

Recognizing child abuse in the classroom from social work perspective

Sosyal hizmet perspektifinden sınıfta çocuk istismarı

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ABSTRACT

Aim: The aim of the study is to analyze whether there is a relationship between compulsory rapporteur training and experience and teachers' ability to detect and report child abuse. This study has a perspective that evaluates the experiences, knowledge and attitudes of educators in reporting child abuse from a social work perspective. **Material Methods:** It was used a quantitative methodology in the study in order to effectively and precisely identify shortcomings of the mandated reporter training given to educators. This method will allow educators to complete a survey that will analyze their attitudes, beliefs and assess their level of preparedness in reporting abuse. **Results:** According to the results obtained at the end of the study; one of the most important results is the education level and quality of professionals regarding the process of recognizing and reporting child neglect and abuse. Respondents in the surveys reported feeling frightened, terrified, and overwhelmed while reporting child abuse. **Conclusion:** The study recommended that school districts and child welfare organizations should work together to develop and provide trainings that will assist with the reporting of child abuse. Besides this mostly emphasize child abuse reporting training should be mandatory and there should be periodic assessment.

ÖZ

Amaç: Çalışmanın amacı zorunlu raporçülük eğitimi ve deneyim ile öğretmenlerin çocuk istismarını tesbit edebilme ve ihbar etmeleri arasında bir ilişki olup olmadığını analizidir. Bu çalışma, eğitimcilerin çocuk istismarını bildirme konusundaki deneyimlerini, bilgilerini ve tutumlarını sosyal hizmet perspektifinden değerlendiren bir bakış açısına sahiptir. **Materyal Yöntemler:** Eğitimcilere verilen zorunlu raporçülük eğitiminin eksikliklerini etkili ve kesin bir şekilde belirlemek için çalışmada nicel bir metodoloji kullanılmıştır. Bu yöntem, eğitimcilerin tutumlarını, inançlarını analiz edecek ve kötüye kullanımı bildirme konusundaki hazırlık düzeylerini değerlendirecek bir anketi tamamlamalarına olanak sağlayacaktır. **Bulgular:** Çalışma sonunda elde edilen en önemli sonuçlardan biri; çocuk ihmal ve istismarını tanıma ve bildirme sürecine ilişkin profesyonellerin eğitim düzeyi ve kalitesidir. Anketlere katılanlar, çocuk istismarını bildirirken korktuklarını ve bunaldıklarını bildirdiler. **Sonuçlar:** Çalışma, okul bölgelerinin ve çocuk esirgeme kuruluşlarının çocuk istismarının bildirilmesine yardımcı olacak eğitimler geliştirmek ve sağlamak için birlikte çalışmasını tavsiye etti. Bunun yanı sıra çoğunlukla vurgulanan çocuk istismarı ihbar eğitiminin zorunlu olması ve periyodik değerlendirme olması gerektiğidir.

INTRODUCTION

When children are abused or neglected, it causes a severe problem in terms of both the general public's health and the stability of society as a whole (1). Because of this, there is a risk that the mental health, academic performance, and interpersonal bonds of a kid will all suffer as a result of this. Abuse of children may have a detrimental effect on the health and well-being of a kid, both psychologically and physically (2). The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) was

passed into law in 1974 with the intention of managing the prevention of child abuse and neglect situations, as well as the evaluation and investigation of such instances. 1974 marked the beginning of operations for the CAPTA. Abuse may have a devastating effect on a youngster who is still growing and developing, and it even has the ability to take the child's life. Several studies have shown that every year, Child Protective Services receives contacts from several million children who are in need of their assistance. Reauthorization

of the CAPTA in 2010 insured that children would be safeguarded from all forms of abuse, including those that are emotional, sexual, physical, and psychological. 2019 based on the data provided by the Child Welfare Information Gateway. In spite of the greatest efforts of everyone involved, incidences of abuse and neglect remain underreported. This is the case regardless of whether there are precautions in place to avert them or not. U.S Department of Health and Human Services (3) in 2018, 'Child Protective Services was confronted with around 4.3 million complaints of child abuse, which had an effect 'on 7.8 million children estimated. Educators, despite their prominent roles as reporters, often fail to bring claims of abuse to the attention of the authorities who should be notified (4). Teachers play a significant role in recognising the warning symptoms of child abuse; nevertheless, they are frequently discouraged from reporting more severe situations owing to a lack of training.

