

**PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL CHILD ABUSE AS DETERMINANTS OF LOW SELF-
CONCEPT AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS IN UYO LOCAL GOVERNMENT
AREA.**

By

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ABSTRACT

This study examines physical and emotional child abuse as determinants of low self-concept among primary school pupils in Uyo Local Government Area. In carrying out this study, an ex post facto research design was adopted. The study was conducted in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. The target population consisted of all Primary Five pupils in Uyo Local Government Area. A simple random sampling technique was employed to select 30 respondents from each of the four clans in Uyo Local Government Area (Ikono, Oku, Etoi, and Offot clans), giving a total sample size of 120 respondents. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled "Physical and Emotional Child Abuse as Determinants of Low Self-Concept Questionnaire" (PECALSCQ). Face and content validation of the instrument was carried out by an expert in Test, Measurement, and Evaluation to ensure its accuracy, appropriateness, and completeness for the study. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.86, which was considered sufficiently high to justify the use of the instrument. The data generated for this study were analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques, including descriptive statistics to answer the research questions and regression analysis to test the hypothesis. Based on these findings, the study concluded that child abuse in any form poses a serious threat to the healthy development of children's self-concept. One of the recommendation made was that parents, teachers, and policymakers should adopt preventive and intervention strategies, including parental education, counseling services, and strict enforcement of child protection laws, to safeguard children and promote positive self-development.

KEYWORDS: Physical, Emotional, Child Abuse, Low Self-Concept and Primary School Pupils

INTRODUCTION

A child's psychological health and self-perception are greatly influenced by their experiences at home and in school during childhood, which is a crucial period in human development. Among these experiences, child abuse—especially emotional and physical forms—has become a significant global social and psychological issue. A child's overall development is harmed by both physical child abuse, which entails the deliberate use of force that may cause harm or injury, and emotional child abuse, which is defined by ongoing rejection, criticism, and psychological abuse (Ekong, 2020; Stoltenborgh., 2020). These types of abuse are particularly harmful because they frequently take place in caregiver relationships where children are supposed to feel safe.

The incidence of physical and emotional abuse raises grave concerns about the psychological effects on students in the Uyo Local Government Area, where socio-cultural and economic factors may influence parental practices and child upbringing. Research has indicated that children who are mistreated frequently suffer from anxiety, sadness, low self-esteem, and low academic engagement (Afifi, 2020; Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor, 2021). Therefore, in order to comprehend the extent of the issue and create suitable interventions targeted at promoting better developmental outcomes, it is crucial to look at physical and emotional child abuse as drivers of low self-concept among primary school students.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Childhood is a critical stage in human development where personality, emotional stability, and self-perception are formed. However, in many homes and communities, children are exposed to various forms of abuse, particularly physical and emotional maltreatment. Physical child abuse, which involves the deliberate use of force that result in injury or harm, and emotional child abuse, which includes persistent criticism, rejection, humiliation, and neglect, have been widely reported as common but often hidden problems affecting children's psychological well-being. These experiences interfere with normal development and may shape how children view themselves and their worth. Despite increasing awareness of child protection issues, cases of physical and emotional abuse continue to be reported among primary school pupils in many parts of Nigeria, including Uyo Local Government Area. At the primary school level, children are still in the formative stage of developing their self-concept, which refers to how they perceive their abilities, identity, and value. When children are exposed to abusive environments, they are likely to develop negative self-perceptions, low confidence, and feelings of inadequacy, which can affect both their academic performance and social relationships. Therefore, the problem this study addresses is the increasing exposure of primary school pupils to physical and emotional child abuse and the lack of adequate empirical evidence on how these experiences contribute to low self-concept among pupils in Uyo Local Government Area. Understanding this relationship is essential for developing effective strategies to promote positive self-development and protect children from long-term psychological harm.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

1. To examine physical child abuse as a determinant of low self-concept among primary school pupils in Uyo Local Government Area.

