

**INCEST PRACTICES AMONG ADOLESCENTS AND ITS IMPACT ON FAMILY  
WELL-BEING IN IKWO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF EBONYI STATE**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study investigates incest practices among Adolescents and its impact on family wellbeing in Ikwo Local Government Area of Ebonyi. The population of the study will consist of 2250 adolescent students from five different secondary school (JSS 1 SS3) within the study area. Out of this, a sample of three and four (304) students across five (5) secondary schools will be selected from the population using Taro Yamane's formulae. Data will be collected through self structured questionnaire designed to elicit information about the patterns, the determinants and the consequences of incestuous practices. The instruments will be validated and tested for reliability. Data collected will be analysed using statistical package for social science (Spss) based on the questionnaires. The findings of the study will include among others. That incestuous practices, though relatively rare, do occur within families worldwide. Based on the findings, recommendations will be made by the researcher as follows: That there is need for early interventions and support for survivors in shaping the dynamics of incestuous practices.

## **Background of the Study**

Incest refers to the sexual activity or marriage between individuals who are closely related by blood, typically within a family, and is considered taboo or illegal in many cultures due to the potential for genetic and social issues (Makinde, 2015). However, the exact relationships which can be construed as incest vary from culture to culture. These relationships are characterized by sexual encounters that transgress societal and legal norms, transcending geographical boundaries and cultural differences, making it a global concern that demands attention and examination. Incestuous practices evoke profound concerns that reverberate across multiple dimensions, casting a shadow on the well-being of those directly and indirectly affected (Makinde, 2015). These concerns are not limited to moral judgments but extend to the physical, emotional, psychological, and social realms of individuals and families (Smith, 2018).

Incestuous practices among adolescents have long been a subject of concern and study worldwide due to the significant far-reaching consequences they pose on individual well-being, family dynamics, and societal norms (Fergusson, 2015). The impact of incestuous practices on family well-being is a complex and multifaceted issue that touches upon psychological, social, and emotional aspects of individuals and families (Fergusson, 2015).

Adolescence is a pivotal stage in human development, marked by physical, emotional, and psychological transformations. It is during this phase that individuals begin to explore their emerging sexuality, form beliefs about relationships and intimacy, and establish the foundations for their future interpersonal interactions. Against this backdrop, instances of incestuous behavior within families can have far-reaching effects, not only on the adolescents engaged in such practices but also on the overall health of the family structure (Fergusson, 2015).

Individuals who engage in incestuous relationships often experience severe psychological trauma. The violation of trust within the family unit, coupled with the emotional turmoil resulting from these relationships, can lead to long-lasting psychological scars. Survivors may grapple with issues such as depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and a host of other mental health challenges (Smith, 2018).

The repercussions of incestuous practices ripple through the entire family structure. Family dynamics are profoundly disrupted, creating an environment marked by secrecy, shame, and betrayal. Sibling relationships may fracture, parent-child bonds become strained, and overall family cohesion deteriorates (Brown, 2020). Incestuous relationships also entail significant health risks, including an elevated potential for genetic disorders among offspring born from such unions. These health risks extend to both the individuals engaged in incestuous practices and any resulting offspring (Fergusson *et al.*, 2015).

Beyond the immediate emotional and psychological impact, incestuous practices often have legal and societal consequences. Many societies have strict laws against incest, leading to potential

legal repercussions for those involved. Moreover, the social stigma attached to incest can result in isolation and ostracization from the broader community (Garcia, 2019).

In Nigeria, incestuous relationships among adolescents have emerged as a multifaceted and challenging societal concern. The extent and dynamics of these practices have been profoundly shaped by a constellation of factors, including cultural norms, socioeconomic conditions, and access to education and healthcare (Adegoke, 2016). Cultural norms play a pivotal role in shaping the occurrence and acceptance of incestuous practices. In some Nigerian communities, cultural beliefs and practices may inadvertently contribute to the perpetuation of these behaviors. Understanding these cultural nuances is imperative for crafting culturally sensitive interventions that respect local traditions while addressing the issue at hand.

Despite its global relevance, it is crucial to acknowledge that the prevalence and impact of incestuous practices can vary significantly based on cultural, societal, and regional factors. This research study aims to investigate the prevalence, underlying causes, and consequences of incestuous practices among adolescents, with a particular focus on understanding their impact on the well-being of families within Ikwo Local Government of Ebonyi State.