The goal of this research was to determine whether or not teachers believe they have received sufficient training and are competent enough to report instances of abuse. This study also looked at the experiences of teachers in their capacity as obligatory reporters, the amount of training they received, and the degree to which they trusted the reporting mechanisms. Experts have to have a better understanding of the abuse and reporting procedures in order to minimise the risks that youngster's face and the harm that they sustain.

CHILD ABUSE IN THE SCHOOL

It is tremendously upsetting for the majority of educators to ponder the possibility that one of their fellow professionals is abusing children. However, in the event that anything like this occur, children need a unique kind of protection. Denial or ignoring the allegations leveled against a colleague is a typical reaction in these situations, particularly when the accused is well-liked or has been working at the institution for a significant amount of time. Sometimes the perpetrator of the assault is expelled and sent to a different school (5). Even if the violator is suspended or given a reprimand, it is probable that the infraction will occur again if there is no intervention or monitoring. It takes a lot of courage for a child who is being abused to come forward and tell someone about it, whether they are being abused sexually, physically, or even emotionally by a member of the school staff. Educators should keep this in mind if a child comes forward and reports being abused in any of these ways. Children of a certain age may make up stories, but such tales almost always have glaring errors. The instructor need to comply with the policies and procedures of the school, which often include

making a report to CPS (Child Protective Services). CPS employees will next conduct an interview with the kid or, depending on the rules of the state, report the claims to law enforcement in order to investigate whether or not the child knows anybody else to whom this has occurred. If this is the case, the CPS investigator needs to speak with any further victims. Notifying the school administration as soon as possible is often required by the protocols. It is not appropriate for other members of the school personnel to discuss the matter. The accused has a reputation to uphold and the right to be informed of the charge; nonetheless, the investigator (who may be a caseworker for Child Protective Services or a member of the police force) is the one who should speak with the accused colleague. It frequently leads to an environment of witch-hunting, which is not advantageous to either the students or the staff, thus failing to do so is not an option. It is also unacceptable to urge the youngsters to recount what happened in the beginning in front of the person who is being charged. There is a considerable power and resource gap between instructors and their pupils. Students have access to fewer resources. It is vital to bear in mind that schools are compelled to report all incidents of abuse, regardless of whether the offender is an outsider or a school employee. This is the case even if the offender is someone who is not affiliated with the school. Educators face the same penalties for failing to report suspected wrongdoings committed by colleagues as they do for failing to report wrongdoings resulting from abuse or neglect committed within the same household, in accordance with the laws that govern the reporting of child abuse and neglect in each state (5). These laws are in place to ensure that abuse and neglect are reported when they occur. In the case that allegations of abuse are made and there is cause to assume that such allegations are true, Child Protective Services or the relevant law enforcement agency must get involved.

Reporting Procedures

The participation of educators in reporting cases of child abuse and neglect is directed by standards and rules set out by the federal government, and it is required by laws set forth by state and local governments. These laws detail the obligations that are placed on the educator as well as the procedures that must be followed to accomplish those responsibilities. Educators are obligated to adhere with these standards and laws, in addition to making efforts to support families in whom they have reasonable grounds to suspect child abuse or neglect (6). Developing policies and practises that would enable schools to respond to allegations of child abuse in a way that is more efficient is often a primary issue for schools. Establishing protocols may be of assistance in addressing concerns about quality control,

the possibility of legal action, as well as the safety of staff members while they are reporting incidents. These procedures also assist to ensure that there are effective mechanisms for supporting children, which is another purpose they serve.

Child abuse and neglect, non-accidental physical abuse and neglect, sexual abuse, and emotional (or psychological) maltreatment are the types of behaviours that may be officially classified as constituting child maltreatment in the legal system of a particular state. These behaviours include child abuse and neglect. In each state's legal system, these types of behaviours may be officially classified as constituting child maltreatment. A variety of different definitions of sexual abuse include elements such as the production of child pornography or the act of subjecting children to activities or media that are sexually explicit without their will. Because of the potential for adverse effects on the child, child protective services (CPS) in some jurisdictions require that incidents of domestic violence that take place inside a family be reported. This is because of the potential for adverse consequences on the child. Every school must either have their own copy of the definitions of child abuse and neglect that are used in their area or be aware of how to receive a copy of those definitions. Although governments require the reporting of suspected occurrences of child abuse or neglect, no state requirements that the person who reports the suspected abuse or neglect present clear proof that the abuse or neglect truly took place prior to filing the complaint. If a teacher or other school employee "suspects" or "has reasonable grounds to assume" that a pupil is being abused in some way, the law mandates that they must register a formal report with the appropriate authorities. In any case, the intention behind this need is quite clear: In the event of an occurrence, it is imperative that it be reported immediately. If we wait until we have absolute proof, there is a chance that the child would be placed in an even more precarious position.

