parents and children and also in settings like schools.

The US Department of Justice (1996) has seen emotion abusive traits as including causing fear by intimidating, threatening, physical harm to self, partner, children or partner's family or friends, forcing isolation from family, friends or school. Brassard, Hart & Hardy (1993) view psychological maltreatment as a repeated pattern of behavior that conveys to children that they are worthless, unloved, unwanted, or only of value in meeting another's needs. All of the behaviours be it by parents, caregivers or other significant figures, seriously interfere with a child's cognitive, emotional, psychological or social development.

Causes of Emotional Abuse

Straus & Field (2003) report that psychological aggression is a pervasive trait of American families; "verbal attacks on children, like physical attacks are so prevalent as to be just about universal" A study in (2008) by English et al, found that fathers and mothers were equally likely to be verbally aggressive towards their children. Parents' aggressiveness may be associated with, addiction to drugs or alcohol, relationship problems, family arguments, mental health issues, just to name a few. Some parents may emotionally and psychologically harm their children because of stress, poor parenting skills, social isolation, and lack of available resources or inappropriate expectations of their children.

Categories of Emotional Abuse

Briere, (1992), Garborino et al, (1986), Hart and Borssard, (1987) proposed the following as kinds of emotional abuse, rejecting, degrading/devaluing, terrorizing, isolating, corrupting, exploiting, denying essential stimulation, emotional responsiveness or availability and unreliable or inconsistent parenting. When a parent or caregiver or others does not show a child love, or make him or her feel wanted, secured, and worthy, these actions result in emotional deprivation. According to the University of Tennessee (n.d), there are three forms of emotional abuse: aggressing, denying and minimizing. These can take different forms, at one end of the spectrum are, insults or belittling words or actions while at the other end can be total indifference and neglect (eg calling names, telling you that you are stupid, constantly rejecting your thoughts, ideas or opinions).

Effects of Emotional Abuse

According to Chitiyo et al, (2019), the psychological impact of maltreatment on a child's wellbeing might vary depending on the type of abuse. For instance, Nezelek et al (2012), found that the people who regularly feel ignored also report lower level of self-esteem, belonging and meaning in their lives, while Hornor, (2012), found that children subjected to emotional abuse then loses access to protective elements such as healthy relationship, friends or other family members, major negative results are quite likely. Hence, children who have been abused are more likely to develop melancholy, anxiety, Stress-related disorders and post-traumatic disorders (Lambie, 2005; Tillman et al, 2015; Usakli, 2012).

Cohen, Brown and Smailes, 2001; Ehrensaft et al, 2003; TI Herrenkohl, 2011 opined that, the emotional pain and trauma associated with emotional abuse can become later manifested in poor psychological functioning and impairment during adolescence and childhood. Victims of child emotional aggression are also more likely than others to report physical health problems such as arthritis, chronic ulcers, (Coke, Smith, et al, 2000; Crouch, Milner, et al, 2010; Street and Arias, 2001).

The Concept of Child Neglect

Neglect according to (Carr et al, 2018 and Chitiyo and Pietrantonio, 2019) is the failure of an adult to meet the needs of a child or adolescent (eg Clothing, housing, food). Child neglect includes lack of supervision, medical neglect, failure to provide food or clothing, inadequate shelter, desertion, abandonment, and other physical neglect (McGargan and Pratt, 2001).

Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA, 2003), defines child neglect as any act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caregiver which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual harassment or exploitation or an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm to the child. This term child neglect is considered as any maltreatment or neglect of the child by parent or caregiver that result in non-accidental harm or injury and which cannot be easily identified (Axmaher, 2004). Child neglect usually takes various forms such as; mild neglect which does not warrant a report to Child Preventive Services (CPS) but might necessitate a community based intervention eg. a parents failing to instruct a child on the dangers of playing with sharp objects. The next form is moderate neglect which occurs when less severe neglect is caused to the victim eg when a child consistently is inappropriately dressed for the weather such as moving bare footed during the rainy season. With

moderate neglect, C.P.S may be involved. The last form is severe or long-term neglect when harm has been done to the child e.g a child with asthma who has not received appropriate medications over a long period of time, be it mild, moderate or severe, child neglect leaves the victims with serious negative consequences such as; since child neglect is often perpetuated by parents, teachers, primary caregivers and others, children are often left with no one to turn to and they can experience traumatization as they might lack social and emotional support to cope with such situations.

