



Teachers' Perceptions and Attitudes toward Child Abuse of Secondary School in Najaf City

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Abstract

Introduction: Child abuse, also known as child maltreatment, is a serious problem in the contemporary society around the world. Furthermore, abuse of students by teachers in schools is now a social problem locally and globally. Child abuse includes all types of (emotional psychological abuse, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation), resulting in a real or possible hurt to the development of the child, wellbeing, dignity or survival in the framework of association with responsibility, power or trust.

Methodology: A descriptive, cross-sectional study design was carried out, so as to attain the stated objectives, during the period from 8th October 2017 to 13th September 2018. study aimed to assess the level of teachers' perception and attitudes toward child abuse in Secondary schools, as well as, To find out the relationship between the level of teachers' perceptions and attitudes toward child abuse in secondary schools and their socio-demographic characteristics. Therefore, by using SPSS a simple random sample of thirty public and private secondary schools were selected, and then 400 secondary school teachers were selected randomly.

Results: The result showed that 236 (59%) of participants had total high perceptions, 156 (39%) of participants had medium perceptions and only 8 (2%) of participant teachers had low perceptions. With regard to teachers' attitudes towards child abuse, the results showed that 362 (90.5%) of the teachers commonly had a positive attitude toward child abuse.

Conclusions: The final conclusion and summary of the study showed satisfactory perception about child abuse in spite of teacher retaining a high perceptions about child abuse, thus the establishment of mandatory training sessions for teachers at the beginning of each academic year is intensely recommended. It is worth mentioning, the teachers' had positive attitudes towards child abuse, it can be improved through programs and educational sessions or at least through health bulletins.

Key Index: Perception, Attitudes, Secondary School Teachers, Child Abuse

I. INTRODUCTION:

Child abuse, also known as child maltreatment, is a serious problem in the contemporary society around the world. Furthermore, abuse of students by teachers in schools is now a social problem locally and global⁽¹⁾. World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 73 million boys and 150 million girls under 18 years have been subjected to forced sexual intercourse or other types of abuse⁽²⁾. Child abuse includes all types of (emotional psychological abuse, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation), resulting in a real or possible hurt to the development of the child, wellbeing, dignity or survival in the framework of association with responsibility, power or trust⁽³⁾. Each child has a right to be protected from harm and to sense secure in an educational environment. Children cannot learn if they are frightened about being abused or being the victims of violence. Therefore all schools should have planned procedures for children welfare and protection from abuse. This should also include procedures to be followed if a teacher or another member of staff is accused of abuse⁽⁴⁾. Truly, the legal guidelines and the attitudes of the international locations concerning child abuse and forget display variances. In line with the remaining 10 years of legal guidelines of USA, bodily abuse is guilt. There are welfare institutions for kids in Australia, England and Canada. These establishments defend the child as long as an abuse scenario is defined with the aid of the child or denounced by every other man or woman⁽⁵⁾. Perception refers to the act of perceiving or the capacity to understand, mental draw close of gadgets, characteristics by the senses; cognizance; comprehension; insight and instinct of the faculty for those information,

knowledge obtained via perceiving a particular concept, concept, and influence by expectancies, wishes, unconscious thoughts, values, and conflicts⁽⁴⁾. School personnel, particularly educators, and school psychologists are a first line of defense in protecting children from abuse. Teachers play a critical function in the reporting and discovery of child abuse. The relationship established between teachers and their students can facilitate the identification of child abuse⁽⁶⁾. Schools ought to take a major responsibility for those parents, who are psychologically insufficient in a few manners and abuse their children. Possibly, if teachers have been supported and properly guided to become aware of the specific social and mental traits of these baby abusers, they could predict and defend children who could be at threat and take measures to make certain their safety⁽⁷⁾. In addition, instructors are in a function to observe children on a day by day foundation and compare behavior with peer norms and/or beyond conduct. While School professionals are in a unique point to recognize and report child abuse, much of the current literature indicates that school personnel, particularly educators, seriously underreport suspected numbers of child maltreatment⁽⁸⁾. Therefore, this study aims at investigating the perception, attitude, and performance of teachers regarding child abuse among group of Iraqi secondary school teachers' in Najaf City.

II. METHADODOLOGY:

By using a descriptive design, a cross-sectional study was carried out with analytic utility. A self-administered questionnaire composed of three parts was used, the first part included inquiry regarding socio-demographic

characteristic of participants, and the second part included questions concerning teachers' perceptions about child abuse which was (26 questions), while the last part included questions regarding teachers' attitude toward child abuse (15 questions).

