

## Prevalence and Public Perception on Causes of Paedophilia in Osun State Nigeria

S. A. Oluwatosin

Mrs Oluwaseun Tope Akinbo

### ABSTRACT

This study assessed the prevalence and the predisposing factors on paedophilic occurrence and, furthermore examines the public perception on ways of preventing it. The study adopted the survey research design. The sample comprised of 1200 respondents which includes, teachers in both private and public schools, church members, mosque members, civil servants and traders/artisans adults between the ages of 18 years and above, both educated and uneducated. Three senatorial district were selected from the state, and from each of the senatorial district one Local Government Areas (LGAs) was selected using simple random sampling technique making a total of three LGAs. From each of the LGAs 400 adults were selected between the ages of 18 years and above. Ask instrument, Questionnaire on paedophilic occurrence (QPO) was used to collect information from the respondents it was divided into three sections and titled prevalence of paedophilia occurrence (PPO). Predisposing factors paedophilic occurrence (PPPF). Perceived measures of preventing paedophilia (PMPP). Data collected were analyzed using frequency counts, simple percentages and chi-square. The results showed that the prevalence of paedophilic occurrence in the respondents environment is 24.7% and knowledge of paedophilia occurrence is also low (27.11): Factors that influence paedophilia occurrence include, social media, family background, loneliness, pornography, sexually deprived partner, sexually abused, not reporting of offenders, low self-esteem, depression, health problem and social economic factor, these factors are arranged in order of influence. There was significant influence of some of the predisposing factors (social, media, pornography, sexually deprived, sexually abused No reporting of offender, family background) on the occurrence of paedophilia. The study concluded that since the knowledge of paedophilia occurrence is low in the respondent Environment. The public needs to be educated on what paedophilia is and what to be done when such occurs, and also the need for reporting when such occurs.

**Keywords:** Perception, Prevalence, Paedophilia

### INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade we have become increasingly aware of the extent and magnitude of the sexual victimization of children in our society and considerable efforts have been made to offer help and assistance to these victims. However, it is of great concern when this abuse is committed by adult towards children. This is considered to be paedophilia a sexual aberration that requires attention.

Paedophilia is a paraphilia that involves an abnormal social interest in children. A paraphilia is a disorder that is characterized by recurrent intense sexual urges and sexually arousing fantasies generally involving; nonhuman objects; the suffering or humiliation of oneself or ones partner (not merely simulated); or animals, children, or other non-consenting persons. Paedophilia is also a psychosexual disorder in which the fantasy or actual act of engaging in sexual activity with prepubertal children is preferred or exclusive means of achieving sexual

excitement and gratification. It may be directed toward children of the same sex or children of the opposite sex. Some pedophiles are attracted to both boys and girls. Some are attracted only to children, while others are attracted to adults as well as to children.

The case of sexual disorders all over the world including Nigeria is rapidly increasing. There are various forms of sexual disorders. There are also various ways of manifesting sexual disorders this includes; exhibitionism (recurrent exposure of one's genitals to an unsuspecting stranger), fetishism (recurrent and intense sexually arousing fantasies, urges, or behaviours involving the use of non-living objects such as shoes or undergarments), frotteurism (recurrent and intense sexually arousing fantasies urges, or behaviours involving the act of being humiliated, beaten, bound, or made to suffer), sexual sadism (recurrent and intense sexually arousing fantasies, urges, or behaviours involving acts in which the psychological or physical suffering of the victim is sexually exciting to the person) and voyeurism (recurrent and intense sexually arousing fantasies, urges, or behaviours involving the observation of an unsuspecting person who is naked, getting undressed, or engaging in sexual activity), paedophilia (recurrent sexual urges towards and fantasies about prepubescent children that have either been acted upon or which cause the person with attraction distress or interpersonal difficulty). These are otherwise known as paraphilia (Brown & Berlow, 2007).

Paedophilic behaviour usually begins during adolescence or early adulthood. Pedophiles are said to groom children. It is rare for their contact to be forced upon a child. Rather they may begin with flattery and gifts or take the child on date (outing), while proceeding from intimate conversation to sexual talk and sexual touch, gradually getting the child accustomed to each new step. Children who are lonely, depressed, or angry with their parents are most vulnerable to these special attentions.

