

Impact of Home Factors On The Developmental Challenges Of Adolescents In Obollo-Afor Education Zone Of Enugu State Nigeria

*Joachim .C. Omeje¹ Petronilla .N.omeje²

1: Department Of Educational Foundations University Of Nigeria, Nsukka

2: Department of Educational Foundations University Of Nigeria, Nsukka

* Email: joachimomeje@yahoo.co.uk

Abstract

The study sought to find out the impact of various home factors on the developmental challenges of adolescents. Three research questions guided the study. The subjects of the study was 1,440 adolescent students consisting 720 males and 720 females drawn from 29,924 adolescent students in the forty-eight secondary schools in Obollo-Afor education zone of Enugu State Nigeria. The instrument for data collection was questionnaire. In analyzing the data, mean scores and standard deviation were used for answering the research questions. Results showed that when parents love and care for their adolescent children, the influence on their developmental challenges is very high. Also when the family has a social stigma and there is also dichotomy in the home, the influence is insignificant on the developmental challenges of adolescents. Jealousy among the siblings at home, and unco-operativeness at home has low influence on the developmental challenges of adolescents. Based on the findings, counselling implications were highlighted and recommendations made.

Keywords: Impact, Home Factors, Developmental Challenges, Adolescents

1. Introduction

Among the adolescents, the rate of lack of peace and disharmony at home, juvenile delinquency and similar phenomenon are very high. Home is a place where this set of people live and it serves as a pivotal institutions for nurturing the growing child. Home front aims at transforming the child by transmitting the societal values to its adolescents and it is the parents as well as the other siblings in the home that furnish the growing child with models of behaviours. This point was echoed by Schmieder (2002) when the researcher states that the home consists the primary socializing agency for the child. This could imply that condition of a home has a great influence on the life of a child.

In the stages of human development from infancy to adulthood, the period of adolescence is a stage of life that is characterized by struggle, frustration, turmoil, insecurity and quest for independence. For these reasons, psychologists describe this period as a period of "storms and stress" (Onyeneje, 2003). Erickson in Onyeneje (2003) maintained that this "Storm" or "Stress" is brought about by identity formation versus role confusion because as adolescents try to cater and integrate many roles, expected of them, some are likely to conflict. Some of these conflicting roles are choosing a life partner, choosing a career, coping with societal demands among other developmental challenges. Resolving these issues are stressful to them and could lead to storm behavior and resentment of parental authority and societal norms.

In all aspects of an adolescents' development namely: physical, physiological, moral, intellectual, emotional and social, they face great challenges of how to adjust properly. They worry so much about their appearance, correctness of dress and manners, attitudes of peers towards them as well as social, vocational and economic success. It is these difficulties of adjusting appropriately to the demands of the new phase of life which the adolescents face at this stage that are regarded as their developmental challenges. Among adolescents, these developmental challenges are widely evident in their attitude to life as they may begin to scout for coping strategies in order to adjust. This is where a lot of influential factors such as the home, society, peer groups come in as crucial factors in response to the challenges.

Though the effects may vary according to individual, home factors are presumed as the premier and primary tools of behavioural adjustment for adolescents at this stage. The effects of the family on the child are direct and immediate as a child's attitudes, standard values, ideals and personal characteristics are fashioned to a large extent in terms of his or her primary relationship in the home. In the backdrop of the influence of the family like on the adolescent, it could be speculated that adolescent facing new phase of life physically, psychologically, morally, mentally, socially and spiritually with their resultant challenges will not have coping strategies devoid of impact of home factors. Parents influence children's behavior by conditioning reward or punishment they provide and by the behavior they model. However Conger in Okonkwo (1993) opined that the ability to reward or punish depends on the quality and quantity of communication between parents and children.