Several large scale studies have supported that children subjected to maltreatment may suffer from depression, anxiety, stress related disorders and post-traumatic disorders (Lambrie, 2005); Tillman et al, 2015, Usakli, 2012) e.g a study by Widom (1995) showed that children (n-1196) who were maltreated before the age of 12 and assessed at age 29, had a post-traumatic disorders diagnosis. Existing research shows that, those individuals with a post-traumatic disorders are more likely to have committed suicide (Gilbert et al, 2009), and More to have alcohol and drug problems (Widom, Weiler and Cottler, 1999). Neglect is practiced by some teachers in schools who turn to have some lukewarm attitude towards particular students. This can also be as a result of anger, laziness, discrimination just to name a few which will go a long way to affect those students' psychological well-being negatively.

The Concept of Psychological Wellbeing

WHO (2014) defines well-being as a state of "health, which is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of diseases or infirmity". She further expands that, well-being refers to a state in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to contribute to his or her community (as stated in Graham et al, 2011). Gross & Munoz, 1995, Ruff; 1995, Ryan and Deci, 2001, Community Translational Science Team (CTST), 2016 define psychological well-being as including hedonic (enjoyment, pleasure) and eudaimonic (meaning fulfilment), happiness as well as resilience (coping emotion regulation) and healthy problem solving.

The two important components in psychological wellbeing are hedonic and eudaimonic. Hedonic well-being refers to the subjective feelings of happiness. It comprises of two components, an affective component (high positive effects and low negative affects) and a cognitive, component (satisfaction with life). It is proposed that an individual experiences

happiness when live affect and satisfaction with life are both high (Carruthers and Hood, 2004).

Eudaimonic well-being on the other hand refers to the purposeful aspect of psychological well-being. The psychologist Carol Ryff has developed a model that breaks down eudaimonic well-being in to six components of psychological well-being, namely; self-acceptance, environmental mastery, positive relation with others, personal growth, purpose in life and autonomy.

Students' well-being encompasses the overall health of students including their social, mental, physical and emotional health. Elements of psychological well-being includes a sense of balance in emotions, thoughts, social relationships and pursuits which necessitates active engagement of self-control processes such as; emotion regulation (Brown and Ryan, 2003; Community Translational Science Team, 2016; Feller et al, 2018; NIH Report 2018). Accumulating evidence has supported a causal relationship between greater psychological well-being and overall health and improved diseases- specific outcomes (Ong, 2010; Diener & Chan, 2011; DeStem et al, 2013).

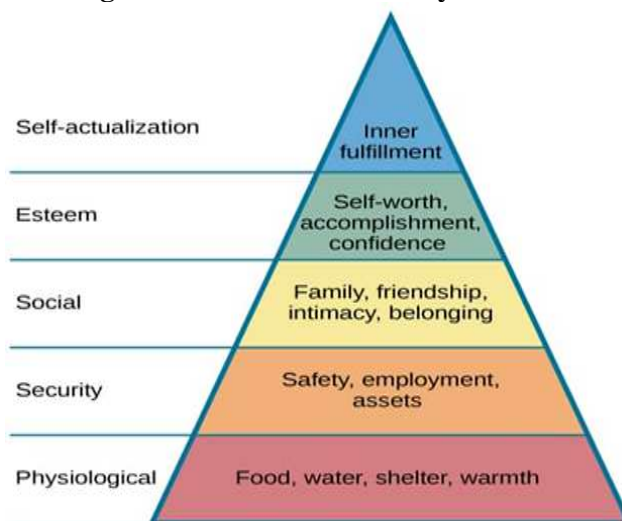
Kiecolt Glaser et al, 2002; Howell et al, 2007; Diener and Chan, 2011; Feller et al, 2018 further exemplified that, changing states of well-being by increasing positive emotions and decreasing negative emotions result in salutory physiological biological changes e.g inflammation, immune functioning and contributes to diverse positive health outcomes e.g cardiovascular health. Students who portray positive psychological wellbeing will participate in activities that are significant and meaningful to them, possess a sense of emotional control, experience sense of belonging, being part of positive connections and being regarded, cherished and pushed to achieve success. Meanwhile, students who portray negative psychological well-being will be unable to cope with stress, cannot cultivate healthy relationships and will suffer from poor academic performance and even achievement in life.

