

The Influence of Family Structure on the Social Behaviour of Adolescents in Ekiti State, Nigeria

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Abstract: The study investigated the influence of family structure on the social behaviour of adolescents. The research design used in this study was survey. A sample of 398 adolescent students were selected through stratified random sampling technique from 161 public Senior Secondary Schools in Ekiti State. The population for the study was made up of all the adolescent students in secondary schools in Ekiti State. The sample for the study consisted of (398) adolescents selected from four secondary schools in the three senatorial districts of Ekiti State. The selection was achieved through multi-stage Sampling technique. The face validity procedure of the instrument was determined through critical examination and evaluation of the items on the questionnaire by experts in Guidance and Counselling and also in Tests and Measurement. A test re-test method was used to ensure the reliability of the instrument. The reliability coefficient of the instrument was estimated at 0.97. The instrument for collecting data was a self-designed questionnaire titled; Family Structure Questionnaire (FSQ) containing 40 items. Descriptive statistical analysis was done using frequency counts, percentages, standard deviation and means while t-test statistics and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) were used in the data analysis, 4 research questions were raised to guide the study and 4 corresponding hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The results of the analysis showed that the family structure of the adolescents influence their social behaviour. It was found out that adolescents from single parent homes and those from both parents differ significantly in their social behaviour. Based on the results, it was recommended that the father and the mother should stay together for good upbringing of their children. Also that couples should try to prevent separation in their marriage, so that their children will not be influenced negatively.

Key words: Influence, FSQ, PPMC, social behaviour, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

There are different types for family structure. There are families having both parents present and there are others having only one of the parents (single-parent) present, who solely cater for the child/children in the family. The role of parents in the family and the society in general cannot be over emphasized because childcare is one of the most important roles performed by the parents. Nigerian parents care much about their children; they inculcate the norms and values of the society into their children. They guide and monitor them in their educational, moral, emotional and career development, Amato (1993).

In view of Sudan, nuclear family basically comprises of the father, mother and children living together in the same household. Such a family produces, nurtures and socializes the off-springs until they are able to survive on

their own. The obligations of the parents to their children are so vital that they are to remain together and produce a stable background for their children. It is not uncommon for many adolescents to experience feelings of self-consciousness, shyness or insecurity in the light of sexual changes that are taking place in them. In recent times, family structure seems to be taking a new dimension in Nigeria society. Growing up in a single family is one of the numerous problems facing the Nigerian youth and since this trend has been found to have more negative effects on the adolescent, it become necessary to investigate how the family structure influences the social behaviour of the adolescents.

The effects of poor parenting may show up in the teen years, adolescents generally become involved in intimate sexual relationships (Owuamanam, 1997). Adolescents living with their real parents tend to receive the support of both parents with regard to the supply of

their emotional, physical and intellectual needs. Such adolescents seem to have advantage over those from single parent homes in terms of emotional, maturity, social competence, cognitive development, school performance, moral behaviour and psychological disposition. For instance, Hanson (1990) says that adolescents from single parent homes have the lowest grades and lowest occupational aspirations. It has been observed that children show a strong desire to live in two-parents home. For most children, the separation of parents causes difficulty. The adolescents are now being exposed to a greater variety of family structure than any other era of history in Nigeria.

Changes in Nigerian's culture have brought about changes in all areas of family life and this have fundamentally affected the social behaviour of the adolescents in home; the relationship between father and mother and also between children and parents. Children spend more time outside the homes with the majority of the recreation like television/video watching (Robert, 1996). Many mothers now work outside the home and divorce, separation and re-marriage are on the increase with parents now more ambitious for their children and are willing to make personal sacrifice for education to prepare them for their future and there is more interaction with outside than family members. This rapid rate of change means that today's children have many experiences, which their parents never had. A greater number of children now grow up in single parent families as a result of many factors such as: Divorce, death of one of the parents, or decision by a couple to live separately. This new trend in family structure is not without its influence on the adolescents. The father usually takes charge of all disciplinary duties in the family and provides food as well. But because of changing time, the arrangement of mother as home maker and father as the breadwinner may no longer work because more and many women are becoming employed outside the home so as to meet the home demands.