Sample Size and Sampling Technique: Sample size was calculated according to the power analysis method cross-sectional studies was used ⁽⁹⁾⁽¹⁰⁾. A total of 30 secondary schools were randomly selected from the total number of secondary schools in Najaf city. The teachers at the level of each school were selected by simple random sampling

technique, 420 secondary school teachers were selected and provided with a self-administered questionnaire. The data collected from 8th March 2018 to 31st May 2018. Finally, only (400) questionnaires were acceptable for analysis due to missing or incomplete data.

Statistical Analysis: The data of the present study were analyzed through the use of statistical package of social sciences (SPSS) version 19. A descriptive statistical data analysis approach used to describe the study variables: Frequencies and Percentages.

III. RESULTS:

Table 4.1: Distribution of Sample according to their socio-demographic Characteristics:

Demographic Data	Rating And Intervals	Frequency	Percent
Age / years	20-29	30	7.5
	30- 39	161	40.3
	40- 49	138	34.5
	50- 59	71	17.8
	Total	400	100.0
Gender	Male	133	33.3
	Female	267	66.8
	Total	400	100.0
Levels Of Education	Bachelor	392	98.0
	Master	8	2.0
	Total	400	100.0
Administrative Position	Teacher	346	86.5
	Administrative Assist.	27	6.8
	Director	27	6.8
	Total	400	100.0
Years Of Experience	Less Than 1	18	4.5
	1-5	50	12.5
	6-10	57	14.3
	11-15	100	25.0
	16-20	57	14.3
	More Than 20	118	29.5
	Total	400	100.0
Information	Yes	378	94.5
	No	22	5.5
	Total	400	100.0
Reference	No	22	5.5
	Books	42	10.5
	TV	132	33.0
	Social Media	143	35.8
	Discussion	32	8.0
	Workshops	15	3.8
	Symposiums	14	3.5
	Total	400	100.0
School Type	Private	49	12.3
	Governmental	351	87.8
	Total	400	100.0
Monthly Income	Sufficient	18	4.5
	Sufficient To Some Extent	114	28.5
	Insufficient	268	67.0
	Total	400	100.0
Marital Status	Married	312	78.0
	Single	58	14.5
	Widowed	14	3.5
	Divorced	9	2.3
	Separate	7	1.8
	Total	400	100.0
Having Children	Yes	331	82.8
	No	69	17.3
	Total	400	100.0

Table 4.2: Level of teachers' perception according type to the child abuse:

Studied Domains	Levels	Frequency	Percent
Psychological Abuse	Low	40	10.0
	Medium	111	27.8
	High	249	62.3
	Total	400	100.0
Neglect	Low	24	6.0
	Medium	82	20.5
	High	294	73.5
	Total	400	100.0
Sexual Abuse	Low	15	3.8
	Medium	120	30.0
	High	265	66.3
	Total	400	100.0
Physical Abuse	Low	2	.5
	Medium	28	7.0
	High	370	92.5
	Total	400	100.0

Mean of scores (2), high (mean 2.34 and more), medium (mean 1.67-2.33), low (mean 1-1.66).

Table 4.3: Overall level of teachers' perceptions according type to the child abuse:

Main Domain	Levels	Frequency	Percent
Overall Teachers' Perception	Low	8	2.0
	Medium	156	39.0
	High	236	59.0
	Total	400	100.0

Mean of scores (2), high (mean 2.34 and more), medium (mean 1.67-2.33), low (mean 1-1.66)

Table 4.4: Overall level of teachers' attitudes:

Main Domain	Levels	Frequency	Percent
Teachers' Attitude	Negative Attitude	38	9.5
	Positive Attitude	362	90.5
	Total	400	100.0

Mean of scores (5), positive attitude (mean 3 and more), negative attitude (mean less than 3)

Table 4.5: Mean difference (ANOVA) between teachers' perception and their age and years of experience:

Demographic data	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	P-value
Age / years	20-29	30	2.5449	.26787	5.323	.001 HS
	30- 39	161	2.3840	.32686		
	40- 49	138	2.3658	.29580		
	50- 59	71	2.2707	.37429		
	Total	400	2.3697	.32683		
Years Of Experience	Less Than 1	18	2.5148	.25597	3.133	.009 HS
	1-5	50	2.4766	.31149		
	6-10	57	2.3620	.33393		
	11-15	100	2.3815	.32064		
	16-20	57	2.3719	.28162		
	More Than 20	118	2.2948	.34910		
Total	400	2.3697	.32683			

Note// when the mean increased that mean the teachers perception going to high perception.

