

A DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS ON THE PERSONALITY OF CHILD PHYSICAL ABUSE VICTIMS**Mariani Mansor**

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Abstract

This paper discusses on the personality development of physically abused children from selected region in Malaysia. A total of 106 children from five selected protection homes and shelters were selected as respondents for this study. A quantitative and qualitative methods were employed to appraise respondent's personality, using a personality questionnaire and a projective human figure drawing techniques. Respondents' personality development was measured based on their personal and social adjustment subscales. Analysis on the personality subscales showed that the overall level for respondents' personality adjustment was rather low, with mean of 71.3% and 70.8% simultaneously. Similarly, qualitative analysis on respondents' drawings also indicated problems in their personality development, with majority of them showed anxiety (84.2%), impulsive (73.3%), aggression (65.3%) and insecurity (55.5%) characteristics. The study demonstrated that experience of abusive treatment leave an impact on victims personality development, specifically on their emotional adjustment, which may further influence their future wellbeing

Key Words: *child abuse, physical abuse, personality development, personality adjustment, children, adolescents.*

1. Introduction

Child abuse is not a new phenomenon. It is a world wide problem. Although it is notably reported among the lower socio-economic group, nevertheless, it is neither specific to any one group or age level. Report on cases of children being abused, abandon, molested, murdered and neglected is always in the mass-media. This distressing and inhumane behaviour towards children seems to be on the arise, and appears to be congruence with the country economic advancement. Child abused seems to spread like the silent cancer, slowly killing the innocents. The increasing trend or scenarios of child abuse in Malaysia can be observed through the statistics from the Police Department and official cases reported to the Social Welfare Department, under the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development. According to the report from the Malaysian Social Welfare Department (Malaysia, Jabatan Kebajikan Masyarakat - JKM), the increment of child abuse cases from year 1981 to 1991, have increased tremendously, i.e. more than 100%. In 1981, only 93 abused cases reported, but in the year 1991, it increases to 970. This is very alarming. However, looking from a different perspective, the increasing number of reported cases may also be an indicator of increasing society consciousness, where, now the public are more vigilant, alert and watchful about the treatment or to be exact, the *unjust* treatment towards children.

Each year, since the early 1990's, cases of abused reported have increased, between 10-15%. In 1996, for example, 1009 cases of children being abused and neglected were reported, and in the following year, the number increases to 1149 cases. Subsequently, the increasing trend can be observed in 1998, where 1161 new cases were reported to the authority (JKM, 1997, 1999). Even though the differences in increased cases are rather small, however, it still portrayed that the rising trend of child abuse continues in Malaysia. Meanwhile, statistics showed that from the year 1996 to 2003, a total of 7336 cases of child abused were reported (JKM 2004, 1997). Looking from this perspective, this is disturbing. And what is more alarming is that, this number does not include those unreported cases, which goes undetected by the authority. Even though the prevalence of abuse in Malaysia is quite worrying and showed remarkable increment, research on child abuse incidences among Malaysian are quite unpopular and scarce, especially on children's personality.

Many researchers are interested in the general antisocial behaviour of children and adolescents, compared to that of the maltreated victims. However, the limited and meagre studies on abused children could also be due to the difficulty of assessing respondents for their study. Strict and limited access, as well as restricted protective policy towards these unfortunate children and adolescent victims, could also be one of the reason. Therefore, to augment the lack of published research and articles on local abused cases, this paper will provide a brief discussion on the impact of physical abuse on one aspect of child socio-emotional development, that is to be precise, on their personality. This article will also be discussing on the methodology and findings of the present study. Discussions on the implications of the study and suggested framework for future study will also be looked into.

2. Child Abuse and Its Consequences

To understand the impact or consequences of child physical abuse among Malaysian children, this study were based on the theoretical perspective of the Human Ecology System Theory by Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979). Except for the macrosystem, specifically, this study emphasized only on the influence of four elements or systems existed within the abused children personality development, such as the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and the chronosystem or changes that transpire throughout a child's life. The influences of people around them such as, families, siblings, peers, extended families, institutions and other significant people in their lives, were looked into as potential influences on the children personality development (see figure 1). Some of the elements in the conceptual framework may act as risk factors that probably increases the impact of abuse on children's personality development, and other elements as protective factors that may prevent the negative outcome on children's personality. Nevertheless, the various elements in the ecological system may jointly determine the overall consequences.

The consequences of abused incidences is not limited to the child alone or their family circle only, somewhat, the impact may also be felt by the community, as demonstrated by the case of Balasundram in the early 90's (Khadijah and Ann, 2003), and Nurin Jazlin Jazimin (Malaysia, 2007) who have been sexually abused and then murdered, which caused public outcry and fear among Malaysians. Children, as we know will grow to be the next future generation, and will be replacing the older one. Therefore, if children were constantly treated unfairly, neglected, abused and tortured, then what will happen to the future generation? Many researches and studies conducted in the west have proved that abused, including physical abused, can leave a negative impact on children's growth and development. Young victims of physical abuse routinely experience emotional disturbance such as feelings of isolation, shame, fear, depression, anxiety and even suicide ideation (Osgood and Chambers, 2000; Wolfe, Scott, Wekerle and Pittman, 2001; Widom 2000). What need to be realized is that, abuse does not only leave the physical scars, but what is more important is the long term consequences on children's behaviour and emotions.

