

Paternity Fraud: Causes, Preventive Strategies, Counselling, and Victims Compensation in Nigeria

Ogunleye, Oluwole Festus

Social Development Department, Rufus Giwa Polytechnic, Owo Ondo State

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51583/IJLTEMAS.2026.150400040>

Received: 11 April 2026; Accepted: 16 April 2026; Published: 05 May 2026

ABSTRACT

Paternal fraud, defined as the deliberate or inadvertent misattribution of biological fatherhood, has emerged as a critical social, legal, and psychological issue within contemporary Nigerian society. This study examines the causes of paternal fraud, the preventive strategies available, the counselling approaches and interventions required for affected individuals, and the mechanisms for victims' compensation and legal redress in Nigeria. Adopting a descriptive and analytical approach, the study draws on existing literature, legal frameworks, and socio-cultural perspectives to explore the multifaceted dimensions of paternal fraud. The findings reveal that socio-economic pressures, weak legal enforcement, patriarchal family structures, stigma surrounding infertility, and limited access to affordable DNA testing significantly contribute to the occurrence of paternal fraud in Nigeria. Preventive strategies identified include public awareness campaigns, premarital and postnatal counselling, routine access to paternal testing, and strengthened legal and institutional safeguards. The study further highlights the importance of professional counselling in addressing the psychological trauma, identity disruption, and family instability experienced by victims. In addition, the paper examines gaps in Nigeria's legal system concerning compensation and proposes policy reforms aimed at ensuring justice, restitution, and emotional rehabilitation for affected individuals. The study concludes that a coordinated response involving legal reform, counselling services, and public education is essential for addressing paternal fraud and safeguarding family integrity in Nigeria.

Keywords: Paternal fraud; Biological fatherhood; DNA testing; Counselling interventions; Victim compensation; Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Paternal fraud refers to the intentional misidentification of a child's biological father by a putative father, typically where a woman leads a man to believe he is the biological father of her child when, in fact, he is not. It is understood as a specific form of misattributed paternity or paternal discrepancy that involves deliberate deception rather than accidental misidentification arising from non-intentional error or mix-ups in reproductive scenarios (Betz-Hamilton, 2020). In the Nigerian context, paternal fraud is frequently described as the act of a woman falsely claiming that a man is the biological father of her child, resulting in that man accepting social, emotional, and financial responsibilities under false premises. This definition underscores both the biological and social dimensions of paternity, where perceived fatherhood does not align with genetic reality (Pinga et al., 2024).

Internationally, the prevalence of paternal discrepancy has been reported to vary widely, with scientific literature suggesting a median discordance rate of around 3.7 percent in diverse populations. However, studies range from less than one percent to considerably higher figures when samples are selected based on suspicion of misattribution. Globally, paternal fraud raises complex ethical, legal, and social concerns, particularly regarding the rights of putative fathers and the consequences of misattributed paternity for family dynamics and child welfare (Badejo & Olowe, 2025). In Nigeria, emerging research and media reporting indicate that paternal fraud has become a subject of heightened public and scholarly attention. Several reports suggest Nigeria ranks among the countries with high rates of paternal exclusion in DNA testing outcomes. For example, recent industry data reported that approximately one in four Nigerian men who undergo DNA paternal testing discover they are not

the biological father of the child in question, illustrating considerable public concern about the scale of the phenomenon. Despite this perceived prevalence, there remains a significant research and statutory gap on paternity fraud in Nigeria, with existing family and matrimonial laws offering limited and inconsistent remedies for affected individuals (Sanni, 2025).

The socio-cultural context of paternity in Nigeria is deeply rooted in normative understandings of family, lineage, and male responsibility. Traditionally, Nigerian societies across ethnic groups such as Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa have placed strong emphasis on social paternity, where fatherhood is defined by social responsibility and acknowledgement rather than biological verification, and view the presence of a man's name on a child's birth record or his verbal acceptance as sufficient proof of paternity (Olujobi, 2021). Within many communities, cultural taboos surrounding DNA testing reflect broader social norms that interpret questioning paternity as an expression of distrust or disrespect within marital relationships.

Religious and moral beliefs further influence attitudes towards paternity and fidelity; in some Christian and Muslim communities, extramarital relations and their potential consequences are heavily stigmatised, discouraging open discussion or verification of biological parentage. Moreover, socio-economic pressures, including unemployment, economic insecurity, and the cultural valorisation of childbearing, especially male offspring, have been implicated in shaping behaviours that contribute to the persistence of paternity fraud (Godwin et al., 2025).

Legally, Nigeria currently lacks explicit statutory provisions that specifically define and penalise paternity fraud, leaving affected men with limited avenues for legal recourse or compensation. The law generally presumes that a child born within a lawful marriage is the husband's biological offspring, and where paternity is disputed, judicial systems often rely on civil torts or general principles of equity without comprehensive statutory guidance on compensation for victims of deception. This absence of specific legal frameworks reflects broader normative and institutional gaps in addressing the harm inflicted by paternity fraud within the country's family law regime (E. G. Nnaemeka et al., 2020).

CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Concept of paternity and biological fatherhood

Paternity is a multifaceted concept that encompasses biological, social, legal, and psychological dimensions of fatherhood. At its core, paternity refers to the relationship between a man and a child, particularly the status of being recognised as the child's father (Okechukwu & Isiugo-Abanihe, 2025). Traditionally, paternity has been understood not only in biological terms but also as a social institution shaped by cultural norms, marital arrangements, and legal presumptions. In many societies, a man is regarded as the father of a child based on marriage to the mother, public acknowledgement, or assumption of parental responsibilities, regardless of genetic ties. This broader conception of paternity emphasises social fatherhood, which prioritises caregiving, authority, inheritance, and social identity over biological connection (Omokhabi et al., 2023)

Biological fatherhood, on the other hand, refers specifically to the genetic relationship between a man and a child, established through biological reproduction. Advances in medical science, particularly DNA testing, have significantly strengthened the ability to determine biological paternity with a high degree of accuracy (Okechukwu & Isiugo-Abanihe, 2025). As a result, biological fatherhood has gained increasing importance in legal, social, and ethical debates, especially in matters relating to child support, inheritance rights, custody, and identity formation. Scholars argue that biological paternity provides a scientific basis for determining lineage and kinship, which can challenge long-standing legal presumptions that equate fatherhood solely with marriage or social acknowledgement (Kandagor et al., 2021)

Despite the growing relevance of genetic testing, the distinction between paternity and biological fatherhood remains critical. While biological fatherhood is a matter of genetics, paternity often reflects socially constructed roles and responsibilities. Legal systems in many jurisdictions, including Nigeria, continue to prioritise presumptive paternity, particularly the presumption that a child born within a valid marriage is the legitimate child of the husband. This legal approach underscores the state's interest in family stability and child welfare,

sometimes at the expense of biological truth (Olaitan & Idowu, 2016) Consequently, situations may arise where a man is legally and socially recognised as a father despite lacking a biological connection to the child.