Many people believe that children are sexually abused by a stranger or known sex offenders. The reality is that strangers seem to account for small proportion of the abuse. The actual profile of the offender is someone who may be a teenager, and for boys, more likely to be female than another male. Children may know their abuser well in 9-% of the cases-they are parents, family members, neighbors, clergy, coaches, and teachers. Family friends and relatives are the primary offenders family friends are more likely to offend with boys and relatives to offend with girls. One in seven girls is abused by a father, step father, or mother's boyfriend, although only 3% boys are abused by people in these categories. One-quarter of the victims, 12 through 17 are family members only 7% of offenders of juveniles are strangers to their victims. (stop it now! Child abuse; fact about abuse and those who commit it. MA; stop it now! 1998).

A worrisome issue in recent time is the rapidly increasing rate of reported cases of paedophilia in Nigeria. It has almost become a permanent feature in our daily news reports as one get to hear of one case or the other with a worrisome frequency. In February 2014, a man in Osun State was reported arrested by the police and charged based on the report that he had forcefully had intercourse with a toddler. The 27 year old man was said to have raped the two year old girl at his residence in the Ifelodun Local Government area of Osun State.

However, according to media, paedophilia continues to increase and the perpetrators escapes without justice, while those caught are arrested and have no proper documentation about the justice done. In spite of this the parent of the abused child tend to keep quiet probably to save their abused child from shame and stigmatization causing the victim to suffer injustice and thereby increasing the spread of paedophilia. Paedophilia has several negative effects on the abused victims such as fear, posttraumatic stress disorder, behaviour problem, depression and low self-esteem. People's perception of Paedophilia and its consequences could distance its

continue perpetration. This is to say that the continual engagement and practice of this sexual aberration may depend on how people view it or perceive the implication. It is therefore necessary to investigate the perception of the public on the behaviour. In light of this, this study investigates the perception of the public to paedophilia with a view to determining its acceptance or otherwise, prevalence, predisposing factors and its perceived preventive measures. Therefore the main objective of the study is to investigate the public perception on the prevalence and causes of paedophilia. Specifically the study is to: determine the prevalence of paedophilic occurrence; investigate the public perception on the predisposing factors on paedophilic occurrence; and examine the public perception on ways of preventing paedophilic occurrence.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions are relevant to this study:

1. What is the prevalence of paedophilic activities?
2. What are the perceived predisposing factors of paedophilia?
3. What are the perceived preventive measure of paedophilia?

### **METHODOLOGY**

One self-designed instrument was used for the study to measure the Public Perception on the Prevalence and Causes of Paedophilia in Osun State. This instrument comprise of five sections comprising a total of 50 items of yes or no type scale to measure the prevalence or causes of paedophilia and the public perception on the ways of preventing paedophilia. The reliability value for the instrument was 0.702 coefficient which was significant at 0.05 level. With this high reliability value, the instrument was then considered reliable and valid for administration.

### **Participants**

A sample of 1184 residents of Osun State which includes Teachers (both private and public schools), church members, mosque members, civil servants, and traders/artisans were selected for the study. The sample for the study was selected using multi-stage sampling technique. The three senatorial district in Osun State were used. From each senatorial district, one Local Government Areas (LGAs) was selected using simple random sampling technique. In each of the local government areas used, 400 adults were selected between the ages of 18years and above. In each of the Local Government Area (LGAs) 100 Questionnaires were given to each of the groups selected for the study.

### **Data Collection**

The researcher visited the selected schools to administer the research instruments. In each of the schools, the researcher discusses with the Principal of the selected schools the essence of the research to sensitize him or her on the importance of the research and also to solicit for support and assistance in the administration of the instruments. In each of the school 15 teachers were randomly selected. The selected teachers responded on the public perception and the prevalence/ causes of paedophilia. One thousand two hundred copies of questionnaire were administered; where 400 copies were administered in each of the senatorial district selected for the study. 1184 copies of the questionnaire were retrieved. Though out of one 1200 copies of questionnaire, eight copies were rejected because they were not properly filled. Eight copies were not even returned by the respondents. Only 1184 copies were considered useful. The data were analysed using appropriate descriptive and inferential statistics.

Table 1 below shows the percentage distribution of respondents by the socio-demographic characteristics. About 64.6 percent of the respondents were female while Males were 35.4 percent. Considering their age, 48.4 percent were between age group 18-30 percent; those that

were between age group 31-40 (29.4%) were more than those between age group 41-50. About 7 percent respondents indicated they were between age group 51-60 while about 4 percent respondents claimed to be above 60 years. According to table 1, one third (33.7%) of the sampled population were civil servants, 21.3 percent were teacher while traders (28.6%) among them were more than the artisans (16.4%). An examination of religion distribution, 51.0 percent indicated they were Muslims, 48.4 percent Christians and about 1 percent respondents were Traitionalists.

