

# CHILDHOOD SEXUAL ABUSE AMONG UNDERGRADUATES OF EBONYI STATE UNIVERSITY, ABAKALIKI: PERSONALITY TRAIT, SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND LONELINESS AS PREDICTORS VARIABLES

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## Abstract

This study investigated childhood sexual abuse among undergraduates of Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki: personality trait, substance abuse and loneliness as predictors variables. A total of 228 participants comprising undergraduates were sampled from Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. Their ages ranged between 17 to 27 years with a mean of 21.54. The study adopted a cross sectional survey design. The instruments used for data collection included Personality trait inventory, substance abuse questionnaire, loneliness scale and childhood sexual abuse scale. Results of stepwise multiple regression showed that personality traits: extraversion, neuroticism personality, openness to experience, substance abuse and loneliness statistically and significantly predict childhood sexual abuse. Agreeableness ( $\beta = .18$ ,  $p = > 0.01$ ) and conscientiousness ( $\beta = .06$ ,  $p = > 0.01$ ) do not statistical and significantly predictors of childhood sexual abuse. The study concludes that school administrators should always deem it necessary to understand substance abuser and personality traits of an individual that are vulnerable to childhood sexual abuse. The study recommends that government should make some laws and policies through which an immediate actions can be taken against the offenders and abusers childhood sexual abuse.

**Key words:** Personality trait, substance abuse, loneliness, childhood sexual abuse, undergraduates.

## Introduction

Childhood sexual abuse had become emerging psychological, sociological, emotional, social and mental health burden to our society today with prevalent rates as high as 8 percent in parts of West African especially Nigeria. In recent year, 45% to 65% of female and 15 to 25% of male globally were victims of childhood sexual abuse or adolescent sexual abuse (World Health Organization, 2020; Burnett, & Thomas, 2016; Roland, 2012). Childhood sexual abuse (CSA) is a complex life experience that has become the subject of great community and societal concern and the focus of many researchers, scholars, policy makers, legislative and professional initiatives towards expanding body of knowledge on childhood sexual abuse, (Allen, Gilbody, Atkin, & Van der Feltz-Cornelis, 2023; Maltz, 2020; Laila, Abdenbi, Badr, & Benjelloun, 2016).

Globally, it has been observed that sexual abuse children suffer from various problems such as personality disorders, loneliness, substance abuse, depression, unintentional injury, mental health

problems and child abuse, which pose serious menace to the young children's mental and psychological health (Allen, Gilbody, Atkin, & Van der Feltz-Cornelis, 2023; McCollum, 2023). Childhood sexual abuse is any sexual contact with a child that occurs when the offender is significantly older than the child, is in a position of authority over a child, or the actions are perpetrated using violence, force, threat, dishonesty, deceit, or child who is incapable of consenting due to age, disability or power of differential. It also includes: touching of the breasts, buttocks and genitals, whether the victim is dressed or undressed, fellatio, cunnilingus and penetration of the vagina or anus with sexual organs or with objects as well as watching of pornographic photography (Stea, Steigen, Dangmann, Granrud & Bonsaksen, 2023; World Health Organization, 2020; Maltz, 2020; Finkelhor, 2016).

According to Tracy (2008) there are four kinds of childhood sexual abuse (Physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect). Physical abuse is any kind of actual or potential physical harm to the children. Sexual abuse is using children for sexual satisfaction. Emotional abuse is unable to promote a supportive environment for children or inadequate/inappropriate responses to children's emotional development. Child neglect can be defined as putting the children under some circumstances in which their basic needs such as; feeding, sheltering, having proper clothes, being safe, being loved, having the necessary care for health, education, and socialization could not be met by their caregivers and it creates a possibility or a potential harm on children's physical, psychological, and emotional health and well-being (Wang, Xu, & Sun, 2022; Smith & Fong, 2004). Research has showed that experience to childhood sexual abuse is linked with personality (Muhammad, 2023; Fujimura and Shimura, et al, 2023; Mohamedamin, & Fatahi, 2022; Moran et al., 2011).

