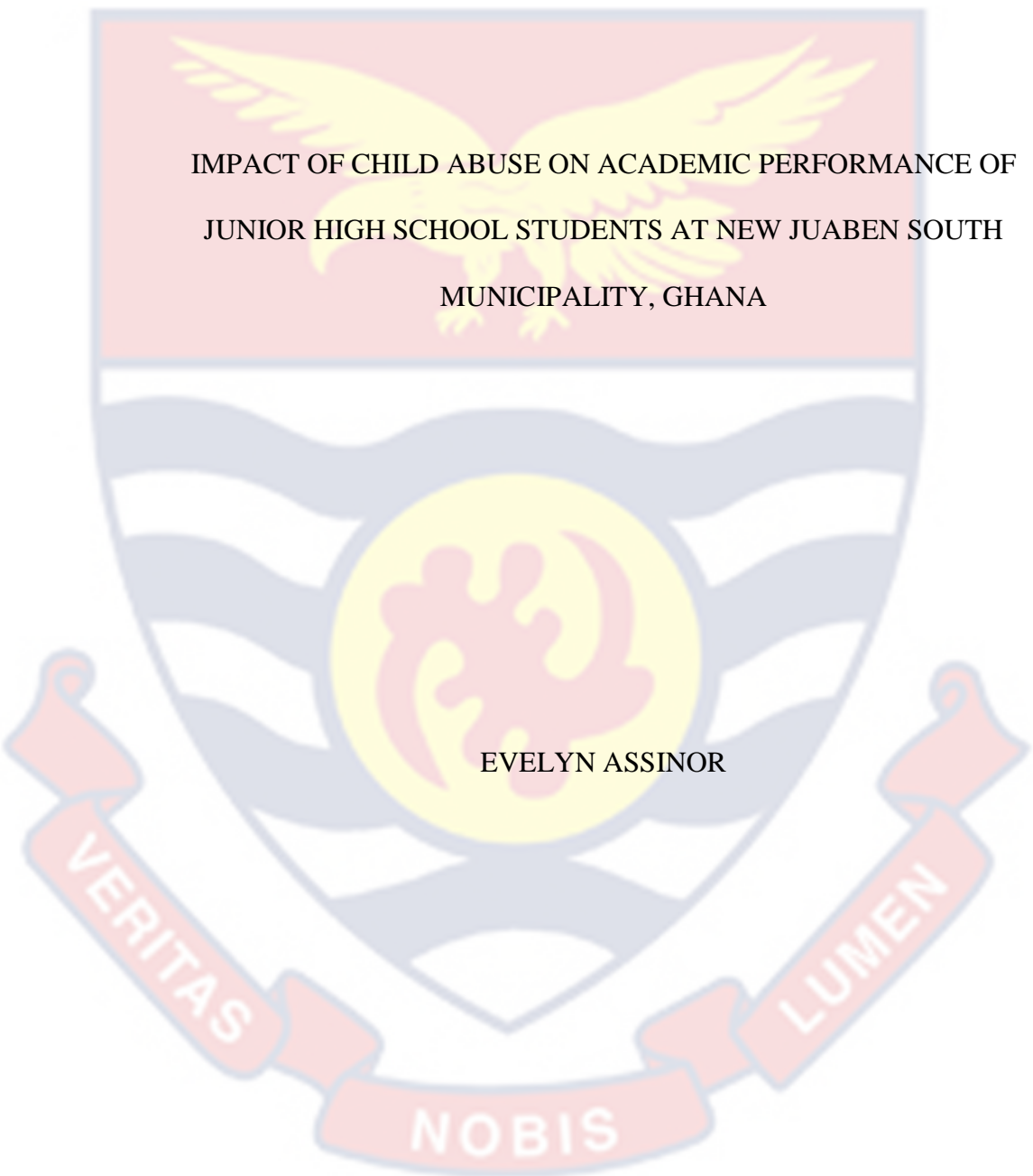


UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST



IMPACT OF CHILD ABUSE ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF  
JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AT NEW JUABEN SOUTH  
MUNICIPALITY, GHANA

EVELYN ASSINOR

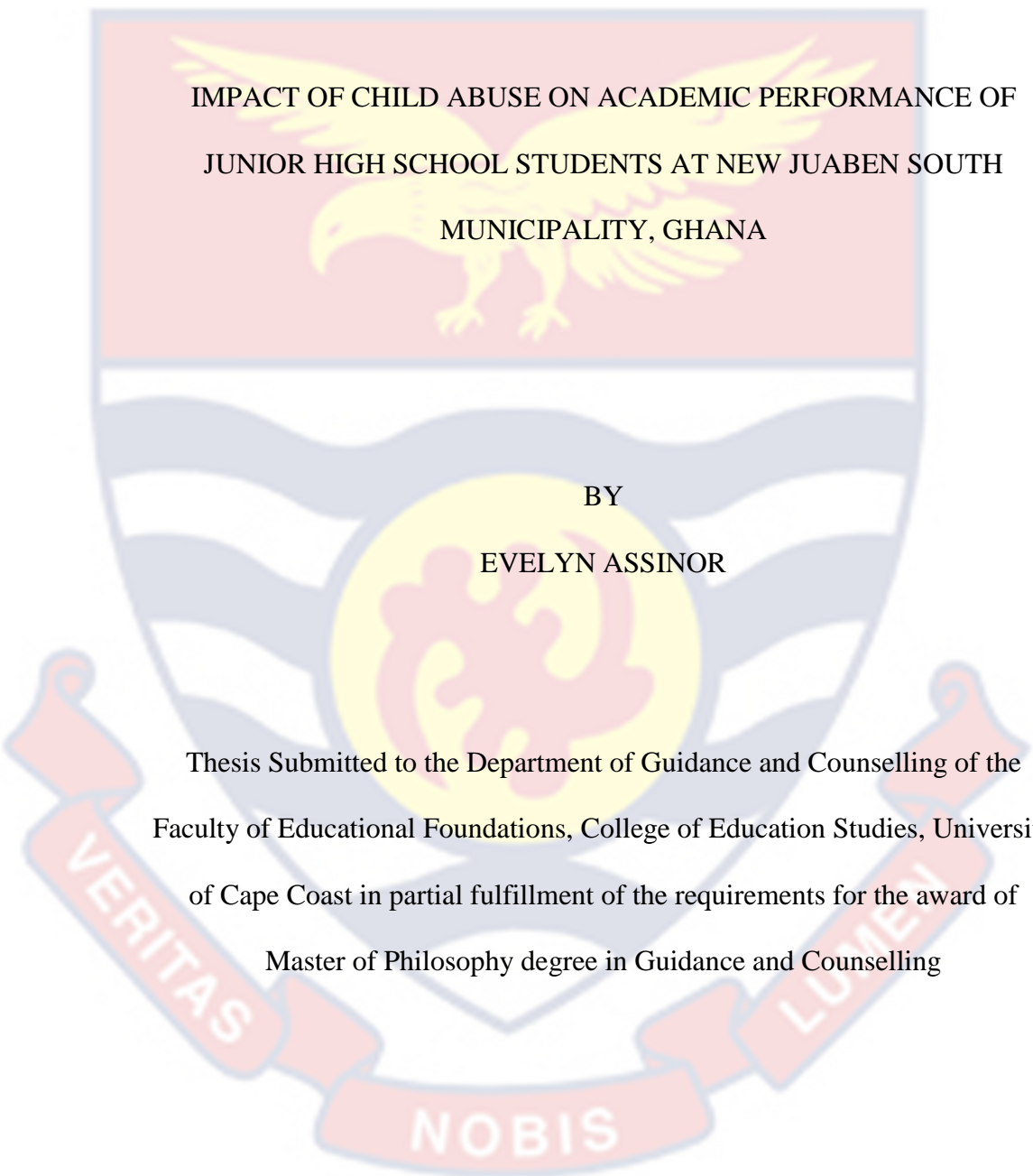
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BY  
EVELYN ASSINOR

Thesis Submitted to the Department of Guidance and Counselling of the  
Faculty of Educational Foundations, College of Education Studies, University  
of Cape Coast in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of  
Master of Philosophy degree in Guidance and Counselling

JANUARY 2023

## DECLARATION

### Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature..... Date.....

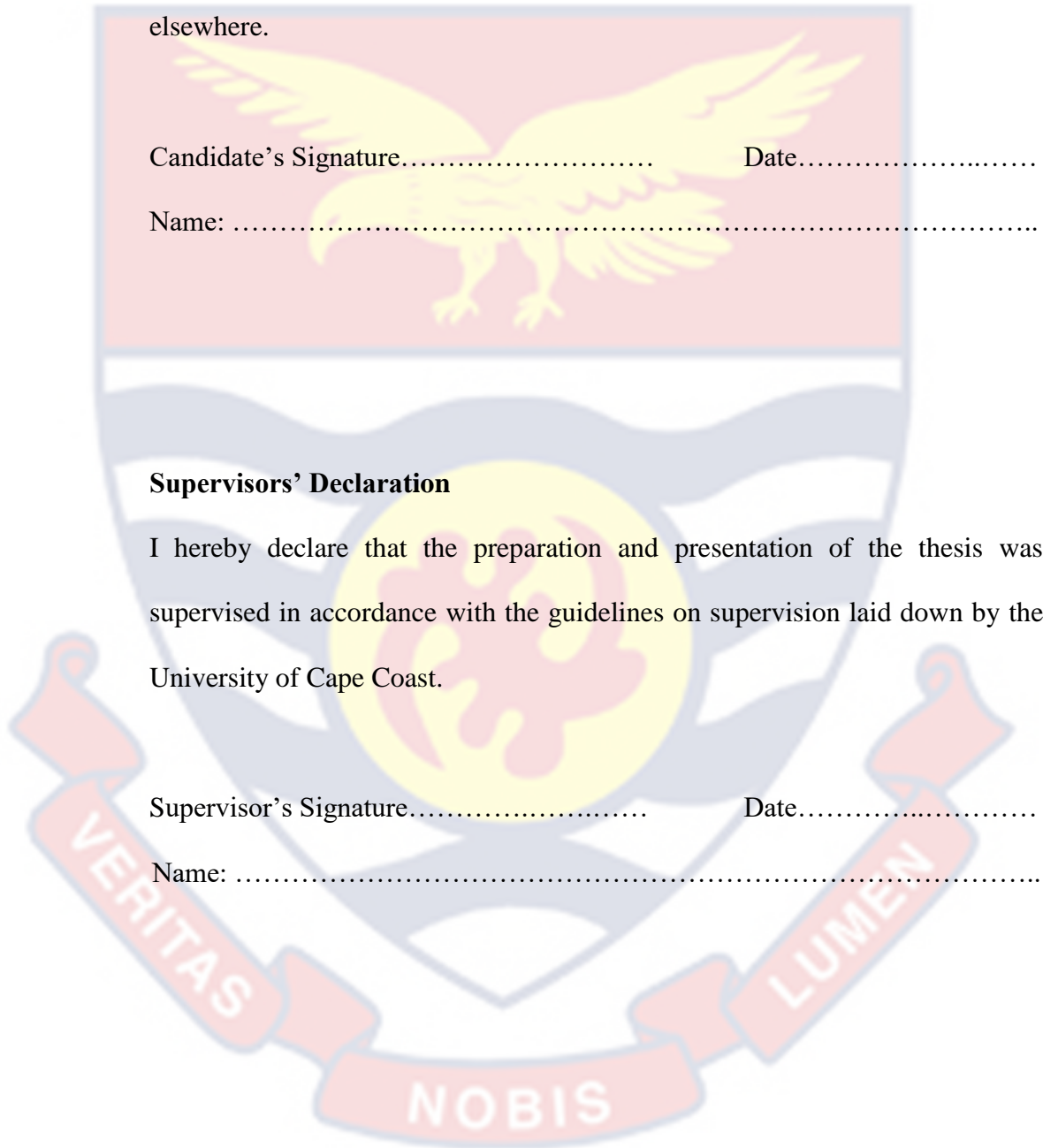
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### Supervisors' Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis was supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Supervisor's Signature..... Date.....

Name: .....



## ABSTRACT

The study investigated the impact of child abuse on the academic performance of junior high school (JHS) students at New Juaben South Municipality in Ghana. The descriptive survey design was utilised. A sample of 98 JHS 2 students selected through cluster, simple random and proportionate sampling techniques. Questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. Research question one was analysed using frequencies and percentages. Research hypotheses were analysed using regression analyses. The findings revealed a distressing prevalence of abuse among the JHS students, with psychological abuse being the most prevalent form, affecting 69.4% of the student population. Physical abuse followed closely, reported by 46.9% of students, while sexual abuse was disturbingly prevalent, with 36.7% of participants revealing their ordeal. Moreover, a significant number of students reported experiencing multiple forms of abuse concurrently. The analysis showed that as psychological abuse and physical abuse increased, academic performance tended to decrease. However, no significant relationship was observed between sexual abuse and academic performance. Based on the findings, the study recommends educational institutions prioritize creating safe and supportive environments, implement comprehensive training programs to identify and address signs of abuse, and establish clear reporting and support systems.

## KEYWORDS

Child Abuse

Maltreatment

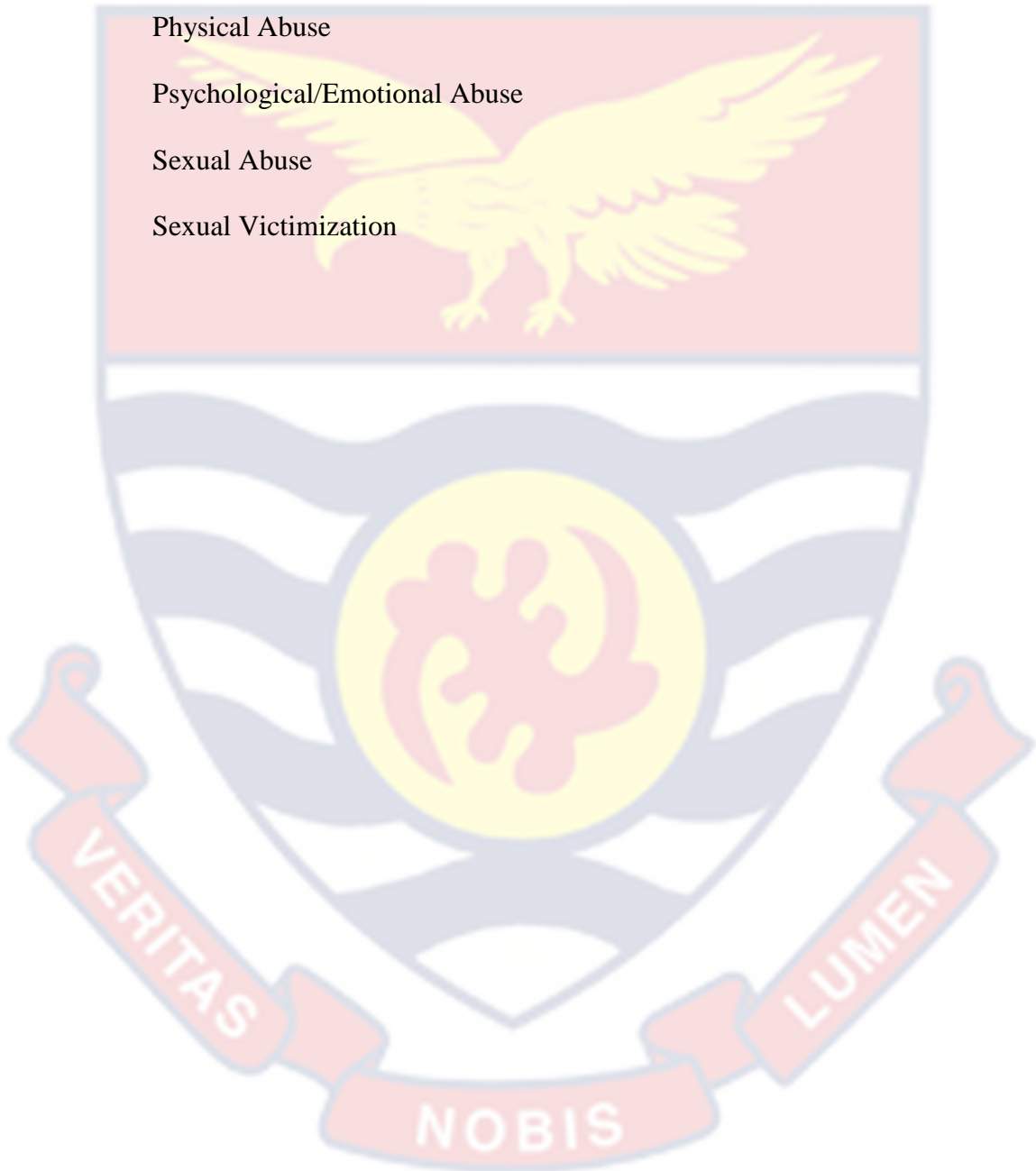
Neglect

Physical Abuse

Psychological/Emotional Abuse

Sexual Abuse

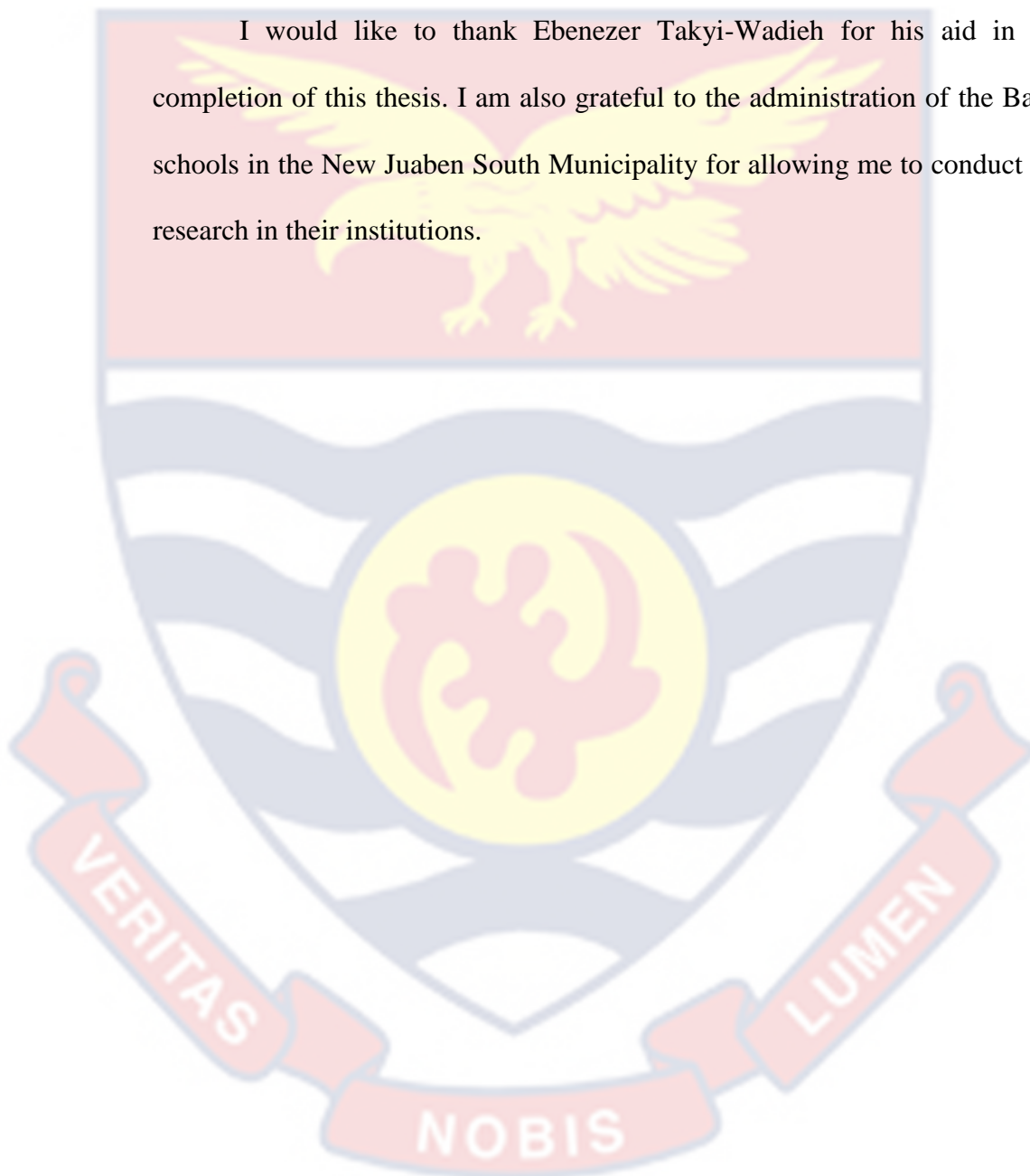
Sexual Victimization



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## DEDICATION

To my husband, Mr. Alexander Ayisi, whose constant support helped me tremendously throughout the writing of this thesis.





