



## Knowledge and attitude of public primary school teachers towards child abuse reporting practices in Nigeria

<sup>1</sup>Deborah Chidubem Adamu and <sup>2</sup>Eyitomilope Eniola Alao

<sup>1</sup>Department of Early Childhood Education,

Faculty of Education, Wesley University, Ondo City, Ondo State, Nigeria

<sup>2</sup>Department of Educational Foundations and Counselling,

Faculty of Education, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria

<sup>1</sup>Correspondent Author: [adamuchidubemdeborah@gmail.com](mailto:adamuchidubemdeborah@gmail.com)

**Abstract** – This study investigated public primary school teachers' level of knowledge and attitudinal disposition towards child abuse reporting practices in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State, Nigeria. A cross-sectional survey research design was used in the study. Three hundred and fourteen teachers were selected at public primary schools in Alimosho, Local Government of Lagos State, Nigeria. The study employed a multi-stage sampling technique; six public primary schools were selected together, and teachers in primary one (P1) to Primary six (P6) constituted the sample for the study. Data collected was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics via Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 22.0. The results showed that the majority of the public primary school teachers in the study area have adequate knowledge about child abuse as all of them (100%) have heard about child abuse; the proportion of the teachers with a high level of knowledge about child abuse reporting was 95.9%; more of the teachers had moderately high (59.7%) attitudinal disposition towards child abuse reporting; there is no significant relationship between the level of knowledge of teachers and child abuse reporting practices ( $r = 0.014$ ;  $p$ -value = 0.806); there is a significant relationship between the attitude of teachers and child abuse reporting practices ( $r = -0.179$  at  $p$ -value of 0.002); and the relationship between teachers' attitude to child abuse and child abuse reporting practices is indirect (at  $r = -0.179$ ). It was concluded in the study that while some teachers have reported child abuse to child protection services, a large number of them claimed that they would not report it even if they noticed any child being abused.

**Keywords:** Attitude, Child abuse reporting practices, Knowledge, Public primary school teachers.

To cite this article (APA): Adamu, D. C., & Alao, E. E. (2024). Knowledge and attitude of public primary school teachers towards child abuse reporting practices in Nigeria. *International Journal of Studies in Psychology*, 4(1), 59-64. <https://doi.org/10.38140/ijpspsy.v4i1.1098>

### I. INTRODUCTION

GENERALLY, the definition of child abuse refers specifically to parents (biological or foster) and other caregivers (such as teachers, nannies, etc.). A "child" who is under the age of 18 or who is not an emancipated minor fall under this definition (kotha, kumar, Pratibha, & Ankitha, 2017). An emancipated minor refers to any person below the age of 18 who a court order, has granted the status of adulthood, has lived independently of parental guidance for one year, is married, is living in the street, or is the head of the family. A recipient of child abuse is referred to as an "abused" while a person committing child abuse is called an "offender". Child abuse can also be referred to as child maltreatment. In Nigeria, earlier than now, child abuse in the constitution was given little or no attention. Today, with an increase in this menace, child abuse or maltreatment is a less serious offense punishable by law. This is because recently, in the country, there are cases of male and female children tied- and locked up by their stepmothers (or father's wives) without food and water for several days, weeks, or months, fallen prey to predators for rape; constantly beaten, humiliated and labelled witches by their parents or caregivers among others.

In most cases, in the face of these ugly situations, the offenders are seen

walking freely and living their normal lives instead of being prosecuted by the law. A recipient, if not rehabilitated, is essentially the "sufferer" of child abuse as s/he may be traumatised emotionally. Psychologically, sometimes, such persons may become violent and unforgivable as they wish to transfer aggression to persons they meet. Forms or different practices of child abuse that can subject an offender to arrest and prosecution include neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, and emotional abuse (or emotional neglect).

Child neglect as a form of child maltreatment is a deficit in meeting a child's basic needs, including the failure to provide adequate health care, supervision, clothing, nutrition, and housing, as well as their physical, emotional, social, educational, and safety needs. Causes of neglect may result from several parenting problems, including mental disorders, substance abuse (for example, using drugs and alcohol), delayed brain development, taking risks (like running away from home), breaking the law, getting into dangerous relationships, difficulty with relationships later in life (including with their children) lower educational attainment, domestic violence, unemployment or limited employment opportunities, unplanned pregnancy, poverty among other social and emotional challenges (Collin-Vézina et al., 2013).