Personality is defined as an individual's entire repertoire of relatively stable and enduring behaviours, emotion, thoughts, cognition, feelings, emotions, interpersonal functioning and psychophysical system that create individual or person's unique characteristic patterns of behaviour (Enyioha, 2018; John, Robins, & Pervin, 2008). Personality traits are identified by the consistent pattern of behaviour that an individual who possesses such traits exhibit over time (Uzoeshi, 2004; Picken, 2012; Bling, 2018; Chin-Lu, 2014; Tracy. 2016). Researchers have also found a relationship between childhood sexual abuse and adult personality characteristics (Moran et al., 2011). Costa and McCrae (1995) classified personality trait into five domains: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience. Extraversion (deals with individuals characteristics such as gregariousness, assertiveness, activity, excitement-seeking, positive emotions, and warmth), agreeableness (is makeup of altruism, modesty, trust, tender-mindedness, compliance, and straightforwardness, conscientiousness (deals with achievement, dutifulness, self-discipline, competence, and deliberation, neuroticism (is measured by anxiety, angry hostility, depression, self-consciousness, vulnerability, and impulsiveness., openness (is characterized through ideas, aesthetics, fantasy, actions, feelings, and values (John et al., 2008).

Previous research suggests that a history of childhood sexual abuse is related to higher levels of extraversion, neuroticism, and openness to experience (Harden et al., 2015; Allen & Lauterbach,

2007). Harden and colleagues (2015) also found that a history of CSA is related to lower levels of conscientiousness. Muhammad, (2023) examined personality trait of psychoticism and academic performance as correlates of adolescent neglect among senior secondary school students in Sokoto metropolis. Descriptive survey design format was used. The total 18, 234 from 47 senior secondary schools as documented from Sokoto State Ministry for Basic and Secondary Education. Two instruments were used for data collection. Pearson correlation was used to test the first and second hypotheses, and independent sample t-test was also used to test the third hypothesis. Results revealed that there is significant relationship between adolescent neglect and psychoticism trait of personality, and between neglect of adolescents and academic performance.

Fujimura and Shimura, et al (2023) examine neuroticism mediates the association between childhood abuse and the well-being of community dwelling adult volunteers and found that effect of childhood abuse on subjective well-being was indirect and was mediated by neuroticism. Also neuroticism has effect on the negative outcome, but not positive, change score on the Life Experiences Survey was significant. The indirect effect of neuroticism on subjective well-being was not significant via either negative or positive change scores.

Mohamedamin, and Fatahi, (2022) examine relationship between personality traits and violence involvement - a study of high school students in northern Iraq. The result showed a significant positive correlation between extraversion, neuroticism, and violence involvement. Also agreeableness, openness, and conscientiousness were negatively correlated. Furthermore results indicate that personality traits neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness, openness, and conscientiousness predicted violence among students. Ménard, Dowgwillo, and Pincus, (2018) their work on gender, child maltreatment, alcohol expectancies, and personality pathology on relationship violence among undergraduates using a total 2441 Male and female students'. Four instrument were used for data collection which comprise of childhood maltreatment, alcohol expectancies, and narcissistic personality traits. Z tests of the correlations and t tests of means were used for data analysis. Result revealed that men and women statistically and significantly differ on childhood sexual abuse. Relationship violence was associated with child sexual abuse for both men and women, whereas high scores on negative alcohol expectancies and vulnerable narcissism, and low scores on grandiose narcissism, were significantly associated with violence for men only. Also, z tests revealed the regression coefficients for child sexual abuse and negative alcohol expectancies were significantly different for men and women. Child sexual abuse and alcohol expectancies had stronger associations with men's than women's violent behaviour. In addition, the models explained a greater amount of variance in men's than in women's behavior.

Harms, (2018) examine the influence of childhood sexual abuse (CSA) and personality in predicting risk recognition among college-aged women. The subject comprise of 223 female undergraduate students at Illinois State University. Big Five Inventory, and a risk recognition vignette that was divided into 13 scenes and were asked to indicate when they were no longer comfortable in the situation and when they would leave the situation. Over a third of participants (37.7%) reported a history of childhood sexual abuse and were placed in the CSA group. Childhood sexual abuse was not related to higher response latency. Furthermore childhood sexual

abuse was found to be related to higher levels of negative affectivity, psychoticism, and disinhibition, as well as higher levels of neuroticism and lower levels of agreeableness. Neuroticism was significantly negatively correlated with risk recognition. Also, psychoticism and neuroticism were significantly related to risk recognition when controlling for other variables.