2. To investigate emotional child abuse as a determinant of low self-concept among primary school pupils in Uyo Local Government Area.
3. To determine the joint influence of physical and emotional child abuse on low self-concept among primary school pupils in Uyo Local Government Area.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. To what extent does physical child abuse determine low self-concept among primary school pupils in Uyo Local Government Area?
2. To what extent does emotional child abuse determine low self-concept among primary school pupils in Uyo Local Government Area?
3. What is the joint influence of physical and emotional child abuse on low self-concept among primary school pupils in Uyo Local Government Area?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

H₀₁: There is no significant influence of physical child abuse on low self-concept among primary school pupils in Uyo Local Government Area.

H₀₂: There is no significant influence of emotional child abuse on low self-concept among primary school pupils in Uyo Local Government Area.

H₀₃: There is no significant joint influence of physical and emotional child abuse on low self-concept among primary school pupils in Uyo Local Government Area

THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

Theory of Child Abuse (Albert Bandura – 1977)

The Theory of Child Abuse is largely rooted in the Social Learning Theory developed by Albert Bandura in 1977. The theory explains that human beings learn behaviors through observation, imitation, and reinforcement from their environment. According to Bandura, children and adults observe the behaviors of people around them, especially parents, caregivers, peers, and authority figures, and may later imitate such actions. The theory argues that abusive behavior is often learned within the family and social environment where violence, aggression, neglect, or harsh punishment are repeatedly displayed. Individuals exposed to abusive experiences during childhood may therefore adopt similar patterns of behavior in adulthood because they perceive such actions as acceptable methods of interaction and discipline. The theory also emphasizes the importance of positive social interaction and supportive environments in preventing child abuse. According to Bandura, children who grow up in loving and caring environments are more likely to develop healthy emotional and social behaviors. Parents, teachers, counselors, healthcare professionals, religious organizations, and government agencies all have significant roles to play in protecting children from abuse. Educational programs on positive parenting, counseling services, social welfare support, and strict child protection laws are essential measures for reducing abusive practices in society. The theory therefore supports interventions aimed at breaking the cycle of violence and promoting healthy family relationships (Bandura, 1997).

The relevance of the theory lies in its explanation of how abusive behaviors are learned and transmitted within society. The theory provides a framework for understanding the causes, patterns, and consequences of child abuse on children's emotional, psychological, and social development. It also highlights the importance of environmental influences and social learning in shaping human behavior. Through this theory, researchers and policymakers can better understand strategies for preventing child abuse and promoting safe and supportive environments for children's healthy growth and development.

CONCEPT OF PHYSICAL CHILD ABUSE

Physical child abuse is the intentional use of physical force against a child or adolescent that results in or has the potential to result in physical injury, harm, or death. It is characterized by non-accidental acts, typically committed by a parent, caregiver, or someone in a position of trust, though it can occur outside the home. As a result, many different techniques were developed to either assist in eliciting a behavior or stopping it (Ekong, 2020).

As noted by Stoltenborgh, Bakermans-Kranenburg, Alink, & van Ijzendoorn (2020), physical child abuse refers to the intentional use of physical force by a caregiver or adult that results in actual or potential harm to a child. This condition may lead either to anxious/escape or depressive behavior (Akpan & Mark, 2022). Acts like punching, slapping, kicking, shaking, or using items to cause pain are examples of this type of abuse, which is frequently incorporated into harsh disciplinary procedures.

CONCEPT OF EMOTIONAL CHILD ABUSE

Psychological maltreatment, another name for emotional child abuse, is a type of child abuse in which a caregiver or authority figure consistently engages in behaviors that negatively impact a child's psychological health, emotional growth, and sense of self. Although it doesn't include physical injury like physical abuse does, its repercussions are frequently severe and long-lasting. Acts of omission or commission that interfere with a child's essential emotional needs, such as love, security, acceptance, and support, are defined in contemporary literature as emotional child abuse. Persistent criticism, humiliation, rejection, intimidation, isolation, and exposure to unpleasant situations are all considered kinds of emotional abuse, according to recent scholarly studies. These behaviors might be vocal (threats, insults) or nonverbal (ignoring, withholding affection), and they usually occur on a regular basis over time rather than as isolated incidents. Hayashi (2022) explains that emotional child abuse is characterized by caregiver actions that undermine a child's sense of identity and emotional stability, thereby disrupting normal psychological development.