In contemporary discourse, the tension between social paternity and biological fatherhood has become more pronounced due to rising awareness of misattributed paternity and increased access to DNA testing. This tension raises complex ethical and legal questions regarding the rights and obligations of biological fathers, social fathers, children, and mothers. While biological fatherhood emphasises genetic truth and individual rights, social paternity underscores continuity, care, and social order. Understanding this distinction is essential for analysing issues such as paternity disputes, paternity fraud, and claims for emotional or financial redress, particularly within socio-cultural contexts where family and lineage carry profound social significance (Nguyen & Mai, 2024).

Definition and forms of paternity fraud

Paternity fraud is generally defined as the deliberate misrepresentation or concealment of a child's true biological paternity, whereby a man is falsely led to believe that he is the biological father of a child and consequently assumes paternal responsibilities under that belief (Nkan et al., 2024). Unlike cases of mistaken or uncertain paternity arising from ignorance or error, paternity fraud involves an element of intentional deception, often perpetuated by the child's mother or other relevant parties. The deception may occur before or after the child's birth and can persist for years, resulting in emotional, financial, and psychological consequences for the deceived individual. Scholars conceptualise paternity fraud as a subset of misattributed paternity, distinguished primarily by intent and the resulting harm to the putative father (Zhu et al., 2021).

One common form of paternity fraud is marital paternity fraud, which occurs when a child is born within a legally recognised marriage, but the husband is not the biological father. In many legal systems, including Nigeria's, the presumption of legitimacy automatically assigns paternity to the husband of the mother, thereby reinforcing social and legal fatherhood irrespective of genetic truth. Where a woman knowingly conceals extramarital conception and allows the husband to assume paternal obligations, the situation may constitute paternity fraud, particularly when the husband would have acted differently had he known the biological facts (Okoye & Nkanu, 2018)

Another form is non-marital or relational paternity fraud, which occurs outside marriage, often within dating or cohabiting relationships. In such cases, a man may be falsely identified as the biological father to secure financial support, emotional commitment, or social legitimacy for the child. This form of fraud is frequently associated with child maintenance claims, informal acknowledgement of paternity, or the registration of a man's name on a child's birth certificate without biological verification (Kaur & Gulati, 2024) The absence of formal marital ties does not diminish the impact of deception, as the putative father may still incur long-term financial and emotional obligations.

Institutional or legal paternity fraud represents another significant form, occurring when state or legal mechanisms reinforce false paternity through administrative or judicial processes (T. A. Ojo & Nwokolo, 2024). This may involve the listing of a man as a child's father on official documents based solely on presumption, acknowledgement, or default judgments, without adequate opportunity for genetic testing. In some jurisdictions, men may continue to be legally obligated to provide child support even after genetic evidence disproves biological paternity, thereby institutionalising the consequences of fraud. Such practices raise critical questions about fairness, consent, and the balance between child welfare and paternal rights (Buratai, 2022).

A further form is concealment-based paternity fraud, where the mother is uncertain of the child's biological father but intentionally withholds this uncertainty, allowing one man to assume paternity without disclosure of possible alternatives. Although some scholars debate whether uncertainty alone constitutes fraud, many argue that deliberate concealment of material information that would affect a man's decision to accept paternity satisfies the ethical and legal elements of fraudulent conduct (Aborisade et al., 2024) This form is particularly relevant in contexts where cultural norms discourage questioning paternity or requesting DNA testing.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Feminist theory

Feminist theory serves as a relevant and robust theoretical framework for the study of paternity fraud in Nigeria, particularly in examining its causes, preventive strategies, counselling interventions, and victims' compensation. Feminist theory is grounded in the analysis of gender relations, power structures, and social inequalities that shape family life, sexuality, reproduction, and legal systems. By focusing on how patriarchal norms and gendered expectations influence behaviour and decision-making, feminist theory provides a critical lens for understanding paternity fraud as a socially constructed phenomenon rather than merely an individual moral failing (Abreu et al., 2025).

Within the Nigerian socio-cultural context, feminist theory highlights how patriarchal family structures and cultural expectations surrounding marriage, lineage, and inheritance place disproportionate pressure on women regarding childbearing and marital stability. Women are often expected to secure their social and economic status through marriage and motherhood, while men are socially positioned as lineage bearers and economic providers. Feminist scholars argue that these unequal power relations, coupled with economic dependence, fear of stigma, and limited reproductive autonomy, may contribute to situations where biological paternity is concealed. Feminist theory, therefore, contextualises the causes of paternity fraud within broader structural constraints, without excusing deceptive practices (Hadia & Siegmann, 2021; Makarem et al., 2019).

Feminist theory also informs preventive strategies by emphasising gender equality, reproductive rights, and shared parental responsibility. From this perspective, effective prevention of paternity fraud requires addressing systemic inequalities that limit women's choices and silence open communication about sexuality and reproduction. Preventive measures include promoting comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education, improving women's access to economic opportunities, encouraging mutual accountability between partners, and reforming cultural norms that discourage transparency in intimate relationships. Feminist theory advocates for preventive approaches that are proactive and rights-based rather than punitive (Yasmeen et al., 2025).

In the area of counselling, feminist theory supports an empowerment-oriented and client-centred approach that is sensitive to gendered experiences and power dynamics. Feminist counselling frameworks emphasise empathy, non-judgment, and the recognition of social context in addressing emotional distress arising from paternity disputes. Counselling interventions guided by feminist theory aim to support affected men, women, and children by facilitating informed decision-making, emotional healing, and constructive dialogue, while avoiding the reinforcement of patriarchal dominance or gender stereotypes (Okorafor et al., 2024).

Feminist theory contributes to discussions on victims' compensation by promoting principles of fairness, social justice, and child welfare. While acknowledging that men may suffer emotional and financial harm due to misattributed paternity, feminist theory cautions against legal remedies that may disproportionately punish women or undermine the best interests of the child. Instead, it supports balanced legal frameworks that recognise harm, ensure equitable compensation where appropriate, and prioritise the protection and well-being of children. In the Nigerian context, feminist theory therefore provides a comprehensive and critical framework for understanding and addressing paternity fraud in a manner that is socially just, gender-sensitive, and culturally informed.

Family systems theory

Family Systems Theory provides a valuable theoretical framework for the study of paternity fraud, particularly in understanding its causes, preventive strategies, counselling interventions, and victims' compensation within the Nigerian context. The theory was propounded by Murray Bowen in the 1950s and 1960s as part of his work in family therapy and systems thinking. Bowen conceptualised the family as an emotional unit in which members are interconnected, such that the behaviour, roles, and experiences of one member inevitably affect the entire family system.