Vaz. Et al, (2021) examined the association between personality traits and parenting styles in boys victims of sexual abuse (SA) using sixty-two (62) boys who were divided into two groups: Victims and non-victims. Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ-J) and the Parenting Styles Inventory (PSI). The intelligence quotient (IQ) were used to elicit formation from the participants. Results revealed that SA victims had higher neuroticism ( $p < 0.001$ ) and identified riskier parental practices, while the comparison group reported good parental practices ( $p < 0.05$ ). The results of the logistic regression analysis showed that higher negative paternal parental style scores increase the chance of belonging to the victims group. Ghezelseflo and Rostami (2015). Relationship of child abuse with personality features and high riskbehaviors in adolescents. Results of independence t-test indicated significant differences between girls and boys in terms of child abuse and high risk experience ( $t = -2.16$ ,  $p = 0.03$  and  $t = -5.03$ ,  $P = 0.001$ , respectively). Also, the results demonstrated a significant relationship between child abuse and personality characteristics, high risk behavior and all its subscales ( $P < 0.05$ ). The findings of multiple linear regression indicated that child abuse could explain 14% total risk-taking, 25% neurotic personality feature , 14% extroversion, 10% agreeableness, 1% flexibility and 13% conscientiousness ( $P < 0.05$ ).

In this research, the researchers sought to quantify the association between childhood sexual abuse and personality and identify individuals with childhood sexual abuse histories that may be at increased risk of personality disorders. Substance abuse is implicated in this research work as it's predict childhood sexual behaviour (Stea, Steigen, Dangmann, Granrud & Bonsaksen, 2023; McCollum, 2023). Substance abuse is defined as harmful or hazardous use of psychoactive substances (alcohol, Cannabis, Amphetamine-type stimulants, diazepam, chlorpromazine, heroine cocaine tobacco) that result to negative health consequences experienced by its users and put a heavy financial burden on individuals, families and society. Substance abuse is a pattern of compulsive substance use marked by recurrent significant social, occupational, legal, or interpersonal adverse consequences, such as repeated absences from work or school, arrests, and marital difficulties (Oluwagbemiga Johnson, Bolajoko, Giro, Rasheed, & Tulushe, 2022; Kaliszewski, 2022; Ogundare & Ghebrehwet, .et al, 2022). Previous research that suggested childhood sexual abuse and substance abuse are Stea, Steigen, Dangmann, Granrud and Bonsaksen, (2023) investigated the associations between exposure to sexual abuse, substance use, adverse health outcomes, and use of youth health services among Norwegian adolescents. Results revealed a significant interaction between sexual abuse and smoking that was associated with increased odds of having suicidal thoughts for males but a decreased odds of having suicidal thoughts and have conducted suicide attempts once or more for females. McCollum (2023) investigated the associations between childhood sexual abuse, adult sexual assault experiences, psychological distress, and substance use and found that Results indicate positive correlations

between Childhood sexual abuse, psychological distress, problematic drinking, and drug use. Further, there was an indirect effect of CSA on substance use through ASA, but not psychological distress.

Oluwagbemiga Johnson, Bolajoko, Giro, Rasheed, and Tolushe (2022) examined substance abuse and sexual frequency among youths: implications for sexually transmitted infections in Nigeria and found that reveals that the estimate incidence of relative risk (IRR) of substance abuse on sexual frequency confirmed a positive significant effects for both adjusted and unadjusted data (Smoking cigarette; consuming alcohol everyday unadjusted adjusted OR=1.40 P-value=.000). While a significant relationship between substance abuse, sexual frequency, and likelihood of contracting STIs was established in the study. Ogundare, and Ghebrehiwet, .et al (2022) investigated risky sexual behaviors and substance use among youths in post-conflict Liberia found that substance use increases the risk of engaging in risky sexual behaviors among youths in Liberia. Kaliszewski, (2022). The effects of Substance abuse on survivors of child abuse substance abuse can have serious and long-lasting consequences for survivors of child abuse. It can lead to physical health problems, like liver and heart disease; exacerbate mental health problems; and result in overdoses. It can also make it more difficult for individuals to cope with the trauma of child abuse, interfering with the ability to process and work through challenging emotions, which makes it harder to heal from the abuse.. Evans, and Reed (2021) in their study on the impulsivity and the effects of alcohol in women with a history of childhood sexual abuse and found that impulsivity can lead to hazardous drinking, and alcohol consumption can further increase impulsivity, putting women with CSA at increased risk for sexual victimization, particularly in the context of alcohol use. Other researchers that supported the view that substance abuse predict childhood sexual abuse are (Hogarth, Martin and Seedat, 2019; Griffith, France, Bacchus & Ortega, 2018; Skinner, Kristman-Valente, & Herrenkohl, 2016; Lil & Shields, 2011; Smith, Smith, & Grekin, 2014).

