

CHILDHOOD MALTREATMENT, PARENTING STYLES AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN FROM MILITARY FAMILIES IN JAJI CANTONMENT, KADUNA STATE, NIGERIA

Terwase Valentine Tamen,* Okorie Agness O.
Felix Ignatius Ibrahim Ruwan*****

Department of Psychology, Nigerian Defence Academy Kaduna.

*E-Mail: vtamen@yahoo.com Phone: 07068218924

**E-Mail: aookorie@nda.edu.ng Phone: 08036132613

***E-Mail: fruwan@nda.edu.ng Phone: 08160671283

&

Antipas Shoonwua

Department of Psychology, Nasarawa University Keffi

E-Mail: shoonwuaantipas@gmail.com Phone: 08138227790

Abstract

Childhood experiences and parenting practices play a crucial role in shaping the emotional development and psychological adjustment of children, particularly those growing up in unique and high-stress environments such as military families. The study investigated childhood maltreatment, parenting styles, and emotional well-being of children from military families in Jaji Cantonment, Kaduna, Nigeria. A cross-sectional survey design was adopted for the study, and a total of 351 participants, aged from 9 to 17 years, were sampled using a purposive sampling technique. Maltreatment and Abuse Questionnaire (CMQ), Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ), and Emotional Well-being Scale were used for data collection. Three hypotheses were formulated and tested using simple and multiple regression analysis. Results of hypothesis one revealed that childhood maltreatment significantly influences the emotional well-being of children of military families residing in Jaji military cantonment in Kaduna State, Nigeria. The results of the second hypothesis revealed that parenting styles significantly influence the emotional well-being of children from military families residing in Jaji military cantonment in Kaduna State, Nigeria. Finally, the results of the third hypothesis showed that Childhood maltreatment and parenting styles jointly predicted emotional well-being of children of military families in Kaduna State, Nigeria. The study concluded that Childhood maltreatment and parenting styles have significant independent and joint influences on the dependent variables, which are the emotional well-being of children from military families residing in Jaji military cantonment in Kaduna State, Nigeria. Therefore, the study recommended that the Nigerian military should integrate child and family welfare policies into its broader personnel management system. This will ensure a protective environment where children's emotional well-being is safeguarded despite the challenges of military life.

Keywords: Childhood Maltreatment, Parenting Styles, Emotional Well-Being, and Jaji Cantonment

Introduction

Emotional well-being is a multifaceted concept that encompasses an individual's ability to navigate life's challenges, build fulfilling relationships, and maintain a positive outlook. It is closely tied to mental health but focuses specifically on the emotional aspects of psychological functioning. According to Park et al. (2023), emotional well-being is characterized by a preponderance of positive emotions over negative ones and overall life satisfaction. Emotional well-being has roots in various psychological theories, including humanistic psychology and positive psychology. Maslow's hierarchy of needs, for instance, places self-actualization at the top, which includes emotional fulfillment (Hanley, et al 2020). Seligman's model of well-being emphasizes Positive emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment (PERMA) as key components of psychological well-being (Al-Ansari, Al-Thani & Al-Emadi, (2024). Research by Wu & Xu, (2020) has shown that emotional well-being is not just a desirable state but has tangible benefits for physical health, cognitive function, and social relationships. Emotional well-being can be cultivated through various interventions, including mindfulness practices, cognitive-behavioural therapy, and positive psychology exercises (Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009). It is important to note that emotional well-being is not the absence of negative emotions, but rather the ability to effectively manage and balance both positive

and negative emotional experiences. Gross's (1998) model of emotion regulation highlights the importance of strategies such as cognitive reappraisal in maintaining emotional equilibrium. This perspective underscores the dynamic nature of emotional well-being and its reliance on active psychological processes. In the context of public health, emotional well-being has gained increasing attention. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2024) includes emotional well-being in its definition of mental health, emphasizing its importance for overall health and quality of life (WHO, 2020). This recognition has led to the development of various initiatives and policies aimed at promoting emotional well-being at both individual and societal levels.

In determining factors associated with emotional well-being, this study, however, investigated childhood maltreatment, parenting styles, and emotional well-being of children of military families in Jaji, Kaduna State of Nigeria. Child maltreatment is the abuse and neglect that occurs to children under 18 years of age. In this broad definition, five subtypes can be distinguished, which include: physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect and negligent treatment, emotional abuse, and exploitation (Uzodimma, et al, 2023). According to Audu, et al. (2019). Child physical abuse is very common in Nigeria and yet poorly reported. The consequences of physical child abuse are grave. Most child physical abuse is perpetrated in the guise of corporal punishment. In some opinions, corporal punishment is a broad spectrum; at one end, it may be corrective, especially if the child can connect the punishment to a demeanour.

