
**THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL SUPPORT ON STRESS AMONG ADOLESCENTS
IN EKITI STATE**

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ABSTRACT: *The study examined the influence of social support on stress among adolescents in Ekiti State. Specifically, the study examined the level of stress among adolescent; the social supports that are available to the adolescent; the relationship between social support and stress among adolescent; the influence of social support on stress among male and female adolescent; and the influence of social support on stress among Christian and Muslim adolescent. The research design used in this study was a descriptive survey type. The population of this study comprised of all the senior secondary school students in Ado local government area of Ekiti state. The sample for this study comprised of one hundred and sixty (160) students. Simple and stratified random sampling techniques were used. The instrument used for data collection was self-designed questionnaire. The questionnaire was validated by experts of Tests and Measurement to check whether the instrument accurately represented the variables under study. The reliability of the instrument was ensured through test re-test method which yielded a reliability co-efficient value of 0.718. The data collected were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings of the study revealed that stress among adolescent in Ekiti State was high. In addition, girls are more likely to use coping strategies that involved relationship, such as seeking social support than boys who tend to use others such as distraction. It was recommended among others that parents, community leaders and Government should give adolescents the necessary support to cope with stress around them.*

KEYWORDS: Influence, Social Support, Stress, Adolescents

INTRODUCTION

Stress has been defined as an unfavourable state of emotional and physiological awakening that people pass through in situations that they recognize as dangerous or threatening to their well-being. Moreover, the word stress has several meaning to different people. Some identify

stress as situations that make them feel tensed up, pressured, or have negative emotions such as anxiety and anger. Others opined stress as the reaction to these situations. This reaction includes physiological changes like increased heart rate and muscle tension—as well as emotional and behavioural alterations. However, most psychologists view stress as a path involving a person's interpretation and reaction to a threatening event (Tech, 2010).

Stress is an inescapable phenomenon in every aspects of man's life. It is a compulsory and unavoidable concomitant of daily living, important because without some stress one would not be able to discharge one's best; and unavoidable because persistent stress can set up a sequence of distress and reduce the ability to handle ordinary situations too. Stress entails a link between people and their environment, most especially between stressors and stress reactions. Stressors are the events and the circumstances to which people must react. A person's reaction towards stress hinges on whether an event is appraised as a problem or a threat (Hankin, 2017).

Stress among adolescents seems to be a state that cause them to feel pressurized, tensed, anxious and angry (Aisenson, 2017). These seem to escalate adolescent heart beat and possibly muscle rigidity that lead to unnecessary change in their behaviour. Over-all wellbeing of adolescents is dependent on different stress result. Stress has its consequences on adolescent in their academic institutions.

Students have different anticipations, goals, and principles that they want to attain which is achievable if the students' expectations, goals, and values are integrated with that of the institution (Ibimiluyi, Fasina & Ireto-Oscar, 2020). Emphasis is not hinged on the importance role of managing adolescents' stress in reducing the unnecessary exhibited behaviour among them in society. It is observed that family, friends and possibly neighbours does not give the needed aid for the adolescent feedback in terms of trust, love and care.

The term social support can be therefore measured as a source of help that is provided to an individual for been part of the social group. The support that one can get includes from the family, friends, neighbours, pets, organizations, co-workers among others. According to Towey (2013), social support is a part of one's connectedness with others. It means having someone whether a family or friend in times of the different kinds of crisis, to boost a sense of belongingness and to enhance the internal positive self-image. The social support enhances and influences the quality of life and protects against any adverse life events. Social support is connected with the attributes of one as how one has developed the linkage and how it aids the people to cope from various challenges or events in their life. It also enhances the psychological well-being.

Social support is a kind of support that one attains from other people when one is there to care for you and that one belongs to the social circle where one lives and grows (Alan, 2012). The support can be in many forms like help in emotional way for example nurture from closed ones, advice in form of the information, assistance in terms of finance, sense of belongingness and also on top of everything that is a personal support and advice. Social support is believed to be one of the most important ways of coping with academic stress. There is some evidence, however, that highlighted the main consequence of support on major health outcomes for the contrast between individuals who are essentially social isolates (i.e., those with very few or

no social contacts) and persons with moderate or high level of support. Although the evidence is not conclusive, it was suggested that there may be a minimum threshold of social contract needed for an effect on mortality to be recognized, with little or no improvement in health outcomes for stages of support exceeding the threshold.

The study therefore sought to find out the influence of social support on stress among adolescents in Ekiti State. Specifically, the study examined.

- i. the level of stress among adolescent in Ekiti State;
- ii. the social supports that are available to the adolescent in Ekiti State;
- iii. the relationship between social support and stress among adolescent in Ekiti State;
- iv. the influence of social support on stress among male and female adolescent; and
- v. the influence of social support on stress among Christian and Muslim adolescent.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide this study:

1. What is the level of stress among adolescent in Ekiti State?
2. What are the social supports that are available to the adolescent in Ekiti State?