According to McClowskey and Lichter (2003), long term developmental problems, such as low self-esteem, depression, physical aggression and school failure are also common among maltreated children. In general a loving and conducive environment will benefit children's development, which leads to better and healthier development, compared to those children living in a violent, unhappy and abusive environment. In their studies, Bolger, Thomamas and Eckenrode (1997) and Schickedanz, Schickedanz, Forsyth and Forsyth (1998), found that children growing up with loving family environment often possess positive and stable personality qualities compared to children suffering from abused, neglect, and did not receive proper care or love. Trickett and McBride-Chang (1995) also found that physically abused victims often displayed excessive uneasiness, anxiety, low self-esteem, depression, withdrawal, aggression and other negative emotional problem. Victims also showed passive behaviour, poor academic achievement and communication skills, poor resiliency skills and problem solving abilities (Kurtz and Gaudin, 1993). Consequently, their inefficiency to control their life and negative personality, may easily lead them towards antisocial behaviour, such as delinquency, crime and other psychiatric problems (Kasmini 1993, 1998; Gewirtz and Edleson, 2007). Vast evidences from past literatures also showed that maltreated children are remarkably overrepresented in the population of truant, runaways, delinquents, prostitutes, substance abusers (Libbey and Bybee, 1978; Barahal, Waterman and Martin, 1981; Kurts, Kurtz, and Jarvis, 1991), and their consequences are undeniably serious for these children. Thus, their future will be bleak and often suffers life complexities, unsettled problems, and difficulty in maintaining or sustaining relationship with other people.

Even though earlier studies conducted in the West showed that physical abuse leave a mark on children's wellbeing and development, which influences their personality development, but to what extend does it influence children in the East, particularly Malaysia, with varieties and various background, culture and upbringing?

Therefore, the lack of solid local studies and evidences, forced the researchers to investigate further into this area, that is, to explore the consequences of physical abuse on child victim. Focused or emphasized were given on the aspect of personality because it is an important indicator in the future development and well-being of every individuals. Positive personality development must starts early, that is, from a younger age, if we want to ensure a successful future generation that possess all positive attitude and vision.

3. Operational Definitions of Physical Abuse and Personality Development

Operationally, in this study, physically abused children refers to those children who have been physically ill-treated or intentionally injured by an adult through hitting, biting, kicking, or slapping; and/or occur through the use of objects such as belts, sticks, rods, or bats. According to the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), physical abuse includes hitting, shaking, kicking, punching, scalding, suffocating and other ways of inflicting pain to a child, and also giving harmful substances, such as drugs, alcohol or poison to a child. If a parent or guardian reports non-existent symptoms of illness in a child, is also considered as a form of physical abuse. Under the Malaysian Child Act 2001 (Malaysia, 2001), act such as abuse, neglect, abandonment or exposing a child to physical and/or emotional injuries is punishable under the law.

Personality can be defined as the organization of an individual's distinguishing characteristics, traits, or habits which include individual's unique way of thinking, feelings and behaving. The earlier definition on personality by Allport (1937) viewed personality as the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his unique adjustment to his environment. Similarly, Mischel (1976), referred personality to the distinctive patterns of behaviour including thoughts and emotions, that characterize each individual's adaptation to the situations of his/her life. Meanwhile, Salvador Maddi (1989) defined personality as a constant set of intra-psychic or internal characteristics and predispositions that directly determine psychological behaviour. Operationally, in this research personality was measured based on personality scales developed by Thorpe, Clark and Tieg (1953), i.e. The California Test of Personality Scales (CTP), which measured personality development based on respondents personality adjustment scales. Further discussion on the instrument subscales will be discussed in the following section.

4. Method

4.1 Ethical clearance and consent

The aim of this article is to discuss the consequences of abused on children's personality development. Ethical clearance and consent however, was first obtained from the Government Child Protective Homes via the Child Protection Unit, Welfare Division, Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, before the actual implementation of fieldwork was carried out. Likewise, permissions and consents on children living in the other private child protection homes were also obtained from the specific non-governmental organizations (NGO) management themselves. Scanning and reviews of instruments to be used on the children by the related agencies was carried out prior to the actual data collection stage. Even though written consent have been obtained earlier from various related agencies (homes), whom act as the legal guardians for these children, nevertheless, before every sessions and interviews with the respondents, researchers, once again sought to obtain respondents consent to participate in the research.

