



Influence of parental attitudes on adolescents behaviour in junior secondary schools in calabar municipality of cross river state, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated the influence of parental attitudes on adolescent behaviour in junior secondary school in Calabar Municipality of Cross River State, Nigeria. The study adopted survey research design and a sample size of 205 was randomly selected from four schools. A breakdown of the figure shows that 165 and 40 respondents were students and parents respectively. The instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire titled 'questionnaire on the influence of parental attitudes on adolescent behaviour (DOIOPAOAB) comprises of 15 items all on a four point rating scale. The instrument was validated by two experts in measurement and evaluation using test-retest method with the reliability index that ranges from 0.79 to 0.86. The data collected was analyzed using Pearson product moment correlation. Based on the results conclusion and recommendations were made.

Keywords: adolescence, adolescent behaviour, parental attitudes

Introduction

Adolescence is a transitional period of physical and psychological development that generally occurs during the period from puberty to adulthood. It is usually associated with the years of developmental changes, but its psychological, physical or cultural expressions may begin earlier and end later. Often times, it is seen as a period of 'storm and stress' for the individual who is passing through the stage. Lannap (2012) ^[5] described adolescence as a developmental stage that is divided into early and late periods, extending from puberty to the attainment of full height and weight and cessation of growth.

Attitudes are predispositions which have developed through long and complex process. Anastasi (1990) ascertain that attitude is a tendency to react favourably or unfavourably towards a designed class of stimuli. It is evident that attitude cannot be directly observed, but must be inferred from overt behaviour, both verbal and non-verbal (Eyo, Joshua & Esuong, 2010) ^[4]. Basically parental attitudes influence the way adolescent behaviour. If parental attitudes are favourable, the relationship of parents and adolescents will be far better than when parental attitudes are unfavourable.

Parents have much influence over their children's behaviour. From birth, a parent will mold and shape behaviours suitable to the norms of society through child rearing. However, there are certain parenting techniques that have a greater impact on a child's behaviour. The largest amongst them is parental support. Barnes et al (2006) ^[1] said that parental support is behaviours towards the child, such as praising, encouraging, and giving affection. They show the child that he or she is valued and loved. In multiple studies, it has been found that support from parents bonds the adolescent to institutions and builds their self-control as postulated by Barnes et al (2006) ^[1]. This building of self-control will hinder deviant behaviour from forming.

To prevent deviant behaviours from appearing, parents must use effective discipline, monitoring, and problem-solving

techniques as put forward by Cross and Kerpelman (2008) ^[3]. Effective discipline is recognizing deviant behaviours and keeping track of when they occur. Consistent discipline must be insured at the sighting of these behaviour in order to prevent the development. The child may view the punishment as unfair and unjust and this can cause them to act out. Monitoring involves the awareness of where the children are, who their friends are, and what they do in their free time. In a study performed by Barnes *et al.* (2006) ^[1], it was discovered that monitoring is a strong predictor for adolescent's deviant behaviour. This illustrates how important parents are in a child's life and how their involvement can make a difference in adolescent behaviour. Through effective monitoring, a parent keeps track of their children where about. In doing this a parent can limit where the child's goes and who they associate with. Along with monitoring and disciplining, a strong parent-child bond is also influential. An adolescent who is closer to his or her parents is more likely to care about his parent's opinion regarding the kind of friends his or she keeps. Coercive parenting can however weaken this bond. When this bond is weakened through parent-child conflict, there are high levels of the youth externalizing their problems (Buehler, 2006). This to a large extent determines the self-concept of the adolescents.

The self undergoes changes right from childhood through adolescence stage to adulthood. Several factors are responsible for such changes, which are physical, emotional, psychological and sociological. He may have negative or positive traits depending upon his heredity and environment; his upbringing, love and affection received from parents, siblings and the atmosphere at school level (Coleman, 2001) ^[2].

In a study conducted by Coleman (2001) ^[2] it was discovered that boys who seemed to be more competent regarded themselves more positively by virtue of their achievement in a variety of areas. Moreso, that boys with

high self-esteem most often had mother who rated them positively than boys with low self-esteem. In another study, Sherif and Cantril (2006) [6] reported that sixth-grade children whose parents displayed warmth and affection were found to have positive self-esteem. In a longitudinal study Farrington (2007) tested youngsters when they were in the eight and tenth grades and then when they were two years older and found that as a group the youngsters exhibited considerable continuity in their self-concepts over the two years period, adolescent with favourable self-concepts were more stable in the way they view themselves than adolescents with unfavourable self-concepts. This to a large extent has proven that parental attitudes among other variables can influence adolescent behaviour in junior secondary schools in Calabar Municipality of Cross River State; Nigeria.

Statement of problem

It is believed that a majority of adults are suffering from low self-esteem and inferiority complex and this can be traced back to unsuccessful events that occurred during their adolescence stage. Researcher have shown that most teenagers change rapidly and radically, they tend to have a disordered desire for independence, due to this, conflicts arise between parents and teens and if not successfully resolved, it may have a lasting negative effect on their adulthood years. As teens grow, they begin to have a sense of maturity in attempting to solve problems, some parents on the other hand do not realized this and they still treat adolescents as children. this often times result to conflict. The study therefore examined the influence of parental attitudes on adolescent behaviour in junior secondary schools in Calabar Municipality.