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between social support and stress among adolescent in Ado Ekiti.
2. There is no significant difference in the relationship between social support and stress among male and female adolescent.
3. There is no significant difference in the relationship between social support and stress among Christian and Muslim adolescent.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research design used in this study was a descriptive survey type. The population of this study comprised of all the senior secondary school students in Ado local government area of Ekiti state. The sample for this study comprised of one hundred and sixty (160) students. Out of fifteen secondary schools in Ado-Ekiti, eight schools were randomly selected using simple random sampling technique while twenty students were selected from each school using stratified random sampling technique.

The instrument used for data collection was self-designed questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of two parts, the first part sought for background information of the respondents while the second part sought for information on social support and stress among adolescent in Ekiti State. The questionnaire was validated by experts of Tests and Measurement to check whether the instrument accurately represented the variables under study. The corrections and observations made were used to edit the final draft of the questionnaire used for this study. The reliability of the instrument was ensured through test re-test method. The final draft of the questionnaire was administered twice on 20 students outside the sampled location within an interval of two weeks. The data gathered were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis which yielded a reliability co-efficient value of 0.718.

The researchers personally administered copies of the questionnaire on the respondents. The data collected were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses raised at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Table 1: Analysis of respondents' socio-demographic information

	Grouping	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	80	50.0
	Female	80	50.0
Family type	Monogamous	109	68.1
	Polygamous	51	31.9
Religious	Christian	108	67.5
	Muslim	52	32.5

Table 1 presents the analysis of respondents' socio-demographic characteristics. The result shows that half of the study participants (n=80, 50%) are male and female in each case. Distribution according to family type shows that 109 (68.1%) respondents are from monogamous family while 51 (31.9%) respondents indicate polygamous family type. The sample comprise of 108 (67.5%) Christians and 52 (32.5%) Muslims.

Research Question 1: What is the level of stress among adolescent in Ekiti State?

Table 2: Level of stress among adolescent in Ekiti State

S/N	ITEMS	YES		NO		X
		N	%	N	%	
1	I frequently work at home together with my studies	82	51.3	48	78.8	1.51
2	I don't usually have enough time for my studies	75	46.9	85	53.1	1.53
3	There are too many deadlines in my assignment	95	59.4	65	40.6	1.59
4	I usually feel tired even after sleeping for long hours	104	65.0	56	35.0	1.65
5	I have the tendency to talk quickly	88	55.0	72	45.0	1.55
6	I have difficulty in making decisions	97	60.6	63	39.4	1.61
7	I am unable to perform tasks as well as i used to	94	58.8	66	41.3	1.59
8	I don't have time for my hobbies outside my studies	75	46.9	85	53.1	1.53
9	I feel irritated too easily	80	50.0	80	50.0	1.50
10	I don't have personal time for myself	81	50.6	79	49.4	1.51

Table 2 presents the level of stress among adolescent in Ekiti State. The result shows that, using a cut-off mean score of 1.50 for the rating scale, all the items had mean scores above the cut-off point. This implies that the level of stress among adolescent in Ekiti State was high.

Research question 2: What are the social supports that are available to the adolescent in Ekiti State?

Table 3: Descriptive analysis showing social support available to the adolescent in Ekiti State

S/N	ITEMS	YES		NO		X
		N	%	N	%	
1	Do you have people who are concerned about you	130	81.3	30	18.8	1.81
2	I have friends who love me	124	77.5	36	22.5	1.77
3	My friend trust me	95	59.4	65	40.6	1.59
4	My parents provide me with enough financial assistance	120	75.0	40	25.0	1.75
5	I receive material, gift from my parents	98	61.3	62	38.8	1.61
6	I have people who provide me with useful information about my schooling	111	69.4	49	30.6	1.69
7	I receive advice from my parent	122	76.3	38	23.8	1.76
8	My friends assist me to solve my problems	89	55.6	71	44.4	1.56
9	I belong to many social clubs	66	41.3	94	58.8	1.41
10	My classmates are always there for me	74	46.3	86	53.8	1.46

Table 3 presents the social supports that are available to the adolescent in Ekiti State. The result shows that, using a cut-off mean score of 1.50 for the rating scale, all the items had mean scores above the cut-off point except This implies that adequate financial provision by parents, mutual trust by friends, having people who are concerned about one's welfare, receiving gifts and advice from parents, belonging to many social clubs, having people who provide one with useful information about schooling among others are social supports that are available to the adolescent in Ekiti State.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between social support and stress among adolescent in Ado Ekiti.

