

Teachers' Perceptions and Management of Trauma-Related Behaviours among Pupils Living with Non-Biological Caregivers in Ilorin South, Kwara State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study is situated within the growing prevalence of children living with non-biological caregivers, commonly referred to as pseudo-parents, particularly in many African societies where extended family caregiving arrangements are widespread. Teachers play a critical role in identifying and managing trauma-related behaviours; however, limited empirical research exists on teachers' perceptions and responses to such pupils in Nigerian primary schools. Specifically, the study investigated the prevalence of such pupils in classrooms, teachers' recognition of trauma indicators, and differences in trauma management practices based on teaching experience. A quantitative research design was adopted. The population consisted of 1,166 qualified primary school teachers, of whom 300 were selected using stratified random sampling. Data were collected using the Teachers' Experience of Adopted Pupils Questionnaire (TEAPQ), and 295 valid responses were analysed using descriptive statistics, t-tests, and ANOVA at a 0.05 significance level. Findings revealed that all participating teachers reported having at least one pupil raised by non-biological caregivers. Teachers moderately recognised trauma-related behaviours such as low self-esteem, absenteeism, and moodiness, but overall trauma identification remained limited. While teaching experience did not significantly influence recognition of trauma, it significantly affected trauma management strategies, with more experienced teachers demonstrating stronger management practices. The study concludes that trauma-related needs of pupils raised by pseudo-parents are insufficiently addressed in classrooms due to gaps in teacher preparedness. The research highlights the need for structured trauma-informed teacher training, strengthened school support systems, and policy interventions aimed at improving educational outcomes for vulnerable pupils.

Keywords: Teacher Perceptions, Trauma-Related Behaviours, Pseudo-Parents, Non-Biological Caregivers, Trauma Management Strategies

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INTRODUCTION

Parenting, in its most traditional sense, is primarily the responsibility of biological parents, whose roles encompass nurturing children, passing down societal values, and providing emotional and psychological support (Radel et al., 2016). However, in many societies, especially in low- and middle-income countries, the role of caregiving often extends beyond biological parents. It is common for children to be raised by relatives, siblings, or even non-biological adults due to various socio-economic factors such as parental death, economic hardship, migration, or neglect (Nwokocha et al., 2021). In African societies, this arrangement is often referred to as "pseudo-parenting" and typically involves extended family members or non-relatives taking on caregiving roles. These caregiving systems are seen as a collective responsibility and reflect the cultural emphasis on community involvement in raising children (Kuranchie, 2021). While pseudo-parenting aims to provide emotional and physical support, it may expose children to specific emotional and developmental challenges. Children raised in these environments may experience trauma due to disrupted attachment and inconsistent caregiving (Lesmana et al., 2024; Jules, 2025). Trauma in children can stem from emotional neglect, abuse, and a lack of stable relationships, leading to long-term psychological consequences such as anxiety, depression, and behavioural issues (Brodzinsky et al., 2022; Downey & Crummy, 2022). Research has shown that such children often display psychosomatic symptoms, including frequent headaches, stomach pain, and trouble sleeping, all of which can significantly affect their academic performance and social adjustment (Ibeme, 2014; Schlecht, 2024).

Teachers, who play a vital role in the development of children, may struggle to recognise trauma-related behaviours, especially when these children exhibit symptoms that are subtle or easily mistaken for common classroom misbehaviours (Ogbemudia et al., 2025). Given the increasing number of children living with non-biological caregivers globally (Tekeba et al., 2024), including those in Nigeria, educators must understand the specific challenges these pupils face. Furthermore, schools must be equipped with trauma-responsive pedagogical strategies to address these challenges effectively (Ayodele & Aina, 2018; Oparinde et al., 2025). However, there is a growing gap in teacher training regarding trauma-informed practices, especially in regions where non-biological caregiving is prevalent (Usifo, 2023). In Nigeria, particularly in Ilorin South Local Government Area of Kwara State, there is an increasing presence of pupils who have been raised by pseudo-parents, yet the recognition of trauma and the application of effective management strategies in schools remain underexplored. This gap underscores the need for research that examines the perceptions of teachers and their capacity to address the emotional and behavioural needs of these pupils. Studies suggest that educators' responses to trauma-related behaviours often range from misunderstanding to punitive actions, which may exacerbate the emotional distress of affected children (Osikwemh, 2022; Loomis et al., 2025; Loomis & Panlilio, 2022; Jules, 2025).