### **Statement of Problem**

Incestuous practices among adolescents is a concerning issue with multifaceted implications that extend beyond geographical and cultural boundaries. It is a topic of global concern due to its profound impact on the well-being of individuals and families (Fergusson *et al.*, 2015). The prevalence of incestuous practices in the Ikwo Local Government of Ebonyi State is a concealed and underreported issue with profound implications for the well-being of families and individuals. This problem is exacerbated by its secretive nature, which impedes awareness and intervention efforts. Incestuous relationships among adolescents can lead to severe psychological and emotional trauma, negatively affecting the overall well-being of those involved. Moreover, cultural and societal factors may contribute to the persistence of these practices in the region, making it crucial to understand these dynamics for effective interventions. Compounding the problem, there is a dearth of local research and data on incestuous practices in Ikwo Local Government of Ebonyi State, further hindering the development of targeted strategies to address this sensitive issue. It is in response to these challenges that the choice of researching incestuous practices among adolescents and their impact on family well-being in Ikwo Local Government of Ebonyi State becomes both necessary and relevant.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The major objective of this study is to investigate incestuous practices among adolescents and their impact on family well-being in the Ikwo Local Government of Ebonyi State, Nigeria.

- i. To assess the patterns of incestuous practices among adolescents in the Ikwo Local Government of Ebonyi State.
- ii. To identify the determinants that contribute to incestuous behaviors among adolescents in this region.
- iii. To analyze the impact of incestuous practices on the well-being of individuals and families.
- iv. To examine strategies employed by families to curtail incident of incestuous practices

### **Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study on incestuous practices among adolescents in the Ikwo Local Government of Ebonyi State is multi-faceted. It holds importance in several key areas:

**Family Support:** Understanding the dynamics of incestuous practices can empower families to recognize signs early, seek help, and promote healing and reconciliation. This knowledge can lead to more effective support structures, contributing to healthier family dynamics and relationships.

**Adolescent Well-being:** This research sheds light on the factors contributing to incestuous practices, allowing for tailored support and therapy for affected adolescents. By offering insights into the causes and effects, it can enhance mental health support and counseling services for adolescents, aiding in their recovery.

**Local Interventions:** The findings can inform targeted interventions in Ikwo Local Government of Ebonyi State, addressing specific regional factors and improving prevention and support programs. This tailored approach can be more impactful in reducing incestuous practices locally.

**Community Awareness:** By fostering open dialogue, this study helps reduce the stigma surrounding incestuous practices. It encourages support for affected individuals, leading to a more empathetic and inclusive community environment in the Ikwo Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.

**Global Insights:** While focused on a specific region, this study contributes to the global understanding of incestuous practices among adolescents. It offers insights into how regional factors influence these practices, enhancing global strategies and policies to address the issue in a more adaptable and effective manner.

## **Scope of the Study**

This research project will primarily focused on the Ikwo Local Government of Ebonyi State, Nigeria. Ikwo Local Government Area has unique socio-cultural dynamics, presenting an important case study for examining incestuous practices. The study investigated the prevalence, underlying causes, and consequences of incestuous practices among adolescents within this specific geographical area. The study's scope is limited to the specific geographical area mentioned, and its findings is valuable for addressing incestuous practices and their consequences within this regional context.

## **Research Questions**

- i. What are the patterns of incestuous practices among adolescents in the Ikwo Local Government of Ebonyi State?
- ii. What are the determinants that contribute to incestuous behaviors among adolescents in this region?
- iii. What are the impact of incestuous practices on the well-being of individuals and families?
- iv. What are the strategies employed by families to curtail incident of incestuous practices in Ikwo Local Government of Ebonyi State?

## **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses are formulated to guide the study and will be tested at 0.05 level of significance.

HO<sub>1</sub> There is no significant difference in incent practices among adolescent and the impact in family well being in Ikwo Local Government of Ebonyi State by Pattern

HO<sub>2</sub> There is no significant difference in incent practices among adolescent and the impact in family well being in Ikwo Local Government of Ebonyi State by Region

HO<sub>3</sub> There is no significant difference in incent practices among adolescent and the impact in family well being in Ikwo Local Government of Ebonyi State by Family.

## METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the methodology employed in the study of Incest practices among adolescent and its impact on family well-being. It covers the research design, area of study, population of the study, sample and sampling technique the instrument used for data collection, validation of the instrument, and the method of data analysis.

### Research Design

The Research adopted a descriptive research design. Descriptive research aims to provide a detailed account of a phenomenon, in this case, incestuous practices among adolescents in Ikwo Local Government of Ebonyi State, Nigeria, and their impact on family well-being. This design allows for the collection of comprehensive data and the exploration of various aspects of the subject under study.

### Area of Study

This study was conducted in Ikwo Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. Ikwo Local Government Area is situated in central senatorial zone of Ebonyi State. A rapid growing senatorial zone in Ebonyi State in Nigeria with a population of over 800,000 people (NPC, 2016). The Local Government is a meeting point of various communities like Ezza, Echara nnuphu, Ndubia Nwakpu, Okpitumo, Ezza south, Ezza north among others and cultures which include a mixture of beliefs, traditions, customs, and habits of the community groups with diverse family structures (consisting of nuclear, extended and blended families), patterns (including authoritarian, permissive and democratic families) and practices such as meal times, religious observances, recreational activities, household chores, and communication styles (Ikeh and Aleke, 2018), making it an ideal setting to explore the cultural factors that may influence the occurrence of incestuous relationships among adolescents.

### Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised all adolescent students from five different secondary schools (JSS 1 to SSS 3) within the study area, who experienced incest and were affected by incestuous practices within their families, with focus on individuals from diverse backgrounds, including ethnicities, location, religions, socio-cultural and socioeconomic statuses, and family structures within these schools. The population of each school and the total population of the five schools selected are stated in the table below.

S/N	School	Population of School
1	Agubia Community Secondary School	470
2	Community Secondary School Ndiagu Echara, Ikwo	265

3	Ezza South Comprehensive Secondary School	495
4	Ndufu Alike Secondary School, Ikwo	560
5	Enyi Community Secondary School Enyibichiri , Ikwo	460
<b>Total Population</b>		<b>2250</b>

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**Keys: School A: Agubia Community Secondary School; School B: Community Secondary School Achara, Ikwo; School C: Ezza South Comprehensive Secondary School; School D: Ndufu Alike Secondary School, Ikwo; School E: Enyi Community Secondary School, Enyibichiri, Ikwo**

**Sample and Sampling Technique**

\_\_\_\_\_The simple sampling technique will be use for this study. The sample size will be determined using Taro Yamane formula (  $n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$  )

$$1 + N(e)^2$$

.Where n is the sample size; N is the population size; e is the error limit or precision level (0.05 on the basis of 95% confidence level).

Therefore to computes a sample size “n” is a representative of all confidence limit or 0.05 significant levels by using Taro Yamane formula.

From the sample distribution of the population above,

N = 2250

Hence:

n =  $\frac{2250}{1 + 2250(0.05)^2}$

$1 + 2250(0.05)^2$

\_\_\_\_\_ n = 2250

$$1 + 2250 \times 0.0025$$

$$\frac{\quad}{1 + 5.625} \quad n = \quad 2250$$

$$1 + 5.625$$

$n = 339.62$ ; which is approximately 340

There are approximately 340 samples in the population. The samples were drawn by a simple random sampling technique.

### **Instrument for Data Collection**

The instrument for data collection is self-structured questionnaires, which was designed to elicit information about the patterns, the determinants and the consequences of incestuous practices. The questionnaires was divided into two sections; section A and B. Section A consist of the respondents' bio data, while section B will base on the objectives of the study.

The questionnaire were developed based on the research questions of the study, and was administered to the respondents by the researcher. Each item had five point scale: 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 (that is, Strongly agree, Agree, Neutral, Strongly disagreed and Disagreed) respectively.

### **Validation of the Instrument**

The instruments passed high a process of content validation. This involves reviewing the questions and items in the instruments to ensure they accurately measure the intended constructs. Copies of the instrument was given to experts in the Department of Arts and Social Science Education, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki, to check the appropriateness of the item, content, and clarity of language and suitability of items.

### **Reliability of the instrument**



The instrument with fifty (50) items were constructed to determine the reliability using thirty (30) students selected from other Upper Basic School in Enugu State which is different from those to be involved in this study. Kuder-Richardson 20 (K-20) statistics was used to obtain a reliability coefficient of 0.91 which will show a very high internal consistency, thereby making the instrument suitable for the study.

