

INFLUENCE OF FAMILY BACKGROUND ON THE SOCIAL FUNCTIONING OF YOUTHS IN OGUN STATE, NIGERIA.

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Abstract

One of the key determinants of social functioning in children and adolescents is family background. This study therefore investigates the influence of family background on youths' social functioning. The study uses a descriptive research design. A simple random sampling technique is used to select two hundred and fifty youths. The instrument used has six sections. Section A, contains demographic data; section B measures parental socio-economic status; section C measures parental marital status; Section D measures parental level of education section E measures family size and section F measures social functioning. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation is used to test the research hypotheses. The result shows a significant relationship between parental marital status and social functioning of youths ($r = .412, P < .05$), family socio-economic status and social functioning of youths ($r = .527, P < .05$), parental level of education and social functioning of youths ($r = .895, P < .05$) and family size and social functioning of youths ($r = .770, P < .05$). It is therefore recommended that parents should be well educated, get good jobs and have fewer number of children that their resources can adequately cater for. They should also endeavour to be close to their children and monitor them as they grow. Social workers should organise seminars and workshops for families on the importance of social functioning of children in the society.

Keywords: Family background, Social Functioning, Youths in Ogun State.

Introduction

The family constitutes the basic unit of the society and is consistently recognised as the foundation of human socialisation. The family plays several roles in the society including the provision of a conducive environment for physical, social and emotional development. Therefore, a functional family promotes and nurtures children while dysfunctional families adversely impact the holistic development of children. In a functional family, values such as loyalty, co-operation, communication and problem solving skills are demonstrated and taught to children. Family background may be defined as the structure, composition, size and socio-

economic standing of a family. These factors all work together to foster or impair the physical, intellectual and emotional development of children (Muola 2010). Family background is not static; several factors including the loss of a parent through death, divorce or abandonment, economic downturns through job loss, chronic illness may all cause temporary or permanent changes in family background. Buchmann and DiPrete (2006) highlight the impact of large family size on the social functioning and academic achievements of youths. Similarly, family structure is an important element in youths' physical, social, emotional and intellectual development. Separation, divorce and death are sources of stress which negatively impact development.

Youths constitute a large proportion of the Nigerian population. According to the National Youth Policy in Nigeria, youths are persons between the ages of 18 – 35 (National Youth Policy 2001). Youths are energetic and constitute a formidable force in any society, hence government should be sensitive to their needs and development. Folaranmi (2014) opines that girls (youths) are part of an interacting social system and that their social functioning is enhanced when they feel satisfied with themselves, their roles in life and their relationship with others. The study further explains that children and youths feel fulfilled when they are able to play their roles effectively either at home or in the school and those who are not able to function effectively due to one personal or social problem usually react negatively. This is the essence of social functioning and it caters for a wide variety of constructs including social problems, social skills and occupational functioning. Different social functioning domains that have been reported in literature include daily living activities, hobbies, friendships, intimate relationships, employment or occupation, social behaviours, and independence competency.

One definition of social functioning is, “one's ability to initiate, form and maintain social relationships with others” (e.g., making friends, playing with others on the playground, attending social events with others). Social functioning can also be defined as, “an individual's ability to adapt to and derive satisfaction from his/her social roles, for example, interaction with friends, coworkers (Bright, Parker, French, Fowler, Gumley, Morrison, Birchwood, Jones, Stewart and Wells 2018). What these two definitions have in common is the individual's ability to make and maintain friendships as well as their satisfaction with these social relationships. More specifically, social functioning can be measured by examining an individual's interpersonal relationships, social activities, and coping methods in social situations.

Although researchers in this field may use more broad definitions of social functioning and a variety of instruments to measure this construct, a valid measure of social functioning would likely not include scales that measure social skills, a term that is closely related to social functioning and often used interchangeably in a rather imprecise fashion. The fact remains that simply having social skills does not guarantee that the skills will be deployed or lead to successful social relationships. Social skills are distinct

from social functioning and are defined as behaviors learned to facilitate awareness of one's social environment and social contingencies and to be able to solve social problems (Bright et al 2018).

It is important to study social functioning as a variable because it helps in connecting issues pertaining to family background such as family structure, family's socio-economic status, parents' education status and family size with the social functioning of youths as regards their inter personal functioning, pro-social activities, recreation, independence and employment. However, as important as the study of this variable is, it has received scant attention in scholarly research thus far.

There are myriads of challenges facing youths in the Nigerian society. The challenges are so enormous that if care is not taken, they make youths to malfunction and engage in anti-social or negative behaviours which consequently makes them unable to function well in their daily activities, recreational activities, friendship relations, intimate relationship, employment or occupation, social behaviour and independence competency (Folaranmi 2014). For these reasons therefore, the study seeks to examine the effect of family background on the social functionality of youths in Abeokuta South Local Government of Ogun State, Nigeria.