Physical abuse is a form of child abuse that causes harm or inflicts injuries to a child (Finkelhor & Korbin, 1988). It refers to injuries and adult behaviours that are not sexual. This type of child abuse is mainly

practiced by teachers in the school, parents, and other caregivers. Physical abuse may include injury from the punishment that is not appropriate for the child's age or condition and can be a single or recurrent act by the teacher (Kumar, 2021). Joseph et al. (2015) highlighted that most actions considered to be physical abuse to learners by teachers are causing injury to learners. According to the General Statistics Office, Vietnam (2014), in most cases, households have incorporated child sanctions, reflecting the motivation of caregivers to control their behaviours in every way possible. The most severe form of physical punishment includes hitting the child on the head, ears, or face or hitting the child hard and repeatedly, among others. In most cases, boys are more physically punished than girls. Children living in remote places and in poor households often directly experience at least one form of psychological pressure or physical punishment (General Statistics Office, Vietnam, 2014).

Child sexual abuse is an act of involving a child under age 18 in sexual activities that the person in question does not completely understand, is not developmentally prepared for, and cannot give consent to (Owoyemi et al., 2020). In Nigeria, it is an act that can lead to stigmatisation if discovered by people, as the abused may be labelled "wayward" by neighbours and peers. Child sexual abuse is a confidential public health problem. For instance, most parents and victims are shy and prefer to keep it a secret when their girls/they are raped. In Nigeria, one in four girls and one in ten boys had experienced sexual abuse before the age of 18 (UNICEF, 2015). Children are usually prey to perpetrators (predators) of child sexual abuse. The predators of child sexual abuse are usually resident within the victims' environment and are often known to, or are, members of the family of the preys (Finkelhor et al., 2007). The consequences of child sexual abuse can be detrimental and devastating to a victim's psychological, emotional, and physical wellbeing (Kilpatrick et al., 2003, cited in Owoyemi, Uchendu & Olabumuyi, 2020). Victims of child sexual abuse are often physically traumatised and are at increased risk of long-lasting psychological trauma. They may also acquire Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDS, and other negative consequences (Abdulkadir et al., 2011). Oftentimes, because of threats or manipulation by the offenders, many of these children, when abused sexually, will never tell anyone (Finkelhor, 2009).

According to Finkelhor and Korbin (1988), cited in Do et al. (2020), child emotional abuse is "the willful destruction or significant impairment of a child's competence through such acts as the punishment of attachment behaviours, self-esteem and punishment of behaviours needed for normal social interaction." Earlier studies found that there were six types of emotional abuse, including rejecting (a child's abilities or desires repeatedly); isolating (a child's connection with society and basic needs for developing health); terrorising (threatening to abandon or hurt the child); ignoring (lack of caution in fulfill the child's needs in time); corrupting (to force a child to join unusual activities that can harm the ability to connect with the society); and "adultifying" (to give unsuitable demands to the child). Umobong (2010) added another type of child emotional abuse, "child exploitation." Child exploitation is related to child employment or trafficking, including the use of coercion to make children work for profit. It involves hiring children and promising them different payments and benefits with little or no care about their health (Do et al., 2020). Other emotionally abusive behaviours include belittling or terrorising the child, isolating them from others, rejection or mis-socialisation, yelling at the child excessively or calling the child names, and getting angry with the child in reaction to the child accidentally breaking something. Ramesh et al. (2017) added that child emotional abuse might include hostile parenting, such as inconsistency, poor stability, low nurturing, coercion, negative interactions, and rejection of the child.

