

Effective Counselling through Media Advocacy and Eradication of Child Abuse in Ekiti State

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Abstract

This study investigated effective counselling through media advocacy and eradication of child abuse in Ekiti State. The descriptive design of the survey type was used for this study. The population of the study comprised of all counsellors in Ekiti State public secondary school. The sample size of one hundred and fifty (150) counsellors were used for the study. Multistage sampling technique was used to select the samples. The research instrument for this study was a self-structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was made up of two sections, A and B. Section A was used to collect the bio-data of the respondents; Section B was used to elicit information for data analysis which was designed to portray the research variables of the study. The face and content validation of the instrument was done. The split half method of reliability was used for the study; the value of the reliability coefficient was 0.87. which adjudged the instrument as usable. The study found that television and radio mediums have the efficacy of eradicating child abuse and abuse in Ekiti State and that counsellors through media advocacy have special roles to play in the eradication of child abuse. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations among others were put forward, counsellors should be more proactive in using television and radio programmes to promote child right and freedom of association. Counsellors should also be alive to their responsibilities as well as being sensitive in handling child abuse cases mostly in the case of referrals to avoid violating the ethics of the job.

Keywords: Effective Counselling, Media Advocacy, Eradication, Child Abuse.

Introduction

School counselors are on the front line when handling situations of abuse and neglect. For this reason, school counselors have a higher reporting rate than other educators due to their duties, trusting relationships with students, and greater knowledge of child abuse. Not to mention, but school counselors often function as experts or consultants within their schools to others who have questions about child abuse or child abuse reporting. School counselors can be helpful in gathering pertinent information that aids in helping child protection agencies, but when the counselor speaks with the child he or she must document the exchange, utilizing professional discretion to decide whether a report is warranted and can make use of media to communicate this to government agencies and every citizen. Media can be defined as the communication channels through which every individual disseminate news, music, movies, education, promotional messages and other data (Market Business News, 2019). Nity and Singh (2017) stated that media can be in print form that is through physical and online newspapers, magazines, television, radio, billboards, telephone, the internet, fax and billboards, books etc. Media includes an electronic form for spreading information which is one of the most used media of mass communication. With the help of radio and TV, listeners and viewers not only get updated but it also creates an understanding of current happenings. The role that media had played and will still continue to play is momentous in its role in informing, forming and changing people's attitudes and behaviour towards child abuse. Of particular note is the part played by media outlet such as news through radio and television, newspaper, billboards, social media and features that reported on specific child abuse cases, research and intervention strategies.

Despite all the joy and merriment that child brings to the family and society at large, child abuse occurs in diverse forms and have become a daily reality for many Nigerian children and only a few do receive help. Child abuse is any actor failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, and sexual abuse or exploitation (Clark, Clark & Adamec, 2007). Umobong (2010) stated that abuse against children is rampant although it is largely under-reported. Under-reporting stems from cultural justification of certain forms of abuse associated with cultural practices and the reluctance of children to speak about prior abusive experiences. Fear of their assailants' threats or their parent's reaction may be the cause of this reluctance. Also, some children may be either too young to understand their experience or unable to speak for themselves. According to United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF] (2019), six out of every 10 children experience some form of violence and one in four girls and 10 per cent of boys have been victims of sexual violence. Of the children who reported violence, fewer than five out of a 100 received any form of support. The drivers of violence

against children are rooted in social norms, including around the use of violent discipline, violence against women and community beliefs about witchcraft, all of which increase children's vulnerability. Umobong (2010) stated that parents now push over the responsibility of caring for their children to the school. Many young children who would have been at home at about two years have been pushed over to the school. The tasks thus become enormous for the teachers and the school management to carry leading role to many children being neglected, despised and abused on a daily basis. This clearly undermines the provision for the right of the child on 'protection against indecent and inhuman treatment like abuse and neglect' earlier stated. Rather, the child has been subjected to all kinds of abuse, is not protected, valued nor defended.