However, when corporal punishment results in actual or potential harm, it becomes clearly abusive. The use of corporal punishment by adults having authority over children is likely to train children to use physical violence to control behaviour rather than rational persuasion (Audu, et al., 2019). There is a need to draw the attention of healthcare professionals, policy makers, and child advocacy groups to this menace turned norm. We hope that this report will remind all concerned groups and individuals of the Child Rights Act 2003 in which Nigeria engaged.

Meta-analyses of global statistical prevalence of child maltreatment showed that about 18% of the population reported experiencing physical abuse, 36% emotional abuse, and 18% of the girls and 8% of the boys reported sexual abuse (Stoltenborgh et al., 2011, 2012, 2013). There is evidence of worldwide prevalence of childhood physical neglect in 16% and of emotional neglect in 18% of the population (Stoltenborgh et al., 2013a). These figures, however, come from research studies that focused mainly on sexual abuse and were conducted mostly in the developed high-income countries (Stoltenborgh et al., 2015). The prevalence of child maltreatment, especially physical abuse, may be even higher in lower-middle-income countries (LMICs), such as India, where corporal punishment and child work are more common and culturally accepted (Kacker et al., 2007).

Another variable that has been adopted in this study, which also impacts emotional well-being, is parenting styles, which has been found to play an influential role in molding

and shaping the behaviour of adolescents. From this perspective, Baumrind identified three parenting styles based on parental demandingness and responsiveness, which included authoritative parenting, authoritarian parenting, and permissive parenting (Bhandari & Bhatt2024). Parenting style is a psychological construct representing standard strategies that parents use in their child rearing. The quality of parenting can be more essential than the quantity of time spent with the child. For instance, a parent can spend an entire afternoon with his or her child, yet the parent may be engaging in a different activity and not demonstrating enough interest in the child. Parenting styles are the representation of how parents respond to and make demands on their children. Parenting practices are specific behaviours, while parenting styles represent broader patterns of parenting practices (Pérez, Kamenderi & Spera, 2022). There are various theories and opinions on the best ways to rear children, as well as differing levels of time and effort that parents are willing to invest.

How will you assess early research by Early research in parenting and child development found that parents who provide their children with proper nurture, independence, and firm control, have children who appear to have higher levels of competence and are socially skilled and proficient (Kadir & Isa, 2025). Additional developmental skills result from positive parenting styles including: maintaining a close relationship with others, being self-reliant and independence. During the mid-1980s, researchers began to explore how specific parenting styles influence a child's later development Igbinovia (2023).

From the above background, this study is set to investigate the impact of childhood maltreatment and parenting styles on the emotional well-being of children from military families in Jaji, Kaduna State Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Children from military families face unique challenges, including parental deployment, frequent relocation, and exposure to violence, which often leads to childhood maltreatment and ineffective parenting styles that exacerbate emotional distress. Childhood maltreatment including emotional, physical and psychological abuse or neglect has been linked to a range of negative outcomes that have been identified to have negative consequences on emotional well-being of Children from military families who face unique challenges due to the nature of military life, which often includes frequent relocations, long parental absences and high levels of stress due to the demanding and unpredictable military lifestyle. In Kaduna State, Nigeria, where military presence is significant, children of military personnel are particularly vulnerable to these stressors, which can be exacerbated by experiences of maltreatment or inadequate parenting approaches. However, due to limited research focusing on childhood maltreatment and parenting styles impacting on the emotional well-being of children of Military families in Kaduna State, the researcher was motivated to conduct this study to find out how these independent variables affect the emotional well-being of children of military families.

Literature Review

Conceptual Review

The conceptual review for this study consists of childhood maltreatment, parenting styles and emotional wellbeing

Emotional Well-being

According to Diener et al. (2010), emotional well-being is characterized by a preponderance of positive emotions over negative ones and overall life satisfaction. Emotional well-being has roots in various psychological theories, including humanistic psychology and positive psychology. Maslow's hierarchy of needs, for instance, places self-actualization at the top, which includes emotional fulfillment (Hanley, et al. 2020). Seligman's PERMA model of well-being emphasizes Positive emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment as key components of psychological well-being (Seligman, 2011).

According to Ryff and Keyes (1995): Emotional well-being is "a state where individuals feel good about themselves, maintain positive social relationships, have a purpose in life, can grow as individuals, achieve self-acceptance and demonstrate mastery over their environment". This definition emphasizes both internal and external factors that contribute to overall well-being. Diener et al. (1999) define emotional well-being, or subjective well-being, "refers to the presence of positive emotions and moods, the absence of negative emotions, satisfaction with life, fulfillment and positive functioning." This definition focuses on the balance between positive emotions and life satisfaction.