Who Reports

Preventing child abuse and neglect is a top priority for every state, and virtually all of them require educators to report any suspicions of it. Public or private, day or residential, guidance counsellor, school nurse, school social worker, or principal, for example, some states have extremely strict definitions of what it means to be a "teacher." Principals and administrators are only two examples of those in this category. Depending on the state, the sorts of experts that must submit reports might change. Schools that has a Child Protection Team, a teacher's disclosure to the team may or may not release him or her from additional obligation, and a caseworker

from child protective services (CPS) may still contact the instructor even after the teacher has disclosed the information to the team. Bear this in mind while you deliberate on what course of action to take. The actual report that would be made to Child Protective Services would be made by a team representative from the Child Protection Team (6). The educator's home state is another jurisdiction whose rules on this regulation need to be researched.

Who is a School Social Worker?

When it comes to assisting kids in achieving success in their academic pursuits, school social workers serve as an essential connection between the family, the school, and the community. When it comes to helping schools develop rules for disciplinary actions such as expulsion or expulsion without cause, mental health professionals play a key role.

Schools' social workers, as part of an interdisciplinary team, advocate for student achievement while facilitating community participation in the schools.

Despite the many functions and responsibilities of the social worker, four fundamental duties are shared by all school social workers. These include:

Consultation with other school personnel as part of a team.

Assessment applied to a range of direct service positions, consultancy and program creation.

Individualized direct interaction with children and parents group and family approaches.

Support for program development (Constable, Kuzmickaite, & Harrison, & Volkmann, 1999).

For school social workers, it is not always easy to achieve awareness and persuade district officials of the value of their job and abilities. By being more visible and building a professional network, a social worker can avoid this issue as possible, with teachers, administrators, and parents. According to standards for school social work services, standards standard 3 "School social workers must engage with the local education department on a regular basis." school board members and community leaders to encourage the proper usage of school resources Services for social workers" (NASW, 2002, Standard 3). Social workers who work in schools should attend school board meetings and participate in PTAs instructors and macro-work inside the system to be seen so that people may learn about the wide range of services that are available social workers give their services. It's a blessing for a school social worker if he or she just has one or two clients.

There is a connection between social workers and teachers, despite the fact that the two professions are rather different in terms of the duties they do and the education they need. Although some do collaborate in schools, social workers often operate in a wider range of different environments. The desire to assist other people and make a positive change in their life is at the heart of each of these careers.

When to Report?

Again, the standards that must be met in order to submit a report at the appropriate time vary greatly across different state laws. Even though prompt reporting is of the utmost importance, instructors may find it beneficial to keep a record of a student's actions, injuries, and any other information that may be relevant to the child. These unofficial notes that were kept secretly may prove to be extremely valuable not only in the process of making a report, but also in the process of transmitting information to CPS. These notes were kept private since they were not intended for public consumption. Even after the report has been filed, it is essential to preserve notes in order to provide the CPS investigators with any new material that may have come to light. It is vital to keep in mind that personal notes may also be needed as evidence in the event that the subject is brought before a court. Whether oral or written reports are required to be provided is determined by the regulations of each particular school district, as well as those of the state and municipality in which the school is located. There are many who want an oral report, while others prefer a written report within a certain length of time after the oral report has been presented (6). Concerns may also be reported to Child Protective Services (CPS) in select jurisdictions over a personal and secure internet connection, since these states have made this option available.

Where to Report?

Every school must have information that is easily accessible, always up to date, and that can be used to get in contact with the appropriate agency for the purpose of reporting suspected occurrences of child abuse or neglect. According to the laws of the state, a certain agency is in charge of accepting complaints from people who have reason to believe that their children have been neglected or abused. This agency is often the state's department of social services, human resources, family and children's services, Child Protective Services (CPS), or department of children and youth services. It's possible that the reports need to be sent to the police department, the health department, the office of the county or district attorney, and the juvenile court or the district court (6).

The Child Protective Services (CPS) section is accountable for taking in any allegations of possible child abuse and conducting follow-up investigations into such allegations (that meet the statutory definitions established by the state). Additionally, the CPS unit may be engaged in the treatment and rehabilitation of impacted families, either by directly providing these services or by sending families to other organisations. This might take place either directly or indirectly. It is very necessary to have an awareness of who is accountable for accepting reports of suspected cases of child abuse and neglect in each particular jurisdiction. It is very necessary that the rules of confidentiality be adhered to at all times in order to ensure that only authorised personnel get reports.