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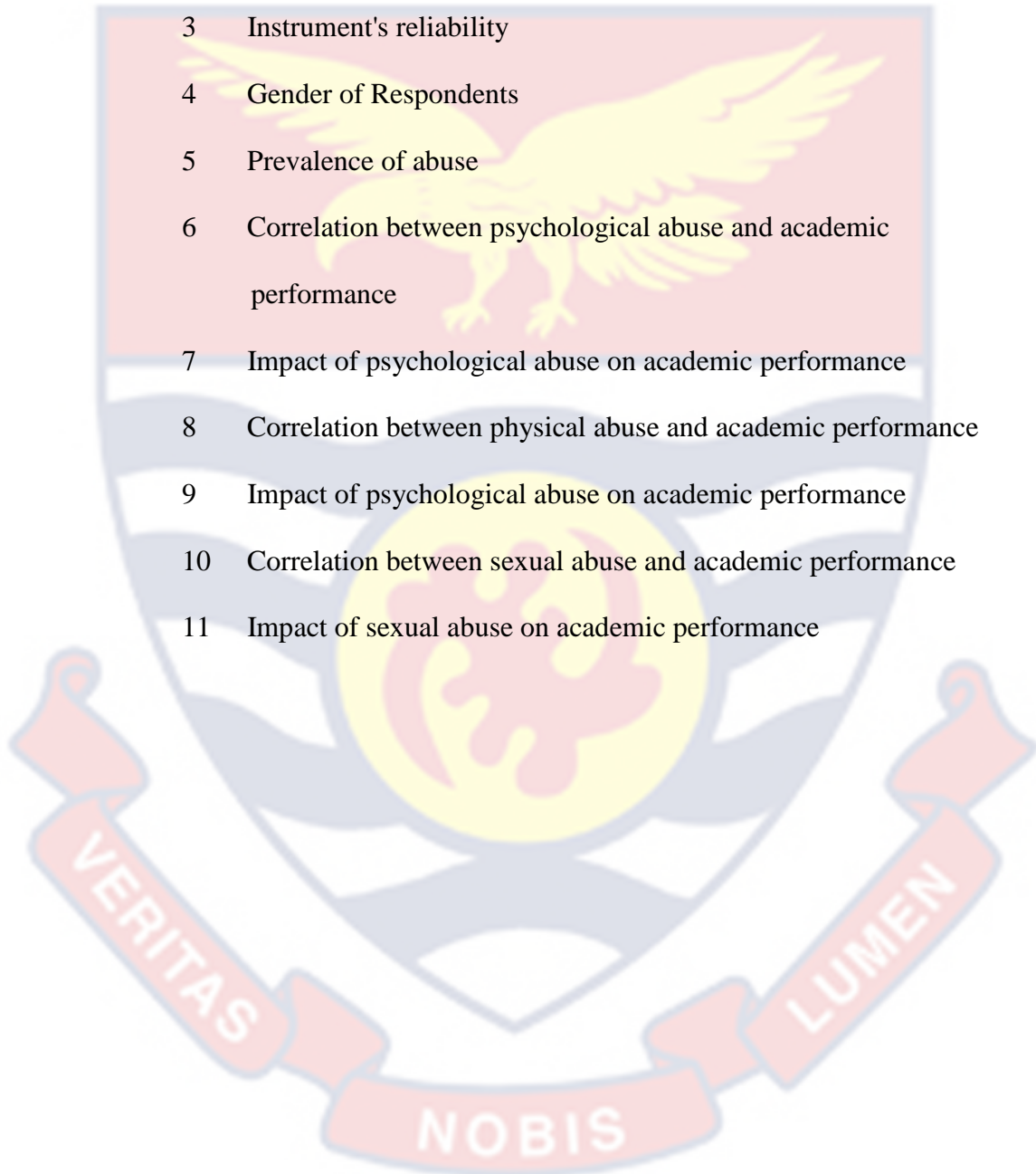
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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Child abuse is any deliberate damage or mistreatment of a child under age 18 (Africans Unite against Child Abuse [AFRUCA], 2009). Child abuse manifests itself in various ways. A traumatised child may feel guilty, humiliated, or confused. He or she may be hesitant to tell anybody about the abuse, particularly if the perpetrator is a parent, another relative, or a close acquaintance. Low self-esteem, social isolation, anxiety, suicidal ideation, and learning impairments are just some of the emotional, psychological, and physical issues that can arise as a result of child abuse. Particular consideration needs to be given to the impact that child abuse may have on children's academic performance. This would guarantee that children have the necessary support to excel academically and establish a better future for themselves.

#### **Background to the Study**

Education remains an essential contributor to the progress of every nation throughout the world. Developing countries, such as Ghana, are always looking for innovative methods to improve the quality of education offered to their population. Despite the fact that education is not the only path to professional success, substantial effort is expended in funding, evaluating, measuring, and promoting students' growth in schools. Parents are worried about their children's academic performance because most parents believe that good scores will lead to more job possibilities.

Schools are interested in teaching healthy habits to their students. However, worries about the school's reputation also have a role in shaping

educational institutions. Also, the possibility of obtaining financial assistance from government agencies, contingent on the school's general academic performance influences the activities of schools. Thus, even though countries seek to improve the quality of education provided to their citizens, individual heads and principals are also looking for innovative ways to increase students' performance, thereby, corroborating the government's efforts.

Several factors have been found to influence academic performance. Research suggests that academic performance is influenced by intelligence level, character, incentive, abilities, interests, studying methods, self-esteem, and relationships between students and teachers (Lamas, 2015). Students' academic outcomes increase when they participate in research groups with other students and researchers, and when they connect with their supervisors using social media for learning and research (Al-Rahmi, Othman, & Yusuf, 2015).

Also, students' peer groups are linked to academic performance, particularly social support is positively linked to academic performance (Jacobson, 2010). As a result, the type of friends that children associate with has impacted their academic performance. Lynch, Lerner, and Leventhal (2013) also add that individual academic performance is linked to parts of the behaviour of their peer group. In contrast, school involvement is linked to interpersonal and behavioural peer culture elements.

Academic performance varies from one person to the next due to individual differences in the previously stated categories. Furthermore, an individual's performance may differ from what is anticipated. As a result,

some students frequently fall short of teacher or family expectations regarding academic performance.

One other factor that may affect students' academic performance is child abuse. Child abuse can be viewed or described as any behaviour with the capacity to cause injury to a child (in this example, anybody under the age of 18) (Reach out Australia, 2021). Abuse against children, as specified by the governing body of all health issues around the world, encompasses all types of violence against persons who have not attained the age of 18 years. Whether by guardians, peers, love partners, or complete strangers, abuse is always unacceptable (World Health Organization, [WHO] 2022).

Child abuse is one of the most complicated emotional tragedies, garnering public attention worldwide (Alokan & Olatunji, 2014). It can manifest itself in a variety of ways. These ways include sexually, physically, and emotionally (Reach out Australia, 2021). On a global scale, it is estimated that up to 1 billion children between the ages two (2) to seventeen (17) have been exposed to physical, sexual, and emotional violence. Furthermore, studies suggest that half of all children found in some continents, including but not limited to Asia, Africa, and Northern America, were victims of violence (Hillis, Mercy, Amobi, & Kress, 2016).

The abuse of children in Africa is a major barrier to the continent's progress toward its sustainable development goals. The long-term harmful effects on the affected population have been widely recognised and appreciated, making this issue more pressing than ever. Abuse perpetrators are becoming increasingly well-known to children, including direct family



members, extended family members, family acquaintances, and even other children.

According to the 2013 UNICEF Child Protection benchmark study conducted in Ghana, when children were questioned regarding their life experience with physical discipline, over 57% of survey participants aged 14 to seventeen indicated that they were beaten at home "all the time" or "sometimes," and 34% said they had been beaten in school by a teacher in the previous month (UNICEF, 2021). There was evidence of this for both genders (UNICEF, 2021). These numbers indicate that child abuse is a major problem in Ghana, as well as the rest of the world.

The majority of incidents of abuse may take place at home. It is in the home that the most significant potential for harm exists. In a close family setting, such as in most Ghanaian families, an abuser has easy, continual access to the victim and a skilled understanding of how to harm the victim. Because the abuser and the victim share a home, the abuser can impose his/her will on the victim at any moment. Child abuse can also take the form of child discipline in which parents inflict physical and emotional trauma on their children under the pretence of correcting them (UNICEF, 2021). Also, between the victim (a child that is abused) and the abuser, there is frequently an imbalance of power due to age or gender or a dependence connection. Older individuals are more likely to mistreat younger children. Thus, most child abuse cases may be prevalent in the home.

When any child is the victim of abuse, it can be challenging to articulate how they feel. The issue of willingness to disclose child abuse cases is also of significant concern. Other individuals may approach the child who

has been abused to discover the problem if they feel or observe specific changes in the child. Even when the family the child belongs to is severely violent, and the child's devotion and affection are not reciprocated, the child generally may have strong emotional attachments that drive them to defend their family members. These emotional ties may prevent disclosure.

The Ghanaian society often has an unspoken guideline of keeping family matters private. This unspoken rule makes it harder for a child or teen to get help. This also hinders the ability of children to have their voices heard. Although older individuals may be able to convince youngsters to offer allegations of abuse, there are cases when children cannot speak up because they are believed to be liars. These situations combine to make abuse between two familiar individuals extremely damaging to those subjected to it. This may contribute to children's unwillingness to disclose child abuse cases, but rather enduring the impact of physical or emotional abuse. There is a risk that the child's health and academic performance will suffer as a result of this endurance.

There is an association between family socioeconomic circumstances and rates of child abuse across society, which is not a simple gap between poor and wealthy families. This conclusion is consistent with findings of inequity in child health and education. Research has shown that the likelihood and severity of child abuse increase with economic hardship (Bywaters, et al., 2016). Child abuse can occur even in wealthy households, therefore financial hardship is neither a cause nor an excuse for it.

Several associated causes may induce child abuse. Several reasonable explanations exist for the association between family socioeconomic situations

and child abuse. Direct influences, like a lack of resources to invest in support, or indirect impacts, like parental stress and environmental factors, seem to be the most plausible reasons (Bywaters et al., 2016). Unfavourable socioeconomic situations can be acute or persistent, and their impact on childhood experiences can be significant. However, it is much more difficult for victims to come out and share their stories with others. This makes it extremely difficult for the appropriate authorities to act and assist abused children.

Being a victim of child abuse may profoundly impact children and young people, and the impact can last even after protective measures have been adopted. Childhood exposure to violence has long-term consequences on one's health and well-being (WHO, 2022). Children and adolescents exposed to domestic violence are more likely to be exposed to emotional, physical, and sexual abuse (Holt, Buckley, & Whelan, 2008). These children are also likely to experience developmental and behavioural difficulties and to be exposed to additional challenges in their lives (Holt et al., 2008). Behavioural issues are commonly reported among those who have experienced both physical and emotional abuse (Debowska & Boduszek, 2017).

According to Strathearn et al., (2020), sexual abuse can cause problems with attention, posttraumatic stress disorder symptoms, and depression in people who have it. Furthermore, physical abuse is linked to behaviour problems, delinquency, and drug abuse. Emotional abuse increases the chances of psychosis, injecting drugs, getting harassed later in life, having a miscarriage, and having asthma symptoms. Current research suggests that child abuse, in general, may lead to significant cognitive delays and

educational failure (Strathearn et al., 2020) and as such can lead to poor academic performance.

In Ghana's Eastern Region, children unfortunately endure the highest levels of domestic physical abuse (Government of Ghana – Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection & UNICEF, 2014). A staggering 73.6 percent of children, aged between 2 and 14, report experiencing beatings within their homes. The tools of punishment commonly employed are canes, sticks, and hands. Moreover, this region records the highest incidence of verbal humiliation, with 48.2 percent of children revealing they have faced such verbal mistreatment from adults.

Disturbingly, instances of defilement have been reported within the studied communities of the Eastern Region, where regrettably, girls often bear the blame. Although rates of commercial sexual exploitation of children are comparatively lower here, the distressing practice of sexually exploiting young girls (and occasionally boys) by older men, especially affluent migrant mining workers, is on the rise. This deeply concerning trend is notably prevalent in certain areas, particularly within mining communities.

Adding to the complexity of the situation, the baseline study found that 11.5 percent of children do not reside with both biological parents in the Eastern Region. This marks the second-lowest rate across the country. The challenges these children face due to varying family structures and the prevalence of abuse underscore the need for comprehensive efforts to address and alleviate their difficult circumstances.

The Ghana Business News (2012) reported that the head of the Eastern Regional Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVSSU) of the

Ghana Police Service disclosed that the unit registered a total of 1,995 cases involving various crimes in 2011. A significant portion of these cases revolved around offenses against children. The reported incidents included defilement, sodomy, rape, assault, abduction, indecent assault, incest, unnatural canal knowledge, criminal abortion, unlawful removal of a child, neglect during pregnancy and child care, causing harm, child abuse, and child trafficking. These figures underscore the critical need to address the safety and well-being of children within the Eastern Region during that year.

The objective of Ghana's Children's Act, which was passed in 1998, is to advance the health and education of the country's young people. The act proposes that parents shall do everything in their power to protect children. This includes protecting the child from discrimination, hostility, abuse, the risk of physical and moral harm, and oppression. It also includes providing the child with the appropriate guidance, care, assistance, and maintenance and guarantee the child's survival and development.

In line with achieving these goals, prioritising opportunities for early detection of child abuse and research into preventative techniques and establishing guidelines for dealing with abuse when it occurs benefits both survivors and the nation. Therefore, for authorities to better curb child abuse, it is essential to identify the causes, prevalence, reasons for non-disclosure of child abuse and its impact on students' academic performance.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Children are vulnerable to various physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. It is believed that up to one billion children worldwide between the ages of 2 and 17 have been subjected to some form of violence, be it physical,

sexual, or emotional (Hillis et al., 2016). It has been found generally that child abuse affects cognitive functioning (Gould et al., 2012), emotion processing (Young & Widom, 2014), and depressive symptoms (Sousa, et al., 2018) in adulthood. Other studies have found that child abuse leads to disordered psychological development and behaviour problems such as aggression, poor self-esteem, suicidal thoughts (Al Odhayani, Watson, & Watson, 2013), drug and alcohol use (Mandavia et al., 2016) and had lower levels of schooling, employment, and wages as adults, in addition to having fewer assets (Currie, & Spatz Widom, 2010).

Furthermore, it has been found that child abuse affects learners' academic performance in primary schools (Makondo, 2017) but there is little work exploring this phenomenon at the junior high school level. Mutua and Ong'ang'a (2017), in a study in Kenya, found that child abuse greatly affected the academic performance of affected pupils, with neglected children performing the poorest. Aboagye (2013) also found that in Ghana, sexually abused children in upper primary and junior high schools in the Ablekuma sub metro reported a lack of concentration and low academic performance in school. This suggests that child abuse significantly affects individuals' health, well-being, and general development.

In my role as a teacher in the New Juaben District, I have unfortunately encountered instances where my students have confided in me about cases of child abuse. These distressing situations encompass a range of forms, including harassment, corporal punishment, and neglect. It is deeply concerning to witness the impact of these abuses on the students' well-being and educational experiences.

The students who have bravely come forward to share their experiences of abuse often exhibit noticeable changes in their behaviour and academic performance. One common observation is a decline in their class participation. Once enthusiastic and engaged learners, these students seem to withdraw, becoming more hesitant to ask questions, offer answers, or engage in classroom discussions. This shift can be attributed to the psychological toll that abuse takes on their self-esteem and confidence. The fear of facing judgment, ridicule, or further mistreatment can be paralyzing, causing them to retreat from the learning environment they once felt safe in.

Equally concerning is the impact on their overall academic performance. The effects of abuse often manifest in cognitive and emotional disruptions, leading to difficulties in concentrating, retaining information, and completing assignments. Their ability to focus on their studies is compromised by the emotional distress they are grappling with due to the abuse they have experienced. As a result, their grades may start to slip, and their academic achievements may suffer.

As an educator, it is my responsibility to create a supportive and nurturing environment where students can thrive. Additionally, raising awareness about child abuse within the community and collaborating with appropriate authorities and organizations can contribute to addressing these issues at a systemic level, ensuring the safety and well-being of all students.

There have been attempts made worldwide to assist alleviate the issue of child abuse. One of these attempts is the Sustainable Development Goal 16.2 of the 2030 Agenda for the United Nations. By 2030, this plan aims to eliminate all types of abuse. Several studies have also been conducted on child

abuse in Ghana. Some studies in Ghana have focused only on child sexual abuse (Boakye, 2009; Böhm, 2017). Other studies have focused on the abuse of disabled children in Ghana (Kassah, Kassah, & Agbota, 2012), parental perceptions of child labour (Adonteng-Kissi, 2018), and understanding child abuse in care institutions in Ghana (Issahaku, 2018). Again, other researchers have studied child abuse from the viewpoints of key informants (Dako-Gyeke, 2019) and elucidated the relationship between child marriage and violence in intimate relationships (Tenkorang, 2019). This indicates that data on child abuse is not lacking in Ghana.

For instance, Böhm (2017), in a qualitative study, found that child sexual abuse experts such as social workers and psychologists in Accra, Koforidua, and Sekondi/Takoradi (Ghana) indicated that most sexual abuse cases remain unreported due to several reasons, including social stigma, victim-blaming. In addition, Böhm adds that the offence may not be considered severe where there is no apparent physical injury following sexual abuse. In addition, Kassah et al. (2012) discovered that disabled children endure social abuse in the form of seclusion, restriction of movement, and involvement in social life in a qualitative study including three key informants in Accra (Ghana).

While numerous studies have been conducted on child abuse in Ghana, a notable gap is the lack of research that specifically examines the impact of child abuse on the academic performance of junior high school (JHS) students. The review points out that previous studies have mainly concentrated on parental perceptions, expert opinions, disabled children, and those in care institutions. This leaves a gap in understanding how child abuse directly



affects the educational outcomes of JHS students. The studies mentioned in the review have predominantly been conducted in specific locations within Ghana, such as Accra, Koforidua, and Sekondi/Takoradi. This limited geographical focus might not fully capture the diverse experiences and challenges faced by JHS students in the New Juaben Municipality. This problem demands quick attention since it may affect the academic performance of students in the district. Therefore, it is essential to investigate the effect of child abuse on students' academic performance in greater detail.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to investigate the impact of child abuse on the academic performance of junior high school (JHS) students at New Juaben South Municipality. Specifically, the study intended to find out;

1. Prevalence of child abuse among JHS students
2. Impact of psychological abuse on academic performance of JHS students
3. Impact of physical abuse on academic performance of JHS students.
4. Impact of sexual abuse on academic performance of JHS students.

### **Research Question**

The study was guided by one research question;

1. What is the prevalence of child abuse among JHS?

### **Research Hypotheses**

1.  $H_0$ : There is no statistically significant impact of psychological abuse on the academic performance of JHS students.  
 $H_1$ : There is a statistically significant impact of psychological abuse on the academic performance of JHS students.

2.  $H_0$ : There is no statistically significant impact of physical abuse on the academic performance of JHS students.

$H_1$ : There is a statistically significant impact of physical abuse on the academic performance of JHS students.

3.  $H_0$ : There is no statistically significant impact of sexual abuse on the academic performance of JHS students.

$H_1$ : There is a statistically significant impact of sexual abuse on the academic performance of JHS students.

### **Significance of the Study**

The result of the study would inform the Ministry of Health, Ghana Education Service (GES), Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU), Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), Social welfare, Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs), and other relevant stakeholders interested in the welfare of children on the impact of child abuse on academic performance of their students for appropriate steps to be taken. Also, teachers would understand the challenges faced by some victims of abuse in their classrooms and put in measures to help these students perform better in their academics.

It would also make the general public aware of some strategies to help children report instances of abuse to relevant authorities. Furthermore, Counsellors, Psychologists, Social Workers, Psychiatrists, and other practitioners would understand the impact that child abuse has on the academic performance of their clients and how to overcome these challenges. Also, this study would contribute to the literature on child abuse.

### **Delimitations**

Though this study looks at the issue of child abuse, there are many factors involved in child abuse; this study focuses only on the impact of child abuse on academic performance. Moreover, the study focused only on JHS 2 students in public junior high school level. Form 1 JHS students were excluded from the study because would have just newly reported to school. Also, because form 3 students were writing their Basic Education Certificate examination (BECE), they too were excluded.

### **Limitations of the Study**

One limitation is identifying individuals who have genuinely been abused because the researcher intends to collect data using self-report measures. The researcher anticipates that some students may not be truthful in their response to some of the questions in the questionnaire, which is likely to affect the study's findings. The researcher therefore explained the purpose of the study and encouraged the participants to be truthful in their responses. It was made clear to the participants that their comments are strictly for academic purposes and as such they should be honest in their responses.