Theoretical Review

Hierarchy of needs theory – Abraham Maslow (1943) situated this study. Maslow's hierarchy of needs, represented as a pyramid with the more basic needs at the bottom (Maslow, 1943). Maslow used the terms "physiological", "safety", "belonging and love", "esteem", "self-actualization", and "self-transcendence" to describe the pattern through which human motivations generally move. The goal of Maslow's Theory is to attain the sixth level or stage: self-actualization needs where in a person must meet the basic or physiological need need at the bottom

before moving to the highest need (self-actualisation) at the top (Maslow, 1954).

Figure 1: Maslow's hierarchy of needs



Source: Adapted from Seong, 2018

An interpretation of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, represented as a pyramid with the more basic needs at the bottom, physiological needs. Physiological needs are the physical requirements for human survival. If these requirements are not met, the human body cannot function properly and will ultimately fail. Physiological needs are thought to be the most important; should be met first. Air, water and food are metabolic requirements for survival in all animals, including humans. Clothing and shelter provide necessary protection from the elements. While maintaining an adequate birth rate shapes the intensity of the human sexual instinct, sexual competition may also shape said instinct (Cianci & Gambrel, 2003).

With their physical needs relatively satisfied, the individual's safety needs take precedence and dominate behavior. In the absence of physical safety- due to war, natural disaster, family violence, childhood abuse, etc.-people may (re)experience post-traumatic stress disorder or Trans-generational trauma (Maslow,1971). In the absence of economic safety- due to economic crisis and lack of work opportunities- these safety needs manifest themselves in ways such as preference for job security, grievance procedures for protecting the individual from unilateral authority, savings accounts, insurance policies, reasonable disability accommodations etc (Wahba & Bridwell, 1976). This level is more likely to be found in children because they generally have a greater need to feel safe. Safety and security needs include; personal security, financial security, health and well-being and safety need against accidents/illness and their adverse impacts.

This theory reflects a clear picture of what the topic is trying to show because students will obviously not learn or go to school when they are hungry, have no uniforms, no books, no school shoes, basic school materials, lack of financial, personal, health security, safety against accidents and diseases and other necessities that will facilitate proper acquisition of knowledge. Rather children will prefer to go late to school, absent from school and classes, boycott school and classes, steal from their friends and engage in other activities such as gambling, cheating, prostitution, sexual relationships with their teachers in order to self- provide such needs (Garcia-Romeu,2010)

Again, even those who engage in out of school and after school jobs like doing unskilled labor and petty trade which involves hawking, selling in beer parlors, washing dishes and serving in the restaurant often retire late at home and with a lot of fatigue, they go late to school, absent from school and have little or no time to study may end up getting sexually transmitted marks or cheating during examinations to succeed and all of these constitutes all what it takes to firmly ascertain the creation and existence of discipline problems (Brazelton & Greenspan,2000).

Finally, the absence of basic needs and safety needs will prevent the students from engaging in family and personal relationships in fact they feel they do not belong which in the long run will lead to low self-esteem thus making the students to feel less important and as such act accordingly thus posing a barrier to move upwards to complete the hierarchy of needs theory (Maslow, 1971).

The theory posits that each person has a hierarchy of needs that must be satisfied, ranging from physiological requirement to love, esteem and finally self-actualization (Tay &Diener,2011). Therefore, for the home and school to maintain discipline, certain basic requirements such as food and shelter need to be provided to the children. Failure to meet the basic needs may lead to deviant behaviour. Besides, when children come to school, they come with the needs or reasons that need to be satisfied. It is the needs that

motivate the pupils to behave accordingly so that they achieve their desired ambitions.

RESEARCH METHOD AND PROCEDURE

This study used a mixed methods (triangulation) research design. The main reason for using this design is that mixing two methods provides a deep insight into the research phenomena that cannot be fully understood by using only qualitative or quantitative method. Mixed method research approach allows researchers to broaden their inquiry with sufficient depth and breath.

The population of this study consists of all the teachers and students of all secondary schools in Ndu Municipality. The total population of teachers stands at 180 and that of students is 2228. The target population of this study comprised of all students of 4 selected schools in Ndu Municipality, Donga Mantung Division, North West Region of Cameroon. The researcher in this study focuses on forms four and five students and teachers of G.B.H.S. Ndu, J.M.B.C. Ndu, G.H.S. Talla and Hope Institute Ndu for the accessible population

A purposive sampling technique was used to select the secondary schools, teachers and students needed for the study. A sample of 150 students and 27 teachers was selected using Krejcie and Morgan (1970), table of determining sample size for research activities.

