THE INFLUENCE OF PEER INTERACTION, HOME AND SCHOOL ON SELF ESTEEM OF ADOLESCENTS

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Abstract
This study explored the contribution of peer interaction, Home and school on self-esteem of Adolescents in Aba metropolis. Two hundred and ninety SS2 students (Males 147, Females 143) randomly selected from six secondary schools with about fifty respondents selected by simple random sampling from each school participated in this study. The age distribution of respondents is between 14-19years with a mean age of 16.37 years and a standard deviation of 1.57. The students were administered Hare self-esteem scale. Data obtained were analyzed using t-test statistic for independent samples. Results obtained show that gender and type of school attended by students does not influence their self-esteem whereas peer interaction, home and school were found to significantly impact on adolescent's self-esteem. The mean score of the participants fall below the norm, therefore the results were discussed in terms of recommendation for action and therapy.

Key Words: Contribution, Peer Interaction, Home, School, Self Esteem, Adolescents

Introduction

Adolescents exist within the social system. This has necessitated several studies which investigated the role of social system in the adjustment and development of self-esteem in adolescents. Specifically, Peers, parents, and school are important factors of the socialization

process which are there in the immediate vicinity of the adolescent and thus make his micro-system (Schwartz et al., 2006). Specifically, the role of parents in the earlier stages of development is not questionable, given that they constitute a significant part of the child's social context. However, adolescence also involves redefining social relations with peers along with the parents and the school. Adolescence describes a time when a young person spends considerably more time with friends, while the time spent with parents decreases significantly (Bester, 2007)

Self-esteem has become a household word. Teachers, parents, therapists and others have focused efforts on boosting self-esteem, on the assumption that high self-esteem will cause many positive outcomes and benefits. Appraisal of the effects of self-esteem is complicated by several factors. We emphasize objective measures of outcome because many people with high self-esteem exaggerate their success and good traits. High self-esteem is a heterogeneous category, encompassing people who frankly accept the good qualities along with narcissistic, defensive and conceited individuals (Moorman, 2003).

Most people seem to have a mental picture of themselves, their strengths and weaknesses. This mental picture is called self-concept or self-image. It is formed through learned experiences beginning at birth. According to Nwokolo and Oguzie (2021), self-esteem is defined as the belief, perception and opinion people have about themselves which influence their behaviours and consequently affects their performance and achievements in life. Self-esteem refers to a person's overall sense of his or her values or worth. It can be considered a sort of measure of how much a person "values, approves of, appreciates, prizes, or likes him or herself" (Adler & Stewart, 2004). Adler and Stewart also noted that self-esteem is considered an important component of emotional health, as it encompasses both self-confidence and self-acceptance. Adler and Stewart further noted that self-esteem and self-image are related to how much people behave in the society, perform in school, react to peer pressure and interact with others.

Primarily it is the role of the home to develop self-esteem in adolescents. For many centuries it is believed that the relationship between mother and child forms the basis of the internal working model. The importance of this mental framework for the understanding of the home and its processes influences development throughout life (Buist, Deković, Meeus & van Aken, 2004a; Klarin, 2006). Feeney, Noller and Roberts (2000) noted that the child believes that, the person with whom he/she develops an attachment is unique and irreplaceable. Attachment is also developed in later periods of life, but to people outside the home context. According to Bowlby, these people are the second in the hierarchy of attachment. They may be friends, peers, teachers, and others (Colin, 1996).

Research on the home in the adjustment of adolescents is therefore focused primarily on the observation of parent-adolescent relationships (Deković & Buist, 2005; Eichelsheim, Deković & Buist, 2009; Sharma & Vaid, 2005). Adolescents who developed a close and healthy attachment to their mothers at an early stage of development seem better adjusted (Van Den Akker, Deković & Prinzie, 2010). Adolescents who have better family relationships also develop better social relationships outside the family environment (Engels, Finkenauer, Deković & Meeus, 2001), and they have higher self-esteem, especially if their mother's support is strong. Engels, Finkenauer,

Deković & Meeus (2001) further noted that the importance of both structural family variables and process family variables for different competences of the child, and with respect to self-esteem, there is an important role for process variables such as the quality of family interaction, parenting style, and parenting practices. This connection of home variables is stronger in children than in adolescents. In any case, the results of numerous studies emphasize the importance of home for the psychological adjustment of adolescents (Jimenez, Deković & Hidalgo, 2009).