This table (4.5) indicates that teachers who are with the age ranging (20-29) years and who have an experience less than one year show a high level of perception toward child abuse.

Table 4.6: Mean difference (T-TEST) between teachers' perception and their gender and school types:

Demographic data	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	d.f.	p-value
Gender	Male	133	2.3739	.36306	.183	398	.855
	Female	267	2.3675	.30790			NS
School type	Private	49	2.4456	.30830	1.740	398	.083
	Governmental	351	2.3591	.32836			NS

This table (4.6) indicates that there is no relationship between the teachers' perceptions toward child abuse and their gender and school type.

Table 4.7: Relationship between teachers' attitude and their demographic data:

Demographic Data	Chi-Square Value	D.F.	P-Value
Age/ Years	6.335	3	.096 NS
Gender	9.168	1	.002 HS
Levels Of Education	0.857	1	.355 NS
Administrative Position	1.086	2	.581 NS
Years Of Experience	7.070	5	.216 NS
Information	0.463	1	.496 NS
Reference	3.240	6	.778 NS
School Type	0.741	1	.389 NS
Monthly Income	1.171	2	.557 NS
Marital Status	2.950	4	.566 NS
Having A children	0.040	1	.841 NS

This table (4.7) shows that there is a high significant relationship between the teachers' attitudes toward child abuse and their gender, while there is no relationship between the teachers' attitudes toward child abuse and the other demographic data of teachers.

Table 4.8: Mean difference (T-TEST) between teachers' attitude and their gender

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	d.f.	p-value
Male	133	3.36	0.625	2.612	398	0.009
Female	267	3.508	0.430			HS

Note// when the mean increased that mean the teachers attitude going to positive.

IV. DISCUSSION:

5.1: Discussion of Socio-Demographic Data of the study sample:

According to (Table 4.1) the present study included a group of (400) Iraqi secondary school teachers. The age of most of them were ranging from (30-39) years old at percent (40.3%). This result can be interpreted by differences in the sampling technique because the samples were taken randomly during the current study which sometimes can be biased. Likewise, a study done in (2017) by Hynniewta, Jose and Anjali, found that that the majority of participants are with the age ranging below 40 years of the study sample⁽¹¹⁾. Moreover, This finding is inconsistent to a study done by Sunil Kumar et al in 2013, who reported that the majority of participants were above 40 years of age⁽¹²⁾. Regarding the gender of participants, females were the dominant gender among teachers, about more than two-thirds of them at (66.8%) percentage. Our result may come back to the fact that females are having better desire and more willing than males to work in the secondary education sector. In addition, the working time in schools is greatly appropriate for females in Iraq. This result agrees with the study done by Joseph *et al*, (2015) which found that females 261 (65.25%)⁽¹³⁾.

In the present study a high percentage of the sample (98%) has a bachelor degree and (2%) has master degree. As for the years of experience, the results show that most of teachers (29.5%) have an experience more than 20 years. This is attributed to reduction in the employment rate by

the Ministry of Education in the last years which lead to reduction of numbers of recently employed teachers.

This evidence can be supported by the results of an Iraqi study done by Al-Tameemi in Najaf City which found that the most of the sample have an experience more than ten years⁽¹⁴⁾.

With respect to information, the present study shows that the majority of teachers have information (94.5%), sourced from social media with the highest percent about (35.8%). This result can be interpreted to the spread of modern technology. Also, people are widely interested in using the social networking applications than reading books and watching T.V. Similar to the result of the study done by⁽¹⁵⁾, from Saudi Arabia reported that 76.3% of teachers gained their information from social media.

Also, the result of the present study about the monthly income, most of the study participants (67%) have insufficient monthly income, more than half of the teachers included in this study have a monthly income of (700,000) to one million IQD, which is considered lower than the average family expenditure set by the Ministry of Planning in 2012 which was (1664,000) IQD, this may refer to unsatisfactory monthly income in relation to the rising of cost of living⁽¹⁶⁾.

Regarding the marital status and number of children the teachers did have, the current study found that the higher proportion of participants was for those who were married (78.0%) of participants. In addition, about 82.8% of teachers had children which reflects the nature of Iraqi

society and its traditions, especially as confirmed by statistics of the Central Organization for Statistics of the Ministry of Planning, which shows an early age for marriage in general for girls throughout Iraq and particularly in Najaf, which ranked the first among other provinces regarding the early age of marriage. This is considered higher in Iraq, comparing to other Arab societies⁽¹⁷⁾⁽¹⁸⁾.

