

Section E

MISCELLANEOUS

**Birth Order and Peer Pressure as Determinants of Adolescents'
- Behavioural Adjustment in Ojo Local Government Area of Lagos State**

¹Daodu, M. Adedayo (Ph. D)

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²Elegbede, C. Bola (Ph. D)

Department of Counselling Psychology Education,
Lagos State University of Education.
Oto/Ijanikin, Lagos. P.M.B 2007 Ijanikin, Lagos

1. daoduma@lasued.edu.ng

08023833221

2. elegbedecb@lasued.edu.ng

08037204542

Abstract

The study examined the influence of Birth-Order and Peer Pressure on Adolescents Behavioral Adjustment in Ojo Local Government Area of Lagos State. Ninety (90) respondents were randomly selected from three (3) senior secondary schools consisting of male and female students. The study adopted descriptive survey design. Data for the study were collected through Adolescent Behavioral Adjustment Scale (ABAS); chi-square method was used to analyze the data collected for the study. Two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that birth order and peer pressure influence have a strong influence on adolescent behavioral adjustment in secondary schools. The study concluded that parents, teachers and school counsellor should monitor and re-orientate the adolescents to behave in a society acceptable way. Lastly, conclusion and recommendation were suggested

Keywords: Birth, Order, Peer, Pressure, Adolescent, Behaviour, Adjustment

Introduction

Adolescent is a developmental transition between childhood and adulthood. The individual is no more a child, but he is not yet an adult. It is necessary to point out that the individual undergoing this period is referred to as adolescent, while the period is called adolescence. Komolafe, Ogunjimi and Adeniyi [2001] make clear that adolescence is a transitional stage between childhood and adulthood characterized by a number of pressures which are internal and external to the Adolescent.

During Adolescence stage, adolescent try to form their own identity. They spend more time with their friends and less time with their families. This is a normal healthy stage of development, but the growing distance between parents and their children and the increasing importance of friends can be a source of conflict and anger within the family.

The desire to feel accepted and to fit in is one of the strongest forces in adolescents. This can lead teens to do things that they know are wrong, dangerous or risky (Hall, 2019). On the positive side, the pressure to keep up with the peer group can also inspire teens to achieve goals that they might never aim at on their own. During this period, there is a change in the adolescent behavioural patterns in school. At this stage, Adolescent tends to adjust in their personality organization, which leads to fitness of the individual to his social and physical environment. Adolescents tend to change their ways to life according to the demands of the situation surrounding them. Adolescents spend an increasing amount of time each day in the company of peers (Demir and Urberg, 2014)

Today, adolescent behavioural adjustment has become a global issue. It has been observed that birth order and peer pressures are determinants of adolescent behavioural adjustment. It is popularly believed that birth order is an important determinant of adolescent personality, intelligence and economic success. During adolescence, the relationship between birth order and a number of adolescent behaviour cannot be over emphasized. These behaviours include the probability that an individual adolescent will smoke cigarette, use substance such as alcohol or Indian hemp, engage in sexual activity or commit any one of a series of crimes (Paul, 2022)

Birth Order refers to the order a child is born in their family; first-born, second born, third born, last born etc. Also, the birth order is the order in which a child is born. Birth order is often believed to have a profound and lasting effect on personality and psychological development of an individual especially children and adolescent. (Rohrer, Egloff and Schmukle, 2015). The work of Adler, the founder of individual psychology in 1982, was the first to discuss the influence of birth order on personality development. While he identified common characteristics and patterns for particular birth order positions, he emphasized how every person has a self- perceived place in his or her family (Leman, 2009). Adler (1982) believed that birth order has a direct association with personality characteristics of Adolescents. He asserted that family position can affect adolescent experiences and development. It is believed that each birth order position has its own unique set of personality traits.

First borns are believed to be more conservative. They are viewed as leaders who follow rules, they and submit to authority. They are often more ambitious and focused than other children and they are more conforming. Adler suggested that first borns tend to be more motivated to achieve than later born. They are usually good at pleasing adults and behaving

in socially appropriate ways. They typically adhere to rules and expect the same from others. In schools, first borns adhere to the rules and regulation that govern the school. They also work hard to stay ahead of the other siblings and keep their special place.