From the perspective of Family Systems Theory, paternity fraud is not viewed as an isolated individual action but as a phenomenon embedded within complex family interactions, communication patterns, and relational dynamics. The theory emphasises that families strive for equilibrium, and deceptive practices, including the concealment of biological paternity, may emerge as maladaptive strategies to maintain stability, avoid conflict, or preserve family cohesion. In Nigerian families, where marriage, childbearing, and lineage continuity carry significant social value, the disclosure of non-biological paternity may be perceived as a threat to family harmony, thereby influencing decisions to conceal or distort paternity information.

Family Systems Theory also explains the causes of paternity fraud through key concepts such as differentiation of self, emotional triangles, and multigenerational transmission processes. Low levels of differentiation may result in heightened emotional dependence and fear of rejection, leading individuals to engage in secrecy or deception. Emotional triangles where tension between two family members is managed by involving a third party may further complicate paternity issues, especially in extended family settings common in Nigeria. Additionally, patterns of secrecy, conflict avoidance, and gendered expectations may be transmitted across generations, reinforcing behaviours that contribute to paternity disputes (Hadia & Siegmann, 2021).

In terms of preventive strategies, Family Systems Theory underscores the importance of open communication, emotional regulation, and healthy boundary-setting within families. Prevention efforts informed by this theory focus on strengthening marital relationships, promoting honest dialogue about reproductive matters, and enhancing emotional differentiation among partners. Family-based education and premarital counselling can help couples develop problem-solving skills and realistic expectations, thereby reducing the likelihood of deception and unresolved paternity issues.

Regarding counselling interventions, Family Systems Theory advocates for a holistic, family-centred approach rather than an exclusive focus on individual blame. Counselling guided by this framework seeks to address dysfunctional interaction patterns, improve communication, and restore trust within the family unit. Therapeutic interventions may involve couples, children, and, where appropriate, extended family members, to achieve emotional balance and adaptive functioning following paternity disclosure (Sokefun et al., 2019).

Additionally, Family Systems Theory offers insights into victims' compensation by highlighting the broader relational and emotional consequences of paternity fraud. Compensation mechanisms should consider not only financial loss but also psychological distress, disrupted family roles, and the long-term impact on children and family stability. In the Nigerian context, applying Family Systems Theory supports restorative approaches that prioritise healing, family reorganisation, and the best interests of the child, while acknowledging the interconnected nature of harm and responsibility within the family system.

Causes of Paternity Fraud in Nigeria

Paternity fraud in Nigeria is driven by a complex interplay of socio-cultural, economic, legal, and relational factors that reflect broader structural inequalities and gendered norms within Nigerian society. One of the most frequently cited causes is the intense cultural pressure to bear children, especially male offspring, as a demonstration of fertility, family continuity, and social status. Scholars note that in many Nigerian cultures, women's worth and marital security are closely tied to their reproductive capacity, particularly in producing male heirs, which can motivate women in situations of infertility or delayed conception to conceal the true biological paternity of a child to preserve their social standing and marital stability (Metuon, 2025).

Relatedly, gendered expectations surrounding fertility and lineage play a significant role in cases of paternity fraud. Traditional Nigerian norms often assign blame for childlessness primarily to women, while male infertility is socially minimised or ignored. As a result, women struggling to conceive within a marriage may clandestinely seek alternative partners to fulfil societal expectations without acknowledging this outside the marital relationship, leading to misattributed paternity. This dynamic is further compounded by the social stigma attached to infertility and childlessness, which disproportionately affects women and constrains open discussions about reproductive health within couples and extended families (Pulse Nigeria interview with Salami, 2012; Marcus, cited in turn0search7).

Economic insecurity and financial dependency also emerge as significant drivers of paternity fraud in Nigeria. Research indicates that economic hardship, high unemployment, and poverty shape reproductive decisions, with financial considerations influencing women to attribute paternity to economically stable or resource-providing partners. Adegoke (2020) found that a substantial proportion of Nigerian women surveyed identified financial insecurity as a major reason for misrepresenting paternity, reflecting the role of economic imperatives in decisions that affect family structure and children's welfare (Jacobs & Ibani, 2025).

Infidelity and relationship instability constitute another critical factor. Patterns of extra-marital relationships and overlapping sexual partnerships, often catalysed by marital dissatisfaction, prolonged separation, or unmet emotional needs, can result in pregnancies where the biological father is not the husband. Women may then elect to conceal this reality to avoid marital conflict, protect the family unit, or avert social censure associated with infidelity (NaNHealths, 2024).

A related cause involves limited access to and utilisation of scientific paternity verification, such as DNA testing. Despite growing availability in urban centres, DNA testing remains prohibitively expensive and geographically inaccessible for many Nigerians, particularly in rural areas. Traditional practices of determining paternity based on acknowledgement, physical resemblance, or social norms persist in the absence of affordable and culturally acceptable genetic testing. This gap allows paternity misattribution to go undetected or unchallenged, while the social stigma surrounding paternity testing discourages its uptake because requesting such tests is often perceived as distrustful and dishonouring within families (Guardian investigation; withinnigeria.com report).

Institutional and legal lacunae further contribute to the prevalence of paternity fraud. Nigeria's existing family law framework does not explicitly criminalise paternity fraud nor provide clear avenues for restitution for aggrieved fathers, leaving significant legal ambiguity around detection, proof, and remedy. This lack of statutory deterrence reduces the perceived risk of engaging in paternity misrepresentation and complicates efforts by affected men to seek redress through formal judicial mechanisms (Jacobs & Ibani, 2025).

Finally, religious and moral expectations exert influential pressure on reproductive behaviour. Strong religious belief systems in Nigeria condemn extramarital sex and children born out of wedlock, creating an environment where women may conceal non-marital pregnancies to avoid spiritual condemnation, communal judgment, or ostracism. The moral weight of these religious norms can thus indirectly foster deceptive practices around paternity disclosure (NaNHealths, 2024).

Consequences of Paternity Fraud

Paternity fraud in Nigeria produces profound and multidimensional consequences for individuals, families, and broader social systems. Among the most immediate and debilitating effects are the psychological and emotional trauma experienced by the wrongly identified father, who, upon learning of misattributed paternity, may suffer a profound crisis of trust, identity, and emotional well-being. Research examining this phenomenon indicates that affected men commonly exhibit symptoms of depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress following disclosure of paternity fraud, reflecting the deep emotional wounds inflicted when fundamental assumptions about family and fatherhood are invalidated (Oti-Onyema & Umeobika, 2024) These psychological responses are compounded by feelings of betrayal and loss, eroding men's confidence in intimate relationships and undermining marital stability.

Beyond individual psychological distress, paternity fraud often precipitates relationship breakdown and familial disintegration. The discovery that a child is not biologically related to the presumed father can lead to marital dissolution, heightened conflict between spouses, and long-term estrangement within family networks (Omokhabi et al., 2023). In the absence of adequate mechanisms for truth-based dialogue and reconciliation, many families fractured by paternity fraud experience persistent tension, blame, and breakdown of communication, weakening the structural integrity of the family unit.

