

## Perception of Media Information on Child Abuse by Children and Parents' in Kosofe Local Government Area, Lagos State, Nigeria

**<sup>1</sup>Johnson Babafemi Akintayo & <sup>2</sup>Oluwaferanmi Moyosore Adebayo**

<sup>1</sup>Lecturer, Department of Mass Communication

<sup>2</sup>Postgraduate Candidate, Department of Mass Communication

Babcock University

Ilishan-Remo, Ogun State, Nigeria

E-mails: akintayob@babcock.edu.ng; feranmi.adebayo1@gmail.com

Phone Nos: +2348037079165; +2349098843986

### ABSTRACT

The dehumanizing experiences of children has generally attracted the attention of international non-governmental organizations as well as different governments that have sponsored both international treaty and platforms to protect this vulnerable group of people. Proclamations from these institutions have translated into localized versions designed to enforce basic international minimum standards. Nigeria is signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The study was designed to examine the level of knowledge and compliance with some of the provisions of this multilateral treaty by children and their parents. To achieve this purpose, a survey involving 200 students and parents of two secondary schools in Lagos was conducted. Findings suggested that majority of the children lack adequate knowledge of the implications of verbal and physical child abuse while parents were fairly higher but low by absolute standard.

**Keywords:** Media, Information, Perception, Child Abuse, Children, Kosofe LGA, Lagos State & Nigeria

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

The need to institutionalize an international legal framework to specifically protect from possible abuse and promote the interest of children culminated in the adoption in 1989 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Aside from the fact that the UNCRC admonishes all states signatories to respect and abide with all the provisions of the multilateral treaty, part II of the Child Rights Act (CRA) in 2003 categorically states that:

*Every child is entitled to respect for the dignity of his person, and accordingly, no child shall be subjected to physical, mental or emotional injury, neglect or maltreatment, sexual abuse, torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; or attacks upon his honor or reputation; or held in slavery or servitude, while in the care of a parent, legal guardian, school authority or any other person or authority having the care of the child.*

In deference to its obligations as a party to this international protocol, the Nigerian government in 2003 localized this law, thus incorporating its provisions into our statutes. Acknowledging the delicate and vulnerable conditions of children in every society and the obligation of all to insulate them from abuse, the law enjoins all societal groups to protect children from abuse. A society whose culture adheres literally to the Biblical injunction “spare the rod and spoil the child”, promoting a new regime for special treatment and protection of children was most likely to be met with some reluctance if not outright rejection. Child abuse takes two forms: verbal and physical abuse. To Gadit (2011), verbal abuse can be expressed as the form of offensive language, usage of swear words, threats, critical comments with harsh tone, shouting, yelling and screaming and passing nasty remarks which fits perfectly into the category of emotional torture that has long lasting repercussions, while Akanji and Dada (2012) citing Ross (1998) defines physical abuse as involving any inflicted injuries such as bruises, burns, fractures, poisoning, striking, kicking or any other actions that result into a physical impairment of the child.

This was substantiated by Dryden (2009) who states that physical abuse involves injury resulting from beating, kicking, throwing, stabbing, hitting, either with a hand, stick or other object which leads to harming a child regardless of whether the guardian or caretaker intended to hurt the child. In the write-up ‘Children’s Rights and Journalism practice’ commissioned by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF, 2007) child protection is defined as “protecting children from harm, both intentional and unintentional and it applies particularly to the duty of organizations and individuals associated with those organizations towards children in their care.” Although Akanji and Dada (2012) assert that child abuse has no specific definition as it varies across individuals, ethnics, religions and professional bodies, the World Health Organization (WHO, 1999) defines it as 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 in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

Beyond governments that are signatories to this international law, compliance with and practice of the provisions of the law lie fundamentally with parents/guardians and children. The capacity of both parties to ensure compliance depends on their level of awareness. Even though the Convention on the Rights of the Child enjoins states parties to encourage the mass media to package and distribute messages designed to promote the spirit of the law, more than a decade after its introduction, there is the urgent need to examine how the two major parties- parents and children perceive the issue of child abuse. The statutes of Lagos state as a metropolitan city and a media centre hub means its residents are presumably expected to be ahead of those in other states in terms of enlightenment and modern-friendly behaviour. This makes Lagos an ideal site for this study.

### **1.2 Research Objectives**

- I. Determine the level of awareness of child abuse incidence among children and parents in Kosofe Local Government Area.
- II. Find out the sources of information on child abuse by children and parents in Kosofe Local Government Area.
- III. Examine the extent to which children’s and parent’s access to information on child abuse has resulted in perceptual changes.