The development of social behaviour of the adolescents prepare them to live among their fellow individuals. Social behaviour of the adolescents and his parents characteristics play an important role in the socialization of the adolescents. Parents set example for their adolescents, although they do not always do so intentionally. For instance, most parents do not want their adolescents to show aggression, yet a parent will punish a child by speaking (Sears, 1987). For example an aggressive father is sometimes imitated by this son but, if the father is very aggressive and dominates his son, the son may develop timid patterns of social behaviour (Hetherington, 1993).

Statement of the problem: Changes in the Nigerian culture seems to have brought about changes in all areas of family structure and have indirectly affected the social behaviour of the adolescents. From the personal experience of the researcher it seems that many adolescents have problems at school and this is associated with the type of family structure they come from. Adolescent from a single parent family seems to have a lot of problems in the area of discipline and many of such adolescents have been found to be involved in alcoholism, smoking, drug addiction, listen to unethical music, cultism and other forms of negative behaviour. It has been observed that children show a strong desire to live in two-parents home. For most children, the separation of parents causes difficulty. The adolescents are now being exposed to a greater variety of family structure than any other era of history in Nigeria.

This study therefore examines family structure and its influence on the adolescent as he grows up. The contention include the fact that:

- Which of the family structure is the most prevalent among the adolescents?
- What is the general social behaviour of the adolescents with respect to their family structure?

Research hypotheses: The following research questions were raised:

- There is no significant relationship between family structure and the social behaviour of the adolescents.
- There is no significant difference in the social behaviour of, male and female adolescents.
- There is no significant difference in the social behaviour of early and late adolescents.
- There is no significant difference in the rate of development of weak relationship of adolescents who are with single parents and those who stay with 2 parents.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The survey research design was adopted because it enabled the researcher to describe the influence of family structure on the social behaviour of the adolescents.

The population for the study consisted of all the adolescent students in senior secondary schools in Ekiti State. As at the time of this study, there were 161 public senior secondary schools in Ekiti State as given by the Ministry of Education, Ekiti State.

The main instrument used for this study was a self designed questionnaire titled Family Structure Adolescent Behavioural Scale (FSABS). It was sub-divided into two sections. Section A consisted of information on the personal data of the individual respondent such as name of school, sex, age and family structure. It contains 4 items. Section B had 20 items. The 20 items were on the family structure of the adolescents. Items 1-6 were on the social behaviour of the adolescents. The response format was likert format: never, occasionally and always. The students ticked the appropriate column according to the level of their agreement or disagreement to each statement. The scores of subject on each item were added together to obtain the total scores on the instrument.

The validity of the instrument was done through examination and evaluation of the items on the inventory by experts in Guidance and Counselling and also in Test and Measurement who thoroughly scrutinized, did some modifications and reconstructed the items to suit the particular purpose for which the instrument was intended.

A test re-test method was used to ensure the reliability of the instrument, using 25 SS II students from a community school in Ido-Ekiti, Ido/Osi L.G.A. of Ekiti State. The instrument was administered twice within an interval of 2 weeks. The 2 sets of responses were compared statistically using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. A reliability coefficient of 0.97 was obtained. The result show that the instrument used for the study was reliable.

The researcher visited the selected schools for the purpose of this study and met with the school counsellors who assisted in the distribution and collection of the questionnaire 398 copies of the questionnaire were collected out of 400 copies that were distributed.

The descriptive statistics was used to analyse general questions 1 and 2. Pearson Correlation was used to test hypotheses 1 while t-test statistics was used to test hypotheses 2, 3 and 4 the data generated were

analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, means and standard deviation to give a summary of the adolescents. All the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

This focuses on the result of the analysis of data interpretation.

Question 1: Which of the family structure is the most prevalent among the adolescents?: In analyzing this general question, scores of social behaviour were used. The data was collected and the analysis was made on the basis of the responses of the respondents using frequency counts and percentages. The findings are shown in Table 1

Table 1 shows the family structure of the adolescents. The data was collected and the analysis was made on the basis of the responses of the respondents using frequency counts and percentages, 80% of the adolescents from single parents always fight for their rights while 71.50% of those from two-parents do so, 27.70% of those from single parents accommodate different behaviours of others, While 15.40% of those from single parents get annoyed with others. 26.7% do take personal problems to others. 20.4% do accommodate different behaviour of others while 9.9% of adolescent from two-parents get annoyed with others. Therefore a greater percentage of the adolescents are from single parent homes.

