

Home Background Variables and Social Adjustment Problems of Secondary School Adolescents in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria

¹Eyong, Emmanuel Ikpi, ²Ezembu Helen Ijeoma,
³Oniemola, Roseline Funmilayo & ⁴Aminu, Abubakar

¹ Faculty of Education, University of Calabar

^{2&4} Department of Educational Psychology Guidance and Counselling,
Federal College of Education Kontagora, Niger State

³ Faculty of Education, Federal College of Education Technology, Akolu, Lagos State

Abstract

The study examined the influence of home background variables and social adjustment problems of secondary school adolescents in Calabar education zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. The study utilized one hypothesis. The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. Adolescents were selected using stratified and simple random sampling technique. The population comprised of 6,605 respondents with a sample of 662 representing 10% of the estimated population of adolescents. Researchers developed instrument entitled Home background Variables and Social Adjustment Questionnaire (HBV&SAQ) validated by three experts, two in Research, Measurement and Evaluation and one in Sociology of Education. The instrument was trial tested on 50 respondents outside the research area. The reliability index of .75 was obtained. The analysis of data was done at .05 alpha level with One-way Analysis of variance. Result of the data analysis revealed that; there is a significant influence of home size on adolescents' social adjustment. It was recommended among others that teachers should provide moral, psychological and physical support to students and also live by example. This will help students avoid or deal with deviant behaviours. Parents should be enlightened to appreciate the benefits of encouraging and motivating their children to achieve a balanced academic and social life.

Keywords: *Home Background, Variables, Social adjustment Problems, Secondary School Adolescents, Calabar Education Zone, Cross River State.*

Corresponding Author: Eyong, Emmanuel Ikpi

Background to the Study

Social adjustment problems are rampant in secondary schools in the contemporary Nigerian Society. This is evident in the surge of social problems witnessed on regular bases in secondary schools. These problems which include various factors such as inferiority complex by most adolescents, criminality, disrespect, indiscipline behaviour, alcoholism, sex abuse and other social vices pervade the length and breadth of our secondary school adolescents in Cross River State. There is a wide gap between the expectations of the society and its actual manifestations. Hardly would a day go by without a record of one form of social problem or the other. The word social adjustment means behaviour that permits people to meet the demands of the environment. It is also defined as a response to stress (Adika, 2003). Different scholars defined the process of adjustment in different terms. The concept of adjustment was first given by Darwin, who used it as adaptation to survive in the physical world. Duvall (2009) observed that the concept of social adjustment of adolescents is associated with the way they live their lives in various communities. Adolescent ability to adapt to various rules and regulation of the society amount to social adjustment but when the reverse is the case, social adjustment problems arise. Social adjustment problem is defined as a condition affecting a significant number of people in ways considered undesirable, about which it is felt that something can be done through collective social action. Therefore, adolescent whose social life is free of problem will be well adjusted. This is what may be called social life (Kalu, 2004).

The concept of adjustment is associated with what may be called living systems: system of organs, psychological systems or personality systems. In the process of adjustment, forces are balanced naturally within the system with forces originating from the environment. The immediate goals of the process may be characterized generally as a type of equilibrium with the system and in the interaction of the system with the environment. Generally, adjustment refers to an individual's general adaptation to his environment and the demands of life such as the way he relates with other people, that is; interpersonal behavior, handles his responsibilities deal with stress. Social adjustment is not a one way process in which the individual conforms to the duties and requirement of others but rather a two way process. It is the ability to be oneself, hold on to one's own and make reality adapt itself to one's requirement and needs. It does not imply a state or condition of contentment or pure mind. Since life is constantly changing, the ability to reverse ones attitude and behavior appropriately is an essential ingredient of adjustment. Life adjustment is easier when the individual is educated which is a sole responsibility of their parents (home background).

The home background is major actors available for children upbringing. This is because the home background can enhance adolescents' psychological development, self-confidence, and sense of well-being (Bada, 2007). Good home background also gives adolescents ample opportunity to confront new challenges and to test and display diverse competencies in and outside the school environment. Parent should be aware that there are several issues an adolescents need to adjust to in the school which are; inferiority complex by most adolescents, criminality, disrespect, indiscipline behaviour, alcoholism, sex abuse. Adolescents that have these adjustment problem in their social lives are likely not to perform well and are usually withdrawn, shy and anti social among their mates (Benoy, 2006).