Objective of the study

The main objective of the study is to examine the influence of family background on the social functioning of youths in Abeokuta South Local Government, Ogun State, Specific objectives are to:

- i. Examine the relationship between parental marital status and social functioning of youths in Abeokuta South Local Government.
- ii. Determine the relationship between family (socio-economic status) financial situation and social functioning of youths in Abeokuta South Local Government.
- iii. Find out the relationship between parents' level of education and social functioning of youths in Abeokuta South Local Government.
- iv. Investigate the relationship between family size and social functioning of youths in Abeokuta South Local Government.

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses are tested in this study:

- H₀₁ There is no significant relationship between parental marital status and social functioning of youths in Abeokuta South Local Government.

- H₀₂ There is no significant relationship between family's (socio-economic status) financial situation and social functioning of youths in Abeokuta South Local Government.
- H₀₃ There is no significant relationship between parents' level of education and social functioning of youths in Abeokuta South Local Government.
- H₀₄ There is no significant relationship between family size and social functioning of youths in Abeokuta South Local Government.

Method

This includes research design, the target population, sample procedure, data collection instruments and data analysis. A descriptive survey design is used. The target population of this study are youths aged 18 -35 years residing in Abeokuta South Local Government of Ogun State, Nigeria as defined in the National Youth Development Policy of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Abeokuta South local government consists 15 wards. In each ward, 25 respondents (youths) are randomly selected, totaling 250 respondents in 10 wards. A simple random sampling technique is therefore employed in the study to select 250 youths in ten (10) out of the fifteen (15) wards in the local government area.

Research Instruments

A research instrument tagged "Family Background and Social Functioning Questionnaire" FBSFQ is the main instrument that is used for the study. The instrument consists six sections namely, section A, B, C, D, E and F.

Section A: is made up of items measuring the demographic characteristics of the respondents. This includes age, sex, marital status and religion.

Section B: Parental Socio-economic Scale (PSES)

The instrument consists items measuring the level of parents' education. The items are drawn from Family Socio-Economic Scale developed by Aggarwal, Bhasin, Sharma, Chhabra, Aggarwal & Rajoura (2005).

Section C: Parental Marital Scale (PMS)

The instrument consists items measuring parental marital status. Items are drawn from the Brief Family relationship scale developed by Carlotta & Henry (2014). It examines marital status in the family in relations to social functioning of its members.

Section D: Parental Education Scale (PES)

The instrument consists items measuring the level of parental income. The items are drawn from Family Socio-economic Scale developed by Aggarwal, Bhasin, Sharma, Chhabra, Aggarwal & Rajoura (2005).

Section E: Family Size Scale (FSS)

The instrument consists items measuring family size. Items are drawn from the Brief Family relationship scale developed by Carlotta & Henry (2014). It examines family size in relation to social functioning of its members.

Section F: Social Functioning (SFS)

The scale contains items measuring family functioning. The items are adapted from McMaster Family Assessment Device (FAD) (Epstein, Baldwin and Bishop 1983). It is a 60-item; self-report instrument designed to measure seven subscales of family functioning: problem solving, communication, roles, affective responsiveness, affective involvement, behaviour control and general functioning (degree of overall family health/pathology and functioning).

In section C, D, E, and F, participants are asked to respond to a 4 point rating scale ranging from strongly disagree (4) to strongly agree (1); with high scores indicating a positive or favourable response.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

Validity is the extent to which the instrument measures what it is supposed to measure based on the researcher's subjective purpose / goal. In order to measure the extent to which the survey instrument has been able to achieve its aims, the process of content validity is employed by cross-examination and verification. In addition, consultation is made with experts in the field of psychology, sociology, health education, guidance and counselling. Their suggestions are used to amend the draft of the research instrument. Only items that are relevant and valid constitute the contents of the questionnaire.

The instrument is pre-tested on 25 youths from different locations to ensure reliability. After the pre test, the instrument is scrutinised and necessary modifications are made before the final administration of the questionnaire. Each item of the questionnaire is checked and all ambiguities and irrelevances are deleted. Reliability coefficient of ($r = 0.$) is obtained to ensure reliability of the instrument. Section B has a reliability coefficient of 0.78; section C has a reliability coefficient of 0.81; section has a reliable coefficient of 0.80, while section F has a coefficient of 0.79

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected is analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency and simple percentages for the demographic characteristics while Pearson correlation is used to analyse the research hypotheses.