Question 2: What is the general social behaviour of adolescents, with respect to their family structure?: In analyzing this general question, scores on social behaviour of the adolescents were used. The data were collected and the analysis was made on the basis of the responses of the respondents using frequency counts and percentages. The findings are shown in Table 2.

Table 1: The family structure of the adolescents

	Single Parent			2 Parents		
	N (f) %	O (f) %	A (f) %	N (f) %	O (f) %	A (f) %
1. I take personal problems to other students	24.0	23.0	18.0	90.0	154.0	89.00
	36.9	35.4	27.7	27.0	46.2	26.70
2. I accommodate different behaviour of others	25.0	23.0	17.0	147.0	118.0	68.00
	38.5	35.4	26.2	44.1	35.4	20.40
3. I prefer to be alone in the school	42.0	15.0	8.0	205.0	75.0	53.00
	64.6	23.1	12.3	61.6	22.5	15.90
4. I get annoyed with others over issues	32.0	23.0	10.0	150.0	150.0	33.00
	49.2	35.4	15.4	45.0	45.0	9.90
5. I fight for my rights	7	6	52.0	44.0	51.0	238.00
	10.8	9.2	80.0	13.2	15.3	71.50
6. I feel awkward in the presence of the other students	44.0	16.0	5.0	208.0	87.0	38.00
	67.7	24.6	7.7	62.5	26.1	11.40

N = Never, O = Occasionally, A = Always

Table 2: The general social behaviour of adolescents, with respect to their family structure

	Single Parent			2 Parents		
	N (f) %	O (f) %	A (f) %	N (f) %	O (f) %	A (f) %
1. I take personal problems to other students	24.0	23.0	18.0	90.0	154.0	89.0
2. I accommodate different behaviour of others	36.9	35.4	27.7	27.0	46.2	26.7
3. I prefer to be alone in the school	25.0	23.0	17.0	147.0	118.0	68.0
4. I get annoyed with others over issues	38.5	35.4	26.2	44.1	35.4	20.4
5. I fight for my rights	42.0	15.0	8.0	205.0	75.0	53.0
6. I feel awkward in the presence of the other students	64.6	23.1	12.3	61.6	22.5	15.9
7. I am always late to school	32.0	23.0	10.0	150.0	150.0	33.0
8. I steal other students biros when I have no money	49.2	35.4	15.4	45.0	45.0	9.9
9. I smoke cigarette when am alone	7.0	6.0	52.0	44.0	51.0	238.0
10. I bully other students I show my strength over them	10.8	9.2	80.0	13.2	15.3	71.5
11. I love to disturb other students during lessons	44.0	16.0	5.0	208.0	87.0	38.0
12. I dodge other students' school materials	67.7	24.6	7.7	62.5	26.1	11.4
13. I'm usually rude to my teachers	52.0	12.0	1.0	264.0	56.0	13.0
14. I disobey my parents	80.0	18.5	1.5	79.3	16.8	3.9
15. I like avoiding lessons	60.0	3.0	2.0	283.0	33.0	17.0
16. I love sleeping in the class	92.3	4.6	3.1	85.0	9.9	5.1
	57.0	6.0	2.0	283.0	33.0	11.0
	87.7	9.2	3.1	85.0	9.9	3.3
	55.0	5.0	5.0	290.0	28.0	15.0
	84.6	7.7	7.7	87.1	8.4	4.5
	54.0	6.0	5.0	296.0	24.0	13.0
	83.1	9.2	7.7	88.9	7.2	3.9
	58.0	5.0	2.0		19.0	11.0
		7.7	3.1	303.0	5.7	3.3
	58.0	2.0	4.0	307.0	16.0	10.0
	89.2	3.1	6.2	92.2	4.8	3.0
	57.0	6.0	2.0	311.0	19.0	3.0
	87.7	9.2	3.1	93.4	5.7	0.9
	51.0	7.0	7.0	279.0	31.0	23.0
	78.5	10.8	10.8	83.8	9.3	6.9
	45.0	14.0	6.0	247.0	63.0	23.0
	69.2	21.5	9.2	74.2	18.9	6.9

Table 2 shows that 67.7% of adolescents from single parents feel awkward in the presence of other students, while 62.5% of the adolescents from both parents do so. 92.3% of adolescents from single parents steal other students biros while 28.3% from both parents do so.