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this research study when the researcher paid a personal visit to a certain secondary school, while interacting with some senior secondary school students, it was observed that most of them find it difficult to associate with their peers even while in the class. Some deliberately refused to neither talk with each other nor ask questions even where they seem not to understand the lesson. In an attempt to probe into these social adjustment problem (inferiority complex) displayed by these adolescents, most of them revealed that their home never showed love, care and concern towards their social lives. Evidence has shown that from early childhood onwards, the home is seen as the primary agent of social adjustment, parent-child relationship normally expands as the child comes into contact with the other members of family. When the child moves outside his family circle, he establishes contact with other children of his own age. When he takes admission in the school the peer group expands because now the child is free to choose his own friends and associates. The adolescents commonly have misgivings about the changes that are taking place in their interests. On the one hand, they feel joy in being dependent upon their parents and on the other; the experiences with their peers are also pleasant. The peer group attracts them a greater force, because it offers them esteem and status which is either lacking in the family or is not got there at all.

Parents generally complicate the problem by placing demands on the adolescent sons or daughters. When they come to know that the relationship between them and their children is about to change, when they find that their children are becoming more rebellious, less responsive, and less involved in the life of the family they feel threatened. Every father or mother thinks that his son or daughter is a psychological extension of himself, and when the adolescent slips along into the outside world, he or she feels that he or she is losing a part of himself or herself. As the adolescent becomes more independent he needs not so much care, direction, and attention of his parents, which parents still think necessary for his existence and well-being. The emotionally insecure parents are unable to face and accept this fact. The adolescent may feel the need of parental love, care and attention at certain times, but he is so proud of himself that he does not want to accept these things. He looks upon any form of dependence as a sign of weakness. This may be the reason why there is social adjustment problem going on between the adolescent and his parents. The loyalties of the adolescent are now divided between the family and the peer group. This division causes tension and anxieties in the adolescent and creates differences between him and his parents. The struggle that goes on within the adolescent is seldom known to most parents. The struggle is caused by his attempt to live in accordance with a double standard composed of the expectations of his parents and those of his associates. Given the foregoing, one may be tempted to ask whether social vices that are found in Nigerian senior secondary schools and in society at large are the result of home background. It is on this basis that this study was designed to examine home background variables such as home size, home type, home structure, child rearing style and parental education background status on adolescents' social adjustment problems in secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria.

Statement of hypotheses

The following hypothesis is formulated to serve as a guide to this study

There is no significant influence of home size on adolescents' social adjustment problem.

Literature Review

Home Size and Adolescent Social Adjustment

The size of the family is an important factor in determining adjustment life of students. From the beginning, parents have been the major persons involved in raising children in every society. That is why the home/family is recognized as an important agent of socialization. Santrock, (2005) observed that it is mainly through their efforts and abilities that children are socialized to become productive citizens. Goode (2009) observed that children from well adjusted home bring joy and pride to the nation, and encourages development and peaceful co-existence.

Day (2002) observed that home size has been highlighted as significant and crucial in adolescent adjustment. The vast amount of research studies in the area point to the various aspects of the size of the home as impacting several areas of adolescent growth and development related to his social adjustment. For example, research in this area suggests that *the size of the home can significantly influence the adolescent's adjustment*. Conversely, larger home has been found to predict maladaptive and incompetent behavior (Igba, 2006). Noted that a small or moderate family size triggers close and caring relationships with parents than a larger family size where parents does not have the wherewithal to cater for the upkeep of the family (Keswet & Dapas, 2010).

Home size influence play an important role in adolescent's life, since they spend more time with their peers in daily life. Several studies have also reported that youth who are sociable and are accepted by their peers emotionally stable, academically competent, and socially well adjusted are those coming from a smaller family size than those from a larger family (Santrock, 2005). On the other hand, adolescents who are from a larger family size display hostile behaviors tend to be socially maladjusted and are at risk for school dropout, delinquency, and psychopathology (Akinade, 2002). In a survey study by Dacey and Travers, (2006) with 121 senior high school adolescents found that *the size of the home plays an important roles in determining adolescents social adjustment and adaptability in school*. According to their study, a large home can foster love, care and concern as children can freely interact with one another, protect themselves and adjust to the different lifestyle of members of the family. Adolescents need to feel that *the home cares* which will help to raise students' self esteem and reduced depression levels and inferiority complex especially when they are with their peers.