The effects on children are especially significant and complex. Psychological research and clinical reports from Nigeria underscore that children who learn of their misattributed paternity may endure emotional upheaval, identity confusion, and a sense of abandonment, with some manifesting anxiety, withdrawal from social

engagement, reduced academic performance, and in extreme cases, suicidal ideation (Ekwok et al., 2022). Such outcomes reflect the deeply intimate nature of paternity revelations, which can disrupt children's sense of belonging and security within the family. These adverse experiences are likely exacerbated in contexts where fathers withdraw affection or financial support following disclosure, as some Nigerian psychiatrists have cautioned (Okorafor et al., 2024)

Paternity fraud also imposes substantial economic consequences, particularly for men who continue to provide financial support under the assumption of biological paternity. In Nigeria, where legal provisions regulating paternity fraud and restitution are limited or inconsistent, many men remain legally obliged to bear the costs of child support and upbringing despite discovering the absence of a biological link (Button et al., 2025). This misallocation of financial resources can strain personal finances, limit economic opportunities, and exacerbate poverty for falsely identified fathers, especially when long-term child support commitments extend over many years.

In addition to direct financial burdens, paternity fraud has legal and institutional implications. The lack of explicit statutory remedies for paternity fraud in Nigerian law leaves affected men with few legal avenues for compensation or redress, contributing to perceptions of injustice and undermining confidence in the family justice system (Bourne, 2025). The absence of clear legal sanctions or frameworks for balancing child welfare with paternal rights often results in inconsistent judicial outcomes, further complicating dispute resolution and deepening mistrust in formal institutions.

At the societal level, the pervasive experience of paternity fraud contributes to erosion of trust in intimate relationships and the institution of family itself. High rates of misattributed paternity as indicated in multiple reports and local DNA testing data are interpreted by social commentators as symptomatic of broader societal challenges, including declining fidelity, weakened moral norms, and pervasive suspicion within marital partnerships (Okwuenu & Okechukwu, 2025). Such perceptions may have ripple effects on social cohesion, community relations, and the cultural valuation of marriage and parenthood.

Collectively, these consequences demonstrate that paternity fraud is not merely a private familial issue but a phenomenon with far-reaching psychological, economic, legal, and sociocultural ramifications. Addressing these impacts requires comprehensive interventions that integrate mental health support, legal reform, and community-based education to mitigate harm and support families affected by paternity misattribution (Gesinde, 2020).

Preventive Strategies Against Paternity Fraud

Preventing paternity fraud in Nigeria requires a multifaceted approach that addresses underlying socio-cultural norms, strengthens institutional frameworks, and promotes informed and transparent relationship practices. One of the foundational preventive strategies is the promotion of comprehensive reproductive and sexual education that fosters open communication between partners regarding fertility, reproductive health, contraception, and expectations around parenthood. Scholars have emphasised that when couples possess accurate information and language to discuss these matters, the likelihood of misunderstandings or concealment of paternity diminishes (Ezeji, 2022). Comprehensive education programmes in schools, healthcare centres, and community settings can demystify issues of fertility testing and destigmatise conversations around conception, thereby encouraging mutual responsibility and transparency in reproductive decisions (Adeola & Bahago, 2021)

Another critical preventive measure is the expansion of affordable and culturally sensitive paternity testing services. Access to reliable DNA testing at subsidised costs can enable prospective parents to confirm biological paternity early in pregnancy or at birth, thereby reducing the incidence of undisclosed misattribution. Research by Mutong et al., (2025) suggests that when paternity testing is readily accessible, couples are better positioned to make informed decisions, and potential disputes can be addressed before they escalate into conflict. However, for testing to be effective as a preventive strategy, Nigeria must also invest in public awareness campaigns that normalise voluntary testing without implying distrust or moral judgment (Emmanuel, 2024)

Strengthening legal and policy frameworks forms another essential component of prevention. Current Nigerian family law lacks explicit provisions that regulate paternity verification, protect the rights of all involved parties,

and outline consequences for deliberate misrepresentation of paternity. Scholars argue that comprehensive legislation is needed to clarify the legal status of paternity testing, parental rights, and obligations, and to establish mechanisms for restitution when fraud is established (Edim & Enda, 2025). Clear legal guidelines not only provide deterrence but also offer a structured pathway for resolving paternity disputes that balances child welfare with parental rights.

In addition to formal legal reform, community engagement and cultural transformation are vital. Given the entrenched cultural emphasis on fertility and male lineage in many Nigerian societies, interventions must aim to reshape harmful norms that stigmatise infertility and silence reproductive dialogue. Community leaders, religious institutions, and traditional authorities can play a significant role in advocating for gender equity, challenging myths about infertility, and promoting mutual respect and openness in relationships (Obioha et al., 2024). Grassroots campaigns that involve men as active participants in reproductive health conversations can also reduce gendered assumptions that women bear sole responsibility for conception outcomes.

Furthermore, relationship counselling and premarital education have been identified as proactive strategies to prevent paternity fraud by preparing couples for the emotional and practical complexities of shared parenthood. Counselling sessions that emphasise trust, communication skills, conflict resolution, and joint decision-making can decrease secrecy and foster environments where partners feel safe discussing sensitive issues such as fertility concerns or suspicions about paternity (Omeje et al., 2023). Such interventions are particularly valuable in a society where direct conversations about intimate matters are often constrained by cultural norms of deference and privacy.

Finally, efforts to reduce economic vulnerability and empower women constitute important preventive dimensions, as economic insecurity is a documented contributor to paternity misattribution (Obalowu & Abdul Rahim, 2022). Policies that improve women's access to education, employment opportunities, and social supports can reduce dependency on male partners and diminish incentives for attributing paternity based on financial considerations rather than biological reality. Research suggests that when women have greater economic autonomy, decision-making around reproductive choices becomes more equitable, and the likelihood of deception for financial security declines (Amalia et al., 2024).

Counselling Approaches and Interventions

Counselling plays a critical role in addressing the psychological, emotional, relational, and social consequences of paternity fraud. Given the sensitive nature of paternity disputes and their far-reaching impact on men, women, children, and extended family systems, counselling interventions must be comprehensive, ethically grounded, and culturally responsive. Effective counselling approaches aim not only to manage immediate emotional distress but also to promote long-term healing, informed decision-making, and family stability (Kiss et al., 2022).

One of the most relevant approaches is family systems counselling, which is rooted in the work of (Asangausung et al., 2025). This approach views paternity fraud as a relational issue embedded within family interaction patterns rather than as an isolated individual wrongdoing. Family systems counselling focuses on improving communication, addressing dysfunctional roles, and restoring balance within the family unit. In cases of paternity fraud, counsellors work with couples and, where appropriate, children and extended family members to process feelings of betrayal, anger, shame, and confusion. By addressing emotional triangles, secrecy, and boundary issues, this approach facilitates healthier interaction patterns and supports adaptive family reorganisation following paternity disclosure.

