Child abuse and neglect (can) research proposal

SYNOPSIS

Child abuse and neglect (CAN) is a serious public health problem and occurs in varying proportions or magnitudes, resulting from burden imposed on children by parents or adults. Most adults often impose their wishes on children without any recourse on their feelings. This flagrant (deliberate) imposition more often than not instilled so much fear in the minds of thechildren(such as fear of early marriage, child labour, allegation of witchcraft and so on). Statistics indicate that, there were an estimated 896, 000 substantiated cases of CAN in the United States (US) in 2004. Cases involving approximately 4. 5 million children were referred to Child Protective Services throughout the country each year for investigation into allegations of abuse and neglect. Of these reported cases 30 per cent concluded were abuse and neglect of children (U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2008). Studies conducted by World Health Organization and International Society for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (2006) showed that CAN has been and continues to be a major public health problem in the United States, Africa including Nigeria. Similarly, a study in Bauchi State showed that 59. 8 per cent of schoolgirls were neglected from being enrolled in school (Targeted States High Impact Project- TSHIP, 2012). From the foregoing statistics, there is evidence of CAN, but the prevalence or extent may not have been determined.

Child is a valuable asset to a good parent that needs to be protected. The Child Right Act (CRA) in UNICEF-Nigeria (2011)defined a child as a person below the age of 18 years. In this study, a child is a person between the ages of 10-20 years. These children at this age may be vulnerable to CAN because

they may not have known their rights, of which these rights are supposed to be protected by parents and caregivers, but, unfortunately, mostabuse and neglect of children is carried out by people the children know and trust, such as parents, foster parents or parents' partners, schoolmates, teachers, caregivers and employers.

Following from above, children who fall victims are mostly abused by people they know and these CAN is either overtly or covertly. Such cases may not even be reported. This worrisome and unprecedented trend is more profound in developing nations of Asia and Africa including sub-Saharan Africa (UNICEF, 2009).

Abuse, is a multi-dimensional phenomenon that encompasses a broad range of behaviours, events, and circumstances, unlike random acts of violence or exploitation (National Academies of Sciences (NAS, 2009). NAS described child abuse as all intentional actions that cause harm or create a serious risk or harm (whether or not harm is intended) to a child by a caregiver or other person who stands in a trusted relationship to the child. Child abuse is of different forms, namely: physical, sexual and psychological (emotional and/or verbal aggression. Therefore, physical, emotional and sexual abuse will be examined in this study. Another core concept in this study is child neglect.

Child neglect means failure of caregiver to provide for a child's basic needs. Child neglect manifests in various forms, namely: physical, emotional, educational and medical neglects, which will be examine.

Demographic factors may be implicated in the perpetration of CAN. Demographic is the attributes or characteristics that define vividly the children's population in Bauchi State in relation to abuse and neglect which may be use to predict an occurrence of certain behaviour. In this study, predictors refer to potential attributes or characteristics that can be used to foretell the occurrence of child abuse and neglect by means of special knowledge or inference. Examples of predictors in any given population may include: Age, gender, religious affiliation, marital status, location, family income/economic status, educational attainment and occupation. The current study uses the term " predictors" to describe potential variables contributing to child abuse occurrence, but makes no assumption as to the causal role of these variables.

The respondents of this study are the children(secondary school), whom acts are perpetrated by the parents. The reason for using children is that, parents may be reluctant to admit abuse or neglect. More so, children at the secondary school age are at the receiving end; they experience it, feel the impact and above all suffer the consequences of CAN. However, parents may be part of those who will provide information on the quantitative data.

Prevention refers to actions that make something impossible or very difficult to happen. In this study, prevention refers to the systematic, coordinate actions taken by health personnel, social workers and others to reduce, delay or eliminate child abuse and neglect in society especially in Bauchi state, Nigeria. There are majors for preventing child abuse and neglect. Masures may be a plan that is intended to achieve a particular purpose .

These may include: Primary, secondary and tertiary prevention measures, which will be examined in this study.

This study will anchor on three theories; Developmental-ecological Model (DEM), Caregiver Stress Theory (CST) and Cumulative Risk Model (CRM).

In Nigeria, Child Rights Act 2003 (CRA) incorporates all the rights and responsibilities of children; consolidate against physical, mental or emotional injury, abuse or neglect, maltreatment, torture among others. Regrettably, parents in Bauchi State sent children to hawk, farm for longer period of the day, girls are given out for early marriage, and children are treated with herbs when they fall sick instead of going to the health facilities for proper diagnosis and treatment. Parents regard these as means or acceptable ways of instilling discipline in children.

Literature reveals that there is child abuse and neglect in Nigeria including Bauchi State. However, the prevalence or extent has not been ascertained. This is supposedly the situation in Nigeria and Bauchi state in particular. The question, therefore, arises and that is: what is the prevalence of child abuse in Bauchi state. This prompted the researcher to investigate the demographic predictors of CAN by parents and prevention measures in Bauchi State.

The purpose of this study is to investigate demographic predictors of CAN and formulate preventive measures against its occurrence. Eleven objectives and eleven corresponding research questions and eight hypotheses where postulated to guide the study.

The study will be of great benefit to Lawmakers, parents, public health educators, in-school and out- of-school children (youths) and the public in general. The result may likely reveal that girls suffer CAN than boys. This result will benefit social welfare workers, government and health educators. This will provide adequate knowledge and information to the government; social welfare workers and health workers on how to protect children against CAN in Bauchi State.