4.2 Participants and Procedure

For this study, children are defined according to the age limit as stated under the Unicef Children's Rights Declaration and Malaysian's Children's Act 2001. As predetermined earlier, only children from the state of Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur and Selangor were selected as study sample. Selection on these two states were made based on the top two highest child abused cases reported. Purposive sampling technique was employed in the selection of samples. Only those who fits the pre-set criteria, such as state of origin, age limit and experiences of physical abused were selected as samples for the study. Based on these pre-set criterion, a total sample of 106 respondents aged between 7-16 years old were selected from five protection homes or shelters in the states of Selangor and Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur, of which one is under the management of the government while four others are under the NGO's.

4.3 Measures

Due to the requirement and nature of the study, field data collection was carried out by the researchers themselves. This is to ensure that the implementations and interpretation of the data collected were not misinterpreted or misconstrued. A mixed method design, using the quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques was employed to comprehensively assess respondents' personality adjustment. The rationale for employing qualitative data collection techniques was for the data to be used as a supplementary for the quantitative data.

Furthermore, the qualitative data also served to “cross-check” or validate the earlier quantitative data findings. Quantitative data were obtained using the adapted version of California Test of Personality Scales (CTP) by Thorpe, Clark and Tiegs (1953). Meanwhile, for the qualitative, in-depth interviews and a projective drawing technique known as the Human Figure Drawing (HFD) were conducted on the respondents. As mentioned earlier, the inclusion of in-depth interview and projective drawing techniques were employed to support and supplement (as supplementary data), and also strengthened the research findings, thus to further validate the personality development of physically abused victims.

For this study, the adapted personality test according to local situation and culture were utilized to evaluate and assess respondents’ personality. It measured personality based on respondents’ personality adjustment, that is, the personal adjustment and social adjustment. For this study, two sets of the test instrument, primary and elementary were employed, according to the respondents’ age group. The primary set which consist of 96 items, was used on respondents aged between 7-9 years old, while the elementary set (consist of 144 items) was used to assess the personality of respondents aged between 10-16 years old. Basically, the personality test consists of two main subscales or dimensions, i.e. the personal adjustment and social adjustment. Each scale (dimension) is further divided into six subscales, making altogether 12 subscales under the personality test. Personal adjustment scales measures individual personal characteristics, such as self-reliance, sense of personal worth, sense of personal freedom, feelings of belonging, withdrawal tendencies and nervous symptoms. Meanwhile, the social adjustment scales measures individual’s characteristics such as social standards, social skills, antisocial tendencies, family relations, school relations and community relations. Subscales on the relationship with family, school and community were intended to measure respondents’ interpersonal relationship or social interaction with other people around them. Respondents were required to answer either *YES* or *NO* to the items set. For all positive statements, each *YES* answer will be allotted two marks, and *NO* one mark, and vice versa for all negative items.

4.4 Data Analysis

As mentioned above, two sets of form were used to measure respondents’ personality adjustment level, which are the primary and elementary set for specific age group. Since each sets have different numbers of items, further calculation were required to ensure accurate and equivalent mean for both sets of form based on the *mean of the proportion of mean*. Further calculation were also necessary to obtain the determinant level for high (good) and low (poor) level of personality adjustment based on the total scores. Thus, for both sets of personality test, calculations were done by taking the minimum and maximum mean score. To obtain an equivalent minimum and maximum mean score from both primary and elementary sets of test, the minimum score were further divided from the maximum score of both sets independently. Both scores were then further calculated separately to obtain the *proportion of mean* in percentages, and finally the end value for each tests were combined and divided by two. This process is necessary to ensure equivalent scales for high-low level (maximum/minimum) score determinant. From the calculation carried out, the range value for the high sub scales personality level is between 76%-100%, while those scores between the range of 50%-75% is considered as low level.

Data collected from the in-depth interview were manually analyzed according to various themes or topics. However, this data or “dialogue” were used narratively to support necessary information. Next, to further supplement and validate the findings from the earlier quantitative personality tests, the projective drawing technique were carried out on the respondents. The children drawings were then analyzed according to the criteria developed by Koppitz (1968; 1984), i.e. by identifying 30 emotional indicators. This were further categorized into five types of negative personality, such as anxiety, impulsive, aggressive, low self esteem and timidity. The symbolic shapes or elements in the drawing symbolized or represent various themes on individual’s dynamic, attitude, perception and response towards their environment, which were influenced from their internal feelings.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1 Respondents’ Background Profile

Before advancing into respondents’ personality development, below are the general overviews on respondents’ background profile. Majority of the respondents were between the age of 7-12 years old (59%) and 40.6% were between the age of 13-16 years old. In terms of gender, 52.8% of the respondents were female compared to 47.2% male. Meanwhile, majority of the respondents were from the Indian ethnicity (45.3%), followed by 32.1% Chinese, and 22.6% Malays. Looking at religion, Christians were found to be the highest (44.3%), followed by Muslim (22.6%), Hindus (19.8%) and Buddhist (13.2%).