Individual counselling is also essential, particularly for men who discover misattributed paternity and experience intense emotional trauma. Studies indicate that affected men often suffer from depression, anxiety, anger, loss of identity, and diminished self-esteem (Oyeyipo, 2025). Individual counselling provides a confidential space for emotional expression, cognitive restructuring, and coping skill development. Therapeutic techniques such as cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) help clients challenge maladaptive thoughts, manage emotional distress, and develop constructive responses to complex family decisions (Hayati et al., 2025). For women involved in paternity fraud, individual counselling can address guilt, fear, social pressure, and underlying factors such as economic vulnerability or coercion.

Another important intervention is couples counselling, which focuses on rebuilding trust, facilitating honest dialogue, and supporting informed decision-making regarding the future of the relationship. Trust repair following betrayal requires emotional attunement, accountability, and sustained communication (Igwe, 2023). In paternity fraud cases, couples counselling assists partners in exploring the circumstances surrounding the fraud, negotiating parental responsibilities, and determining whether reconciliation, co-parenting, or separation is the most viable option. This approach is particularly relevant in the Nigerian context, where marital breakdown carries significant social and economic consequences.

Feminist counselling approaches also offer valuable insights and interventions, especially in contexts marked by gender inequality and power imbalance. Feminist counselling emphasises empowerment, social context, and the recognition of structural factors influencing individual behaviour (Wokoma & Udochukwu, 2020). In paternity fraud cases, this approach avoids simplistic moral judgments and instead examines how patriarchy, reproductive expectations, and economic dependency shape women's decisions. Feminist counselling promotes agency, informed choice, and gender-sensitive conflict resolution while remaining attentive to the emotional harm experienced by men and children.

Counselling interventions must also be child-centred, given the profound psychological impact of paternity fraud on children. Child counselling and play therapy can help children process confusion, identity disruption, and emotional distress resulting from changes in parental relationships (Hodzi, 2024). Counsellors are ethically obligated to prioritise the best interests of the child by fostering emotional security, maintaining consistent caregiving relationships, and preventing abandonment or emotional neglect following paternity disclosure.

In the Nigerian context, culturally sensitive and faith-based counselling may enhance effectiveness, given the strong influence of religion and tradition on family life. Integrating culturally appropriate values, community mediation, and religious counselling, where ethically appropriate, can support acceptance and compliance with counselling outcomes (Wagner et al., 2022). However, counsellors must ensure that cultural or religious norms do not reinforce gender oppression, silence victims, or compromise psychological well-being.

Victims' Compensation and Legal Redress

Victims' compensation and legal redress constitute a crucial component of any comprehensive response to paternity fraud, particularly given the significant emotional, financial, and social harm suffered by affected individuals. In the Nigerian context, victims of paternity fraud, most notably men who have been wrongly identified as biological fathers, often experience prolonged financial obligations, psychological distress, reputational damage, and disruption of family life (Kamalludin, 2024). Legal and compensatory mechanisms are therefore essential not only for restoring a sense of justice but also for deterring future occurrences and reinforcing accountability within family relations.

From a legal standpoint, paternity fraud presents considerable challenges within Nigeria's existing family law framework. Nigerian statutory and customary laws largely presume paternity based on marriage, acknowledgement, or cohabitation, rather than biological verification (Oyeyipo, 2025). While courts increasingly recognise DNA evidence in resolving paternity disputes, there is no specific legislation that clearly defines paternity fraud as a civil wrong or criminal offence, nor are there standardised remedies for compensation. This legal gap often leaves victims with limited options for redress, forcing courts to rely on general principles of equity and judicial discretion when adjudicating paternity-related claims (Ojo & Adebago, 2021).

Victims' compensation in cases of paternity fraud typically involves claims for financial restitution, including reimbursement of child maintenance, educational expenses, healthcare costs, and other expenditures incurred under false assumptions of biological parenthood. Scholars argue that compensatory frameworks should also recognise non-economic damages, such as emotional distress, psychological trauma, and loss of trust, which are often more profound and long-lasting than financial losses (Hayati et al., 2025). However, in Nigeria, compensation claims for emotional harm remain underdeveloped in family law practice, reflecting broader limitations in the recognition of psychological injury within civil litigation.

Legal redress mechanisms must also carefully balance victims' rights with the best interests of the child, a principle firmly embedded in Nigerian child protection laws and international conventions such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989). Courts are often reluctant to impose punitive measures that may indirectly harm children, particularly where compensation claims could destabilise a child's welfare or result in abandonment. Consequently, legal scholars advocate for restorative justice approaches that combine compensation for victims with protective measures for children, such as continued social parenting arrangements or state-supported child welfare interventions (Boxall et al., 2025)

Another critical dimension of legal redress involves access to justice and procedural fairness. Many victims of paternity fraud face barriers such as high litigation costs, prolonged court processes, limited awareness of legal rights, and social stigma associated with challenging paternity. These obstacles disproportionately affect low-income individuals and discourage formal legal action (Nnaemeka, 2024). Strengthening access to legal aid services, simplifying evidentiary requirements for DNA testing, and establishing specialised family courts or tribunals have been proposed as measures to enhance effective redress and ensure the timely resolution of paternity disputes.

Policy-oriented scholars further argue for the introduction of clear statutory guidelines on paternity determination, compensation, and liability. Such reforms could include provisions for mandatory or voluntary paternity testing at birth (with informed consent), defined civil remedies for deliberate misrepresentation of paternity, and structured compensation schemes that distinguish between intentional fraud and situations driven by coercion or socio-economic vulnerability (Obalowu & Abdul Rahim, 2022). These measures would promote legal certainty, reduce judicial inconsistency, and provide clearer pathways for victims seeking justice.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The growing incidence of paternity fraud in Nigeria carries significant policy implications for family stability, child welfare, gender relations, and the integrity of the legal system. As a socially embedded and legally under-regulated phenomenon, paternity fraud exposes critical gaps in Nigeria's family law framework, reproductive health policies, counselling infrastructure, and social protection mechanisms. Addressing these gaps requires coordinated policy responses that are preventive, remedial, and restorative in nature (Efut & Chiagoziem, 2021).

One major policy implication is the need for comprehensive reform of family and child-related laws. Current Nigerian legal frameworks largely presume paternity based on marriage or acknowledgement, with limited statutory guidance on biological verification, fraud, or compensation. Policymakers should consider enacting clear legal provisions that define paternity fraud, establish standards for admissible DNA evidence, and outline civil remedies for deliberate misrepresentation of paternity (Denwigwe & Ngwu, 2022) Such reforms would enhance legal certainty, reduce judicial inconsistency, and provide structured avenues for redress while safeguarding the best interests of the child.