How to Report

Educators are obligated to comply with the policies and procedures provided by their various local school systems when reporting suspected incidents of abuse. These are based on the laws that have been passed at the state level, which might vary from one another in terms of the structure and the specifics of the complaints that are filed about suspected abuse. Complaints may be filed verbally, in writing, or both to the agency or agencies in each state that are in charge of investigating claims of child abuse and neglect. These complaints can be made in any format (6). When it is essential to submit two reports, the oral report is normally anticipated to be delivered immediately, and the written report will typically be submitted between 24 and 48 hours after the oral report has been delivered. The types of information that must be supplied in a report of suspected child abuse or neglect are outlined in the standards of particular state laws, which must be complied with before filing such a complaint. In most cases, this means doing the following (7):

- The child's full name, age, gender, and address;
- The child's parents' full names and addresses;
- The child's full name, age, gender, and address;
- Injuries that occurred in the past and when seen;
- The actions performed by the reporter, such as having a conversation with the youngster;
- The location of the infraction.

The entire name of the reporter, as well as their physical location and any accessible contact information for the reporter, should be included (sometimes not required, but extremely valuable to CPS staff). In certain states, in comparison to the requirements of other states, you will be required to supply a higher number of information. All of the facts listed above, as well as any additional

information about the kid and family that will assist CPS in better understanding the danger of maltreatment to the child, should be included as part of a report that is sent to CPS.

Making the Report

It is imperative that an educator disclose any suspicions of abuse or neglect immediately upon becoming aware of it. For educators, compiling such a report may be both hazardous and perplexing. Preparation for a report might be aided by the following checklist (6):

Is the teacher familiar with the school's reporting policy and procedure? What information does he or she possess that would allow them to write a report? Is the school equipped to handle the paperwork?

- Is the information backed up by evidence? Is it written down to assist the instructor arrange their thoughts?
- Is the data being examined properly? The instructor should think about why he or she suspects this specific incidence of abuse or neglect. Physical and behavioral signs and symptoms should be listed by the teacher.
- Did the reporter see any parent-child interactions that would point to potential exploitation, such as insults or threats? It seems as though the mother or father of this child believes that he or she is special, different from other "regular" kids, or both.
- Inquiring about the educator's interactions with other members of the school's staff? Does there seem to be a pattern of maltreatment or neglect? Why?
- Is the instructor (or school) aware of the agency's current contact information? No matter how many of these questions the educator can positively answer, he or she should report promptly. In order to speed things up, it is important to organize one's ideas.

In addition, the reporter should ask the following questions to better prepare:

- Has the educator discussed with his or her administrator the help that will be provided when the report is completed?
- Parents may attempt to withdraw their kid from the classroom, and the educator has to know what will happen.
- It is important to ask yourself whether the educator has a network of support in place to help them through the difficult times.

One cannot exaggerate how crucial student cooperation is in a classroom. If a teacher in the classroom is concerned about a student who has bruises on their

body, for example, they may go to the school nurse. If a member of the faculty witnesses a student engaging in behaviour that cannot be rationally explained, it is conceivable that the student should be sent to the social worker or psychologist at the school. Even while it is essential to respect the child's right to privacy, it is nevertheless feasible to make such a suggestion in a manner that is kept a secret from the child (8). The usefulness of teamwork in these types of institutions is one factor that has contributed to the success of the Child Protection Team technique in a number of different educational settings. Members of the child safety team serve in a variety of capacities within the school; hence, they may be in a position to shed light on the situation affecting the child from an angle that the reporter was either unaware of or did not immediately recognise (9).

Difficulties That Could Arise While Reporting

When a child abuse complaint is lodged, it is not an accusation that abuse or neglect has taken place; rather, it is a request to ascertain if there has been abuse or neglect and to initiate the aid process if it has taken place. On the other hand, the method for reporting may not always run as well as planned. There is a possibility of encountering obstacles throughout the reporting process, which may dissuade the teacher from reporting in the future (10).

Personal Feelings

The most difficult scenarios that a teacher may be put in is one in which the teacher discovers that a person they know and trust is abusing or neglecting one of their students (11). When it comes to confronting the reality that a respected member of the community is sexually assaulting a child, or that the child of a colleague or neighbour is being abused, an educator may have a very difficult time doing so, particularly if the educator knows the child who is the subject of the allegations (12). This is a natural experience, but it is one that has to be overcome in order to feel better. No matter how well an educator knows the abusive home, it is still very important for them to register a complaint on behalf of a student. The law protects all children from being harmed in any way, and it does not matter what the specifics of the situation are; the educator is still compelled to file a complaint (13). The act of reporting suspected instances of child abuse may be an emotionally taxing experience for the reporter, despite the fact that the report can help protect the child. However, reporting suspected instances of child abuse can help protect the child. Because of worries about maintaining confidentiality, the educator is limited in the number of individuals with whom she is permitted to address the topic. The process may be beneficial to many educators if they took the time to establish support

structures and strategies to cope with the obstacles they confront as they move through it (14).

