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Correlates of Child Rearing Techniques and Peer Group Influences on the Anti-Social Behavior of Adolescents in Rumuokoro, Obio Akpor Local Government Area (LGA) of Rivers State

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Abstract: This study focused on the correlates of child rearing techniques and peer group influences on the anti-social behavior of adolescents in Rumuokoro, Obio akpor LGA of Rivers State. One hundred and eighty adolescents participated in the study. Questionnaire was used to obtain data. Data were analyzed using frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviation. ANOVA was used to test the difference between sexes and significance was set at $p < 0.05$. The results showed among others that the correlates of childrearing techniques and peer group influence include observation of curfew at home (1.56 ± 0.95), involve parents in decision making (2.54 ± 0.88), night clubbing (2.34 ± 0.32) and smoking (1.88 ± 0.31). Parents should put more effort to ensure that their children are adequately provided for and morally groomed.

Key words: Correlates, childrearing, peer group, anti-social, adolescents

INTRODUCTION

Startling transformations have occurred all over the world, particularly on the mode of caring and rearing of children. There are a number of important issues, which arise as a result of these transformations and the major structural shift in the population. One of these issues is the concern of every well meaning individual for the future of our youths on the one hand and the development of the society on the other. It should however be mentioned at this juncture that this transformation affects different people in different ways, depending on the location, economic resources (individual, familial and national), norms inherited from the past and individual's live experiences and personality. For example, patterns of childbearing and child rearing are significant factors influencing the formation of individual personality. This has direct consequences for what an individual becomes in the near future, whether, a child will become maladjusted or not.

Child rearing technique is defined as the methods used by parents or care givers to raise children and educate them in the best possible manner (Berk, 2006). It is also defined as the methods used by parents and care givers used to shape their children or ward into the kind of adult they want them to be (Obiagwu, 2007). The child rearing technique used by a parent or care giver has an important and significant influence on the child's personality and social development in their adolescent and adult years. This means that the child rearing technique used by a parent can make or mar the child later in life (Santrock, 2001).

There is a paucity of material on studies of parent-child relationships in the world over as well as cultural

variations among families across the globe (Chin-Yau and Cindy, 2003). Knowledge about child-rearing values, attitudes and behaviours among many tribes in Nigeria particularly in Rivers State are limited. Recent studies on children in many African and other developing countries of the world have focused mainly on parental influence on their children academic performance (Chin-Yau and Cindy, 2003). Thus there is the need to understand child-rearing practices among parents in Nigeria.

One of the reasons which have been adduced for this dearth of knowledge on childrearing and child personality development and behavior may not be unconnected with the fact that, there is lack of "an explicit conceptualization of the significance of child rearing to personality development" (Ho, 2001) as cited in Chin-Yau and Cindy (2003). Suffice to note that the concepts of individual and society are mutually inseparable in normal sociological discourse because they are interdependent. The society, through the various practices affects individual's life course and behavior and in the same way as individual affects the nature of the society. Before an individual behaviour is considered meaningful it must be in conformity with certain norms, values and goals/standard of the society. However, evidences have shown that parents in all over societies of the world and in Nigeria in particular grapple with how to raise their children in a way that prepares them for the complexities of life (Yorburg, 2002) and equips them to one day become parents themselves (Hamner and Turner, 2001). In order to accomplish this daunting task, parents rely on their own socialization into parenting, their intuitive sense of right and wrong and their overall cultural beliefs (Hamner and Turner, 2001). The

sanctions of these influences create a prerogative that confers upon parents the responsibility to guide their children to become competent, responsible and fully functioning members of society. There is no doubt that poor parental supervision, or monitoring, erratic or harsh parental discipline, parental disharmony, parental rejection of the child and low parental involvement with the child (as well as anti social parents and large family size) were all important predictors of anti-social behavior.

The rate of antisocial behavior among adolescents in Rivers State is on the increase. Between January 2003 and December 2008, the number of adolescents especially within the age of 15-22 years have been arrested and put under custody for various crimes such as cultism, thuggery, alcoholism, murder, smoking of marijuana and rape was about 7475 and this also shows that about 4 adolescents were arrested every day (Rivers State Police Command, 2010). Some group of girls within the age range of 16-22 years numbering about 22 were arraigned before an Obio akpor Chief Magistrate court and charged with acts capable of causing breach of peace, prostitution and criminal acts (Garden City Newspaper, 2009).

Purpose of the study: The general purpose of the study was to identify the correlates of child rearing techniques and peer group influences on the anti-social behavior of adolescents in Rumuokoro, Obio Akpor Local Government Area (LGA) of Rivers State. Specifically, the study identified the:

- Personal and socio-economic data of the respondents
- Correlates of childrearing techniques on the anti-social behavior of adolescents
- Correlates of peer group on the anti-social behavior of adolescents

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Area of study: Obio akpor LGA is one of the 23 LGAs in Rivers State. Rumuokoro is a town and also the local government headquarters of Obio akpor. Obio akpor is densely populated with about 464,789 (National Population Census, 2006). Rumuokoro consists of five villages which are Rukpakwolusi, Eligbolo, Awalama, Rumuagholu and Elieke. Majority of the people are civil servants, farmers and traders. The study adopted a survey design.