The mean number siblings is 3, with majority (80.2%) of them having between 2-4 numbers of siblings, followed by 15.1% with 5-7 siblings, and the balance is above 7. And, in terms of birth order, 41.5% of the respondents were middle child, followed by 34.0% youngest or 'baby of the family'. More often than not, youngest children were the 'unwanted' or 'accidental' child.

Even though knowledge and education have been one of the most important elements emphasized by the Malaysian government, however study showed that the level of education among the abused respondents varies, ranging from no education to secondary education level. Majority (56.6%) of their education level were at the primary level, i.e. 33.0% in primary 1-3 and 23.6% in year 4-6, followed by 34% with secondary education level. Nevertheless, it is unfortunate to witness that there were still respondents (4.7%) who have never received any formal education while living with their parents. This scenario is to be expected among children living in abusive environment, because these parents priority and awareness on the importance of education are very minimal. In view of their academic achievement, the overall achievements among the respondents were rather low. Majority of them (65.1%) have poor academic achievement (average score of examination marks 39% and below), followed by 26.4% average (average score of examination marks between 40%-59%) and only 3.8% scored good with total examination marks of 60-79%. None of the respondents' academic achievement can be categorized as excellent.

5.2 Personality Development

Table 1 showed respondents' personality adjustment level, or specifically respondents personal adjustment and social adjustment level, measured through the CTP quantitatively. Personal Adjustment Scales measured individual personality based on their internal or personal characteristics such as self-reliance, sense of personal worth, sense of personal freedom, feelings of belonging, withdrawal tendencies and nervous symptoms. Meanwhile, the social adjustment scales measured individual personality such as social standards, social skills, antisocial tendencies, family relations, school relations and community relations.

Findings showed that the *mean of the proportion of mean* for the overall score for respondents personality adjustment is 71.0% (SD= 7.9), with range between 53 to 94.0%. Looking at each of the personality adjustment subscales scores, the *mean of the proportion of mean* for personal adjustment is 71.3% (SD=7.5), with range score between 55 - 94.0 %, while the mean score for social adjustment level is 70.8% (SD=9.6), with range between 51% - 98%. Based on the earlier calculation, to determine the level of personality adjustment (High or Low), scores between 76-100% is considered as HIGH personality level, whilst scores between 50-75% is considered as LOW. Therefore, from the results obtained, it clearly showed that on the whole, the average respondents' overall personality adjustment level were rather low, that is below 75.0% or to be exact with mean score of 71.0%

Detailed analysis conducted on each sub-scales of the personal and social adjustment dimensions revealed that the mean score for each sub-scales that measures the respondents personality were almost similar, i.e. at the lower side of the personality adjustment level (below 75%), except for the nervous symptoms subscales (mean score 83.4% – SD=12.8) and social standards subscales (mean score 81.4% – SD=7.9). In contrast, the mean score for withdrawal tendencies subscales is the lowest (mean score 61.9% – SD=11.9), which demonstrate that majority of the respondents displayed difficulty in communicating and interacting with strangers or people outside their institutions, and would prefer to isolate themselves. Similarly, analysis on the data collected also reflected that respondents showed a rather negative relationship with family (mean score 64.0%; SD=12.6) and school/teachers (mean score 69.8% – SD=16.9). Scores for respondents personal adjustment subscales such as self-reliance, sense of personal worth, sense of personal freedom and feelings of belonging were also found to be quite low. The low mean scores showed that majority of the respondents were having problem in several dimensions of their personality characteristics and this may lead to poor personality development later on.

Table 2 demonstrated respondents' characteristics based on the projective technique scores analysis. As mentioned earlier, this study also examined respondents' personality qualitatively through the *Human Figure Drawing* (HFD) scores. Scores were analyzed based on the emotional indicators categorized according to the Koppitz's scoring (1983). Initially, Koppitz had identified 30 emotional indicators, which were then further re-categorized according to personality characteristics demonstrated, such as anxiety, impulsive, anger (aggressiveness), insecurity (feelings of inadequacy), shyness (timidity), and organic sign. Furthermore, according to Koppitz, when analyzing the drawings it is practical to collect the common or general perceptions of the drawing as a whole without apprehension for the specific details alone. However for this study, the analysis on the organic signs was omitted.

Only 101 respondents were willing to draw or responded to the projective drawing technique. Findings showed similarities between the quantitative findings and the HFD qualitative findings. From the drawing, it clearly showed that many of the abused children revealed negative emotional indicators or personality characteristics. Based on the Koppitz criteria, it clearly showed that majority of these physically abused victims reflected anxiety symptoms in their drawings (similar to the CTP scores), followed by impulsive, aggression, insecurity and shyness/ timidity. These negative characteristics will influence on their overall personality development. According to the HFD test, the children's drawing reflected their personal self, i.e. what is being drawn and what were the 'hidden' message behind their drawing is an actual reflection of their personality. Examples of drawings by the respondents that reflected some emotional indicators stated above can be observed in figure 2.