Children raised by pseudo-parents often exhibit emotional and behavioural challenges that are indicative of trauma but may be misinterpreted by teachers as simple disciplinary issues. Common symptoms of trauma, such as withdrawal, anxiety, poor concentration, and low self-esteem, may be mistaken for misbehaviour or lack of discipline (Lesmana et al., 2024; Nwokocha et al., 2021). This misunderstanding often leads to punitive responses, further deepening the emotional struggles of these children (Brodzinsky et al., 2022). The lack of proper recognition and management of trauma-related behaviours in classrooms not only affects the academic performance of affected pupils but also their overall well-being and adjustment in school settings (Schlecht, 2024; Downey & Crummy, 2022). In Ilorin South Local Government Area, many over-age pupils, especially girls, are enrolled in primary schools through missionary programs, placed in lower primary classes despite their age, further exacerbating their vulnerability and adjustment challenges. These pupils are often more susceptible to trauma-related behaviours, yet their unique emotional needs are insufficiently addressed by teachers (Tekeba et al., 2024). Preliminary observations show that teachers are often unaware of the trauma-related behaviours these pupils exhibit and may inadvertently respond in ways that do not address the root cause of the issue.

Despite the growing prevalence of pseudo-parenting and foster care arrangements in Nigeria, little research has focused on how teachers perceive trauma-related behaviours in pupils raised by non-biological caregivers. This gap in the literature hinders the development of trauma-informed teaching strategies that could provide better emotional and academic support for these children. Additionally, existing studies suggest that teacher experience and professional training influence their ability to identify and manage trauma (Ibeme, 2014; Ayodele & Aina, 2018). However, in Ilorin South, there is a noticeable lack of empirical research documenting the experiences of teachers with trauma-affected, pseudo-parented pupils. Addressing this gap is critical for enhancing teacher preparedness, strengthening school-based counselling services, and informing child-sensitive education policies within the region. This study aims to fill this gap by exploring how primary school teachers in Ilorin South perceive and manage trauma-related behaviours in pupils raised by pseudo-parents. The findings will provide valuable insights into the challenges faced by teachers and suggest strategies for improving trauma-informed practices in the classroom.

Objectives of the study

The study seeks:

1. To determine the extent to which teachers have pupils living with non-biological parents (pseudo-parents) in their classrooms
2. Determine the extent of primary school teachers' experience of trauma among pupils raised by pseudo-parents in Ilorin South Local Government.
3. Determine the extent of primary school teachers' experience of trauma management among pupils raised by pseudo-parents in Ilorin South Local Government.

4. To examine the difference in teachers' experience of trauma among pupils raised by pseudo-parents across different teaching experience categories.
5. To investigate the difference in teachers' experience with trauma management strategies for supporting pupils raised by pseudo-parents across different teaching experience categories.

Research Questions

1. What percentage of teachers report having at least one pupil living with non-biological parents (pseudo-parents) in their classrooms?
2. To what extent do primary school teachers experience trauma among pupils raised by pseudo-parents in Ilorin South Local Government?
3. To what extent do primary school teachers' practice (experience) trauma management strategies in helping pupils raised by pseudo-parents in Ilorin South Local Government?

Research Hypothesis

H01: There is no significant difference in teachers' experience of trauma among pupils raised by pseudo-parents across teaching experience categories.