School counselor's role in providing services for children that have experienced any form abuse is important. Counselors should demonstrate an understanding of child abuse problems, recognize and detect indicators of abuse, and provide strategies for preventing and combating the cycle of child abuse (Brown, Brack & Mullis, 2008). School counselors are legally, ethically, and morally mandated to report suspected child abuse or neglect to proper authorities. Until then, school counselors must keep information confidential unless legal requirements demand that confidential information be revealed or a breach is required to prevent serious or foreseeable harm (Dahir & Stone, 2012). Deeming whether an action is harmful is up to the judgment of the counselor. Determining whether certain behaviors such as disciplining a child constitutes as abuse can be a judgment call and demonstrates the importance of counselors being educated about signs and symptoms of abuse (Herlihy & Corey, 2015). The media attention to child abuse has, at times, positively influenced public, professional and political responses to the circumstances in which children and young people find themselves. Goddard and Saunders (2019) affirmed the role of media in curbing child abuse as the media sensitize citizen on the awareness of, and response to, child abuse and neglect. In addition to news stories, feature articles, and investigative journalism, sporadic mass media education and prevention campaigns are launched. These campaigns usually endeavour to broaden community knowledge of child abuse and neglect, to influence people's attitudes towards children and young people, and to change behaviours that contribute to, or precipitate, the problem of child abuse and neglect in our communities.

The media play a key role in revealing child abuse to the whole world as a major social problem. The issue of child abuse has been covered across a range of category of media which news programmes, TV drama, films, call-in shows, soap operas and thereby reaching a diverse range of audiences (Powell and Scanlon, 2019). Media representations of sexual abuse not only transformed public knowledge, but also had profound implications for private knowledge. While acknowledging the importance of the media in raising awareness, stakeholders in child education have also noted that the media's interest is very recent and has generally relied on others (e.g. activists, professional groups) to lay the groundwork. Counsellors teaching an abused child how to create their own happiness alone is a key part of building self-confidence and overcoming fears of rejection. As long as they do not believe that they can create their own happiness and enjoy life alone, then the child will be less confident and more dependent on others creating their happiness and thereby allowing him/herself to be abused (Murphy, 2008). According to Murphy (2008), the feelings associated with child abuse like sexual abused are a self-perpetuating cycle, the abused client feels. It is too hard for them to come out and take the bold steps to break out of their abusers because of fear of being killed by the perpetrators. So, it is then harder for them to commit to change. As with changing any pattern of behaviour, it takes effort and commitment for the abused children to begin to move out and tell the story of what he or she is facing.

Meanwhile, counsellor can fill the gap and help the child to overcome the problem of abuse and bring the perpetrator to book. From a counselling perspective, breaking the cycle of child abuse requires finding its cause. Warwick (2006) suggested that the counsellor needs to identify any existing dysfunctional ways the client deals with like hiding away, drinking alcohol and sleeping. The next steps usually include identifying the settings and conditions under which one feels willing to communicate with others. Olukoya (2013) stated that it has been discovered that child abuse could cause and lead to various side effects directly or indirectly. Child abuse may permanently alter the psychological well-being of a child; following abuse, children are known to display the following problems: unusual high level of anger and aggression, feeling of guilt and shame, for sexual abuse victims this could be severe, general fearfulness

and specific manifestations of phobia, depression symptoms, social withdrawal, low self-concept, feelings of stigmatization, intrusive thoughts, fear, depression and loneliness are some of the effects of child abuse. Thus, making the roles of a school counsellor sacrosanct and very essential.

Statement of the Problem

All over the world, the place and pride given to children are well pronounced and recognized. Despite all the joy and merriment that child brings to the family and society at large, child abuse occurs in diverse forms and have become a daily reality for many Nigerian children and only a few do receive help. Van der Kolk, Hopper and Crozier (2016) reported that almost 81% of child abuse cases find the parents to be the perpetrators of the abuse. While the exact numbers vary from every source, the scope of the problem that child abuse is very large and complex regardless of where it happens. Children are indiscriminately given away for fostering, some are apprenticed to masters and abandoned to their fate; in some parts, betrothal of underage girls and the genital mutilation of female children are regular and acceptable practice. Children cannot speak for themselves as this is obvious in the way they are being treated but they need someone or any form of communication to speak for them. Having media in focus, the school counsellor can make use of the media to inform the society about their findings and understanding of child abuse among school age children. Specifically, this research work looked into using effective counselling through media advocacy to eradicate child abuse in Ekiti State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to evaluate the use of counselling through media advocacy on the eradication of child abuse Ekiti State. In specific, the study seeks to determine the efficacy of television on eradication of child abuse, ascertain the efficacy of radio on eradication of child abuse and finally to find out the role of counsellors on eradication of child abuse in Ekiti State.

