

ATTITUDE OF RURAL RESIDENT WOMEN IN UMUCHU AGUATA L.G.A ANAMBRA STATE TOWARD CHILD ABUSE

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Abstract

The main focus of the study was to investigate the attitude of rural resident women in Umuchu Aguata Local Government Area Anambra State toward child abuse. In line with the objectives of the study three research questions and two null hypotheses were postulated. Descriptive survey research design was employed while 292 women formed the sample for the study. A fifteen-item structured valid questionnaire built on five point rating scale was used in gathering the data for the study. Data collected were failed and analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency statistics of chi-square. It was found that attitude of rural residents women in Umuchu Aguata LGA Anambra State towards child abuse is negative. Significant relationship existed among subject of various ages and educational qualifications. Recommendation were made based on the findings pertinent among which is that the ministry in charge of women affairs should be used to create awareness on the dangers of child abuse.

Introduction

Child abuse is one of the world's social problems. It has attracted both national and international attention. Agonia (2001) defined child abuse as the portion of harm to children that result from human actions or in action that is prescribed, proximate and preventable. According to Ebigbo (1991) such harm is no accident but something inflicted upon children by others. Following child abuse children suffer serious physical injuries inflicted upon them by another person other than accidental means. Abused children are harmed, malnourished and sexually abused. Some abused children go without food/necessary and basic physical care. Some grow up under conditions which threaten their physical, social and emotional health.

Child abuse is the denial of the basic rights and needs of the child by parents, school, peers, government and community.

The various forms of child abuse include child battering, girl-child marriage, teenage pregnancy, child-street hawking, child prostitution and child labor among others, (Bowlby; 1994).

Some of this behavior can occur as an act of omission or commission. Some factors predispose children to abuse such factors include parental factors which is mother or father who may have the tendency of abusing their children if they were abused as a child etc. Abused children factors-A child may be prone to abuse if he is unwanted, illegitimate, chronically ill or deformed and troublesome or hyperactive (Onuzulike, 2006). The child temperament and behavior patterns may increase his vulnerability to abuse.

Environmental factors: Family environmental conditions like marital disharmony, financial difficulties, unemployment, poverty and social class may provoke a child

abuse in the house. Onuzulike (2006), Pointed out some of the factors that predispose children to abuse which include hawking which its social implications can lead to unwanted pregnancy, prostitution, smoking, armed robbery, poor academic performance among others. Other factors include Early marriage-Teenagers who are abused suffer the worst trauma of child abuse. For example a teenage girl who is abused sexually may suffer the result of being pregnant as the case may be. Some of them are exposed into armed robbery, prostitution, going into drugs, majority of them start gambling pick pocketing. Some may fall victim of kidnap and other social ills.

Fine (1994) opined that many parents and guardians have been in regret today because of children or wards lost through street hawking. Most women abuse their children because of ignorance of the consequences. Not only do children suffer acutely from the physical and mental consequences of child abuse. They endure many long-term consequences including delays in reaching developmental milestones. The child or children that are abused grow to become misfits and burden on the family and society at large. Child abuse has led to a lot of consequences to the abused child, nation, community and nations at large. It is against the background of child safety that the researcher was motivated towards ascertaining the attitude of rural resident women in Umuchu Aguata L.G.A Anambra State towards child abuse.

The following research questions were posited to guide the study.

Research questions

1. What is the attitude of rural resident women in Umuchu towards child battering?
2. What is the attitude of rural resident women in Umuchu Aguata L.G.A
- 3 Anambra State towards girl child marriage?
What is the attitude of rural resident women in Umuchu Aguata L.G.A Anambra State towards child street hawking?

Hypotheses:

1. There is no significant relationship among rural resident women of various educational qualifications in Umuchu Aguata L.G.A in their attitude towards child abuse.
2. There is no significant relationship among rural resident women of various ages in Umuchu Aguata L.G.A in their attitude towards child abuse.

Method

Descriptive survey research design was used for study. This design was considered appropriate because it permits for intensive study that exists in its natural setting. The appropriateness of this research design could be adduced from the use in similar studies by previous researcher including Igwe (1996) and Nelson (1998). The accessible population for the study consisted of all the parents from the five randomly drawn villages in Umuchu community. The sample consisted of 292 women of child bearing age from five randomly drawn villages in Umuchu community. Multistage sampling procedures were used:

Stage one involves clustering women of child bearing age (WCBA) in Umuchu Aguata L.G.A into nineteen representing the nineteen villages in the area.

In stage two five villages were chosen through simple random sampling technique by balloting with replacement. In stage three non-probability (chance selection) was used in choosing five thousand female parents.

The main instrument for data collection was structured interview guide. Structured interview guide was used because 69.95% of the respondents were not very literate. The structured interview guide was self-developed by the researcher following review of related literature. The structured interview guide was in four sections. Section A contained two questions on background information of the respondents. Section B contained five questions on child battery; Section C contained five questions on child marriage while Section D contained five questions on child street hawking. The instrument was validated by a junior of health experts from two Nigerian Universities. All their corrections were adequately effected in restructuring the instrument. Reliability of the instrument was established by exposing the structured interview twice for reliability using test-retest technique. Twenty women from Uga community were used for test-retest. After fifteen days a re-test with the same but fresh copies of the interview instrument was made. The test-retest results were subjected to reliability co-efficient using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient (PPMCC) which yielded high positive correlation of 0.85.