Lack of affectionate relationship with the child during the early years may affect the child's adjustment in his/her developmental challenges. Thus it is presumed that good relationship and strong bonds between parents and

children are important for better adjustment to life challenges. Eke (2004: 24) support this when the researcher observed that:

Adolescents tend to relate to people based on the filters they had acquired in early years. In the course of growing up they learned from important and powerful peoples such as parents, aunts and uncles. Thus, meaning they (the child) copies or imitates the person he/she models.

Many studies have been carried out by experts on adolescents adjustment problems. Okonkwo (1993) carried out a study on family correlates of delinquent behaviours of schooling adolescents in Nsukka education zone of Enugu State Nigeria and reported that when parents do not exhibit and encourage positive pleasant behaviours within the family, children in the home watching these negative behavior develop negative feelings in themselves. Ugwoke (1989) also carried out a study on effects of family background on the academic performance of adolescents in Nsukka education zone of Enugu State Nigeria. The result among others reveal that there is no significant differences in the performance of adolescents from intact family and separated family. In spite, to enhance positive understanding of factors related to developmental challenges of adolescent boys and girls, the home could have an important roles to play as a model. This is necessary as it is not uncommon to see adolescents, especially in the area of the study or investigation engaging in cultism, sexual immorality, robbery, religious bigotry, examination malpractices, family quarrel among other anti social behaviours. Problems that influence adolescent developmental challenges are many and could be varied. Thus put in a question forms: what social conditions at home influence the developmental challenges of adolescents? What impacts do parents and sibling accord make on the development challenges of adolescents? This study thus investigate impact of home factors on the developmental challenges of adolescents and its counselling implications.

2. Research Questions

Three research questions guided the study

1. How does parent child relationship influence the developmental challenges of adolescents?
2. How does the social conditions of home influence the developmental challenges of adolescents?
3. What impact does sibling accord make on the developmental challenges of adolescents?

3. Methods

The design of the study is ex post facto design. The study was conducted in Obollo-Afor education zone of Enugu State Nigeria. The population of the study is composed of 29, 924 adolescents in the 48 approved senior secondary schools in the zone. A simple random sampling technique was used to draw 1,440 adolescents made up of 720 males and 720 females.

The instrument for collecting data was a questionnaire made up of two sections. Section one is on the demographic data of the respondents while section two was items on home factors made up of three clusters, meant to elicit information on parent-child relationships, social conditions at home and sibling accord influence on the developmental challenges of adolescents. The questionnaire is a rating scale measure of a four point. Face validity of the instrument was determined by giving draft copies to experts in guidance and counselling and measurement and evaluation in the faculty of Education University of Nigeria Nsukka.

The reliability of the instrument was determined in a preliminary survey among 40 senior secondary school adolescents from Nsukka education zone which is outside Obollo-Afor education zone. Reliability of instrument was estimated at 0.74, 0.67 and 0.82 for the three clusters using Cronbach Alpha. The instrument was administered to the respondents through the assistance of two trained hired research assistant using direct delivery and retrieval method. Mean score statistic was used to analyze the data collected in line with the research questions.

4 Results:

Mean Score Rating of Adolescents on how Parent-Child Relationship Influences the Developmental Challenges of Adolescents.

From the table 1 below on the mean ratings of adolescent on the influence of parent-child relationship on the developmental challenges of adolescents, it showed that only one out of the seven items was rated low extent (LE). That was item 4 – quarrelling with parents. Others were rated high extent (HE) and very high extent (VHE) which are indications from opinion of majority of the respondents that parent – child relationship influences the developmental challenges of adolescents. This conclusion was based on the attainment of cluster mean of 2.91 for the adolescents students which was above the criterion mean of 2.50.

Mean Score Ratings of Adolescents on how Social Conditions of the Home Influences the Developmental Challenges of Adolescents.

From the data on table 2 below, on the mean ratings of adolescents on the influence of home conditions on their developmental challenges, only items 3 and 4 indicated a high extent (HE) level response from the respondents.