Research Questions

The following research questions are raised for answers in this study:

1. Will counsellor's usage of television media have effect on eradication of child abuse in Ekiti State?
2. Will counsellor's usage of radio media have effect on eradication of child abuse in Ekiti State?

Research Hypothesis

Sequel to the research questions raised above, one hypothesis was formulated for the study.

1. There is no significant difference in counsellor's usage of audio visual and eradication of child abuse in Ekiti State.

Methodology

The descriptive design of the survey type was used for this study. The population of the study comprised of all counsellors in Ekiti State public secondary school. The sample size of one hundred and fifty (150) counsellors were used for the study. The counsellors were selected all across the public secondary schools in Ekiti State. Multistage sampling technique was used to select two local government areas from each of the three (3) senatorial districts. Then a purposive sampling technique was used to select counsellors from secondary schools and institution across the selected local government areas in the state. The research instrument for this study was a self-structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was made up of two sections, A and B. Section A was used to collect the bio-data of the respondents. Section B was used to elicit information for data analysis which was designed to portrait the research variables of the study. The face and content validation of the instrument was done.

The split half method of reliability was used for the study; the value of the reliability coefficient was 0.99.

Research Question 1

Will counsellor's usage of television medium have effect on eradication of child abuse in Ekiti State?

Table 1: Responses to usage of television media has effect on eradication of child abuse

S/N	Item	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	SD
1.	Through television programmes more awareness programmes on child abuse can be introduced	90 (60.0)	39 (26.0)	8 (5.3)	13 (8.7)	1.63	.931
2.	Television programmes can help to discourage parents' act of using their children for hawking during the school hour	86 (57.3)	52 (34.7)	10 (6.7)	2 (1.3)	1.52	.683
3.	Television kiddies' programmes enhance parents understanding of the need for self-freedom	68 (45.3)	57 (38.0)	16 (10.7)	9 (6.0)	1.77	.868
4.	Television news reporter can give present documentary report on the punishment for parents who maltreat their children	74 (49.3)	55 (36.7)	16 (10.7)	5 (3.3)	1.68	.797

Table 1 showed the mean and standard deviation scores of items 1 to 4 regarding the responses to the efficiency of television in eradicating child abuse. The table showed the mean scores ranging from 1.52 – 1.68 and standard deviation values (.683 - .868). Analysis of statement revealed that (86.0%) of the respondents agreed that through television programmes more awareness programmes on child abuse can be introduced while the remaining (14.0%) of the respondents expressed contrary opinion. It was also observed from the table that majority of the respondents (92.0%) also agreed that Television programmes can help to discourage parents' act of using that through television programmes more awareness programmes on child abuse can be introduced that Radio house can provide a strong support for the fight against child abuse their children for hawking during the school hour, while (8.0%) disagree to this assertion. The table equally revealed that (83.3%) of the respondents agreed to the assertion that Television kiddies' programmes enhance parents understanding of the need for self-freedom while (16.7%) of the respondents does not support the opinion. Lastly, it was revealed by the table that (86.0%) of the respondents believed that counsellors through television news reporter can present documentary report on the punishment for parents who maltreat their children while (14.0%) of the respondents disagreed to the assertion.

Research Question 2

Will counsellor's usage of radio media have effect on eradication of child abuse in Ekiti State?

Table 2: Responses to counsellor's usage of radio media has effect on eradication of child abuse

S/N	Item	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	SD
1.	Radio house can provide a strong support for the fight against child abuse	80 (53.3)	53 (35.3)	9 (6.0)	8 (5.3)	1.63	.823
2.	Though news and adverts, law against child abuse can be communicated to the parents and guardians	87 (58.0)	46 (30.7)	14 (9.3)	3 (2.0)	1.55	.747
3.	Radio presentation can help to educate parents on the possible danger or luring their children into child abuse	94 (62.7)	46 (30.7)	8 (5.3)	2 (1.3)	1.45	.661
4.	Through radio since it is most common means of media, awareness on child abuse becomes easier and faster	89 (59.3)	43 (28.7)	15 (10.0)	3 (2.0)	1.55	.756