Problems Internal to the School

School officials have been known to impede the reporting process from time to time, according to school staff (15). Once they have been made aware of a problem, they may choose not to file an official complaint of suspected mistreatment, or they may make it impossible for other school workers to file reports. It's possible that this is done for the same reasons as were mentioned before, or simply because the administrator does not want to "create noise." These kinds of behaviours might be more than just disruptive; they could also be unlawful (16).

There are a number of concerns that arise when administrators refuse to report or make it hard for other adults on their team to do so. Additionally, educators may be held responsible for the unreported abuse of pupils in their classrooms by administrators if they are ignored or even undercut by their superiors. Teachers are forced to choose between facing legal consequences or going around the administration as a result. When this happens, it casts doubt on the reporter's ability to act in the child's best interest while still following the letter of the law. Teachers may not get any support from the central administrative staff in certain cases. Suddenly, the motives of journalists are being questioned. The failure of school administrators or principals to provide their personnel with mandatory in-service training, which informs them of their legal responsibilities, might act as an additional impediment to reporting abuses. Child abuse is a serious problem, and educators need to be aware of their legal responsibilities and the warning signs and repercussions of child abuse in order to aid children in need (17).

Instructor protection would not apply even in areas where anonymous reporting is permitted since there would be no evidence that the teacher had ever reported any cases of student sexual misconduct. It might be difficult for a teacher to know what to do or how to respond when dealing with an inattentive or obstructive administration. The most accurate response is that it depends on the circumstances of the situation and the choices that are available. There are several instances where a working connection with a CPS caseworker or other child welfare professional may make it easier to produce a report. Others in the school's administration, such as a counsellor, may be ready to look into the possibility of reporting the incident in a different way (18).

School Activities and Programs Supporting the Abused Child

Children's safety begins with reporting any incidents of suspected abuse or neglect. Treatment, rehabilitation, strengthening the family, and preventing future abuse are all important considerations. When it came to child abuse, the school and the educator's responsibility was restricted to just reporting the incidence. After a report is filed, educators increasingly aid and support CPS workers by sharing essential information about families and children, giving services to the kid, parents, and family, and engaging in multidisciplinary teams (9). As a result, schools take an active part in the community's efforts to reduce child abuse and neglect.

If the normal school curriculum is appropriately arranged, it may provide opportunity for the kid who has been maltreated to get help. Positive educational experiences and a feeling of success and accomplishment might help young children overcome the negative self-concepts that are all too typical within their peer group. Teachers are in a position to assist abused and neglected children if they integrate certain categories of knowledge into classroom activities that are conceived with the intention of benefiting all children (19). For instance, identifying and expressing emotions, as well as making choices, are two challenges that often present themselves for those who have been the victims of abuse or neglect. A great number of educators have devised and used exercises to discern emotions with great levels of effectiveness. The "emotions barometer" is a popular teaching tool that promotes youngsters to shift a signal to various facial expressions to reflect their feeling and to explore the reasons behind their feelings. This tool is geared for younger pupils (6). Additionally, many educators include inventive approaches to problem-solving into the regular lesson plans. All children gain the ability to make better judgments in this manner, but children who have been mistreated may experience an especially strong sense of agency as a result of improving this skill (20).

Multidisciplinary Teams Against Child Abuse and Neglect

School and community-based organizations may work together to tackle challenges in a multidisciplinary way. It has been shown to be effective in schools with Child Protection and Crisis Teams. Experts working within the school form these teams, who are entrusted with analyzing and responding to reports of child abuse or other school-related crises, such as drug abuse, death, and other forms of emergencies. If you have a staff that is diverse in terms of backgrounds and competence in the care of children, it is feasible to offer better care

for the young people in your care. In order to meet the needs of the community as a whole, community-based approaches to child abuse make the most of the specialized skills and knowledge of many professionals. Increasingly, child abuse case consultation teams are being used as a means of guaranteeing integrated investigations, service planning, and delivery (6). These community teams are usually made up of people who work in social services, police enforcement, and educational institutions, among others. All of the members have a range of diagnostic, assessment, as well as therapeutic talents and backgrounds. On a regular basis, they meet together to talk about the cases of child abuse they've observed and the therapeutic choices they believe would be most helpful. This is due to the fact that complex social issues need the involvement of several organizations. When members of a team work together, they come to know one another better and have a deeper respect for the roles that they play. Within the framework of the team, any concerns that arise may be addressed with quickly. If a certain piece of advice doesn't work, try something else (21).