According to Fredrickson (2001), the broaden-and-build theory, defined by Fredrickson as emotional well-being, is "a state characterized by the frequent experience of positive emotions, which helps broaden thought-action repertoires and builds enduring personal resources." Fredrickson's definition links emotional well-being to the development of resilience and adaptive capabilities. According to Seligman, emotional well-being is part of "flourishing" and is defined as "the experience of positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment." This is part of his PERMA model, which views well-being as multi-dimensional and connected to personal growth and fulfillment (Seligman, 2011). WHO (WHO, 2014) describes emotional well-being as "a state of mental health in which the individual realizes their own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively, and can contribute to their community." This definition emphasizes coping, productivity, and the individual's role in society as part of their well-being.

Childhood Maltreatment

Child maltreatment refers to the physical, emotional, or psychological harm caused to a child, often by a caregiver or someone responsible for their well-being. It encompasses various forms of abuse and neglect, including physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2020), child maltreatment can lead to serious lifelong consequences for mental and physical health, affecting emotional well-being, development, and overall quality of

life. Child maltreatment has been a critical public health and social issue for centuries, manifesting in various forms and influenced by social, cultural, economic, and psychological factors. Child maltreatment is broadly defined as any form of abuse or neglect that causes harm or potential harm to a child under the age of 18 by a caregiver or a responsible adult. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2020) categorizes maltreatment into four main types: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect, with each type having serious implications for children's immediate and long-term health, development, and well-being.

The consequences of maltreatment are wide-ranging, affecting children's physical, mental, and emotional health. Children who experience maltreatment are at higher risk for developing behavioural problems, depression, anxiety, substance abuse issues, and other psychological challenges throughout their lives (Felitti et al., 1998).

In addition to individual health impacts, child maltreatment has high social and economic costs. Child maltreatment is associated with increased healthcare costs, lost productivity, and the need for additional services in education, criminal justice, and mental health. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the United States estimates that the total lifetime economic burden of child maltreatment is over \$124 billion each year, highlighting the need for prevention and intervention strategies at both individual and societal levels (Fang et al., 2012).

Efforts to prevent child maltreatment have evolved significantly, incorporating legal, policy, and public health strategies. Mandatory reporting laws require certain professionals (teachers, healthcare providers, and social workers) to report suspected cases of child maltreatment to authorities, while child protective services investigate reports and provides support for at-risk families. International organizations, such as the United Nations and the World Health Organization, have called for policies that protect children's rights and ensure their safety and well-being.

Parenting Styles

Parenting style can be simply defined as the mode of interaction between a person (as father or mother, or guardian) and his/her children. There are four distinct parenting styles: authoritarian, permissive, authoritative, and neglectful parenting styles (Baumrind, 1991). These four parenting styles are determined by what emphasis a parent puts on responsiveness (amount of warmth and attention the parent gives to the child) and demandingness, which refers to how much control the parent places on the child's behaviour (Baumrind, 1991).

According to Terkende (2023). Parenting styles or styles represent the different approaches caregivers adopt to raise and nurture children, often shaped by cultural values, personal beliefs, and social norms. Psychologists and child development experts have categorized these methods to better understand the impact of parenting on children's behavioural, emotional, and cognitive development. Key parenting styles, typically based on Diana Baumrind's

foundational research and later expanded by Maccoby and Martin, are commonly grouped into four main categories: authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful. Each style presents distinct approaches to discipline, communication, warmth, and expectations. Also, each has varying impacts on child development outcomes.

Authoritative Parenting

Authoritative parenting is characterized by a high level of responsiveness and high demands. Authoritative parents set clear expectations and boundaries but remain responsive, nurturing, and supportive. They encourage independence, provide reasons for rules, and emphasize open communication while also allowing children to voice their opinions and ask questions. Research indicates that children raised by authoritative parents tend to exhibit better psychological well-being, higher self-esteem, and greater social competence. They are also more likely to develop strong problem-solving skills and display lower levels of depression and anxiety (Baumrind, 1991; Maccoby & Martin, 1983). This style is associated with higher academic performance and stronger emotional regulation (Steinberg, 2001).

Authoritarian Parenting

Authoritarian parenting is defined by high demands but low responsiveness. Authoritarian parents enforce strict rules and expect obedience without question, using punishment as a means of discipline. They often prioritize discipline over open communication and may discourage independence or decision-making in children. Authoritarian parenting can lead to obedience and good behavioural control,

especially in the short term. However, research has shown that children raised in authoritarian households are more likely to experience anxiety, low self-esteem, and difficulties with social interaction.