Table 4: Pearson Correlation of social support and stress among adolescent

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r	P
Social support	100	16.4313	2.18520	-0.696*	0.000
Stress	100	15.4438	1.79358		

*p<0.05

Table 4 shows that the computed r-value (-0.696) is significant at p<0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is significant relationship between social support and stress among adolescent in Ado Ekiti. The correlation between social

support and stress among adolescent is moderately high and statistically significant in a negative direction. This implies that increase in social support will lead to corresponding decrease in the stress among the adolescents.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the social support and stress among male and female adolescent.

Table 5: t-test of social support and stress among adolescents by gender

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	T
Social support	Male	80	16.53	2.49	158	0.541
	Female	80	16.34	1.84		
Stress	Male	80	15.46	1.94	158	0.132
	Female	80	15.43	1.65		

p>0.05

Table 5 shows that the computed t-values (0.541, 0.132) with degree of freedom 158 is not significant at $p<0.05$ level of significance for the groups in each case. The hypothesis is not rejected. This implies that there is no significant difference in the social support and stress among male and female adolescents.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the social support and stress among Christian and Muslim adolescent.

Table 6: t-test of social support and stress among adolescents by religion

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	T
Social support	Christian	108	16.4907	1.96462	158	0.449
	Muslim	52	16.3077	2.60119		
Stress	Christian	108	15.4074	1.57692	158	0.329
	Muslim	52	15.5192	2.19170		

p>0.05

Table 6 shows that the computed t-values (0.449, 0.329) with degree of freedom 158 is not significant at $p<0.05$ level of significance for the groups in each case. The hypothesis is not rejected. This implies that there is no significant difference in the social support and stress among Christian and Muslim adolescent.

DISCUSSION

The study showed that the level of stress among adolescent in Ekiti State was high. The finding supports the research work of Potter (2014) that life's major changes experienced during adolescence – academic pressure, gaining independence from parents, intimate relationships with peers, physical maturation, starting romantic relationships, expectations from parents, etc. – are accompanied by a drastic increase in the frequency at which stressful events occur. These changes and stressful events during adolescence may elevate to maladaptive behaviour and problems, such as depressive symptoms.

The study showed that adequate financial provision by parents, mutual trust by friends, having people who are concerned about one's welfare, receiving gifts and advice from parents, belonging to many social clubs, having people who provide one with useful information about schooling among others were social supports that are available to the adolescent in Ekiti State. The finding is in line with the study of Levo, (2013) that view social support as the process of interaction in relationships which improves coping, esteem, belonging and competence through actual or perceived exchanges of physical or psychosocial resources. It serves a variety of functions, such as guidance, social reinforcement, and tangible assistance.

The study showed that there was significant relationship between social support and stress among adolescents in Ado Ekiti. The finding agrees with the submission of Berkman et al. (2000) who found social relationship to be related with the effects on the health education and health behaviour. The finding also corroborates the assertion of Mah (2016) that posited that teenage mothers need social support to overcome the stress associated with motherhood and developmental tasks of adolescence and if such support is not given, they are likely to have low self-esteem. Hazzard (2015) further explained that in stressful times, social support helps people reduce psychological distress (e.g., anxiety or depression). Social support can simultaneously function as a problem-focused (e.g. receiving tangible information that helps resolve an issue) and emotion-focused coping strategy (e.g. used to regulate emotional responses that arise from the stressful event).

The study showed that there was no significant difference in the social support and stress among male and female adolescents. The finding contradicts the finding of Hankin (2017) that events from interpersonal nature (i.e. relationship with peers, intimate partners, or family members) explain depressive symptoms among the girls, while boys tend to react more to achievement-related events (i.e. sports performance). Similarly, Murray-Harvey and Slee (2017) found that adolescents regard it as the most important coping strategy used to resolve interpersonal conflicts. Girls are more likely to use coping strategies that involve relationships, such as seeking social support, than boys who tend to use others, such as distraction. Therefore, girls are more sensitive to relationship stress but are also more likely to use coping strategies that maintain relationships.

The study showed that there was no significant difference in the social support and stress among Christian and Muslim adolescents. Ellonen, Kääriäinen and Autio (2008) posited that social support has been proposed as one of the protective factors to stress that include social

systems as a source of well-being particularly in children and adolescents studies, social support is seen as a manifestation of community social capital

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that stress among adolescent in Ekiti State was high. Girls are more likely to use coping strategies that involved relationship, such as seeking social support than boys who tend to use others such as distraction.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made:

1. Parents, community leaders and Government should give adolescents the necessary support to cope with stress around them.
2. Government and parents should encourage female adolescents by the way of reducing stressful task on them.
3. Government, religion leaders and parents should give the necessary social support inform of care, love and guidance to acquire high level of self-esteem and self-assurance by the adolescent.
4. Religious leaders should not allow any dichotomy in the religions group instead they should treat everyone equally.

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