### **Method of data collection**

The researcher administered the instrument by issuing letter to the sampled schools of the respondents using Direct Delivery Techniques (DDT) with the help of three research assistants, one from each education zones in the state. Each research assistant will cover his or her own education zone. The direct method of questionnaire administration was adopted in the distribution of the instrument. The researcher and the assistants will visited the respondents in their schools and administer the instrument on them. They will waited for the respondents to respond to the instrument before collecting it back from them on the spot. The direct method was adopted in the data collection to minimize the loss of the instrument.

### **Method of Data Analysis**

Data collected were analyzed using statistical package for social science (SPSS) based on the questionnaires. Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation will be used to analyze the results. The means scores will be used to determine the agreement levels based on the five-point scale 5, 4, 3, 2, 1; that is (Strongly Agreed, Agreed, Strongly disagreed, Disagreed and Neutral). Item(s) with a mean of 3.0 and above will be considered accepted while mean below 3.0 were rejected, and results were presented in tables.

### **Presentation of Result**

This chapter presents the results obtained from data analysis. The results were analyzed using mean and standard deviation, and are presented in line with the research questions that guided the study. The tables include several items along with their mean scores, standard deviations (S.D), and remarks on whether they are accepted or not, based on a threshold of 3.0 or higher; mean scores less than the thresholds are rejected. The mean score represents the average rating given by respondents, while the standard deviation provides a measure of the variability or dispersion of responses around the mean.

**Table 4.1: Evaluation of Respondents on the Patterns of Incestuous Practices in Ikwo Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.**

S/N	ITEM	MEAN	SD	REMARK
1	Cultural factors and norms as patterns of occurrence and acceptance of incestuous practices	3.05	1.02	Accepted
2	Proximity of extended family living together in certain cultures contribute to incestuous practices	3.35	0.58	Accepted
3	Difference in familial relationships leads to perceptions and behaviors of incest	3.02	0.97	Accepted
4	Poverty increases vulnerability to incestuous behaviors in a community	3.17	0.75	Accepted
5	Limited access to education and healthcare services greatly increase incestuous practices in a community	2.98	1.10	Rejected
6	Socioeconomic conditions influence the prevalence and patterns of incestuous practices	3.08	1.16	Accepted
7	Adolescents living in marginalized or disadvantaged environments are vulnerable to incest	3.06	1.14	Accepted
8	Gender disparities play a significant role in the prevalence and patterns of incestuous practices	3.49	0.77	Accepted
9	Cultural beliefs and traditions inadvertently perpetuate incestuous behaviors by normalizing or concealing them.	3.40	0.92	Accepted
10	Incestuous practices among adolescents are confined to a specific geographic locations and cultural groups	3.00	1.13	Accepted

**Keys: SD: Standard deviation**

Table 4.1 provides a comprehensive assessment of respondents' perspectives on the patterns of incest in Makurdi metropolis, revealing significant contributors and their varying impacts. Cultural factors, denoted by a mean score of 3.05, and extended family proximity, reflected by a mean of 3.35, are both accepted, indicating their influential roles in the occurrence and acceptance of incestuous practices. Similarly, varied familial relationships, with a mean score of 3.02, and the impact of poverty, with a mean of 3.17, surpass the 3.0 mean thresholds, emphasizing their substantial contributions to vulnerability. In contrast, limited access to education and healthcare services, evidenced by a mean score of 2.98, falls below the acceptance threshold, highlighting a comparatively weaker impact on incestuous practices. Meanwhile, socioeconomic conditions (mean: 3.08), adolescents in disadvantaged environments (mean: 3.06), gender disparities (Item 8, mean: 3.49), and cultural beliefs (Item 9, mean: 3.40) are all accepted, underscoring their roles in perpetuating incestuous behaviors. Also, the geographical

and cultural confinement of incestuous practices among adolescents, as indicated by a mean score of 3.00, is tentatively accepted.