H02: There is no significant difference in teachers' experience with trauma management strategies for supporting pupils raised by pseudo-parents across different teaching experience categories.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study utilised a quantitative research design to investigate primary school teachers' perceptions and practices regarding trauma-related behaviours among pupils raised by pseudo-parents in Ilorin South Local Government Area of Kwara State, Nigeria. A quantitative design was selected because it allows for the objective measurement and analysis of teachers' experiences with trauma in pupils and their application of trauma-management strategies. This approach is particularly appropriate for identifying patterns and establishing correlations between teachers' characteristics and their ability to manage trauma-related behaviours (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The population for this study consisted of 1,166 qualified primary school teachers in Ilorin South Local Government Area, with a composition of 280 males and 886 females. The teachers were selected from 38 public primary schools within the Local Government Area. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure the sample was representative of various demographic characteristics such as gender and teaching levels. The use of stratified sampling helps ensure that subgroups of interest (e.g., male vs. female teachers) are adequately represented, leading to more accurate and generalizable results (Tipton, 2013). From this population, a sample of 300 teachers was drawn, which is consistent with the recommendations from Raosoft (2024) for a population size of 1,166, providing a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. Only teachers from Primary 3–6 classes were selected for participation, based on the

assumption that these classes are more likely to include pupils who live with pseudo-parents and exhibit trauma-related behaviours. The study included only qualified teachers, ensuring that all participants had sufficient professional experience to provide informed responses regarding their observations and practices. The primary instrument for data collection was the Teachers' Experience of Adopted Pupils Questionnaire (TEAPQ). This questionnaire was specifically developed for the study to assess two main variables: teachers' experiences with trauma-related behaviours and their management strategies for pupils raised by pseudo-parents. The instrument consisted of 11 items focused on identifying trauma-related behaviours (e.g., withdrawal, low self-esteem, poor personal hygiene) on a four-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. 6 items on trauma-management practices, using a four-point scale ranging from No Experience to Extensive Experience. The reliability of the TEAPQ was assessed using a pilot study conducted with a small sample of teachers from a similar setting, yielding Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.74 for the trauma-related behaviours section and 0.75 for trauma management strategies. These values indicate strong internal consistency, suggesting that the items reliably measure the constructs they were designed to assess. The validity of the instrument was established through an expert review process, in which professionals in education, psychology, and trauma studies evaluated the relevance, clarity, and comprehensiveness of the items. Data collection occurred over a period of four weeks. The researcher, with the assistance of three trained research assistants, distributed the TEAPQ to the selected teachers. The research assistants were trained to ensure that the questionnaires were administered correctly and that participants understood the instructions. The research assistants were also tasked with ensuring that the responses were completed in full and collected without bias. Before distributing the questionnaires, informed consent was obtained from all participants. School heads were informed of the purpose of the study, and their permission was obtained for data collection. Teachers were given an explanation of the study's objectives and were assured of confidentiality and voluntary participation. The participants were also informed that they could withdraw from the study at any point without facing any negative consequences. The questionnaires were distributed during teachers' free periods or after school hours to minimise disruption to regular teaching activities. After completing the questionnaires, the research assistants collected them directly from the participants. A total of 295 completed and valid questionnaires were retrieved, representing a response rate of approximately 98%, which is considered high for survey research. The collected data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics with the help of SPSS Version 26 software. The analysis proceeded in two main steps: Descriptive Statistics: Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarise the data and answer the research questions. These measures provided an overview of teachers' perceptions of trauma-related behaviours and the extent of their engagement with trauma management strategies. Inferential Statistics: To test the hypotheses, t-tests and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were employed. Specifically, T-

tests were used to compare the means of different groups (e.g., male vs. female teachers) to determine if there were significant differences in teachers' perceptions and practices. ANOVA was applied to examine whether there were significant differences in teachers' trauma-management practices across different categories of teaching experience. Post-hoc tests (LSD test) were conducted to identify which specific groups differed significantly from one another. For all statistical tests, the significance level was set at 0.05, meaning that any p-value below 0.05 was considered statistically significant. All results were presented with accompanying statistical measures such as mean scores, standard deviations, and p-values, ensuring transparency in the interpretation of the findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question 1: What percentage of teachers report having at least one pupil living with non-biological parents (pseudo-parents) in their classrooms?