Trained research assistants who worked in pairs with community based escorts helped in administering the instrument. Ninety-Seven percent of the instrument were returned and used for data analysis. The responses to the structured interview guides were coded appropriately and collated in terms of frequencies of the response options. Appropriate cross-tabulation of variables was done to test the null hypotheses stated. The level of significance was set at .05.

Results

Results of data analysis are shown in the table I – IV

1 Table

Frequency distribution of attitude of Rural resident women based on child battering N = 292.

	Child battering	Attitudinal Responses	
		Positive	Negative
a.	Child abuse through battering will constitute serious health problems of children	211 (72.3%)	81 (27.7%)
b.	Abused children through battering may end up getting hardened.	173 (59.3%)	119 (40.7%)
c.	Battered children find it difficult to develop affectionable relationship in later life.	188 (64.4%)	104 (35.6%)

d.	Excessive flogging of the child with stick, belt, booth etc is child battering.	187 (64)	109 (36)
e.	Denial of basic rights and needs of the child is child battering	187 (64)	109 (36)
	Total	950	514
	Average	190	102
		65%	35%

Table 1 revealed the frequency distribution of attitude of rural resident women in Umuchu Aguata L.G.A towards child abuse based on child battering.

Two hundred and eleven (72.3%) revealed positive attitude that child abuse through battering will constitute serious health problem while 81 (27.72) revealed negative attitude. One hundred and seventy-three (59.3%) disclosed positive attitude that abused children through battering may end up getting hardened. While 119 (40.7%) disclosed negative attitude. One hundred and eighty eight (64.4%) revealed positive attitude that battered children find it difficult to develop affection while 104 (35.6%) revealed negative attitude. One hundred and ninety one (65.4%) disclosed positive attitude that excessive flogging with stick, belt etc is battering while 101 (34.6%) disclosed negative attitude. One hundred and eighty seven (64%) revealed positive attitude that denial to basic right and needs is child battering while 109 (36%) revealed negative attitude.

Table II

Frequency distribution of attitude of rural resident women based on girl child marriage.

	Girl child marriage	Attitudinal Responses	
		Positive attitude	Negative attitude
a.	Forced under aged child into marriage is child abuse	221 (75.7%)	71 (24.3%)
b.	When an under aged child is raped by adult is child abuse	230 (78.8%)	62 (21.2%)
c.	Children who are forced into early marriage may end up getting VVF (Vesico Vagina Fistula)		
d.	Early marriage hamper the development of the child biologically, psychologically, social and educationally.	180 (61.6%)	112 (38.4%)
e.	If a child marries before the age of eighteen is child abuse	165 (56.5%)	127 (43.5%)
	Total	988	472
	Average	198.6	94
		(67.8%)	(32.2%)

Table II revealed the frequency distribution of attitude of rural resident women in Umuchu Aguata L.G.A toward child abused based on girl child marriage. Two hundred and twenty one (75.7%) had positive attitude that forcing a child into marriage is child abuse while 71 (24.3%) revealed negative attitude. Two hundred and thirty (78.8%) disclosed positive attitude that children who are raped by adults is child abuse while 62 (21.2%) revealed negative attitude. One hundred and ninety-two (65.7%) revealed positive attitude that children forced into marriage end with VVF (Vesico Vagina fistula) while 100 (34.3%) disclosed negative attitude. One hundred and eighty (61.62) revealed positive attitude that early marriage hamper child development socially, psychologically etc. while 112 (38.4%) revealed negative attitude.

One hundred and sixty-five (56.5%) revealed positive attitude that a child marrying before eighteen years is child abuse while 127 (43.5%) had negative attitude.

Table III

Frequency distribution of attitude of rural resident women based on child street hawking.

	Child Street hawking	Attitudinal Responses	
		Positive attitude	Negative attitude
a.	Child abuse through hawking will affect the academic performance of children	198 (67.8%)	94 (32.2%)
b.	Sending children to hawk on the street, road, motor parks and schools is child abuse	198 (64.7%)	103 (35.3%)
c.	Hawking of wares expose children to prostitution, pregnancy, venereal diseases and communicable disease like T.B, measles etc is child abuse	223 (76.4%)	69 (23.6%)
d.	Hawking of wares by underage children is child abuse	203 (69.5%)	89 (30.5%)
	Total	813	355
	Average	203	89
		69.5%	30.5%

Table III revealed the frequency distribution of attitude of rural resident women in Umuchu Aguata L.G.A toward child abused based on child street hawking. One hundred and ninety eight (67.8%) revealed positive attitude that child abuse through hawking will affect academic performance while 94 (32.2%) disclosed negative attitude. One hundred and eighty nine (64.7%) revealed positive attitude that sending children to parks, streets, motor parks etc to hawk is child abuse while 103 (35.3%) disclosed negative attitude. Two hundred and twenty three (76.4%) revealed positive

attitude that hawking exposes children to prostitution, pregnancy venereal diseases etc. While 69 (23.62) disclosed negative attitude.