Furthermore, emotional abuse may also involve insufficient emotional support, which is sometimes linked to emotional neglect. However, emotional abuse, which encompasses behaviors that make a child feel unwanted, unloved, or undeserving, is typically more active and intentional. According to recent research, this kind of abuse hinders children's psychological needs from being met and has a major negative impact on their social, behavioral, and cognitive development (Younas, 2023). Furthermore, it might be difficult to recognize emotional child abuse because it sometimes lacks clear physical indicators. It can occur alone or in conjunction with other forms of abuse, such as sexual or physical abuse. Clinical viewpoints emphasize that it comprises behaviors that harm a child's mental health, emotional control, and attachment development, raising the likelihood of anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem in later life (Luo, 2025).

CONCEPT OF SELF-CONCEPT

Self-concept refers to the total perception an individual has about themselves, including beliefs, feelings, attitudes, and evaluations formed through experience and interaction with the environment. It is a multidimensional construct that influences behavior, motivation, emotional stability, and interpersonal relationships. Self-concept is generally understood as how individuals perceive “who they are,” “what they are capable of,” and “how they fit into society.” According to contemporary psychological literature, self-concept develops progressively from childhood through adulthood as individuals interpret feedback from significant others, social experiences, and personal achievements.

As noted by Marsh and Martin (2020), self-concept is not a single unified idea but a structured system consisting of multiple domains such as academic self-concept, social self-concept, emotional self-concept, and physical self-concept. These domains interact to form a global self-view that guides decision-making and behavior. Similarly, Orth and Robins (2021) explained that self-concept is closely linked to self-esteem, although they are distinct constructs; while self-concept refers to descriptive beliefs about oneself, self-esteem reflects evaluative judgments of self-worth.

Additionally, scholastic achievement and professional behavior are significantly influenced by one's self-concept. In comparison to pupils with a weak self-concept, individuals with a strong academic self-concept typically exhibit higher levels of achievement, perseverance, and goal orientation. Affective outcomes include attitudes, interests, values, and self-concept, whereas psychomotor outcomes include motor skills (Xavier 2023). Several methods or tools could be used to assess students' performance. This suggests that people's perceptions of their own talents have a big impact on how well they perform. In addition, recent studies emphasize the role of digital and social environments in shaping self-concept

CONCEPT OF LOW SELF-CONCEPT

Low self-concept refers to a negative or poorly defined perception that individuals hold about themselves, including their abilities, identity, roles, and overall worth. Self-concept itself is understood as the collection of beliefs and perceptions individuals have about who they are, which shapes how they interpret experiences and interact with the world (Gutiérrez & Ayala, 2021). As noted by Kabiru and Jibrilla (2026), self-concept encompasses individuals' views about their personality, competence, appearance, and social identity, forming a central structure in psychological functioning.

Low self-concept is also frequently impacted by developmental and environmental factors, including peer connections, family dynamics, cultural norms, and life experiences. People's self-concept can be lowered by internalizing negative beliefs about themselves as a result of negative experiences like rejection, failure, or criticism. In order to study, therefore, the individual needs to have a strong will and determination that he will succeed in it because a positive attitude towards a subject will build the required confidence for success in the individual (Osuafor & Sambo 2023).

EFFECT OF PHYSICAL CHILD ABUSE ON LOW SELF-CONCEPT AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS

The development of low self-esteem and a negative self-perception is one of the main consequences of physical abuse. Children who get physical punishment on a regular basis tend to

internalize the idea that they are wicked, undeserving, or worthy of damage. Their self-perception is shaped by this recurring experience, which results in emotions of inadequacy and inferiority. According to Afifi. (2020), exposure to physical abuse is strongly associated with poor self-concept and diminished psychological well-being in children.

Fear and emotional insecurity are additional effects that damage one's self-concept. Children who are abused may experience ongoing fear or anxiety, particularly in settings that ought to be secure, such their homes or schools. Their inability to openly express themselves or engage in class activities due to this emotional instability can reinforce a negative perception of their talents. Gershoff and Grogan-Kaylor (2021) found that harsh physical discipline contributes to increased anxiety and reduced self-confidence among school-aged children.