Several studies have found a positive correlation between home and social adjustment of adolescents. Durojaiye (2004) investigated the impact of home size on socialization with senior secondary students in and found that there was a significant difference in socialization when comparing students with small family size and those with large family size. The author found that adolescents from small home though scored better *in their social adjustment test* compared to students from moderate and large families. However, in his final analysis with descriptive statistics, it was proven that families that are large showed a persistent performance in their adjustment test score than families that are moderate and small. This difference as due to more attention paid on homes with larger families. In another study, Baumrind (2005) using secondary school students in Nairobi found that the size of the family highly correlates with the level of socialization among adolescents. Baumrind (2005) found that larger family tends to show more focus in terms of emotional bound among siblings *than families that are small*. Kidd (2009) opined that

adolescents at risks are those who are from smaller family size especially when parents are economically down; the children tend to be less socially adjusted. He also found that adolescents residing in residential homes with larger sibling are socially adjusted than those of smaller homes this is because of the social interaction among members of the family.

Social adjustment is a type of relationship which involves the accommodation of the individual and circumstances in his social environment for the satisfaction of his need or motives (Kolo, 2010). An adolescents who may find it difficult to adjust at home effectively may end up developing adjustment problem in school. Maduewesi, and Emenogu, (2007) noted that when the home is unable to adequately prepare the child for schooling adjustment problem will likely set in because such child may find it difficult to cop academically when he/she gets to school.

Nag (2003) conducted a study with 457 final year adolescents of large moderate and low family size in New York on the Global perspectives in family therapy and social adjustment. The researcher interviewed these set of student using questionnaire. The findings revealed that adolescents who stay with parents of small family generally are bothered with problems of emotional and social adjustment than those of moderate and large family. The problems are not usually too severe enough to produce the kind of gross disturbances that underlie chronic social adjustment problem behaviour. These behavioural problems are of great concern to parents, teachers, caregivers not merely because some types are disruptive, but also because whether aggressive or passive, they are likely to interfere with family relationship and students' learning.

Hazel, and Marvella, (2006) conducted a survey study with 128 adolescents on perceived racial discrimination, social support, and psychological adjustment among adolescents. The findings revealed that adolescents from small families' show poorer adjustment, are more likely to have academic problems, exhibit high rates of antisocial behaviour and emotional disorders, indulge in sexual promiscuity, take drugs and have low self-esteem. They are also found to be easily lured into thuggery and other vices like stealing and truancy where as those of larger and moderate family size display cultured attitude due to the level of competition among family members.

Research Methodology

This study employed the use of survey design. The choice of survey design was considered most appropriate for measuring the attitude and behavior of a large number of people. The population of the study was made up of 6,605 senior secondary one (SS1) students in all the 86 public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone. The study adopted the stratified and simple random sampling technique to select the required respondents to participate in the study. The sample consisted of 662 senior secondary school adolescents which make up 10% of the entire study population from the seven local government areas in Calabar education zone of Cross River State. A researcher-developed instrument; Home background Variables and Social Adjustment Questionnaire (HBV&SAQ) was used to gather data for the study. The variables inherent in the hypothesis was identified and the appropriate statistical analysis technique for testing the stated hypothesis at .05 level of significance.

Results and Discussion

Hypothesis one

There is no significant influence of home size on adolescents' social adjustment problem. The independent variable in this hypothesis is home size categorized into large moderate and small home; while the dependent variable is social adjustment problem. To test this hypothesis, home size and social adjustment were analyzed using One-way Analysis of variance. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of One-way Analysis of Variance with the influence of home size on adolescents' social adjustment problem

Group	N	\bar{X}	SD
Large home	279	16.17	3.43
Moderate home	226	15.45	3.61
Small home	153	14.13	3.51
Total	658	15.69	3.52

Sources of variance	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F-value	Sig.
Between Group	86.29	2	43.145		
With Groups	8113.492	656	12.368	3.488*	.031
Total	8199.785	658			

***P<.05 df=2,656 F-critical =3.00**

The results in Table 1 show that there were 658 respondents in the sample that constituted the analysis of the study 279, 226, 153 for large home, moderate home and small home; their means values are 16.17, 15.45 and 14.13 with standard deviation of 3.43, 3.61 and 3.5. To carry out the analysis, the respondents were categorized on the basis of their home size (large moderate and small). Results in Table 1 depicts that the F-ratio was 3.48 with a p-value of .031 when a One-way Analysis of variance was performed using home size and social adjustment problems of adolescents. At 2, and 656 degrees of freedom, the F-critical value was found to be 3.00 which was less than the F-calculated value. The null hypothesis is rejected which implies that *there is a significant influence of home size on adolescents' social adjustment problem*. Since the null hypothesis was rejected, there is need to compare the direction of differences between the scores involved. A Post-hoc multiple comparison was calculated with Fisher's Least Significant Difference (LSD) and presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Post-hoc comparison with Fisher's Least Significance Different (LSD) on home size on social adjustment problems of adolescents