## 2. REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

Due to the delicate and rather sensitive nature of issues relating to children, it has attracted considerable scholarly attention. According to the African Child Policy Forum (2013) citing CRC (1989), a child is a human being below the age of eighteen years unless where the applicable law says majority is attained earlier. The African Network for Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN) defines child abuse as “the intentional or unintentional acts which endanger the physical health, emotional, moral and the educational welfare of children (Olotu, 2013). According to Umobong (2010), child abuse is any act of omission or commission, physical or psychological mistreatment or neglect of a child by their parents, guardians, caregiver or other adults that may endanger the child’s physical, psychological or emotional health and development. In this definition, wrongfully maltreating a child or selfishly making an unfair use of a child’s services by adults responsible for the child constitutes child abuse. Thus, the adult may not be directly related to the child but a person in whose care the child is left can be an abuser. This may include the educators, healthcare workers, day care workers, or other responsible adults (Child Welfare Information Gateway 2008 as cited by Umobong, 2010). Child abuse is a common problem worldwide, and its physical and psychosocial effects are felt by abused children, their families, and their communities. It has been linked to changes in the victims’ mental and behavioural development throughout their lives, putting them at risk of engaging in potentially dangerous behaviour in the future (Al Odayhani, Watson & Watson, 2013).

### 2.1 Types, Causes and Manifestations of Child Abuse

Child abuse has different categories, causes and outcomes. The different types of child abuse are physical neglect, emotional abuse, child labor, child abandonment, physical abuse, verbal abuse and sexual abuse. Akanji & Dada (2012), citing Olukoshi (1990) define physical neglect as disregard of the physical appearance, nutritional, medical and safety needs of the child. It manifests in unkempt appearance, inappropriate dressing, anger, unbalance diet and non-immunization of children and ante-natal neglect which are aspects of the neglect. The National Clearing house on Child Abuse and Neglect Information (2006) asserts that, emotional abuse is an act or omission by the parents or other caregivers that have caused, or could cause serious behavioural, cognitive, emotional or mental disorders to a child. Therefore, emotional abuse can be seen as any attitude, behaviour or failure to act on the part of a caregiver which interferes with a child’s mental health, social development or sense of self-worth. Umobong (2010), clearly establishes that emotional abuse is also known as mental or psychological abuse.

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), child labour can be described as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development. It involves children being enslaved, separated from their families, exposed to serious hazards and illnesses and/or left to fend for themselves on the streets of large cities often at a very early age. On the other hand, child trafficking is a practice through which young people below 18 years are handed over by either or both parents or by a guardian to a third person, whether for free or with the intention of exploiting the person or the work of the young person (Akanji & Dada, 2012). Child Welfare Information Gateway (2014), explains child abandonment as the desertion of a child when the guardian's personality or whereabouts are undisclosed and the child has been left by the guardian in circumstances in which the minor endures genuine damage. Child sexual abuse is the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared and cannot give consent, or that violates the laws or social taboos of society (WHO, 1999).

Verbal abuse, from the perspective of other scholars is expressed as constant name calling, harsh threats, and sarcastic comments that continually “beat down” the child’s self-esteem with humiliation, as well as openly telling the child that (s) he is worthless (Roth, 2004 citing Hamarman & Bernet, 2000). The pain caused by words many times may be as severe as pain caused by physical assault due to the emotional anguish that attend verbal assaults on individuals (Douglas, 2010). Verbal abuse is a prevalent form of communication that has been shown to have damaging psychological effects (Brandt & Pierce, 2000) such as anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, isolation, anger, aggressiveness, suicide attempt and death (Al Odhayani et al, 2013). In Nigeria, verbal child abuse is undoubtedly the least understood, yet the most prevalent, brutal and destructive type of abuse because the signs are harder to recognize and this may account for the seemingly low number of "official" verbal abuse cases (Vardigan, 2015). On the other hand, physical child abuse is an act of a person deliberately or naively inflicting physical pain or injury such as; beating, slapping, kicking, burning and pushing et cetera.