Another critical implication concerns child welfare and social protection policy. Paternity fraud disputes often place children at risk of emotional abandonment, economic deprivation, and identity crises. Policy frameworks must therefore prioritize child-centred outcomes by ensuring continuity of care, access to psychosocial support, and protection from harm irrespective of biological parentage. Government agencies responsible for child welfare should integrate paternity dispute resolution mechanisms with counselling services and social assistance programmes to mitigate the adverse effects on children (Abreu et al., 2025)

The findings of this study also highlight the importance of reproductive health and family planning policies. Limited access to fertility testing, reproductive counselling, and sexual health education contributes to secrecy and misinformation surrounding conception and parenthood. Policy reforms should strengthen reproductive health services for both men and women, including routine fertility screening, premarital counselling, and public education campaigns that destigmatise infertility and promote shared reproductive responsibility (Jacobs & Ibani, 2025). Such measures can reduce the social pressures that often precipitate paternity fraud.

In addition, there are strong policy implications for counselling and mental health services. The psychological trauma associated with paternity fraud affecting men, women, and children remains largely unaddressed within

Nigeria's mental health system. Policymakers should invest in the integration of family counselling, trauma-informed care, and mediation services into primary healthcare and judicial processes. Establishing counselling units within family courts and community health centres would provide timely psychosocial support and facilitate non-adversarial dispute resolution (Metuonu, 2025)

From a gender policy perspective, paternity fraud underscores persistent gender inequality and economic vulnerability, particularly among women. Policies aimed at women's economic empowerment through education, employment opportunities, and social safety nets can reduce dependency-driven incentives for paternity misrepresentation. Simultaneously, gender-responsive policies should encourage male involvement in reproductive health, parenting education, and family planning to promote shared accountability and reduce gendered blame for reproductive outcomes (Asangausung et al., 2025)

Based on these implications, several policy recommendations are advanced. First, Nigeria should enact specific legislation on paternity determination and fraud, incorporating provisions for DNA testing, compensation, and restorative remedies. Second, government and private stakeholders should subsidise and regulate affordable DNA testing services to ensure equitable access across urban and rural areas. Third, mandatory premarital and marital counselling programmes, supported by religious and traditional institutions, should be strengthened to promote transparency and communication. Fourth, child-centred compensation and welfare mechanisms should be institutionalised to protect children from the adverse consequences of paternity disputes. Finally, sustained public awareness and advocacy campaigns are needed to challenge harmful cultural norms surrounding fertility, masculinity, and lineage (Orhe et al., 2025).

CONCLUSION

Paternity fraud in Nigeria emerges as a complex social phenomenon with multifaceted causes, wide-ranging consequences, and significant implications for individuals, families, and society. The study has shown that the primary causes of paternity fraud include cultural and societal pressures surrounding fertility and male lineage, stigmatisation of infertility, economic insecurity, relationship instability, and limited access to reliable paternity verification methods. These causes are embedded within broader structural and gendered inequalities that shape reproductive decisions and family dynamics, reflecting the socially constructed nature of paternity misattribution in Nigeria. The consequences of paternity fraud are profound and multidimensional. At the individual level, affected fathers experience emotional trauma, loss of trust, and financial burdens, while women may face guilt, social stigma, and strained relationships (Anderson, 2016; Omokhabi, Adegbite & Omokhabi, 2023). Children, who are often unintended victims, may suffer identity confusion, emotional distress, and disrupted family bonds (Punch Healthwise, 2025). Beyond the family, paternity fraud erodes trust within intimate relationships, challenges societal norms of parenthood, and exposes gaps in legal and institutional frameworks, highlighting the urgent need for comprehensive policy intervention.

From a policy and societal perspective, the study underscores several key implications. For families, paternity fraud disrupts emotional and financial stability, necessitating enhanced communication, reproductive health awareness, and access to counselling and mediation services. For society, the prevalence of paternity fraud signals the need to address gender inequalities, economic vulnerabilities, and cultural norms that perpetuate secrecy and misattribution. Policymakers are called upon to implement legal reforms that define paternity fraud, ensure access to DNA verification, provide structured compensation mechanisms, and prioritise the best interests of children (Ekhatior, 2016; Okafor & Eze, 2021). Integrating mental health support, reproductive education, and gender-responsive economic policies would further mitigate the risk of paternity misattribution while promoting family stability and social cohesion. Paternity fraud in Nigeria is not merely a private family issue but a societal concern with far-reaching emotional, economic, and legal ramifications. Addressing it requires a holistic, multidisciplinary approach that combines legal, social, psychological, and cultural interventions. Through comprehensive policy, preventive strategies, counselling, and public education, it is possible to reduce the incidence of paternity fraud, protect children's welfare, and strengthen family integrity and trust within Nigerian society.

REFERENCES

1. Aborisade, R. A., Ocheja, A., & Okuneye, B. A. (2024). Emotional and financial costs of online dating scam: A phenomenological narrative of the experiences of victims of Nigerian romance fraudsters. *Journal of Economic Criminology*, 3. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeconc.2023.100044>
2. Abreu, L., Hecker, T., Goessmann, K., Abioye, T. O., Olorunlambe, W., & Hoeffler, A. (2025). Prevalence and correlates of sexual violence against adolescents: Quantitative evidence from rural and urban communities in South-West Nigeria. *PLOS Global Public Health*, 5(2). <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pgph.0004223>
3. Adeola, N., & Bahago, S. B. (2021). Incidences and Causes of Paedophilia and Child Sexual Molestation as Perceived by Teachers of Secondary Schools in the Federal Capital Territory. *FCT Counsellor.*, 1(1), 130–143.
4. Buratai, A. H. (2022). Effect of Rape on Physical and Psychological Wellbeing of Girl Child in Northern Nigeria. *Education and Human Development: Interdisciplinary Perspective*, 124–129.
5. Amalia, S. C. R., Anggraini, A. U., Rato, D., & Setyawan, F. (2024). Non-Penal Policy In Tackling Cyber-Bullying Through Integrated Cyber-Prevention. *JURNAL LEGALITAS*, 17(1), 38–48. <https://doi.org/10.33756/jelta.v17i1.24900>
6. Asangausung, O. S., Okorie, E. J., & Daniel, U. S. (2025). Paternity Disputes And Delinquent Behaviour Among Street Children In Major Towns In Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. *Academic Journal of National Issues (AJNI)*, 2(1), 24–37. <http://orcid.org/0009-0006-0895-53X>
7. Badejo, A. O., & Olowe, N. E. (2025). Age and Social Support as Moderators of Trauma-Focused CBT Effectiveness among Female Adolescent Sexual Abuse Survivors in Lagos, Nigeria. *International Journal Of Research And Innovation In Social Science (IJRISS)*, IX(X), 9669–9682. <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS>
8. Betz-Hamilton, A. (2020). A Phenomenological Study on Parental Perpetrators of Child Identity Theft. *Journal of Financial Counseling and Planning*, 31(2), 219–228. <https://doi.org/10.1891/JFCP-19-00001>
9. Bourne, P. A. (2025). Female and Male Perspectives on Paternity Fraud in Jamaica: A Multidimensional Approach to Legal, Social, and Ethical Solutions. *International Journal of Insights & Transformations in Law, Crime & Justice*, 9, 29–47. <https://eurekajournals.com/>
10. Boxall, H., Bragias, A., & Corner, E. (2025). “You Have Caused All of This, It’s All Your Fault”: An Argument for the Application of Grievance-Fuelled Violence Frameworks to the Prevention of Male-Perpetrated Intimate Partner Homicide. *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy*, 14(4), 118–132. <https://doi.org/10.5204/ijcjsd.3487>
11. Button, M., Lazarus, S., Hock, B., Bugbilla Sabia, J., Pandey, D., & Gilmour, P. (2025). Factors Influencing Involvement in Cyber-Frauds in West Africa and the Implications for Policy. *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10610-025-09649-6>
12. Denwigwe, C. P., & Ngwu, M. E. (2022). Personal variables and attitude of youths to Lassa fever preventive practices in Bwari area Council Abuja, Nigeria: Counselling implications. *Global Journal of Educational Research*, 21(1), 17–25. <https://doi.org/10.4314/gjedr.v21i1.3>
13. Edim, P., & Enda, T. (2025). Influence of Parental Counselling and Need Satisfaction on Premarital Sex Vulnerability among Secondary School Teenagers in Calabar Education Zone, Cross River State, Nigeria. *Journal of Education Research and Library Practice*. <https://doi.org/10.70382/ajerlp.v7i8.020>
14. Efut, M. R., & Chiagoziem, A. (2021). Paternity Fraud: Examining Its Causes, Tort Of Deciet And Victims Compensation. *Global Scientific Journals*, 9(12). www.globalscientificjournal.com
15. Ekwok, M. L., Effiom, B. E., Ebuara, M. O., Inaja, A., & Elizabeth, G. A. (2022). Exploring Community Counselling on Violence against Women, Rape, Divorce and Domestic Violence in Cross River State Nigeria. *IIARD Journal Of Humanities And Social Policy*, 8(2), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.56201/jhsp.v8.no2.2022.pg1.9>
16. Emmanuel, T. (2024). Influence of harmful widowhood practices on widows in Nigeria: implications for Guidance. *International Journal of Journal of Humanities and Social Policy*, 10(4), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.56201/jhsp.v10.no4.2024.pg1.20>