Home size	N	Large home	Moderate home	Small home
Large home	279	16.17	.73*	2.05*
Moderate home	226	2.32	15.45	1.32*
Small home	153	5.51	3.57	14.13
		MSW=12.37		

* $<.05$, critical $t = 1.960$, $df = 656$.

a = Group means are placed along the diagonal

b = Difference between group means are placed above diagonal

c = Fisher LSD are placed below the diagonal

The means comparison with Fisher's Least Significant Difference (LSD) in Table 7, revealed that the mean differences for large home and moderate home has a statistical mean difference as (* $P < .05$; $t = -2.32$; $P = .010$, $X = .73$). For large home and small home the mean difference is statistically significance as (* $P < .05$; $t = 5.51$; $P = .000$, $X = 2.05$), while for moderate home and small home there is a statistical mean difference as (* $P < .05$; $t = -3.57$; $P = .002$, $X = 1.32$).

Discussions of Findings

The findings of the study was discussed hypothesis by hypothesis as presented below Home Size and adolescent Social Adjustment Problem. The finding of the hypothesis revealed that there is a significant influence of home size on adolescents' social adjustment problem. The result may be due to the interaction between the home size and adolescents at home can have a significant impact on a child's social adjustment problem when such adolescents gets to school. There is no better way to talk about social adjustment of a child than to consider the size of the family he/she come from. The home size is usually considered to be the most important agent of socialization. As infants, we are completely dependent on others to survive. Our parents, or those who play the parent role, are responsible for teaching us to function and care for ourselves. They, along with the rest of our family, also teach us about close relationships, group life, and how to share resources. Additionally, they provide us with our first system of values, norms, and beliefs and a system that is usually a reflection of their own social status.

Parents with larger family size have the capacity to show love to their children and manage their children's personal problems than those of smaller and moderate family size. This is because home with more children bring unity, oneness and concern among one another as the children are truly emotionally bound together by the large numbers. The present finding agree with that of Collins (2000) in a study with 283 secondary school student in New York using questionnaire as the data collection instrument, the study found that home size has a significant influence. The finding is also in consonance with that of Dacey and Travers, (2006) with 121 senior high school students found that *the size* of the home play an important roles in determining adolescents social adjustment and adaptability in school. According to their study, a large home can foster love, care and concern as children can freely interact with one another, protect themselves and adjust to the different lifestyle of members of the family. Adolescents need to feel that *the home*

cares which will help to raise students' self esteem and reduced depression levels and inferiority complex especially when they are with their peers. In another study, Baumrind (2005) using secondary school students in Nairobi found that the size of the family highly correlates with the level of socialization among adolescents. According to his finding larger family tends to show more focus in terms of emotional bound among siblings *than* families that are small.

Conclusion

In the context of this work, social adjustment is seen as the behavioural process by which adolescents maintains equilibrium among their various needs or between their needs and the obstacles of their environments. The problems of adjustment in adolescence include adjustment to physical growth, home and school environment, the major adjustment problem revealed from this study is social disturbances as portrayed in the finding of this study. Adjustment to social disturbances in the adolescent period is very necessary due to the rapidly changing physical structures and widening social experiences. Home as seen as the paramount to adolescents' social adjustment includes adjustment of adolescents with their parents as well as with other family members.

During adolescent period, an individual seek independence while parents become more conscious and display more restrictions for their children which leads to argument and difficulty in parent-child relationships. Parent and family members are vested with the responsibility to ensure that the adolescents appropriately agree to the standards, values and needs of a society in order to be accepted in the society. The school is the major socialization institution for any child. It is the child's first exposure with the world outside the house. Adolescents also face adjustment problem at schools as most of the adolescents usually spend seven to eight hours in the school. The study concludes that home background influence on social adjustment revealed that home adjustment is influenced by degree of support and commitment the family offers to the adolescents at home. the extent to which set rules are followed in the family (control) the amount of anger and aggression in the family (conflict) the degree of interest in political, social and cultural activities (intellectual-cultural orientation) and the extent to which family members are assertive, self sufficient and make their own decisions (independence) are some major factor that help adolescents to tackle with social adjustment problems.

Recommendations

On the basis of the findings of the study, the following recommendations are offered:

1. Teachers should provide moral, psychological and physical support to students and also live by example. This will help students avoid or deal with deviant behaviours.
2. Parents should be enlightened to appreciate the benefits of encouraging and motivating their children to achieve a balanced academic and social life. They should also make regular unscheduled visits to their children's schools to see how they are faring.

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