Another psychological variables of interest in this research is loneliness. Loneliness has recently emerged as a major focus of research (Mohammadi, (2023). Allen, Gilbody, Atkin, and Van der Feltz-Cornelis, (2023) defines loneliness as "an enduring condition of emotional distress that arises when a person feels estranged from, misunderstood, or rejected by others. Adults who were victimized as children report feelings of fear, disgust, intense shame, and loneliness (Turner, 2013). Individuals who have been violated often isolate themselves from their family, friends, teachers, and/or co-workers (Wang, Xu, & Sun 2022). Coriena de Heer, Bi, Finkenauer, Alink, & Maes (2022) found feelings of isolation to be significantly more prevalent in a sample of sexually abused women compared to those who had not been abused.

Jehu (2018) found feelings of isolation or alienation from others, mistrust of others, insecurity in relationships, limited social skills, and a feeling of difference from others in a majority of his subjects. Marshal (2016) work on intimacy, loneliness and sexual offenders and found that the failure to achieve intimacy in relations with adults produces emotional loneliness, which leads to an aggressive disposition and a tendency to pursue sex with diverse partners in the hope of finding intimacy through sexuality or through less threatening partners. Gibson and Hartshorne

(2017) research on childhood sexual abuse and adult loneliness and network orientation found that victims of sexual abuse tend to isolate themselves from others.

Mohammadi, (2023) examined educational effect of the family on the feeling of security: the mediating role of loneliness in the correlation between childhood abuse and psychological security. The result revealed that childhood abuse experiences have a direct relationship with psychological security and an indirect effect on psychological security due to loneliness .In addition, the feeling of loneliness had a direct effect on psychological security.Allen, Gilbody, Atkin, and Van der Feltz-Cornelis, (2023) in their study on associations among childhood trauma, loneliness, mental health symptoms, and indicators of social exclusion in adulthood using hierarchical multiple regression models indicated small associations between childhood trauma and social exclusion outcomes, explaining between 1.5% and 5.0% of the variance. Associations weakened but remained significant when loneliness, anxiety, and depression were entered in the models; however, anxiety symptoms demonstrated a negative association with “individual deprivation” and “social exclusion” in the final models. Depression was most strongly associated with “individual deprivation,” “area deprivation,” and “social exclusion” followed by childhood trauma. Loneliness was most strongly associated with “limited social participation. Wang, Xu, and Sun (2022) examine loneliness and coping skill mediate the association between child maltreatment and depression for rural males and females and found that child maltreatment was more common and severe in males than females. Loneliness and coping skills partially mediated the relationship between child maltreatment and depression in males, but loneliness fully mediated the relationship between child maltreatment and depression in females.

Matthews, Caspi, Danese, Fische, Moffitt, and Arseneault, (2020) examined a longitudinal twin study of victimization and loneliness from childhood to young adulthood. The results indicated that exposure to different forms of victimization was associated with loneliness in a dose–response manner. In childhood, bullying victimization was uniquely associated with loneliness, over and above concurrent psychopathology, social isolation, and genetic risk. Moreover, childhood bullying victimization continued to predict loneliness in young adulthood, even in the absence of ongoing victimization. Within-twin pair analyses further indicated that this longitudinal association was explained by genetic confounds. In adolescence, varied forms of victimization were correlated with young adult loneliness, with maltreatment, neglect, and cybervictimization remaining robust to controls for genetic confounds. These findings indicate that vulnerability to loneliness in victimized young people varies according to the specific form of victimization in question, and also to the developmental period in which it was experienced.