17. Ezeji, C. L. (2022). Gender based Violence Its Impact on Women and Girls during COVID-19 Pandemic in Lagos State Nigeria. *Alternation Interdisciplinary Journal for the Study of the Arts and Humanities in Southern Africa*, 29(2). <https://doi.org/10.29086/2519-5476/2022/v29n2a5>
18. Gesinde, A. (2020). Gender and paternal psychological abuse on psychopathology symptoms among children and adolescents in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 6(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2020.1783911>
19. Godwin, S. A., Liman, A. N., & David, U. (2025). Assessment Of Public Perception Of Internet Fraud Among Residents Of Delta State, Nigeria. *Polace Management Review (PMR)*, 5(2), 303–319. www.pemsj.com
20. Hadia, M., & Siegmann, K. A. (2021). The Effects of Growth on Women’s Employment in Pakistan. *Feminist Economics*, 27(4), 29–61. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13545701.2021.1942512>
21. Hayati, F., Fidiawati, L., Helnita, Afdal, & Helminsyah. (2025). Sharia-based collaborative counseling model to prevent child sexual abuse and violence. *Multidisciplinary Science Journal*, 7(5). <https://doi.org/10.31893/multiscience.2025236>
22. Hodzi, B. (2024). The Role of Traditional Leadership in Addressing Gender-Based Violence in Seke Community, Zimbabwe. *African Journal of Inter/Multidisciplinary Studies*, 6(1), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.51415/ajims.v6i1.1270>
23. Igwe, O. D. (2023). Students’ Involvement In Social Media Fraud: A Case Study Of Lagos State University. *African Journal of Social and Behavioural Sciences (AJSBS)*, 13(2).
24. Jacobs, A. I., & Ibani, B. G. (2025). Paternity Fraud in Nigeria: Examining the Legal Framework and Dispute Resolution Mechanisms. *American Journal of Political Science and Leadership Studies*, 2(10), 108–119. <https://semantjournals.org/index.php/AJPSLS>
25. Kamalludin, I. (2024). Women and Children as Victims of Financial-based Violence in Online Gambling Circles: A Criminological Approach to Criminal Law and Rehabilitation Policy in Indonesia. *Sawwa: Jurnal Studi Gender*, 19(1), 1–28. <https://doi.org/10.21580/sa.v19i1.22628>
26. Kandagor, V., Isaac Wanjohi, K., & Barasa Mukadi, E. (2021). Causes Of Child Neglect Among Primary School Pupils In Marigat Sub County, Kenya And It’s Counselling Implications. *International Journal of Education and Research*, 9(5). www.ijern.com
27. Kaur, N., & Gulati, S. (2024). Domestic Violence Against Men In India: A Critical Analysis With Special Reference To Indian Laws. *South India Journal of Social Sciences*, 22(1), 70–81.
28. Kiss, L., Fotheringham, D., Kyegombe, N., McAlpine, A., Abilio, L., Kyamulabi, A., Walakira, E. J., Devries, K., & Tanton, C. (2022). Paper: violence, abuse and exploitation among trafficked women and girls: a mixed-methods study in Nigeria and Uganda. *BMC Public Health*, 22(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-022-13021-2>
29. Makarem, Y., Metcalfe, B. D., & Afiouni, F. (2019). A feminist poststructuralist critique of talent management: Toward a more gender sensitive body of knowledge. *BRQ Business Research Quarterly*, 22(3), 181–193. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.brq.2019.04.004>
30. Metuonu, I. C. (2025). Paternity fraud in Nigeria: Ethical, legal, cultural, and social dimensions. *Faculty of Natural and Applied Sciences Journal of Basic and Environmental Research*, 2(2), 101–108. www.fnasjournals.com
31. Mutong, C., Ekma, I. K., & Dogara, H. R. (2025). Influence of Childhood Abuse on the Academic Achievement of Secondary School Students in Plateau State, Nigeria. *Journal of Education Research and Library Practice*, 10(8). <https://doi.org/10.70382/ajerlp.v10i8.052>
32. Nguyen, M. T. D., & Mai, L. H. (2024). Child sexual abuse in Vietnam: A review of prevalence, risk factors, and prevention strategies. *Multidisciplinary Reviews*, 7(11). <https://doi.org/10.31893/multirev.2024269>
33. Nkan, V., Udofia, E. A., & Uduk, D. (2024). Determinants and Perception of Incest in Family Relationships in Uyo Capital City, Nigeria. *International Journal of Home Economics, Hospitality and Allied Research*, 3(2), 12–28. <https://doi.org/10.57012/ijhhr.v3n2.002>
34. Nnaemeka, E. G., Anuar, M. A. M., Abdul Wahat, N. W., & Ismail, I. A. (2020). Exploring Self-Leadership Strategies and its Proposed use among Small and Medium Enterprise Leaders in Nigeria. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 10(11), 821–838. <https://doi.org/10.6007/ijarbss/v10-i11/8146>