Poor academic achievement is another consequence of physical abuse, and this has an indirect impact on self-concept. Due to mental anguish, children who are abused may have trouble focusing, remembering things, and being motivated. They could start to believe that they are unable or stupid when their academic performance deteriorates. An general bad self-image is reinforced by this intellectual self-doubt. Maltreated children frequently show worse academic achievement and less school involvement, according to a study by Font and Maguire-Jack (2020).

EFFECT OF EMOTIONAL CHILD ABUSE ON LOW SELF-CONCEPT AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS

Primary school students' self-concept development is significantly harmed by emotional child abuse. Constant criticism, rejection, humiliation, and lack of affection are examples of emotional abuse, which can have a profound impact on a child's self-perception. Children are in a crucial stage of developing their identities and sense of value during primary school. When they are repeatedly exposed to negative messages about their value, they are more likely to internalize these experiences, leading to feelings of inadequacy, low confidence, and poor self-image (Spinazzola., 2021).

Negative self-beliefs are one of the main consequences of emotional abuse. Students' academic performance and social interactions may suffer if they start to believe that they are unworthy, stupid, or unlovable. These kids frequently exhibit worry, disengagement, and decreased engagement in class activities. Research indicates that emotionally abused children are more prone to low self-esteem and depressive symptoms compared to their peers (Norman., 2020). Over time, this low self-esteem may continue to have an impact on their motivation and academic performance.

Furthermore, emotional abuse interferes with children's normal emotional development, making it challenging for them to control their emotions and form wholesome connections. They might have trouble communicating and building trust, which would exacerbate their low self-image. The consequences may persist into adolescence and adulthood in the absence of appropriate intervention. In order to help impacted students restore a positive self-concept and enhance their general well-being, early support from educators, caregivers, and mental health specialists is crucial.

HOW TO MINIMIZE PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL CHILD ABUSE

Reducing emotional and physical abuse of children necessitates a multifaceted strategy that addresses social structures, family dynamics, and larger governmental frameworks. Child abuse has long-term effects on a child's cognitive, social, and emotional development, whether it takes

the form of physical violence or emotional maltreatment including verbal abuse, neglect, or psychological manipulation.

- **Parental education and support.**

Parental support and education are one of the best tactics. Stress, ignorance of child development, or acquired negative behaviors are common causes of maltreatment. It has been demonstrated that parenting programs that emphasize communication skills, emotional control, and positive discipline greatly lessen abusive behaviors. According to Sanders (2020), evidence-based parenting interventions such as the Positive Parenting Program (Triple P) improve parent-child relationships and decrease harsh disciplinary practices. Educating caregivers about non-violent discipline techniques—such as time-outs, reinforcement of good behavior, and active listening—helps replace harmful responses with constructive ones.

- **Early identification and intervention**

Early detection and intervention is another crucial strategy. When it comes to identifying warning signs of abuse, such as unexplained injuries, withdrawal, anxiety, or abrupt behavioral changes, educators, medical professionals, and social service providers are essential. Counseling and family therapy are examples of early intervention interventions that can stop escalation. A study by Walsh (2021) found that integrated child protection systems that involve schools and healthcare institutions significantly improve early detection and reduce recurrence of abuse.

- **Public awareness and legal enforcement**

Legal enforcement and public awareness are crucial at the societal level. Campaigns that raise awareness of the negative consequences of child abuse and advocate for children's rights have the power to change societal norms that may condone or excuse violence. Deterrents are also provided by robust legal structures and enforcement systems. According to UNICEF (2022), countries that combine legal protections with public education campaigns see measurable declines in reported child abuse cases.

HOW TO MITIGATE CHILD ABUSE CAUSED LOW SELF-CONCEPT

A comprehensive strategy that takes into account social, emotional, and cognitive development is needed to mitigate the negative self-concept that frequently follows child maltreatment. Using trauma-informed psychological interventions, such as cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), which helps kids reframe self-defeating beliefs and create more positive thought patterns, is one successful tactic. Research shows that CBT and related therapies can significantly improve self-esteem and emotional regulation among abused children by challenging internalized feelings of worthlessness (Lenz & Hollenbaugh, 2020). Similarly, trauma-focused interventions that emphasize safety, trust, and empowerment have been found to promote positive self-concept and resilience (Dorsey, 2020).