Choo (2000) found that self-esteem, autonomy, and social competence as measures of psychological adjustment are significantly associated with the behaviour of both parents, and especially of the mother. In general, it appears that home support is a significant predictor of global self-esteem, especially in early adolescence. The social support of adults (parents and teachers) is more important for developing self-esteem in girls than in boys (BrajšaŢganec, Raboteg-Šarić & Franc, 2000). The research conducted on adolescents from two countries (the Republic of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina) leads to a conclusion about the importance of the role of home in decision-making in different life situations of adolescents, such as choosing a school/university, academic achievement, and moral values (Klarin, Proroković & Šimić Šašić, 2010a). The results also suggest cross-cultural differences in the direction of the stronger influence of parents from Bosnia and Herzegovina. Peers and the development of the self-esteem

The quality of interaction between adolescents and their peers as well as the type of peers they associate with, play important roles in aiding or impeding their current or future functioning. Despite the fact that, especially for adolescents, peer interaction is significant, systematic research in this area began only in the 1970s (Klarin, 2006). Because adolescents spend significantly more time with peers, it is reasonable to assume that the role of peers in adolescence is more important than the role of parents. The development of close peer relationships is a universal task in adolescence (Deković, Engels, Shirai, de Kort & Anker, 2002), and for this reason social relations are concentrated on friends (Wissink, Deković & Meijer, 2009).

Some authors (Asher, Parker & Walker, 1996; Bukowski, Hoza & Boivin, 1993; Hartup & Stevens, 1997; Parker & Gottman, 1989); Klarin, 2006) noted that the importance of peers is associated with several aspects of development: emotional security, positive self-image, social competence, the satisfaction of the need for intimacy, the adoption of pro-social behaviour and satisfaction. The relationship with peers and friends plays an important role in satisfying the needs for intimacy and closeness. Failure to satisfy these needs, particularly prominent in adolescence, is the result of difficulties in peer interactions, and the outcome is anxiety and social isolation

Bester (2007) presents the findings of research conducted on 98 high school students. On the basis of correlation analysis, the author concludes that, of 14 personality characteristics, 12 are significantly correlated with peer interaction, while only five personality characteristics are significantly associated with relationships with parents. Also, where self-esteem is concerned, it is more strongly associated with peer interaction than with parents. The same is true for boys and girls. The author thereby does not reduce the role of parents in the personality development of adolescents, but points out the importance of peer interactions for the formation of the social

context in which a young person has the opportunity to practice socially responsible behaviour (p. 188).

The role of friends is also evident in the formation of the motives for achievement and academic self-concept (Bissell-Havran & Loken, 2009). Satisfaction with a friendly relationship contributes to well-being and self-esteem. The sizes of friends‟ networking sites and the feedback which adolescents receive from their friends in this manner are significantly associated with self-esteem and well-being (Valkenburg, Peter & Schouten, 2006). Furthermore, the relationship between self-esteem and relationships depends on the culture and gender of respondents (Deković et al., 2002).

According to Jen and Chien (2008), a positive effect will occur on a student's accomplishment based on a student's self-esteem within the same learning subject but will negatively affect another. The correlation among the academic self-esteem and academic performance of students had three perspectives. It was proposed in the skill development model that a positive effect occurs regarding the student's self-concept when academic performance is exerted. The self-enhancement model states that promoting students' self-esteem is necessary to improve a student's academic performance.

Using a descriptive survey research design, Oluwatosin and Bamidele (2014) investigated the relationship between self-esteem and academic performance of secondary school students in chemistry. The study revealed a positive correlation between students' self-esteem and academic performance in chemistry.

Ghazvini (2011) in another study determined the relationship between academic self-esteem and academic performance. Findings indicated that there is a close correlation between the variables of academic self-esteem and academic performance.

In the study of Gabriel et al. (2009) stated that failure or success in life or schoolwork would depend on how much individuals feel regarding the attributes and qualities they hold for themselves. It is noted that achievement rests a lot on the student's self-esteem of their ability.

Self-esteem has been described as a large part of adolescents’ self-understanding and is likely to be a fluctuating and dynamic construct, susceptible to internal and external influences during adolescence (Moksnes & Espnes, 2013). Self-esteem is widely recognized as a central aspect of psychological functioning during adolescence. Boys seem to score higher than girls on self-esteem during adolescence (Frost & McKelvie, 2004)

In a descriptive study with 360 children aged 11 years, Zakriski et al. (2005) found that gender differences may reflect the sexes differential tendencies to place themselves in situations conducive to particular behaviors. For example, boys may chose situations that encourage competition, whereas girls may seek opportunities for self-disclosure. In boys-only uni-gender groups, there was more competition and conflict than in girls-only groups or mixed-gender groups. Girls-only groups displayed more nurturance and empathy than boys-only groups or mixed-gender groups (Ruble, Martin & Berenbaum, 2006)