The instruments that were used for data collection were close ended questionnaires for students and interview guide for teachers. These instruments were validated using face and content validity and reliability analysis checked which stood at 0.707.

The data was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS version 23.0) with the aid of descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistical tools used were frequency count and percentages. The hypotheses of the study were tested using a-none parametric test, the Spearman Rho because the data for all the variables were not approximately normally distributed.

FINDINGS

Findings were presented based on demographic data and research questions of the study

Table 1: Distribution showing respondents by demographic data

Demographic information		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	92	61.3
	Female	58	38.7
	Total	150	100
Age Range	13-15	50	33.3
	16-20	70	46.7
	21-25	20	13.3
	26 and above	10	6.7
	Total	150	100
Class	Form 4	84	56
	Form 5	66	44
	Total	150	100
Marital Status	Single	150	100
	Married	0	0.0
	Total	150	100

Among the 150 students sampled, 92(61.3%) were male while 58(38.7%) were female. Based on age range, 50(33.3%) of the students were between the ages of 13-15, 70(46.7%) of them ranges from 16-20 years of age, 20(13.3%) of the students were between 21-25 years while 10(6.7%) were 26 years and above. Based on class, 84(56.0%) were in form 4 while 66(44.0%) were in form 5. Based on marital status, 150(100%) of the students were single and non 0(0.0%) was married.

Research question one: To what extent does sexual abuse have on students' psychological wellbeing?

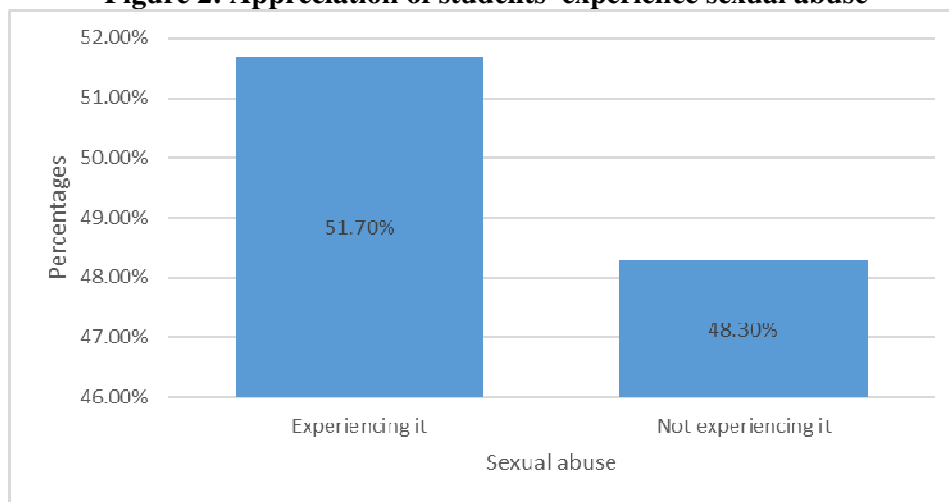
Table 2: Appreciation of sexual abuse and students' psychological wellbeing

Statements	Stretched				Collapsed	
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Agree	Disagree
I like seeing my mates exposing body parts like breast, private parts and I always move with them	30 (20.0%)	72 (48.0%)	27 (18.0%)	21 (14.0%)	102 (68.0%)	48 (32.0%)
I don't watch pornographic pictures	29 (19.3%)	59 (39.3%)	27 (18.0%)	35 (23.3%)	88 (58.6%)	62 (41.3%)
I always keep away from people who make insulting sexual jokes.	31 (20.6%)	67 (44.7%)	23 (15.3%)	29 (19.3%)	98 (65.3%)	52 (34.6%)
I always report cases where sexual advances are made to me or my mates	19 (12.7%)	29 (19.3%)	79 (52.7%)	23 (15.3%)	48 (32.0%)	102 (68.0%)
I don't welcome sexual gestures e.g. finger signs and I don't like to interact with students who do that.	19 (12.6%)	33 (22.0%)	61 (40.7%)	37 (24.7%)	52 (34.6%)	98 (65.4%)
Multiple response set	128 (17.0%)	260 (34.7%)	217 (28.9%)	145 (19.4%)	388 (51.7%)	362 (48.3%)