Statement of hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study

1. Parental attitude has no significant influence on adolescent towards self
2. Adolescent behaviour towards disciplinary measures is not significantly influenced by parental attitudes

Methodology

The study employed survey research type. The population of the study consisted of all junior secondary schools students in Calabar Municipality. Stratified random sampling technique was adopted in selecting four schools for the study, while a simple random sampling was employed in selecting two hundred and five respondents for the study. A breakdown of the figure indicated that 165 respondents were students, while 40 respondents were parents. The instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire titled questionnaire on the influence of parental attitudes on adolescent behaviour (QIDPAOAB) comprises of sixteen items all on a 4 point rating scale. The respondents were required to indicate their level of agreement with each statement. The instrument was validated by two experts in measurement and evaluation using test-retest method; the reliability index of the instrument ranged from 0.79 to 0.86. 205 questionnaires were administered to the respondents in the study area and the same number completed and successfully retrieved through the assistance of research assistants. The statistical tool used for the analysis of results was Pearson product moment correlation.

Results

Hypothesis one: Parental attitude has no significant influence on adolescent towards self.

The result is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Pearson product moment correlation analysis of parental attitude on adolescent toward self

Variable	N	X	SD	df	r-value
Adolescent towards self	205	19.69	3.06		
				203	0.481
Parental attitudes	205	13.00	2.39		

Significant at 0.05 level df = 203, critical r = 0.138

From the table above, the analysis has a significant result. This result therefore implies that parental attitudes significantly influenced adolescent towards self. It also shows that the calculated r-value of 0.481 was greater than the critical r-value of 0.138 at 0.05 level of significance with 203 degree of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative retained.

Hypothesis two: Adolescent behaviour towards disciplinary measures is not significantly influenced by parental attitudes.

Table 2: Analysis of adolescent behaviour towards disciplinary measures is not significantly influenced by parental attitudes

Variable	N	X	SD	df	r-value
Disciplinary measures	205	19.56	3.40		
				203	0.282
Parental attitudes	205	13.00	2.39		

Significant at 0.05 level, df = 203, critical r = 0.138

The result of the Table 2 above revealed that the calculated r-value of 0.282 was greater than the critical r-value of 0.138 when tested at 0.05 level of significance with 203 degree of freedom. This indicated that the result is significant. This implies that adolescent behaviour towards disciplinary measures is not significantly influenced by parental attitudes. Thus the null hypothesis which states that; adolescent behaviour towards disciplinary measures is not significantly influenced by parental attitude in Calabar Municipality is therefore rejected and the alternate hypothesis is retained.

Discussion

The findings of hypothesis one reveals that adolescent self behaviour is significantly influenced by parental attitude. The null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted. From Table 1, the calculated r-value of 0.481 was found to be greater than the critical r-value of 0.138 at 0.05% level of significant and at 203 degree of freedom. The result of this finding is in line with Cooper (1967) who investigated factors influencing self-acceptance. The younger were given a variety of tests of personality and ability. In general, the boys who seemed to be more competent regarded themselves more positively by virtue of their achievement in a variety of areas, they received greater recognition from others which enhanced their self-image. Boys with high self-esteem more often had mothers who rated them positively than boys with low self-esteem. Their parents also tended to manifest high self-esteem. Specific parental child-rearing practices were also found to be related

to the level of esteem display by the boys.

The result from Table 2 shows that adolescent behaviour towards disciplinary measures is significantly influenced by parental attitudes in the study area. The result revealed that the calculated r-value of 0.282 was greater than the critical r-value of 0.138 when tested at 0.05 level of significance with 203 degree of freedom.

Conclusion

The foregoing discussion may have left the impression that the parents are ultimately being responsible for the kind of adolescent or young adult that is produced. Nevertheless as has been repeatedly emphasized with parent-child interaction, the characteristics of the child can hold equal weight in influencing the parents' behaviour and attitudes. The numerous rapid changes in adolescent cognitive, sexual and emotional functioning can in themselves produce individual characteristics to which the parent has to adjust. We must be careful not to always imply that parents are always responsible for how their adolescents turn out. Change within the adolescents as well as other influences outside the family such as school, peers, mass and social media can also affect the adolescent. Nevertheless, the family environment is a very important soil in which adolescent behaviour and other developmental characteristics can be influenced positively or negatively.

Recommendations

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

- Parents should provide an environment that is accepting, warm and loving that fosters independence, friendliness and flexibility in their children.
- Parents should take adolescent opinions seriously and carry them along in the decision-making process.
- Those adolescents who distinguished themselves behaviour-wise should be given some kind of award to encourage sustainable positive behaviour.
- Other members of the society should develop a positive and friendly attitude towards the adolescents so as to in turn promote adolescent positive behaviour.

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