



## ABSTRACT

*Emotional abuse has thrived and is still gaining grounds, with its perpetrators being parents, guardians and caregivers who constantly abuse children emotionally. Due to its prevalence and the severity of its effect on victims, emotional abuse should be at the forefront of all media reports on child abuse. This study examined the effect of media intervention on knowledge and*

# EFFECT OF MEDIA INTERVENTION ON KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE- INTENTION OF CHILD EMOTIONAL ABUSE PREVENTION AMONG PARENTS IN IKENNE, OGUN STATE

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## Introduction

Children are the assurance of the continuity of human society therefore, their growth and healthy development should be the concern of parents and guardians because without children today, there will be no society of humans tomorrow. According to Ezzat (2019) children are the bedrock to every society and are often referred to as the leaders of tomorrow, and as such need to be trained, adequately handled and protected. Children are among the vulnerable of the society who needs to be guided and protected; unfortunately, that is not the case in many quarters as child abuse is a common occurrence in today's society. Parents and guardians Abuse is perceived by the society to be dominantly physical due to the bruises and pains it can leave on its victims. Physical abuse, which manifest in various forms including choking, beating, strangling, slapping, throwing, and use of weapons has become a



recurring scenario in the society and even gets media attention due to protests in schools and communities when children are punished physically beyond limits. According to the Global Initiative to end corporal punishment of children in schools which is enshrined in the Convention Article 28 (2), school discipline methods should be “consistent with the child’s human dignity”. In implementing the convention, the committee on the Rights of the Child has consistently interpreted this article as requiring prohibition of corporal punishment in schools. In 2020, the Federal Ministry of Education in Nigeria banned corporal punishment in schools as it is only the head teacher who is permitted to punish any child indicted of

*practice-intention of child emotional abuse prevention among parents in Ikenne, Ogun State, Nigeria using the quasi-experimental pretest-posttest design. A sample size of 120 parents within the age range of 20-49 years who have children of age 3-17 were exposed to a total of five video messages on emotional abuse using television for a period of five weeks. A validated questionnaire was administered to respondents pre and post media intervention. Data were analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistics, frequency counts, mean and standard deviation were the descriptive tools, while paired sample T-test was the inferential analysis tool used for determining the significant difference in the experimental and control groups’ knowledge and practice-intention of emotional abuse among parents before and after the intervention. Findings revealed that knowledge of emotional abuse among parents increased and that they had a high intention to prevent the practices of emotional abuse after exposure to video messages. Consequently, it is concluded that lack of knowledge and understanding to what constitutes emotional abuse is based on dearth of information among participants.*

**Keywords:** Knowledge, Attitude, Practice-Intention, Emotional Abuse, Media Intervention



grievous offence”(Premium Times, 2020). Compared to physical abuse, emotional abuse leaves no physical sign on its victims, rather it manifests psychologically as post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, disassociation, low self-esteem, lack of self-confidence and suicide. Emotional abuse is rarely reported or even understood by its victims as abuse and consequently not protested nor given attention by the media as much as physical abuse. This lack of media attention has somehow allowed emotional abuse on children to thrive.

Child emotional abuse is an invisible form of abuse that affects the psychological development of a child. It occurs when a person purposefully harms a child’s self-worth or well-being by conveying to the child that they are somehow inadequate, worthless, or unloved. Emotional abuse may be the result of [verbal abuse](#), or physical actions may cause it. According to [Tatliali](#) and [Berkmen](#) (2017), emotional abuse includes all behaviours that prevent the child from developing emotionally, socially and physically. It is also a type of maltreatment that results in the deterioration of the child’s physical and psychological development. According to Xu, Cui, Xing and Parkinson (2019), other forms of abuse may have physical signs and scars but emotional abuse has none. Therefore, emotional maltreatment may be a stand-alone form of abuse and neglect, as well as a frequently co-occurring form. Emotional abuse can also be the reoccurrence of events like constant criticism, threats, humiliation, rejection, yelling and verbal abuse which in turn have severe long-term effect on the child. According to Abayomi (2014), the effects of emotional abuse are so severe that they threaten a person’s behavioural, emotional and mental well-being. Adebayo (2014) further stated that emotional abuse if left unchecked or unattended, may affect the communication skills and psychological well-being of children from childhood to adulthood. It includes all actions that have the capacity to result in post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, disassociation, low self-esteem, suicide, and lack of self-confidence in children as well as substance abuse later in life.