In aggregate, findings revealed that 388 (51.7%) of the students opined that sexual abuse have negative effect on their psychological wellbeing meanwhile 362 (48.3%) of the students do not. Specifically, 102 (68.0%) of the respondent like seeing their mates exposing body parts like breast, private parts and the always move with them while 48(32.0%) did not. Also, 88 (58.6%) of respondent don't watch pornographic pictures while 62 (41.3%) always like to watch pornographic pictures. Also majority of the student 98(65.3%) said they always keep away from people who make insulting sexual jokes. In addition, 102(68.0%) of the student don't always report cases where sexual advances are made to them or their mates.

Also 98(65.4%) student agreed that they welcome sexual gestures e.g. finger signs and like to interact with students who do that while 52(34.6%) did not. In summary sexual abuse have negative effect on their psychological wellbeing

Figure 2: Appreciation of students' experience sexual abuse



Also, among the 150 students that were sampled for the study, 51.70% of the students were experiencing sexual abuse while 48.3% of them were not.

Table 3: Teachers opinion on the impact of sexual abuse on students' psychological wellbeing

Opinions	Groundings	'Sample quotations
Yes	3	Depression
	3	aggression,
	3	low self-esteem
	2	risk taking behavior
	1	poor academic performance
	1	mental health problems

Based on the interview guide from the teacher's sexual abuse have negative consequences on students' psychological wellbeing such as depression, aggression, low self-esteem, risk taking behavior, poor academic performance and mental health problems

Verification of hypothesis one

(H₀₁): There are no significant relationship between sexual abuse and students' psychological wellbeing.

Table 4: Relationship between sexual abuse and students' psychological wellbeing

	Test statistics	Sexual abuse	Psychological wellbeing
Spearman's rho	R-value	1.000	.170**
	P-value	.	.001
	N	150	150

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Statistically, there was a significant and positive relationship between sexual abuse and students' psychological wellbeing (P=0.000, <0.001). However, the positive sign of the correlation value (R=0.170**) imply that when students sexual abuse is high, their psychological wellbeing is more likely to low. The null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between sexual abuse and students' psychological wellbeing was rejected and the alternative that there is a significant relationship between sexual abuse and students' psychological wellbeing was retained

Research question two: What is the impact of Emotional Abuse On Psychological Wellbeing?

Table 5: Appreciation of Emotional Abuse on Psychological Wellbeing

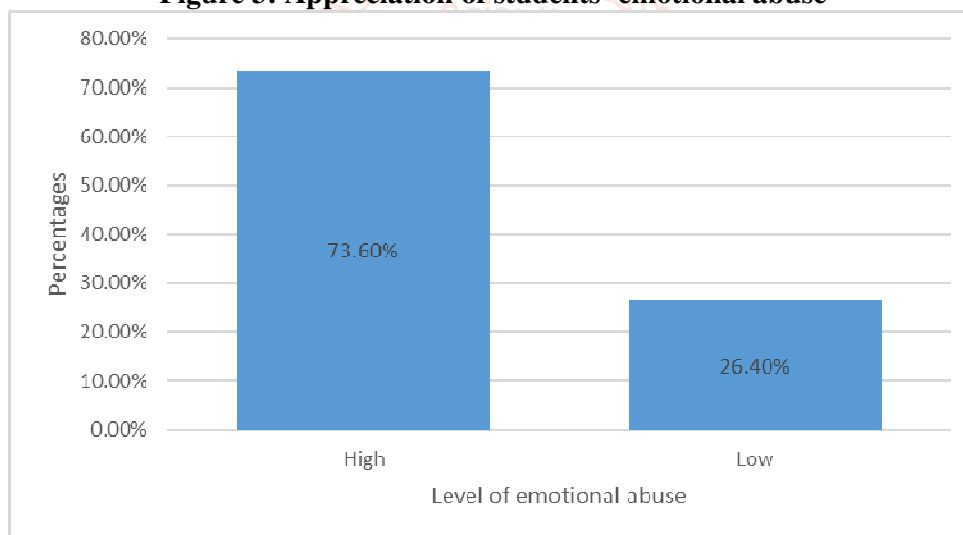
Statements	Stretched				Collapsed	
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Agree	Disagree
I always feel depress when someone calls me an idiot or say I am stupid	79 (52.7%)	29 (19.3%)	27 (18.0%)	15 (10.0%)	108 (72.0%)	42 (28.0%)
I always feel discouraged and sometimes give up my effort in a task when I am shamed at.	90 (60.0%)	26 (17.3%)	14 (9.3%)	20 (13.3%)	116 (77.3%)	34 (22.7%)