Others were low extent (LE) and Never. This was also evidence in the cluster mean of 2.17 which is below the criterion mean of 2.50. Therefore going by the opinions of the respondents social conditions of the home has no influence on the developmental challenges of adolescents.

Mean Score Ratings on the Impact of Sibling Accord on the Developmental Challenges of Adolescents.

From the data on table 3 below regarding the mean responses of adolescents respondents on the impact of sibling accord on their developmental challenges, it was revealed that majority of them are of the opinion that sibling accord has no influence on the developmental challenges of adolescents. This was evident in the item by item responses and the grand mean of 2.17 which is below the criterion mean of 2.50.

5. Discussion

The study was guided by three research questions which focused on influence of parent child relationship on the developmental challenges of adolescents, influence of social conditions at home on the developmental challenges and impact of sibling accord on the development challenges of adolescents. The first research question sought to find out the influence of parent-child relationship on the developmental challenges of adolescents. The results showed that the influence of parent-child relationship on the developmental challenges of adolescent is to a very high extent when parents love and care for their children, when the children are close and enjoy being with their parents. The result conforms with the finding of McGrath and Nicole (1983) who observed that the way the child is handled, held and even talked to bring a message to the mind of the little one. So the love, care and closeness of parents to their children has great influence on the children while they mature from infancy to adulthood.

The second research question sought to determine the influence of various social conditions of the home on the developmental challenges of adolescents. The results reveal poverty and overcrowdings in the home as having high influence on the developmental challenges of adolescents. Again overcrowdness in a home creates an uncondusive condition for the adolescents who may not be relaxed to develop their potentials. This is in line with the finding of Oguama (2007) which revealed that due to poverty in the land families of many children are forced to live in old and rikert home because parents are unemployed and have no sources of income and therefore are exposed to all sorts of dehumanizing treatments and conditions. Such condition often times force young people to criminal activities such as gambling, cultism, stealing and lots more.

The third and last question of the study sought to find out the extent to which various aspects of sibling relationship influence the developmental challenges of adolescents. The findings reveal that of the seven (7) items relating to this question, only the presence of peace and understanding among the siblings in the home has a high influence on the developmental challenges of adolescents. The rests which include love among brothers and sisters, jealousy among siblings, co-operation among siblings, home belongness among siblings, presence of discrimination among siblings and quarrel among siblings have low influence on their developmental challenges. This shows that as adolescents develops amidst their siblings, they draw greater percentage of the influence in their adjustment to challenges from the peace and understanding existing among them than from other conditions. Thus Schmiedeler (2002) explains this further when the researcher stated that intra-sibling relationship is also decisive besides intra-parental relationship in the wholesome developmental tasks of the child.

6. Conclusion and Recommendation

Conclusively, it is important to note that when there is a cordial relationship between parents and their adolescent children, it influences the children very highly as they face their developmental challenges. Further still, poverty in the home has a high influence on the developmental challenges of adolescents as they are incapacitated in many ways. It has also been discovered as well that with high cordial relationship among siblings at home, adolescents will face developmental challenges with ease.

The implication of the findings for counsellors is that the home factors are very influential in adolescent developmental challenge. It is therefore imperative that professional counsellors work closer with parents (home) and teachers as well to ensure that both homes and schools are made conducive environments for the growing children. Of equal important is the need for counsellors and teacher to note that adolescent students come from various family background that exert divergent influence on them. This knowledge will be a backup instrument for teachers and counsellors in their professional roles of assisting adolescent boys and girls to comfort some adolescent development challenges they may face while growing to adulthood.

The present work is limited by the fact that visiting the schools to collect data was not an easy task considering the state of our inter and intra communication network. There could also be faking of responses on the parts of the respondents and one is aware that if not the result could have been otherwise. This therefore calls for a replication of this study in any quarter of the state or country.

Finally the study recommends that parents should be made to see the potency of good parent-child relationship as an influential home factor on the developmental challenge of their adolescent children. This can be made possible by counsellors and government agents through seminars, workshops and conferences.