5.2: Discussion of Level Teachers of Perception toward Type to Child Abuse-Table (4.2, 4.3):

The present study indicated that more than half of the study samples, (59%), had a high level of perception toward child abuse at all domains (psychological, neglect, sexual and physical abuse), while (39%) had a medium level of perception and (2%) had a low level of perception toward child abuse. Our results can be interpreted by the fact they got such information from sources through the means of social media on internet (e.g. Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and etc...) where almost 36% of those who had previous information about child abuse answered that they got such knowledge from television or the internet. Additionally, The phenomenon of child abuse has become widespread in many countries and the talk of a trader; so people are aware of and look forward to the subject.

This result matches with the result of a study done by⁽¹⁹⁾ who found in their study that (42.4%) had a good perception, while the other percents had a fair and a bad perception about child abuse.

This finding is supported by another study of (Mlekwa *et al.*) which found that the majority of participants retained a high knowledge about child abuse⁽²⁰⁾. Likewise, this result was consistent with another finding of study in Udupi district (2017) were the majority of school teachers (84%) had an average knowledge on child abuse⁽¹¹⁾.

5.3: Discussion of Teachers' Attitudes about Child Abuse -Table (4.4):

With regard to the teachers' attitudes toward child abuse, the current study found that the overall assessment of the participants' attitude of the majority of teachers was positive; were in (90.5%) of teachers had a positive attitude, while only 9.5% of participants' had a negative attitude, toward child abuse. This can be explained by the fact that teachers possess a high level of perceptions. Likewise, the existing study results are analogous to studies done by Saudi Arabia's researchers Mogaddam *et al.*, in 2016, which stated that the majority of teachers had a positive attitude toward child abuse regardless of the level of knowledge about child abuse found among participants⁽²¹⁾. This finding is inconsistent with an Udupi District study done by Hynniewta and others who found that the majority of participants had favorable attitudes towards the identification and reporting of child abuse⁽¹¹⁾.

In addition, a study done by⁽²²⁾ found that teachers perceiving punishment as an unacceptable method of discipline was surprising. This is because most teachers still punish their students and pupils for any misbehavior. Supporting this claim is the result of a study performed in Tanzania by Mlekwa and others who revealed positive attitudes toward preventing child sexual abuse⁽²⁰⁾.

5.4: Relationship between Teachers' Perception with their Socio-Demographic Data-Table (4.5, 4.6):

According to the present findings, there was a significant relationship between the participants' knowledge and their attitudes toward child abuse. That is, both the knowledge and attitudes have a mutual effect on each other.

Concerning the result related to the associations between teachers' perceptions and their demographic data, the present study reveals that there is a high significant relationship between the teachers' perceptions and their age; teachers are with the age ranging between (30-39) years in a significant relationship between their perceptions toward child abuse. In fact, young teachers are more understanding of their students than other teachers because firstly, their age is close to the student's age. And secondly, they treat them in a friendly way.

The study carried out by⁽²⁰⁾..indicated that there was a non-significant relationship between knowledge levels among parents with their education level, duration of stay, type of family and occupation.

Furthermore, the study done by Umezina and Elendu found no significant difference in the perception of teachers towards the use of punishment in relation to age⁽²²⁾. Concerning their gender, years of experience and school type this study disagrees with⁽²³⁾ were teachers from the private school setting showed the lowest knowledge about the prevalence of child sexual abuse in Pakistan.

5.5: Relationship between teachers' Attitudes with their Socio-Demographic Data -Table (4.7, 4.8):

With regard to the relationship between respondents' socio-demographic characteristics and their attitudes toward child abuse, the current results exposed that there was no significant relationship but with female gender (p-value 0.009). There is no relationship between the teachers' attitudes toward child abuse and the other demographic data of teachers. This result can be interpreted by the fact that females have more positive results than males. This is due to the females' natural biological composition as they are more emotional than males.

The study done by⁽²⁴⁾ found that the attitudes of people towards child abuse were predicted uniquely by their age and their income. As the age decreases and the income increases, people display negative attitudes towards child abuse.

Nevertheless, in difference to another finding of Sciences in 2015, the attitudes of people towards child abuse were predicted uniquely by their age and their income. As the age decreases and the income increases, people display negative attitudes towards child abuse⁽²⁵⁾.

V. CONCLUSIONS:

The final conclusion and summary of the study showed satisfactory perception about child abuse in spite of teacher retaining a high perceptions about child abuse, thus the establishment of mandatory training sessions for teachers at the beginning of each academic year is intensely recommended. It is worth mentioning, the teachers' had positive attitudes towards child abuse, it can be improved through programs and educational sessions or at least through health bulletins.

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