I always like calling my mates by nicknames usually mocking names.	25 (16.7%)	80 (53.3%)	28 (18.7%)	17 (11.3%)	105 (70%)	45 (30%)
I don't like seeing people insulting each other because insults bring shame.	79 (52.7%)	37 (24.7%)	15 (10.05)	19 (12.7%)	116 (77.4%)	34 (23.2%)
I feel happy declaring my intentions to harm my school and classmates	27 (18.0%)	80 (53.3%)	25 (16.7%)	18 (12.0%)	107 (71.3%)	43 (28.7%)
Multiple response set	300 (40.0%)	252 (33.6%)	109 (14.5%)	89 (11.9%)	552 (73.6%)	198 (26.4%)

In aggregate, findings revealed that 551(73.6%) of the students that were experiencing emotional abuse which affect their Psychological Wellbeing negatively meanwhile 198(26.4%) of the students do not. To be more specific, majority of the students 108(72.0%) of the students agreed that they always feel depress when someone calls them an idiot or say they am stupid. To another degree, 116(77.3%) of the students said they always feel discouraged and sometimes give up their effort in a task when they are shamed at. Also, majority of the students 105(70.0%) agreed that they always like calling them mates by nicknames usually mocking names while minority 45(30.0%) of them disagreed.

Also, majority of the students 116(77.4%) agreed that they don't like seeing people insulting each other because insults bring shame. Moreover, 107(71.3%) agreed they feel happy declaring their intentions to harm their school and classmates. Conclusively findings revealed that students that were experiencing emotional abuse which affect their Psychological Wellbeing negatively.

Figure 3: Appreciation of students' emotional abuse



Also, among the 150 students that were sampled for the study, 73.6% of the students were experiencing high level of emotional abuse while 26.4% were expiring low.

Table 6: Teachers opinion on the impact of emotional abuse on students' psychological wellbeing

Opinions	'Sample quotations
Negatives	Depression
	aggression,
	low self-esteem
	risk taking behavior
	poor academic performance
	mental health problems

Based on the interview guide from the teachers on emotional abuse, they opined that it has negative consequences on students' psychological wellbeing such as depression, aggression, low self-esteem, risk taking behavior, poor academic performance and mental health problems

Verification of hypotheses two

(H₀₂): There are no significant relationship between emotional abuse and students' psychological wellbeing

Table 7: Relationship between emotional abuse and students' psychological wellbeing

	Test statistics	Emotional abuse	Psychological wellbeing
Spearman's rho	R-value	1.000	.353**
	P-value	.	.000
	N	150	150
	**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).		

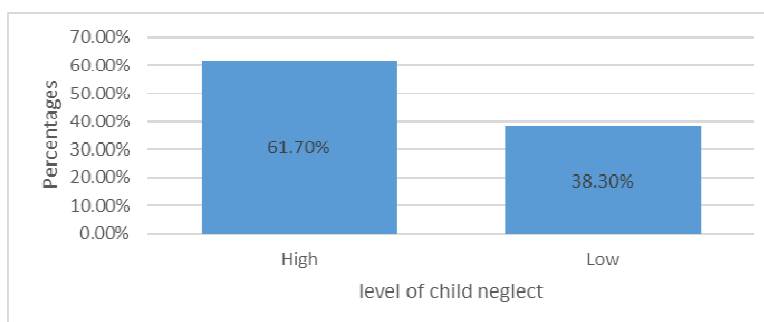
Statistically, there was a significant and positive relationship emotional abuse and students' psychological wellbeing ($P=0.000$, <0.001). The positive sign of the correlation value ($R=0.353^{**}$) imply that when students emotional abuse is high, their psychological wellbeing is more likely to be low. The null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between emotional abuse and students' psychological wellbeing was rejected and the alternative that there is a significant relationship between emotional abuse and students' psychological wellbeing was retained.