Table 2 showed the mean and standard deviation scores of items 1 to 4 regarding the responses to the usage of radio in eradicating child abuse. The table showed the mean scores ranging from 1.45 – 1.63 and standard deviation values (.661 - .823). Analysis of statement revealed that (88.6%) of the respondents agreed that Radio house can provide a strong support for the fight against child abuse while the remaining (11.4%) of the respondents expressed contrary opinion. It was also observed from the table that majority of the respondents (88.7%) also agreed that though news and adverts, law against child abuse can be communicated to the parents and guardians while (11.3%) disagree to this assertion. The table equally revealed that (93.4%) of the respondents agreed to the assertion that Radio presentation can help to educate parents on the possible danger or luring their children into child abuse while (6.6%) of the respondents does not support the opinion. Lastly, it was revealed by the table that (88.0%) of the respondents believed that through radio since it is most common means of media, awareness on child abuse becomes easier and faster children while (12.0%) of the respondents disagreed to the assertion.

Hypotheses Testing: There is no significant relationship in counsellor's usage of audio visual and eradication of child abuse in Ekiti State.

Table 3: ANCOVA analysis of relationship in counsellor's usage of audio visual and eradication of child abuse

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	P
Corrected Model	406.586 ^a	2	203.293	7.111	0.001
Intercept	2985.926	1	2985.926	104.445	0.000
Effective counselling and Child abuse	406.190	1	406.190	14.208	0.000
Audio visual	73.572	1	73.572	0.04	0.110
Error	5060.142	177	28.588		
Total	181123.000	180			
Corrected Total	5466.728	179			

a. R squared = 0.74 (Adjusted R squared = 0.064)

b. Computed using alpha = 0.05

Table 4 showed that the F-value, $F_{cal}(0.04)$, with a P value <0.05 alpha level obtained for audio visual effectiveness which was significant at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. Hence, there was significance in effective counselling through the use of audio visual in eradicating child abuse.

Discussion of Findings

The study found that television and radio mediums have the efficacy of eradicating child abuse and abuse in Ekiti State. This is achievable through series of awareness programmes, special editorial report, documentary relay, news and adverts, as well as law against child abuse and abuse. This supported the claim of Powell and Scanlon (2015) who posited that while it is undoubtedly selective with the news, the mass media like television and radio has had a powerful influence in augmenting children's rights within civil society, simply by reporting child emotional abuse cases. Also, it supported Adekunle (2019) who posited that through television and radio, information on the penalty for parents, guardian, caregiver, etc. who cause children to go through all forms of abuse will be watched with an example of erring individual being showcase on the television. He also stated that the role of radio house in achieving the set goals of fight against child physical abuse cannot be overlook. It also corroborated Saunders & Goddard (2019) who submitted that understanding media influences, and how to use the media constructively, may thus be an essential tool for counsellors who advocate for children, young people and their families.

Also, the findings of the study indicate that counsellors through media advocacy have special roles to play in the eradication of child abuse as they are supposedly very close to the children and understand them better, hence it will be very easy for them to detect and identify an abused child. They can equally leverage on their level of closeness to the abused children to help in expediting healing process on their damaged emotions. Relevant law enforcement agencies can also leverage on the information gotten from the counsellors to help them in full prosecution of the culprits of child abuse. This supported the claim of Murphy (2008) who opined that counsellor will engage children in talking to boost their self-esteem so as to achieve a positive sense of self-acceptance, and find relating to others is both achievable and

enjoyable. Also, Warwick (2006) posited that the counsellor needs to identify any existing dysfunctional ways the client deals with hiding away, drinking alcohol and sleeping. The inferential analysis of the study revealed that there was a significant efficacy of audio visual in eradicating child abuse and abuse particularly.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, it is evident that significant relationship exists between effective counselling using media advocacy in eradicating child abuse. The study also concludes that there was significant efficacy of radio and television in eradicating child abuse particularly in Ekiti State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are put forward, Counsellors should be more proactive in using television and radio programmes to promote child right and freedom of association. Counsellors should be alive and active to their responsibilities as well as being sensitive in handling child abuse cases mostly in the case of referrals to avoid violating the ethics of the job. All child abuse culprits should be made to face the full wrath of the law. Finally, parents should be very close to their children in order to protect them from pedophiles and child abusers.

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