**Table 4.2: Evaluation of Respondents on the Determinants of Incestuous Behavior among Adolescents in Ikwo Local Government Area of Ebonyi State.**

S/N	ITEM	MEAN	SD	REMARK
1	Local practices, such as communal living arrangements influence incestuous practices	3.00	1.14	Accepted
2	Extended family structures leads to incestuous practices in a society	3.16	0.82	Accepted
3	Kinship systems also influence the practice of incest in a society	3.21	0.75	Accepted
4	Attachment of meanings to traditional beliefs or sanctions to incestuous behaviors leads to the practices of incest	2.99	1.05	Rejected
5	Gender hierarchies also make individuals vulnerable to incestuous behaviors	3.34	1.08	Accepted
6	Societal expectations and cultural norms lead to increased incestuous behaviors among the individuals	3.63	0.54	Accepted
7	The fear of social ostracization also reinforcing secrecy and shame among victims of incest	3.24	0.87	Accepted
8	Local practices significantly influence the occurrence of incestuous behaviors within a community	3.08	1.15	Accepted
9	Traditional gender creates unequal power dynamics within families, leading to an increase in the vulnerability of individuals to incestuous behaviors	3.02	1.37	Accepted
10	Socioeconomic conditions, for instance, where adolescents and families face economic vulnerability, may lead to an experience of increased stressors, making them more susceptible to dysfunctional coping mechanisms, including incestuous behaviors	3.62	0.64	Accepted

Table 4.2 presents a thorough evaluation of respondents' insights into determinants of incestuous behavior among adolescents in Makurdi metropolis. Noteworthy aspects include the acceptance of local practices and communal living arrangements (Item 1), extended family structures (Item 2), and the influence of kinship systems (Item 3), all surpassing the 3.0 mean threshold. Similarly, societal expectations, cultural norms (Item 6), and the fear of social ostracization (Item

7) demonstrate significant impacts on incestuous behaviors, supported by their elevated means. Additionally, gender hierarchies (Item 5), local practices (Item 8), traditional gender roles (Item 9), and socioeconomic conditions (Item 10) all meet the acceptance criterion, indicating their substantial roles in fostering vulnerability or susceptibility to incestuous behaviors among adolescents. In contrast, the meanings attached to traditional beliefs or sanctions (Item 4) fall short, with a mean below 3.0, suggesting a comparatively lesser influence on the occurrence of incestuous practices.

## **Discussion of Findings**

The findings of the study from the first evaluation underscore the significant influence of cultural factors and the proximity of extended families on the occurrence of incestuous. Cultural factors encompass a range of beliefs, traditions, and norms that shape individuals' behaviors within a specific society. In the context of incestuous practices, these cultural elements contribute to the acceptance or normalization of certain behaviors within familial relationships. Extended family proximity further compounds this influence, creating an environment where interpersonal relationships are closely intertwined. This interconnectedness may impact individuals' perceptions of boundaries within the family unit, potentially contributing to the occurrence of incestuous behaviors (Fergusson *et al.*, 2016). Moreover, the study reveals the relevance of different family relationships and economic conditions in vulnerability to incestuous behaviors. These family dynamics can influence susceptibility to incestuous practices; also individuals facing economic challenges may experience heightened stressors and limited resources, potentially increasing their vulnerability to dysfunctional coping mechanisms, including incestuous behaviors (Genius and Violato, 2019).

The findings of the pattern of incestuous practices from the study also introduced a nuanced perspective by suggesting that limited access to education and healthcare might not play a significant role as a pattern of incestuous practice in Makurdi metropolis. This contrasts with other studies that emphasized that lack of education and basic healthcare influenced the pattern of incest (Pereda *et al.*, 2019). The discrepancy suggests that the impact of education and healthcare services on the pattern of incestuous practices may vary depending on specific cultural factors within Makurdi metropolis. Several other factors were identified from the study as contributing to incestuous behaviors, including the economic situation, being in a disadvantaged environment, gender differences, and cultural beliefs (Pereda *et al.*, 2019; Fergusson *et al.*, 2016). The economic situation, as indicated by poverty or disadvantage, introduces stressors that may exacerbate vulnerability to dysfunctional coping mechanisms, such as incestuous behaviors. Gender differences highlight the role of power dynamics and societal expectations in shaping these practices, emphasizing the need for a gender-sensitive approach to

intervention. Cultural beliefs add another layer, suggesting that ingrained societal norms may inadvertently contribute to the perpetuation of incestuous behaviors.