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) says physical child abuse is any physical act by an adult that results in the child being hurt or injured. Physically abused children are likely to have challenges with academic achievements, physical development and coordination, developing friendships and relationships, aggression and anger management, depression, anxiety and low self-esteem (Adults Surviving Child Abuse, ASCA 2015). On the home and school fronts, the Nigerian child often experience verbal and physical abuse repeatedly without such kids knowing, talk less of attempting to invoke their rights. Parents or guardians in the bid to teach morals or instill discipline, infringe the rights of their children. Interestingly, abusing a child verbally or physically does not necessarily make the child behave decently, rather it makes them more aggressive and rebellious, detesting corrections (Pritchard, 2006). In conclusion, verbal and physical abuse have a relationship given that, oftentimes name-calling, cursing, yelling, may likely result in physical assaults (Gelles & Harrop, 1991). This progression can occur if the abuser feels that verbal abuse is no longer effective so (s) he starts to employ physical violence (Telep, 2009) which impairs the development of the growing child.

Child abuse as a phenomenon has been attributed to many factors. Such factors include marital problems, poverty, illiteracy, domestic violence, childhood experience, isolation, substance abuse and mental illness. According to Wynd (2013), troubled marriages are likely to end in divorce if not well handled. The frustration of either parents due to the crisis can lead into abusing the child by neglect, cursing or physical assault, thereby impairing the child’s development. Poverty remains a major factor in fostering child abuse given that, it is a denial of choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity. It means lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society, that is, not having enough to feed and clothe a family, not having a school or clinic to go to, not having the land on which to grow one’s food or a job to earn one’s living. It also means susceptibility to violence, and it often implies living in marginal environments (Gordon, 2005 citing UN, 1998). However, parents’ inability to provide for the child generates frustration or contempt towards the child so they lash out verbally or physically.

The lack of knowledge or education also plays a key role in child abuse in that, adults in care of a child are mostly the abusers and they are not cognizant enough to know that there are certain harmful effects that comes with abusing a child due to less understanding of issues associated with parenting. However, some abusers are aware, but are ignorant to the influence and consequence that accompany the abuse of a child. Moreover, children learn from observation in the sense that, the violent behaviour exhibited by their family members is likely to influence them such that, when they watch and observe the aggression among family members, they tend to adopt the violent behaviour thereby conveying it to adults and other kids they relate with (Gelles & Harrop, 1991).

Also, adults who were verbally and physically abused as kids are more likely to abuse their children in the same manner, thereby spreading the abuse from generation to generation (Roth, 2004). Furthermore, parents that are lonely and socially isolated, do not get assistance when in need because there is no one to turn to and this feeling comes with sadness and frustration which results into lashing out verbally or physically at a child for minor mistakes (Wynd, 2013). The abuse of alcohol also makes adults prone to violence in the sense that, in their subconscious, they are likely to assault a child verbally and physically for little or no absolute cause (Kendall-Tackett, 2001). In addition, parents whose psychological instability are not identified or untreated may maltreat their kids because their disorder may make it problematic for them to distinguish or meet their kid's developing requirements. Mental disorders include; bipolar disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder and so on (Kendall-Tackett, 2001).

According to Al Odhayani et al (2013), ASCA (2015) & Roth (2004) there are psychological effects that come with abusing a child such as depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, isolation, immense aggressiveness & anger, low academic performance, suicide attempt and death. In psychology, depression is a mood or emotional state scarred by feelings of self-worthlessness or blame and a decreased ability to appreciate life. An individual who is depressed usually experiences sadness, cynicism, low self-esteem and high self-downgrade, inability to take part in ordinary activities and loss of appetite. A child that has been verbally and physically abused is likely to feel depressed due to cruel encounters (s) he had. Anxiety on the other hand, is a state of worry and nervousness occurring in a variety of mental disorders such as; obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) or panic attacks. However, it is a normal part of childhood but when it becomes too intense it develops into anxiety disorder and are likely due to forms of child abuse.

Children who suffer from an anxiety disorder experience fear, nervousness, shyness, and avoidance of places and activities. It tends to become chronic and interfere with how a child functions at home or at school to the point that the child becomes distressed and uncomfortable and starts avoiding activities or people (Anxiety Disorders Association of America, ADAA). Lingren, (1991) affirms that, children's need for parental approval and acceptance is so strong that they will try very hard to do what the parent expects of them. Negative parental responses like name-calling ('you are a dumb kid'), rejection ('I don't like you'), threats ('If you don't stop being mean, I will spank you'), disinterest ('don't bother me, I'm working'), silence after a child's question, and violent punishment will cause the child to develop negative self-image. These responses make the child feel worthless which becomes a psychological problem such that, they begin to tell themselves that they are not good enough. Once a child has such thoughts, (s) he gradually comes to terms that they are of no use to anyone which cuts off the child from normal social experiences (Roth, 2004 citing Hamarman & Bernet 2000).