Research question three: What is the impact of child neglect on students' psychological wellbeing?**Table 8: Appreciation of child neglect and students' psychological**

Statements	Stretched				Collapsed	
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Agree	Disagree
I like mocking and laughing at my mates who dress poorly to school.	70 (46.7%)	36 (24.0%)	27 (18.0%)	17 (11.3%)	106 (70.7%)	44 (27.3%)
I always feel angry and sometimes aggressive when I am refused food.	71 (47.3%)	55 (36.7%)	14 (9.3%)	10 (6.7%)	126 (84.0%)	24 (16.0%)
I am always depressed when I see a mate who is not given adequate medical attention.	45 (30.0%)	45 (30.0%)	21 (15.0%)	39 (26.0%)	90 (60.0%)	60 (40.0%)
I sometimes encourage my friends to isolate a particular friend for not always providing food for the group.	20 (13.3%)	22 (14.7%)	68 (45.3%)	40 (26.7%)	42 (28.0%)	108 (72.0%)
I always feel inferior and discouraged when my teacher consistently rejects my opinions in class.	67 (44.7%)	32 (21.3%)	26 (17.3%)	25 (16.7%)	99 (66.0%)	51 (44.0%)
Multiple response set	273 (36.4%)	190 (25.3%)	156 (20.8%)	131 (17.5%)	463 (61.7%)	287 (38.3%)

In aggregate, findings showed that 463 (61.7%) of the students accepted that child neglect impact students' psychological wellbeing meanwhile 287 (38.3%) of the students were not. To be more explicit, 106(70.7%) students agreed that they like mocking and laughing at their mates who dress poorly to school. Also, majority of student 126(84.0%) agreed that they are always feel angry and sometimes aggressive when they refused them food. Moreover, 90(60.0%) students agreed that they are always depressed when they see their mate who is not given adequate medical attention.

Furthermore, majority of student 108(72.0%) disagreed that they sometimes encourage their friends to isolate a particular friend for not always providing food for the group. In addition, 99(66.0%) agreed that they always feel inferior and discouraged when their teacher consistently rejects their opinions in class. conclusively, child neglect impact students' psychological wellbeing.

Figure 4: Appreciation of students' of students' level of child neglect

Finally, among the 150 students that were sampled for the study, 61.7 % of the students' experience child neglect meanwhile 38.3% of them do not.

Teachers opinion on the impact child neglect on students' psychological wellbeing, most teachers opined that child neglect have negative consequences on students' psychological wellbeing such as depression, aggression, low self-esteem, risk taking behavior, poor academic performance and mental health problems.

Based on method to abolish child neglect, there should be massive sensitization about the negative consequences of child abuse on students' psychological wellbeing. Perpetuators of child abuse should be sanctioned seriously by law. Government should open child protective centres in our communities where victims of child abuse will be catered for. Schools should have counselors who will always carry-out counseling services in schools

Verification of hypothesis three

(H03): There are no significant relationship between child neglect and students' psychological wellbeing

Table 9: Relationship between child neglect and students' psychological wellbeing

	Test statistics	child neglect	Psychological wellbeing
Spearman's rho	R-value	1.000	.346**
	P-value	.	.000
	N	150	150
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Statistically, there was a significant and positive relationship between child neglect and students' psychological wellbeing ($P=0.000$, <0.001). The positive sign of the correlation value ($R=0.346^{**}$) imply that when child neglect is high, their psychological wellbeing is more likely to be low. The null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between child neglect and students' psychological wellbeing was rejected and the alternative that there is a significant relationship between child neglect and students' psychological wellbeing was retained.

Discussions

Discussed in themes and how each of these supports or contradicts the existing findings.

Sexual Abuse and Psychological Well-being

There was as significant and positive relationship between sexual abuse and students' psychological well-being. The positive correlation implies that when students' sexual abuse is high, their psychological wellbeing is normally going to be low. This means that sexual abuse contributes negatively, to students' psychological well-being as it is associated to low self-worth, difficulties in socialization among students. Findings form teachers also reveals that sexual abuse has negative impact on students' psychological wellbeing as sexually abused students' show signs of aggression, low self-esteem, risk taking behavior, poor academic performance and health problems which are characteristics of negative psychological wellbeing.