Table 1
Teachers' Experience of Adopted Pupils in the Classroom

Statement	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Do you have pupils living with non-biological parents (pseudo-parents) in your classroom?	295	100
Total	295	100

The table above illustrates that 100% of the teachers who participated in the study reported having at least one pupil in their classroom who is living with non-biological parents (pseudo-parents). This finding suggests that non-biological caregiving is a prevalent arrangement within the sample population, highlighting the significance of addressing trauma-related behaviours in pupils from such caregiving backgrounds in this setting. In the context of the study, this indicates that the issue of pupils raised by pseudo-parents is widespread in the classrooms of the teachers surveyed, making it essential to explore how these teachers perceive and manage trauma-related behaviours in such pupils.

Research Question 2: To what extent do primary school teachers experience trauma among pupils raised by pseudo-parents in Ilorin South Local Government Area?

Table 2.
Mean Scores Showing the Extent of Primary School Teachers' Experience of Trauma Among Pupils Raised by Pseudo-Parents

Statement	Mean (X̄)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Pupils living with pseudo-parents often have poor personal hygiene	1.10	0.30
Anxiety or excessive worry is a common sign of trauma in pupils from alternative families	1.00	0.00
Pupils living with non-biological parents are often easily scared	2.54	0.89
Low self-esteem is common among pupils living with pseudo-parents	2.75	0.89
Pupils raised by pseudo-parents often miss school	2.84	0.78
Sometimes, pupils living with pseudo-parents stay quiet and do not participate in class	2.71	0.82
Pupils living with pseudo-parents often lose concentration in class	2.67	0.83
Pupils from alternative families may have unwashed uniforms, uncombed hair, or unpleasant body odour	2.57	0.85
Pupils living with pseudo-parents often appear moody or sad	2.71	0.81
Pupils living in alternative homes are sometimes persuaded to leave school early	2.47	0.86
Pupils living with pseudo-parents suffer unnecessary physical punishment	2.49	0.82
Weighted Mean	2.35	

The data presented in Table 2 shows the mean scores for various statements related to teachers' experiences with trauma among pupils raised by pseudo-parents. The findings reveal that teachers agree to a moderate extent with several statements indicating the presence of trauma-related behaviours. Specifically, teachers reported that pupils raised by pseudo-parents often show signs of low self-esteem ($M = 2.75$), tend to miss school frequently ($M = 2.84$), and may appear moody or sad ($M = 2.71$). However, there was considerable disagreement with other items, such as the presence of poor personal hygiene ($M = 1.10$) and anxiety or excessive worry ($M = 1.00$), suggesting that teachers did not consistently identify these trauma-related signs in their pupils. The weighted mean of 2.35, which is below the benchmark of 2.50, indicates that, overall, teachers' experiences with trauma-related behaviours among pupils raised by pseudo-parents are moderate to low. This suggests that while teachers acknowledge certain

behavioural issues related to trauma, the overall recognition and reporting of trauma-related behaviours are not pervasive or consistently perceived as significant by the majority of teachers in the study. This finding highlights the need for further training and awareness among teachers regarding the recognition of trauma in pupils raised in non-traditional caregiving arrangements.

Research Question 3: To what extent do primary school teachers practice trauma management strategies in helping pupils raised by pseudo-parents in Ilorin South Local Government Area?

Table 3.
Mean Scores Showing Teachers' Experience of Trauma Management Strategies in the Classroom

Statement	Mean (\bar{X})	Standard Deviation (SD)
I have attended training or workshops on trauma-informed teaching	1.67	0.72
I have discussed pupils' well-being with their pseudo-parents.	2.51	0.76
I have conducted home visits about the adopted child's well-being.	2.29	0.93
I have liaised with external child welfare or social services regarding pupils' welfare	2.23	0.83
I have organised extra lessons to help adopted pupils cope with schoolwork	2.10	0.86
I am familiar with school and community resources that support pupils experiencing trauma	2.22	0.82
Weighted Mean	2.18	-