A verbally and physically abused child most times, tends to be aggressive and angry given that, a parent who abuses his/her child frequently will influence the child to adopt the negative traits by means of observing and learning. Onwe (2014), Hutchinson & Mueller (2008) citing Hart et al, (1998) posit that, children experiencing psychological effects of verbal and physical child abuse believe that they are not intelligent or good enough to get anything done the right way due to negative comments their parents have passed to them which is likely to result in low grades. Children know their abusers so when they are being maltreated they feel trapped due to the fearful power of the abusers so they stay silent till they take their own lives or are abused to death (Lamont, 2010 citing Brodsky & Stanley, 2008). Conclusively, all of these could impede the future of the Nigerian child if not attended to with the right strategies of the media.

### **3. RESEARCH DESIGN**

The study was executed using a survey of 200 respondents, made up of 100 children and 100 parents. To achieve this, two secondary schools- Supreme Education Foundation School and Ojota Junior and Senior Secondary School, both located in Kosofe Loyal Government Area with a student population of 660 and 1,850

respectively were randomly chosen. Simple random sampling was used to select 100 students from each school. Each student was handed a parental consent form with instructions to give his/her parents or guardian for obtainment of their permission to administer the test on the selected student. A copy of the questionnaire designed for parents was also handed to the students to be filled by their parents. Upon the return of the consent form, each student was then tested using the questionnaire designed for children. The instruments had earlier been face validated and tested for reliability using test-retest. The return rate was 98% for students and 96% for parents.

**Table 1: Students Demographic Characteristics**

Variables	Student Respondents in this study N=98	
	Frequency (N)	Frequency (N)
<b>Age</b>		
9-11yrs	1	1.0
12-15yrs	9	9.2
16-19yrs	50	51.0
20yrs & above	38	38.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Level of Education</b>		
JSS 1	1	1.0
JSS 2	8	8.2
JSS 3	24	24.5
SS1	18	18.4
SS2	27	27.6
SS3	20	20.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>School</b>		
Supreme Education Foundation School, Magodo	50	51.0
Ojota Junior and Senior Secondary School, Ojota	48	49.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Profile of students respondents according to their age as shown in table 1 shows that, only, 1 (1.0%) respondent fell between the category of 9 - 11 years, 9 (9.2%) are between 12-15 years, and 50 (51.0%) are between 16-19 years, while 38 (38.8%) are between 20years and above. Result of students respondents by level of education shows that only, 1 (1.0%) respondent were in JS1, 8 (8.2%) in JS2, 24 (24.5%) in JS3. Another 18 (18.4%) in SS1, 27 (27.6%) in SS2 while 20 (20.4%) fell within the SS3 category.



**Table 2: Parent's Demographic Characteristics**

Variables	Parents Respondents in this study N=96	
	Frequency (N)	Frequency (N)
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Married	63	65.6
Single	22	22.9
Separated	4	4.2
Widowed	7	7.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Religion</b>		
Christian	56	58.3
Muslim	22	22.9
Others	8	8.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Occupation</b>		
Accountant	12	12.5
Marketer	13	13.5
Doctor	4	4.2
Consultant	8	8.3
Trader	18	18.8
Barber	10	10.4
Driver	12	12.5
Vulcanizer	3	3.1
Hairdresser	8	8.3
Teacher/lecturer	8	8.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Residence</b>		
Ikosi-Ketu	55	57.3
Magodo	41	42.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Profile parent's respondents by marital status as presented indicates that, 63 (65.6%) are married, 22 (22.9%) are single and 4 (4.2%) are separated while 7 (7.3%) are widowed. Parent respondents by occupation shows that majority are traders as represented by 18.8%, marketers by 13.5%, accountants by 12.5%, drivers by 12.5% and barbers by 10.4%. Another 8.3% are teacher's/lecturer's, 8.3% are consultants, 8.3% are hairdresser's, 4.2% are medical doctor's while 3.1% fall within the category of vulcanizer's. Profile of parent respondents according to their religion shows that, 56 (58.3%) are Christians and 22 (22.9%) are Muslims while 8 (8.3%) of respondents are of other religions. Result of parent respondents according to their place of residence reveals that, 55 (57.3%) respondents are from Ikosi-Ketu, while 41 (42.7%) are from Magodo.