Another important factor in reducing negative self-concept is supportive relationships. Rebuilding a child's sense of worth and belonging can be facilitated by consistent care from parents, guardians, educators, or mentors. Positive social support has been linked to improved self-esteem and reduced psychological distress in maltreated children (Yoon, 2021). In addition, school-based programs that encourage social-emotional learning (SEL) help children develop self-awareness, confidence, and interpersonal skills, thereby strengthening their self-concept (Taylor, 2020).

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

An empirical study conducted by Spinazzola, (2021) examined the effect of emotional maltreatment on self-concept among school-aged adolescents in the United States of America. The area of study focused on child and adolescent psychology within school settings, particularly investigating emotional abuse such as rejection, verbal humiliation, and emotional neglect. The population of the study consisted of approximately 200 students drawn from selected urban middle and secondary schools. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study because it allowed the researchers to gather information on existing conditions without manipulating variables. Data were collected using validated self-report questionnaires, including an emotional maltreatment scale and a self-concept inventory designed to measure how students perceive their academic, social, and personal worth. The findings of the study revealed a significant negative relationship between emotional abuse and self-concept, indicating that students who experienced higher levels of emotional maltreatment tended to have low self-concept, reduced self-confidence, and negative self-perception in both academic and social environments.

Olusa & Owotade (2022) studied the influence of physical child abuse on self-esteem and behavioural adjustment among school children in Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design and was guided by three research questions. The area of the study was Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria. The population of the study comprised secondary school students in selected schools within the study area. A sample size of 324 students was selected using a multi-stage sampling technique. Data were gathered using the Child Abuse Questionnaire and Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. Mean, standard deviation, and regression analysis were used to analyze the data. The findings revealed, according to Olusa and Owotade (2022), that physical abuse negatively affects children's self-esteem, confidence, and social interaction, leading to poor self-concept and emotional instability among abused children. The study recommended that parents, teachers, and caregivers should avoid harsh physical punishment and encourage supportive disciplinary strategies.

METHODOLOGY

In carrying out this study, an ex post facto research design was adopted. The study was conducted in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. The target population consisted of all Primary Five pupils in Uyo Local Government Area. A simple random sampling technique was employed to select 30 respondents from each of the four clans in Uyo Local Government Area (Ikono, Oku, Etoi, and Offot clans), giving a total sample size of 120 respondents. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled "Physical and Emotional Child Abuse as Determinants of Low Self-Concept Questionnaire"(PECALSCQ). Face and content validation of the instrument was carried out by an expert in Test, Measurement, and Evaluation to ensure its accuracy, appropriateness, and completeness for the study. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.86, which was considered sufficiently high to justify the use of the instrument. The data generated for this study were analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques, including descriptive statistics to answer the research questions and regression analysis to test the hypothesis.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Hypothesis One

The null hypothesis states that there is no significant influence of physical child abuse on low self-concept among primary school pupils in Uyo Local Government Area. In order to test the hypothesis, simple regression analysis was used to analyse the data (see Table 1).

TABLE 1

Simple regression of the influence of physical child abuse on low self-concept among primary school pupils in Uyo Local Government Area

Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R square	Std. error of the Estimate	R Square Change
1	0.93 ^a	0.87	0.87	1.18	0.87

Significant at 0.05 level; DF = 118; N = 120; critical R-value = 0.197

The above Table 1 shows that the calculated R-value (0.93) is greater than the critical R-value of 0.197 at 0.05 level of significance with 118 degrees of freedom. The R-square value of 0.87 indicates that 87% of the variation in self-concept is explained by physical child abuse among primary school pupils in Uyo Local Government Area. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is a significant influence of physical child abuse on self-concept among primary school pupils in Uyo Local Government Area. To further determine the significance and differences among the variables, an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) will be presented and interpreted.