Permissive Parenting

Permissive parenting is marked by high responsiveness but low demands. Permissive parents are nurturing and communicative, but often lack the structure, discipline, and consistency found in other parenting styles. These parents avoid setting firm boundaries and rarely enforce rules or expectations, which can lead to a lack of guidance in children's behaviour. Children raised by permissive parents are often described as impulsive, less self-disciplined, and more prone to behaviour issues. They may struggle with authority and tend to perform poorly academically due to a lack of structure in their formative years (Baumrind, 1971). Studies have also indicated that permissive parenting is associated with higher levels of emotional instability and lower self-control in children, as these children often do not learn appropriate coping strategies (Lamborn et al., 1991).

Neglectful (Uninvolved) Parenting

Neglectful or uninvolved parenting is characterized by low responsiveness and low demands. Neglectful parents may fulfill children's basic physical needs but are emotionally detached, unresponsive, and generally uninvolved in their children's lives. This parenting style can be either intentional, often due to parents' own issues (e.g., substance abuse, mental health issues), or unintentional, due to circumstances such as extreme poverty, lack of social support, or

excessive work demands.

Neglectful parenting is often associated with the most negative outcomes. Children from neglectful homes are at a significantly higher risk of developing emotional issues, behavioural problems, and academic difficulties. They may also experience low self-esteem, poor impulse control, and difficulties with relationships (Baumrind, 1991). In the absence of parental guidance, children may engage in risky behaviours or struggle with mental health issues such as depression and anxiety (Amato & Fowler, 2002). Neglectful parenting often reflects broader systemic issues, such as poverty, social isolation, or a lack of mental health resources, rather than deliberate choices. Addressing neglectful parenting requires a multifaceted approach that involves support services, community resources and mental health interventions.

Empirical Review

Child Maltreatment and Emotional Well-being

Childhood maltreatment is associated with mental health problems, but the extent to which this relationship is determined remains unclear. In determining how child maltreatment influences the emotional well-being of children, a systematic review and meta-analysis of quasi-experimental studies examining the relationship between childhood maltreatment and emotional well-being. Baldwin, et al (2023) examined the association between childhood maltreatment and mental health problems using a quasi-experimental method (twin/sibling differences design, Children of Twins design,

adoption design, fixed-effects design, random-intercept cross-lagged panel model, natural experiment, propensity score matching, or inverse probability weighting). The researcher identified 34 quasi-experimental studies, including 54,646 independent participants. Before quasi-experimental adjustment for confounding, childhood maltreatment was moderately associated with mental health problems (Cohen's $d=0.56$, 95% CI=0.41-0.71). Following quasi-experimental adjustment, a small association between childhood maltreatment and mental health problems remained (Cohen's $d=0.31$, 95% CI=0.24-0.37). This adjusted association between child maltreatment and mental health was consistent across different quasi-experimental methods and generalized across different psychiatric disorders. These findings are consistent with a small, causal contribution of childhood maltreatment to mental health problems. Furthermore, the findings suggest that part of the overall risk of mental health problems in individuals exposed to maltreatment is due to wider genetic and environmental risk factors. Therefore, preventing childhood maltreatment and addressing wider psychiatric risk factors in individuals exposed to maltreatment could help prevent psychopathology.

Childhood maltreatment and its influence on mental health are key concerns around the world. [Jiaxu, Xin, Xiaomei, and Yanhui](#), (2019) reviewed that previous studies have found that childhood maltreatment is a positive predictor of mental symptoms, but few studies have been done to explore the

specific mediating mechanisms between these two variables. Previous studies have found that there is a negative correlation between childhood maltreatment and emotional intelligence and between childhood maltreatment and social support, both of which are strong indicators of mental symptoms. Therefore, in this study, we took emotional intelligence and social support as mediating variables, exploring their mediating effects between childhood maltreatment and mental symptoms via the structural equation modeling method. We recruited 811 Chinese college students to complete the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ), the Symptom Checklist 90 Scale (SCL-90), the Wong Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS), and the Perceived Social Support Scale (PSSS). The results showed a significant and positive correlation between childhood maltreatment and mental symptoms; meanwhile, social support played a significant mediating role in the influence of childhood maltreatment on emotional intelligence; and emotional intelligence likewise played a significant mediating role in the effect of social support on mental symptoms. These results indicated that childhood maltreatment not only directly increases the likelihood of developing mental symptoms but also affects emotional intelligence through influencing social support and then indirectly increasing the likelihood of developing mental symptoms. This study provided a theoretical basis for ameliorating the adverse effects of childhood maltreatment on mental symptoms by enhancing emotional intelligence and social support.

