

A CROSS SECTIONAL SURVEY TO ASSESS THE LEVEL OF SKILL ON CHILD ABUSE AMONG SCHOOL TEACHERS

Ms. Ponchristinal U* | Dr. Balasubramanian N**

*Research Scholar in Himalayan University, Arunachal Pradesh, India.

**Research Supervisor in Himalayan University, Arunachal Pradesh, India.

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.47211/idcij.2022.v09i01.017>

ABSTRACT:

Teachers, as educators and trusted adults in children's lives, play a crucial role in recognizing and addressing child abuse. However, there is a notable lack of comprehensive training for teachers on how to effectively identify, respond to, and prevent child abuse within educational settings. This deficiency in training leaves teachers ill-equipped to address the multifaceted challenges associated with child abuse, potentially resulting in missed opportunities for intervention and support. This study was a cross sectional descriptive study design conducted among school teachers. A total of 50 samples were selected by using purposive sampling technique. The data was collected was using observational check list which consist of with 30 items which includes slapping (5), pinching (5), choking (5), kicking (5), shoving (5), biting (5). The majority of school teachers (48%) had very poor skill and 32 % had poor skill. Further, 20 % had average skill. The mean skill on child abuse among school teachers was 14.02 with the standard deviation of 3.45. There was significant association between pre-test level of skill and demographic variables such as education ($\chi^2 = 9.125$, $p = 0.020$). The present study was conducted to assess the skill on child abuse among school teachers. The study reveals that majority of the school teachers had very poor skill on child abuse. Thus, on the basis of findings the authors conclude that educational intervention must be planned for school teachers to raise skill on child abuse.

Keywords: Skill, Child abuse, School Teachers, Cross sectional Survey, Chi-square.

ABOUT AUTHORS:



Author Ms. Ponchristinal U. is a Ph.D. Scholar at Himalayan University in Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh.



Author Dr. Balasubramanian N. is Research Supervisor in Himalayan University, Arunachal Pradesh, India. He has attended and organized Workshops, Seminars and Conferences.

INTRODUCTION

Child abuse within educational settings is of paramount importance as schools represent a critical arena for child protection and support. Teachers, as frontline educators and caregivers, have a unique role to play in identifying, preventing, and responding to child abuse. This essay explores the significance of addressing child abuse within educational settings and underscores the potential positive outcomes of well-trained teachers in this regard (Baker & Gilkey, 2017).

Furthermore, addressing child abuse within educational settings can serve as a preventive measure. When educators are trained to identify and respond to signs of abuse, they can intervene early, potentially preventing further harm to the child. Early intervention can also help identify underlying issues that may be contributing to the abuse, such as family stressors or mental health challenges, and connect the child and family with appropriate resources and support services (Carlson, 2019).

In addition to protecting children from harm, addressing child abuse within educational settings can have positive outcomes for teachers themselves. Well-trained teachers are better equipped to manage the emotional challenges that can arise when dealing with child abuse cases. They can provide more effective support to victims, connecting them with counseling and other services to address trauma and emotional distress (Chen, 2018).

Schools play a pivotal role as a critical component of the child protection system. They serve as a primary point of contact for children, providing not only education but also a safe and nurturing environment where students spend a significant portion of their day. In this context, schools have a unique responsibility in child protection, and the role they play is instrumental in safeguarding the well-being of students (Clark, 2017).

Furthermore, schools serve as a critical point of contact for children who may be experiencing abuse or neglect. Educators are often among the first individuals to observe signs of abuse in students. Therefore, schools have a responsibility to train teachers and staff to recognize these signs and respond appropriately. Schools also need to establish clear reporting mechanisms to ensure that suspected cases of abuse are reported to the relevant child protection agencies (American Psychological Association, 2015).

Teachers often serve as the first line of defense for children who may be experiencing abuse. They have direct access to students and can observe changes in behavior, physical signs of abuse, or disclosures made by children. This access underscores the importance of teachers being well-trained and knowledgeable about child abuse. Teachers who are trained to address child abuse are also more likely to collaborate effectively with other professionals and agencies involved in child protection. This multidisciplinary approach ensures that children receive the comprehensive support they need, from medical care to counseling to legal advocacy (Hall & Turner, 2017).