The data presented in Table 3 shows the mean scores for various statements related to teachers' practices in managing trauma among pupils raised by pseudo-parents. The results indicate that teachers' engagement with trauma management strategies is generally low, as reflected by the overall weighted mean of 2.18, which is below the 2.50 benchmark. Teachers reported limited attendance at training or workshops on trauma-informed teaching ($M = 1.67$), suggesting a lack of professional development in trauma-responsive education. The teachers also indicated that their involvement in direct trauma management practices was minimal. For example, home visits to check on the well-being of adopted pupils received a mean score of 2.29, and liaising with external child welfare services scored 2.23. Organising extra lessons to support adopted pupils ($M = 2.10$) and familiarity with school/community resources for supporting trauma-affected pupils ($M = 2.22$) also received relatively low scores, further suggesting that teachers are not extensively utilising or familiar with available resources to assist trauma-affected pupils. The statement regarding discussing pupils' well-being

with their pseudo-parents ($M = 2.51$) showed slightly higher agreement, indicating that teachers engage more in communication with caregivers compared to other trauma management strategies. However, overall, the low scores across most of the items reflect that trauma management practices are not deeply integrated into the teachers' regular teaching strategies or routines. This suggests that there is a need for more comprehensive training and resources to help teachers develop the skills necessary to address trauma-related behaviours in pupils raised by pseudo-parents effectively.

Testing Hypotheses

H01: There is no significant difference in teachers' Experience of trauma among pupils raised by pseudo-parents across teaching experience categories.

Table 4

ANOVA showing teachers' Experience of trauma among pupils raised by pseudo-parents across teaching experience categories

ANOVA					
Experience	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Not Significant
Between Groups	30.201	4	7.550	.418	.796
Within Groups	5236.206	290	18.056		
Total	5266.407	294			

Source: Field Report 2025

The one-way ANOVA result shows that teachers' experience does not differ significantly across teaching-experience categories, $F(4, 290) = 0.418$, $p = .796$. Since the p-value is far greater than 0.05, the differences observed among the group means are not statistically meaningful. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in teachers' experience of trauma across teaching-experience categories is retained.

H02: There is no significant difference in teachers' experience of trauma management practices among pupils raised by pseudo-parents across teaching-experience categories

Table 5a

ONE-WAY ANOVA Showing teachers' experience of trauma management among pupils raised by pseudo-parents across teaching-experience categories

ANOVA					
Management					
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	93.588	4	23.397	3.656	.006
Within Groups	1856.073	290	6.400		
Total	1949.661	294			

The table revealed a statistically significant difference in teachers' reported experience of trauma-management strategies across different teaching-experience categories, $F(4, 290) = 3.656$, $p = .006$. This result indicates that the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in teachers' experience of trauma management practices among pupils raised by pseudo-parents across teaching-experience categories is rejected. This therefore implies that the level of teaching experience contributes to variations in how teachers manage trauma among pupils raised by pseudo-parents in the local government area.

Table 5b

LSD Post Hoc Multiple Comparisons of Teachers' Experience of Trauma Management Strategies

Comparison	Mean diff.	Standard Error	P	Remarks
12 -17 years vs 30 – 35 years	-1.30059	.44648	.004	Sig
18-23 years vs 30 – 35 years	-1.87169	.54336	.001	Sig
30 -35 years vs 0 – 5 years	1.54384	.57366	.008	Sig
30- 35 years vs 12 – 17 years	1.30059	.44648	.004	Sig
30 -35 years vs 18 -23 years	1.87169	.54336	.001	Sig

The LSD Post Hoc table above shows the significant influence of teaching experience categories on how teachers handle trauma-related challenges. Teachers with

12–17 years of experience showed lower levels of trauma-management effectiveness than those with 30–35 years ($p = .004$; mean diff. = -1.30), indicating that the most experienced teachers manage trauma situations better. Similarly, teachers with 18–23 years of experience showed lower effectiveness compared to the 30–35-year group ($p = .001$; mean diff. = -1.87). Teachers with 0–5 years of experience also showed lower effectiveness than those with 30–35 years, as reflected in the positive mean difference (1.54) and significant p-value ($p = .008$). Consequently, teachers with 30–35 years of experience consistently demonstrated stronger trauma-management abilities than the 0–5, 12–17, and 18–23-year groups. Differences among the other groups were not significant, suggesting similar levels of effectiveness except when compared with the most experienced teachers.