### **Definition of terms**

**Child:** any JHS student below the age of eighteen.

**Child abuse:** the intentional or unintentional acts that endanger children's physical, sexual, or emotional health.

**Psychological abuse:** Psychological abuse, refers to deliberate actions taken by caregivers that result in a child experiencing feelings of worthlessness, inadequacy, lack of love, rejection, fear, or a sense of value only when catering to someone else's requirements.

**Physical abuse:** Physical abuse encompasses the utilization of physical force, such as intimidation, discipline, hitting, kicking, slapping, shoving, or shaking, against a child. This may also extend to the use of objects to cause harm to the child.

**Sexual abuse:** Acts constituting sexual abuse involve exposing a child to indecent situations, introducing them to explicit language of sexual nature, engaging in non-consensual or consensual rape, involving them in explicit materials or prostitution, presenting pornographic content to a child, making inappropriate physical contact with a child's private areas, and pressuring or coercing a child to engage with an adult's genitalia.

**Academic performance:** this pertain to different dimensions of students' abilities such as attentiveness in class, learning abilities, accuracy in following instructions, completion of written work, and interactions with peers.

### **Organisation of the Study**

The study is organised into five chapters. The background to the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, research objectives, questions and hypotheses, significance of the study, delimitations, limitations, definitions of terms, and finally the organisation of the study were all covered in the first chapter, which is the introduction. Chapter two reviews literature on the theoretical framework, conceptual framework, and empirical review. The research design, study area, population, sampling procedure, data collection instruments, data collection procedures, and data processing and analysis are presented in chapter three. Chapter four presents the results and discussion of findings. Chapter five, includes a summary of the results, conclusion, recommendations, and suggestions for further research.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of the study was to investigate the impact of child abuse on the academic performance of junior high school (JHS) students at New Juaben South Municipality. The literature review is presented under the relevant theories, concepts, and empirical research.

#### **Theoretical Framework of the Study**

For this study, Ainsworth and Bowlby's Attachment Theory and Travis Hirschi's Social Bonding Theory are reviewed as underpinning theories of the study.

#### **Ainsworth and Bowlby's Attachment Theory (1991)**

In its initial formulation by Bowlby in 1973, Attachment Theory was defined as any behaviour that enables an individual to establish and maintain closeness with another person who is perceived as more knowledgeable and influential, often a preferred figure (p. 292). The first presentation of Bowlby's definition of attachment was in 1973. Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, and Wall (1978) extended Bowlby's (1973) definition of attachment by discovering and classifying several behavioural attachment patterns. Different people have different ways of forming attachments. There are a variety of attachment styles, including secure, insecure-avoidant, insecure-ambivalent, and disorganized-disoriented (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Main & Solomon, 1986; 1990).

When a child has a secure attachment, their primary caretaker or parent meets most of their needs. A child who feels safe and has received consistent, sensitive, and attentive care might find a happy balance between independence

and dependence (Tarabulsky, et al., 2008, p. 323). Second, when a child engages in insecure-avoidance relationships, they avoid the parent or caregiver both physically and emotionally, and they do not rely on the adult for assistance in coping with their feelings of discomfort. Third, a child who is insecure and ambivalent displays resistance and behavioural conflict with the parent or extreme immaturity in order to attract and sustain the caregiver's attention and monitoring skills (Tarabulsky et al., 2008, p. 323). Children who have the disorganised attachment style, also known as the fourth attachment style, are unable to rely on their parents or other caregivers for comfort or protection. When a parent or other caregiver is in close proximity to an infant who is disorganised and confused, the parent or caregiver will exhibit unusual responses to neonatal cues and worrisome behaviour (Tarabulsky et al., 2008).

According to Attachment Theory, during the first few months of a new-born's existence, it is possible for either secure or insecure attachments to develop between the infant and the mother for the purposes of providing the infant with safety and stability. The link that develops between an infant and his or her mother has a profound impact on the quality of subsequent encounters that the child will have throughout his or her life. The core tenet of attachment theory is that throughout their offspring's formative years, parents should offer their offspring a safe and stable environment. When children are exposed to healthy, stable relationships, they develop both an internal model of self-sufficiency as well as an external model of dependency on other people. On the other hand, feelings of danger, rejection, and an overall lack of personal merit are generated by insecure ties (Tarabulsky et al., 2008).

The disorganised attachment style is the aspect of attachment theory that is most pertinent to the present research being conducted on the subject of child abuse. The disorganised attachment style is characterised by parents who behave in a fearful manner while their child is present. This might cause the child to be startled and frightened. When parents do not believe they are capable of fulfilling these tasks or do not receive proper assistance in doing so, they may give the impression that they are afraid to implement efficient approaches of child care. Children may feel frightened of their parents if their parents have a parenting style that is extremely authoritarian or harsh, or if their parents have a strong or unexpected reaction to the behaviours of their children. While insecure-avoidant and insecure-ambivalent attachment styles are associated with a significant risk of future issues for children, the disorganised attachment style is associated with the highest risk of future complications of any attachment type (Tarabulsy et al., 2008).

Poor child-caregiver interactions are just one of the many negative outcomes that may be traced back to unhealthy attachments. Other negative outcomes include maladaptive self-development, deficient peer relationships, substance abuse issues, and educational challenges (Toth & Cicchetti, 2004). As a consequence of this, some parents and caregivers may lack the skills necessary to effectively handle children who are defiant, argumentative, or annoying, which can lead to situations in which abuse occurs (Toth & Cicchetti, 2004).

In the context of the current research, in attachment theory, children form internal working models of themselves and their caregivers based on their early interactions. A secure attachment is formed when a child feels safe,

loved, and cared for by their caregiver. This secure base allows the child to explore the world with confidence and seek comfort from their caregiver when needed. On the other hand, an insecure attachment can result from inconsistent, neglectful, or abusive caregiving.

Child abuse may arise in the context of insecure attachment styles:

1. **Avoidant Attachment:** Children with avoidant attachment may have learned that their caregiver is not consistently available or responsive to their needs. They may develop a coping mechanism of suppressing their emotions and distancing themselves from others, making it difficult for them to seek help or support when faced with abusive situations.
2. **Anxious Attachment:** Children with anxious attachment may have experienced inconsistent or unpredictable caregiving. They may become overly anxious about their caregiver's availability and responsiveness, leading them to be hypervigilant to signs of potential abuse or neglect.
3. **Disorganized Attachment:** Disorganized attachment results from caregivers who are both a source of fear and comfort to the child. These children may experience a chaotic and unpredictable caregiving environment, leading to confusion and ambivalence about their caregiver's behaviour. In such situations, children may not have a clear strategy for dealing with stress or abuse.

It is important to note that attachment theory does not directly explain why child abuse occurs but provides a framework for understanding how early relationships can impact a child's vulnerability to abuse. Other factors, such as



the caregiver's own history of trauma or stress, societal and cultural factors, and the presence of support systems, also play crucial roles in the occurrence of child abuse.

### **Travis Hirschi's (1969) Social Bonding Theory**

The foundation of the Social Bonding Theory is the presumption that humans have an innate predisposition to engage in antisocial behaviour. As a result, while the majority of ideas about child abuse make an effort to respond to the question "Why do adults abuse children?" The concept of social bonding places an emphasis on the social dynamics that prevent the majority of adults from abusing children. Hirschi (1969a) was interested not in explaining the cause for deviant behaviours but rather in explaining the justification for why people do not engage in those behaviours. To put it another way, the fundamental purpose of the theory was to describe the factors that prevent people from engaging in antisocial behaviour.

According to Hirschi (1969a), people are less likely to engage in deviant behaviour when they have a significant stake in conformity, which is provided by strong social relationships. Commitment, involvement, attachment, and belief are the four aspects of the social bonding theory that are most important to consider while talking about the abuse of children.

The degree to which an individual is invested in traditional activities and conventional levels of achievement is referred to as their level of commitment. The rational component of conformity is called commitment. This relates to an individual's engagement toward traditional goals, relationships, or activities (Hirschi, 1969b). The fundamental idea behind commitment is the anticipation that one's likelihood of committing a crime

will decrease in proportion to the amount of time and effort that one devotes to job, education, or partnerships. The potential offender before engaging in a deviant act, would measure their commitments to the norm against the repercussions of breaking the law. If they had a lot to lose by engaging in a deviant act, they would choose not to deviate from the norm. People who have a lot to lose, such as their house, family, job, and standing in the community, have a significant stake in conformity and are less likely to abuse children. This is because conformity is safer for everyone involved.

At first glance, it could appear that involvement and commitment are interchangeable terms. This component is similarly centred on the concept that an increase in the amount of time spent participating in conventional activities results in a reduction in criminal behaviour (Hirschi, 1969b). However, commitment relates to the potential offender's unwillingness to put their investments at risk, whereas involvement alludes to the individual's availability. A person who is engaged in a variety of activities will have less chances and opportunities to engage in abusive behaviour toward children.

Attachment is the term used to describe the emotional relationships that form between people and their significant others. Attachment is the emotional aspect of the relationship; it refers to the degree to which an individual is sensitive to the perspectives of other people (Briar & Piliavin, 1965). Hirschi (1969b) proposed that an individual's relationships with their parents, peers, and school were significant for the development of attachment. The degree to which a person fully accepted the norms or values of such significant others as well as authorities would influence the extent to which they were free to violate these norms. Because we do not want to let the

people who are important to us down, attachments strengthen the links that bind us to society. People who have less substantial bonds are more likely to engage in deviant behaviour since they have more freedom.

Last but not least, belief refers to the extent to which an individual thinks that rules against child abuse are just and appropriate. Belief constitutes the fifth and final component of the social relationship. The recognition of social consensus or a group of values that are held in common by members of a community is essential to the validity of belief (Hirschi, 1969b). Belief is predicated on the notion that the level to which an offender respects and feels bound to follow the standards of conventional society is directly correlated to the degree to which their criminal behaviour will be reduced. People who do not have a sense of obligation to conform to social norms are less likely to be constrained by such norms and, as a result, more inclined to act in a manner that violated those norms. For instance, there is a wide range of opinions regarding the appropriateness of hitting children and how much it should be discouraged. Some people hold the view that children are their property and that society has no right to tell them what they can or cannot do with their children. They feel that society has no authority to tell them what they can or cannot do with their children (Hechler, 1988). Because of this notion, the likelihood of engaging in antisocial behaviour such as abuse is significantly raised.

The current theory puts forward four primary assumptions that serve as a foundation for the current study. Thus, commitment, involvement, attachment and belief are related to the current study in several ways such that these four ideas can be used to help reduce people's engagement in abusive

behaviour. In relation to commitment, people who have a lot to lose, such as their house, family, work, and standing in the community, have a large stake in conformity and are less likely to abuse children. This is because conformity is in the best interest of the people they care about. It is considered that those who have achieved a high level of recognition in society are less likely to perpetrate acts of child abuse because they do not want to risk losing the honour and prestige that comes with having achieved such a level of social status.

Regarding involvement, the theory postulates that a person who is involved in a wide variety of activities will have fewer opportunities and chances to participate in abusive behaviour toward children since they will be so busy with all of those other things. Therefore, people who are engaged in things that have purpose in their lives are less likely to have the time to participate in harmful behaviours. On the other side, those who do not engage in things that are meaningful to them are more likely to be able to commit acts of child abuse because they have enough time on their hands.

Attachments are what help to build the ties that bind us to society. This is because we do not want to disappoint the individuals who play an important role in our lives. Therefore, those who have a strong feeling of attachment to the society in which they live are less likely to engage in abusive behaviour toward children. If members of a community have a strong sense of belonging to that group, they are less likely to participate in deviant behaviours that go counter to the norms and expectations of that society. On the other hand, people who do not feel a strong attachment to another are more likely to participate in abusive behaviour toward children.

Last but not least, the beliefs that people have might serve as a foundation for them to prevent being abused. People who have been taught that it is unacceptable to hit children are more likely to abstain from abusing children. People who did not have a sense of obligation to conform to social norms would be less likely to feel constrained by such norms, and as a result, they would be more likely to act in a manner that violated those norms. People who did not have a sense of obligation to conform to social norms would feel less constrained by such norms.

In relation to this study, individuals are more likely to conform to societal norms and avoid engaging in deviant behaviour when they have strong social bonds to conventional society. These social bonds are based on four elements: attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief. The theory can be applied to explain child abuse as follows:

1. Attachment: A strong attachment to others, particularly caregivers and family members, is an essential element in social bonding theory. When children have secure and positive attachments to their caregivers, they are more likely to internalize societal norms and values, fostering a sense of responsibility and empathy towards others. Secure attachments can lead to healthier parent-child relationships, reducing the likelihood of abusive behaviour.

On the other hand, insecure or disrupted attachments can contribute to child abuse. Caregivers/family members/adults who have weak attachments to their children may be less invested in their well-being and more prone to neglect or harm them. In cases where caregivers have unresolved traumas or

emotional difficulties, they may struggle to form healthy attachments and resort to abusive behaviours.

2. Commitment: Social bonding theory suggests that individuals who have strong commitments to conventional life goals and values are less likely to engage in deviant behaviour. For Caregivers/family members/adults, this means being committed to their role as caregivers and prioritizing their children's well-being and safety.

However, when Caregivers/family members/adults experience high levels of stress, financial strain, or have unmet needs, their commitment to caregiving may weaken. This can lead to frustration and a lack of focus on providing a nurturing and safe environment for their children, potentially increasing the risk of child abuse.

3. Involvement: The theory suggests that individuals who are actively engaged in conventional activities and have a stake in society are less likely to engage in deviant behaviour. In the context of child abuse, involved parents are more likely to be invested in their children's lives, education, and well-being, reducing the likelihood of abusive behaviours.

Conversely, Caregivers/family members/adults who are disengaged from their children's lives or are socially isolated may lack the support and resources needed to cope with stress and may resort to abusive behaviour as a maladaptive response.

4. Belief: Social bonding theory emphasizes the importance of individuals believing in the legitimacy of societal norms and rules. Parents who adhere to societal norms and values are less likely to

engage in abusive behaviour. A belief in the importance of positive parenting, non-violence, and the well-being of children can serve as protective factors against child abuse.

In contrast, Caregivers/family members/adults who hold deviant beliefs, have distorted views of parenting, or have experienced violence themselves may be more prone to abusive behaviours.

### **Ainsworth and Bowlby's attachment theory and Travis Hirschi's Social Bonding Theory Combined**

When considering the combination of Ainsworth and Bowlby's attachment theory with Travis Hirschi's Social Bonding Theory to comprehend the impact of child abuse on the academic performance of junior high school (JHS) students in the New Juaben Municipality, a comprehensive understanding emerges.

Child abuse sets in motion a complex chain of challenges that affect multiple dimensions of a child's life. Disrupting the formation of secure attachments, which are essential for emotional stability and positive self-concept, child abuse triggers emotional turmoil that impedes the child's capacity for effective emotional regulation.

The distortion of self-concept, often accompanied by feelings of inadequacy and mistrust, due to disrupted attachments, has direct implications for emotional regulation. This internal turmoil interferes with the student's ability to manage emotions, leading to difficulties in handling the stress and anxiety that accompany learning and academic performance.

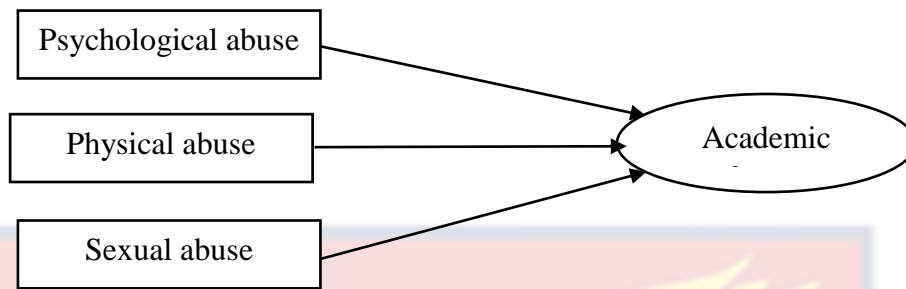
Consequently, the disruption in forming positive attachments also extends to the development of social bonds with peers and the school

community. These bonds, integral for a sense of belonging and commitment to academic objectives, are weakened by the emotional challenges stemming from child abuse. This results in detachment from teachers and classmates, contributing to academic disengagement.

The disengagement from academic activities due to the lack of attachment and diminished social bonds directly impacts academic performance. Students who feel detached and disengaged are less likely to invest effort in their studies, resulting in incomplete assignments, poor attendance, and a lack of enthusiasm for learning. This compromised academic performance further intensifies the cycle of frustration and emotional challenges, deepening the negative repercussions of child abuse on both emotional well-being and educational outcomes.

In summation, the combination of attachment theory and social bonding theory illuminates the intricate relationship between child abuse, emotional well-being, and academic performance. This synthesis underscores the importance of addressing not only the immediate emotional consequences of child abuse but also its enduring effects on educational achievement. Effective interventions should target the nurturing of secure attachments, the reinforcement of social bonds, and the creation of supportive environments that empower JHS students in the New Juaben Municipality to surmount the obstacles posed by child abuse and flourish academically.



**Conceptual framework****Figure 1: Conceptual framework (Researcher's construct)**

Understanding the intricate connection between abuse and academic performance is crucial for addressing the challenges faced by junior high school (JHS) students. In this context, a conceptual framework is proposed to shed light on the potential impact of psychological, physical, and sexual abuse on the academic outcomes of JHS students in New Juaben South. This framework provides a structured lens through which to examine how different forms of abuse might influence the educational journey of these students.

The framework primarily focuses on three independent variables: psychological abuse, physical abuse, and sexual abuse. These variables are believed to have distinct effects on the academic performance of JHS students. Psychological abuse, for instance, can lead to emotional distress and reduced motivation, both of which contribute to a diminished engagement with academic activities. This decreased engagement, in turn, can lead to a decline in academic performance. Similarly, physical abuse may cause not only physical pain but also emotional distress, impacting the overall well-being of the students. These consequences can result in difficulties in concentrating, attendance issues due to health problems, and a general disinterest in the learning process, all of which collectively contribute to a decline in academic performance. Additionally, sexual abuse, which often leads to psychological

trauma, negatively affects emotional well-being. The turmoil experienced by students in the aftermath of sexual abuse can hinder their ability to concentrate, cope with stress, and actively participate in academic tasks, thereby influencing their academic performance.

The framework generates hypotheses that further underline the relationships between abuse and academic performance. It is hypothesized that the severity of psychological, physical, or sexual abuse correlates with a decrease in motivation and emotional well-being. As motivation and emotional well-being decrease, students are less likely to engage actively with academic activities, leading to a decline in academic performance.

In conclusion, the proposed conceptual framework provides a structured approach to understanding how different forms of abuse might impact the academic performance of JHS students in New Juaben South. By outlining potential mechanisms and relationships, this framework enhances our grasp of the complexities involved. It underscores the importance of interventions that address both the emotional well-being and academic aspirations of JHS students who have faced different types of abuse. Through this holistic approach, researchers and educators can better support these students and help them achieve their full academic potential.

### **Conceptual Review**

This section reviews the key concepts in the study. These include the concept of child abuse, types of child abuse.

### **Concept of child abuse**

Child abuse, as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO, 1999) and supported by Bicakci, Er, and Aral (2016), refers to any act that

negatively impacts a child's health, physical growth, or psychosocial development. It encompasses a wide range of harmful actions, whether intentional or unintentional, committed by adults, society, or even countries, towards children. This definition takes into account both overt acts of violence and subtle forms of harm that may have significant and lasting consequences on the child's well-being.

Child abuse can manifest in various forms, including physical abuse, emotional/psychological abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Physical abuse involves the intentional use of physical force against a child, which can result in injuries, pain, or even death. Emotional/psychological abuse refers to the use of words, actions, or neglect to undermine a child's emotional stability and self-esteem, leaving deep emotional scars. Sexual abuse entails the exploitation of a child for sexual gratification, leading to severe physical and emotional trauma. Neglect involves the failure to meet a child's basic needs for survival, such as food, shelter, and medical care. Exploitation encompasses child labor, child trafficking, and other forms of using children for profit or personal gain.

The impact of child abuse can be devastating and may result in various adverse outcomes. Physically abused children may suffer from visible injuries and pain, but they may also experience long-term health issues and developmental problems. Emotionally abused children often struggle with low self-esteem, anxiety, and depression, affecting their ability to form healthy relationships and cope with challenges. Victims of sexual abuse may experience profound shame, guilt, and confusion, leading to difficulties in their psychological and emotional development.

Child abuse is not limited to individual actions; it can also be perpetrated by larger societal or systemic factors. For instance, children living in conflict zones or under oppressive regimes may experience abuse and trauma as a result of broader societal conditions. Children subjected to poverty and lack of access to education and healthcare may face neglect and exploitation due to the socioeconomic context they are born into.