The negative effects of emotional abuse on children have been highlighted by researchers and scholars in recent times. Xu et al (2019) stated that emotional abuse results in behavioural and physical side



effects like moodiness, nightmares and racing heart beats. The short-term effect may include confusion, fear, hopelessness and shame, while the long-term effect may result in the development of chronic pain, anxiety, guilt, insomnia and social withdrawal or loneliness. Similarly, Alshammari and Alshammari (2016) warned that “the perpetration of emotional abuse denies the child the opportunity of developing at his/her expected rate of growth but rather, the child is forced to experience mental, emotional and physical challenges”. Globally, it is evident that abuse whether physical, sexual or emotional is majorly committed by parents, relatives, caregivers or teachers (NCAI, 2017). The World Health Organisation (WHO) (2020) estimated that up to 1 billion minors between the ages of 2 and 17 have endured violence physically, emotionally or sexually in the past year. A review of meta-analyses conducted by Stoltenborgh, Bakermans-Kranenburg, Alink and Van (2015) placed the global prevalence of emotional abuse at 36.3% with (1000 children) and emotional neglect at 18.4%. Similarly, the report by National Child Abuse Index (NCAI) 2017 in the USA revealed that, child abuse reports involved 7.5 million children, 74.9% being victims of emotional abuse, while 7.1% of victims suffered neglect. Whereas 83.4% of people who abused and neglected children were between the ages of 18 and 44, the report showed that 54.1% of perpetrators were women, while 45.0% were men. In March 2019, the Crime Survey for England and Wales CSEW estimated that approximately 3.8 million adults, whereby 1 in 11 adults aged 18 to 74 had experienced emotional abuse before the age of 16. Such abuse was found to be perpetrated by the child’s parent(s), with around 5 in 10 being abused by their mothers and around 4 in 10 abused by their fathers.

In Nigeria, a survey report on violence against children conducted by the National Population Commission with the support of the United States Centre for Disease Control and UNICEF in 2014 reported that approximately 6 in 10 children experienced some form of violence and 50 percent of all children in Nigeria experienced physical violence. The report further showed that 1 in 6 girls and 1 in 5 boys experienced emotional violence by a parent, caregiver or adult relative. Although the Child’s Right Act (CRA) in 2003 stated that “every child is entitled to



respect for the dignity of his person, and accordingly, no child shall be subjected to physical, mental or emotional injury, neglect or maltreatment, sexual abuse while in the care of a parent, legal guardian, school authority”, the study of Akinlusi, Rabi, Olawepo, Adewunmi, Ottun and Akinola (2014) showed that children are still being abused in different ways in and around different parts of Nigeria. The sight of children undergoing various forms abuses including emotional abuse is common in nearly every neighbourhood. This is why many are of the belief that the media are not doing enough in sensitizing children on their rights. Parents, guardians and care givers should also be sensitized by the media to protect and care for the child and not abuse them.

Gesinde (2013) noted that the rate at which children and adolescents suffer from emotional maltreatment of isolation, degradation, and exploitation is rather startling. This is why Spinazzola, Hodgdon, Li-Jung, Ford, Layne, Pynoos, Briggs, Stolbach and Kisiel (2014) believe that the prevalence of emotional abuse among children and the severity of harm it inflicts to its victims should be at the fore of mental health, social service training and the media. To them, the media should take the responsibility of creating intervention strategies that may not only create awareness on the effect of emotional abuses on children, but also spur adults to desist from its practice. Since the media are reputed for their ability and capacity to create awareness, mobilize efforts as regards social causes, removal of the scales of ignorance from people’s eyes and rallying of citizens for national development, putting the challenges of child abuse, child rights on the front burner of public discourse can help reduce its negative consequences on children. Sodeinde, Ajilore and Adekoya (2020) posited that the mass media as a tool for health communication is known to have the capacity to reach a widely dispersed audience, set agenda on health issues and persuade the audience on the promoted health behaviour. In Nigeria, the mass media has been identified as an important tool for health communication towards sustainable development. As regards the issue of child abuse, the 2030 agenda for sustainable development goal (SDG 16.2) includes to end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children with a renewed drive towards the awareness of



the rights of every child to live free from fear, neglect, abuse and exploitation. In order for this sustainable development goal to be achieved, communication through the media will be very important.