Parenting Styles and Emotional Well-being

According to Fitri et al. (2022), the research examined the relationship between supportive parenting styles (warmth, structure, and autonomy support) and emotional well-being and whether they are mediated by basic psychological need satisfaction. It also explores thwarting parenting styles (rejection, chaos, and coercion) that may be associated with emotional ill-being, mediated by basic psychological needs frustration. This study involved 394 Indonesian adolescents aged 11–15 years old (49.5% boys, 50.5% girls) as the participants. We employed the structural equation model (SEM) analysis to evaluate the hypotheses. The research found that basic psychological needs satisfaction fully mediated the relationship between supportive parenting styles and emotional well-being; basic psychological needs fully mediated the relationship between thwarting parenting styles and emotional ill-being. Interestingly, the findings indicate that the thwarting parenting style positively influences basic psychological needs satisfaction. The research concludes that supportive parenting enhances the well-being of adolescents by satisfying their basic psychological needs. However, thwarting parental behaviours did not forestall the satisfaction of needs. The way Indonesian adolescents perceived the thwarting parenting style was discussed.

Awoyemi (2016) investigated the influence of parenting styles on psychological well-being and school adjustment of secondary school adolescents in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. It made use of a descriptive survey design. The simple sampling technique was used to

select 300 Senior Secondary School 1 (SSS 1) students, comprising 150 boys and 150 girls, with a mean age of 14.6 years and an age range of between 12 and 17 years. Data analysis involved the use of multiple regressions, chi-square at a 0.05 level of significance. The results indicated that parenting styles influence psychological well-being ($\chi^2 = 24.684$) and school adjustment ($\chi^2 = 22.020$), respectively. Also, the extent to which the three parenting styles contributed to psychological well-being was moderated ($R=0.34$ and $r^2=0.092$). The implications of these findings suggest that the line of communication and parental support should be responsive, warm, and open to the needs and challenges of the adolescent.

The study by Anyanwu (2023) investigated the influence of parental relationships on the psychological well-being of southeastern adolescents. A descriptive survey design was adopted for the study, with 4000 (2000 males and 2000 females) adolescents in senior secondary II from schools in Abia, Enugu, Imo, and Anambra States of Nigeria as the sample. A questionnaire whose reliability coefficient was 0.60 was used to collect information. The result showed that the adolescents have more emotional and social problems than personal problems, among others. The finding lends credence to Videon's (2005) report that parents (mothers and fathers) have a lot of influence on adolescent psychological well-being. It was recommended that guidance counselors should handle each adolescent problem with full knowledge of the cultural milieu and gender of clients, in addition to organizing family seminars on parenting practices and

parent/adolescent relationships.

Akinnawo et al (2019) research findings show that parenting style could potentially contribute to or hinder the lifetime success of a child's well-being into adulthood, including leadership roles. The influence of parenting style on the emotional well-being and psychological health of the Nigerian child has not been given adequate research attention. The study selected 332 in-school adolescents who responded to the Wong and Law Emotional Wellbeing Scale, Parenting Style Dimension Questionnaire (PSDQ), and General Health Questionnaire -12 (GHQ-12). Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for data analysis. Results patterns for low, high, and very high levels respectively showed that authoritative parenting style (45.5%, 41.6%, and 12.9%), authoritarian parenting style (53%, 30.7% and 16.3%); and permissive parenting style (64.2%, 20.7% and 15.1%). Authoritative as well as authoritarian parenting styles were observed to significantly predict Emotional well-being. Permissive parenting style failed to significantly predict Emotional well-being. Authoritative parenting style failed to significantly predict psychological distress, while authoritarian as well as permissive parenting styles were significant predictors of psychological distress. Conclusion: The Authors conclude that a child's emotional well-being and psychological health status are products of parenting style.

Research Questions

The following are the questions that are raised to guide this study:

- i. To what extent did childhood maltreatment influence emotional wellbeing of children

of military families residing in Jaji military cantonment Kaduna State Nigeria?

- ii. How does parenting styles influence emotional wellbeing of children of military families residing in Jaji military cantonment Kaduna State Nigeria?
- iii. To what extent did childhood maltreatment and parenting styles jointly influence emotional wellbeing of children of military families residing in Jaji military cantonment in Kaduna State Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses:

The following hypotheses were tested in the study:

- i. Childhood maltreatment will significantly predict emotional wellbeing of children of military families residing in Jaji military cantonment in Kaduna State Nigeria.
- ii. Parenting styles will significantly predict emotional wellbeing of children from military families residing in Jaji military cantonment in Kaduna State Nigeria.
- iii. Childhood maltreatment and parenting styles will jointly predict emotional wellbeing of children of military families in Kaduna State Nigeria.