Community Coordination

Child protection coordinating committees or task groups are being established in several areas in order to improve collaboration among the many agencies involved. In order to better serve abused children and their families, these organizations act as a coordinating framework for a variety of community services and resources. In this way, roles and responsibilities may be clearly defined and communication improved, service gaps discovered and duplicated services avoided, all of which help make better use of the resources and services currently in existence (22). When it comes to committees, CPS is usually in charge of setting them up. Diverse organizations, such as colleges and other educational institutions, government agencies, and other professional disciplines must work together in order to make full use of the community's available assets. An educational institution's policy should also include consideration for students' involvement in such a body. Numerous community-based resources are available to assist families and children that are at risk. New York City Public Schools, the Children's Aid Society, the New York City Board of Education, and other stakeholders worked together to create and carry out a project that was initially intended to minimize juvenile delinquency. School hours were extended, nutritious meals were provided, homework help was provided, and medical care was made available to students as part of the project. However, the program was able to help families in danger, and the local child protection agency concluded that the organization was able to satisfy its clientele's needs adequately.

METHOD

This research employ the snowball sampling method, to increase the number of people who sign up for the study. In order to take part in the survey, participants were required to first hand in a signed permission form that they had already filled out. On the permission form, it was stated that participant confidentiality will be maintained at all times throughout the procedure. In addition, the form emphasised the significance of the study's objectives and the teacher's role in the research. The participants were given the information that they might revoke their agreement at any time over the course of the study, therefore their participation in the research was entirely voluntary.

During the course of this study's investigation, it would be essential to carry out a quantitative analysis. During the course of this investigation, we treated the factors of training, experience, and preparedness as independent variables. The degree to which a teacher was willing to report inappropriate student behaviour served as the study's dependent variable. Ethnicity, degree of education, number of years of teaching experience, as well as age and gender, are all aspects that was taken into account in the hiring process. During the course of my inquiry, the researcher provided a thorough account of the scenario as well as an original take on the matter. Multiple logistic regression is the kind of statistical analysis that was used in this investigation (MLR). It is conceivable that the dependent variable have two outcomes, one of which was positive and the other of which was negative. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, also known as SPSS, was used in order to do an analysis on each and every piece of data that was amassed in order to conduct this inquiry (SPSS).

RESULTS

Despite the fact that 200 people began the survey, only 176 finished it. On the 176 individuals, analysis was conducted. The Demographic Characteristics of each Participant in this research are shown in Table 1. 75.0 percent of the 176 participants were female, while 23.9% were male. 14.8 percent of the sample's participants were aged 24 or under, 39.8 percent were aged 25-35, 20.5% were aged 36-45, 13.6% were aged 46-55, 9.1% were aged 56-65, and 1.1% were aged 66 or over. 42% of the individuals identified as Yoruba, 38% as Igbo, 5% as Hausa, 5% as Efik, 3% as Ibibio, and 3% as having two or more tribe.

A question on the participants' education level was also included in the survey. Due to the fact that participants were given the option of selecting more than one option, the totals in this section exceed the sample size. As can

Table 1. Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

Variable	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Female	132	75.0
Male	42	23.9
Missing	2	1.1
Age		
Age 24 or under	26	14.8
Age 25 to 35	70	39.8
Age 36 to 45	36	20.5
Age 46 to 55	24	13.6
Age 56 to 65	16	9.1
Age 66 or above	2	1.1
Missing	2	1.1
Ethnicity		
Hausa	10	5.7
Yoruba	74	42.0
Efik	68	38.6
Ibibio	6	3.4
Two or more races	6	3.4
Missing	2	1.1

be seen in Table 2, the subjects tutor, teaching grade, and amount of time spent in classroom of teaching experience are all listed there. There were 17.0 percent with a bachelor's, 18.2 percent with a certificate, 68% with their master's and 1.1% with their PhD. Only 14.8 percent of respondents have a special education certificate when asked what sort of credential they had when questioned about their credentials. 37.5 percent of participants had taught for two to five years, 27.3 percent had taught for 16 years or more, 14.8 percent had taught for one year, 12.5 percent had taught for six to ten years, and 6.8 percent had taught for 11 to 15 years.