Teachers play a critical function in the reporting and discovery of child abuse. The relationship established between teachers and their pupils can facilitate the identification of child abuse (Sinaan, 2011, cited

in Mohammed & Khudair, 2019). This is because teachers are in close contact daily with children for a longer period as the child spends a longer time in school. As a result, teachers observe behavioural changes in the child. They are in a better position to detect and report child abuse. Unfortunately, in most cases, they are not equipped or adequately informed. Teachers' beliefs and attitudes influence the perception of abuse and, consequently, the reporting of cases. Teachers witness social-emotional problems in their students, such as anxiety, self-harming behaviours, aggression, low self-esteem, and depression. These factors may be associated with divorce and other family dysfunction, but they also may indicate child abuse (Feng et al., 2010). Schools are expected to take major responsibility for those parents who are psychologically insufficient in a few manners and abuse their children. Possibly, if teachers are supported, properly guided, and informed to become aware of the specific social and mental traits of their pupils, they would predict and defend children who could be at threat of child abuse.

Generally, some related studies have been conducted on the knowledge and attitudes of teachers on child abuse or maltreatment in different study areas. For instance, Kothea et al. (2017) determined the knowledge and awareness among school teachers regarding child abuse using a questionnaire. Results in their study showed that most of the teachers (>90%) had average knowledge and awareness about child abuse. It then concluded in the study that most of the teachers had average knowledge and awareness among teachers regarding child abuse. Similarly, Owoyemi et al. (2020) assessed public primary school teachers' knowledge, attitude, and practice on primary prevention of child sexual abuse in Southwestern Nigeria using a cross-sectional research design that utilised a two-stage cluster sampling technique and a self-administered questionnaire. Their results showed that good practice in the primary prevention of child sexual abuse was found among the teachers (Owoyemi et al., 2020). They concluded that the knowledge and attitude of primary school teachers on the primary prevention of child sexual abuse in Lagos State was low (Owoyemi et al., 2020).

Also, Induja et al. (2021) investigated school teachers' knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding child abuse using a self-constructed questionnaire. Their results showed that the teachers agreed that it should be mandated to report child abuse (Kumar, 2021). Kumar (2021) concluded that most of the teachers know about child abuse. They are aware of the signs and symptoms of child abuse and child neglect. Still, they are not reporting child abuse cases. In all the related studies across the federation available to the researcher regarding knowledge and attitude of public primary school teachers on child abuse reporting practices, none has been carried out in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State; hence, the study.

## II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The thrust of the study was to investigate the level of knowledge and attitudinal disposition of public primary school teachers towards child abuse reporting practices in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study intended to:

1. determine the level of knowledge of public primary school teachers towards child abuse reporting practices in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State, Nigeria, and
2. assess the attitudinal disposition of public primary school teachers towards child abuse reporting practices in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State, Nigeria.

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What is the level of knowledge of public primary school teachers about child abuse reporting practices in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State, Nigeria?
2. What is the attitudinal disposition of public primary school teachers towards child abuse reporting practices in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State, Nigeria?

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study and

tested at a 0.05 significance level.

1. There is a significant relationship between the knowledge of public primary school teachers and child abuse reporting practices in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State, Nigeria.

2. There is a significant relationship between the attitude of public primary school teachers and child abuse reporting practices in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State, Nigeria.

### III. METHODS

#### Research approach and design

The study employed a quantitative approach through a cross-sectional survey research design. This design was helpful as it allowed the researchers to collect data from many different public primary school teachers simultaneously without influencing their responses (Best & Kalin, 2009, cited in Aideyan & Akingbade, 2019).

#### Respondents

The study population consisted of all the 1,105 public primary school teachers in Alimosho, Local Government Area of Lagos State, Nigeria. The sample comprised 314 public primary school teachers in the study area. A multi-stage sampling technique was adopted for the study. In stage one, Alimosho Local Government Area was stratified into six Local Council Development Areas (LCDAs), including Alimosho, Agbado/Oke-odo, Ayobo-Ipaja, Egbe-idimu, Igando-ilotun, and Mosan-Okunola. In stage two, a simple random sampling technique was used to select three LCDAs (Alimosho, Agbado/Oke-odo, and Ayobo-Ipaja) from the six LCDAs through balloting. In stage three, two public primary schools from each of the three LCDAs (making a total of six schools) were done using a simple random sampling technique by balloting. Stage four involved determining the number of public primary school teachers that were used in each of the three LCDAs through a proportional sampling technique (for instance, 82 + 401 + 189 in the three LCDAs respectively = 672 teachers; each sample in each LCDA was then divided by 672 and multiplied against the sample size of 314). Thus, six public primary schools were selected altogether, and teachers from primary one (P1) to primary six (P6) constituted the sample for the study.