Method

Design

This study employed a cross-sectional survey design to investigate Childhood Maltreatment and parenting styles on the emotional well-being of Children of Military families in Kaduna State-Nigeria.

Setting

This study was carried out in Jaji military cantonment, Kaduna State, Nigeria. Kaduna State is a [State](#) in the northwest geopolitical

zone of [Nigeria](#). Jaji Military Cantonment is one of the most significant military establishments in Nigeria, located in the Igabi Local Government Area of Kaduna State, in the northern region of the country. The cantonment was established in the early 1970s as part of the Nigerian government's post-civil war effort to modernize and professionalize the armed forces.

Participants

The participants for this study were 351 secondary school children between the ages of 9-17 years from military families residing in Jaji Military Cantonment, Kaduna State, Nigeria, who participated in the study. Out of the total number, 210 (59.8%) were males, while 141 (40.2%) were females. The data collected shows that 62 (17.7%) JSSI, 79 (22.5%) JSSII, 64 (18.2%) JSSIII, 67 (19.1%) SSSI, and 79 (22.5%) SSSII, respectively.

Instrument

Three instrument used for this study was a questionnaire; it was divided into the following sections.

Section A: Demographic information of the respondents such as age, gender, class of study.

Section B: Child Maltreatment and Abuse Scale

Section C: Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ)

Section D: Emotional Well-being Scale by Simsek (2011)

Procedure

The researcher first obtained a letter of introduction from the Department of Psychology, Nigerian Defense Academy, Kaduna, and presented it to the management of the Armed Forces Command and Staff College Command Secondary School, Jaji, which the researcher intends to visit for the study. The researcher trained four research assistants to become familiar with the instrument before they assisted in administering it.

The participants were given the instrument in their classes, and they were instructed on how to fill out the questionnaire. They were informed to feel free to indicate their answers on the questionnaire by placing a tick [] in the box provided. The participants were also informed to feel free to express their views on each of the items, as their views would not be used against them but only to be used purely for research purposes. This was done to establish rapport. In the end, the researcher collected the questionnaire from the participants with the help of research assistants and thanked the respondents for their participation.

Method of Data Analysis

The data for this study were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics involving frequencies, simple percentages, mean, and standard deviations were used to analyze the demographic characteristics of the respondents. While hypotheses one, two, and three were tested using Multiple regression.

Results

Table 1: Inter-correlations among the study variables

Variables	N	Mean	SD	1	2	3
1 Childhood maltreatment	351	54.28	6.07	-		
2 Parenting Styles	351	222.40	18.82	.623**	-	
3 Emotional Wellbeing	351	66.49	9.61	.764**	.476**	-

** = P<.01

Table 1 presents the means and standard deviations of the study variables. The results of intercorrelations for the study variables presented in Table 1 show that all the variables of the study had statistically significant relationships among the study variables. It can be observed that the highest relationship amongst the variables of the study exists between parenting styles and emotional well-being [r (351) = .764, P< .05]. followed by the relationship between Childhood maltreatment and emotional well-being [r (351) = .623, p<.05]. It can also be

observed that the relationship between parenting styles and Childhood maltreatment [r (351) = .476, p<.05].

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1 stated that Childhood maltreatment will significantly influence the emotional well-being of children of military families residing in Jaji military cantonment in Kaduna State, Nigeria. Multiple regression was used to test the significance of this hypothesis, and the results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of Multiple Regressions showing the influence of Childhood maltreatment on the emotional well-being of children of military families residing in Jaji military cantonment in Kaduna State Nigeria.

Predictor Variable	R	R ²	df	F	t	Sig
Constant	.821	.382	346	503.984	3.717	.000
Physical Abuse				.099	5.413	.680
Sexual Abuse				.273	5.920	.007
Emotional Abuse				-.124	-2.690	.000
Affection Abuse				.887	3.704	.000

The results in table.2 show that the model, which included four predictors: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and affection abuse, was statistically significant, [R. .821, R² = .382, F(4,346)=503.984, P<.01], indicating that childhood maltreatment jointly influences emotional well-being. The model produced a multiple correlation coefficient (R) of .821 and an R²

value of .382, suggesting that approximately 38.2% of the variance in emotional well-being is explained by the combined effects of the predictors. The coefficients table further reveals that sexual abuse (β = .273, t = 5.920, p < .001), emotional abuse (β = -.124, t = -2.690, p = .007), and affection abuse (β = .887, t = 3.704, p < .001) were significant influence of emotional wellbeing, while

physical abuse ($\beta = .099, t = .413, p = .680$) was not statistically significant. This implies that higher levels of sexual, emotional, and affection-related forms of abuse significantly influence the emotional well-being of children in military families, either positively or negatively, depending on the direction of the relationship. Overall, the hypothesis that childhood maltreatment significantly influences emotional well-being was

supported.

