

# DIMENSIONS OF EMOTIONAL MALTREATMENT OF SCHOOL ADOLSCENTS AT HOME: IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNSELLING PRACTICE

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# Introduction

- Human beings at birth are naturally bequeathed to express their pleasant and unpleasant dispositions to people and life events.
- Feelings expression from psychological point of view are regarded as emotional state of an individual.
- The term 'emotion' originated from a Latin word called 'emotus' which means 'to stir up'.
- It is a feeling or affect that involves physiological arousal, behavioural expressions and sometimes conscious experience (Santrock, 2005) .

## Emotional Expression and Significant Others

- Individual emotional state is a function of what operates in the environment and relationship with significant others in his /her life.
- Parents/caregivers have greater tendency to influence his/her emotional status from childhood period of life.
- parents exert so much emotional power over their children and this has significantly contributed to emotional turmoil and abused been experienced by adolescents.

- May (2010) observes that:

*“All parents will have to discipline their children from time to time. However, there are times when parents loses control, or simply have no respect for a child, or may be ignorant or uncaring of the boundaries*

*when bringing up a child. This is when simple parenting crosses the line and becomes emotional abuse”*

## **Emotional Abuse Definition and Effects**

- Emotional abuse is synonymous with terms like psychological abuse, emotional maltreatment, and psychological aggression.
- Emotional abuse is a pattern of behavior that attacks a child's emotional development and sense of worth.
- Axmaher (2004) posits that emotional abuse is the cruelest and most destructive of all abuse in that it is failure to create emotional fortune thereby promoting personality maladjustment.

- Emotional abuse is also any act on the part of a parent or caregiver that has potential for or has actually caused serious, emotional, cognitive, mental or behavior disorder (Isangedighi, 2004).
- Consequences of emotional maltreatment includes:
  - ✓ the impact of emotional abuse may even be more devastating than physical assault and have much longer-term effects.
  - ✓ most of these emotional behaviours assault are not crimes and as such very difficult to obtain protection or get others to take them serious when reported

- ✓ emotional abuse is more strongly predictive of subsequent impairments in children development.
- ✓ emotional abuse accompanies other forms of abuse and can as well occurs on its own.
- ✓ rejection can dramatically reduce IQ in students and their ability to reason while increasing aggression.
- ✓ impair children's psychological development in the areas of intelligence, memory, recognition, perception, attention, imagination and moral development.

# Prevalence of Emotional Maltreatment

- 36% of women in Canada had experienced emotional abuse while growing up.
- emotional abuse was the least reported case of child abuse form in USA:  
21% (physical abuse); 11% (sexual abuse); 49% ((neglect); 3% for emotional abuse and 16% for other forms of child maltreatment.
- emotional abuse tops the list of other abuses in Okene, Kogi State, Nigeria for it ranges between 68.0 to 92.2%.



- students who are emotionally abused at home in Afijio, Oyo State, Nigeria experienced the following emotional bashing from parents in order of occurrence:
  - ❖ raining curses or abusing them at the slightest mistakes as the most occurring emotional abuse at home.
  - ❖ inability of parents to see anything good in whatever they do; and
  - ❖ humiliation in the presence of others.

# Dimensions of Emotional Maltreatment

- rejecting,
- isolating,
- ignoring,
- corrupting,
- exploiting,
- terrorizing
- degrading

## Statement of the Problem

- Existing diagnostic tools of emotional abuse are inadequate because they failed to take into cognizance diverse dimensions of emotional abuse.
- Quite a number of people do not know whether they have been maltreated psychologically before or could abuse or have being abusing their wards emotionally not to talk of being aware that there are different forms of emotional abuse.
- research studies over concentrated on children and couples and gave inadequate attention to adolescent emotional status.

# Objectives of the Study

- identifying different dimensions of emotional abuse at home;
- develop measuring instrument for them;
- determine frequency of occurrence in adolescent in schools; and
- expose the influence of emotional maltreatment of adolescents on gender and type of family bases.

## Significance of the Study

- Help parents, adolescents and teachers recognize dimensions of emotional maltreatment at home and schools and their influence on adolescent developmental processes.
- knowledge of emotional maltreatment dimensions would give direction to prevention and treatment plans.

# Research Question

- What dimension of emotional maltreatment is most frequently used by parents at home?
- What dimension of emotional maltreatment is the least frequently used by parents at home?

## Research Hypothesis

- Male and female adolescents will not significantly differ in their experience of emotional maltreatment at home?
- Adolescents from monogamy and polygamy will not significantly differ in their experience of emotional maltreatment at home?

# Methodology

- Descriptive survey designed was employed .
- The sample consisted of 480 (215 males and 265 females) purposively selected senior secondary school students from 15 private schools in Ota, Nigeria.
- The measuring instrument used for data collection was 'Questionnaire on Seven Dimensions of Emotional Maltreatment at Home' (QSDEMH).
- The split-half reliability of the instrument yielded a Pearson Moment Coefficient Correlation of .84.