TABLE 2

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) of the influence of physical child abuse on low self-concept among primary school student in Uyo Local Government Area

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1113.422	1	1113.422	804.173	.000b
Residual	163.378	118	1.385		
Total	1276.800	119			

a. Dependent Variable: Self-concept

b. Predictors: (Constant), Physical abuse

The table shows that the calculated F-value (804.173) is significant at $p < 0.05$, since the significance value is 0.000. This indicates that there is a significant influence of physical child abuse on self-concept among primary school pupils. To further determine the magnitude and direction of the influence of the variables, coefficient analysis will be conducted. The finding of the study revealed that there is a significant influence of physical child abuse on low self-concept among primary school pupils in Uyo Local Government Area. The result shows it is significant.

TABLE 3

Coefficient analysis of the influence of physical child abuse on self-concept

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	32.020	0.596		53.739	.000
Physical Abuse	-1.196	0.042	-0.934	-28.358	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Self-concept

From the table, physical child abuse has a negative coefficient ($B = -1.196$) and is statistically significant ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$). This implies that an increase in physical child abuse leads to a decrease in self-concept. Since the significance value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. This result is in agreement with the opinion of Gershoff and Grogan-Kaylor (2021), who stated that fear and emotional uncertainty caused by physical abuse can harm a child's self-concept. According to the authors, abused children frequently experience ongoing worry and anxiety, particularly in areas that are supposed to give protection and comfort, such as the home and school. This emotional instability may prevent individuals from freely expressing themselves or actively participating in school activities, promoting negative attitudes of their abilities and self-

worth. The authors also emphasised that harsh physical discipline causes anxiety and lowers self-confidence in school-aged youngsters. Similarly, Font and Maguire-Jack (2020) argued that poor academic accomplishment is another result of physical abuse, which has an indirect impact on children's self-concept. Because of mental turmoil, abused children may struggle with focus, memory recall, and motivation to learn, and as their academic performance deteriorates, they may come to regard themselves as incompetent or dumb

HYPOTHESIS TWO

The null hypothesis states that there is no significant influence of emotional child abuse on self-concept among primary school pupils. To test this hypothesis, simple regression analysis was used (see Table 4).

TABLE 4

Simple regression of the influence of physical child abuse on low self-concept among primary school pupils in Uyo Local Government Area

Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R square	Std. error of the Estimate	R Square Change
1	0.93 ^a	0.87	0.87	1.18	0.87

Significant at 0.05 level; DF = 118; N = 120; critical R-value = 0.197

The above Table 1 shows that the calculated R-value (0.93) is greater than the critical R-value of 0.197 at 0.05 level of significance with 118 degrees of freedom. The R-square value of 0.87 indicates that 87% of the variation in self-concept is explained by physical child abuse among primary school pupils in Uyo Local Government Area. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is a significant influence of physical child abuse on self-concept among primary school pupils in Uyo Local Government Area. To further determine the significance and differences among the variables, an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) will be presented and interpreted.

TABLE 5

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) of the influence of physical child abuse on low self-concept among primary school student in Uyo Local Government Area

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1113.422	1	1113.422	804.173	.000b
Residual	163.378	118	1.385		
Total	1276.800	119			

a. Dependent Variable: Self-concept

b. Predictors: (Constant), Physical abuse

The table shows that the calculated F-value (804.173) is significant at $p < 0.05$, since the significance value is 0.000. This indicates that there is a significant influence of physical child abuse on self-concept among primary school pupils. The result means that there is significant influence of emotional child abuse on low self-concept among primary school pupils in Uyo Local Government Area. The finding of the study revealed that emotional child abuse has a significant influence on low self-concept among primary school pupils in Uyo Local Government Area. To further determine the magnitude and direction of the influence of the variables, coefficient analysis will be conducted.

TABLE 6

Coefficient analysis of the influence of physical child abuse on self-concept

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	32.020	0.596		53.739	.000
Physical Abuse	-1.196	0.042	-0.934	-28.358	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Self-concept

From the table, physical child abuse has a negative coefficient ($B = -1.196$) and is statistically significant ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$). This implies that an increase in physical child abuse leads to a decrease in self-concept. Since the significance value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. This finding is consistent with the view of Spinazzola (2021), who explained that emotional abuse such as constant criticism, rejection, humiliation, and lack of affection greatly affects the development of children's self-concept. According to the author, primary school children are at a crucial stage of developing their identity and sense of self-worth, and repeated

exposure to negative messages about their value may lead them to internalize feelings of inadequacy, low confidence, and poor self-image. Gershoff and Grogan-Kaylor (2021) also stated that found that harsh physical discipline contributes to increased anxiety and reduced self-confidence among school-aged children. The result shows it is significant

HYPOTHESIS THREE

The null hypothesis states that there is no significant joint influence of physical and emotional child abuse on self-concept among primary school pupils in Uyo Local Government Area .In order to test this hypothesis, multiple regression analysis was used to analyse the data (see Table 7).