To combat child abuse effectively, it is crucial to address not only the overt acts of violence but also the underlying factors that contribute to its occurrence. This involves implementing comprehensive prevention strategies, promoting awareness and education, strengthening child protection systems, and providing support and rehabilitation for victims and their families. Creating a safe and nurturing environment for children requires a collaborative effort from governments, communities, families, and individuals to ensure the protection and well-being of all children.

Conforming to the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, the federal definition of child abuse is "any recent act or failure to act on the part of the parent or caretaker which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation (Robinson & Breaux, 2019). Also, child abuse includes a failure to act that can cause "imminent risk of serious harm" to a child (Robinson & Breaux, 2019). In other words, any recent act or failure to act on the part of the parent or caretaker which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation (Robinson & Breaux, 2019). According to the existing literature, the term "child abuse" refers to not only physical abuse but also emotional and psychological abuse, neglect as well as sexual abuse.

The child may be subjected to any one of these forms of abuse (i.e., physical, emotional/psychological, or sexual) at the hands of the parent, another caregiver, or members of society in general.

### **Types of child abuse**

#### **Psychological abuse**

Psychological abuse, as defined by the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, n.d.), refers to intentional actions by caregivers that cause a child to feel worthless, flawed, unloved, unwanted, threatened, or only valuable when meeting someone else's needs. It is a form of child abuse that encompasses emotional abuse, which is a subset of psychological abuse. This type of abuse can be persistent, characterized by chronic and pervasive mistreatment, or episodic, triggered by specific environmental or situational factors, such as caregiver substance use or abuse (CDC, n.d.).

Various behaviours can be considered psychologically abusive, including blaming, belittling, degrading, intimidating, terrorizing, and isolating the child. Additional actions may involve restraining, confining, corrupting, exploiting, or engaging in behaviours that are harmful or potentially harmful to the child's psychological and emotional well-being. Such actions may also include insensitivity to the child's developmental needs and disregard for their emotional health (Taner & Gokler, 2004).

In essence, emotional abuse refers to the actions of adults within a child's environment that harm the child's personality or hinder their emotional development. This form of abuse often takes the form of threats or non-physical punishments that can be severe and damaging. Children who experience emotional abuse may develop feelings of estrangement from their

families, endure high levels of stress, internalize feelings of worthlessness, develop dependent personalities, and display maladjusted and aggressive behaviours. These negative impacts, similar to other forms of abuse, can significantly affect a child's ability to function effectively within an educational environment.

Children subjected to psychological abuse may experience conflicting emotions towards their caregivers, such as simultaneous feelings of love and loathing. They may also fear abandonment, expressing their emotions, or getting hurt. The chaotic and violent nature of their lives can evoke feelings of anger, helplessness, and powerlessness. These emotional responses can lead to a sense of humiliation and sadness surrounding their domestic situations (Taner & Gokler, 2004).

It is essential to understand that "psychological abuse" serves as a comprehensive term encompassing both "emotional abuse" and "psychological abuse" in the context of this study. This broader terminology acknowledges the complexity and wide-ranging impact of abusive behaviours on a child's emotional and psychological well-being. Recognizing and addressing psychological abuse is crucial to providing a safe and supportive environment for children, as it directly influences their emotional development, self-esteem, and overall mental health. Effective interventions, awareness programs, and support systems are necessary to protect children from the detrimental effects of psychological abuse and promote their healthy emotional growth and academic success (CDC, n.d.; Taner & Gokler, 2004).

### Physical abuse

Physical abuse, as described by Bicakci et al. (2016), involves the use of physical aggression, such as threatening, intimidating, disciplining, hitting, kicking, slapping, shoving, or shaking a child. It may also include using objects to inflict harm on the child. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2021), physical abuse is purposefully using physical force on a child, resulting in bodily injury or having the potential to cause harm. Physical abuse can range from acts that leave no visible physical evidence to those that result in permanent disability, disfigurement, or even death. It can occur as a form of discipline or corporal punishment.

Physical abuse is unfortunately one of the most common types of abuse endured by children (Beitchman et al., 1992). Its impact on children can be severe, leading to various adverse effects. Physically abused children may suffer from soft tissue injuries or even deaths with unknown causes. Additionally, they may experience memory loss, delayed growth, speech delays, social isolation, academic failure, and suicidal tendencies (Bicakci et al., 2016).

These children often struggle to relate to others and express their emotions due to the trauma they have endured (Bicakci et al., 2016). It is essential to differentiate physical abuse from sexual abuse, as some physical injuries in the anal or genital area, or surrounding areas, can result from attempted or completed sexual abuse. Bruising or tearing in the anal or genital area, internal damage from penetration, and other physical injuries resulting from sexual abuse are categorized as sexual abuse by the CDC (2021).

The impact of physical abuse on a child's well-being and academic performance can be profound. Physically abused children may miss school due to pain and injuries or have difficulty concentrating in class (CDC, 2021). These challenges can lead to academic struggles and hinder their educational achievements. It is vital for educators, caregivers, and authorities to recognize the signs of physical abuse and provide appropriate support and intervention to ensure the safety and well-being of these vulnerable children (Bicakci et al., 2016; CDC, 2021).

### **Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse involves the use of sexual activity for coercion, intimidation, or threat against a child. According to Bicakci et al. (2016), sexual abuse can manifest in either physical or verbal assault. Acts of sexual abuse include subjecting a child to indecent exposure, exposing them to sexual language, rape with or without their consent, involvement in pornography or prostitution, displaying pornographic materials to a child, having physical contact with a child's genitals, and inducing or coercing a child to touch an adult's genitals (Beitchman et al., 1992). Often, sexual abuse may not leave visible signs or symptoms, making it challenging to detect. However, a medical examination may reveal specific indications of abuse (Bicakci et al., 2016).

Children who have experienced sexual abuse may exhibit various signs that can hinder their academic performance. Some of these signs include a distorted or absent sexual interest, trouble sleeping, recurring nightmares, or an overwhelming fear of being alone (Green, 1996). Additionally, they may experience bedwetting, depression, or distance themselves from family



members and friends. Behavioural issues such as disobedience, attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder, loss of appetite, and weight loss are also common symptoms (Green, 1996).

These children may frequently fall ill and develop a belief that their bodies are dirty or that something is wrong with their genitals. As a result, they may refuse to attend school, display abnormal misbehaviour, and face difficulties in concentrating and engaging in class (Green, 1996). A child who has suffered sexual abuse may develop hatred towards their male teachers, making it challenging for them to approach teachers with academic work or seek help when faced with difficulties. The phobias formed due to the abuse may also lead to the child avoiding lessons and being inattentive during class (Green, 1996).

The consequences of sexual abuse on a child's emotional and psychological well-being can significantly impact their ability to excel in their academic pursuits. It is crucial for educators and caregivers to be vigilant in identifying signs of sexual abuse and providing the necessary support and resources to ensure the child's safety, recovery, and academic success (Bicakci et al., 2016; Green, 1996). Creating a safe and supportive environment is essential in helping sexually abused children heal and regain their confidence in their educational journey.

### **Empirical Review**

This section focused on the causes of child abuse, the prevalence of child abuse, reasons for non-disclosure of child abuse and the impact of child abuse on academic performance.

## Types of child abuse

Child abuse is a pervasive and distressing issue that affects millions of children worldwide, regardless of their age, gender, or socioeconomic background. It encompasses various forms of maltreatment, including physical, emotional, sexual, and neglectful behaviours inflicted upon children by adults or other children. Child abuse has profound and long-lasting effects on the victims, leading to adverse consequences for their physical, psychological, and social well-being. It is a matter of global concern, demanding urgent attention and comprehensive efforts to protect children from harm and promote their safety and development.

Over the years, numerous studies have been conducted in different countries to understand the prevalence, characteristics, and impacts of child abuse. These studies provide valuable insights into the complex nature of this issue, shedding light on the factors that contribute to abuse and the challenges in its identification and prevention. Moreover, research has also explored the association between child abuse and various aspects of children's lives, such as their academic performance, mental health, and overall quality of life.

This section aims to synthesize and summarize key findings from diverse studies conducted across different regions to present a comprehensive overview of child abuse's prevalence, forms, and impact on children's lives. By examining the results of these studies, we can better comprehend the gravity of child abuse and its implications for society at large. Additionally, this review will underscore the importance of implementing evidence-based interventions and policies to protect children from abuse and create safe environments where they can thrive and reach their full potential.

While the studies presented in this review may focus on specific regions or populations, their collective findings contribute to a broader understanding of child abuse as a global issue that requires a unified and coordinated response. By disseminating this knowledge, we hope to raise awareness and advocate for greater investment in research, prevention programs, and support services aimed at safeguarding children from the devastating effects of abuse.

Ultimately, the goal of this review is to promote a better understanding of child abuse and inspire collective action towards building a safer, nurturing, and compassionate world for every child. Only through concerted efforts can we effectively address the scourge of child abuse and ensure that every child grows up in an environment free from violence and maltreatment.

A quantitative survey was carried out in Iran by Mikaeili et al. (2013) to establish the prevalence of various forms of child abuse and to identify abused teenage males from non-abused adolescent boys based on the characteristics of both the parents and the children involved (factors that lead to child abuse). The sample consisted of 2,100 students who had been chosen at random through multiple stages of the selection process. Data for this study were gathered using the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ) and the Beck Depression Inventory, II (BDI-II). The study also made use of the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI), the modified Hazan and Shaver Attachment Style Questionnaire (ASQ), and the Symptom Check List 90 (SCL-90-R). It seems that emotional abuse is the most common kind of abuse among the 2,100 Iranian males surveyed, with only a handful reporting physical abuse (3.1%). A total of 14.85 percent of the participants, on average, were victims of abuse

that ranged from severe to extreme. Due to the fact that this study used only males for its sample, it does not contribute to a better understanding of the prevalence among girls. To completely understand the issue of abuse from either gender, more study is needed.

Aboagye (2013) conducted a study in the Ablekuma central sub-metropolis of the Greater Accra Region to investigate the causes of child abuse. Thirty sexually abused children, thirty parents of sexually abused children, and ten school counsellors took part. Both a questionnaire and an interview guide were used to gather data on the objective of the study. Aboagye (2013) revealed that children reported being exposed to pornographic material at a rate of 23.3%, engaging in vaginal intercourse at a rate of 16.7%, engaging in anal intercourse at a rate of 13.3%, and having a child touch an adult's genitals at the lowest rates. In 3.3% of cases, genital parts were rubbed against the child's body.

Parents who were interviewed revealed that their children had vaginal intercourse 23.3% of the time, anal intercourse 20% of the time, adults touched the child's body 13.3% of the time, used other instruments or their fingers to penetrate the child's anus and vagina 6.7% of the time, and had the least amount of adult genital contact, kissing the child sexually 3.3% of the time.

In-school guidance coordinators who responded, on the other hand, reported that 30% of the occurrences involved vaginal intercourse, 20% involved the use of other objects or fingers to penetrate the child's anus and vagina, and 10% involved the introduction of minors to pornographic materials. The study looked more closely at the people who had committed

these acts of abuse. According to the accounts provided by the victims, 93.3% of the offenders are persons that the children already know, while only 6.7% are unknown individuals.

The parents who were interviewed also noticed that 86.7% of the offenders were known to the victims, while 13.3% were unknown. In-school guidance coordinators state that the perpetrators of the abuse, with the exception of dads and uncles, are familiar with all of the victims, some of whom they even trust. The researcher went on to inquire about the responses given by offenders following the mistreatment of the children. A total of 50 percent of those surveyed said the offender had threatened them, 30 percent said the offender had tried to transfer the blame, and 20 percent said they were rewarded.

A random-effects meta-analysis was carried out by Barth, Bernmetz, Heim, Trelle, and Tonia (2013) using studies that were published between 2002 and 2009. These studies were screened and those that reported child sexual abuse in children under the age of 18 years in the research carried out in Asia (16), North America (14), Europe (11), Africa (9), Europe, and Central and South America were included in the analysis. The pooled prevalence estimates of child sexual abuse by gender and type of abuse based on four types of sexual abuse (non-contact abuse, contact abuse, forced intercourse, and mixed sexual abuse) ranged from 0% to 69% for girls and 0% to 47% for boys.

Non-contact abuse was the most common form of sexual abuse. The next common abuse was contact abuse, it was followed by forced intercourse, while mixed sexual abuse was the least. The pooled prevalence estimate for

forced intercourse among girls was 9%, and the estimate for mixed sexual abuse among girls was 15%. The pooled prevalence estimate for forced intercourse among boys was 3%, and the estimate for mixed sexual abuse among boys was 8%. The authors discovered that the pooled prevalence estimates for non-contact abuse (which was examined in nine studies) were 17% for males and 31% for females.

According to the findings of 11 studies, the prevalence estimates for contact abuse were 6% among males and 13% among females. Although these statistics provide a general picture of child abuse around the world, they do not take into consideration the specific prevalence rates that exist in countries such as Ghana. Additionally, the research that was considered in the meta-analysis was conducted in 2002; however, in order to assess the prevalence rates of child abuse, more recent studies are required.

A study was carried out by Lev-Wiesel, Eisikovits, First, Gottfried, and Mehlhausen (2018) to determine the extent to which children in Israel are subjected to abuse and neglect. The findings of this study were derived from information collected from students of Jewish and Arab descent who were enrolled in the sixth, eighth, and tenth grades in Israel's national education system (N = 12,035). A stratified, two-stage random sampling was used as the method of sampling in this study. The strata included the following three types of schools. These schools are primary, junior high, and high school. Furthermore, it included an additional strata based on the two sectors (Jewish and Arab). The study also involved the nine Israeli school districts combined into four geographic areas (Northern Israel, Central Israel, the Greater Jerusalem area, and Southern Israel). Finally, the last indicator strata was the

school socio-economic status (SES), which consisted of a three-level measure (high, medium, and low) and was provided by the Ministry of Education.

The Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ) and the Juvenile Victimization Questionnaire (JVQ) were used in the process of data collection for this study. Both questionnaires were complementary to one another. More over half of the respondents who participated in the survey (52.9%) had at least one experience in their lives of being a victim of any one of the forms of abuse that were measured in this article. Emotional abuse (31.1%) and sexual abuse (18.7%) were the types of victimisation that were reported the most frequently, followed by physical neglect (17.0%). Additionally, the study found that physical abuse (18.0%) was more prevalent than emotional neglect (17.0%). However, the least prevalent abuse type was that of domestic violence (9.8%).

In a quantitative study, Baker, et al., (2016) investigated whether or not exposure to higher levels of sexual victimisation were associated with lower levels of academic success in universities in the United States of America. They used two separate studies to investigate the prevalence of sexual abuse among college women. In the first study, twenty-two percent (22%) of the women in their sample reported having experienced at least one kind of sexual victimisation (SV). More precisely, 15%, 6%, and 1% of the women reported having experienced one, two, and three different types of SV, respectively.

The most common kind of non-consensual sexual contact was found to occur during adolescence (9%), followed by non-consensual sexual contact as an adult (7%), non-consensual sexual contact during childhood (6%), and non-consensual sexual contact during childhood (5%). In addition, students who

claimed to have experienced a greater variety of sexual victimisation also reported having lower cumulative grade point averages (GPA).

Twenty percent of students in a second survey, which was similar to the first study, reported experiencing sexual violence. Furthermore, the investigation revealed that more specifically, 14% had experienced one type of SV. Also, further investigation revealed that, 5%, and 1% reported having experienced one, two, and three different types of SV. The most common report was of unwanted sexual contact experienced as an adolescent (10%), followed by non-consensual sexual contact experienced as an adult (8%), sexual contact experienced in childhood by someone older (5%), and non-consensual sexual contact experienced in childhood by a peer of a similar age (4%).

These results are restricted in the usage of their samples, and the metrics used to evaluate academic performance are restricted to pupils in the United States of America. In addition, only college-aged women participated in the research that was done. This does not help in any way to assess the prevalence rate among the pupils attending primary schools in Ghana.

A study on the sexual abuse of children in Tanzania was carried out by McCrann (2017). The study was an exploratory one, and it included participation from 487 students attending a university in Tanzania. The participants filled out a questionnaire that evaluated their sexually abusive childhood experiences. Answers to questions about the age of the victim, the length of the abuse, the abuser(s), the degree of force or coercion used, and the possible causes of child sexual abuse were collected through the use of a



questionnaire. In addition, some individuals were asked about their experiences during an interview.

In addition, the research included a review of case files and participation in two separate focus groups. The overall prevalence rate for child sexual abuse was 27.7%, with higher rates for females than for boys. The rates of child sexual abuse were higher for females than for males. When the abuse happened, the victim was typically 13.8 years old on average. In most cases, respondents were unable to identify the culprits; despite this, an unexpectedly high percentage of female perpetrators was found.

Meinck et al., (2017) conducted a study on the disclosure of physical, emotional, and sexual child abuse. In two areas in South Africa, researchers looked at how people there deal with abuse and how easy it was to get help if they needed it. The study focused on disclosure rates as well as help-seeking and access to abuse response services. A total of 3,515 teenagers in South Africa between the ages of 10 and 17 were asked to fill out self-report questionnaires in confidence. The research indicated that the majority of respondents had experienced one of three types of abuse. There was a 7.4% prevalence rate of regular (weekly or more) physical abuse, a 12.4% prevalence rate of frequent emotional abuse, and a 9% prevalence rate of lifetime contact sexual abuse. In all, 22.0% of children had been subjected to at least one type of physical or emotional abuse.

Kumar et al. (2017) carried out research to determine the likelihood of experiencing sexual, physical, or emotional abuse in the context of a school setting in Kenya. The Children's Institutional Version of the Child Abuse Screening Tool, developed by the International Society for the Prevention of

Child Abuse (ISPCAN), was used to collect information regarding a child's history of abuse (ICAST-CI).

According to the findings of the study, the one-year and lifetime prevalence of physical abuse among school-going teenagers was high (75.5–78.5%), as were the prevalence of emotional abuse (84.5–85.7%) and sexual abuse (21.0–23.8%). The majority of the alleged misconduct was described as occurring "occasionally" rather than "many times." The percentage of males who reported being victims of abuse was significantly higher than the percentage of girls who did so; the results for one-year prevalence (males vs. females) were as follows: physical abuse (83.4% vs 61.7%), emotional abuse (89.5% vs 75.7%), and sexual abuse (29.5% vs 6.2%).

If a child enjoyed going to school and consistently perceived that they were safe there, they were less likely to report being abused. In spite of the fact that the findings shed light on the pressing necessity of addressing the problem of abuse in the school environment and minimising its impact, it should be noted that these findings are restricted to abuse that took place within the school environment, and additional research is required to fully comprehend the effect that abuse has on academic performance.

The lifetime and past-year prevalence of children's exposure to violence in nine different Balkan countries was studied by Nikolaidis et al., (2018). This study focused on children's experiences with violence over the course of their lifetime as well as in the past year. A stratified random sample of 42,194 school-going children in three grades (aged 11, 13, and 16 years) was drawn from schools in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria,

Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), Greece, Romania, Serbia, and Turkey. The response rate for this sample was 66.7%.

Children completed the ICAST-C survey, which measures their exposure to violence from any source. The lifetime prevalence of exposure to psychological violence varied from 64.6% in FYROM to 83.2% in Greece, and the prevalence of exposure in the last year varied from 59.62% in Serbia to 70.0% in Greece. The lifetime prevalence of exposure to physical violence ranged from 50.6% in FYROM to 76.3% in Greece, and the prevalence of exposure in the past year ranged from 42.5% in FYROM to 51.0% in Bosnia. The lifetime prevalence of sexual assault was found to be highest in Bosnia (18.6%), while it was found to be lowest in FYROM (7.6%).

The rate of lifetime sexual contact violence was found to be highest in Bosnia (9.8%), and it was found to be lowest in Romania (3.6%). Romania had the lowest prevalence of sexual violence and contact sexual violence during the past year at 5.0 and 2.1 percent, respectively, while Bosnia had the highest frequency of both at 13.6 and 7.7 percent. The prevalence of self-reported neglect was highest for both the last year (48.0%) and lifetime (20.3%) in Bosnia, while it was lowest in Romania (22.6%) and the United States (16.7%).

Where there were significant variations in violence exposure by sex, males reported higher exposure to past-year and lifetime sexual violence, whereas girls had higher exposure to neglect. The burden of violent victimisation among children in Balkan countries is considerable.

A study on the prevalence of sexual violence against children in South Africa was carried out by Ward et al. (2018). For the purpose of conducting a

cross-sectional study that is representative of South Africa as a whole, families were recruited for the study using a multistage sample frame that was stratified according to province, urban or rural setting, and race group. The proximity of the schools to the area from which the homes were drawn determined their eligibility for inclusion. With the children's parents' and the children's own informed consent, interviews and self-administered questionnaires were used in each setting to determine the lifetime and last-year prevalence of sexual abuse and its correlations among children aged 15–17 years old.