The emotional indicators or personality characteristics analyzed according to the Koppitz criteria in table 2 are arranged in ranking order, starting from the most prominent characteristics perceived in the children's drawing. Based on the analysis, it was found that majority of the respondents reflected anxiety [85 - 84.2%], followed by impulsive [74 - 73.3 %] and aggressiveness [66 - 65.3%]. Consecutively, a total of 56 respondents or 55.5% reflected insecurity and feelings of inadequacy that hinders them from interacting and socializing with other people. Meanwhile, 48 or 47.5% respondents displayed shyness or timidity characteristics in their drawings.

From the analysis carried out on the children's drawing, anxiety characteristics were evident on majority (84.2%) of the respondents' drawing. Symptoms of anxiety can be detected through drawings of human-like figure that have certain criteria, such as, shadings of the face, feet, hand, head or neck, feet closed together, omission of eyes, or drawings of objects such as clouds, rain, snow, birds or huge sun. Generally, children with anxiety symptoms displayed excessive and continuous worry about their body, behaviour, situations or their future. Most of the time they feel depressed, unsettled and useless, and often worried about their own feelings and experiences, which will leave an impact on the personality development and well being.

Meanwhile, impulsiveness is another significant characteristic detected in the children's drawing. Based on the Koppitz criteria, analysis showed respondents' impulsive attitude and behaviour cues, such as spontaneous, low tolerance frustration level and poor/low internal self-control. These symptoms were often related to children temperament and immaturity when encountering with a particular situation. According to the Koppitz criteria, these emotional indicators or personality characteristics can be clearly seen from respondents' drawings, such as no integration between body parts, or unequal hand and feet size or shapes, transparent body parts, extremely big figures and drawings of people without neck.

Consequently, the third highest emotional indicators or personality criteria detected in the respondents' HFD was aggression. Extreme anger or aggressive criteria can be observed on 65% of the respondents' drawings studied. Children portrayed their aggression through drawings of a cross-eyed human being, people showing/baring their teeth, long arms, big hands, nude figures or/and apparent indication of genital parts. Their drawings illustrated that these children were full of anger and hatred towards self, others or a particular object, which have been trapped and *bottled-up* for many years.

Feelings of insecurity and inadequacy symptoms can be observed through 55% of the respondents' drawing. The symptoms can be identified through drawings of slanting figures, tiny head, hand and feet cut-off, monster or grotesque figures and the omission of arms or/and legs in human-like figures. Normally, children with insecurity and inadequacy characteristics often possess low self-concept and no self-confidence. These children were often reported feeling unsecured and weak. They often feel weak, weird, abnormal, detached and have difficulty sustaining relationship with other people.

Finally, even though shyness and timidity criteria only existed in 47.5 % of the respondents' drawing, however it still reflected the presence of negative emotional indicators in the abused children, which may potentially influence further negative personality development. This is because timidity is very much related to low perception towards self, such as low self worth and insecurity among the abused victims. Symptoms of shyness and timidity can be observed through drawings of tiny figures, short arms, arms clinging to body or omission of mouth and/or nose in the human figures drawing.

6.0 General Discussion and Conclusion

From the above result, undoubtedly, the abuse experienced by the respondents leaves an impact on their personality development. Findings from the study showed that respondents' personality adjustment, specifically the personal and social adjustment, was quite low, especially on the withdrawal tendencies subscales.

Majority of the respondents were found to have problems in socializing, interacting and communicating with other people and/or strangers. Their fear and timid behaviour derived from feelings of insecurity, low self-confidence and low self worth. In general, from the descriptive analysis, it was found that majority of the respondents scored low on their personality adjustment scales, and this can actually lead to further problems in their children's general personality development. Analysis on the CTP personality adjustment dimension scores showed that there are some similarities with the children personality characteristics if compared based on findings from the HFD projective test. Based on the Koppitz criteria, pictures drawn by the children showed majority of them displayed negative emotional indicators akin to the personality characteristics. For each of the emotional indicators set, researcher managed to determine the number of children's drawing that displayed particular negative characteristics or symptoms through their drawing.

This research found that out of the five emotional indicator criteria suggested by Koppitz, anxiety was obviously and significantly reflected through the respondents drawing, followed by impulsive, aggression, low self-worth and finally timidity or shyness. The findings also showed that children may displayed more than one symptoms or characteristics of negative personality at one period of time. Just imagine what would happen to a child who 'bottled-up' in them all the pressure and negative emotional feelings for years. What do you think will happen to this child when they grow up into adults; and at the same time, bringing with them all the destructive emotions and hatred of past lives? Apparently, all the past thoughts, emotions, belief and attitude will gradually contribute to a child identity and personality development. Thus, it is not wrong to say that a child with many negative characteristics can produce a negative effect on their personality development. In line with Groth-Marnat's (1990) view, HFD tests can provide a general picture of respondents' personality. Children's drawing can and is suitable to be used as guideline or rough estimation on their personal behaviour and characteristics. In fact, a global rating on attributes or characteristics such as adjustment level, impulsivity and anxiety can be envision, especially that of children. This is because children normally expressed their feelings and emotion through their drawings.