The study will be conducted in Bauchi state, Nigeria. The study will cover demographic predictors of CAN and prevention measures against child abuse and neglect by parents in Bauchi State. The study is also delimited to forms of child abuse and neglect. These will be studied along side Predictors such as age, gender, religious affiliation, academic level, location, marital status parity and occupation and also be delimited to three theories Developmental-ecological Model (DEM), Caregiver Stress Theory (CST) and Cumulative Risk Model (CRM).

The Literature will be reviewed under the following headings, Conceptual Framework; Theoretical Framework; Empirical Studies; and Summary of Review of Related Literature.

The study will employ the descriptive survey design. Nworgu (2006); described this design as that permits the description of conditions as they exist in their natural setting.

Adalio (2010) used descriptive survey design to conduct a study on demographic predictors of corporal punishment endorsement University of Florida. The descriptive survey research design, therefore, is most

appropriate for this study. The successful applications of the design by the aforementioned investigator in her study suggested a possible success for use in this study.

Bauchi state was created in 1976 out of the defunct North East state. Bauchi states have twenty Local Government Areas (LGA's) and have six Emirates. The state spans two vegetation zones namely the Sudan Savannah and Sahel savannah. This made the state to be predominantly farmers. In addition, Bauchi state is endowed with a range of tourist attraction (Yankari game reserve and Sumu wildlife park) that captures and satiates the pleasure and sensibilities of visitors, therefore the " motto" : " Pearl of tourism" The population of the state is projected at 4. 5million. Like all other ethnic groups in Nigeria, the state operates strong form of social organizations. These organizations (ethnic groups) have cultural similarities and share similar social occupational practice, festivals, naming ceremonies and a high degree of ethnic interaction especially in marriage. Culture and poverty play a key role in CAN in Bauchi state, because most parents give out their daughters in marriage as early as nine years, on the assumption that it prevents sexual promiscuity. The children more often than not, may not know their rights such as right to education, right to life, or even right to be protected. Even if they know their rights, they may not be able to stand for it for the fear of parental punishment. Besides, they still depend on their parents for the provision of their basic needs. This, therefore, makes them vulnerable to CAN in Bauchi State.

The population for the study will consist of secondary school children students in Bauchi State which is estimated at 550, 421(public and private).

The sample size for this study will consists of one thousand five hundred and eleven (1511) secondary school students in Bauchi State Nigeria. This is in line with the suggestion of Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011), that when a population size is five hundred (500, 000.) and above at (95%) confidence level at (5% interval), the sample size should be six hundred and sixty three (663) and above will be the sample (see Appendix II). The multi-stage sampling procedure will be employed to draw up the sample size for the study (see appendix IV). The instrument for data collection will be the researcher structured questionnaire called Demographic Predictors of Child Abuse and Neglect Questionnaire (DePCANQ). The questionnaire will consist of 75 items consisting of four sections: A, B, C, and D,

The validity of the instrument will be established by giving the draft instrument, the specific objectives and research questions to five experts, three from Department of Health and Physical Education and one each from Department of Sociology and Science Education (measurement and Evaluation Unit), all of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. They will be requested to determine the suitability of the items and also to determine whether the items are in line with the purpose, and check for appropriateness of the items in terms of language used, objectives, research questions and hypotheses of the study. The experts' corrections, inputs, and suggestions will be used to produce the final instrument that will be used for the study.

To establish the reliability of the instrument, split half method will be used. Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (2006) explained split half as a method of assessing the reliability of an instrument by dividing the items into two equal

parts and correlating the scores in one part with scores in the other. In this study, twenty (20) copies of questionnaire will be administered to twenty (20) respondents in Dengi, Kanam LGA Plateau state who will not be included in the study but who have the same characteristics with the study population. The reason for using split half is to estimate the internal consistency and to exclude some error arising from psychological disposition, fatigue, and health (Gall, & Borg, 2007). The reliability of the instrument for section B will be established through the use of Cronbach Alpha technique, since the items of the instrument are polychotomously scored (Nwogu, 2006). The results of the reliability estimates will be shown in the appropriate Appendix.

Cronbach Alpha K-R-20 according to Mohsen and Reg (2011) can be used to determine internal consistencies of the instrument. Reliability correlation coefficient of 0. 70 and above will be accepted for the instrument. Ellen (2011) explained that if the correlation coefficient attains 0. 70 and above, the instrument should be considered reliable for the study. But if the correlation coefficient obtained is not up to 0. 70 and above, the instrument will be revalidated to make it reliable for the study.

In order to gain access to the respondents, a letter of introduction will be obtained from the Head, Department of health and Physical Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and will be presented to the respective school principals who will introduce the research to the heads of department, and class teachers (see Appendix). The researcher will administer copies of the questionnaire to the respondents with the help of two assistants. The two assistants will be briefed on the modalities of completing the instrument

(DPCANQ). The research and the two assistants will supervise the respondents to ensure that there will be no exchange of ideas during the process of completing the questionnaire. The completed copes of the questionnaire will be collected on the spot to ensure high return rate.

Research question 1 and 2 will be answered using frequencies and percentages while research 3-11 will be answered using mean and standard deviation. The entire hypothesis (1-8) will be analyzed using ANOVA statistic at . 05 level of significance