**Table 3: Distribution of respondents according to their knowledge of cases on verbal child abuse**

Respondents Category	YES	NO	TOTAL
Students	93 (94.9)	5 (5.1)	98 (100%)
Parents	70 (72.9)	26 (27.1)	96 (100%)

Findings in table 3 shows respondent's knowledge or lack of knowledge on verbal child abuse. Majority of the students and parents claimed 'Yes' as depicted by 93 (94.9%) and 70 (72.9%) responses respectively. Whereas, 5 (5.1%) and 26 (27.1%) of students and parents claimed 'No', indicating that majority of the respondents are aware of cases on verbal child abuse.

**Table 4: Distribution of respondents according to their knowledge of cases on physical child abuse?**

Respondents Category	YES	NO	TOTAL
Students	93 (94.9)	5 (5.1)	98 (100%)
Parents	68 (70.9)	28 (29.2)	96 (100%)

Findings in table 4 reveals respondents knowledge or lack of knowledge on physical child abuse. Majority of students and parents claimed Yes as represented by 93 (94.9%) and 68 (70.9%) responses respectively. While 5 (5.1%) and 28 (29.2%) of respondents (students and parents) claimed they did not know of any physical child abuse cases. Indicating that majority of the respondents are aware of cases on physical child abuse. Therefore, answering research question one on the level of awareness among students and parents in Kosofe Local Government Area on verbal and physical child abuse, findings as presented in tables 3&4 reveals most respondents (students and parents) are aware of cases of verbal and physical child abuse.

**Table 5: Distribution of student and parent respondents on sources of knowledge on verbal and physical child abuse**

Respondents Category	Radio	Newspaper	Magazine	Movies	Television	Social media	No idea	Total
Students	8 (8.2)	12 (12.2)	30 (30.6)	25 (25.5)	18 (18.4)	0 (0.0)	5 (5.1)	98 (100%)
Parents	8 (8.3)	16 (16.7)	8 (8.3)	12 (15.8)	16 (16.7)	14 (14.6)	26 (27.1)	96 (100%)



Findings in table 5 reveals how students get to know about verbal and physical child abuse; 8 (8.2%) respondents claimed through radio, 12 (12.2%) through newspaper and 30 (30.6%) through magazine. Another 25 (25.5%) claimed through movies, and 18 (18.4%) through television while the remaining 5 (5.1%) claimed they had no idea. Indicating that majority of the students get to know about verbal and physical child abuse mostly through magazine and movies as depicted by 30.6% and 25.5% responses respectively. Parents claimed primarily through newspaper 16 (16.7%), television 16 (16.7%) and social media 14 (14.6%). Thus, pointing out that parents get to know about verbal and physical child abuse generally through the media. However, 26 (27.1) of parent respondents claimed that they had no idea about verbal and physical abuse through the media.

**Table 6: Distribution of student and parent respondents on frequency of information reception on verbal and physical child abuse**

Respondents Category	Everyday	Twice a week	Weekends only	Rarely	Never	Total
Students	6 (6.1)	25 (25.5)	40 (40.8)	22 (22.4)	5 (5.1)	<b>98 (100%)</b>
Parents	28 (29.2)	25 (26.0)	20 (20.8)	15 (15.6)	8 (8.3)	<b>96 (100%)</b>

Findings as presented in table 6 shows how often students come across information on verbal and physical child abuse; 6 (6.1%) respondents claimed every day, 25 (25.5%) claimed they accessed on average of twice a week, 40 (40.8%) claimed weekends only. Another 22 (22.4%) claimed they rarely came across information on verbal and physical child abuse, while the remaining 5 (5.1%) claimed they never heard of it. Indicating that student's highest rate of access to information on verbal and physical child abuse ranged between twice a week and weekend basis as represented by 25.5% and 40.8% responses respectively. Also, parents mostly claimed everyday 28 (29.2%), twice a week 25 (26.0%) and weekends only 20 (20.8%), showing that parents at least on a general note got information every week and indicating that the general accessing of information combined 76% outweighs the 23.9% that rarely or never accessed information on verbal and physical child abuse. Conclusively, students' encounter information on verbal and physical child abuse at most twice a week and weekends only while parents largely access information on verbal and physical child abuse everyday, twice a week, and weekends only which implies that a greater percentage of those who accessed information at all, irrespective of how frequently they did showed that if consistently exposed to information, they may be able to positively shift the grounds on verbal and physical abuse on children.