TABLE 7

Multiple regression of the joint influence of physical and emotional child abuse on self-concept among primary school pupil in Uyo Local Government Area

Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R square	Std. error of the Estimate	R Square Change
1	0.95 ^a	0.91	0.89	1.04	0.91

Significant at 0.05 level; DF = 117; N = 120; critical R-value = 0.197

The table shows that the calculated R-value (0.95) is very high, indicating a strong relationship between the independent variables (physical and emotional child abuse) and self-concept. The R-square value of 0.91 implies that 91% of the variation in self-concept is jointly explained by physical and emotional child abuse. This percentage is very high and indicates a strong joint influence of the independent variables on self-concept.

TABLE 8

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) of the joint influence of physical and emotional child abuse on self-concept among primary school pupils in Uyo Local Government Area

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1150.455	2	575.227	532.681	.000 ^b
Residual	126.345	117	1.080		
Total	1276.800	119			

a. Dependent Variable: Self-concept

b. Predictors: (Constant), Physical abuse, Emotional abuse

The table shows that the calculated F-value (532.681) is significant at $p < 0.05$, since the significance value is 0.000. This indicates that there is a significant joint influence of physical and emotional child abuse on self-concept. The finding of the study revealed that physical abuse has a significant influence on low self-concept among primary school pupils in Uyo Local Government Area.

TABLE 9

Coefficient analysis of the joint influence of physical and emotional child abuse on self-concept

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	33.253	0.567		58.670	.000
Physical Abuse	-0.350	0.149	-0.273	-2.346	.021
Emotional Abuse	-0.838	0.143	-0.682	-5.856	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Self-concept

From the table, both independent variables made significant contributions emotional abuse has the strongest influence (Beta = -0.682, $p = 0.000$) Physical abuse also significantly influences self-concept (Beta = -0.273, $p = 0.021$). Both variables have negative coefficients, indicating that increases in abuse lead to a decrease in self-concept. This finding is consistent with Afifi (2020), who explained that repeated physical punishment contributes to the development of low self-esteem and a negative self-perception in children. According to the author, children who are frequently exposed to physical abuse tend to internalize harmful beliefs about themselves, such as

feeling bad, undeserving, or worthy of harm, and these repeated experiences gradually shape their self-concept, leading to feelings of inadequacy and inferiority. Afifi further emphasized that exposure to physical abuse is strongly linked to poor self-concept and reduced psychological well-being among children. In addition, Norman (2020) maintained that emotional abuse disrupts normal emotional development in children, making it difficult for them to regulate their emotions and build healthy relationships. Such children may struggle with communication and trust, which further deepens their negative self-image. The effects, if not properly addressed, may continue into adolescence and adulthood. The result shows it is significant.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, children who are exposed to physical violence or persistent emotional maltreatment tend to internalize negative beliefs about themselves, leading to feelings of worthlessness, insecurity, and reduced confidence. These negative self-perceptions not only affect their emotional well-being but also hinder their academic performance and social interactions. Furthermore, both forms of abuse disrupt the normal developmental processes of children, especially during the formative primary school years when self-concept is still being shaped. The long-term implications of such experiences may extend into adolescence and adulthood if not properly addressed. Therefore, child abuse should not only be viewed as a social problem but also as a critical psychological issue that requires urgent attention from families, schools, and society at large.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Parents and caregivers should be educated on positive parenting techniques and the harmful effects of physical and emotional abuse. Programs should emphasize non-violent discipline strategies and effective communication.
- Schools should implement guidance and counseling services to identify and support pupils experiencing abuse. Teachers should also be trained to recognize early signs of abuse and low self-concept.
- Government and relevant authorities should enforce child protection laws and establish functional reporting systems to address cases of abuse promptly.

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