The second child always finds a way to measure up to the accomplishments of the first born or find a place of significance through other means. For example, if the first born finds significance through academic achievement, the second may compete with the older sibling or find significance through another area such as sports, music or an ability to develop strong social relationships. Adler described this child as appearing to be in a race in order to overtake the first-born child.

Middle borns are considered more rebellious and more likely to challenge authority of the school. They often have a more difficult time finding their place of significance in the school setting. They learn to be competitive because they have to keep up with their older siblings while trying to stay ahead of younger siblings.

Youngest siblings are often viewed as pampered, dependent, immature and irresponsible. They tend to be more sociable and usually get the most attention in schools. They often want their classmate to do things for them. Adler described only child as often being the center of attention and striving for attention from adults more than peers. Only children are often leaders and have a more difficult time going along with others in schools, especially in groups of their peers. They typically carry feelings of entitlement. A typical characteristic of an only child is the carefulness that results from the extreme amount of attention they receive growing up. It is believed that independence, sociableness, responsibility and thoughtfulness are qualities associated with the only child position.

Another determinant of adolescent behavioural adjustment is peer pressure. Peer pressure can be described as the influence exerted by a peer group in encouraging a person to change his or her attitudes, values or behaviours to conform to the group. An adolescent affected by peer pressure may or may not want to belong to those groups. They may also recognize dissociative groups that they do not wish to belong to and therefore adopt behaviours in opposition to those of the group (Adams, 2021). In the same vein, Harris (2016) emphasized that peer pressure can cause adolescent to do things they would not normally do example, take drugs, smoke, date, marry, have a job, have children and buy expensive items. Research has shown that over the last fifty years, peer influence/pressure has emerged as the chief source of values and behavioural influence for adolescents, replacing the influence of adults (Zeijl, 2014). Along with this new trend comes a rise in anti-social behavior (Neufeid & Mate, 2005). Although the level of deviance varies between peer groups, the negative actions of one members of a group will increase the probability of other member taking part in similar behaviours. Affiliation with deviant peers predicts delinquent behavior more strongly than community, school or family characteristics (Gifford-smith, *et al*

2015). A different perspective by Pruitt (2013) showed that positive peer pressure can also have a strong effect on adolescents. Adolescents that are highly susceptible are more likely to be influenced by positive or neutral behavior than anti-social behavior. Furthermore, while pressure from peer groups is undoubtedly influential, most teens choose friends that share common views about behaviours such as drinking or drug use. Ryan, (2019) stated that the good kid who falls in with the bad crowd is the exception, not the rule.

Methodology

Design: The research design for this study was descriptive. Which was adopted because the information needed for the study would be collected from a large number of participants.

Participants: The participants in this study comprised ninety (90) senior secondary school students one and two (SS 1 and Ii) from three (III) senior secondary schools in Ojo Local Government Area of Lagos State. Forty-Four (44) male and Forty-Six (46) female.

Instrumentation: The main instrument used for this study was self-developed questionnaire tagged Adolescent Behavioural Adjustment Scale (ABAS). The instrument comprised two sections A & B. Section A dealt with personal data of respondent such as sex, age position in the family, name of the school and so on, while section B contained twenty (20) items that were design to collect relevant information to test the two (2) hypotheses formulated for the study. It ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Test-retest, reliability range from 69 to a high of 82. Internal consistency ranges from 73 to 92.

Procedure

The research visited the three (3) schools and obtained the permission of the Schools' Principal after which copies of the instrument were administered to the randomly selected participants. Explanation was given to them, and they were sufficient time to respond to the instrument which was collected on the spot.

Data Analysis: Two hypotheses formulated to guide the study were used to guide the study. Chi-square tool was used to analyse the data generated from the respondents and the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Result

The first hypothesis stated that there is no significant relationship between peer pressure and adolescent behavioural adjustment in Secondary School.