Hypothesis II stated that parenting styles will significantly influence the emotional well-being of children from military families residing in Jaji military cantonment in Kaduna State, Nigeria. Multiple regression was used to test for the significance of this hypothesis, and the results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Summary of Multiple Regressions showing the influence of Parenting Styles on Emotional Wellbeing of Children from military families residing in Jaji military cantonment in Kaduna State Nigeria

Predictor Variable	R	R ²	df	F	β	t	Sig
Constant	.924	.464	347	673.531		3.723	.000
Authoritative Parenting					.273	5.926	.000
Authoritarian Parenting					-.123	-2.686	.008
Permissive Parenting					.985	41.305	.000

The hypothesis, which stated that parenting styles will significantly influence the emotional well-being of children from military families residing in Jaji Military Cantonment, Kaduna State, Nigeria, was tested using multiple regression analysis. The results, as presented in the Model Summary table, revealed a multiple correlation coefficient (R) of .924, indicating a very strong positive relationship between the combined parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive) and emotional well-being. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = .464$) shows that approximately 92.4% of the variance in children's emotional well-being can be explained by the three parenting styles. The adjusted R^2 value of .464 further suggests that the model is a very good fit and remains robust even after adjusting for the number of predictors.

The ANOVA table confirms that the overall regression model was statistically significant, $F(3, 347) = 673.531, p < .001$, implying that the set of parenting style variables jointly influences emotional well-being among children from military families in Jaji Cantonment. This indicates that the model reliably predicts the dependent variable.

The coefficients table provides insights into the individual contribution of each parenting style. The unstandardized coefficients show that for every one-unit increase in permissive parenting, emotional well-being increases by 0.624 units ($\beta = .985, t = 41.305, p < .001$), making it the strongest and most significant predictor in the model. Similarly, authoritative parenting has a positive and significant influence on emotional well-being ($B = .173, \beta = .273, t = 5.926, p < .001$),

suggesting that as the level of authoritative parenting increases, the emotional well-being of children also improves. On the other hand, authoritarian parenting has a negative and significant influence on emotional well-being ($B = -.080, \beta = -.123, t = -2.686, p = .008$), indicating that a higher level of authoritarian parenting is associated with lower emotional well-being among the children. Therefore, the hypothesis that parenting styles will significantly influence

the emotional well-being of children from military families is accepted.

Hypothesis 3: This hypothesis stated that Childhood maltreatment and parenting styles will jointly influence the emotional well-being of children of military families in Kaduna State, Nigeria. The hypothesis was tested using Standard Multiple Regression, and the result is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Summary of Standard Multiple Regressions showing joint influence of Childhood maltreatment and Parenting Styles on Emotional Wellbeing of Children of military families in Kaduna State Nigeria

Predictor Variable	R	R ²	df	F	β	t	Sig
Constant	.575	.276	348	5395.746		5.461	.000
Childhood Maltreatment					.298	22.677	.000
Parenting Styles					.199	10.280	.000

The result presented in Table 4 above shows that Childhood maltreatment and parenting styles jointly influence the emotional well-being of children of military families in Kaduna State, Nigeria [$R = .575, R^2 = .276, F(2, 348) = 5395.7746, P < .05$]. This result showed that Childhood maltreatment and parenting styles jointly contributed 27.6% to emotional well-being. Based on this result, the hypothesis was therefore confirmed. Furthermore, the result indicated that independently, Childhood Maltreatment ($\beta = .298, P < .05$) made the highest contribution to emotional well-being, while parenting styles ($\beta = .199, P > .05$) contributed to emotional well-being.

Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

Hypothesis one, which stated that Childhood maltreatment will significantly influence the

emotional well-being of children of military families residing in Jaji Military Cantonment in Kaduna State, Nigeria. Simple Linear regression was used to test for the significance of this hypothesis, and the results showed that Childhood maltreatment significantly influences the emotional well-being of children of military families residing in Jaji Military Cantonment in Kaduna State, Nigeria. Based on this result, the hypothesis was therefore confirmed. This result is consistent with the findings of Baldwin (2023), whose study reported the association between childhood maltreatment and mental health problems using a quasi-experimental method (twin/sibling differences design, Children of Twins design, adoption design, fixed-effects design, random-intercept cross-lagged panel model, natural experiment, propensity score matching or inverse probability weighting). Following quasi-

experimental adjustment, there is an association between childhood maltreatment and mental health problems. The association between child maltreatment and mental health was consistent across different quasi-experimental methods and generalized across different psychiatric disorders. These findings are consistent with a small, causal contribution of childhood maltreatment to mental health problems.