Population of the study: The population of the study were adolescents in Rumuokoro, Obio akpor LGA. The adolescents were aged 13-18 years. The percentage of adolescents between 13-18 years in Obio akpor LGA is 13% (National Population Census, 2006). The adolescents used in the study comprised of students in secondary schools located in Rumuokoro.

Sample for the study: The sample comprised of one hundred and eighty adolescents. Three villages were randomly selected from the five villages in Rumuokoro. For equal samples in the three villages, sixty adolescents were randomly selected each from the three villages to make up the population. One school from each village was selected by balloting and the sixty adolescents were selected from the different classes of the senior secondary schools.

Instrument for data collection: The instrument for data collection was a structured and validated questionnaire developed from the extensive review of literature. The questionnaire was face-validated by three lecturers in the Department of Home Science, Nutrition and Dietetics, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The questionnaire contained information on the personal and socioeconomic data of the respondents, correlates of childrearing techniques and peer group influences on the anti-social behavior of adolescents.

Data collection and analysis: One hundred and ninety copies of questionnaires were distributed to the subjects and retrieved by hand. Out of the 190 copies distributed, 180 questionnaires were retrieved and used for the study. This represents 94.75% return rate. The instrument was made up of 23 structured items. The respondents were expected to provide information on the subject based on a four-point hedonic scale using the following format, strongly agree, agree, disagreed and undecided with values 4,3,2,1 assigned respectively. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics: frequencies and percentages, mean and standard deviation. ANOVA was used to test for significance between sexes and P-value was set $p < 0.05$.

RESULTS

Personal and socio-economic data of the respondents: The personal and socio-economic data showed that more than half (55.7%) of the respondents were males while 44.3% were females. About 44% were aged 15-16 years, 29% aged 17-18 years while 27% aged 13-14 years. Majority (87.6%) of the respondents were Christians. More than a quarter (29.7%) of the respondents' father were civil servants, 22.7% were traders while about 20% were farmers. A greater percentage (47.6%) of the respondents' mothers were traders, 27.6% were civil servants while 10.8% were farmers.

Table 1 shows the correlates of child rearing techniques on the anti-social behavior of adolescents. More respondents reported that their parents allow them to do house chores, allow friends to visit them, share not personal matters and worries with their parents, owned cell phones, received whatever they demand from parents, involve parents in decision making and parents

Table 1: Correlates of child rearing techniques on the anti-social behavior of adolescents

Child rearing techniques	Mean	SD	Remarks
Parents allow respondents to do house chores	2.56	0.72	Practiced
Punishments by parents for not doing house chores	1.89	0.84	Not practiced
Observing of curfew at home	1.56	0.95	Not practiced
Parents allow friends to visit respondents	3.01	1.00	Practiced
Parents allow the respondents to visit friends	2.67	0.32	Practiced
Respondents share not personal matters, worries and secrets with parents	2.35	0.34	Practiced
Parents give whatever is demanded by the respondents	2.69	0.42	Practiced
Parents being aware of the whereabouts of the respondents	2.31	0.21	Practiced
Respondents go out of the house without permission from parents	2.01	0.66	Practiced
Ownership of a cell phone	3.42	0.58	Practiced
Answer calls in front of their parents	1.69	0.23	Not practiced
Involve parents in decision making	2.54	0.88	Practiced
Strictness of parents	2.21	0.88	Practiced

Table 2: Correlates of peer group influences on the anti-social behavior of adolescents

Peer group influences	Mean	SD	Remarks
Adolescents that have ever smoked	1.88	0.31	Not practiced
Adolescents that have a nick name	2.61	0.43	Practiced
Drinking of alcohol	2.83	0.95	Practiced
Ever being drunk of alcohol	1.89	0.23	Not practiced
Night clubbing	2.34	0.32	Practiced
Sleeping outside the home at night	2.48	0.97	Practiced
Ever being pregnant	0.61	0.25	Not practiced
Sexual intercourse	2.31	0.21	Practiced
Use of condom	2.68	0.66	Practiced
Watch films in Cinema/film houses	2.06	0.58	Practiced

Table 3: Analysis of Variance on some of the correlates of child rearing techniques and peer group on the anti-social behavior of the adolescents