Table 1: Summary of chi-square computation showing the significant relationship between peer pressure and adolescent behavioural adjustment in secondary school.

| ITEM | SA | A | D | SD | TOTAL | D.F | P | X ² cal | X ² TAB | DECISION |
|--------------|------------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|-----|------|--------------------|--------------------|----------|
| 1 | 1(23) | 6(14.2) | 17(10.2) | 66(42.6) | 90 | 12 | 0.05 | 388.75 | 21.026 | Rejected |
| 2 | 51(23) | 35(14.2) | 2(10.2) | 2(42.6) | 90 | | | | | |
| 3 | 1(23) | 1(14.2) | 19(10.2) | 69(42.6) | 90 | | | | | |
| 4 | -(23) | 4(14.2) | 10(10.2) | 76(42.6) | 90 | | | | | |
| 5 | 62(23) | 25(14.2) | 3(10.2) | -(42.6) | 90 | | | | | |
| Total | 115 | 71 | 51 | 213 | 450 | | | | | |

The result above shows that the calculated value (X²cal) was greater than the tabulated value (X²tab). Therefore, the hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between peer pressure and adolescent behavioural adjustment in secondary school was rejected. The alternative hypothesis which stated that there is significant relationship between peer pressure and adolescent behavioural adjustment in secondary school was accepted.

The findings support that of Undergraff (2001) that stated that adolescents spend more than half of their time in the company of their peers and therefore, it is not surprising that peers play an influential role in adolescent lives.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant relationship between birth order and adolescent behavioural adjustment in Secondary School.

Table 2: Summary of chi-square computation showing the significant relationship between birth order and adolescent behavioral adjustment in secondary school.

| ITEM | SA | A | D | SD | TOTAL | D.F | P | X ² cal | X ² TAB | DECISION |
|------|----------|--------|----------|---------|-------|-----|---|--------------------|--------------------|----------|
| 6 | 15(30.8) | 27(30) | 28(17.6) | 10(9.6) | 90 | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|------------|----|------|--------|--------|----------|
| 7 | 53(30.8) | 30(30) | 6(17.6) | 2(9.6) | 90 | 12 | 0.05 | 139.45 | 21.026 | Rejected |
| 8 | 12(30.8) | 17(30) | 33(17.6) | 28(9.6) | 90 | | | | | |
| 9 | 38(30.8) | 40(30) | 11(17.6) | -(9.6) | 90 | | | | | |
| 10 | 36(30.8) | 36(30) | 10(17.6) | 8(9.6) | 90 | | | | | |
| Total | 154 | 150 | 88 | 48 | 450 | | | | | |

The result above shows that the calculated value (x^2_{cal}) was greater than the tabulated value (x^2_{tab}). Therefore, the hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between birth order and adolescent behavioural adjustment in secondary school was rejected. The alternative hypothesis which stated that there is significant relationship between birth order and adolescent behavioural adjustment in secondary school was accepted.

Discussion of Findings

The results from the study revealed that there is a significant relationship between peer pressure and adolescent behavioural adjustment in Secondary School. The finding corroborates that leman (2009) That the position 1 an individual in the family has strong influence on the adolescent behavioural adjustment. Curti (2010), also emphasized that behavioural adjustment of first born is different from the last born, the same thing applicable to second born and middle child.

Conclusion

From this study, it is obvious that birth order and peer pressure influence have a strong effect on adolescent behavioural adjustment in secondary school. Desire to feel accepted and to fit in, is one of the strongest forces in adolescents. This can lead teens to do things that they know is wrong, dangerous or risky. On the positive side, the pressure to keep up with the peer group can also inspire teens to achieve goals that they might never aim for on their own. Also, birth order position can affect adolescent behavioural adjustment. The influence of birth order on adolescent can be positive or negative. Both birth order and peer pressure influence cannot be underestimated in adolescent behavioural adjustment.

Recommendation

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

1. Schools should design programmes that will help adolescents to become more responsible;

2. Teachers should be effective and resourceful in classroom management thereby promoting effective teaching and learning as well as encouraging positive behavior among peers;
3. The society should sensitize adolescents to avoid deviant behavior through empowerment programme thereby making them useful citizens of the country;
4. Regular counselling should be given to adolescents on the kind of peers that they should associated with;
5. Parents should be watchful on the types of friends kept by their adolescent children; and
6. The parents-child relationship should be cordial enough to permit adolescents to discuss their problems with their parents.

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