Through media intervention programmes, society's attention can be drawn to relevant issues germane to the discourse on emotional abuse and this could shape behaviour in the long run (Akpobo, 2015). Media intervention programmes are diverse and can be carried out with the use of television, radio, social media, newspaper, leaflets or posters. Bakare and Oyero (2017) observed that the nature of the target audience will determine the best medium that suits the purpose of the intervention programme. In recent times, researchers have used graphics, videos, television, and radio programmes as channels for media intervention, but the captivating nature of videos and its high level of appeal to users have made it an often preferred choice when it comes to capturing the attention of an audience. Videos are very effective for media interventions because it comprises visuals, texts and sound (Bakare & Oyero, 2017). The magnitude of children and adolescents suffering from emotional maltreatment of isolation, degradation and exploitation, and the fact that emotional isolation has been observed to be a common dimension of abuse and predictor of psychological maltreatment among adolescents in Nigeria (Gesinde, 2013), this study then seeks to investigate the effect of media intervention on knowledge and practice-intention of child emotional abuse prevention among parents in Ikenne, Ogun state, Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

1. What is the level of knowledge about child emotional abuse prevention among parents in Ikenne before and after exposure to a media intervention?
2. What is the practice-intention level of child emotional abuse prevention among parents in Ikenne before and after exposure to media intervention?

### **Hypotheses**

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant difference in knowledge of child emotional abuse among parents before and after exposure to media intervention.



**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the practice-intention of parents towards child emotional abuse prevention before and after exposure to media intervention.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Overview of Child Abuse**

The World Health Organization (WHO, 1999) defines abuse as all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power. Abuse is a term used to denote the wrong use of something, including human beings. Human abuses cover four major areas: physical, sexual, and emotional and neglect (Tyler, Allison and Winsler, 2006). Abuse is defined as intentionally using physical force directly, or by threat against oneself, another person, a group or a society in a way that ends or might probably lead to injury, death, psychological trauma, developmental disorder or loss. Abuse does not only include physical conducts, but also attitudes and behaviours that could harm children's sexual and emotional health and limit their development (Müdriye, Sühendan, and Neriman, 2016). According to Azuka and Patrick (2019) abuse has continued to be a threat to the development of the child and the country. This has consequential implications on the sustainable development of the country. Over the years, society has been persistently challenged by cases of child abuse. Although the form of abuse has changed over time, these continuous cases of abuse have implications on the sustainable development of the child and by extension the country.

The African Network for Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN) expresses child abuse as “the intentional or unintentional acts which endanger the physical health, emotional, moral and the educational welfare of children. According to Abamara (2016), child abuse or child maltreatment is physical, sexual, or psychological maltreatment or neglect of a child or children, especially by a parent or other caregivers. It may include any act or failure to act by a parent or other caregivers that results in actual or potential harm to a child, and



can occur in a child's home, or in the organization, schools or communities the child interacts. Safiyyah (2017) also asserts that child abuse is the psychological, physical or sexual abuse or exploitation of a child or group of children particularly by a parent or caretaker. However, child abuse as defined by Prasama, Yogesh, Mahesh and Shikrant (2018) is the non-accidental injury, sexual abuse, emotional abuse or trauma inflicted on a minor by a parent or other caregiver. Child abuse is a global public health concern. Children who have been abused are prone to experiencing recurrent abuse which might lead them into becoming abusers later in life. According to Al Odhayani, Watson and Watson (2013), child abuse is a common problem worldwide, and its physical and psychosocial effects are felt by the abused children, their families and communities. Al Odhayani, Watson & Watson also added that "it has been linked to changes in the victims' mental and behavioural development throughout their lives, putting them at risk of engaging in potentially dangerous behaviour in the future'.