	Male	Female	p-value	Remarks
	Mean±SD	Mean±SD		
Respondents share not personal matters, worries and secrets with parents	1.52±0.50	2.85±0.31	0.040	Significant
Parents give whatever is demanded by the respondents	2.22±0.21	2.53±0.42	0.870	Not significant
Respondents go out of the house without permission from parents	1.89±0.03	3.15±0.09	0.030	Significant
Ownership of a cell phone	2.53±0.64	2.89±0.36	0.080	Not significant
Involve parents in decision making	2.13±0.52	3.54±0.34	0.030	Significant
Adolescents that have ever smoked	0.61±0.53	0.00	0.038	Significant
Night clubbing	2.32±0.35	2.38±0.59	0.980	Not significant
Sleeping outside the home at night	2.54±0.08	2.20±0.43	0.780	Not significant
Sexual intercourse	2.78±0.68	1.90±0.56	0.042	Significant

being strict to them. However, they reported that the observation of curfew, punishment for not doing house chores and answering of calls in front of their parents are not practiced by them

Table 2 shows correlates of peer group influences on the anti-social behavior of adolescents. Majority of the adolescents reported that by the influence of peer group, they had nick-name, drink alcohol, go to night club, have slept outside their homes, had sexual intercourse, used condom and watched films in cinema/film houses. However, a greater percentage of the adolescents had never smoked or ever been pregnant.

Table 3 shows the analysis of variance some of the correlates of child rearing techniques and peer group on the anti-social behavior of the adolescents. There was a significant ($p < 0.05$) difference between the males and females on respondents sharing not personal matters, worries and secrets with parents, go out of the house with permission from parents, involve parents in decision making, respondents that ever smoked and had sexual intercourse.

DISCUSSION

Parents have been said to be the most critical factor in the social development of children. This exploratory study identified the correlates of childrearing practices and child personality development vis a vis delinquent behavior formation among the adolescents in Rumuokoro, Rivers State. This was clearly shown in the results of Table 1 as a greater percentage of the adolescents reported that they do not share personal matters and worries with their parents; involve their parents in decision making; received whatsoever they demand from their parents; went out without permission from parents and ownership of cell phones. However, the parents of a greater percentage of the adolescents do not punish them when they do not do house chores, never answer phone calls in front of their parents and also do not observe curfew for the adolescents in their homes. A study by Ajiboye *et al.* (2012) showed that the family serves as the child's first socialization agent. Parents model behaviours may be prosocial or antisocial. Parents are also in a powerful position to

reward and punish a child's behaviour. Evidences have shown that parents who have difficulty expressing warmth and who fail to monitor and appropriately discipline their children, raise children who have a high likelihood of engaging in delinquent behaviour (Gilmer, 2008). If the lack of parental affection and inadequate parenting skills influence the delinquent pathway then family interventions that encourage positive relationships between parent and child and that teach appropriate parenting skills would be expected to reduce the chances of children following a criminal trajectory.

The peer group influence on the anti-social behavior of the adolescents was clearly shown in the results of Table 2. A greater number of the adolescents in this study involved in a lot of anti-social activities such as smoking, night clubbing, sleeping outside their home at night, had sexual intercourse, practiced the use of condom and watched films in Cinema/film houses at odd hours due to peer pressure. This supports the finding of a study that the determinant of problem behavior are not limited to the family. As children approach adolescence, they spend increasing amounts of time with their peers without adult supervision (Mounts and Steinberg, 1995) and peers become the most important reference group for adolescents (Hartup, 1999). An aspect of peer relations that has emerged as the most prominent predictor of several kinds of problem behaviour is the association with deviant peer groups. Research findings showed that adolescents who are involved with deviant peers exhibit more norm-breaking behaviour (Brendgen *et al.*, 2000), more substance use (Aseltine, 1995), more school problems (Berndt and Keefe, 1995) and more antisocial behaviour in general (Dishion *et al.*, 1991). An explanation offered for these findings according to Dishion *et al.* (1995) is that deviant peers' activities provide opportunities to engage in antisocial behaviour and supply the adolescents with attitudes, motivation and rationalization to support such behaviour. In addition, exposure to deviant peers may foster antisocial behaviour through positive reinforcement and through modeling of new types of problem behavior.

Furthermore, the results of this study showed there was a significant difference between the males and females in some anti-social behaviours such as respondents not sharing personal matters, worries and secrets with parents; go out without permission from parents; involve parents in decision making; ever smoked and had sexual intercourse. This might be because some anti-social behaviours are commonly practiced more by one sex than the other.

Conclusion: Based on the interpretation of the findings of this study, it has identified some of the childrearing techniques and peer group influences on the anti-social behavior of adolescents which are practiced among the

people of Rumuokoro in Obio akpor LGA. There was a significant difference between the sexes on some of the child rearing techniques and peer group influences identified among the adolescents.

Recommendations:

- Parents must spend quality times with their children at their formative stage in life
- Parents should put more effort to ensure that their children are adequately provided for and morally groomed. This call to question the issue and justification for family planning which among other objectives seeks to ensure that parents only give birth to children they can comfortably cater for
- Intensive workshops and seminars should be regularly organized for those formative adolescents to keep driving home to them the dangers of anti social behaviours
- Proper guidance and counseling should always be given to them at and in school by those qualified and recruited to such a high responsibility

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