Thought about Mandated Reporter Training

Tests of understanding concerning reporting abuse were administered to the sample's participants, who answered questions about their own experiences in mandatory reporter training. Table 4.3 shows the results of the questions and remarks about Mandatory Reporter Training Experience. Eighty-seven percent of the 176 people who took part in the survey agreed that mandatory reporter training had been provided, while the remaining three percent were undecided. About 82.9 percent of those polled said they are at least

Table 2. Subjects tutor, Teaching Grades, and the Amount of Time Spent in the Classroom

Variable	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Education Level		
Bachelor's Degree	30	17.0
Credential	32	18.2
Master's Degree	120	68.2
Doctoral Degree	2	1.1
More than one choice	8	4.5
Number of Years Teaching		
1 year or less	26	14.8
2 to 5 years	66	37.5
6 to 10 years	22	12.5
11 to 15 years	12	6.8
16 years or more	48	27.3
Missing	2	1.1

somewhat equipped to see signs of child abuse, while 6.8 percent strongly disagree. 60.2% of participants agreed that greater trainings on child abuse must be conducted by school districts when surveyed about their opinions. The most of participants, 71.6 percent, thought that compulsory reporting training modules were adequate in educating them to report abuse. Mandatory reporter training hours for the 2019-2020 school year were requested from participants. This information was gathered from the participants. According to participants, 71.6% had gotten no training at all, while 18.2% had received 3 to 7 hours of instruction.

Child Abuse Reporting Knowledge

The respondents were then asked, as a follow-up question, about the proper way to report instances of

child abuse. The instructors' understanding on how to report child abuse and neglect to the proper authorities is shown in Table 4.4. As the participants were informed while they were being questioned on the subject, there is no need for providing documentation when reporting instances of child abuse. The answer that you are looking for to this question is "no." Most of the respondents (67.0%) said they did not need any evidence, but 19.3% of respondents claimed that proof was needed. Most of the respondents (76.1% of them) did not agree with the statement that it is required of them to speak with the head of the school before they may report an instance of abuse. The vast majority of participants (77.3% of those polled) reported that they know of the timetable for reporting a distrust incidence of child abuse. 77.2 percent of participants thought that they had a moral

Table 3. Experience in Mandatory Reporter Training

Variable	Frequency [N]	Percentage [%]
In my school district, I've completed required reporting training	Strongly Agree – 142	80.7
	Somewhat agree – 20	11.4
	Neither agree nor disagree – 6	3.4
My school district should provide more training	Strongly Agree – 54	30.7
	Somewhat Agree – 52	29.5
	Neither Agree nor Disagree - 30	17.0
	Somewhat Disagree – 22	12.5
	Strongly Disagree – 10	5.7
	Missing – 4	4.5
	Strongly agree – 62	35.2
	Somewhat agree - 84	47.7
	Neither agree nor disagree - 10	5.7
	Somewhat disagree - 8	4.5
	Strongly disagree – 4	2.3
	Missing – 8	4.6
The mandated reporter training modules are enough to report abuse	Strongly agree – 40	22.7
	Somewhat agree - 86	48.9
	Neither agree nor disagree - 18	10.2
	Somewhat disagree - 18	10.2
	Strongly disagree - 4	2.3
	Missing – 10	5.7
	Less than 3 hours - 126	71.6
	3-7 hours – 32	18.2
	More than 7 hours - 4	2.3
	No training – 4	2.3
	Missing – 5	5.6
	Strongly agree – 40	22.7
	Somewhat agree - 86	48.9
	Neither agree nor disagree - 18	10.2
	Somewhat disagree - 18	10.2
Strongly disagree - 4	2.3	
Missing – 5	5.7	

duty to report the abuse even if they were aware that someone else had already done so. Eighty-four percent of individuals who were questioned think that if they fail to report suspected instances of child abuse, they might be subject to criminal prosecution.

Presentation of the Findings

Child abuse reporting regulations are not correlated with how many years a teacher has been on the job. There is no correlation between mandatory reporting training and understanding of child abuse legislation, according