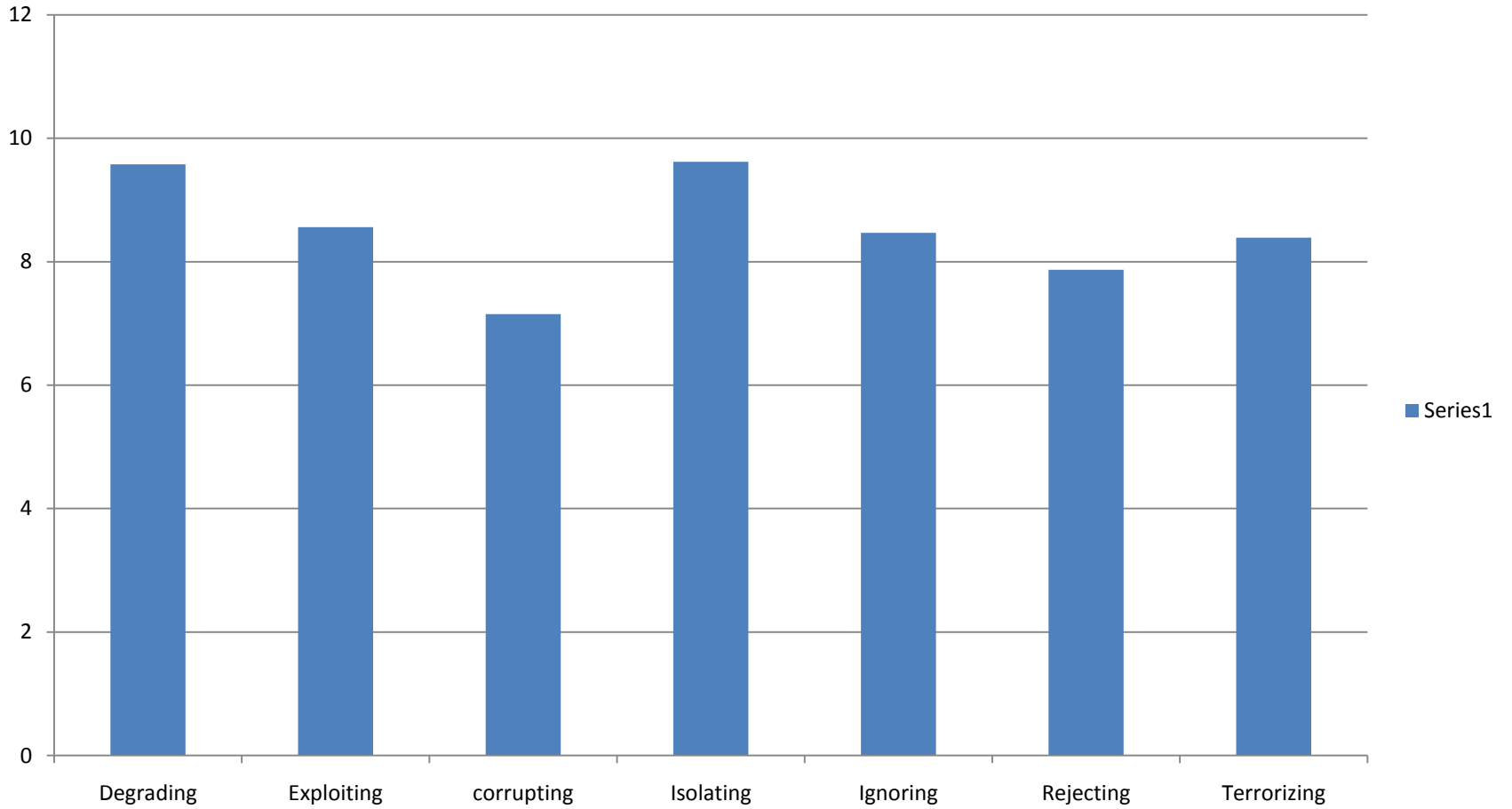


- The researcher with the assistance of ten research assistants administered and collected the copies of the questionnaire from the participants after due permission of the head of schools.
- The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean, standard deviation and rank-order for the two research questions and t-test statistic for the two null hypotheses.

# Findings

S/N	Dimension of EM	Mean	SD	Rank-Order
1	Degrading	9.58	2.97	2nd
2	Exploiting	8.56	1.99	3rd
3	Corrupting	7.15	.961	7th
4	Isolating	9.62	2.57	1st
5	Ignoring	8.47	2.11	4th
6	Rejecting	7.86	1.64	6th
7	Terrorizing	8.39	1.97	5th

# Findings



- ✓ Adolescents suffered the seven forms of emotional maltreatment.
- ✓ The most frequently employed was isolating followed by degrading, exploiting, ignoring, terrorizing, and corrupting.
- ✓ parents emotionally maltreated males than females.
- ✓ Male and female adolescents are not significantly different in their experience of emotional maltreatment at home.

- ✓ Adolescents from monogamy homes differed significantly from those from polygamous home in their experience of emotional maltreatment at home.
- ✓ adolescents from polygamous family type experienced more emotional maltreatment than their counterpart from monogamous type.

# Implications for counselling Profession

- counsellors to investigate factors culminating into these findings and develop a practicable remediating measure.
- There is the need to organize seminars and workshops that will expose parents to the psychology of adolescent with a view to update their knowledge and correct misgivings and misconceptions about adolescents' overt and covert behaviours.
- Counsellors to educate adolescents on what the phase of life entails and should expose them to adjustment strategies.

## References

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*Thanks for Listening*

*and*

*God Bless*