Life experiences and family circumstances have both positive and negative impacts on a child's vulnerability or resilience in the face of maltreatment. Resilience refers to the ability of a child to cope and thrive despite being exposed to negative experiences (Al Odhayani, Watson and Watson, 2013). According to Akintayo and Adebayo (2016), child abuse as a phenomenon has been attributed to many factors such as marital problems, poverty, illiteracy, domestic violence, childhood experience, isolation, substance abuse and mental illness. Being aware of the effects child abuse has on adult functioning has potential for improving quality of life for both victims and individuals associated with victims. Mental health professionals who work with child abuse victims will be more competent in helping them develop appropriate social skills and prevent problems in future relationships (Trickett, Negriff, Ji, & Peckins, 2011).

### **Types of Child Abuse**

Abuse is generally characterized into physical, emotional, sexual, neglect and child exploitation or child labour.





**a. Physical Abuse:** Physical abuse may be seen as the inflicting of a non-accidental fleshly and physical injury on a child. This includes striking, kicking, burning, biting or any action that results in physical impairment of a child (Children’s Welfare Information Gateway, 2019). It involves employing physical power (beating, pushing, strangling and repression bruises, burns, injuries, fractures, poisoning, striking, and kicking) or any other actions that result into a physical impairment of the child in a way that harms victims or puts him/her at the peril of being harmed (Akintayo & Adebayo, 2013). According to Safiyyah (2017), physical abuse of children can be intentional or unintentional. It can also be an act of omission or commission on the part of parents, elders or caretakers. Physical abuse could lead to severe injuries, bruises, burns, incapacitation, disability or even death. This physical violence may come as a result of lack of physical affection from parents in childhood. In most cases, children are the victims of physical abuse and are at the risk of developing aggressive behaviour or substance abuse, risk of suicidal attempts is also associated with physical abuse, studies have also shown that children with history of physical abuse may meet the criteria for post-traumatic stress disorder.

**Sexual Abuse:** Sexual abuse is defined “as the employment, use of persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any child to engage in, or assist another person to engage in any sexually explicit conduct or simulation of such conduct for the purpose of producing a visual depiction of such conduct”. It is the rape, and in cases of the caretaker or interfamilial relationships, statutory rape, molestation, prostitution, or other forms of sexual exploitation of children or incest with children. As a result of the secrecy that characterizes these cases; sexual abuse is the most often under-reported form of child maltreatment. According to Corwin & Olafson (2014), sexually abused children experience emotional problems from a feeling of guilt and shame.

**Child Exploitation:** Child exploitation often referred to as child labor or child trafficking involves the use of a child in work or other activities for the advantage of others. Child exploitation is a regular process of using children to work with little or no reward and consideration for their health and safety. These children are used to do hard works in the farms



that are above their ages and some are made to hawk wares for long hours without food. Such children rarely benefit from education and will eventually drop out of school. By the time these children reach adulthood, they are physically, emotionally, morally and intellectually damaged.

**Street Hawking:** Street hawking by children is another form of abuse. Street hawking encourages sexual abuse. This may occur in three levels: exposure to obvious genital seduction, exposure to genital stimulation and witnessing adults in the act of sex. The man may lure young female hawkers by buying up all their merchandise or goods and giving them money. These girls may be shown pornographic pictures in magazines or pornographic video films (Ebigbo & Abaga, 2015).

**Child Labor:** Child labor is a prominent way of abusing children. In the poorer parts of the world, like sub-Saharan Africa, acute and widespread poverty can be seen as the main cause. If children do not work, their own survival is at stake (ILO, 2016). In the African old-fashioned society, children were a source of labor for farming. However, with the rise of industrialization and urbanization, such practice becomes dysfunctional; such practice is referred to as child labor (Ebigbo & Abaga, 2015). Child trafficking is a particularly spiteful type of child labor. It is a practice through which young people below 18 years are handed over by either or both parents or by a guardian to a third person, whether for free or with the intention of misusing the person or the work of the young person.