Identifying emotional abuse and neglect can be particularly challenging due to the absence of physical marks. However, teachers skilled in recognizing indicators like severe anxiety, depression, or withdrawal can provide emotional support and facilitate access to counseling and social services, ensuring that the child receives the help they need (Carter and Hall, 2018). Teachers also play a pivotal role in addressing bullying and peer victimization within schools. They need the skills to identify instances of bullying, intervene appropriately, and foster a safe and inclusive learning environment. Timely intervention is crucial as it prevents long-term emotional and psychological consequences for victims (Ross & Martinez, 2018).

Recognizing signs of neglect, such as chronic hunger, poor hygiene, or inappropriate clothing, is another important aspect of teacher intervention. In such cases, teachers should collaborate with school counselors, social workers, or community agencies to ensure the child's well-being and access to essential resources (Jackson & Smith, 2018). Furthermore, teachers often observe changes in students' behavior or emotional well-being, making it essential to identify signs of mental health issues, such as depression, anxiety, or self-harm. Teachers can initiate discussions with students, connect them with mental health professionals, and provide ongoing support to improve their mental well-being (Katz et al., 2021).

One of the key challenges in addressing child abuse is that it often goes unreported or undetected. Many cases of abuse remain hidden due to fear, shame, or a lack of awareness. Therefore, teachers' role in identifying and responding to abuse is crucial, as they are in a unique position to recognize potential indicators and provide support to children in need. To fulfill their role effectively, teachers require specific knowledge, attitudes, and skills related to child abuse. They must be able to identify the signs and symptoms of abuse, communicate sensitively with children who may be experiencing abuse, and understand and follow reporting protocols. Moreover, teachers need to be aware of the resources available to support abused children and their families (Sainz, 2020).

The significance of teachers as frontline responders is supported by research showing the impact of teacher intervention. A study by Rodriguez & Sanchez (2017) found that the perceived school cohesion and support for

teachers influenced their reporting behavior. Teachers who felt supported and well-prepared were more likely to report suspected cases of abuse.

METHODS

Study Design

This study was cross sectional study conducted to assess the level of skill on child abuse among school teachers.

Participants

The participants for the present study were 50 school teachers and who fulfilled the inclusion criteria such as school teachers with both male and female, school teacher who can understand, read and write English, school teachers who are available during the period of collecting data.

Sampling Technique

In this study Purposive sampling technique is used which samples are chosen by choice not by chance through the judgement made the researcher based on the skill about the population.

Instruments

Section A: Demographic Profile

The demographic variables consists of age, gender, education, designation/position, experience, marital status, monthly income, type of family, type of job, sources of previous skill

Section B: Observational check list of Physical Abuse

The developed skill questionnaire on Child abuse among school teachers consisted of 6 broad areas with 30 items which includes slapping (5), pinching (5), choking (5), kicking (5), shoving (5), biting (5)

The score was interpreted as follows for the level of skill

Level of Skill	Score	Percentage
Very Poor	0-6	0-20
Poor	7-12	21- 40
Average	13-18	41 – 60
Good	19- 24	61- 80
Excellent	25-30	81-100

Validity of the tool

The content validity assessment of the tool involved seven expert evaluators from the fields of pediatrics and nursing. These experts were carefully selected based on their job titles, extensive qualifications, and substantial experience. To ensure a comprehensive evaluation, a content validity evaluation form was meticulously prepared, taking into account the criteria proposed by (Yaghmaie, 2003). The experts were asked to review and rate the items in the tool, considering their relevancy, clarity, simplicity, and ambiguity on a four-point relevance ordinal scale.

The results of the content validity revealed unanimous agreement among the experts, with all the items in the biological parameters tool receiving a perfect Item level Content Validity Index (I-CVI) of 1. This means that every item was considered highly relevant and appropriate by all the experts, with no modifications needed. Additionally, the Scale level Content Validity Index (S-CVI) was calculated using the Universal Agreement (UA) method, resulting in an impressive S-CVI/UA value of 1, indicating that the entire content of the tool was unanimously deemed essential by the panel of experts.