#### Data collection instrument

The research instrument used for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire titled "Knowledge and Attitude of Public Primary School Teachers towards Child Abuse Reporting Practices." This questionnaire consists of three sections: A, B, and C. Sections A and B sourced information on the knowledge and attitude (respectively) of public primary school teachers towards child abuse reporting in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State. In contrast, section C elicited information on the child abuse reporting practices in the study area. The research instrument was subjected to face (extensive review by two experts in educational tests and measurement and two experts in Psychology) and content validity (the extent to which the conceptual model was applied). A pilot study was conducted using 20% (N = 62) of the sample size in the study area. A test-retest approach was used to ensure the instrument's internal consistency, generating Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.709 (meaning that the questionnaire's content was 71% reliable for the study). Four research Assistants were employed and trained on how to administer the questionnaire. Data was collected from 19th February to 21st February 2020. Each respondent spent 10 minutes filling out copies of the questionnaire.

#### Data analysis

A coding system was used for data entry. Each copy of the questionnaire was coded and entered into the computer. Data analysis was done using descriptive and inferential statistics through Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 22.0. The descriptive statistics used were frequency counts, percentages, mean, standard deviation, and Relative Strength Index (RSI). At the same time, inferential statistics were used to perform the Pearson correlation analysis.

#### Ethical considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the Babcock University Research Ethics Committee (BUHREC) before administering the instrument to the respondents. Also, permission was obtained from the selected schools, and clarification about the study was given to the participants, including the following:

- the objectives of the research,
- privacy and confidentiality: the questionnaire distributed by the researcher and the research assistants to the respondents will be treated with utmost confidentiality,
- informed consent will be requested, and the respondents will not be forced to participate in the study.

### IV. RESULTS

Three hundred and fourteen copies of the questionnaire were administered, only two hundred and ninety copies were completely and correctly filled, and data analysis was based on this number (290). The response rate was 97.5 percent.

#### Level of knowledge of public primary school teachers about child abuse reporting practices

Table 1: Level of Knowledge of public primary school teachers about Child Abuse reporting practices

| Items  | Respondents in this study=290 |         |
|--|-------------------------------|---------|
|  | Frequency(n)                  | Percent |
| Have you heard about child abuse?  |                               |         |
| <b>Yes</b>   | 290                           | 100     |
| Is child abuse the physical maltreatment or sexual molestation of a child? |                               |         |
| <b>Yes</b>   | 264                           | 91.1    |
| <b>NO</b>  | 26                            | 8.9     |
| What are the forms of child abuse?   |                               |         |
| Physical abuse   | 279                           | 24.9    |
| Sexual abuse   | 286                           | 25.5    |
| Emotional abuse  | 279                           | 24.9    |
| Neglect  | 278                           | 24.8    |
| Which of these is the effect of child abuse?                               |                               |         |
| <b>Low self-esteem</b>   | 279                           | 34.6    |
| <b>Depression</b>  | 277                           | 34.3    |
| <b>Being abusive to others</b>   | 283                           | 31.1    |
| Which of the following are signs of child abuse?                           |                               |         |
| <b>Unexplained frequent injuries on a child</b>                            | 283                           | 25.9    |
| <b>A child being afraid to go home after school</b>                        | 283                           | 25.9    |
| <b>Unclean clothing on a child</b>   | 253                           | 23.1    |
| <b>Bite marks on a child</b>   | 275                           | 25.1    |

Source: Author's Analytical Result

The results showed in Table 1 that all (100%) of the respondents have heard about child abuse; the majority (91%) of the respondents described child abuse as physical maltreatment or sexual molestation of a child. The majority of the respondents stated the forms of child abuse as physical (24.9%), sexual (25.5%), and emotional abuse (24.9%). The effects of child abuse reported by the respondents were children having low self-esteem (34.6%), child will suffer from depression (34.3%), and child will be abusive to others (31.1%). The respondents indicated the following as signs of child abuse: unexplained frequent injuries on a child (25.9%), a child being afraid to go home after school (25.9%), unclean clothing on a child (23.1%), and bite marks on a child (25.1%).