This result agrees with the findings of Jiayu et al (2019), where in their study they reported that childhood maltreatment directly increases the likelihood of developing mental symptoms and affects the emotional well-being of children. The results showed a significant and positive correlation between childhood maltreatment and mental symptoms; meanwhile, social support played a significant mediating role in the influence of childhood maltreatment on emotional intelligence, and emotional well-being likewise played a significant mediating role in the effect of social support on mental symptoms. These results indicate that childhood maltreatment not only directly increases the likelihood of developing mental symptoms but also affects emotional well-being through influencing social support and then indirectly increasing the likelihood of developing mental symptoms. This study provided a theoretical basis for ameliorating the adverse effects of childhood maltreatment on mental symptoms by enhancing emotional well-being and social support.

Hypothesis two, which stated that parenting styles will significantly influence the emotional well-being of children from

military families residing in Jaji Military Cantonment in Kaduna State, Nigeria. Standard Multiple Regression was used to test for the significance of this hypothesis, and the results showed that parenting styles significantly influenced the emotional well-being of children from military families residing in Jaji Military Cantonment in Kaduna State, Nigeria. Based on this result, the hypothesis was therefore confirmed. This result agrees with the findings of Fitri et al (2022) research, which examined the relationship between supportive parenting styles (warmth, structure, and autonomy support) and emotional well-being and whether they are mediated by basic psychological need satisfaction. The research found that basic psychological needs satisfaction fully mediated the relationship between supportive parenting styles and emotional well-being; basic psychological needs fully mediated the relationship between thwarting parenting styles and emotional ill-being.

Again, the results of this study also corroborate the findings of Awoyemi (2016) that parenting style influences psychological well-being and school adjustment of secondary school adolescents in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. The results indicated that parenting styles influence psychological well-being; also, the extent to which the three parenting styles contributed to psychological well-being was moderated. In the same way, Akinawo et al (2021) research findings showed that parenting style could potentially contribute to or hinder the lifetime success of a child's well-being into adulthood, including leadership roles. The influence of parenting style on the emotional well-being and

psychological health of the Nigerian child has not been given adequate research attention. The Results showed a high-level correlation of parenting styles to child emotional well-being, respectively showing that authoritative parenting style, authoritarian parenting style, and permissive parenting style all were observed to significantly predict Emotional well-being. The study concludes that a child's emotional well-being and psychological health status are products of parenting style.

Hypothesis three, which stated that Childhood maltreatment and parenting styles will jointly influence the emotional well-being of children of military families in Kaduna State, Nigeria. The hypothesis was tested using Standard Multiple Regression, and the result shows that Childhood maltreatment and parenting styles jointly predicted emotional well-being of children of military families in Kaduna State, Nigeria. This result showed that Childhood maltreatment and parenting styles jointly contributed 57.5% to emotional well-being. Based on this result, the hypothesis was therefore confirmed. Furthermore, the result indicated that independently, pathological internet use ($\beta = .298, P < .05$) made the highest contribution to emotional well-being, while parenting styles ($\beta = .199, P > .05$) contributed to emotional well-being. There is a paucity of research in this area; therefore, the present study serves as a foundational reference and a starting point for future researchers interested in this field.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that the emotional well-being of

children from military families residing in Jaji Military Cantonment, Kaduna State, Nigeria, is significantly influenced by both childhood maltreatment and parenting styles. The results demonstrate that exposure to childhood maltreatment adversely affects the emotional well-being of these children. Importantly, the joint influence of childhood maltreatment and parenting styles further underscores the complex interplay between adverse childhood experiences and family dynamics in determining the emotional well-being of children in military families in Kaduna State, Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made.

- I. Military institutions in Kaduna State should design and implement structured parental education programs that emphasize positive parenting practices, emotional support, and non-violent disciplinary strategies. Such training will help parents adopt healthier parenting styles that foster emotional resilience and well-being in their children.
- ii. There is a need to establish functional child protection units within Jaji Military Cantonment. These units should focus on early detection of maltreatment, confidential reporting systems, and provision of professional counselling services for affected children. This intervention would mitigate the negative effects of maltreatment on children's emotional development.
- iii. The Nigerian military should integrate child and family welfare policies into

its broader personnel management system. Policies should mandate periodic assessments of children's well-being, incorporate child-centered support in deployment and relocation decisions, and promote programs that balance military duties with family responsibilities. This will ensure a protective environment where children's emotional well-being is safeguarded despite the challenges of military life.

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