This was done with the children's parents' informed consent and with the children's informed consent. The total number of households in the sample was 5631, representing a participation rate of 94.6%. According to the findings of the study, 9.99% of boys and 14.61% of girls reported having experienced some form of sexual victimisation throughout their lifetime. A high correlation was found between sexual victimisation and other forms of victimisation, such as physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, familial violence, and others.

The prevalence of child maltreatment was investigated by Koc, et al., (2018) among first-year medical students in Turkey. In order to collect sociodemographic information from first-year medical students at a university in Turkey, a survey was conducted using the Child Abuse Screening Tool-Retrospective Version (ICAST-R) developed by the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN). In addition, a questionnaire was used. The study had 192 participants, with female students making up 56.8% and male students making up 43.2%. Abuse of the

participant's body, emotions, and/or sexuality was discovered in 14.6%, 32.3%, and 8.9% of the individuals, respectively.

Males were substantially more likely to be victims of physical and sexual abuse than females. On the other hand, there was no association between gender and emotional abuse. There was a correlation that may be considered statistically significant between emotional abuse and the separation of parents.

Wan, Wang, and Chen (2019) investigated the prevalence of child maltreatment involving girls in Chinese ethnic regions, as well as its deleterious impacts and the risk factors that contribute to it. The research was carried out in 126 classrooms across three counties in southwest China using a multi-stage cluster sampling process and a paper-and-pencil questionnaire survey. This resulted in a total sample size of 2,899 female students, all of whom were students in southwest China.

According to the findings of the study, the prevalence of physical abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect of girls in areas with ethnic minority populations was much greater than in areas with Han populations. Girls living in remote communities and those who were younger were substantially more likely to be affected by the risk. After taking the child's age into account, the incidence rates of physical abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect were, in that order, 62.6%, 74.7%, and 58.5%. Despite the high prevalence, the severity of child abuse among girls in ethnic regions was lower than expected.

Self-reported severity ratings of 0.7 for physical abuse, 0.7 for emotional abuse, and 0.5 for neglect (total score = 4) point to less severe forms of punishment as a parenting strategy. The study found that the rate of

child abuse against females was significantly higher in ethnically concentrated areas.

The researchers Na'imah and Indriyani (2019) looked at the many forms of child abuse that occur in low-income households in Purwokerto, Indonesia. The different forms of violence that mothers use against their children were investigated in this study. The approach of purposive sampling was used to select a total of six different informants. Primary sources were selected using a purposive sampling strategy. The primary informants were women from families that are recipients of a social stipend from the Indonesian government. In addition, the primary sources ought to consist of mothers of children between the ages of three and five.

The secondary informants included members of the subjects' families as well as neighbours who knew them. Interviews and observations were the two primary methods of data gathering that were utilised. The triangulation approach of data source and method was utilised in the test to determine whether or not the data was legitimate. According to the findings, there are three distinct types of violent acts committed against children who are members of low-income families. These acts include physical abuse, the behaviour of the mother toward the child (such as pinching, punching, or slapping), and locking the child in the bathroom.

As a second category, we have psychological abuse. This is a reference to the mother's behaviour, which consists of treating her children harshly and constantly making comparisons to their peers. Negative labelling, reprimanding, and rejection of a child's presence are all forms of psychological abuse. The third type of abuse is economic abuse, which

includes situations in which mothers ignore their children's requirements for food and clothing and make them labour instead of providing for them.

Atiqul-Haque, Janson, Moniruzzaman, Rahman, Mashreky, and Eriksson (2019) conducted a population-based study in order to determine the prevalence of Child Psychological Abuse (CPA) perpetrated by adults in a rural area of Bangladesh. This research was published in the journal *Criminal Justice and Behaviour*. During the months of March and April 2017, data were collected by conducting face-to-face interviews with a random sample of 1416 children aged 11 to 17 years old using the ISPCAN Child Abuse Screening Tool for Children (ICAST-C). The sample consisted of 49% girls and 51% boys.

The percentage of those who responded was 91.5%. In order to evaluate the factors that can predict CPA, the frequency of physical abuse was divided into two groups: frequent and less frequent. It was estimated that approximately 99% of people have experienced at least one type (type 1), 95% of people have experienced two types (type 2), and 83% of people have experienced three or more types (type 3) of CPA at some point in their lifetimes, with respective prevalence rates of 93%, 79%, and 57% in the most recent year. The most commonly reported forms of physical abuse were hitting (except on the buttocks), standing or kneeling, and slapping. Physical abuse was less common but nevertheless present in the forms of drug or alcohol usage, pinching, burning, scalding, beating, and confinement.

More severe forms of CPA were diagnosed in female children than in male children. Significant risk factors for both type 1 and type 2 forms of frequent CPA were male children, younger age groups, observing adults using

weapons in the house, being bullied by siblings, and poor levels of mother education. Concurrently, adult shouting in a terrifying manner was found to be a major risk factor for at least two different forms of frequent CPA. In the rural society of Bangladesh, there is a high frequency of CPA, according to people's own reports.

A study was carried out by Abbas and Jabeen (2020) with the purpose of generating estimates of the frequency with which child abuse occurs in Pakistan. This investigation into the frequency of abused children included both a cross-sectional and a retrospective component. The research was carried out with the use of the standard International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect Child Abuse Screening Tools Retrospective Version instrument. This instrument was developed by the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect. Data were obtained from 274 students enrolled in the Bachelor of Science (BS) programme at the University of the Punjab in Lahore using a sample method known as simple random sampling.

According to the statistics, the most common kind of abuse was physical, with a prevalence rate of 57% (46% of females and 68% of males). The second most common type of abuse, emotional abuse, had a prevalence rate of 53%, with 54% of victims being female and 53% of victims being male. Other forms of abuse include neglect, which was reported by 40% of respondents (40% of females and 40% of males), while 41% of respondents acknowledged having been sexually assaulted (39% of females and 44% of males).



According to the findings of this study, the category of perpetrators that is reported the most commonly is parents (20%). In addition to their parents, friends (16%) and then teachers (14%), were the most common people who harmed children. The 12th year is the one year that has the highest reported incidence of all types of abuse combined. Additionally, the age group of 10 to 15 years old is the one that has the highest occurrence of abuse across all types of abuse.

A study on the prevalence of child maltreatment in Iranian families with addicted parents was carried out by Farnia et al., (2020), with an emphasis on family risk factors. The research was carried out using a method known as cross-sectional analysis. All drug-dependent parents referred to Kermanshah Province, Iran's Narcotic Treatment Centres in 2017 and 2018 constituted the study population. Their children ranged in age from 6 to 12 years old. A total of 273 participants were chosen at random for the purpose of the research project, and each of them was required to complete the Child Abuse Potential (CAP) Inventory.

The findings indicated that the prevalence of both physical and psychological abuse was comparable at 43.2%. [Citation needed] After accounting for all of the factors that could have played a role, researchers found that the incidence of child abuse among boys was 0.67 times higher than it was among girls. In addition, the likelihood of child abuse rose in proportion to the number of children's siblings, to the point that those children who had three or more siblings were 2.92 times more likely to be mistreated than those children who did not have siblings.

The likelihood of a child being abused was increased by a factor of 0.62 when the mother worked outside the home and by a factor of 2.56 when psychological issues were present in the family. It was found that families in which both parents struggled with addiction had a 2.66 times higher risk of child abuse than families in which only the father struggled with addiction.

Okunlola, Gesinde, Nwabueze, and Okojide (2020) carried out a review of the relevant literature, for which they drew data totalling 39,375 from 17 studies carried out in Nigeria between the years 2005 and 2012. The survey found that there were 4,074 cases of sexual abuse against children. If you convert this number to a percentage, you get a prevalence rate of about 10.35%. That's a really high rate if you consider the number of children and adolescents that make up that figure to be at risk for a variety of negative outcomes.

A study on the prevalence, incidence, and chronicity of child abuse among orphaned, separated, and street-connected children and adolescents (OSCA). The study in western Kenya was carried out by Ayaya et al., (2021). The study's participants included orphaned, separated, and street-connected children and adolescents. From 2009 until 2019, researchers in Kenya's Uasin Gishu County followed a group of people who had participated in OSCA. There were a total of 2393 children (all younger than 18) who took part in the study. Of those, 1017 were from institutions, 1227 were from foster families, and 95 were from the streets.

Multiple logistic regressions were carried out in order to ascertain the probability of recent abuse at baseline, during follow-up, and chronically for each type of abuse, as well as the adjusted odds ratios (AOR). This was done

compared different care settings, taking into account a number of different factors. Overall, 47% of OSCA reported recent abuse at the baseline interview, whereas 54% did so at the follow-up interview. Street-connected individuals had a significantly greater reported prevalence of all types of recent abuse at the time of the study's beginning than those who were living in family-based care. When they were followed up on, OSCA who were receiving care in an institution did not have a greater likelihood than OSCA who were receiving care in a family-based setting to report any recent abuse or event abuse.

Okite (2021) conducted a study in the form of a cross-sectional analysis in order to identify the impacts of child abuse on the academic performance of pupils who were enrolled in elementary school. The Laroo Division of the Gulu Municipality in Kenya served as the location for the research project. Both qualitative and quantitative research methods were utilised in this study. For the purposes of this study, samples were selected at random or purposefully from a total of eight schools and forty-two respondents. The primary and secondary data were collected through the use of methods such as questionnaires and interviews.

According to the findings of the survey, the most prevalent kind of domestic violence experienced by students in the Gulu Municipality of Uganda is psychological abuse. Fifty-seven percent of people were found to have suffered from psychological abuse at some point in their lives. A total of 36% of those who participated in the survey mentioned physical abuse, whereas just 7% mentioned sexual abuse. This demonstrates that children in Uganda who are affected by domestic violence are more likely to be subjected to psychological abuse.

In summary, several studies have been conducted to understand the prevalence and impact of child abuse in various countries. Mikaeili et al. (2013) surveyed Iranian male students and found emotional abuse to be the most common form of abuse. Aboagye (2013) investigated child abuse in Ghana and identified different forms of sexual abuse, with a significant percentage perpetrated by known individuals. Barth et al. (2013) conducted a meta-analysis covering different regions and found non-contact abuse to be the most common form of child sexual abuse.

Lev-Wiesel et al. (2018) studied child abuse in Israel and found emotional and sexual abuse to be prevalent. Baker et al. (2016) focused on sexual victimization in the USA and its association with lower academic success. McCrann (2017) explored child sexual abuse in Tanzania, revealing high prevalence rates. Meinck et al. (2017) investigated child abuse disclosure in South Africa and found a significant percentage of children exposed to abuse.

Kumar et al. (2017) studied child abuse in Kenya's schools and found high prevalence rates of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. Nikolaidis et al. (2018) conducted a study in Balkan countries and found high rates of child exposure to violence. Ward et al. (2018) investigated child sexual abuse in South Africa, while Koc et al. (2018) explored abuse among medical students in Turkey. Studies from China (Wan et al., 2019), Indonesia (Na'imah & Indriyani, 2019), Bangladesh (Atiqul-Haque et al., 2019), Pakistan (Abbas & Jabeen, 2020), Iran (Farnia et al., 2020), Nigeria (Okunlola et al., 2020), and Kenya (Ayaya et al., 2021) also revealed high prevalence rates of child abuse

in different forms and settings. Okite (2021) studied child abuse in Uganda and found psychological abuse to be the most common.

These studies highlight the widespread nature of child abuse in various regions, impacting children's physical, emotional, and academic well-being. Understanding and addressing child abuse is crucial for the well-being and development of children worldwide.

### **Impact of child abuse on academic performance**

Child abuse is a grave societal concern that has far-reaching consequences on the well-being and development of children worldwide. Over the years, extensive research has been conducted to understand the effects of child abuse, particularly on academic performance. This literature review provides an overview of various studies conducted in different countries, shedding light on the relationship between child abuse and educational outcomes.

In recent years, researchers have recognized the urgent need to examine the link between child abuse and academic performance to better comprehend its lasting impact on children's lives. This review draws from a diverse range of studies conducted across Ghana, the United States, Kenya, Nigeria, Swaziland, and Rwanda, all aimed at exploring how child maltreatment influences students' ability to thrive academically.

Aboagye (2013) conducted the study in the centre sub metropolis of Ablekuma in the Greater Accra Region. Thirty sexually abused children, thirty parents of sexually abused children, and ten in-school guidance coordinators participated. The information for the study was gathered using a questionnaire and an interview guide. According to the findings of Aboagye's study,

sexually abused children, their parents, and the guidance coordinators at their schools all reported that abused children suffered from a lack of concentration (23.3% of the time) and low academic performance (13.3% of the time) in school.

Baker et al., (2016) evaluated whether or not previous exposure to sexual victimisation (SV) predicted poorer levels of academic accomplishment among college students in the United States of America using two distinct studies. In the first study, longitudinal data were analysed from a sample of female college students (N 192) who were assessed at the beginning and end of a semester. SV was found to be a predictor of a poorer cumulative end-of-semester grade point average (GPA), even after correcting for other known academic success indicators.

A second longitudinal study of female college students, these findings were evaluated again (N 390). In addition, the analyses were broadened to incorporate four-year follow-up data on the undergraduate students who were freshmen and sophomores (N 206) at the time. SV was the sole variable related to college graduation, and it was able to predict students' GPA in their last semester at the university to a greater extent than well-established academic predictors. Therefore, SV has a substantial effect on GPA, particularly among women of college age.

Raby et al., (2019) conducted a study in the United States of America on the consequences of childhood abuse on a person's ability to function socially and intellectually throughout adolescence and adulthood. The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not traumatic events that occur

within the first five years of a child's life have lasting impacts on that child's capacity to function socially and academically for the next thirty years.

In Minneapolis, Minnesota, between 1975 and 1977, the Metropolitan Low Income Pregnancy Study (MLSRA) recruited 267 pregnant women living below the federal poverty line and getting prenatal care from the city's health department. A bit more than 79% of the mothers were white or non-Hispanic white, 15% were African American, and 7% were Native American, Hispanic, or Asian American. 65% of the children were white or non-Hispanic, 14% were African-American, 17% were multiracial, and 4% were Native American, Hispanic, or Asian American. These individuals served as the key participants in the study, and their information was collected at various times, beginning at birth and continuing into maturity.

Early exposure to maltreatment and neglect was consistently associated with increased interpersonal difficulties and lower academic performance, and this link was maintained from childhood through adulthood, according to the study's findings (age range, 32–34 years). Abuse and neglect throughout the first five years of a person's life were found to be associated with peer difficulties and poor performance on measures of scholastic achievement during childhood and adolescence.

In a rural setting in Kenya, Mutua and Ong'ang'a (2017) examined the impact of child maltreatment on the academic performance of lower primary school pupils. They discovered that it hinders students' ability to learn. This study aimed to examine the effects of child abuse on the academic performance of Nyandarua County children enrolled in lower elementary schools. In this study, a descriptive research approach and a survey were

employed to collect data. This study's sample population consists of the 42 public primary schools located within the sub county of Nyandarua West.

The purposive sampling technique was used in this study, and only the Gatimu zone was chosen from the three available in the Nyandarua west sub county. Each and every one of the 14 schools in the Gatimu zone was included in the sample. Three instructors from each of the 14 distinct lower elementary schools were chosen at random to participate in the study. A questionnaire was the most crucial instrument used in the data collection process. According to the investigation's conclusions, there is a correlation between academic achievement and physical and sexual child maltreatment. As a result, child maltreatment had a significant impact on the academic performance of affected students, with neglected children performing the worst.

Oruche and Ezeiba (2021) conducted a study on the impact of child maltreatment on the academic performance of children attending public junior secondary schools in Anambra State. Participants in the study were pupils from the state of Anambra. The study was conducted using an ex-post research approach. Junior students attending public secondary schools in the state of Anambra were the study's participants. There were 68,000 of them in total.

The sample size for the study was 326 students in their second year of junior high school. Due to the researcher's proximity to the area under study, three of the six zones were sampled using stratified sampling. Ten percent of the total population in each of the three zones-Aguata, Awka, and Onitsha-was selected by random sampling, and the results were analysed. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire created by the researcher with the working title "Impact of Child Abuse on Academic Achievement" (ICAAA).



The study's findings revealed, among other things, that pupils' academic proficiency in the English language is affected by childhood trauma. In conclusion, the study's findings indicated that students' views of physical abuse, emotional abuse, and verbal abuse had a major impact on their academic performance in the English language. The various forms of mistreatment had a negative effect on the academic performance of the students. Students who were subjected to mistreatment significantly underperformed academically.

Azi and Saluhu (2016) examined the influence of child abuse on the academic performance of schoolchildren and its implications for Nigeria's economy in a narrative theoretical study. The 2014 research of the authors served as the basis for this investigation. According to the study's findings, abused children have a difficult time concentrating on their schoolwork, which adds to their typically poor academic performance.

In a 2017 study conducted by Ngisa, Muriungi, and Mwenda, the researchers aimed to assess the influence of child abuse on the academic performance of students attending public primary schools in the Kieni West Sub-County of Nyeri County, Kenya. The study employed a descriptive survey methodology and included 52 principals, 560 teachers, and 2,275 students as its potential participants. Through proportional random sampling, a sample of 228 students, 26 teachers, and 26 principals was chosen. Data collection involved interviews and questionnaires, with descriptive statistics and content analysis used for quantitative and qualitative data analysis, respectively. The study revealed that students had limited awareness of child

abuse, and it had detrimental effects on school attendance, student behaviour, and learning outcomes in children.

In the Manzini Region of Swaziland, Makondo (2017) investigated the effects of child maltreatment on the academic performance of primary school students. This qualitative study was conducted employing the phenomenological research design. The intended recipients of the programme were the children who had been abused in Manzini primary schools. 15 victimised pupils and their teachers from four distinct schools provided information. The critical case approach of purposive sampling was utilised to identify these institutions. As a result, only schools with students who have been subjected to mistreatment were chosen.

Interviews using semi-structured questions, discussions in focus groups, and document analysis were used to acquire the data. According to the data, the majority of mistreated students had poorer academic performance as a direct effect of the abuse. In addition, these students became wary of everyone around them, which negatively affected their academic performance. Therefore, the primary result of this study is that child maltreatment has a negative impact on the academic performance of elementary school pupils.

Ryan et al., (2018) conducted a study regarding the association between early exposure to child abuse and academic outcomes. This study aimed to determine the prevalence of early interactions with child protection services (CPS) and the association between early exposure to abuse investigations and significant academic results. The authors concentrated on the outcomes of third-grade standardised exams (math and reading), grade retention, and the presence or absence of special education services.

All pupils enrolling in public schools in the state of Michigan who were born between the years 2000 and 2006 (N = 732,838) constituted a diverse sample. By the third grade, nearly 18% of these students had already been the subject of an official CPS investigation. Over fifty percent of third-grade students from a variety of school systems participated in the investigation. African-American and low-income students were more likely to be the subject of a suspected abuse inquiry. Children who were the focus of a probable abuse investigation had significantly worse scores on standardised reading and mathematics exams, were more likely to be categorised as needing special education, and were more likely to be held back at least one grade.

Okite (2021) conducted a cross-sectional study to examine the influence of child maltreatment on the academic performance of Kenyan primary school students in the Laroo Division of the Gulu Municipality. This study included both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. For the purposes of this study, samples were selected from a total of 42 respondents and three out of eight schools using either purposeful or random sampling. According to the study's findings, every single respondent (100%) feels that students' experiences with domestic violence affect their academic performance.

This suggests that students who are victims of domestic violence are more likely to have poor academic achievement than students from non-domestic violence households. The findings of the study indicate that the majority of respondents, fifty percent, stated that abused children had a shorter attention span, that forty-three percent of respondents stated that dropping out of school was one of the effects, and that seven percent stated that truancy is

extremely high. In addition, the majority of respondents (71%) claimed that children's academic performance is negatively impacted, and 29% stated that pupils who are mistreated are frequently absent from school. This shows that the existence of domestic violence in students' households has a negative influence on their overall academic performance.

Pierre and Claire (2021) conducted a study in the Kicukiro district of Rwanda to investigate the influence of child maltreatment on the academic performance of children attending public secondary schools in the district. The sample size of 204 was determined using the Yamane technique based on the fact that the target population consisted of 418 respondents. A guide for conducting interviews and a questionnaire were among the data collection tools. The study employed a correlational methodology as the research strategy.

According to the research, sexual harassment is one of the factors believed to be associated with child abuse. In addition, children are subjected to arduous labour and severe punishments. It has been discovered that the prevalence of these child-related difficulties contributes to a deterioration in academic performance among secondary school pupils in the Rwandan region of Kicukiro. Students' decreased advancement and grade rates reflect this deterioration.