Findings of this study are similar with that of Brandenburg (1997), who revealed that, the effects of sexual abuse can be devastating to individual's self-worth, emotional health, career path, interpersonal relationship and the entire course of one's personal and professional life. Bietchman et al (1992), theorized that childhood anxiety symptoms and disorders have long been identified as both long and short term psychological effects of child sexual abuse.

Emotional Abuse and Psychological Well-being

There was a significant and positive relationship between emotional abuse and students' psychological wellbeing. The positive sign of the correlation implies that psychological disorders is more likely going to be reduced if emotional abuse is not too high. On the other hand a minority of respondents say emotional abuse does not impact students' psychological wellbeing. The majority of respondents who say there is a significant relationship between emotional abuse and psychological wellbeing testify that, they always feel depressed, discouraged, ashamed when they are emotional abused. Majority of the teachers attest to the fact that emotional abuse impacts students' psychological wellbeing negatively as it creates psychological stress disorder in students such as anxiety, depression, aggression, low-self-esteem and poor academic performance.

Findings from the study agrees with McEachern, Aluede and Kenny, (2008) who opined that, emotional abuse have detrimental outcomes on secondary school childrens' wellbeing and that emotional abuse by teachers or school personnel is associated with emotional and behavioural problems. It is also noted that emotional abuse may reduce childrens' self-worth and confidence Twenlow and Fonagy, (2005).

Child Neglect and Psychological Well-being

There was a significant and positive relationship between child neglect and students' psychological wellbeing. The positive sign of correlation value implies that when child neglect is high, students' psychological wellbeing will likely be low. Majority of teachers attest to the fact that, child neglect negatively affects students' psychological wellbeing as it causes depression, aggression and inferiority, poor academic performance among others in children. This was confirmed as majority of students testified that child neglect causes them to exhibit anger, aggression and inferiority.

Such a positive relationship between child neglect and students' psychological wellbeing is in line with Sidebotham, (2002) who says that, persistent neglect can lead to serious impairment of health and development, and long-term difficulties with social functioning relationship and education progress in extreme cases, neglect can also result in death, 40 percent of maltreatment-related deaths are probably the result of neglect, or a combination of neglect and other forms of abuse Sidebotham, (2007).

Conclusion

All the findings revealed that child abuse has a great impact on students psychological wellbeing. Based on the findings, it can therefore be concluded that there is a significant and negative relationship between child abuse and students' psychological wellbeing. When students are sexually, emotionally abused and neglected, it impacts their psychological wellbeing. A growing body of knowledge shows that they will exhibit negative psychological wellbeing than positive. Briere, (1996), Heim and Nemeroff, (2001) suggested that victims of child abuse are associated with negative mental health outcome; low self-esteem and depression, severe anxiety. Also as per the study victims of abuse were found to act in fear, timidity and inferiority. Some face the problem of anxiety, anger, and substance misuse. Many students agree that abuse has caused them to exhibit psychological disorders and thereby facing a lot of problems in school with their teachers and mates. Some of them become withdrawn, do not socialize and keep to themselves. Furthermore, the presence of child abuse in school in this municipality, has pushed some students in to social deviant behaviours such as smoking, joining dangerous groups in order to revenge or protect themselves which only go a long way to mar their psychological wellbeing.

Recommendations

Government should employ more counselors to help and guide parents on how to treat their children and avoid abuse. Parents and guardians should adopt a

good parental care, love and concern for their children, this could help to boost their psychological wellbeing. Head teachers or principals should refer cases of child abuse to counsellors for expertise action and if need arise to higher appropriate authorities.

The study also recommends that policy makers should ensure proper creation, implementation and dissemination of policies to address child abuse both at home and in schools. In order to address child abuse, policies need to be created with all actors involved. Also, school authorities should ensure proper implementation of the policies in the school milieu.

Parents should strengthen their communication lines with their children as this is very important to help them keep in touch with their children's school work, friends and activities both in school and at home. Parents and educators should encourage students to always report cases of sexual, emotional abuse and neglect.

Also, parents, teachers, and Counsellors foster the teaching of sex education which is an aspect of the school curriculum and continuously create respectful, safer and comfortable environment for children both in the home and in school. School professionals should avoid the use of inappropriate language, remaining calm and restraining from angry outburst towards students, being sensitive and encouraging to students. On the part of the parents, they should be supportive towards their children and letting children know that they care and are concerned for their personal and academic wellbeing.

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