Coriena de Heer, Bi, Finkenauer, Alink, and Maes (2022) examined the association between child maltreatment and loneliness across the lifespan: a systematic review and multilevel meta-analysis. Results indicated that individuals with maltreatment histories, on average, feel lonelier than individuals without maltreatment histories. Moderator analyses showed that effect sizes were larger for emotional abuse and emotional neglect as compared to other types of child maltreatment and decreased when participants were older at the time of loneliness assessment.

These findings suggest that individuals with maltreatment histories, especially those who have been emotionally abused and/or emotionally neglected, are vulnerable to experiencing loneliness across the lifespan. The results also suggest that feelings of loneliness warrant attention in prevention and intervention programs for individuals with maltreatment histories. Other scholars that investigate the predictive roles of loneliness and childhood sexual behaviour are (Başoğlu, 2019; Kurt, Bumby, David & Hansen, 2015; Louise, Hawkley, John, & Cacioppo, 2016; Newcomb & Bentler, 2016; Rook, 2014).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Examining how the combined influence of personality trait, substance abuse and loneliness predict childhood sexual abuse among undergraduate of Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki.

Personality trait is one of the psychological variable that seem to have both positive and negative influence on childhood sexual abuse in the western and non-western culture as such there is need to investigate the dimensions of personality as predictive variables on childhood sexual abuse. Also it is important to identify personality characteristics of vulnerable groups, as well as to explore the potential role played by personality trait on childhood sexual abuse.

Regardless of abundance of study on personality trait, substance abuse, loneliness and childhood sexual abuse as independent topics, there is a gap in the literature and practical knowledge regarding the predictive and inter-relationships among these variables of interest.

Moreover, irrespective of the venerable gender, researchers are consistently with the body of evidence that links childhood sexual abuse with mental health, emotional, cognitive, psychological and behavioral disorders. However, there is still a need for more researchers on personality dimension, substance abuse and loneliness on childhood sexual abuse among undergraduate.

### **Research Questions**

1. Will personality trait significantly predict childhood sexual abuse among undergraduates of Ebonyi State University Abakaliki?
2. Will substance abuse significantly predict childhood sexual abuse among undergraduates of Ebonyi State University Abakaliki?
3. Will loneliness significantly predict childhood sexual abuse among undergraduate of Ebonyi State University?

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study include:

1. Examine whether personality trait will significantly predict childhood sexual abuse among undergraduates of Ebonyi State University.
2. To investigate whether substance abuse will significantly predict childhood sexual abuse among undergraduate of Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki.
3. To ascertain whether loneliness will significantly predict childhood sexual abuse among undergraduate Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki..

### **Hypotheses**

1. Personality trait will statistically and significantly predict childhood sexual abuse among undergraduate Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki.

2. Substance abuse will statistically and significantly predict childhood sexual abuse among undergraduate Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki.
3. Loneliness will statistically and significantly predict childhood sexual abuse among undergraduate Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki.

## **Method**

### **Participants**

A total of two hundred and twenty eight (228) undergraduates of Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki comprising 178 females (85.7%) and 50 males (14.3%) who were drawn through convenient sampling techniques. Their ages ranged from 17 to 27 years with a mean of 21.54 and standard deviation of 10.47.

### **Instruments**

Four instruments were used for this study

#### **The Big Five Inventory (BFI; Goldberg, 1993).**

This is a 44- item inventory developed by John Donahue & Kentle (1990). It assesses personality from five distinct dimensions. Extraversion (8 items), Agreeableness (9 items), conscientiousness (9 item), Neuroticism (8 item) and openness to experience (10 items), According to Omolluabi (2002). BFI was adapted for the use of professionals in Nigeria after several years of research at standardizing it, in order to enhance its suitability and relevance for Nigerians. John Donahue & Kentle (1991) reported a cronbach alpha coefficient of reliability of .80 and a 3 month test retest reliability of .85 for the BFI. The authors also reported mean convergent validity coefficient of .75 and .85 with the big five instruments authored by Costa & McCrae (1992) and Goldberg (1992) respectively. Using a Nigerian sample, Umeh (2004) obtained the following divergent validity coefficient with University Maladjustment scale (Kleinmontz, 1961): Extraversion = .05, Agreeableness = .13. Conscientiousness = .11, Neuroticism = .39 and openness to Experience = .24. Oginyi, Ofoke, Nwonyi, Ekwo, and Nwoba (2018) reported the cronbach alpha coefficient of reliability of .78