The respondents' level of knowledge measured on a 13-point

rating showed a mean score of 12.23 ± 1.53. This translates to 94% knowledge prevalence, as presented in Table 2. The proportion of the respondents with a high level of knowledge about child abuse reporting was 95.9%. One can infer that the respondents had a high knowledge of child abuse reporting practices (see Table 2).

Table 2: Proportion of public primary school teachers' Level of Knowledge about Child Abuse Reporting

|          | Respondents in this study: N=290 |                |
|----------|----------------------------------|----------------|
|          | Frequency                        | Percentage (%) |
| Low      | 1                                | 0.3            |
| Moderate | 11                               | 3.8            |
| High     | 278                              | 95.9           |

Source: Author's Analytical Result

**Attitudinal disposition of public primary school teachers towards child abuse reporting practices**

Table 3: Public primary school teachers' Attitudinal Disposition towards Child Abuse Reporting

Respondents in this study: N=290

| Items   | Strongly agree F (%) | Agree F (%) | Disagree F (%) | S Disagree F (%)      |
|---|----------------------|-------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| If I report, the parents will take care of the child.   | *220(75.9%)          | 54(18.6%)   | 7(2.4%)        | 9(3.1%)               |
| There is a need to report child abuse as teachers are more concerned about what happens to a child outside school | *82(28.3%)           | 197(67.9%)  | 7(2.4%)        | 4(1.4%)               |
| Authorities do not respond effectively to report of child abuse   | 26(26.2%)            | 135(46.6%)  | 62(21.4%)      | 17(5.9%)*             |
| People will praise me when I make a report of child abuse   | *51(17.6%)           | 173(59.7%)  | 43(14.8%)      | 23(7.9%)<br>37(12.8%) |
| Reporting child abuse will not make me prone to danger  | *59(20.3%)           | 166(57.2%)  | 28(9.7%)       |                       |
| The safety of the child is my responsibility  | *113(39.0%)          | 160(55.2%)  | 10(3.4%)       | 7(2.4%)               |
| Reporting suspected case of child abuse is a professional responsibility  | *163(56.2%)          | 70(24.1%)   | 44(15.2%)      | 13(4.5%)              |

\*Expected responses

Most (75.9%) respondents strongly agreed that the parents will care for the child if they report. More (67.9%) of the respondents agreed that there is a need to report child abuse as teachers are more concerned about what happens to a child outside school. Less than half (21.4%) of the respondents disagreed that authorities do not respond effectively to reports of child abuse. More than half (59.7%) of the respondents agreed that people will praise them when they make a report of child abuse. More than half (57.2%) of the respondents agreed that reporting child abuse will not make them prone to danger. Fifty-five percent of the respondents agreed that the child's safety is their responsibility. More than half (56.2%) of the respondents agreed that reporting suspected cases of child abuse is a professional responsibility.

The respondents' attitudinal disposition towards child abuse reporting measured on a 21-point rating scale showed that the respondents scored a mean of 14.32 ± 2.51, translated to an attitudinal disposition prevalence of 68.19%, and the result is as presented in Table 4. The proportion of the respondents with positive attitudinal disposition was 59.6% (see Table 4). One can infer that more of the respondents had a moderately high attitudinal disposition toward child abuse reporting.

Table 4: Proportion of public primary school teachers' Attitudinal Disposition towards Child Abuse Reporting

|          | Respondents in this study: N=290 |                |
|----------|----------------------------------|----------------|
|          | Frequency                        | Percentage (%) |
| Negative | 6                                | 2.1            |
| Moderate | 111                              | 38.3           |
| Positive | 173                              | 59.6           |