Two hundred and three (69.5%) revealed positive attitude that hawking by under age child abuse while 89 (30.52) disclosed negative attitude.

Table IV

Chi-square analysis of respondent's attitude towards child abuse in relation to their educational qualification.

Educational Qualification	Attitudinal Responses		Total
	Positive attitude	Negative attitude	
Less than N.C.E	21 (52.9%)	156 (53.4%)	156 (53.4%)
N.C.E/Diploma	56 (31.9%)	38 (61.1%)	94 (32.2%)
First degree/ equivalent	22 (14.2%)	20 (27.8%)	42 (14.4%)
Total	193 (66%)	99 (34%)	292 (100%)

$$X^2 \text{ Cal} - 62.6 > - 2 = 5.991, \text{ df} = 2 \text{ p} < .05$$

Table IV showed that at df 2 and 0.5 level of significance, $X^2 \text{ cal} (62.6) > X^2 \text{ tabulated } 5.991$, hence there was significant relationship among rural resident women in their attitude toward child abuse.

Women with less than N.C.E revealed the highest negative attitude, while those with first degree/equivalent revealed lowest negative attitude.

Table V

Chi-square analysis of respondent's attitude toward child abuse in relation to their ages.

Ages	Attitudinal Responses		Total
	Positive attitude	Negative attitude	
20 – 29 yrs	42 (35%)	11 (18%)	53 (18.22%)
30 – 39 yrs	92 (74%)	20 (38%)	112 (38.4%)
40 yrs & above	59 (83.9%)	68 (43%)	127 (42.4%)
Total	193 (66%)	99 (34%)	292 (100%)

$$X^2 \text{ cal} = 40.52 > X^2 0.05 = 5.991,$$

$$\text{df} = z \text{ P} < .05.$$

$$X^2 = 40.52 > X^2 0.05 = 5.911, \text{ at } \text{df} = 2.$$

Thus, from table X^2 calculated (40.52) $> X^2$ table value (5.991), the null hypothesis was rejected and conclusion drawn that there was significant relationship among rural resident women of various ages in their attitude towards child abuse women aged 40 years and above showed highest negative attitude while women age 20 – 29 years showed lowest negative attitudes towards child abuse.

Discussion

Findings in table 1 on the attitude of rural resident women in Umuchu Aguata L.G.A towards child abuse based on child battering revealed that the attitude of rural resident woman toward child battering was low. This was unexpected one would have expected parents to play the highest roles in stopping child battering. Related literature revealed that recent observation has suggested that battering parents are not confined to any particular personality intelligence or social class (Nelson 1998). According to table 2 above ascertain the attitude of rural resident women towards girl child marriage.

Result of the study revealed that women force their underage child into marriage. This was not expected. One would expect parents to allow their children to grow well before entering into the marriage.

This is in line with Finkellor (1999) who opined that girl child marriage can result to parent lacking acquisition of complex knowledge, skills & overall knowledge of managing a home. Also it can result to the girl having damage in her under developing organs.

Further findings in table 3 confirm that attitude of rural resident women toward child street hawking is unexpected because about 112 (38.4) indicated that it affects academic performance of the child while 127 (43.4) also maintained that it exposes them to prostitution, pregnancy and venereal diseases.

Related literature revealed that child street hawking leads to many dangers to those girls and Nigerian roads are usually clustered by these children.

Hypothesis one confirmed that there was significant relationship among rural resident women of various educational qualifications in their attitude toward child abuse. This is in line with Nwosu (1993) who confirmed that child abusers are more common among parents with low level of education than those with high level of education.

Hypothesis two ascertain the attitude of rural resident women towards child abuse based on their ages.

Result revealed that there was significant relationship among rural resident women of various ages in their attitude towards child abuse.

Related literature revealed that parents who cannot cope with their numerous children often abuse them (Powell, 2001).

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were drawn

1. Attitude of rural resident women in Umuchu Aguata L.G.A Anambra State towards child battering is positive.
2. Attitude of rural resident women towards child street hawking. Eight hundred and thirteen has positive attitude while three hundred and fifty five disclosed negative attitude.
3. Attitude of rural resident women in Umuchu Aguata L.G.A towards girl child marriage is positive.
4. There was significant relationship among rural resident women of various

educational qualifications in their attitude toward child abuse.

5. There was significant relationship among rural resident women of various ages in their attitude toward child abuse.

Recommendations

- Based on the followings and conclusions the following recommendations were made.
- Women of child bearing age should be enlightened by government by creating awareness on the dangers and implications of child abuse.
- Ministry of Education should periodically organized seminars to educate women on the health implications of child abuse.
- Religious leaders should be used to sensitize the women on the dangers of girl child marriage and other forms of child abuse during their daily/weekly liturgies.
- The ministry in charge of women affairs should equally be used by the government to create awareness on the dangers of child abuse to women.

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