From the table, there is a little difference in the social behaviour of adolescents from single parent and those from two-parent family. Adolescents from single parent family seem to be more trouble some than those from two-parent family.

Testing of hypotheses: This section deals with the testing of the four hypotheses generated for the study using the appropriate statistical tools and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

HO₁: There is no significant relationship between family structure and the social behaviour of the adolescents. In testing this hypothesis, data on the social behaviour of the adolescents and scores on the family structures were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation to determine the relationship between family structure and the social behaviour of the adolescents Table 3 shows the result of the analysis.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation summary on the relationship between family structure and the social behaviour of the adolescents

Variables	N	r-cal	r-table
Family structure	398	0.755	0.195
Social behaviour of the adolescents	398		

PN0.05 (result significant)

Table 4: t-test summary on the difference in the social behaviour of adolescents-male and female

Variable	Sex	N	X	SD	df	t-Cal	t-table
Social behaviour	Male	243	11.70	2.14	396	3.911	1.96
	Female	155	12.66	2.78			

p<0.05 (result significant)

Table 3 shows that the value of r-cal (.755) is greater than r-table (0.195). The null hypothesis is rejected at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between family structure and the social behaviour of adolescents.

HO₂: There is no significant difference in the social behaviour of adolescents, male and female.

This hypothesis was analyzed through the use of t-test. To test this hypothesis, mean score obtained by the adolescent on the social behaviour in relation to their sex, male and female adolescents were subjected to t-test analysis. The result of the analysis is presented on Table 4.

Table 5: t-test summary of social behaviour of early and late adolescents

Variable	Age range	N	X	SD	df	t-Cal	t-table
Social behaviour	(10-15 years) early adolescents	175	174	.602	396	0.097	0.196
	(Above 15 years) Late adolescents	223	3.10	.510			

p>0.05 (result significant)

Table 6: t-test summary of adolescents' development of weak relationship

Variable	Family structure	N	X	SD	df	t-Cal	t-table
Development of weak relationship	Single parents	65	11.95	2.197	396	1.95	1.96

p>0.05 (result not significant)

Table 4 shows that the value of t-cal (3.911) is greater than t-table (1.96). The null hypothesis is rejected at 0.05 level of significant. Therefore, there is significant difference in the social behaviour of adolescents among male and female.

HO₃: There is no significant difference in the social behaviour of early and late adolescents. This hypothesis was tested using t-test mean scores obtained by the adolescents whose ages are 10-15 years and those above 15 years and their social behaviour were subjected to t-test analysis. Result of the analysis is presented on Table 5.

The hypothesis was tested using t-test statistical method. The t-cal value is (0.097). It is less than the t-table value of (0.196). The result is not significant at 0.05 level. The hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the social behaviour of early and late adolescents.

HO₄: There is no significant difference in the rate of development of weak relationship of adolescents who are staying with single parents and those with two-parents: To test this hypothesis, the mean scores obtained on the rate of development of weak relationship of adolescents who are staying with single parents and those with two-parents were subjected to t-test analysis. The result of the t-test analysis is shown on Table 6.

Table 6 shows that the t-cal value is 1.95. It is lesser than the t-table value of 1.96. The result is not significant at 0.05 level. The hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the rate of development of weak relationship of adolescent who are staying with single parents and those who stay with two-parents.

DISCUSSION

The study has examined the family structure and its influence on the social behaviour of the adolescents.