**Emotional Abuse:** Emotional abuse is a term that has diverse interpretations to different people and nations. The term has also been interchangeably used with such terms as psychological abuse, psychological aggression, mental abuse, emotional neglect, and psychological maltreatment. The National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information (2016) defines emotional abuse as acts or omissions by the parents or other caregivers that have caused or could cause serious behavioural, cognitive, emotional or mental disorders. Emotional abuse can be seen as an attitude, behaviour or failure to act on the part of a caregiver, which interferes with a child's mental health, social development or sense of self-worth. It is probably the least



understood, yet the most prevalent, cruelest and damaging type of abuse. It attacks the child's self-concept making the child see his/herself as unworthy, worthless and incapable. When a child is continually disgraced, shamed, terrorized or rejected the child suffers more than if he/she had been physically maltreated. The resulting effect is that most children often withdraw to themselves leading to depression and lack of concentration in school. Of all the types of human abuse, emotional abuse is recognized as a silent epidemic because its often-subtle nature goes unnoticed and untreated (Alkema, 2013). Engel (2015) contended that 'emotional abuse is like brainwashing in that it systematically wears away the victim's self-confidence, sense of self-worth, trust in their own perceptions, and self-concept. Whether it is done by constant berating and belittling, by intimidating, or under the guise of 'guidance,' 'teaching,' or 'advice,' the results are similar. Eventually, the recipient of the abuse loses all sense of self and personal value. Emotional abuse cuts to the very core of a person, creating scars that may be far deeper and more lasting than physical ones. The power imbalance involved in being the child in an emotionally abusive family relationship can make these consequences even worse.'

### **Research Methods**

The study utilized the quasi-experimental pretest-posttest design. The population of the study was 47,798 adults from two local communities (Ilishan and Irolu) in Ikenne LGA of Ogun State. A sample size of 120 (60 in experimental group and 60 in the control group) parents within the age range of 20-49 years who have children of age 3-17 were selected. Participants were exposed to a total of five (5) video messages on emotional abuse with the use of television for a period of five weeks. Instrument for data collection was a structured validated questionnaire administered to respondents pre and post media intervention. Data were analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistics, frequency counts, mean and standard deviation were the descriptive tools, while paired sample T-test was the inferential analysis tool used for determining the significant difference in the experimental and control groups' knowledge and practice-intention of emotional abuse among



parents before and after the intervention. Ethical approval for the study was obtained from Babcock University Health Research Ethics Committee (BUHREC).

## Results

Findings revealed that the exposure to media intervention increased the knowledge of emotional abuse among parents in Ikenne, Ogun State. In the experimental group, the participants at pre-intervention had no knowledge ( $0.32 \pm 0.46$ ) about child emotional abuse. At post intervention, participants in the experimental group ( $0.73 \pm 0.43$ ) had an improved knowledge of emotional abuse. Hence, the experimental group's mean scores showed that the intervention led to an increase in participants' knowledge of emotional abuse; hence, the intervention was regarded as effective. Furthermore, it was also revealed that the overall practice-intention of emotional abuse among parents in Ikenne was low at baseline. The participants in the experimental group who were later exposed to the video messages had an overall score of ( $32.43 \pm 16.97$ ), while average mean score before exposure to media intervention was ( $2.49 \pm 1.31$ ), indicating a low practice-intention of emotional abuse prevention. At post-intervention, participants in the experimental group's overall score were ( $43.75 \pm 15.32$ ) with an average mean score of ( $3.37 \pm 1.18$ ). This improvement brought the participants to having a high level of practice-intention prevention. Hence, the experimental group's mean scores showed that the intervention led to an increase in participants' intention of emotional abuse prevention; therefore, the intervention was regarded as effective.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on Knowledge, Attitude and Practice Intention of Emotional Abuse**