**Table 7: Distribution of student respondents according to how access to information on verbal and physical child abuse has resulted in perceptual and behavioural changes**

**STUDENTS PERCEPTION**

S/N	Questions	SA	A	U	D	SD	Total
1	Name calling such as: dumb (ode), fool (asiwere), idiot/stupid (oloshi) etc. by parents constitutes child abuse	50 (51.0)	28 (28.6)	10 (10.2)	8 (8.2)	2 (2.0)	<b>98 (100%)</b>
2	Beating with cane or any harmful tool E.g. stick, wire, belt etc. by parents constitutes child abuse	50 (51.0)	18 (18.4)	18 (18.4)	10 (10.2)	2 (2.0)	<b>98 (100%)</b>
3	It is the right of parents to call a child idiot, stupid, fool when he/she is disobedient	8 (8.2%)	2 (2.0)	60 (61.0)	10 (10.2)	18 (18.4)	<b>98 (100%)</b>
4	It is the right of parents to beat a child mercilessly when he/she is naughty	28 (28.6)	2 (2.0)	51 (52.0)	9 (9.2)	8 (8.2)	<b>98 (100%)</b>
5	It is normal for a student to feel very sad whenever his/her parents refer to him/her as a: bastard (omo ale), dummy (oponu), cursed person (oloriburuku) etc.	28 (28.6)	55 (56.1)	5 (5.1)	8 (8.2)	2 (2.0)	<b>98 (100%)</b>
6	Students feel it is okay to be very unhappy when parents flog or beat them with cane (pankere), belt, mop-stick etc.	19 (19.4)	51 (52.0)	11 (11.2)	9 (9.2)	8 (8.2)	<b>98 (100%)</b>
7	I do not bother about the feeling of worthlessness I sense when referred to as a fool, dummy, idiot etc. because I will get over it eventually	28 (28.6)	2 (2.0)	51 (52.0)	9 (9.2)	8 (8.2)	<b>98 (100%)</b>
8	It is okay to be lonely/isolate when flogged continuously	28 (28.6)	50 (51.0)	10 (10.2)	8 (8.2)	2 (2.0)	<b>98 (100%)</b>
9	Parents call their children stupid so there is nothing wrong in referring to someone else as stupid	28 (28.6)	2 (2.0)	8 (8.2)	50 (51.0)	4 (4.1)	<b>98 (100%)</b>
10	If anyone attempts to beat a student, it is right to hit the person back irrespective of who the person is	8 (8.2)	2 (2.0)	18 (18.4)	38 (38.8)	32 (32.7)	<b>98 (100%)</b>
11	A student can tell his/her parents not to shout at him/her or call names like: dumb (ode), idiot/stupid (oloshi) bastard (omo ale), cursed person (oloriburuku) etc.	19 (19.4)	11 (11.2)	51 (52.0)	9 (9.2)	8 (8.2)	<b>98 (100%)</b>

Findings as presented in table 7 reveals that 78 (79.6%) respondents agreed name calling such as: dumb (ode), fool (asiwere), idiot/stupid (oloshi) by parents constitutes child abuse, 10 (10.2%) are undecided while 10 (10.2%) disagreed. In addition, 68 (69.4%) respondents agreed that beating with cane or any harmful tool e.g. stick, wire, belt by parents constitutes child abuse, 18 (18.4%) are undecided while 12 (12.2%) disagree. Furthermore, 10 (10.2%) respondents agreed that it is the right of parents to call a child idiot, stupid, fool when he/she is disobedient, 60 (61.0%) are undecided while 28 (28.6%) disagreed. It is the right of parents to beat a child mercilessly when he/she is naughty, 30 (30.6%) agreed, 51 (52.0%) are undecided and 17 (17.4%) disagreed. Indicating that, majority of the students do not have a clear understanding regarding what entirely constitutes child abuse as well as have little or no idea about their rights. Also, 83 (84.7%) respondents agreed that, it is normal for a student to feel very sad whenever his/her parents refer to him/her as a bastard (omo ale), dummy (oponu), cursed person (oloriburuku), 5 (5.1 %) are undecided while 10 (10.2%) disagreed. Additionally, 70 (71.4%) respondents agreed students feel it is okay to be very unhappy when parents flog or beat them with cane (pankere), belt, mop-stick, 11 (11.2%) are undecided while 17 (17.4%) disagreed.

Furthermore, 30 (30.6%) respondents agreed that, they do not bother about the feeling of worthlessness they sense when referred to as a fool, dummy, idiot etc. because they will get over it eventually, 51 (52.0%) are undecided while 17 (17.4%) disagreed. It is okay to be lonely or isolated all the time when flogged continuously, 78 (79.6%) agreed, 10 (10.2%) are undecided while 10 (10.2%) disagreed. Signifying that, majority of student respondents misconstrue child abuse for discipline which makes them perceive verbal and physical abuse as norm. This could be as a result of dearth of adequate information on the menace of verbal and physical child abuse. 30 (30.6%) respondents agreed parents call their children stupid so there is nothing wrong in referring to someone else as stupid, 8 (8.2%) are undecided while 54 (55.1%) disagreed.