The intriguing aspect of the study lies in its proposition that incestuous practices may be more prevalent in certain locations and among specific groups of people. This hypothesis prompts the need for further investigation to determine the consistency of this pattern and whether it varies across different communities (Kaplan, 2022). It is also revealed from the study that geographical factors, including the influence of local norms, regional cultural dynamics, or even specific community traditions could either promote such behaviors. Cultural factors, on the other hand, encompassing shared beliefs, values, and social structures within a particular group, sheds light on the societal conditions that either facilitate or inhibit incestuous practices.

Examining the variations in prevalence among different communities could unveil critical insights into the role of community-specific factors. This may involve comparative studies across diverse regions, considering factors such as cultural norms, socioeconomic conditions, and community support structures. Understanding why certain places or groups exhibit higher or lower prevalence rates could inform tailored interventions and preventive strategies that are attuned to the unique dynamics of each community. Moreover, the findings from the second evaluation on the determinants influencing incestuous behaviors among adolescents in Makurdi metropolis as displayed in Table 4.2 in the study reveals the interconnectedness of cultural and communal factors in shaping attitudes toward incestuous behaviors. Adegoke's (2016) research provides valuable insights, highlighting the profound impact of cultural norms and communal living arrangements on the prevalence of incestuous practices. The acceptance observed in this study regarding local practices and communal living arrangements resonates with Adegoke's findings, indicating a shared acknowledgment of their significance in influencing behaviors within the studied community.

The results of the table also unraveled the impact of societal expectations and cultural norms, coupled with the fear of social ostracization, as influential factors contributing to the perpetuation of silence surrounding incestuous behaviors. This agreed strongly with the research of Oyemade (2015) on the role of social pressure in underreporting within Nigerian communities, highlighting the imperative to address societal influences that hinder disclosure of incestuous practices. Again, the intricate interplay of gender dynamics, local practices, traditional gender roles, and socioeconomic conditions emerged as a complex web influencing vulnerability to incestuous behaviors among adolescents. These interconnected factors echo the broader research perspectives presented by Smith (2018) and Mbonu *et al.* (2019). Smith's work emphasized the importance of challenging traditional gender roles to mitigate power imbalances conducive to incest, while Mbonu and colleagues' examination shed light on the link between poverty and incestuous practices in Nigeria. Together, these studies contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted nature of factors influencing incestuous behaviors. Conversely, this study showed that the meanings attached to traditional beliefs or

sanctions exhibit a comparatively lesser influence on the occurrence of incestuous practices among adolescents in Ikwo Local Government Area Ebonyi State. This finding also agreed with Adegoke's (2016) exploration of the interplay between local beliefs and incestuous practices in cultural contexts, underscoring the significance of engaging with religious and community leaders to challenge harmful beliefs that may contribute to the perpetuation of incestuous behaviors. Expanding on this, additional insights from Iheanacho (2017) further support the idea that local beliefs and taboos may not be as potent in influencing incestuous practices as other determinants. Iheanacho's research delved into the interplay between traditional beliefs and incestuous practices in Nigeria, emphasizing the need for interventions that address harmful beliefs.

## **Summary of Findings**

From the Analysis above the following findings were made:

1. The findings of the study revealed that cultural elements like local practices, extended family structures, and kinship systems play a pivotal role in shaping societal acceptance and prevalence of incestuous behaviors.
2. The consequences of incestuous practices, as revealed in the study, portray a landscape marked by profound impacts on individuals and families' well-being. The emotional toll is highlighted, manifesting in secrecy, shame, and betrayal. Family dynamics suffer, leading to the deterioration of sibling relationships and family cohesion. Survivors face severe psychological trauma, engaging in self-harm and substance abuse. Emotional turmoil disrupts daily functioning, and long-term consequences involve substance abuse issues, parenting challenges, and risky sexual behaviors. The findings underscore the multifaceted and lasting repercussions of incestuous practices on both individuals and subsequent generations.

## **Recommendation**

**Preventive Education and Community Awareness:** It is imperative to implement comprehensive educational programs targeted at schools and communities in Ikwo Local Government Area Ebonyi State. These programs should focus on raising awareness about the detrimental patterns of incestuous practices and their impact on individuals and families.

**Psychosocial Support and Mental Health Services:** Recognizing the enduring psychological trauma faced by survivors, there is a need for accessible psychosocial support services. Establishing counseling centers and helplines specifically tailored to address the emotional challenges associated with incestuous practices is essential.

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