#### **Psychoactive Substance Use Questionnaire (PSUQ: Eze (2006)).**

Psychoactive Substance Use Questionnaire (PSUQ): PSUQ, developed by Eze (2006), is a 6-item measure of the frequency of substance use. The items are scaled on a 4-point Likert format as follows: never used it = 0, used it not more than twice in a week = 1, used it less than thrice in a week = 2, used it more than thrice in a week = 3, used it frequently in the past but stopped = 4. Substances included in the instrument were alcohol, tobacco, heroine, cannabis, cigarette, kola-nut and amphetamine. Sample items in the scale are; "how often do you take alcoholic drink", and "how often do you smoke cannabis". High scores on the questionnaire represent high substance abuse. As reported by Eze (2006), the instrument has content validity and test – retest reliability index ( $r = .61$ ). Reliability analysis and confirmatory factor analysis yielded good fit for the present study.

**UCLA Loneliness Scale (Russell, 1996).**

The University of California, Los Angeles Loneliness Scale (UCLA-LS), developed by Russell, Peplau and Ferguson (1978) is a 20-item instrument designed to measure individuals' subjective feelings of loneliness as well as feelings of social isolation. Sample items include "I am unhappy doing so many things alone", "I am no longer close to anyone", "People are around me but not with me", etc. Participants are required to rate each item as either O ("I often feel this way"), S ("I sometimes feel this way"), R ("I rarely feel this way"), N ("I never feel this way"). The developers reported high reliability, both in terms of internal consistency (coefficient  $\alpha$  ranging from .89 to .94) and test-retest reliability over a 1-year period ( $r = .73$ ). Reliability and confirmatory factor analysis yielded good fits for the present study.

**Assessment of childhood maltreatment**

Childhood maltreatment was diagnosed with the shorter version of the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ) (Bernstein et al., 2003). It was validated for community and clinical samples with good reliability and validity (Grassi- Oliveira et al., 2014). The CTQ is composed of 28 questions that evaluate the subtype of maltreatment experience (emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional neglect, and physical neglect) as well as its intensity through a five-point Likert scale. The cut-off mild-high was used in accordance with the author's manual. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of this questionnaire was 0.93, which indicates the high internal consistency.

**Procedure**

The researcher obtained a letter from the Office of Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities and the Heads of all the Departments that make up Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities (Psychology and Sociological Studies, Economics, Political Science and Mass Communication department) in the Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. for the study. Afterwards, the researcher and the research assistants administered the questionnaires to the participants.

Before administering the questionnaire, the researcher created rapport with the participants, in which case the participants were told that the exercise is purely for academic research purpose.

Participants equally assured that their responses will be treated with utmost confidentiality and that participation in the study will be voluntary participation and can withdraw at any time. The five instruments were distributed to the participants through a luck dip containing "YES". and "NO". Yes means that the participants will be administered questionnaire, while "NO" means exclusion of the participant in the study. A total of two hundred and twenty eight (228) (228) copies of questionnaires were distributed and collected for data analysis.

**Design/Statistics**

The design of the study was cross-sectional survey design and stepwise multiple regression was also used for data analysis with the aid of Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) version 25.

## Result

**Table 1** Means, standard deviations, and correlations for control variables, personality traits (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience), substance abuse, loneliness and childhood sexual abuse as dependent variables.