35. Nnaemeka, K. (2024). Promoting Marital Fidelity: The Socio-Religious Case For Honest Paternity In Lagos Urban, Lagos State, Nigeria. *International Journal Of Igbo Scholars Forum, Nigeria*, 17(3).
36. Obalowu, I. A., & Abdul Rahim, A. (2022). Marital Infidelity and Paternity Dispute in Nigeria: an Islamic Perspective. *AL-HIKMAH: INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ISLAMIC STUDIES AND HUMAN SCIENCES*, 5(5), 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.46722/hikmah.v5i5.299>
37. Obioha, W. C., Obi, C. J. V., Nnamani, K. E., Chima, U. E., Mefoh, P. C., Okoye, K. M., & Anozie, E. U. (2024). Interparental violence and school bullying among Nigerian adolescents: Moderating role of psychological resilience. *Child Protection and Practice*, 1. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chipro.2024.100010>
38. Ojo, L., & Adebago, A. (2021). Risk Factors, Symptoms, Preventive Measures, Suicidal Behaviours And The Undergraduates In Nigeria: Pressure Of E-Learning And E-Health Resources. *UNILORIN Journal Of Lifelong Education*, 5(1), 164–181.
39. Ojo, T. A., & Nwokolo, C. (2024). Effect Of Behaviour Contract Technique On Bullying Tendency Among Secondary School Students In Ado Ekiti Local Government Area Of Ekiti State. *AJEMATES African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies*, 13(3), 189–208. <https://ajemates.orgURL:http://sjifactor.com/passport.php?id=21362>
40. Okechukwu, P. O., & Isiugo-Abanihe, U. C. (2025). Causes and Social Consequences of Paternity Discrepancy in Enugu Metropolis, Nigeria. *The Nigerian Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, 23(1), 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.36108/njsa/5202.32.0110>
41. Okorafor, K. A., Okeibunor, J., Oyinlola, F. F., Ouedraogo, L., & Tinuola, F. R. (2024). Exploring sexual and reproductive health needs, barriers, and coping strategies of internally displaced women of reproductive ages in north-central Nigeria: A qualitative analysis. *PLoS ONE*, 19(12). <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0309317>
42. Okoye, K. R. E., & Nkanu, S. M. (2018). Factors Militating against the Integration of Information and Communication Technologies for Effectiveness of Technical and Vocational Education and Training. 28(1), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.9734/JESBS/2018/45323>
43. Okwuenu, S. E., & Okechukwu, D. N. (2025). Forensic Evidence In Nigeria: The Legal Psychodynamics In Quality, Credibility And Utility Values. *Journal of Psychology and Behavioural Disciplines, COOU*, 5(2).
44. Olaitan, O., & Idowu, A. A. (2016). Child Abuse In Nigeria: Dimension, Reasons For Its Persistence And Probable. *Child and Family Law Journal*, 4(2).
45. Olujobi, J. O. (2021). Analysis of the Legal Strategies for Tackling the Crime of Kidnapping in the Nigeria's Oil and Gas Industry. *Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka Journal of Commercial and Property Law*, 8(5), 2021. <https://www.iaee.org/documents/newsletterarticles/109balouga.pdf>
46. Omeje, G. N., Ede, M. O., Amadi, K., Ogbueghu, S. N., Chinweuba, N. H., Obeagu, E. I., Eze, E., Areji, A. C., Agbo, C. O., & Ekwueme, F. O. (2023). Intervention for burnout and irrational beliefs in parents of couples seeking a divorce: A critical reflection of Igbo-African marital discord. *Medicine (United States)*, 102(27), E34221. <https://doi.org/10.1097/MD.00000000000034221>
47. Omokhabi, U. S., Adegbite, O. O., & Omokhabi, A. A. (2023). Breaking the Silence of Paternity Fraud Effects on Families: Assessing Social Welfare Policies Interventions. *FUOYE International Journal of Education (FIJED)*, 6(2). <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9700-5216>
48. Orhe, O., Ekpebe PA, Eberegwha EM, & Anyanwu EB. (2025). Paternity fraud in Nigeria and the distress of fathers: Multiple case studies. *International Journal of Biological and Pharmaceutical Sciences Archive*, 9(1), 021–024. <https://doi.org/10.53771/ijbpsa.2025.9.1.0023>
49. Oti-Onyema, & Umeobika. (2024). Examining The Legal Implications Of The Experiences Of The Nigerian Child In The Information Age: The Need For Sustainable Positive Actions. *International Review of Law and Jurisprudence (IRLJ)*, 6, 142–149. <https://heinonline.org|holsupport@wshein.comhttps://www.copyright.com>
50. Oyeyipo, M. O. (2025). School-Based Counselling and Risky Lifestyle Behaviours among Senior Secondary School Students in Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. *Prestige Journal of Education*, 8(2).
51. Pinga, M., Jor, J., & Olatunde, O. H. (2024). Addressing Examination Malpractice In Nigerian Secondary Schools: Challenges, Effects And Strategic Solutions. *Journal Of Education Review*, 15(1).

52. Sanni, M. (2025). Analysing Crime Waves in Contemporary Nigeria Through the Maqāsid Al-Sharī'ah Framework. *Invest Journal of Sharia & Economic Law*, 5(2), 351–386. <https://doi.org/10.21154/invest.v5i2.10970>
53. Sokefun, E. A., Opayemi, A. S., & Akinbode, J. O. (2019). Work-family conflict, emotional intelligence and stress as determinants of job satisfaction among female bank employees. *Caleb International Journal of Development Studies*, 2(2), 1-20.
54. Wagner, K., Bartels, S. A., Weber, S., & Lee, S. (2022). UNsupported: The Needs and Rights of Children Fathered by UN Peacekeepers in the Democratic Republic of Congo. *Human Rights Review*, 23(3), 305–332. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12142-021-00652-y>
55. Wokoma, P. I., & Udochukwu, G. (2020). The Influence on Family Type on Bullying Behavior Among Students of Secondary School Age in Ikwerre Local Government Area. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 6(5), 2454–6186. www.rsisinternational.org
56. Yasmeen, F., Petersen, A., & Forbes-Mewett, H. (2025). Discrimination at Work? The Case of Pakistani Migrant Women in Australian Workplaces. *Australian Feminist Studies*, 40(126), 390–409. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08164649.2025.2532054>
57. Zhu, C., Huang, S., Evans, R., & Zhang, W. (2021). Cyberbullying Among Adolescents and Children: A Comprehensive Review of the Global Situation, Risk Factors, and Preventive Measures. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 9. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2021.634909>