Discussion of Findings

The study explored primary school teachers' perceptions and management of trauma-related behaviours in pupils raised by non-biological caregivers in Ilorin South, Kwara State, Nigeria. The results indicated that of teachers who reported having at least one pupil in their classroom raised by pseudo-parents. The findings also highlighted that teachers recognised trauma-related behaviours such as low self-esteem, absenteeism, and moodiness among these pupils. However, the overall recognition of trauma-related behaviours was moderate, and trauma management strategies in the classroom were limited. Teachers' familiarity with trauma-informed practices and resources was low, with minimal involvement in activities like home visits or collaborating with child welfare services. The findings of this study show both alignment and divergence when compared to existing research on the trauma-related behaviours of children raised by pseudo-parents. Similar to other studies, this research found that pupils raised by pseudo-parents exhibit trauma-related behaviours such as low self-esteem, school absenteeism, moodiness, and withdrawal. This aligns with findings from Brodzinsky et al. (2022) and Lesmana et al. (2024), who also reported that children in non-biological caregiving environments tend to experience emotional distress and show signs of trauma such as anxiety, withdrawal, and depressive symptoms. This study corroborates findings from Ogbemudia et al. (2025) and Loomis et al. (2025), who observed that teachers often misunderstand trauma-related behaviours, interpreting them as mere misbehaviour. In this study, teachers reported behaviours such as low self-esteem and school absenteeism but were less likely to recognise other trauma signs like anxiety and poor personal hygiene, which may reflect the subtle nature of trauma symptoms. These findings reinforce previous research by Downey and Crummy (2022), who emphasised that trauma-related behaviours are often mistaken for ordinary classroom misbehaviours, leading to insufficient support for affected pupils. The study also aligns with existing research that highlights the lack of effective trauma management practices in schools. According to Schlecht (2024), trauma management in classrooms is often underdeveloped, with teachers failing to engage in supportive strategies such as home visits or liaising with child welfare services. This study found similar gaps in trauma

management practices, with teachers reporting low engagement in these activities, liaising with external services, which suggests that trauma-informed practices are not deeply integrated into teachers' daily routines. One notable difference is the high prevalence of pseudo-parenting in the study sample. While existing studies on children in non-biological caregiving arrangements, such as Nwokocha et al. (2021) and Tekeba et al. (2024), suggest that pseudo-parenting is common, this study revealed that of the teachers surveyed reported having at least one pupil raised by pseudo-parents. This suggests that pseudo-parenting is more widespread in Ilorin South compared to other regions, highlighting the urgency of addressing trauma-related behaviours in such pupils. This finding indicates that pseudo-parenting is a particularly prevalent issue in the study area, warranting targeted intervention efforts in schools. Another significant difference found in this study is the relationship between teaching experience and trauma management strategies. The research revealed a statistically significant difference in trauma management practices across teaching experience categories, with more experienced teachers (30–35 years) showing higher effectiveness in managing trauma-related behaviours. This result contrasts with findings from Usifo (2023) and Loomis & Panlilio (2022), where no significant variation in trauma management practices was observed based on teaching experience. This suggests that in Ilorin South, teaching experience may play a critical role in the ability to identify and manage trauma-related behaviours, which has not been as prominent in other studies. Teachers with longer teaching careers appear to have more effective strategies, potentially due to their greater exposure to various student needs and behaviours. A key difference between this study and other research is the specific lack of trauma-informed training among teachers in Ilorin South. The study found that teachers had minimal exposure to professional development in trauma-informed teaching practices, with low mean scores for attendance at workshops or training. This is in contrast to studies such as Ayodele & Aina (2018), which suggest that teacher training is becoming increasingly integrated into education systems in some regions. The findings in this study suggest a need for a more structured approach to professional development focused on trauma recognition and response, a gap that is less pronounced in other studies from different regions, where teacher training programs are more robust.