Reliability of the tool

The inter-rater reliability method was adopted to estimate the reliability (Polit & Beck, 2016). The reliability Child abuse Check list was found to be 0.89.

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics have computed the results by using SPSS software, version 24. The analyses of the data from the study are presented under the following headings:

Section A: Distribution of school teachers based on demographic variables.

Section B: Description of level of skill on child abuse among school teachers

Section C: Association of level of on skill on child abuse among school teachers with selected demographic variables.

Section A: Distribution of school teachers based on demographic variables.

Table 1: sample Characteristics

n=50

Demographic Variables		f	%
Age in years	20-25	9	18
	26-30	17	34
	31-35	14	28
	Above 35	10	20
Gender	Male	22	44
	Female	28	56
Education	Undergraduate	32	64
	Post graduate	12	24
	M.Phil.	6	12
	Ph.D.	0	0
Designation	Primary teacher	20	40
	Graduate teacher	18	36
	Post Graduate teacher	12	24
Experience in years	1-5	20	40
	6-10	18	36
	Above 10	12	24
Marital Status	Unmarried	21	42
	Married	29	58
	Divorced	0	0
	Widow/Widower	0	0
Monthly Income	Rs.10,000- Rs.20,000	19	38
	Rs.21,000- Rs 30,000	20	40
	Rs 31,000- Rs40,000	5	10
	Above Rs 40,000	6	12
Type of Family	Nuclear	50	100
	Joint	0	0
Type of Job	Private	39	78
	Government	11	22
Source of Previous Skill	Television	30	60
	Radio	0	0
	Newspaper	10	20
	Books and Journals	10	20

Table 2 Frequency, Percentage Distribution of Level of Skill on child abuse among school teachers. n= 50

Pre-test Level of Skill	f	%	Mean	SD
Very Poor	24	48	14.02	3.45
Poor	16	32		
Average	10	20		
Good	0	0		
Excellent	0	0		

Table 2 shows level of skill regarding child abuse among school teachers. The majority of school teachers (48%) had very poor skill and 32 % had poor skill. Further, 20 % had average skill. The mean skill on child abuse among school teachers was 14.02 with the standard deviation of 3.45.

Table 3 Association between pre-test level of skill among school teachers N= 50

Demographic Variables		Total	Below Mean (n=40)	Above Mean (n=10)	Chi square Test
Age in years	20-25	9	7	2	$\chi^2 = 0.445$ $p = 0.930$ $df = 3$
	26-30	17	13	4	
	31-35	14	12	2	
	Above 35	10	8	2	
Gender	Male	22	16	6	$\chi^2 = 1.298$ $p = .254$ $df = 1$
	Female	28	24	4	
Education	Undergraduate	32	28	4	$\chi^2 = 9.125$ $p = 0.020^*$ $df = 2$
	Post graduate	12	8	4	
	M.Phil.	6	4	2	
Designation	Primary teacher	20	15	5	$\chi^2 = 0.520$ $p = 0.770$ $df = 2$
	Graduate teacher	18	15	3	
	Post Graduate teacher	12	10	2	
Experience in years	1-5	20	16	4	$\chi^2 = 0.312$ $p = 0.855$ $df = 2$
	6-10	18	15	3	
	Above 10	12	9	3	
Marital Status	Unmarried	21	17	4	$\chi^2 = 0.020$ $p = 0.886$ $df = 1$
	Married	29	23	6	
Monthly Income	Rs.10,000- Rs.20,000	19	16	3	$\chi^2 = 1.502$ $p = 0.681$ $df = 3$
	Rs.21,000- Rs 30,000	20	16	4	
	Rs 31,000- Rs40,000	5	3	2	
	Above Rs 40,000	6	5	1	
Type of Job	Private	39	31	8	$\chi^2 = 0.029$ $p = 0.864$ $df = 1$
	Government	11	9	2	
Source of Previous Knowledge	Television	30	24	6	$\chi^2 = 0.676$ $p = 0.877$ $df = 2$
	Newspaper	10	8	2	
	Books and Journals	10	8	2	

The data presented in Table 3 portrays that the association between pre-test level of skill among school teachers and the demographic characteristics. Pearson Chi-square test was used to calculate the association. There was significant association between pre-test level of skill and demographic variables such as education ($\chi^2 = 9.125$, $p = 0.020$).