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- Joachim .C. Omeje B.E.D, M.E.D and Ph.D (Nigeria) Associate Professor of Guidance and Counseling University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
- Joachim teaches undergraduate and postgraduate courses in Educational Guidance and Counseling, Supervises both undergraduate and postgraduate theses in the Department of Education Foundations, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Joachim organizes workshop, seminars and conferences, and articulates research proposals that have funding prospects, functions as a professional in education in planning, producing and or implementing educational research projects, evaluation and book development initiatives. Joachim's research interest spans a wide range of Education, social and Environmental issues in the areas of Education and Development, Human Sexuality, Counseling, Genders, Cultural Issues, Family and Adolescence.
- Joachim's Educational background is this:
 University of Nigeria, Nsukka-B.E.D Guidance and Counseling 1992.
 University of Nigeria, Nsukka-M.E.D Guidance and Counseling 1996
 University of Nigeria, Nsukka-Ph.D Guidance and Counseling 2000
- Petronilla is a postgraduate students: the department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Her research interest is the area of adolescence development.

Results

Table 1: Mean Score Rating of Adolescents on how Parent-Child Relationship Influences the Developmental Challenges of Adolescents.

S/N	Items	X	SD	Decision
1.	I enjoy staying with my parents as it affords me opportunity of asking questions affecting any developmental challenges	3.16	0.86	VHE
2.	My parents love and care for me as they readily respond to my confusing questions	3.24	0.74	VHE
3.	I am close to my parents and so have opportunity of finding out what I do not knows about my developmental challenges	3.74	0.51	VHE
4.	I quarrel with my parents and this complicates my developmental challenging problems	2.16	0.96	LE
5.	My parents want me to be with them always because they do not want me to be mislead	2.78	0.96	HE
6.	My parents method of discipline on me is too strict thereby adding to my developmental challenging problems	2.76	0.81	HE
7.	My parents do not discuss freely with me and this makes me to loss sense of belonging			
	Cluster mean (X)	2.91	0.84	HE

Table 2: Mean Score Ratings of Adolescents on how Social Conditions of the Home Influences the Developmental Challenges of Adolescents.

S/N	Items	X	SD	Decision
1.	My family has a social stigma and this hampers my development	1.42	0.84	N
2.	There is quarrel in my home and this does not afford me the opportunity of correcting my mistakes	2.48	1.13	LE
3.	We are poor in my home and this makes it hard for us to meet our economic and social needs	2.56	0.96	HE
4.	My family is overcrowded and this brings disharmony	2.54	1.04	HE
5.	We enjoy excessive freedom in my home and getting needed assistance is far fetched	2.42	0.68	LE
6.	We care little about religious obligations in my home and this affects my moral characters	2.14	0.97	LE
7.	There is dichotomy in the home to the level that it is hard for me to get needed advice from my parents	1.64	0.93	LE
	Cluster Mean (X)	2.17	0.93	LE

Table 3: Mean Score Ratings on the Impact of Sibling Accord on the Developmental Challenges of Adolescents.

S/N	Items	X	SD	Decision
1.	My brothers and sisters do not like me to the extent that it affects my positive development	2.40	0.68	LE
2.	There is jealousy among us in the family and this brings quarrels	1.42	0.81	LE
3.	We do not do things cooperatively together at home and this affects me mentally.	2.14	0.97	LE
4.	There is no brotherly and sisterly interaction among us at home and so I cannot learn as supposed.	2.11	0.91	LE
5.	We discriminate a lot at home and this influences my social interactions at school	2.16	0.96	LE
6.	We quarrel a lot at home and that might be the reason for my frequent quarrels at school.	2.42	0.71	LE
7.	There is peace among us at home and this reduces lots of developmental challenges	2.56	1.06	HE
	Cluster mean (X)	2.17		