In a cross sectional study with 284 children (mean age 9.9 years) and 324 adolescents (mean age 13.8), Rose (2002) found that girls engage in co-rumination-extensively discussing problems and focusing on negative feelings. In early and middle adolescence, girl's friendships focused on issues of intimacy, love, and communion, whereas boys' friendships tended to focus on power, and excitement

Gender differences in adolescents' relationships with their peers have been noted. In a longitudinal study by De Goede et al. (2009) with 930 adolescents-593 in early adolescence (mean age 12.4 years) and 337 in middle adolescence (mean age 16.7 years), girls reported a significantly higher level of support from their best friends compared to boys, and this level increased from early to late adolescence. Higher initial levels of support were related to lower initial levels of negative interaction. Boys, on the other hand, initially perceived more negative interactions with friends than girls. A cross-sectional study by Parker et al. (2005) that included 399 young adolescents in 5th to 9th grade found that girls are more jealous than boys, and have a reputation for greater passive and social aggression.

Gender differences in same-sex friendship shave also been noted in other studies (Benenson & Christakos, 2003; Galambos, 2004; Rose, Carlson & Waller, 2007). Friendships among girls are characterized by greater intimacy, self-disclosure, empathy, interdependence, caring and co-rumination of woes and fears. Boys generally interact in larger friendship groups with a focus on companionship, competition, risky activities, excitement, efforts at direct control, and inhibition of feelings and intimacy. These different styles of emotional response may render girls more vulnerable to depression (especially following negative relationship events), but protect them from externalizing behavior (e.g., aggression, recklessness); the opposite holds true for boys (Rose & Rudolph, 2006). To summarize, gender roles have a significant impact on adolescents' self-esteem and thus an influence on how adolescents place themselves in different social situations.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of the three variables- Peer group, home and School on the self-esteem of secondary school students and to proffer plausible management therapy for people with low self esteem

Research Questions

1) What is the influence of peer pressure on adolescent's self-esteem?

2) What influence does school have on adolescent's self-esteem?

3) What influence does home have on adolescent's self-esteem?

Hypotheses

1) There is no significant difference in the self-esteem of male and female respondents

2) There is no significant difference in the self-esteem of adolescents in public and private schools

Methods

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Hare self-esteem scale was used in collecting the data so as to determine the effect of the three variables - Peer group, home and School on self-esteem of adolescents. A sample of 290 SS 2 students was purposively drawn from four randomly selected secondary schools both private and public in Umuahia Education Zone. There were 147 males and 143 females, 144 students from private schools and 146 students from public schools. The age distribution of respondents is between 14-19 with a mean age of 16.37 years and a standard deviation of 1.57

Hare self-esteem scale was the main instrument for data collection. The survey instrument consists of 30 item inventory designed to assess the influence of the factors – Peer group, home and school on self-esteem of primary and secondary school students. A pilot testing of this instrument was done using 200 students. A test retest reliability co-efficient of 0.74 was obtained in an interval of three months. The acceptance point of the study was the mean of 2. 5 and above.

Results

The results of this study are presented in accordance with the research questions and hypotheses

Table1 (Section A) Influence of peer interaction on adolescents self-esteem.

S/N	ITEM	X	SD
1	I have at least as many friends as other people of my age	2.62	1.00
2	I am not as popular as other people of my age.	2.42	1.02
3	In the things that other people of my age like to do, I am at least as good as most other people	2.68	1.05
4	People of my age often pick on me	2.54	1.08
5	Other people think am a lot of fun to be with	2,73	1.03
6	I usually keep to myself because I am not like other people of my age	2.54	1.12
7	Other people wish they were like me	2.79	1.07
8	I wish I were a different kind of person because I would have more friends	2.17	1.07
9	If my group of friends decide to vote for leaders of their group I'd be elected to a high position	2.69	1.07
10	When things get tough, I am not a person that other people of my age would turn to for help.	2.46	1.20

Table 1 above shows that generally peer group seem to have much influence on self-esteem of adolescents. This conclusion is based on the data obtained as shown that, the respondents scored above the mean (x=2.5) in seven items, except for three item where they scored below the mean.

Table2 (Section B) Influence of home on adolescents self-esteem.