According to the study's findings, 7.9% of students' academic performance is negatively affected by child maltreatment, whereas the remaining 92.1% of the variance can be attributed to other factors. According to the study's findings, there is a statistically significant and inverse relationship between child abuse and student academic attainment. This

indicated that the academic performance of students who were abused in secondary schools was negatively affected.

Ibok (2020) conducted research to determine whether or not the abuse of children has an effect on the academic achievement of pupils studying biology in the Calabar Municipality of Cross River State. The low academic performance of pupils enrolled in SS2 Biology classes in the study area served as the impetus for the investigation. We came up with a total of four different null hypotheses so that we could direct the inquiry more effectively. The research plan made use of a methodology that was based on surveys. The literature that was examined was pertinent to the variables that were the subject of the research, and it was evaluated in accordance with those parameters.

As research instruments, a questionnaire and a biology-related performance examination were utilised. According to the results of an investigation conducted in conjunction with the Pearson Product Minute Correlation, child emotional abuse, child neglect, and child physical abuse all have a significant association with biology students' academic performance. There is a significant association between the physical, emotional, and negligent mistreatment of children and the academic achievement of biology students.

Numerous studies conducted in different regions, including Africa and the United States, consistently highlight the adverse impact of child abuse on academic performance. Aboagye (2013) conducted a study in Ablekuma, Greater Accra Region, involving sexually abused children, their parents, and school guidance coordinators. The study found that sexually abused children

suffered from lack of concentration (23.3% of the time) and low academic performance (13.3% of the time) in school, as reported by all three groups.

Baker et al. (2016) evaluated the impact of previous exposure to sexual victimization on academic achievement among college students in the United States. They found that sexual victimization predicted poorer cumulative end-of-semester grade point average (GPA), even after considering other academic success indicators. Raby et al. (2019) conducted a long-term study in the United States to examine the consequences of childhood abuse on social and academic functioning in adolescence and adulthood. Early exposure to maltreatment and neglect consistently correlated with increased interpersonal difficulties and lower academic performance throughout participants' lives. Mutua and Ong'ang'a (2017) investigated the impact of child maltreatment on academic performance in lower primary school pupils in Kenya. The study revealed that child abuse hindered students' ability to learn, and maltreated children performed poorly academically, especially neglected children.

Oruche and Ezeiba (2021) studied child maltreatment's impact on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in Anambra State, Nigeria. The findings showed that childhood trauma, physical abuse, emotional abuse, and verbal abuse significantly affected students' academic performance, leading to underperformance. Azi and Saluhu (2016) explored child abuse's influence on the academic performance of Nigerian schoolchildren and its implications for the economy. Their study revealed that abused children struggle to concentrate on schoolwork, leading to poor academic performance. Ngisa, Muriungi, and Mwenda (2017) investigated child abuse's effect on the academic performance of public primary school

students in Kenya. The findings indicated that child abuse negatively impacted school attendance, student behaviour, and learning outcomes.

Makondo (2017) conducted a qualitative study in Swaziland, revealing that child maltreatment had a negative impact on the academic performance of primary school students. The abused students had poorer academic performance and became wary of others, further affecting their academic outcomes. Ryan et al. (2018) studied the association between early exposure to child abuse and academic outcomes among students in Michigan, USA. They found that children who were the subject of an abuse investigation had significantly worse scores on standardized exams, higher rates of grade retention, and a need for special education. Okite (2021) conducted a cross-sectional study in Kenya, revealing that domestic violence affected students' academic performance. Students from abusive households had poorer academic achievement, shorter attention spans, higher truancy rates, and increased chances of dropping out.

Pierre and Claire (2021) investigated child maltreatment's influence on the academic performance of students in Rwanda. The study found that child abuse, particularly sexual harassment and harsh punishments, negatively impacted academic performance, advancement, and grade rates. Ibok (2020) examined the effect of child abuse on the academic achievement of biology students in Cross River State, Nigeria. The study showed a significant association between emotional abuse, neglect, physical abuse, and biology students' academic performance.

These studies collectively underscore the critical need to address and mitigate child abuse to promote better academic outcomes. The findings

emphasize the importance of implementing comprehensive intervention programs and support systems for affected children, ensuring their safety and fostering an environment conducive to academic success. By addressing child abuse's underlying issues, we can work towards creating nurturing and secure learning environments that empower children to reach their full academic potential.

### **Summary**

This summary highlights the extensive research conducted on child abuse and its impact on academic performance. Studies from various countries, including Ghana, the United States, Kenya, Nigeria, Swaziland, and Rwanda, have consistently revealed the adverse effects of child abuse on students' educational outcomes. The research shows that children who experience abuse suffer from concentration difficulties, lower academic performance, grade retention, truancy, and increased dropout rates. Emotional and sexual abuse have been identified as the most prevalent forms of maltreatment in several regions.

The findings emphasize the urgent need to address child abuse and create safe and supportive learning environments for children. Implementing comprehensive intervention programs and support systems can help mitigate the negative effects of abuse and promote better academic outcomes. By understanding and confronting child abuse, societies can work towards safeguarding the well-being and academic development of children worldwide.



## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODS

The purpose of the study was to investigate the impact of child abuse on the academic performance of junior high school (JHS) students at New Juaben South Municipality. The research methods involved in conducting the study are described in this chapter. These include the research design, study area, population, sampling procedure, data collection instruments, data collection procedure, and data processing and analysis.

#### **Research Paradigm**

The positivist approach was chosen for this study due to its compatibility with the research objectives and the nature of the investigation. This approach emphasizes empirical observation, measurement, and the objective analysis of data. In the context of studying the impact of different types of abuse on the academic performance of junior high school (JHS) students in New Juaben South, the positivist approach aligns well with the aim of uncovering empirical patterns and relationships. By employing structured surveys and questionnaires, this approach enables the collection of quantitative data that can be statistically analysed, facilitating the identification of correlations, trends, and causal relationships between variables. The positivist approach's emphasis on objectivity and generalizability is especially valuable in a study where a systematic examination of abuse's impact on academic performance is sought. It ensures that findings are grounded in empirical evidence, enhancing the credibility and reliability of the study's outcomes.

## Research Approach

The utilization of a quantitative approach in this study is justified given the specific research objectives and the nature of the inquiry. The aim is to quantitatively assess the impact of psychological, physical, and sexual abuse on the academic performance of junior high school (JHS) students in New Juaben South. The quantitative approach aligns well with this goal as it emphasizes the systematic collection and analysis of numerical data. By employing structured surveys and questionnaires, this approach facilitates the measurement of variables in a standardized manner across a representative sample. This numerical data enables statistical analysis, allowing researchers to identify patterns, trends, and relationships. Given the study's scope, a quantitative approach enables the researchers to draw objective conclusions based on empirical evidence. Additionally, it provides a solid foundation for making comparisons, generating insights, and contributing to the broader understanding of how different forms of abuse relate to academic outcomes among JHS students.

## Research Design

This study aimed to examine the impact of child abuse on the academic performance of students attending junior high school (JHS) in the New Juaben South Municipality. Therefore, the descriptive survey design was deemed appropriate for the research. According to Levin (2006), the goal of a descriptive survey is to characterise a population or a subset within a population in terms of an outcome and a collection of risk variables.

The choice of a descriptive survey design for this study is well-justified due to its relevance in investigating the impact of various forms of

abuse on the academic performance of junior high school (JHS) students in New Juaben South. This design allows for the comprehensive collection of data that describes the existing conditions and relationships between variables within the specified population. Given the sensitive nature of the topic, the non-intrusive nature of survey instruments ensures participants can provide information about their experiences in a confidential and open manner. Furthermore, the design facilitates the exploration of potential correlations between different types of abuse and academic performance, offering valuable insights into the current academic landscape of these students and how abuse might influence it. Overall, the descriptive survey design serves as a suitable approach for this study, providing a snapshot of the prevailing conditions and relationships within the specified context, and laying the foundation for further research endeavours in this area.

### **Study Area**

The study was conducted in the New Juaben South Municipality, chosen as the primary research location due to the limited existing research on the impact of child abuse specifically on junior high school (JHS) students in this area. The dearth of previous investigations led to the selection of this municipality to fill the research gap. Additionally, direct observations and interactions with students within the region highlighted the presence of various forms of abuse that had the potential to adversely affect their academic performance. This aligns with reports from both the Eastern Regional Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVSSU) and UNICEF, which indicate an increasing prevalence of abuse cases within the Eastern Region.

The combination of these factors collectively motivated the selection of the New Juaben South Municipality as the study's focal point.

The New Juaben South Municipality is located in the Eastern Region of Ghana. This municipality is one of Ghana's 260 metropolitan, municipal, and district assemblies. It was first established in 1988 by the LI 1426, a legislative enactment (Ghana Districts, n.d.).

Common boundaries may be found between the East-Akim Municipality, which is located to the north-east, the Akwapim North Municipality, which is located to the east and south, and the Suhum Municipality, which is located to the east (Ghana Districts, n.d.). Its total land area of 159 km<sup>2</sup> is around 0.6% of the total land area in the Eastern Region. There are a total of 183,727 people living in the municipality as of the 2010 census. Of that number, 88,687 are males and 95,040 are females (Ghana Districts, n.d.).

### **Population**

The population of a study, as defined by Amedahe (2004), is the group of people about whom a researcher asks questions and draws conclusions in order to produce research results. The target group refers to all JHS students in the Municipality. There are a total of 42 junior high schools and seven circuits inside the New Juaben Municipality. Ada has six schools, Adweso has six schools, Betom has four schools, Nsukwao has eight schools, Nyerede has four schools, Oguaa has seven schools, and Srodai has seven schools.

According to the Ghana Education Service (GES) of the New Juaben Municipality, the total population of JHS students is 5912 (GES, 2022). However, due to the researcher's inability to use all seven municipalities, the

researcher randomly selected three municipalities; Nsukwao (8 schools), Ada (6 schools) and Oguaa (7 schools). The accessible population for the study comprised JHS 2 students within the 3 circuits and 21 schools. This brought the accessible population to 1087. Table 1 below gives a summary of each circuit, number of schools, and number of students as well as the number of boys and girls in each class.

**Table 1: Distribution of Accessible population**

Circuit	Name of school	Form 2		Total
		Boys	Girls	
<b>Ada</b>	Ada Kyerematen M/A Basic A	13	18	31
	Ada Kyerematen M/A Basic B	13	17	30
	Falahiya Islamic Basic	10	12	22
	Khalid Ion Walid Islamic JHS	15	13	28
	Koforidua Apimpoa Islamic	36	32	68
	Mahd - Deen Islamic JHS	27	13	40
<b>Total</b>		<b>114</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>219</b>
<b>Nsukwa</b>	Densuano M/A Basic School	61	17	78
	Koforidua School For the Deaf	2	7	9
	Koforidua St. Annes Anglican Basic	17	25	42
	Nana Oware Agyapong M/A Basic	19	22	41
	New Juaben M/A Basic School	3	13	16
	Nsukwao M/A Basic	12	8	20
	Sarkodee M/A Basic A	7	15	22
	Sarkodee M/A Basic C	14	8	22
<b>Total</b>		<b>135</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>250</b>
<b>Oguaa</b>	Koforidua Presby JHS A	53	64	117
	Koforidua Presby JHS C	49	71	120
	Nana Kwaku Boateng M/A Basic A	27	22	49
	Nana Kwaku Boateng M/A Basic B Oguaa	38	29	67
	Nana Kwaku Boateng M/A Basic C Oguaa	27	32	59
	Nana Kwaku Boateng M/A Basic D Oguaa	21	22	43
	Riis Presby Model J.H.S (Presby B) Oguaa	93	70	163
	<b>Total</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>618</b>
	<b>Grand total</b>	<b>557</b>	<b>530</b>	<b>1087</b>

Source: GES, New Juaben South Municipality (2022)

### Sampling Procedure

With a total of 1087 JHS 2 students, a total of 285 were sampled to be screened for the presence of child abuse for the study. This sample was determined using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size determination table which indicates that for 1087 cases, 285 should be sampled. The multistage sampling method was used in choosing respondents for the study. These are the cluster method, simple random sampling and proportionate sampling techniques.

The New Juaben South Municipality is divided into seven circuits. These served as clusters for the study. Three circuits served as the accessible population. This was to ensure an accurate representation of the municipality and ensure generalisability of the study's findings. These circuits were randomly selected through the lottery technique. This was done by writing the names of each circuit on pieces of papers and placing them inside a container. The researcher randomly selected one paper from the list. This was repeated to get all three circuits. Three schools from each cluster were also chosen using simple random sampling, the lottery method as was used in selecting the circuits. Three schools in each circuit were chosen due to the relatively small number of JHS 2 students in each school, therefore one school from each municipality could not be used, and the researcher could not include every school in the municipality owing to restricted resources.

After obtaining nine schools to be included in the study (3 from each of the three circuits), proportionate sampling was used to determine a representative number of both boys and girls from each school. After determining the number of boys and girls to be chosen from each school using

a proportionate sampling technique, a simple random sampling technique was used to choose these students; this is because simple random sampling is simple to execute and offers an accurate representation of a larger population.

Table 2 provides a summary of the sample size to be used for the study. The

formula used in calculating the sample was:

$$\frac{n}{N} \times S$$

Where n is the population of the school/class

N is the total population of all students

S is the sample for the entire population

For instance, to get the required number of students from Ada circuit, the accessible population of students is 89, the total population of students in schools for the entire district used for the study is 521. Based on Krejcie and Morgan, the required sample size for the study was 285. To get the required number of students from Ada circuit the following calculation was used.

$$\frac{89}{521} \times 285 = 48.8.$$

Since the study was dealing with human participants, this was rounded up to 49. Thus 49 students from the Ada circuit were used in the study. This was repeated for other circuits.

After determining the number of students to be used in each circuit, the number of students to be used in each school were also calculated. For instance, to get the required number of students from Ada Kyeramateng M/A Basic A School, the population of students in the school is 32, the population of students in Ada circuit is 89, and the sample size required from Ada is 49.

$$\frac{31}{89} \times 49 = 17$$

Therefore, 17 students were selected from Ada Kyeremateng M/A Basic A School. This calculation was used to determine the number of males and females to be selected from each school.

**Table 2: Distribution of Sample size**

Circuit	Name of school	Form 2			Sample		
		Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Ada	Ada Kyerematen M/A Basic A	13	18	31	7	10	17
	Ada Kyerematen M/A Basic B	13	17	30	7	10	17
	Khalid Ion Walid Islamic JHS	15	13	28	8	7	15
	<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>49</b>
Koforidua St.	Annes Anglican Basic	17	25	42	9	14	23
	Nana Oware Agyapong M/A Basic	19	22	41	10	12	22
	Nsukwao M/A Basic	12	8	20	7	4	11
	<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>56</b>
	<b>Oguaa</b>	<b>Koforidua Presby JHS A</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>35</b>
Oguaa	Nana Kwaku Boateng M/A Basic A	27	22	49	15	12	27
	Riis Presby Model J.H.S (Presby B)	93	70	163	51	38	89
	<b>Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>180</b>
<b>Grand total</b>		<b>262</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>521</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>285</b>

Source: GES, New Juaben South Municipality (2022)

After selecting the 263 students, the Child Abuse Self-Report Scale (CASRS) and the Academic Performance scale was administered to them. After the administration of the Child Abuse Self-Report Scale (CASRS), only 98 students met the inclusion criteria for child abuse. These students must have scored above average on one of the subscales of the CASRS. They must have experienced either physical abuse, sexual abuse or psychological abuse.



Therefore, the final sample size for the study was 98 students. Thus from the screening of 263 students, 98 met the criteria for child abuse.

### **Data Collection Instruments**

Adapted questionnaires were used to collect data for the study.

Questionnaires provide consistent data from a large sample or population on a range of topics, and they may be affordable, dependable, reliable, quick, and simple to complete. Questionnaires were presented for respondents to answer for quick feedback. The questionnaire was in three (3) sections. Section A, B, and C. Section A focused on the demographics of respondents. This focused on gender of respondents.

#### **The Child Abuse Self-Report Scale (CASRS)**

Section B measured the prevalence of child abuse. Respondents' reports of childhood abuse were measured using the Child Abuse Self-Report Scale (CASRS) developed by Mohammadkhani, Mohammadi, Nazari, Salavati, and Razzaghi (2003). There were 38 items in the scale, these are Psychological (14 items), neglect (11 items), physical (8 items), and sexual abuse (5 items). The preliminary results have shown that this measure has high levels of internal consistency. The psychological sub-scale demonstrated excellent internal consistency ( $\alpha=0.95$ ), whereas the sexual abuse sub-scale had only moderate internal consistency ( $\alpha=0.87$ ). The CASRS demonstrated high reliability ( $r=0.82$  to  $0.89$ ) when administered twice. However, for the purposes of this study, the focus was on physical abuse, sexual abuse and psychological abuse. A total of 26 items were used for the study. The neglect section of the scale was excluded from the study since this was not part of the scope of the study. One item on physical abuse which was "*I testify other*

*members of my family are being beaten up*” was excluded because this did not measure the respondents’ experience of child abuse.

For Psychological abuse, there were 14 items scored on a scale of 1-4. Thus a score of 14 was the lowest score, while a score of 56 was the highest score. For an individual to be considered as experiencing psychological abuse, the child should score 29 and above (more than half of the scores).

For physical abuse, there were 7 items scored on a scale of 1-4. Thus a score of 7 was the lowest score, while a score of 28 was the highest score. For an individual to be considered as experiencing physical abuse, the child should score 15 and above (more than half of the scores).

For sexual abuse, there were 5 items scored on a scale of 1-4. Thus a score of 5 was the lowest score, while a score of 20 was the highest score. For an individual to be considered as experiencing sexual abuse, the child should score 11 and above (more than half of the scores).

A total of 26 items were used to measure child abuse. These were scored on a scale of 1 to 4. With 1 representing never, 2 for sometimes, 3 for most often, and 4 for always.

### **Students’ academic performance**

This section focused on students’ academic performance. The Academic Performance Rating Scale (APRS) was modified to assess students’ academic performance. The scale is a 19-item scale developed to assess the performance of pupils (DuPaul, Rapport, & Perriello, 1991) from teachers’ perspectives. These were reworded to be a self-report measure from the students’ perspectives. The psychometric qualities of the data were checked to ensure its use in the study. Teachers were the original target group for the

scale. Each item was answered using 1 for never or poor to 5 for often or excellent. This was modified to be a self-report scale for students. These were scored on a scale of 1 to 4. With 1 representing never, 2 for sometimes, 3 for most often, and 4 for always. For instance, an item on the original scale such as *“how frequently does the child follow teacher instructions or large group discussions”* was reworded to *“I accurately follow instructions and/or class discussion during large-group (eg. Whole class) instruction”*. As such, only 11 items were retained.

### **Validity**

Checking that the study instruments actually measured the variables of interest was crucial to establishing their validity. To check content validity, the researcher conferred with her supervisor and other research academics at the University of Cape Coast's Department of Guidance and Counselling. Suggestions and ideas were utilized to enhance the instrument in order to increase its validity.

### **Reliability**

The consistency of an instrument is referred to as its reliability. Cronbach's alpha is used to determine the internal consistency of most research questionnaires. The pilot testing was carried out to see if the questionnaires are reliable. For the pre-test, 28 students from Koforidua A.M.E Zion A/B Basic School were used. This school was selected because it did not form part of the schools which were employed in the study but was part of the Juaben Municipality and as such possessed similar characteristics to the other schools. After initial pilot testing, the researcher used Cronbach's Alpha to determine the instrument's consistency.

**Table 3: Instrument's reliability**

Scale	Sub-scale	No of items	Cronbach's Alpha (Pilot test)
Total child abuse self-report scale		26 Items	.741
	<i>Psychological</i>	<i>14 Items</i>	<i>.873</i>
	<i>Physical</i>	<i>7 Items</i>	<i>.745</i>
	<i>Sexual</i>	<i>5 Items</i>	<i>.763</i>
Academic performance		11 Items	.718
<b>All items</b>		<b>37 items</b>	<b>.876</b>

Source: Field survey (2022)

The scale consists of 37 items, divided into four sub-scales: Psychological, Physical, Sexual, and Academic Performance. During the pilot test, the results revealed found promising levels of internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.718 to 0.876 for the individual sub-scales and the overall scale. These findings indicate that the questionnaire demonstrates good reliability in measuring child abuse experiences and their association with academic performance.

#### **Data Collection Procedure**

All participants in the research were asked to provide informed consent. Thus, participants voluntarily participated in the study. They were free to withdraw from the study at any point. The entire objective of the study was explained to them, and the confidentiality of their information were guaranteed. The study's advantages were communicated to them as well. Those who declined to participate were questioned about their reasons, and any misunderstandings about the project were addressed. Those who declined to participate after a thorough explanation were excluded from the study. Data was collected using a period of one month.