## RESULTS

What is the prevalence of paedophilic activities?

To answer the research question one, the frequency and percentage were comouted in order to find out the prevalence of paedophilic activities in Osun State. The result is as presented in table 2.

<b>Knowledge of any paedophilic occurrence</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	292	24.7
No	892	75.3
Total	1184	100

Table 2 shows the prevalence rate of paedophilic occurrence in respondents' environment. The rate of paedophilic occurrence is 24.7 percent. This implies that the occurrence is low in the sampled population environment.

Research Question 2: What are the perceived predisposing factors of paedophilia? To answer the research question two, the frequency was computed in order to find out the prevalence of paedophilic activities in Osun State. The result is as presented in table 3.

**Table 3: Order of Influence of Predisposing factors on Paedophilic Occurrence**

<b>Factors associated with the occurrence of paedophilia in society</b>	<b>Rate</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Social Media	618	1 <sup>st</sup>
Family Background	578	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Loneliness	568	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Pornography	539	4 <sup>th</sup>
Sexually deprive partner	536	5 <sup>th</sup>
Sexual abused	525	6 <sup>th</sup>
Not reporting of offenders	523	7 <sup>th</sup>
Low Self esteem	518	8 <sup>th</sup>
Depression	478	9 <sup>th</sup>
Health Problem	456	10 <sup>th</sup>
Health Problem	456	10 <sup>th</sup>
Socio-economic Status	408	11 <sup>th</sup>

Table 3 shows the order of influence of these predisposing factors of pedophiic occurrence. Most influenced factor among the factors considered according to the table 2 was social media which was ranked first; followed by the contribution of family background, ranked second. The

third and fourth were loneliness and watching of pornography respectively, while the least contributing factor was perpetrator's socio-economic status which was ranked 11<sup>th</sup>.

**Table 4: Perceived Measures in Preventing Paedophilia**

<b>Perceived measure in preventing paedophilia</b>	<b>Frequency n-1, 184</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Education children about paedophilia</b>	805	68.0
Yes	805	68.0
No	379	32.0
<b>Children stay in lonely with adults (families, neighbours or friends)</b>		
Yes	510	43.1
No	674	56.9
<b>Monitor children through social media (text, email, phone call)</b>		
Yes	794	67.1
No	389	32.9
<b>Family or neighbor tells children jokes with words or topics which are offensive and let them get away</b>		
Yes	486	41.0
No	698	59.0
<b>Adults introduce child to unacceptable behavior like speeding, smoking or drinking</b>		
Yes	319	26.9
No	865	73.1
<b>Allow child to use correct words for their private part</b>		
Yes	694	58.6
No	490	41.4
<b>Overreact to the outcry of your child when they tell you about an abuse</b>		
Yes	680	57.4
No	504	42.6
<b>Subject child to harsh discipline</b>		
Yes	641	54.1
No	543	45.9
<b>Take to Child abuse pediatrician or children advocacy centre if molested or abused</b>		
Yes	757	63.9
No	427	36.1

Table 4 above presents the distribution of respondents by perceived measures or precautions taken in preventing paedophilia in society. Among the sampled populations, 68 percent of the respondents claimed that to safeguard their children, they engaged in educating them about paedophilia, while 32 percent of respondents reported they do not. More than half of the respondents do not allow their children to stay in a lonely place with adults whether families, neighbours or friends; contrarily others (43.1%) lived their children with adults in lonely places.

However, as measure to percent paedophilic occurrence, high percentage of the respondents (67.1%) claimed that they monitor their children through social media (text, email and phone call); also 59 percent respondent asserts that they never allow their families or neighbor to tells their children off colour jokes and let them get away with it. Majority of the respondents (73.1%) disclosed that they don't allow adults to introduce unacceptable behavior that can influence their children such as smoking or drinking. About 59 percent respondents reported that as part of precaution to preventing paedophilia their children must use correct words for their private part. However, slightly more than half of the total respondents overreact to the outcry of their children when heard of any abuse and 54.1 percent respondents subjects their child to harsh discipline. Large percentage respondents claimed that children should be taken to child abuse pediatrician or children advocacy center in case they are molested or abused.

### **DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS**

The study investigated the public perception on the prevalence and causes of paedophilia in Osun State. The result revealed that the rate of paedophilia occurrence in the respondent's environment is know in the environment. This figure of prevalence is however higher in comparison with other studies by Abel and Harlow (2007) where lesser percentage reported been attracted to children.