Undeniably, findings of this study are consistent with earlier studies that demonstrated abused children as often displayed poor or negative personality (Finkelhor 1990; Douglas 1995; Osofsky 1995; Kasmini 1998; Schickedanz et al.1998). Past studies also showed majority of the abused children exhibited antisocial attitude and also poor interpersonal relationship with other individual within their human ecological or environmental contact. Besides constant distrust on others, these children also often showed no appreciation towards self. Low personal adjustment scores on self reliance dimension or sub scales, or sense of personal growth, sense of freedom and sense of belonging, affect and influence each other. For example, lack of self-reliance influence their ability (or to be exact, incapable) to handle their problems (poor problem solving skills) and other challengers in their lives, especially things that are beyond their control and expectation. Without proper guidance and reinforcement from parents, the unfortunate abusive victims become more strained and tense, and this may further lead to other negative implication on their personality development.

Concurrently, a failure in their lives makes these children lost their sense of confidence and belief towards their own ability. The absence of self reliance or believing own ability, may lead them to not appreciating themselves because to them there is nothing good or to be proud about themselves anymore. The negative perception towards their own capacity further influenced their behaviour, which inclined towards failure and negative characteristic. This negative and destructive thinking and/or emotions may further affect their future and personality development. Their negative sense of self tends to hinder or obstruct these children from facing a more constructive and successful future and challengers. Subsequently, they become weaker and are likely to accept these weaknesses or drawback as fate (determined by god), without even trying to overcome them (Kellerman and Bury; 1991). Moreover, the personal characteristics of these abused children will further alleviate the negative impact on their personality development.

According to Chiam dan Nik Aziz (1982), the low personality adaptation was also one of the potentials factors that caused these children to become timid, shy, overly sensitive and lack of self confidence. Especially for those in the transition stage or in the process to adolescence, who were always confused, isolated, tense and anxious, due to the hormonal changes that influenced their physical and psychological development. All these occurrences further hinder or make it difficult for these children (victims of abused) to have a better personality adjustment and adaptation. Therefore, based on the above discussion, it can be concluded also that the low achievement scored in the personal adjustment subscales such as self reliance and sense of personal growth, can directly influenced children social skills.

Personality characteristics such as low self-esteem, confused, restlessness, anxious and distrusting, further developed into negative emotions. This will further influenced their perception and interaction with others, which means, the socialization process of these unfortunate children will be disrupted, and stunted their personality development, especially their interactions and relationship with people around them. Likewise, the low mean scores on the nervous symptoms subscales also portrayed that majority of the respondents (abused victims) often felt uncomfortable, scared, anxious, self blaming, guilty, low self esteem, prejudice and alike, towards others. These symptoms derived from lack of self-believe and appreciation towards self, which further lead to lack of confidence in taking action, and instead prefer to be alone. Often, these children have conflicting values due to their diverse experiences and background with others of the same age. Thus, the low score on their nervous symptoms stopped or hindered them from mixing and socializing with other normal children. According to Horney (in Jersild et al. 1978), their antisocial tendency and nervous symptoms influenced the negative personality development further, where the children developed low self confidence (timidity), high anxiety and possess low self-concepts. The negative personal adjustment characteristics that they have in them will indirectly cause them to develop negative social adjustment, where most of them are not able to develop a 'sense of belongingness' and social skill, which will further cause them to develop withdrawal tendencies and low self acceptance.

The findings and above discussions demonstrated that victims of child physical abused will have tendency towards difficulties in their personality development due to their negative personality adjustment symptoms. Undoubtedly, past trauma left a negative impact on their personality development. The unruly and negative personality development sort of have halted, hindered and barricade the children from mixing or having positive relationship with other people due to the feelings of incompleteness and unconfident towards self because of the lack of self appreciation in them.

Without effective and proper assistance, treatment or counselling, the impact of abusive act experienced by these children will consistently have an impact or leave a mark on their adolescents and adults lives. They will continuously developing the feelings of insecurity and anxiousness towards others. Children who are not able to trust themselves or other people will never experience or obtain 'love' in a positive manner. At the same time, they also frequently experienced rigid and overly strict discipline or rules that further leave a negative effect on their emotional and psychological development. Consequently, in the long run, this situation will lead to a prominently negative consequences on several of the personality elements, such as attachment, self-control and assessment or judgment of their moral and social values. However, if these children were treated and counselled in a proper manner and guidance, it is not impossible that it could help them build a positive personality development, and to ensure a more successful and meaningful future. Improvement towards positive personality development will definitely assist in a positive development of self-concept, thus developing a more confident and positive individual, towards themselves and to people around them. Having a positive view of self and their environment is very important because this can also increase their resiliency, and subsequently will lead them to have a more positive perspectives of life, i.e. always wanting to do well in their lives, energetic and eager to face the future and challengers with extra confidence. A positive and assiduous attitude that they developed will help them towards further success and achievement in life.