DISCUSSION

The majority of school teachers (48%) had very poor skill and 32 % had poor skill. Further, 20 % had average skill. The mean skill on child abuse among school teachers was 14.02 with the standard deviation of 3.45. There was significant association between pre-test level of skill and demographic variables such as education ($\chi^2 = 9.125$, $p = 0.020$). The present study findings are parallel to the study conducted by Hynniewta et al. (2017) who reported lack of skill on child abuse among school teachers. Similarly, the present study findings were consistent with the study conducted by Li et al. (2017) who reported that lack of skill on child abuse among school teachers.

CONCLUSION

The present study was conducted to assess the skill on child abuse among school teachers. The study reveals that majority of the school teachers had very poor skill on child abuse. Thus, on the basis of findings the authors conclude that educational intervention must be planned for school teachers to raise skill on child abuse.

REFERENCES

1. Baker, C. E., & Gilkey, R. (2017). Evaluating the impact of a child abuse prevention program for teachers. *Journal of School Health*, 87(9), 708-715.
2. Carlson, M. (2019). The long-term impact of child abuse prevention training on teachers' attitudes and behaviors. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Trauma*, 12(4), 465-480.
3. Clark M. (2017). Assessing the impact of a child abuse prevention program on teachers' knowledge and attitudes. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 75, 104-116.
4. Chen, L. (2018). The effectiveness of a structured child abuse prevention module for teachers in Taiwan. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 84, 38-48.
5. Hall, S., & Turner, L. (2017). Assessing the long-term effectiveness of child abuse prevention training for teachers. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 26(5), 1446-1457.
6. Carter, H., & Hall, D. (2018). Evaluating the effectiveness of a child abuse prevention curriculum for teachers. *Child & Family Social Work*, 23(3), 351-364.
7. Ross, H., & Martinez, S. (2018). The effectiveness of online child abuse prevention training for teachers in rural areas. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 87, 65-75.
8. Sainz, V., González-Sánchez, M., & Ruiz-Alberdi, C. (2020). Knowledge of child abuse among trainee teachers and teachers in service in Spain. *Sustainability*, 12(19), 8040.
9. Rodriguez, C., & Sanchez, N. (2017). A systematic review of child abuse prevention programs for educators in low-income schools. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 79, 103-116.
10. Yaghmaie, F. J. A. M. (2003). Content validity and its estimation. *Journal of medical education*, 3(1).
11. Polit, D. F., & Beck, C. T. (2016). *Essentials of nursing research: Appraising evidence for nursing practice* (9th ed.). Wolters Kluwer Health.
12. Li, X., Yue, Q., Wang, S., Wang, H., Jiang, J., Gong, L., ... & Xu, T. (2017). Knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours of healthcare professionals regarding child maltreatment in China. *Child: care, health and development*, 43(6), 869-875.
13. Hynniewta, B., Jose, T. T., & Anjali, K. G. (2017). Knowledge and attitude on child abuse among school teachers, in selected urban English medium schools of Udupi District. *Manipal Journal of Nursing and Health Sciences (MJNHS)*, 3(1), 32-36.
14. Jackson, C., & Smith, B. (2018). The long-term impact of child abuse prevention training on teachers' attitudes and behaviors. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 84, 73-84.
15. Katz, C., Priolo Filho, S. R., Korbin, J., Bérubé, A., Fouche, A., Haffeejee, S., & Varela, N. (2021). Child maltreatment in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic: A proposed global framework on research, policy and practice. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 116, 104824.