### **Data Processing and Analysis**

The data obtained were thoroughly checked to discover any omissions and mistakes. The revised data were first coded and then analysed with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Research question one was analysed using percentages and frequencies. Regression analysis was used to test research hypothesis one, two and three.

### **Summary**

The purpose of this research was to determine the impact of child abuse on academic performance among JHS students in New Juaben South Municipality. This chapter presented the research method employed by the researcher. The research design, which determines the type of data and procedure of data analysis was identified and explained. The population of the student consisted of JHS students from New Juaben South Municipality.

All ethical considerations during the conduct of a study were duly adhered to. Data collection lasted for one month. Both descriptive and inferential statistics such as, percentages and frequencies and regression analysis were used to analyse the research objectives.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the data gathered through a quantitative survey approach. The purpose of the study was to investigate the impact of child abuse on the academic performance of junior high school (JHS) students at New Juaben South Municipality. Out of a total of 263 students, 98 met the criteria for inclusion in the study. For an individual to be diagnosed as experiencing child abuse, the individual must have scored above 50% on one subscale of the child abuse scale. Thus, a total of 98 students were included in the study. These students experienced different forms of child abuse. The results are presented below.

#### Results

##### Demographic information of the respondents

The responses of the participants on their demographics are presented in Table 1. These include gender, age, whom participants stay with, and their parents' highest educational background.

**Table 4: Gender of Respondents**

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	54	55.1
Female	44	44.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Study (2022)

From the analysis, there were more male students (55.1%) than female students (44.9%).

### Research Question One

*What is the prevalence of child abuse among respondents?*

This research question sought to assess the prevalence of child abuse experienced by respondents. A total of 26 items were used to collect data from respondents. These included psychological abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse. The assessment of abuse involves three distinct types: psychological, physical, and sexual abuse, each evaluated using different scales. For psychological abuse, a scale of 1-4 is employed for 14 items, yielding a potential range of scores from 14 to 56. To be considered as experiencing psychological abuse, an individual must score 29 or higher, which represents more than half of the total possible score. For physical abuse, 7 items are scored on the same 1-4 scale, resulting in a score range of 7 to 28. Those who score 15 and above are deemed to be experiencing physical abuse. Finally, sexual abuse is evaluated with 5 items on a 1-4 scale, leading to scores between 5 and 20. To be classified as experiencing sexual abuse, an individual should obtain a score of 11 or higher.

**Table 5: Prevalence of abuse**

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Psychological abuse	68	69.4
Physical abuse	46	46.9
Sexual abuse	36	36.7
Sexual and psychological abuse	23	23.5
Sexual and physical abuse	20	20.4
Physical and psychological abuse	25	25.5
All three types of abuse	17	17.3

Source: Field Study (2022)

In Table 5, the prevalence of abuse among students is presented. The data indicates that psychological abuse is the most prevalent, with 69.4% (68 students) reporting experiencing it. Physical abuse follows with 46.9% (46 students) reporting such incidents, and sexual abuse is reported by 36.7% (36 students) of the participants. Additionally, a considerable number of students reported experiencing multiple types of abuse. Specifically, 23.5% (23 students) reported facing both sexual and psychological abuse, while 20.4% (20 students) experienced both sexual and physical abuse, and 25.5% (25 students) faced physical and psychological abuse simultaneously. Strikingly, 17.3% (17 students) of the participants revealed that they have encountered all three types of abuse.

### **Research Hypotheses**

#### **Research Hypothesis One**

*Impact of psychological child abuse on the academic performance of JHS students at New Juaben South Municipality*

Research hypothesis one sought to identify the impact of psychological abuse on the academic performance of JHS students at New Juaben South Municipality. Data on this research question was analysed with simple linear regression form of analysis. Psychological abuse was the independent variable while the dependent variable was academic performance. Simple linear regression analysis was most appropriate since the focus was to identify how one independent variable affected one dependent variable.



**Table 6: Correlation between psychological abuse and academic performance**

	Variable	Academic performance	Psychological abuse
Correlation (r)	Academic performance	1.000	-.404
	Psychological abuse	-.404	1.000

Source: Field Study (2022) \*\*\* $p < .01$  N= 98

**Table 7: Impact of psychological abuse on academic performance**

Variables	B	SE B	$\beta$	t	p
Constant	34.721	2.447		14.191	.000
Psychological abuse	-.331	.077	-.404	-4.326	.000

Source: Field Study (2022)  $r^2 = .163$  F= 18.718 df = (1, 96)

Table 6 demonstrates weak and inverse association between high levels of psychological abuse and academic performance ( $r = -.404, p < .01$ ). This implies that as score for psychological abuse that of academic performance decreases and vice versa. Thus psychological abuse and academic performance are negatively correlated.

The impact of psychological abuse on academic performance was analysed using a simple linear regression model to provide performance predictions. As indicated in Table 7, a statistically significant regression equation was located. According to the findings, the value for F (1, 96) is 18.718, p is less than .01, and  $R^2$  is .163. Per the findings, psychological abuse was a significant factor that had a detrimental effect on academic performance ( $B = -.331, p < .01$ ). The model explains 16.3% of the variance. Thus approximately 16.3% of the variation in academic performance is due to

psychological abuse. This means that 16.3% of the time, psychological abuse did bear some unfavourable effect on the academic performance of JHS students at New Juaben South Municipality. Furthermore, a unit increase in psychological abuse results in a -331 decrease in academic performance.

### Research Hypothesis Two

*Impact of physical abuse on the academic performance of JHS students at New Juaben South Municipality*

Research hypothesis one sought to identify the impact of physical abuse on the academic performance of JHS students at New Juaben South Municipality. Data on this research question was analysed with simple linear regression form of analysis. Physical abuse was the independent variable while the dependent variable was academic performance. Simple linear regression analysis was most appropriate since the focus was to identify how one independent variable affected one dependent variable.

**Table 8: Correlation between physical abuse and academic performance**

	Variable	Academic performance	Physical abuse
Correlation (r)	Academic performance	1.000	-.45
	physical abuse	-.45	1.00
Source: Field Study (2022)		***p < .01	N= 98

**Table 9: Impact of psychological abuse on academic performance**

Variables	B	SE B	$\beta$	t	p
Constant	33.851	1.962		17.256	.000
Physical abuse	-.621	.124	-.455	-5.009	.000

Source: Field Study (2022)  $r^2 = .207$ ,  $F = 25.091$   $df = (1, 96)$

The correlation between academic performance and physical abuse is -.45,  $p < 0.01$  indicating a negative correlation. The negative correlation between physical abuse and academic performance implies that students who experience more physical abuse tend to have lower academic performance, while those who experience less physical abuse tend to have higher academic performance.

The impact of physical abuse on academic performance was analysed using a simple linear regression model to provide performance predictions. As indicated in Table 20, a statistically significant regression equation was located. According to the findings, the value for  $F(1, 96)$  is 25.091,  $p$  is less than .01, and  $R^2$  is .207. Per the findings, physical abuse was a significant factor that had a detrimental effect on academic performance ( $\beta = -.621$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The model explains 20.7% of the variance. Thus approximately 21% of the variation in academic performance is due to physical abuse. This means that 21% of the time, physical abuse did bear some unfavourable effect on the academic performance of JHS students at New Juaben South Municipality. Furthermore, a unit increase in child abuse results in a -.621 decrease in academic performance.

### **Research Hypothesis Three**

*Impact of sexual abuse on the academic performance of JHS students at New Juaben South Municipality*

Research hypothesis three sought to identify the impact of sexual abuse on the academic performance of JHS students at New Juaben South Municipality. Data on this research question was analysed with simple linear regression form of analysis. Sexual abuse was the independent variable while

the dependent variable was academic performance. Simple linear regression analysis was most appropriate since the focus was to identify how one independent variable affected one dependent variable.

**Table 10: Correlation between sexual abuse and academic performance**

	Variable	Academic performance	Sexual abuse
Correlation (r)	Academic performance	1.000	-.152
	Sexual abuse	-.152	1.000
Source: Field Study (2022) *** $p > .05$ N= 98			

**Table 11: Impact of sexual abuse on academic performance**

Variables	B	SE B	$\beta$	t	p
Constant	26.924	1.767		15.236	.000
Sexual abuse	-.269	.178	-.152	-1.507	.135
Source: Field Study (2022) $r^2 = .023$ F= 2.271 df = (1, 96)					

Table 10 demonstrates no relationship between sexual abuse and academic performance ( $r = -.152$ ,  $p > .05$ ). This implies there is no relationship between sexual abuse and academic performance.

The impact of psychological abuse on academic performance was analysed using a simple linear regression model to provide performance predictions. As indicated in Table 11, there is no statistically significant influence of sexual abuse on academic performance,  $F(1, 96) = 2.271$ ,  $p$  is greater than .05. This means that sexual abuse did not bear any unfavourable effect on the academic performance of JHS students at New Juaben South Municipality.

## Discussion

This section discusses the findings of the study. The findings are discussed in relation to previous literature and outline how the findings of the current study confirms or contradicts previous empirical literature.

### **Types of child abuse among JHS students at New Juaben South Municipality.**

#### **Psychological abuse/emotional**

The main findings on the prevalence of abuse among students indicate a distressing reality of abuse. Psychological abuse emerged as the most prevalent form, affecting a significant 69.4% of the student population. The main findings on the prevalence of abuse among students paint a distressing picture of the reality many students face. Among the various forms of abuse, psychological abuse emerged as the most prevalent, affecting a significant 69.4% of the student population. This alarming statistic highlights the prevalence and severity of psychological abuse in educational settings and underscores the urgent need for awareness, intervention, and support mechanisms to address this critical issue. Psychological abuse, also known as emotional or mental abuse, encompasses a range of harmful behaviours that can have profound and long-lasting effects on students' mental well-being and academic performance. This form of abuse may manifest through verbal insults, humiliation, ridicule, threats, and manipulation, among other damaging tactics. Unlike physical abuse, which leaves visible marks, psychological abuse often goes unnoticed, making it harder to identify and address.

The prevalence of psychological abuse among students, affecting 69.4% of the population, can be understood through the lens of attachment theory. Attachment theory, developed by psychologist John Bowlby, suggests that early interactions with caregivers significantly influence an individual's emotional and social development throughout their lives. According to this theory, the quality of attachment formed with primary caregivers during childhood shapes an individual's internal working models of relationships and influences their behaviour in future relationships and interactions.

In the context of the distressing reality of psychological abuse among students, attachment theory helps us understand how early experiences with caregivers can impact their ability to form healthy and secure relationships later in life. Students who experienced psychological abuse, such as emotional neglect, rejection, criticism, or manipulation during their early years, may develop insecure attachment styles, particularly anxious or avoidant attachment.

Anxious attachment refers to students who may become excessively preoccupied with seeking validation and approval from others, often seeking reassurance and attention to compensate for the emotional neglect they experienced in their early relationships. They may struggle with feelings of worthlessness and fear of rejection, affecting their self-esteem and confidence in academic settings. This may lead to difficulties in concentration, fear of failure, and a constant need for external validation, impacting their overall academic performance.

On the other hand, avoidant attachment style can manifest in students who learned to suppress their emotions and detach from their caregivers'

negative interactions to cope with the psychological abuse. These students may develop a tendency to avoid emotional connections and withdraw from social interactions, creating a barrier between themselves and their teachers or peers. This emotional detachment could hinder their ability to form supportive relationships in school and may lead to a sense of isolation, affecting their engagement and academic achievements.

Thus, attachment theory provides insight into the distressing prevalence of psychological abuse among students. Early experiences with caregivers significantly influence students' attachment styles, shaping their emotional and social behaviours in academic settings. Psychological abuse can lead to insecure attachment styles, impacting students' self-esteem, social interactions, and academic performance. Understanding the influence of attachment in this context can guide interventions and support systems to help students overcome the impact of abuse and create a healthier learning environment.

This study supports previous findings on emotional abuse. For instance, Mikaeili et al. (2013) found that among boys in Iran, emotional abuse appears most prevalent, with a few reporting physical abuse. Lev-Wiesel et al. (2018) also found that the most frequently reported type of child abuse was in Israel was emotional abuse. Both Mikaeili et al. (2013) used the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ) while the current study used the Child Abuse Self-Report Scale (CASRS). Thus, although these studies used different scales, they had similar findings.

### Physical abuse

Following closely is physical abuse, reported by 46.9% of students, highlighting the alarming incidence of physical harm experienced by many. Travis Hirschi's Social Bonding Theory, proposed in 1969, helps explain the alarming incidence of physical abuse experienced by many students. According to this theory, individuals are more likely to engage in deviant behaviours, such as physical abuse, when their social bonds to conventional society are weakened or broken. These social bonds consist of four elements: attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief.

In the context of physical abuse among students, the weakening of these social bonds contributes to the prevalence of such harmful behaviour. First, attachment refers to the emotional connection individuals have with others, especially significant figures like parents, teachers, or peers. When students lack positive and supportive relationships with these figures, they may resort to aggression as a way to cope with feelings of alienation or neglect. For instance, students who experience strained relationships with their parents or are isolated from their peers may act out violently to gain attention or assert dominance.

Second, commitment involves the individual's investment in conventional goals and future aspirations. When students feel disconnected from academic or career goals, they may be more inclined to engage in disruptive behaviours like physical abuse. A lack of commitment to their studies or future prospects can lead to frustration and aggression towards others.



Third, involvement refers to the extent of an individual's participation in conventional activities, such as sports, clubs, or extracurricular. Students who have limited opportunities for positive involvement in structured activities may seek excitement or validation through aggressive actions, including physical abuse.

Lastly, belief pertains to the individual's adherence to societal norms and values. When students do not internalize the values that discourage violence and promote empathy, they may be more likely to resort to physical aggression as a means of resolving conflicts or exerting power.

In summary, Travis Hirschi's Social Bonding Theory explains that physical abuse among students can be attributed to weakened social bonds with conventional society. When students lack positive attachments, commitment to conventional goals, involvement in prosocial activities, and belief in societal norms, they are more susceptible to engaging in deviant behaviours like physical violence. Addressing these underlying factors and reinforcing positive social bonds can be essential in reducing the incidence of physical abuse and promoting a safer and more nurturing environment for students.

Results of the current study is in line with previous research which found physical abuse to be prevalent. Meinck, et al. (2017) found that physical abuse was prevalent among adolescents in South Africa. Similarly, Kumar et al. (2017) using the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse (ISPCAN) Child Abuse Screening Tool–Children's Institutional Version (ICAST-CI) found that among school-going adolescents, one year and lifetime prevalence of physical abuse was very high.

## Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse is also disturbingly prevalent, with 36.7% of participants revealing their ordeal. Travis Hirschi's Social Bonding Theory, also known as Social Control Theory, provides insights into the disturbingly prevalent rates of sexual abuse. According to this theory, individuals are more likely to conform to societal norms and avoid engaging in deviant behaviour when they have strong social bonds or attachments to conventional society. These social bonds consist of four elements: attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief.

In the context of sexual abuse, the theory can help understand why some individuals perpetrate such acts despite societal norms against it. If a person lacks strong social bonds, they may be more prone to engage in deviant behaviour, such as sexual abuse.

Applying Travis Hirschi's Social Bonding Theory to the prevalence of sexual abuse, it becomes evident that individuals who lack strong social bonds, commitment to conventional goals, involvement in positive activities, and belief in societal norms are more likely to engage in sexual abuse. Addressing and preventing sexual abuse would require strengthening social bonds, promoting positive involvement and commitments, and reinforcing beliefs that prioritize respect, empathy, and the well-being of others. This can be achieved through comprehensive prevention and intervention programs, education, and community engagement to foster a culture of mutual care and responsibility

This is in line with previous findings of Barth et al., (2013) who found that children experienced sexual abuse in the form of non-contact abuse,

contact abuse, forced intercourse, and mixed sexual abuse. Further, the current study is in line with those of Mikaeili et al. (2013), who found that children reported being exposed to pornographic material, vaginal intercourse, anal intercourse, and, at the very least, sexual kissing, stroking, and rubbing of the adult's genitalia on the child. Also, the study supports the findings of Baker et al. (2016) who discovered that non-consensual sexual contact during adolescence was the most common form of sexual abuse. This was followed by non-consensual sexual contact during adulthood, non-consensual sexual contact during childhood by a peer of a similar age, and non-consensual sexual contact during childhood by someone older.

### **Impact of psychological abuse on the academic performance of JHS students**

The current study conducted an analysis to investigate the associations between psychological abuse and academic performance among junior high school (JHS) students in the New Juaben South Municipality. The key finding of this study was that there exists a significant negative correlation between psychological abuse and academic performance. In simpler terms, as instances of psychological abuse increased, academic performance tended to decrease. Furthermore, the regression analysis supported this finding by attributing approximately 16.3% of the variation in academic performance to psychological abuse.

In practical terms, the findings of the current study regarding the negative correlation between psychological abuse and academic performance among junior high school (JHS) students have several important implications for educators, parents, and policymakers.

It means that when students experience psychological abuse, such as verbal insults, constant criticism, humiliation, or emotional manipulation, it can significantly impact their ability to perform well in school. This impact can manifest in various ways, including lower grades, reduced concentration in class, and decreased motivation to learn.

This study's findings share similarities with several previous studies that have explored the impact of psychological abuse on academic performance. For instance, Mikaeili et al.'s (2013) study in Iran revealed that emotionally abused children reported a lack of concentration and low academic performance in school, highlighting a negative influence of psychological abuse on students' ability to concentrate and perform well academically. Similarly, Azi and Saluhu's theoretical study in Nigeria (2016) indicated that abused children often face difficulties in concentrating on their schoolwork, ultimately leading to poor academic performance. These studies, along with the current research, all underscore the adverse effects of psychological abuse on academic achievement.

Although there were a few differences with Raby et al.'s long-term study in the United States (2019) and Oruche and Ezeiba's research in Anambra State, Nigeria (2021), the findings were similar. While the current study primarily focuses on the correlation between psychological abuse and academic performance among JHS students, Raby et al.'s study delved into the long-term consequences of childhood maltreatment and found that early exposure to maltreatment and neglect correlated with increased interpersonal difficulties and lower academic performance throughout individuals' lives.

This suggests a broader impact of maltreatment, including psychological abuse, on various aspects of life beyond just academic performance.

Similarly, Oruche and Ezeiba's study examined the effects of childhood trauma, encompassing physical and emotional abuse, on students' academic performance, emphasizing that various forms of mistreatment significantly affected academic achievement. In contrast, the current study specifically narrows its focus to the correlation between psychological abuse and academic performance among JHS students in a specific locality, however, the findings are similar.

Therefore, the current study's findings align with previous research, such as Mikaeili et al. (2013), Raby et al. (2019), Oruche and Ezeiba (2021) and Azi and Saluhu (2016), in highlighting the negative impact of psychological abuse on academic performance.

### **Impact of Physical abuse on academic performance**

The current study focused on investigating the influence of physical abuse on academic performance among students. The key finding revealed that there is a significant negative influence of physical abuse on academic performance. In simpler terms, students who experienced more instances of physical abuse tended to exhibit lower academic performance. Additionally, the regression analysis conducted in the study attributed approximately 20.7% of the variation observed in academic performance to physical abuse. This suggests that physical abuse had a substantial impact on how well students performed academically.

In practical terms, this means that students who have been subjected to physical abuse face real challenges when it comes to their educational

achievements. They are more likely to struggle academically, which can manifest in various ways, such as lower grades, difficulty concentrating in class, or even a higher likelihood of repeating grades.

Furthermore, the extent of the influence of physical abuse, as indicated by the regression analysis, underscores the urgency of addressing this issue. It highlights the need for schools, teachers, and educational authorities to be vigilant in detecting signs of physical abuse and providing appropriate support and intervention to affected students.

The findings of the current study align with several previous studies that explored the impact of physical abuse on academic achievement. For instance, Mutua and Ong'ang'a's study in Kenya and Makondo's qualitative study in Swaziland both found that physical and sexual child maltreatment hindered students' ability to learn and negatively affected their academic performance. Similarly, Ryan et al.'s study in Michigan, USA, indicated that children subjected to abuse investigations had significantly worse academic outcomes, including lower standardized exam scores and higher rates of grade retention. Okite's study in Kenya also revealed a connection between domestic violence and poorer academic achievement among students.

However, the current study differs from Pierre and Claire's study in Rwanda, which primarily focused on child maltreatment in the context of public secondary schools. While both studies emphasize the negative influence of child maltreatment on academic performance, Pierre and Claire's study specifically examined the impact of domestic violence within households, whereas the current study appears to encompass various forms of physical abuse beyond domestic violence.