Table 4. Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting

Variable	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Before I can report abuse of child to child protective services, I must have evidence (Answer= No) Missing	Strongly Agree- 10	5.7
	Somewhat agree-24	13.6
	Neither agree nor disagree-10	5.7
	Somewhat disagree-40	22.7
	Strongly disagree- 78	44.3
	14	8
I have to tell the school principal before I can report child abuse (Answer= No) Missing	Strongly Agree- 6	3.4
	Somewhat agree-14	8
	Neither agree nor disagree-8	4.5
	Somewhat disagree-20	21.6
	Strongly disagree- 96	54.5
	14	8
I am aware of the deadlines for filing a suspected child abuse report. Missing	Strongly Agree- 88	50
	Somewhat agree-48	27.3
	Neither agree nor disagree-16	9.1
	Somewhat disagree-6	3.4
	Strongly disagree- 4	2.3
		14
Even when I am aware that someone else has previously reported abuse, it is still my duty to do so. Missing	Strongly Agree- 96	54.5
	Somewhat agree-40	22.7
	Neither agree nor disagree-10	5.7
	Somewhat disagree-8	4.5
	Strongly disagree- 6	3.4
	16	9.2
You can face legal action if an inquiry indicates that you had a good cause to suspect anything was wrong but chose not to disclose it. (Answer= yes) Missing	Strongly Agree- 118	67
	Somewhat agree-30	17
	Neither agree nor disagree-8	4.5
	Somewhat disagree - 2	1.1
	Strongly disagree - 2	1.1
	16	9.3
I have made a child abuse complaint.	Strongly Agree- 88	50
	Somewhat agree-16	9.1
	Neither agree nor disagree-8	4.5
	Somewhat disagree-8	4.5
	Strongly disagree- 40	22.7
I've had suspicions about child abuse but choose not to come forward. Missing	Somewhat agree-4	2.3
	Neither agree nor disagree-8	4.5
	Somewhat disagree-22	12.5
	Strongly disagree- 12	71.6
	6	9.1
My reporting skills are lacking. Missing	Somewhat agree - 10	5.7
	Neither agree nor disagree - 18	10.2
	Somewhat disagree - 22	12.5
	Strongly disagree - 110	62.5
	16	9.1
I have faith in my ability to see signs of child abuse. Missing	Strongly Agree - 50	28.4
	Somewhat agree - 64	36.4
	Neither agree nor disagree - 24	13.6
	Somewhat disagree - 18	10.2
	Strongly disagree - 4	2.3
	16	9.1

to the data. Results reveal that reporting or not reporting abuse is not a reflection of their actual knowledge. Teachers' training, experience, and expertise did not influence their reporting, according to the results of the study. Gender was not shown to be a major factor in the reporting of abuse, according to the findings. Findings show that attitudes about reporting abuse are unrelated to the number of hours of training obtained. Knowledge of how to report abuse is independent of students' grade level. When it comes to reporting abuse, the gender or attitude of the participants has no bearing. Negative outcomes emerged from vignettes during the research. Several respondents in the surveys reported feeling frightened, terrified, and overwhelmed while reporting child abuse because of the mandatory reporter training, according to the results of the surveys.

CONCLUSION

The objective of this research was to determine whether or not there is a connection between mandatory reporter training, previous work experience, and a teacher's level of readiness to report instances of child abuse. In contrast to previous literature studies, which have concentrated on the information about reporting abuse, this one also examined the sentiments of instructors regarding the system of reporting abuse, which is a significant difference that sets it apart from others.

The results of data collected via the use of a survey questionnaire design were given. The 176 participants' responses were analyzed as part of the data. When comparing participant genders, it was found that the study had a much greater percentage of females (75%), compared to males (23.9 percent). This study found a high degree of familiarity with reporting child abuse or neglect in the majority of the people surveyed. There have been 60 percent or more reports of abuse, according to the figures. More time should be devoted to required reporting training, notwithstanding participants' confidence in their capacity to identify signs of abuse, according to a survey of respondents. Bivariate results revealed that people's opinions on reporting child abuse were not very unique.

Based on the conclusions from the study, the following recommendations were made:

- Child abuse reporting training should be mandatory and there should be periodic assessment,
- Child abuse reporters should be adequately protected,
- Child abuse cases should be handled by professionals,
- The school districts, child welfare organizations (both governmental and non-governmental) should work together to develop and provide trainings that will assist with the reporting of child abuse.

- The most efficient method for gaining an understanding of how to use an ecological perspective in social work is to start with the person, then go on to the family, then the culture, then the community, and finally the policies. The study's findings show that school districts might benefit from compulsory reporting training for child welfare organizations or social workers in the schools. In order to recognize and report child abuse and neglect, educators should be given refresher trainings in which they are able to contact social professionals and feel supported.
- The prevention of child abuse might be the subject of future study that is carried out in conjunction with social workers and educators. When it comes to training for mandated reporters, school districts would be well to make use of child welfare organizations as a resource. The field of social work has a vast amount of information as well as experience in training, which may be of assistance to instructors.
- Workshops and professional training for educators should be provided by social workers who routinely interact with abused and neglected children.

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