Therefore, cooperation from all is very crucial to ensure a positive development for these unfortunate children. They need to rebuild their lives again, in order for them to succeed life and face challengers ahead. What's important is that, these children need proper guidance, caring and love, to ensure a positive personality adjustment will be attain, where it can actually help the children to become more resilient. A resilient child will be able to 'bounce back' from all adversity and challengers, and finally develop a positive perspective on their future. Specifically parents and general community must be made aware of the potential negative consequences that derived from an abusive background. It leaves an impact, not on the physical domain alone, but worse of all it leaves a deep mark on the child emotional and psychological development. Indeed, societal and parental awareness are important methods of prevention to overcome this abusive and violent behaviour. The negative implication of abused can be avoided if parents are aware of the consequences and did not easily implement harsh or corporal type of punishments. Without these awareness, the aim to instil and develop a loving and caring society may not be materialized. Loving and appropriate nurture, plus cooperation between parents and community are very important to ensure that these children will not be mistreated and at the same time stops the negative personality characteristics from forming and developing.

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Figure 1: The Human Ecology System Theory (Bronfenbrenner, U; 1979)

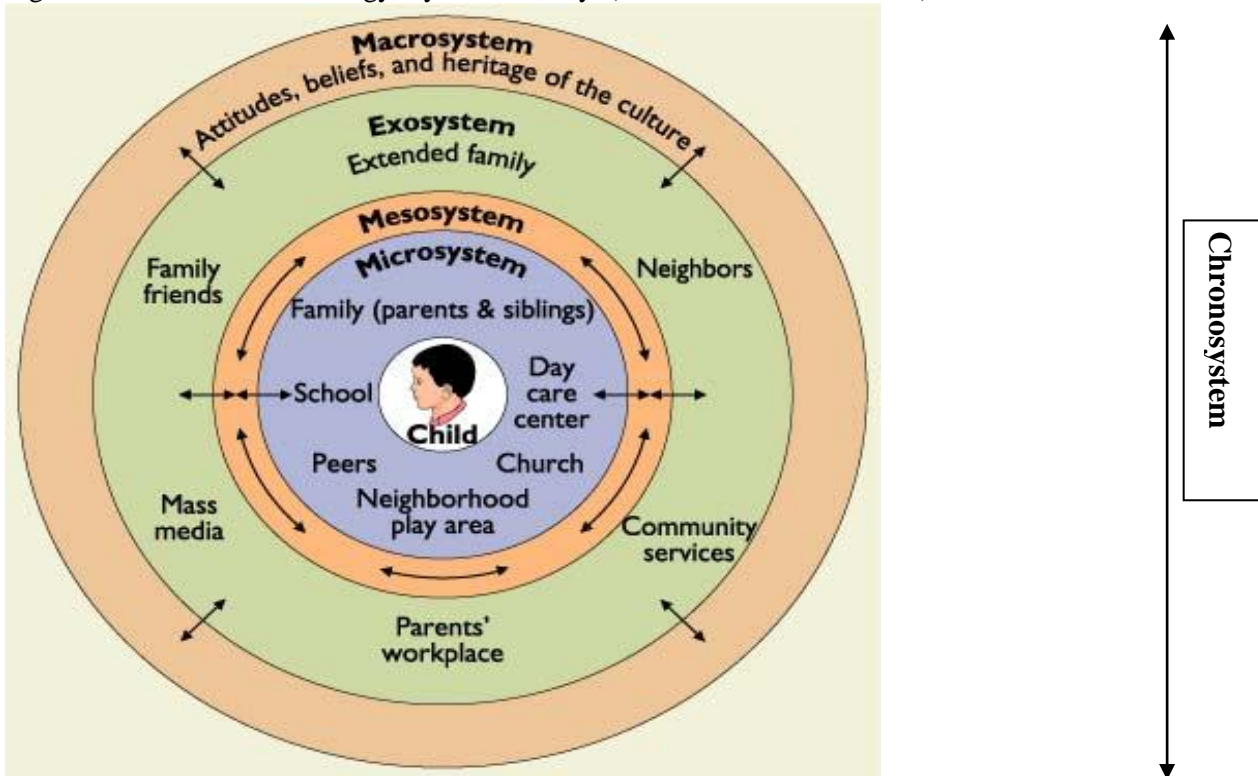


Figure 2: Respondents drawings that reflected some emotional and personality disturbance