Source: Author's Analytical Result

**Section C: Child Abuse Reporting Practices**

Table 5 Respondents' Child Abuse Reporting Practices

| Items  | Respondents in this study=290 |             |
|--|-------------------------------|-------------|
|  | Frequency(n)                  | Percent (%) |
| Have you ever noticed a child who is abused?                             |                               |             |
| Yes  | 196                           | 67.6        |
| No   | 94                            | 32.4        |
| *If yes, what did you do?  |                               |             |
| I reported to school authority(headmaster/headmistress)                  | 103                           | 22.8        |
| I reported to child protection services                                  | 132                           | 29.3        |
| I reported to law enforcement organisations                              | 110                           | 24.4        |
| I reported to non-government organizations                               | 60                            | 13.3        |
| I did not make a report  | 46                            | 10.2        |
| *If no, what would you do if you notice a case of child abuse in future? |                               |             |
| I would report to school authority (headmaster/headmistress)             | 71                            | 24.5        |
| I would report to child protection services                              | 71                            | 24.5        |
| I would report to law enforcement organisations                          | 74                            | 25.5        |
| I would report to non-governmental organisations                         | 20                            | 6.9         |
| I will not make a report   | 54                            | 18.6        |
| Have you ever made a report of suspected child abuse?                    |                               |             |
| Yes  | 153                           | 52.8        |
| No   | 137                           | 47.2        |
| If yes, how many times have you made a report of a child abuse?          |                               |             |
| Once   | 38                            | 24.8        |

|                   |    |      |
|-------------------|----|------|
| 2 times           | 54 | 35.3 |
| 3 times           | 28 | 18.3 |
| 4 times           | 16 | 10.5 |
| More than 4 times | 17 | 11.1 |

\* Multiple responses \*\* N=196 \*\*\* N=94

Source: Author's Analytical Result

As shown in Table 5, more than half (67.6%) of the respondents had ever noticed a child who had been abused. Of those who noticed a child who had been abused, few (22.8%) reported to the headmaster/headmistress, child protection service (29.3%), and law enforcement agency (24.4%). Those who had never noticed child abuse indicated that whenever they noticed in the future, they would report to the headmaster/headmistress (24.5%), child protection services (24.5%), and law enforcement agency (25.5%).

**Test of Hypotheses**

Two hypotheses were tested for this study. Pearson correlation was conducted at a 0.05 significance level in testing these hypotheses. The decision rule applied was that if the p-value computed is less or equal to the cut-off p-value of 0.05, the null hypothesis will be rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis and vice-versa.

Hypothesis One: There is a significant relationship between the knowledge of public primary school teachers and child abuse reporting practices in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State.

Table 6: Relationship between Respondents' Level of Knowledge about Child Abuse Reporting and Respondents' Attitudinal Disposition towards Child Abuse Reporting Practices

| Variables   | N   | R     | p-value | Decision        |
|-------------|-----|-------|---------|-----------------|
| Knowledge   | 290 |       |         |                 |
|             |     | 0.014 | 0.806   | Not significant |
| Child Abuse | 290 |       |         |                 |

\*Significant < 0.05

Source: Author's Analytical Result

The result of the correlation analysis in Table 6 showed no significant relationship between teachers' knowledge level and child abuse reporting practices (r = 0.014, p-value = 0.806). Since the p-value surpasses the 0.05 cut-point, the hypothesis is rejected. It is therefore concluded that there is no significant relationship between knowledge of teachers and child abuse reporting practices.

**Hypothesis Two:** There is a significant relationship between the attitude of public primary school teachers and child abuse reporting practices in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State.

Table 7: Relationship between Attitude of Teachers and Child Abuse Reporting Practices

| Variables   | N   | R      | p-value | Decision    |
|-------------|-----|--------|---------|-------------|
| Attitude    | 290 |        |         |             |
|             |     | -0.179 | 0.002   | Significant |
| Child Abuse | 290 |        |         |             |

\*Significant < 0.05

Source: Author's Analytical Result

Table 7 shows the test of the relationship between the attitude of teachers and child abuse reporting practices. The value of r obtained in the test is -0.179 at a p-value of 0.002. The hypothesis cannot be rejected since the p-value is less than 0.05. It can, therefore, be concluded that there is a significant relationship between the attitude of teachers and child abuse reporting practices. Further, the coefficient of the relationship is negative (-0.179). This implies that the relationship between teachers' attitudes to child abuse and child abuse reporting practices is indirect. As a result, a positive attitude of primary school teachers towards child abuse will lead to a decrease in their child abuse reporting practices and vice versa.