If anyone attempts to beat a student, it is right to hit the person back irrespective of who the person is, 10 (10.2%) agreed, 18 (18.4%) are undecided while 70 (71.4%) disagreed. Moreover, 30 (30.6%) respondents agreed that a student can tell his/her parents not to shout at him/her or call names like: dumb (ode), idiot/stupid (oloshi) bastard (omo ale), cursed person (oloriburuku), 51 (52.0%) are undecided while 17 (17.4%) disagreed. Implying that majority of the students can differentiate between proper and improper behaviour acted out by parents and even students as well as and know how to react to such behaviour, but some of them still have ambivalent opinions as to what actions should be taken when confronted with verbal and physical child abuse.

**Table 8: Distribution of parent respondents according to how access to information on verbal and physical child abuse has resulted in perceptual and behavioural changes.**

**PARENTS PERCEPTION**

S/N	Questions	Respondents Category	SA	A	U	D	SD	Total
1	Name calling such as: dumb (ode), fool (asiwere), idiot/stupid (oloshi) etc. constitutes child abuse	Parent	50 (52.1)	26 (27.1)	10 (10.4)	8 (8.3)	2 (2.1)	96 (100%)
2	Flogging with cane or any harmful tool E.g. stick, wire, belt etc. constitutes child abuse	Parent	26 (27.1)	10 (10.4)	50 (52.1)	2 (2.1)	8 (8.3)	96 (100%)
3	Beating children/students with cane and belt is meant for instilling discipline	Parent	22 (22.9)	50 (52.1)	6 (6.3)	10 (10.4)	8 (8.3)	96 (100%)
4	Shouting at a child/student using offensive words will make the child behave properly	Parent	26 (27.1)	2 (2.1)	50 (52.1)	10 (10.4)	8 (8.3)	96 (100%)
5	Children/students will turn from being unruly when flogged multiple times	Parent	2 (2.1)	8 (8.3)	10 (10.4)	50 (52.1)	26 (27.1)	96 (100%)
6	Offensive name calling such as: foolish (asiwere), dumb (ode), can make children/students depressed	Parent	26 (27.1)	5 (5.2)	47 (49.0)	10 (10.4)	8 (8.3)	96 (100%)
7	Whipping with cane or wire can cause feelings of unhappiness in children/students	Parent	26 (27.1)	50 (52.1)	10 (10.4)	2 (2.1)	8 (8.3)	96 (100%)
8	Continuous beating can make children/students feel worthless	Parent	26 (27.1)	2 (2.1)	50 (52.1)	10 (10.4)	8 (8.3)	96 (100%)
9	Frequent yelling at children/students can lead to feelings of loneliness	Parent	34 (35.4)	42 (43.8)	5 (5.2)	7 (7.3)	8 (8.3)	96 (100%)
10	Constant spanking of children/students can cause isolation	Parent	26 (27.1)	50 (52.1)	10 (10.4)	4 (4.2)	6 (6.3)	96 (100%)
11	Harsh/unpleasant comments can push a child/student to take his/her own life	Parent	22 (22.9)	6 (6.3)	50 (52.1)	10 (10.4)	8 (8.3)	96 (100%)

12	Severe beating can kill a child/student	Parent	26 (27.1)	50 (52.1)	10 (10.4)	2 (2.1)	8 (8.3)	96 (100%)
13	It is against the law to abuse children/students	Parent	50 (52.1)	26 (27.1)	10 (10.4)	8 (8.3)	2 (2.1)	96 (100%)
14	The way parents/teachers train a child is consequent upon how they were disciplined during their childhood	Parent	22 (22.9)	6 (6.3)	50 (52.1)	10 (10.4)	8 (8.3)	96 (100%)
15	Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you strike him with a rod, he will not die (Proverb 23:13) means you should beat children mercilessly when they misbehave	Parent	2 (2.1)	8 (8.3)	10 (10.4)	50 (52.1)	26 (27.1)	96 (100%)
16	It is better to tell a child/student to face the wall rather than flogging he/she	Parent	26 (27.1)	2 (2.1)	50 (52.1)	10 (10.4)	8 (8.3)	96 (100%)
17	It is preferable to correct a child/student calmly instead of shouting/cursing	Parent	7 (7.3)	6 (6.3)	72 (75.0)	3 (3.1)	8 (8.3)	96 (100%)