Constructs	Max Scale Point	Experimental Groups		Control Group	
		PRE TEST $\bar{x}(SE) \pm SD$	POST TEST $\bar{x}(SE) \pm SD$	PRE TEST $\bar{x}(SE) \pm SD$	POST TEST $\bar{x}(SE) \pm SD$
Knowledge of Emotional Abuse	15	4.78(0.21)1.61	11.00(0.22)1.72	3.30(0.20)1.58	6.05(0.27)2.05



Attitude Towards						
Emotional Abuse	60	30.43(0.51)3.98	32.75(0.64)4.94	31.8(0.60)4.63	29.67(0.53)4.13	
Practice Intention of Emotional Abuse Prevention among Parents	65	32.43(1.26)9.78	43.75(1.13)8.78	35.85(0.90)6.99	38.40(0.96)7.45	

Source: Field Survey 2021;  $\bar{x}$  = Mean; SE= Standard Error;  $\pm SD$ = Standard Deviation

Data in Table 1 indicate that participants' knowledge of child emotional abuse improved at post intervention ( $\bar{x} = 11.00$ ) compared to ( $\bar{x} = 4.78$ ) at pre-intervention; this was also the case with parents' practice-intention of emotional abuse ( $\bar{x} = 43.75$ ) compared to pre-intervention ( $\bar{x} = 32.43$ ). This suggests that the intervention was effective in terms of improving participants' knowledge of child emotional abuse and the intention to practice emotional abuse prevention. Consequently implying that video could be a helpful medium in improving participants' knowledge and practice-intention of emotional abuse prevention.

### Hypotheses testing

The Paired samples T-test was adopted for the test of hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance.

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant difference in knowledge of child emotional abuse among parents before and after exposure to media intervention.

**Table 2: Paired Samples T-Test analysis of difference in knowledge of child emotional abuse among parents before and after video intervention**

Intervention	N	Df	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean Difference	T	P	Remark
Post	60	59	11.00	1.72	6.22	24.38	<b>0.000</b>	Significant
Pre	60		4.78	1.60				
Control								
Post	60	59	6.05	2.05	2.75	10.85	<b>0.000</b>	Significant
Pre	60		3.30	1.58				

(Field Survey 2021)



Table 2 revealed that there was a significant difference in participants' knowledge of child emotional abuse before and after the media intervention for experimental group ( $t(59) = 24.38, p < 0.05$ ). The mean difference at pre and post intervention was 6.22, suggesting that at post-intervention, the knowledge of child emotional abuse among parents improved significantly. Additionally, the analysis of the control group showed that there was a difference but not as significant as that of the experimental group. This implies that the media intervention played a significant role in increasing knowledge of emotional abuse among parents for the experimental group. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the practice-intention of parents towards child emotional abuse prevention before and after exposure to media intervention.

**Table 3: Paired Samples T-Test analysis of difference in the level of practice-intention of child emotional abuse among parents before and after Video Intervention**

Intervention	N	Df	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean T	P	Remark
Post	60	59	43.75	8.78	9.26	<b>0.000</b>	Significant
Pre	60		32.43	9.78			
Control							
Pre	60	59	35.85	6.99	-3.58	<b>0.001</b>	Significant
Post	60		38.40	7.45			

(Field Survey 2021)

Table 3 indicates that there was a significant difference in participants' practice-intention of child emotional abuse prevention before and after the media intervention for experimental group ( $t(59) = 9.26, p < 0.05$ ). The mean difference at pre and post intervention was 11.32, suggesting that at post-intervention, the participants had no intention to practice child emotional abuse prevention prior to a positive improvement. The analysis of the control group also showed that there was a significant difference in the practice-intention of child abuse prevention. This



implies that the media intervention played a significant role in positively influencing parents' intention to practice child emotional abuse prevention. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected.