S/N	Variables	M (SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Child. Sex. ab	136.94(16.32)	1							
2	Extra	36.61(6.23)	.468**	1						
3	Agree.	49.92(7.31)	.378	.41*	1					
4	Consci	81.93(9.31)	.125	.006	.513*	1				
5	Neuro.	169.85(13.24)	.313**	.513*	.055	.412*	1			
6	Open	37.34(6.57)	.042**	.292**	.058	.381*	.037	1		
7	Sub. Abuse	56.91(10.23)	.129**	.278*	.117*	.152**	.116*	.123*	1	
8	Loneliness	49.93(7.31)	.079**	.186**	.109*	.137*	.069	.386**	.211	1

Predictor variable = childhood sexual abuse

N=228, M = Mean, S.D. = Standard Deviation, extea= extraversion, agree= agreeableness, consci= conscientiousness, neuro= neuroticism and open= openness to experience, sub. Abuse= substance abuse, loneliness and childhood sexual abuse as dependent variables. \*\* p < 0.001, \* p < 0.05. Personality traits such as extraversion, neuroticism and openness to experience, substance abuse and loneliness are significant predictors of childhood sexual abuse while agreeableness and conscientiousness are not statistical predictors of childhood sexual abuse.

**Table 2:** Showed stepwise regression analysis for the predicting childhood sexual abuse through personality traits, substance abuse and loneliness among undergraduates.

Variables	R	R <sup>2</sup>	ΔR <sup>2</sup>	F	Df	β	t	P
<b>Block 1:</b>								
Personality Traits	.46	.16	.09	3.35	2.48	4.39**	.40	6.46
Extraversion.						.16	5.32	.04
Agreeableness.					.18	5.32	.06	
Conscientiousness.						.06	1.32	.08
Neuroticism						.04**	3.41	.02
Openness						.05**	1.52	.03
<b>Block 2</b>								
Substance Abuse	.51	.25	.24	2.65	8.76	1.4**	.26	.04
<b>Block 3</b>								
Loneliness	.35	.13	.07	3.23	2.34	1.3**	.163	.01

Note: \*\* p < .001. \* P < .05.

**In block1:** personality traits such as extraversion (β = .16, p = < 0.001), neuroticism personality

( $\beta = 0.04$ ,  $p = < 0.01$ ), openness to experience ( $\beta = .05$ ,  $p = < 0.001$ ), In **block 2**: Substance abuse ( $\beta = 1.4$ ,  $p = < 0.001$ ) and in **Block 3**: Loneliness (( $\beta = 1.3$ ,  $p = < 0.001$ ) statistically and significantly predict childhood sexual abuse Also in **Block 1**: agreeableness( $\beta = .18$ ,  $p = > 0.01$ ) and conscientiousness ( $\beta = .06$ ,  $p = > 0.01$ ) are not statistical and significantly predictors of childhood sexual abuse

## Discussion

The present study focused on personality traits, substance abuse and loneliness as predictors of childhood sexual abuse among undergraduates of Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki.

The findings of this study showed that childhood sexual abuse was predicted through personality traits and supported by the first hypotheses which stated that personality trait will statistically and significant predict childhood sexual abuse among undergraduate Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. This result is consistent with the research results of Mohamedamin, and Fatahi, (2022) in their research on relationship between personality traits and violence involvement a study of high school students in northern Iraq. The result showed a significant positive correlation between extraversion, neuroticism, and openness on childhood sexual abuse. In the vein, Fujimura and Shimura, et al (2023) examine neuroticism mediates the association between childhood abuse and the well-being of community dwelling adult volunteers and found that effect of childhood abuse on subjective well-being was indirect and was mediated by neuroticism. Others researchers that supported this finding's includes (Vaz. Et al, 2021; Moran et al., 2011; Ménard, Dowgillo, & Pincus, (2018). Based on previous studies and the findings of this study, it can be said personality traits such as extraversion, neuroticism and openness to experience are significant predictors of childhood sexual abuse while agreeableness and conscientiousness are not statistical predictors of childhood sexual abuse. Which implies said that people with extraversion, neuroticism and openness to experience are vulnerable to childhood sexual abuse.