Thus, the current study shares similarities with previous research regarding the detrimental effects of physical abuse on academic performance, aligning with findings from studies conducted in Kenya, Swaziland, the USA, and Kenya. However, the scope and focus of the current study differ from Pierre and Claire's study, which emphasized domestic violence in the context of public secondary schools.

### **Impact of sexual abuse on academic performance**

The current study aimed to investigate the relationship between sexual abuse and academic performance among students. Surprisingly, the study found no significant relationship between sexual abuse and students' academic performance. In other words, it suggests that sexual abuse did not have a significant impact on how well students performed academically.

The finding that there is no significant relationship between sexual abuse and students' academic performance means that, based on the data collected in this study, it appears that experiencing sexual abuse does not directly lead to lower academic achievement among the students involved. In practical terms, it means that the students who reported experiencing sexual abuse did not, on average, perform noticeably worse academically than those who did not report such abuse.

However, it is important to note that this finding should be interpreted cautiously. While this particular study did not find a significant relationship, it doesn't mean that sexual abuse has no negative effects on students' lives or academic performance in all cases. The absence of a significant relationship in this study may be influenced by various factors, including the sample size, the

specific characteristics of the students studied, or the methods used to measure academic performance.

In practical terms, educators, parents, and policymakers should not assume that students who have experienced sexual abuse do not need support or intervention in other areas of their lives. Sexual abuse can have profound psychological and emotional effects on individuals, and these effects may manifest in various ways, including but not limited to academic performance. It is essential to consider the holistic well-being of students and provide appropriate resources and support to address any potential consequences of sexual abuse, even if they do not manifest directly in academic performance in every case.

This finding stands in contrast to the results of two previous studies conducted by Aboagye (2013) and Baker et al. (2016). Aboagye's study, which involved sexually abused children, their parents, and school guidance coordinators, reported that sexually abused children suffered from a lack of concentration and low academic performance in school, as reported by all three groups. This suggested a clear negative impact of sexual abuse on both concentration and academic achievement. Similarly, Baker et al.'s study conducted in the United States found that exposure to sexual victimization among college students predicted poorer levels of academic accomplishment, with SV being linked to lower GPAs among female college students. Additionally, their second study suggested that SV could even predict students' GPAs in their last semester at the university.

In summary, the current study's finding of no significant relationship between sexual abuse and academic performance differs from the results of



previous studies conducted by Aboagye and Baker et al., both of which demonstrated a negative impact of sexual abuse on students' academic achievements and concentration. This discrepancy highlights the complexity and variability of research findings in this area, suggesting that more research may be needed to fully understand the relationship between sexual abuse and academic performance.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of the study was to investigate the impact of child abuse on the academic performance of junior high school (JHS) students at New Juaben South Municipality. This chapter provides a summary of the study, as well as the conclusion and recommendations of the study.

#### Summary

##### Overview of the study

The study investigated the impact of child abuse on the academic performance of junior high school (JHS) students at New Juaben South Municipality. The study's goal is descriptive in nature. It sought to describe the impact of psychological, physical and sexual abuse on the impact on the academic performance of JHS students at New Juaben South Municipality. Ainsworth and Bowlby's attachment theory and Travis Hirschi's Social Bonding Theory guided the study. Relevant concepts such as the concept of child abuse and types of child abuse were reviewed. Empirical literature on the impact psychological, physical and sexual abuse on the academic performance were reviewed. The descriptive survey design was deemed appropriate for the research. The research focused on the New Juaben South Municipality in Ghana's Eastern Region. Because there has been a minimal study on the impact of child abuse among JHS students in the New Juaben South Municipality of Ghana's Eastern Region, this location was chosen.

The accessible population for the study comprises JHS 2 students within the 3 circuits and 21 schools. This brings the accessible population to 1087. The multistage sampling method was used in choosing respondents for

the study. These are the cluster method, simple random sampling and proportionate sampling techniques. Three schools in each circuit were chosen due to the relatively small number of JHS 2 students in each school. After obtaining the 9 schools to be included in the study (3 from each of the three circuits), proportionate sampling was used to select a representative number of both boys and girls from each school. After determining the number of boys and girls to be chosen from each school using a proportionate sampling technique, a simple random sampling technique will be used to choose these students. A total of 143 boys and 142 girls, totalling 285 students served as the sample size. However, 138 boys and 125 girls returned their questionnaires. This brought the total number of respondents to 263 students, giving a response rate of 92.3%. The child abuse scale was used to identify individuals who experienced child abuse. This brought the final sample size to 98 students.

Questionnaires were used to collect data for the study. The questionnaire was in six (6) sections. Section A and B. Section A focused on the demographics of respondents such as gender, age, and location of respondents. Section B measured the types of child abuse. Content validity and reliability were ascertained before the instrument was used in collecting data for the study. A pilot test was conducted to ensure the instrument was reliable. Scores on internal consistency as measured by the Cronbach's alpha were above the 0.7 threshold and thus deemed reliable to be used. Research questions one was analysed using means and standard deviations. Regression analysis was used to test research hypothesis one, two and three.

## Key findings

The investigation revealed the following findings:

1. The main findings on the prevalence of abuse among students indicate a distressing reality of mistreatment within the educational environment. Psychological abuse emerges as the most prevalent form, affecting a significant 69.4% of the student population. Following closely is physical abuse, reported by 46.9% of students, highlighting the alarming incidence of physical harm experienced by many. Sexual abuse is also disturbingly prevalent, with 36.7% of participants revealing their ordeal. Equally concerning is the discovery that a considerable number of students have faced multiple forms of abuse simultaneously. Specifically, 23.5% reported experiencing both sexual and psychological abuse, 20.4% faced both sexual and physical abuse, and 25.5% encountered physical and psychological abuse concurrently. Most troubling is the revelation that 17.3% of participants endured all three types of abuse, underscoring the gravity of the situation and the urgent need for comprehensive interventions to protect students' well-being and foster a safe learning environment. Addressing this issue is crucial to ensuring the overall health and academic success of students.
2. The analysis reveals a significant and negative association between psychological abuse and academic performance among JHS students in the New Juaben South Municipality. Psychological abuse shows a weak and inverse correlation with academic performance, indicating that as psychological abuse increases, academic performance tends to decrease. The regression analysis confirms these findings,

demonstrating that psychological abuse has a detrimental effect on academic performance. Approximately 16.3% of the variation in academic performance can be attributed to psychological abuse. The study emphasizes the need for interventions to address psychological abuse and improve students' academic outcomes in the educational setting.

3. The analysis reveals a significant and negative correlation between academic performance and physical abuse among JHS students in the New Juaben South Municipality. The negative correlation suggests that students who experience more physical abuse tend to have lower academic performance, while those who experience less physical abuse tend to perform better academically. The regression analysis supports these findings, showing that physical abuse has a detrimental effect on academic performance. Approximately 20.7% of the variation in academic performance can be attributed to physical abuse, indicating its significant impact. The study highlights the urgent need for interventions to address physical abuse and its adverse effects on students' academic outcomes. Creating a safe and supportive learning environment is essential to improve the overall well-being and academic success of the students.
4. The analysis indicates no significant relationship between sexual abuse and academic performance among JHS students in the New Juaben South Municipality. The correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) of -0.152 and  $p$ -value greater than 0.05 suggest that there is no statistically significant association between sexual abuse and academic performance, implying

that sexual abuse does not have a significant effect on students' academic performance. The regression analysis further supports these findings, demonstrating that sexual abuse does not bear any unfavourable effect on the academic performance of the students. Overall, the study highlights that sexual abuse does not appear to influence academic performance in this specific population. However, addressing the issue of sexual abuse and providing support to affected students remain essential for their overall well-being and educational experience.

### **Conclusions**

In conclusion, the study reveals that Abuse is distressingly prevalent among students, with psychological abuse affecting 69.4%, physical abuse reported by 46.9%, and sexual abuse experienced by 36.7%. Many students face multiple forms of abuse simultaneously, underscoring the need for comprehensive interventions to ensure their well-being and a safe learning environment.

Psychological abuse negatively impacts academic performance for junior high school (JHS) students. As psychological abuse increases, academic performance tends to decrease. This highlights the urgency of addressing psychological abuse to improve students' educational outcomes.

Physical abuse is significantly correlated with lower academic performance among JHS students. Those experiencing more physical abuse tend to have poorer academic achievements. It is crucial to address physical abuse for the well-being and academic success of students.

No significant relationship is found between sexual abuse and academic performance among JHS students. Despite this, addressing sexual abuse and providing support for affected students remains important for their overall well-being and educational experience.

These findings emphasize the importance of addressing abuse and fostering a safe and supportive learning environment for students. By doing so, educational institutions can promote the well-being and academic success of their students.

### **Recommendations**

In light of the research results, the following recommendations are offered:

1. **Prevalence of Abuse:** Educational institutions particularly basic schools should prioritize creating safe and supportive environments for students, where they feel comfortable reporting incidents of abuse. GES should implement comprehensive training programs for teachers, staff, and students to identify and address signs of abuse promptly and establish clear reporting and support systems to ensure that students who experience abuse can access appropriate help and resources. Parents should foster open communication with their children to create a safe space for discussing any issues they may face at school. Stay vigilant and observant of any signs of distress or changes in their child's behaviour, as it may indicate possible abuse. Counsellors should educate parents about the signs of different types of abuse and encourage them to seek professional advice if they suspect their child is experiencing abuse.

2. Psychological Abuse and Academic Performance: Counsellors should develop counselling and support services to assist students in JHS who have experienced psychological abuse, focusing on promoting emotional well-being and resilience. Counsellors should train teachers and educators to recognize signs of psychological abuse in students and implement appropriate interventions.
3. Physical Abuse and Academic Performance: Counsellors should raise awareness among students, teachers, and parents about the negative effects of physical abuse on academic performance and overall well-being. Counsellors should collaborate with local authorities and child protection agencies to create a safe learning environment and promptly address cases of physical abuse and establish support programs to assist students who have experienced physical abuse, providing access to counselling and resources.
4. Sexual Abuse: GES should implement age-appropriate sex education programs to empower students with knowledge and understanding of healthy relationships and boundaries. Raise awareness about sexual abuse prevention and the importance of reporting incidents promptly to appropriate authorities and create a safe and confidential reporting mechanism for students who experience sexual abuse and ensure they receive the necessary support and protection.

### **Counselling Implications**

The findings from the study on the prevalence of abuse among students, as well as the analysis of the association between abuse and academic performance, have important counselling implications for addressing



the well-being and academic success of students. These are the counselling implications based on the main findings:

1. **Addressing Psychological Abuse:** Given that psychological abuse emerged as the most prevalent form of abuse, counselling interventions should focus on addressing this type of mistreatment. School counsellors and mental health professionals should be equipped to identify signs of psychological abuse in students and provide appropriate support and interventions. Counselling sessions can help students cope with the emotional impact of abuse, build resilience, and develop healthy coping mechanisms to navigate the effects of psychological abuse on their academic performance.
2. **Support for Students Experiencing Physical Abuse:** The significant negative correlation between physical abuse and academic performance highlights the need for counselling support for students who have experienced physical harm. School counsellors can create safe spaces for these students to express their emotions, fears, and concerns related to the abuse. Providing trauma-informed counselling can help students heal from the physical trauma and address any emotional and behavioural difficulties that may arise from such experiences.
3. **Comprehensive Interventions for Multiple Abuse Types:** The study revealed that a considerable number of students experienced multiple forms of abuse simultaneously. Counselling interventions should be comprehensive and address the complex interplay of multiple abuse types. A holistic approach that considers the mental, emotional, and

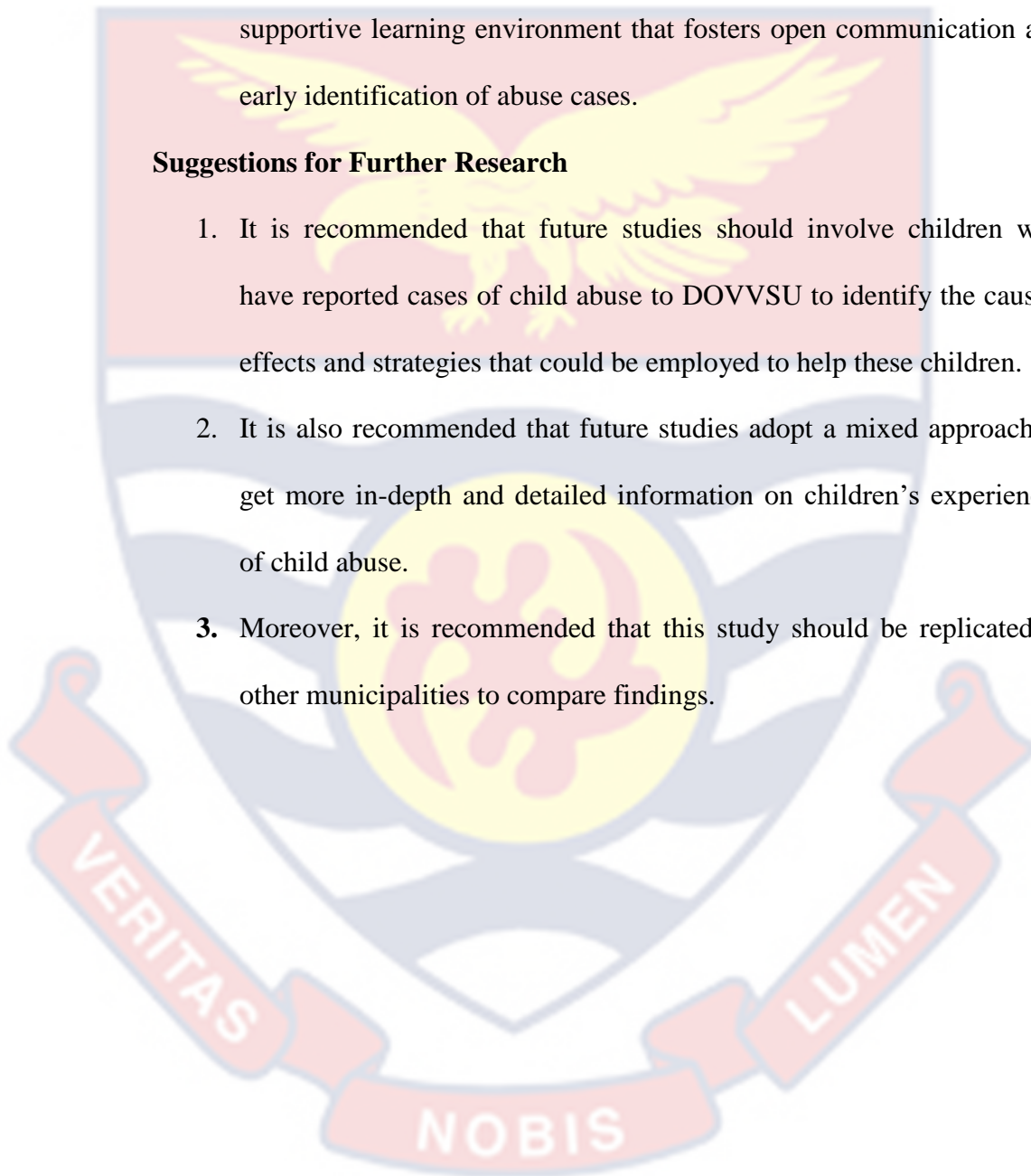
physical well-being of students is crucial. Collaborative efforts involving school counsellors, teachers, parents, and community resources can help provide the necessary support and protection for students facing multiple forms of abuse.

4. Addressing the Impact of Abuse on Academic Performance: The negative association between abuse and academic performance highlights the importance of addressing the academic consequences of mistreatment. School counsellors can work with students to identify academic challenges stemming from abuse and develop personalized academic plans to support their educational needs. Additionally, counsellors can collaborate with teachers and school administrators to implement accommodations and support systems for affected students to help them succeed academically despite their traumatic experiences.
5. Support for Students Affected by Sexual Abuse: Although no significant relationship between sexual abuse and academic performance was found, it is essential to provide support and counselling services to students who have experienced sexual abuse. Addressing the emotional and psychological impact of sexual abuse can be critical in promoting their overall well-being and educational experience. School counsellors should ensure a safe and confidential environment for students to discuss their experiences and provide appropriate referrals to specialized mental health services when necessary.
6. Prevention and Education: Counselling interventions should not only focus on supporting students after abuse has occurred but also on

prevention and education. School counsellors can play a significant role in promoting awareness about abuse, its impact, and how to seek help. Implementing prevention programs and educational workshops for students, parents, and school staff can help create a safe and supportive learning environment that fosters open communication and early identification of abuse cases.

### **Suggestions for Further Research**

1. It is recommended that future studies should involve children who have reported cases of child abuse to DOVVSU to identify the causes, effects and strategies that could be employed to help these children.
2. It is also recommended that future studies adopt a mixed approach to get more in-depth and detailed information on children's experiences of child abuse.
3. Moreover, it is recommended that this study should be replicated at other municipalities to compare findings.



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**APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX A**

**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST**

**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES**

**FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS**

**DEPARTMENT OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING**

**DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT**

**RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Dear Respondents,**

You are invited to participate in a study on the effect of child abuse on the academic performance of junior high school (JHS) students. I wish to assure you that this questionnaire is strictly for academic purposes and as such, all information obtained through this medium shall be treated as confidential.

Please read carefully and tick the appropriate choice for each statement.

**Please fill in the required information below by ticking [] the appropriate box**

**PLEASE BE HONEST IN YOUR RESPONSES**

**SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

1. Gender

Male

Female



**SECTION B: TYPES OF CHILD ABUSE**

Please answer by ticking (✓) the corresponding boxes.

1=NEVER (N)      2 = SOMETIMES (S)      3 = MOST OFTEN (MO)

4 = ALWAYS (A)

<b>CHILD ABUSE SELF-REPORT SCALE</b>					
S/№	Statements	N	S	MO	A
<b>Psychological/Emotional Abuse</b>					
1.	I feel that other members of my family do not like me and they do not care for me.				
2.	I feel that my parents do not like me and they do not care for me.				
3.	The other members of my family criticize me.				
4.	My family taunt me.				
5.	My parents criticize me.				
6.	My parents treat me with disrespect.				
7.	I feel worthless because of the way my parents treat me.				
8.	My parents are very hard on me.				
9.	I wish to live with another family.				
10.	My parents order me a lot.				
11.	My parents blame me in others' presence.				
12.	I feel the other members of my family ridicule me.				
13.	My parents ridicule me.				

14.	Other members of my family order me a lot				
PHYSICAL ABUSE					
15.	My parents/guardians beat me up, so hard that I have signs of it on my body.				
16.	I was beaten up hard at home.				
17.	I am beaten up because of every small mistake.				
18.	I have been punished unfairly at home.				
19.	I was beaten up so hard that it caused me serious injury (Like broken bones ...).				
20.	When my parents/guardians punish me, it is not proportionate to my mistakes.				
21.	If I do not obey the rules of my family I will be punished very hard.				
22. SEXUAL ABUSE					
23.	An adult or some adults have tried to touch my private parts.				
24.	An adult or some adults have tried to look at my private parts.				
25.	An adult or some people talk to me nastily.				
26.	An adult or some adults have tried to hurt me sexually.				
27.	An adult made me look at or touch his/her private parts				

**SECTION C: ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

Please answer by ticking (√) the corresponding boxes.

1=NEVER (N)      2 = SOMETIMES (S)      3 = MOST OFTEN (MO)

4 = ALWAYS (A)

S/Nº	Statements	N	S	MO	A
28.	I accurately follow instructions and/or class discussion during large-group (e.g., whole class) instruction				
29.	I accurately follow instructions and/or class discussion during small-group (e.g., reading group) instruction				
30.	I quickly learn new material in class				
31.	My reading skills are accurate				
32.	My speaking skills are accurate				
33.	I complete written work in a careful manner				
34.	I complete my work faster than others				
35.	I am able to pay attention well in class				
36.	I understand my work before I begin to do it				
37.	I do not get easily distracted by other things in class				
38.	I learn well with my colleagues				

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION**

APPENDIX B

INTRODUCTORY LETTER

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES  
FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS  
**DEPARTMENT OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING**

Telephone: 0332091854  
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UNIVERSITY POST OFFICE  
CAPE COAST, GHANA

Our Ref: DGC/L.2/VOL.1/198  
Your Ref:

20<sup>th</sup> September, 2022

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

We introduce to you, Evelyn Assinor a student pursuing an M.Phil programme in Guidance and Counselling at the Department of Guidance and Counselling of the University of Cape Coast. As a requirement, she is to submit a thesis on the topic: *"The Impact of Child Abuse on Academic Performance of Junior High School Students at New Juaben South Municipality"*. We are by this letter affirming that, the information she will obtain from your Institution will be solely used for academic purposes.

We would be most grateful if you could provide her the necessary assistance.

Thank you.

Dr. Stephen Doh Fia  
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

APPENDIX C

ETHICAL CLEARANCE