### **Discussion of Findings**

Findings portrayed the experimental and control participants as not knowledgeable that verbal abuse, yelling, constantly blaming a child negatively, humiliating a child in public; neglecting a child's medical, physical and educational needs are forms of emotional abuse before the media intervention. The lack of knowledge on emotional abuse before the intervention somewhat validates the assertion that emotional abuse is hardly known as a form of child abuse which may account for the prevalence of this act especially among parents, and perhaps part of the reason why a low number of emotional abuse cases are reported by the media. The findings of Nuskiewicz (2012) supports the claims of this study that media contents such as posts on social media, video messages and initiatives can help increase awareness and knowledge of emotional child abuse. Also, the findings of Corbett (2013), affirms the findings of the study that lack of knowledge on emotional abuse can be as a result of the perception that emotional abuse is a bruise to the mind and not the body. Therefore, the popular saying that "sticks and stones may break my bones but names will never hurt me" can be considered not to be true because words and actions that put a person down, affect the self-esteem and cause the victim to start seeing themselves in that light has more effect than physical abuse (Douglas, 2010). This was also seen in the result of hypotheses tested which revealed a significant difference in participants' knowledge of emotional abuse before and after exposure to video intervention for the experimental group (pre-intervention mean = 4.78; post-intervention mean= 11.00  $p < 0.05$ ). With this, it is safe to assert that the video intervention resulted in parents' high knowledge of emotional abuse indicating that the media intervention was effective.

The findings of this study also aligned with that of Munodawafa (2008) that health communication seeks to increase knowledge gain among audiences. In this study, parents are not knowledgeable about emotional



abuse as a form of child abuse and also not knowledgeable about the forms of emotional abuse at pre-intervention stage but were more knowledgeable after the intervention. The study of Charafddine, El Rafei, Azizi, Sinno, Lamiddine, Howson, Walani, Nassar and Yunis (2014) validates the usage of health intervention in this study to influence knowledge with their investigation on the effect of pre-conception health education intervention on high school students in Lebanon, which showed a 47% increase in participants' knowledge of pre-conception after the intervention. The study of Solo-Anaeto (2013) also validates the effect of social-media intervention in increasing students' knowledge of health-enhancing behaviour. According to the study of Blumenthal (2015), video was an effective tool in enhancing the knowledge of teachers. The findings of Jegede (2015) also attested to the usefulness of video intervention in passing health communication messages to selected audiences. These findings authenticate the assumption of media dependency theory that individuals depend on the media on information as long as it satisfies them.

Beyond knowledge improvement, the study as well revealed that parent have the intention not to practice child emotional abuse as seen in the overall mean score after media intervention ( $\bar{x}=43.75$ ) compared to pre-intervention ( $\bar{x}=32.43$ ). It can be assumed that the reason behind a change in parents practice intention is closely related to parent's exposure to positive attitude at the intervention stage as the inferential statistics between both variables shows a significant relationship ( $p<0.05$ ). The findings of Jabraeili (2016) are similar to the findings of this study as his study concluded that parents had a negative attitude towards child abuse and that the attitudes of parents were influenced by different factors. Although, this study found that parents attitude towards child emotional abuse changed as a result of positive media intervention; the findings of Jabraeili was influenced by level of education and attitude towards the type of child abuse.

### **Conclusion**

This research investigated the effect of media intervention on the knowledge and practice-intention of emotional abuse prevention among parents in Ikenne, Ogun state, Nigeria, and found that knowledge of emotional abuse among parents increased after exposure to the video





messages as intervention. The media intervention through the use of video messages was effective in increasing practice-intention of emotional abuse prevention among parents. This implies that parents had a high intention to prevent the practices of emotional abuse. This is as a result of the significant difference in parents' level of intention not to practice emotional abuse after the exposure to video messages. Consequently, it is concluded that lack of knowledge and understanding to what constitutes emotional abuse is based on dearth of information among participants.

### **Recommendation**

As a result of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are offered: Since lack of knowledge is the major reason why emotional abuse is practiced, it is recommended that government and non-governmental organizations should create and establish educational and inspiring campaigns through the use of videos that will involve parents and also educate them on the manifestations and negative effect of emotional abuse. Media practitioners should also help by paying attention to this form of child abuse and create programmes that will be used to educate the public at large especially parents and guardians on how to treat their children. This will help members of the public to be fully aware and be more knowledgeable about emotional abuse as forms of child abuse and its effect on the mental health of children.

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