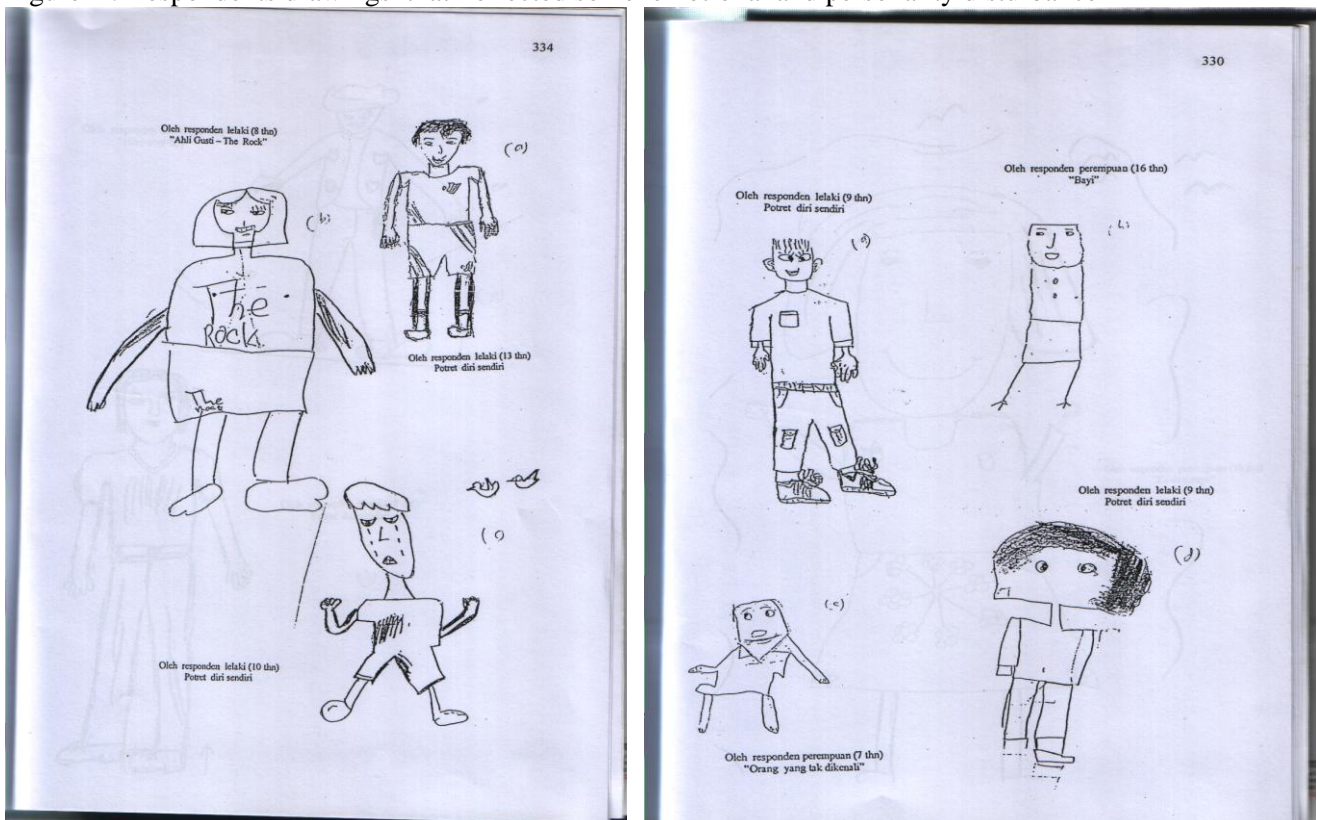


Table 1: The Mean Score of Respondents Personal And Social Adjustment

Scale and of Personality Adjustment	Mean of the proportions of sub-scales mean score (%)	Standard deviation (SD)
Personal Adjustment	71.3	7.5
Self-reliance	70.8	9.4
Sense of personal worth	70.6	12.5
Sense of personal freedom	69.9	11.4
Feelings of belonging	70.9	12.6
Withdrawal tendencies	61.9	11.9
Nervous symptoms	83.4	12.8
Social Adjustment	70.8	9.6
Social standards	81.4	7.9
Social skills	71.9	10.7
Antisocial tendencies	67.4	12.6
Family Relations	64.0	12.6
School Relations	69.8	16.9
Community Relations	73.3	10.9
Overall Personality Adjustment Score	71.0	7.9

NOTE: N=106; SD= Standard Deviation

Table 2: Personality Characteristics According to Koppitz Emotional Indicators On The Human Figure Drawing

Personality	n (%)
Anxiety*	85 (84.2)
Impulsivity*	74 (73.3)
Aggressiveness (anger) *	66 (65.3)
Insecurity (feelings of inadequacy) *	56 (55.5)
Shyness (timidity) *	48 (47.5)

*NOTE= Only 101 respondents responded to the projective test because the other five were reluctant to draw.