The study revealed that the social behaviour of the adolescents is influenced by the family structure of the adolescents. This finding was in agreement with that of Amoto (1993) who made it clear that the role of behaviour of the adolescents cannot be overemphasized. He said

that childcare is one of the important roles performed by Nigerian parents. They play a vital role in inculcating the norms and values of the society into the children. It was also in agreement with Sudan who mentioned the fundamental function of the family in producing, nurturing and socializing the adolescents. Parents play a vital role in the socialization of the adolescents. Parents have the task of directing the behavioural development of the adolescents toward the desired normative socially valued goals.

This finding was in agreement with the Christian Women Magazine which emphasized the fact that parents need to ensure that the adolescents receive decent education, encourage them in their studies and let them have access to proper career guidance and counselling. This finding was in support of White (1996) who said the obligation of parents to their adolescents are so vital that they are to remain together and provide a stable background for their children.

The finding of hypothesis one revealed that there was a significant relationship between family structure and the social behaviour of the adolescents. This result was supported by the findings of Davidoff. He said that parents play substantial role in the adolescent search for an identity. The parents or the family structure the adolescent come from, often impart their own knowledge. Their career, aspiration, political, religious values and interpersonal patterns serve as model. Their approval and disapproval are likely to be powerful on the adolescents. In the view of Sullivan, parental characteristics influence the adolescents' level of self-satisfaction.

The result of hypothesis 2 showed that there was significant difference in the social behaviour of adolescents, male and female. The mean score of the female adolescents was higher than that of the male adolescents according to the result. This result supports that of Dornbush (1985) who said that adolescents' (female) social behaviour is higher than their male counterparts.

The finding of hypothesis three showed that there was no significant difference in the social behaviour of early and late adolescents. This negates the finding of Richard (1992) who found that adolescent's background and age affect his social adjustment.

The result of hypothesis four showed that there was no significant difference in the rate of development of weak relationship of adolescents who are staying with single parents and those who stay with two-parents. This negates the finding of Brown (1982), in one of his studies as a British psychologist when he discovered that adolescents who are deprived of maternal care in the early years of their lives grow up to develop weak relationship with their parents.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that the family structure that an adolescent comes from whether single-parent family or both parents' family has a great influence on the social behaviour of the adolescents. Adolescent boy from a single parent family turns to be morally backward, emotionally unstable and socially maladjusted. He sees himself as inferior to his colleagues owing to the fact that he does not have an identity. There is no well spent time for such an adolescent, he takes decisions and carries out his responsibilities all alone. An adolescent that is used to the pattern of living alone or separately, without the father or mother will grow up to live that pattern of life and this may encourage undesirable behaviour that can lead to divorce or separation in his own family later in life. Single parenthood creates problems for the society by encouraging sexual corruption and preventing good family upbringing in the society. The review showed that single parenthood can cause or lead to so many undesirable behaviours in the society. It was equally shown that people that were involved in this phenomenon usually face so many marital problems. These problems have negative impact on the adolescents and the society in general.

Evidence from this study shows the need to really understand the social behaviour of the adolescents. Single parents should be wise enough to create sufficient time for their children, especially the adolescents. They should try to forget their personal problems and concentrate on the training of the adolescents so that they can later give them rest. Marriage counsellors should be aware of the influence that the family structure has on the adolescents. Social workers and those in related problems of decision making should be passing right judgment as related to child bearing, divorce and separation in the family structure.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- Single parents should spend more time with their adolescents to build up good relationships and to compensate them for the loss of the second parents. He/she should not over-compensate the adolescents by being too soft with them. Over-compensation is not a permanent solution to an unhappy situation. The families can gain mutual understanding and security from talking to each other and sharing affection and consideration.
- The two-parents should try to stay together for the sake of good upbringing of the adolescents. Couples should try to stop breakage of marriage so that it will not affect their children negatively. When there is a problem in the family, the couple should visit the counsellor so as to settle their problems amicably. There is need for the two parents to see that there is a solid foundation for their marriage.
- Teachers should move closer to their students especially the adolescents to know which of their problems can be traced to their family background with particular reference to the living together of their parents. He/she should also take individual differences into consideration in his/her teaching.
- Father and Mother should try to maintain a healthy relationship so as to prevent their children from having unfavourable development later in their years. In order to avoid unhealthy environment for the adolescents, the two-parents shall keep the family intact, despite whatever they face.

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