**V. DISCUSSION**

This study revealed that the majority of the public primary school

teachers in Alimosho LGA of Lagos State, Nigeria, have adequate knowledge about child abuse. This suggests that their pupils have at one time or more been abused. These pupils usually feel free to discuss child abuse-related issues with their trusted and friendly teachers. In most cases, they confide in their teachers what they cannot disclose to their parents or caregivers. These teachers were able to identify the different forms, effects, and signs of child abuse on their pupils. According to them, pupils usually narrate any form of child abuse meted out to them with a broken heart, in pain, and fear. The results also indicated that knowledge of child abuse reporting practices among teachers in public primary schools in Alimosho LGA of Lagos State, Nigeria, is high. This contradicts the finding of Kothea et al. (2017) that most of the teachers in their study area had average knowledge and awareness about child abuse. Again, this finding of the study disagrees with Owoyemi et al. (2020), who concluded in their study that the knowledge and attitude of primary school teachers on the primary prevention of child sexual abuse in Lagos State was low. Also, it was found in the study that teachers' years of experience in handling child abuse-related cases may influence their level of knowledge of child abuse.

Furthermore, it was shown in the study that most of the teachers in the study area exhibited a positive attitude towards child abuse reporting. This is in line with Owoyemi et al. (2020), who posited that primary school teachers in Lagos State had a positive attitude towards primary prevention of child sexual abuse.

The different child abuse reporting practices were also studied. It was found in the study that some of the teachers claimed that they had never noticed a child who was abused, while the majority claimed that they had done so. Those who have done so were mainly able to provide information on the authorities they could contact whenever they notice a child who has undergone/is undergoing child abuse. However, a substantial percentage of the teachers could not identify the authorities to be contacted for reporting child abuse. Those who claimed not to have noticed any child being abused were also in the majority; a substantial proportion claimed that they would not report even if they noticed any child being abused. This finding of the study is at variance with Kumar (2021) that although most of the teachers in their study area know about child abuse and are aware of the signs and symptoms of child abuse and child neglect, they are not reporting child abuse cases. The finding also agrees with Sinanan (2011), who provided that possible reasons for teachers not reporting child abuse may include legal ramifications for false allegations, consequences of disclosure, lack of knowledge regarding how to detect and report child abuse, and the possible deterioration of the relationship between the school and the family. This finding also concurs with Kenny (2001), who found that the reason for failure to report child abuse cases was the fear of making an inaccurate report.

**VI. CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that public primary school teachers in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State, Nigeria, have a high level of knowledge of child abuse reporting practices. Some of the respondents have reported child abuse to child protection services. Many teachers claimed that they would not report even if they noticed any child being abused.

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the researchers therefore recommend the following: Although the findings of the study showed that teachers possessed a high level of knowledge of child abuse reporting practices, the knowledge does not translate to reporting cases of child abuse if/whenever it happens. Hence, primary school teachers should be encouraged and rewarded for reporting cases of child abuse to child protection services or the principal/headmistress. Moreover, primary school teachers should be well trained in child reporting practices as the prompt reporting of any form of child abuse case would go a long way in providing help for the victim(s). Nevertheless, necessary measures

and speedy action should be wisely taken by the child protection services, school management, parents, or caregivers after the report of child abuse incidents. The application of wisdom, love, and care would give a victim of any form of child abuse a sense of belonging. Finally, in the case of the rape of a primary school pupil, stigmatisation should be wholly avoided.