Findings in table 8 reveals whether name calling such as: dumb (ode), fool (asiwere), idiot/stupid (oloshi) etc. constitutes child abuse, 76 (79.2%) parent respondents agreed, 10 (10.4) are undecided while 10 (10.4%) disagreed. Flogging with cane or any harmful tool E.g. stick, wire, belt etc. constitutes child abuse, 36 (37.5%) parent respondents agreed, 50 (52.1%) are undecided while 10 (10.4%) disagreed. In addition, 72 (75.0%) parent respondents agreed that beating children/student with cane and belt is meant for instilling discipline, 6 (6.3%) are undecided while 18 (18.7%) disagreed. Shouting at a child/student using offensive words will make the child behave properly, 28 (29.2%) parent respondents are agreed, 50 (52.1%) are undecided while 18 (18.7%) disagreed. 10 (10.4%) parent respondents agreed, 76 (79.2%) disagreed, and 10 (10.4%) are undecided whether children/students will turn from being unruly when flogged multiple times. Moreover, 31 (32.3%) parent respondents agreed, 47 (49.0%) are undecided and 18 (18.7%) disagreed that offensive name calling such as: foolish (asiwere), dumb (ode), can make children/students depressed. However, 76 (79.2%) agreed that whipping with cane or wire can cause feeling of unhappiness in children/students, 2 (2.6%) are undecided while 26 (34.3%) disagreed.

Findings further presented in table 8 shows that, continuous beating of children or students makes them feel worthless, 28 (29.2%) parent respondents agreed, 50 (52.1%) are undecided, while 18 (18.7%) disagreed. 76 (79.2%) parent respondents agreed that frequent yelling at children or students can lead to feelings of loneliness, 5 (5.2%) are undecided while 15 (15.6%) disagreed. In addition, 76 (79.2%) parent respondents agreed that constant spanking of children or students can cause such children or students to isolate himself or herself, 10 (10.4%) are undecided while 10 (10.5%) disagreed with this. Regarding whether or not harsh or unpleasant comments can push a child or student to take his/her own life, 28 (29.2%) parent respondents agreed, 50 (52.1%) are undecided while 18 (18.7%) disagreed.

Also, 76 (79.2%) parent respondents agreed that severe beating in the name of discipline can kill a child or student, 10 (10.4%) are undecided while 10 (10.4%) disagree. 76 (79.2%) also agreed that it is against the law to abuse children or students while 10 (10.4%) are undecided and 10 (10.4%) disagreed. However, 28 (29.2%) parent respondents agreed that individuals were likely to attempt raising (discipline) children or students in the same way they were raised while 18 (18.7%) disagreed and 50 (52.1%) of them took the undecided position.

In consonance with their earlier position that it is against the law to abuse a child, parent respondents 76 (79.2%) disagreed on the question that sought to test if they believed that a naughty child or student required merciless spanking in the spirit of the biblical text of proverbs 23:13 which says 'spare the rod and spoil the child' while 10 (10.4%) are undecided and 10 (10.4%) agreed with this statement. 50 (52.1%) parent respondents are undecided as to whether it is better to tell a child or student to face the wall rather than flogging him/her, 28 (29.2%) agreed while 18 (18.7%) disagreed. 72 (75.0%) parent respondents further took the undecided position on the need to correct a child or student calmly instead of shouting or cursing, while 13 (13.6%) agreed and 11 (11.4%) disagreed.

In conclusion, results of findings indicate that parents have adequate knowledge about verbal and physical abuse but may be unwilling to adhere it. They also have uncertain views as to what entirely constitutes verbal and physical child abuse which could have stemmed from lack of or inadequate information.

#### **4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The findings of this study revealed that majority of the children and parents' in Kosofe Local Government Area are aware of verbal and physical child abuse cases but a considerable amount of them are not on the same page regarding what absolutely constitutes verbal and physical child abuse in the sense that they are either not adhering to the information or have no idea about verbal and physical child abuse. It is therefore recommended that every media should produce editorials or programmes in the local languages of the people that deliberately discuss consistently, extensively and specifically verbal and physical abuse of children. The government should implement all policies put in place against the violation of child rights for the purpose of eradicating verbal and physical abuse. Every government owned broadcast station should have a programme or public service announcements on verbal and physical child abuse and emphasize the penalty for those who violate the rights of children.



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