S/N	ITEM	X	SD
1	My parents are proud of the kind of person that I am	2.95	1.14
2	No one pays much attention to me at home	2.15	1.19
3	My parents feel that I can be depended upon	2.85	1.10
4	I often feel that if they could, my parents would trade me in another child	1.97	1.07
5	My parents try to understand me	2.93	1.07
6	My parents expect too much from me	2.76	1.13
7	I am an important person in my family	2.93	1.09
8	I often feel unwanted at home	2.29	1.21
9	My parents believe that I will be a success in future	2.73	1.25
10	I often wish that I had been born into another family	2.23	1.15

Table 2 above shows that generally the home has some measures of influence on the self-esteem of adolescents, since out of ten items listed, only four had mean below 2.5

Table3 (Section C) Influence of school on adolescents self-esteem.

S/N	ITEM	X	SD
1	My teachers expect too much of me	2.56	1.07
2	In the kind of things we do in school, I am at least as good as other people in my class	2.88	1.10
3	I often feel worthless in school	2.24	1.19
4	I am usually proud of my report card	2.72	1.18
5	School is harder for me than most other people	2.16	1.13
6	My teachers are usually happy with the kind of work I do	2.78	1.14
7	Most of my teachers do not understand me	2.39	1.15
8	I am an important person in my class	2.77	1.12
9	It seems that no matter how hard I try, I never get the grades I deserve	2.48	1.20
10	All in all, I feel I’ve been very fortunate to have had the kind of teachers I’ve had since I started school	2.43	1.18

Table 3above shows that adolescents do generate some of their self-esteem competences from interaction with the school since five out of ten items investigated has a mean above 2.5

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the self-esteem of male and female respondents

Table 4: t-test analysis on gender and self-esteem of respondents

SEX	N	X	SD	t	P	R
Male	147	2.55	0.29	-0.48	0.63	Not Significant
Female	143	2.57	0.25	-0.48	0.63	

Table 4 above reveals that P value 0.63 is greater than the alpha level 0.05, therefore the null hypothesis is upheld that, there is no significant difference in the self-esteem of male and female adolescents

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the self-esteem of respondents in public and private schools

Table 5: t-test analysis on type of school and self-esteem of respondents

SCHOOL	N	X	SD	t	P	R
Private	144	2.53	0.32	-0.67	0.50	Not Significant
Female	146	2.59	0.21	-0.67	0.50	

Table 5 above, shows that P value 0.50 is greater than the alpha level 0.05, therefore the null hypothesis is retained that, there is no significant difference in the self-esteem of adolescents in private and public schools.

Discussion

Although peers are very important for adolescents during this developmental stage, the home and school also play important role in adolescent's lives. Adolescents who developed a close and healthy attachment to their mothers at an early stage of development seem better adjusted (Van Den Akker, Deković & Prinzie, 2010). Adolescents who have better family relationships also develop better social relationships outside the family environment (Engels, Finkenauer, Deković & Meeus, 2001), this implies that adolescents are less influenced by peers when they have close and involving relationships with family.

The result as shown in table 1 and 2 indicate a high degree of influence of peer group and home on self-esteem of adolescents. This is because the mean score obtained for the greater majority of the items investigated was quite above 2.5. The result in table three reveal that out of ten items investigated under school as a factor influencing self-esteem, five had mean value above 2.5. The result generally indicates that peer interaction impacted more positively on the self-esteem of adolescents than both the home and school.

The findings of this study agrees with Salami (2000) who among other things found that adolescents whose friends and parents support perform better in school than adolescents who receive support from only one or neither. The results further lays credence to Valkenburg, Peter and Schouten (2006) who found that Satisfaction with a friendly relationship contributes to well-being and self-esteem. The sizes of friends networking sites and the feedback which adolescents

receive from their friends in this manner are significantly associated with self-esteem and well-being, and Klarin (2006) who found that the importance of peers is associated with several aspects of development: emotional security, positive self-image, social competence, the satisfaction of the need for intimacy, the adoption of pro-social behaviour and satisfaction.

The result of the analysis of the first hypothesis indicates that gender does not necessarily influence self-esteem of adolescents. It therefore implies that self-esteem is not gender specific However the findings of this study disagrees with Frost and McKelvie (2004) who found that Self-esteem is widely recognized as a central aspect of psychological functioning during adolescence. Boys seem to score higher than girls on self-esteem during adolescence

The result of the second hypothesis equally confirms that the type of school an adolescent attends be it private or public does not determine the level of self-esteem. The implies that the school as an agent of socialization has a defined responsibility towards boosting the adolescents esteem smarts. This study has great implication for the school and home in that effective home school collaboration will engender positive attitude and balanced self-image of students (Uwakwe, 2001)

Conclusion: This study therefore concludes that gender and type of school attended by adolescents does not influence their self-esteem whereas peer interaction, home and school were found to significantly impact on adolescent's self-esteem.

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