## REFERENCES

- Abdulkadir, I., Umar, L. W., Musa, H., Musa, S., Oyeniyi, O., & Ayoola-Williams, O. (2011). Child sexual abuse: A review of cases seen at General Hospital Suleja, Niger State. *Annals of Nigerian Medicine*, 5(1), 15-19. <https://doi.org/10.4103/0331-3131.84223>
- Aideyan, O. D., & Akingbade, T. A. (2019). Knowledge, attitude, and practice of school safety among primary schools' teachers in Edo South Senatorial District. *KIU Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(4), 217-224.
- Collin-Vézina, D., Daigneault, I., & Hébert M. (2013). Lessons learned from child sexual abuse research: Prevalence, outcomes, and preventive strategies. *Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health*, 1, 7-22. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1753-2000-7-22>
- Do, H. T. H., Nguyen, K. K., & Pham, H. P. (2020). The impact of education on child abuse prevention. *European Journal of Business and Management*, 12(20), 80-89. <https://doi.org/10.7176/EJBM/12-20-09>
- Feng, J., Huang, T., & Wang, C. (2010). Kindergarten teachers' experience with reporting child abuse in Taiwan. *Child abuse and neglect*, 34(2), 124-128. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2009.05.007>
- Finkelhor, D. (2009). The prevention of childhood sexual abuse. *Future Child*, 19, 169-194. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27795052>
- Finkelhor, D., & Korbin, J. (1988). Child abuse as an international issue. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 12(1), 3-23. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0145-2134\(88\)90003-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/0145-2134(88)90003-8)
- Finkelhor, D., Ormrod, R. K., & Turner, H. A. (2007). Poly-victimization: A neglected component in child victimization. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 31(1), 7-26. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2006.06.008.Epub2007>
- General Statistics Office, Vietnam. (2014). *Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey*, 2014. <https://scidoc.org/IIDQS.php>
- Kumar, M. P. S. (2021). Knowledge, attitude, and practices regarding child abuse among school teachers: A cross-sectional study. *International Journal of Dentistry and Oral Science*, 8(5), 2405-2409. <https://doi.org/10.19070/2377-8075-21000472>
- Joseph, N., Narayanan, T., Zakaria, S., Nair, A.V., Belayutham, L., Subramanian, A. M., & Gopakumar, K. G. (2015). Awareness, attitudes, and practices of first aid among school teachers in Mangalore, South India. *Journal of Primary Health Care*, 7(4), 274-281. <https://doi.org/10.1071/hc15274>
- Kenny, M. (2001). Child abuse reporting: Teachers' perceived deterrents. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 25(1), 81-92. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0145-2134\(00\)00218-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0145-2134(00)00218-0)
- kotha, A., kumar, Y. V., Pratibha, B., & Ankitha, C. H. (2017). Knowledge and awareness among school teachers regarding child abuse. *International Journal of Applied Research*, 3(11), 146-148. Retrieved from [www.allresearchjournal.com](http://www.allresearchjournal.com)
- Kumar, R. (2015). Knowledge of primary school teachers on first aid management of minor accidents among children at Ambala. *International Journal of Nursing Research & Practice*, 2(2), 50-53.
- Mohammed, S. M., & Khudair, F. W. (2019). Teachers' perceptions and attitudes toward child abuse of secondary school in Najaf City. *Journal of Pharmaceutical Sciences and Research*, 11(4), 1510-1515.
- Owoyemi, S. O., Uchendu, O., & Olabumuyi, O. (2020). Knowledge, attitude, and practice of public primary school teachers on primary prevention of child sexual abuse in Southwestern Nigeria. *American Journal of Educational Research*, 8(8), 536-542. <https://doi.org/10.123691/EDUCATION-8-8-4>
- Ramesh, G., Kumar, A., Raj, A., Gupta, B., Katiyar, A., & Nagarajappa, R. (2017). Child abuse and neglect: A survey on primary school teachers of Kanpur City. *International Journal of Medical Toxicology and Forensic Medicine*, 7(2), 105-116. [https://doi.org/10.22037/ijmtmf.v7i2\(Spring\).13088](https://doi.org/10.22037/ijmtmf.v7i2(Spring).13088)
- Sinanan, A. N. (2011). Bridging the gap of teacher education about child abuse. *Educational Foundations, Summer Fall*, 59-73.
- Umobong, M. E. (2010). Child abuse and its implications for the educational sector in Nigeria. *Ogirisi: A New Journal of African Studies*, 7(1), 15-21. <https://doi.org/10.4314/og.v7i1.57927>
- United Nations Children Emergency Fund (2015). UNICEF Annual Report, Nigeria.