The results of this study signify the urgent need for greater awareness and training for teachers regarding trauma-related behaviours, particularly among pupils raised by non-biological caregivers. The high prevalence of pseudo-parenting in the region highlights the importance of addressing the emotional and psychological needs of these children. The study underscores that trauma-related behaviours are not always overt or easily identifiable, which contributes to their under-recognition and inadequate management in classrooms. Connecting this to the larger phenomenon, it becomes clear that fostering trauma-informed educational practices is essential for ensuring the well-being and academic success of pupils in non-biological caregiving environments. This issue should be viewed as part of a broader societal challenge that encompasses the need for more responsive child welfare systems and educational policies. This research has

significant implications for teacher training, school policies, and child welfare systems in Nigeria and similar contexts. Firstly, the findings suggest a need for integrating trauma-informed training into teacher professional development programs. Additionally, schools should establish stronger support systems that involve collaboration with child welfare agencies, allowing for more comprehensive care of pupils raised by pseudo-parents. Furthermore, educational policies should prioritise trauma-sensitive approaches to address the needs of vulnerable pupils, ensuring that teachers are better equipped to identify and support children experiencing trauma. This research also calls for more empirical studies on the intersection of trauma and pseudo-parenting in educational settings to guide future interventions. The research results are likely a reflection of the limited exposure that teachers in Ilorin South have had to trauma-informed practices and the complexities of trauma in children raised by pseudo-parents. The low level of teacher participation in trauma-focused professional development, coupled with the challenges posed by inadequate school resources, may explain the moderate recognition and low application of trauma management strategies. Furthermore, the cultural and socio-economic context of the region, where non-biological caregiving is common but often underreported in educational research, may also contribute to teachers' lack of awareness and preparedness to manage trauma-related behaviours.

CONCLUSION

The most significant findings of this study highlight the prevalent presence of pupils raised by non-biological caregivers (pseudo-parents) in the classrooms of primary school teachers in Ilorin South, Kwara State, Nigeria. All teachers surveyed reported having at least one pupil from such caregiving backgrounds, underlining the widespread nature of this issue. The research revealed that teachers recognised several trauma-related behaviours, such as low self-esteem, absenteeism, and moodiness, but their overall perception and recognition of trauma were moderate. Additionally, the study found that trauma management strategies in classrooms were limited, with teachers reporting low levels of engagement in practices such as home visits, liaising with child welfare services, and using trauma-informed teaching methods. Furthermore, teaching experience was found to significantly influence the effectiveness of trauma management, with more experienced teachers demonstrating stronger strategies for addressing trauma-related behaviours. This research provides valuable insights into the perceptions and management of trauma-related behaviours among pupils raised by pseudo-parents in Nigeria, an area that has been underexplored in the educational research literature. By focusing on teachers' experiences and their ability to identify and manage trauma, this study highlights a critical gap in teacher training and support, emphasising the need for professional development in trauma-informed teaching. The study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on trauma and education in Nigeria, specifically in the context of non-biological caregiving arrangements. It also underscores the need for more comprehensive and culturally sensitive interventions to

support trauma-affected pupils. The findings can inform educational policies and help design more effective support systems for teachers and students in regions with high levels of pseudo-parenting. While this study provides significant insights, it is not without limitations. First, the research focused solely on primary school teachers in Ilorin South, Kwara State, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions or countries. Additionally, the study relied on self-reported data from teachers, which may be subject to bias or inaccuracies, especially in their perceptions of trauma-related behaviours and management strategies. The use of a cross-sectional design also limits the ability to assess the long-term effectiveness of trauma-informed practices in the classroom. Future research should explore a broader range of geographic locations to determine whether the findings hold in different cultural and socio-economic contexts. Longitudinal studies could also be conducted to assess the long-term outcomes of trauma-informed teaching practices on pupils' academic performance and emotional well-being. Further research is needed to investigate the effectiveness of specific trauma management strategies and their impact on students raised by pseudo-parents. Additionally, studies could explore the perspectives of pupils themselves to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences and the specific types of support they find most beneficial.

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