Furthermore, the result revealed that majority of the respondents had low knowledge on paedophilic occurrence which could be due to the fact that the respondents may truly not be aware and also it could be because the perpetrators commit the crime secretly and some people might not be willing to report the offenders due to stigmatization or the shame it will bring to their family and to the abused child. . The prevention and treatment of child sexual abuse and exploitation cannot be accomplished through legal provisions alone. The legal process is just one tool for the protection of children. An understanding of problem paragnacy to combating the sexual exploitation of children.

Good public knowledge and awareness is likely to enhance reporting of occurrences and perpetrators. The since around child abuse and exploitation can only be broken when cases of abuse are reported, child victims are supported revealed that abuse perpetrators in Nigeria were majority sexual perpatrators in Nigeria were majorly sexual partners (28%) followed by friends (25.8), strangers (24.1%), family (8.7%). (Yahaya et al. 2012), (Survey of 2008). Abuse most often occurred at the perpetrator's resident (29.2%).

However, the low knowledge of the respondents could be due to the fact that the in this study might truly not be aware and also it could be because the perpetrators commit the crime secretly and some people might not be willing to report the offenders due to stigmatization or the shame it will bring to their family and to the abused child. It could also be due to the fact that the media have not done a proper documentation of the occurrences of the paedophilic activities. Furthermore, from the findings it was observed that the factors that are perceived to affect the occurrence of paedophilia activities are rated from the highest to the least starting with social media, family background, loneliness, pornography, sexually deprive partners, sexually abused, not reporting of offenders, low self-esteem, depression, health problem and socio-economic status.

The present study confirmed that paedophilic occurrence is associated with accumulation risk factors in families and environment where children have been exposed to violence. The leading risk factors as established by this study include exposure to social media, family background, loneliness, pornography and sexual deprive partner. This was consistent with findings in the study of child sexual abuse by La Fontaine (1990) that backgrounds of perpetrators play a

major role. Howitt (1995) in his study "Faedophiles and sexual offences against children" maintained that disorganized family system was among the contributing factors of paedophilic occurrence. Other study (Wilson & Cox, 1983) also mentioned unemployment rate in the society. Contrarily, findings further indicated that although it seems unlikely that paedophilia is solely a working-class phenomenon, it may be that non-working class offenders are more adept at silencing victims of paedophilia (La Fontaine, 1990). The majority of pedophiles arrested and prosecuted are from working-class backgrounds, which contributes to the skewed perception and comprehension of paedophilia in modern society. As established in the study there is significant relationship between loneliness, social media, pornography, low self esteem and paedophilia occurrence; other studies put it that pedophiles result from socially and psychologically abnormality (Silverman & Wilson, 2002; Howitt, 1995; La Fontaine, 1990).

Meanwhile, the perceived measures in preventing the occurrences of paedophilia in the society includes educating the public and also children about the occurrences, which must include what to be done to the abused child and the perpetrators of paedophilia. Trusted and caring family friends provide emotional support to parents by offering encouragement and assistance in facing the daily challenges of raising a family. Children with the ability to positively interact with others, self-regulate their behaviors, and communicate their feelings have relationships that are more positive with family, friends, and peers. Children without these competencies may be at greater risk for abuse, community event which through this, you will get to know your neighbors while helping to keep your neighborhood and children safe. Parents who are emotionally resilient have a positive attitude, creatively problem solve, effectively address challenges, and are less likely to direct anger and frustration at their children. And most importantly, in case of abuse, take to child advocacy center or counseling unit.

### CONCLUSION

The study concluded that the level of awareness of paedophilia among the people of Osun State is very low. This is to say that the prevalence of paedophilia occurrence is also very low.

However, the low level of awareness of the respondent does not affect their attitude towards offender of paedophilia by their willingness to report offenders and take the abused child to the hospital as well as to see counsellor for rehabilitation.

From the findings and conclusion of this study, these recommendations are given:

- Intervention programme should be mounted for children to prevent them from being sexually abused.
- Adolescents who have experienced childhood sexual abuse should be identified and counseled to prevent future occurrences.
- Sexual abuse Prevention programmes for adolescent girls should be carried out.
- the government should explore the media and religious organizations to create awareness on existences of paedophilia.
- Education policy makers and school administration should make effort in educating children on predisposing factors of paedophilia perpetrations and perpetrators.

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