The second hypotheses which stated the substance abuse will statistically and significantly predict childhood sexual abuse among undergraduate Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki was accepted and supported by Stea, Steigen, Dangmann, Granrud and Bonsaksen, (2023) in their study on the associations between exposure to sexual abuse, substance use, adverse health outcomes, and use of youth health services among Norwegian adolescents and found that a significant interaction between childhood sexual sexual abuse and substance abuse. Also McCollum (2023) investigated the associations between childhood sexual abuse, adult sexual assault experiences, psychological distress, and substance use and found positive correlations between Childhood sexual abuse, psychological distress, problematic drinking, and drug use. Others researchers that supported the view that substance abuse predict childhood sexual abuse are (Hogarth, Martin and Seedat, 2019; Griffith, France, Bacchus & Ortega, 2018; Skinner, Kristman-Valente, & Herrenkohl, 2016; Lil & Shields, 2011; Smith, Smith, & Grekin, 2014).

Third hypotheses which stated that loneliness will statistically and significantly predict childhood sexual abuse among undergraduate Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki was accepted. This finding is consistent with the research results of (Wang et al., 2022; Wang et al, 2020; Yang & Swekwi,

2021).Based on previous studies and the findings of this study, it can be said that people who have been subjected to childhood sexual abuse more loneliness (Wang et al, 2020).Other scholar that investigate the predictive roles of loneliness and childhood sexual abuse includes (Başoğlu, 2019; Kurt, Bumby, David & Hansen, 2015; Louise, Hawkley, John, & Cacioppo, 2016; Newcomb & Bentler, 2016; Rook, 2014).

### **Implications of the Study**

The result of the study provided a vital information about the predictive roles of personality traits, substance and loneliness on childhood sexual abuse among undergraduates of Ebonyi State University. Personality traits: extraversion, neuroticism and openness to experience was found to be predictors of childhood sexual abuse This practical knowledge can contribute to the development and improvement of personality traits that are venerable to childhood sexual abuse and youth mental health services in our society.

Secondly, substance abuse was found to be predictors of childhood sexual abuse among undergraduates of Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki since most undergraduates indulge in substance abuse. Understanding childhood sexual abuse and substance abuse and their risk factors, signs, symptoms, and barriers to disclose and seek support after being exposed to sexual abuse can help to improve undergraduates mental health services for youth and adolescents by developing targeted programs that successfully identify, prevent, and treat this vulnerable population group.

Thirdly, Loneliness was also found to be predictors of childhood sexual abuse among undergraduates of Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki.Helping undergraduates, children and adolescents gain social skills and seek social support, it also focuses on helping individuals with childhood sexual abuse histories to think more positively about themselves and others which seems to be the most effective aspect of an intervention to reduce loneliness. Also, using Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) intervention to address loneliness in children and adolescents who have experienced childhood sexual abuse is of paramount important in our society.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The first limitation of the present study is related to the sample size, since the researcher used only undergraduates of Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki and all participants involved were undergraduates, and the findings may not be applicable to the general public.

Secondly, the participants were unable to understand the content of the items on the questionnaire and it imposes much stress on the researcher by trying to explain to the participants to understand content and the important of the study.

Thirdly, the inability of some respondents to complete their questionnaire because it involved childhood sexual abuse, substance abuse histories and their personality characteristics.

### **Conclusion**

This study, focused on personality traits, substance abuse and loneliness as predictors of childhood sexual abuse among undergraduates of Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. The result

indicated that personality traits such as extraversion, neuroticism, openness to experience, substance abuse and loneliness statistically and significantly predict childhood sexual abuse while agreeableness and conscientiousness are not statistical and significantly predictors of childhood sexual abuse among undergraduate students of Ebonyi State University. This finding implies that school administrators should always deem it necessary to understand the personality traits of an individual that are vulnerable to childhood sexual abuse. Also, substance abuse and loneliness of undergraduate students of Ebonyi State University should be monitored and control since it has psychological and mental health effect on children and youth. It also contributes to low academic performance and low productivity of undergraduates of Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. Therefore, appropriate concern should be taken to control the predictive roles of personality traits, substance abuse and loneliness on childhood sexual abuse among undergraduate of Ebonyi State University, abakaliki.

### **Recommendations**

Considering the sensitivity and issues of the childhood sexual abuse, an integrated approach, focusing on psychologist, parent, researchers, teachers, scholars and medical professionals. Moreover, government should make some laws and policies through which an immediate actions can be taken against the offenders and abusers, as well as special laws on childhood sexual should be developed. Laws guiding the use of substance should also be provided by the government

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