Results

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The demographic characteristics considered in this study are age, sex, marital status, religious affiliation, level of education, level of income and residential area of the respondents. The following are the frequency distribution tables:

Table 1: Age of Respondents

Age range	Frequency	Percentage
18 – 25	141	56.4
26 – 30	35	16.0
31-35	74	29.6
Total	250	100.0

Table 1 shows the frequency distribution by age. Out of the total number of 250 respondents in the study, 141 respondents which constitute the majority (56.84%) are between the ages of 18 – 25, while 35 (16.0%) of the respondents are between the ages of 26-30 and 74 (29.6%) are between the ages of 31-35 years. This implies that majority of the respondents are between 18-25 years of age and should be targeted for social functioning development skills training.

Table 2: Sex of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	144	57.6
Female	106	42.4
Total	250	100.0

Table 2 indicates the sex distribution of the respondents of the study. 144 (57.6%) of the respondents are male while their female counterparts are 106 (42.4%). This result implies that there are more male respondents than female respondents.

Religion	Frequency	Percentage
Christian	139	55.6
Muslim	111	44.4
Total	250	100.0

Most families in Nigeria regard religion as a part of every family life activity. Table 3 is the distribution of respondents' religious status. 139 (55.6%) of the respondents are Christians while 111 (44.4%) are Muslims. This table reveals that most of the respondents who agreed to fill the questionnaire are Christians.

Table 4: Marital Status of Respondents

Marital status	Frequency	Percentage
Married	79	31.6
Separated	12	4.8
Single	159	63.6
Total	250	100.0

From the above, 79 (31.6%) of the respondents are married while 12 (4.8%) of them are separated. Also, 159 (63.6%) respondents are single. This shows that majority of the respondents are single. This might be due to the fact that most youths do not get married early again due to the decline in the Nigerian economy which has resulted in lack of employment opportunities for young people.

Table 5: Educational Qualification of Respondents

Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
No formal education	2	0.8
Primary School	12	4.8
Secondary School	210	84.0
Tertiary	26	10.4
Total	250	100.0

As shown in table 5 above, only 2 of the respondents have no formal education, 12 (4.8%) have primary education, 210 (84.0%) have secondary education, 26 (10.4%) attended tertiary institutions. This indicates that majority of the respondents have secondary school education. The result is an indication that majority of the respondents in the study have completed their secondary school education and are either seeking admission into tertiary institutions or engaging in a form of trade or skill acquisition in order to earn a living.

Table 6: Family Size of Respondents

Family Size	Frequency	Percentage
1 – 2	12	4.8
3 - 5	79	43.6
6 and above	159	63.6
Total	250	100.0

Table 6 reveals the family size of the respondent. As shown above, 12 (4.8%) have family size of 1-2, 79 (43.6%) have a family size of 3-5 while 159 (63.6%) have a family size of 6 and above members.

Hypotheses

H₀₁ There is no significant relationship between family (socio-economic status) and social functioning of youths in Abeokuta South Local Government.

Table 7: Relationship between family socio - economic status and social functioning of youths.

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	n	r	P	Remark
Family Socio-economic Status	22.0341	4.75411	250	.527	.001	sig.
Social Functioning	23.5688	6.75880				

Table 7 shows that there is significant relationship between family's socio-economic status and social Functioning of youths ($r = .527$, $P < .05$). Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected and this implies that family's socio-economic status has a significant effect on social functioning of youths.

This finding is in line with that of Lauer (2002) who asserts that family's socio-economic background plays important role in youth's social functioning. He concludes in his study that if the youths' needs are not properly addressed, their learning ability as well as their behaviour could be affected due to lack of motivation.

A favourable family background motivates the youth to develop good social relations with others and to excel in school. The high level of education which most often goes with high occupational status means that the parents will be able to provide the necessary learning facilities and assist youths in their overall development and to be of good behaviour in the community and society at large.

Hypotheses 2

H₀₂ There is no Significant Relationship between Parental Marital Status and Social Functioning of Youths in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Table 8: Relationship between Parental Marital Status and Social Functioning of Youths

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev.	n	R	P	Remark
Parental Marital Status	18.0969	3.50820	250	.412	.000	Sig.
Social Functioning	23.5688	6.75880				

Table 8 shows that there is a significant relationship between Parental Marital Status and Social Functioning of youths ($r = .412, P < .05$). Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected and this implies that parental marital status has a significant influence on social functioning of youths.

This result is supported by the finding of Sumskas and Zaborskis (2017) who claim that children/adolescents and youths from homes where both biological parents are present have better social functioning outcomes than their peers in single-parent families. Children from such families are less likely to have social problems such as dropping out of school, teen pregnancy, substance abuse and delinquency. They evince positive attributes such as high personal satisfaction, good conflict resolution skills and emotional well-being. On the other hand, dysfunctional families adversely impact children's well-being because they are exposed to parental conflict and other anti-social behaviours (El-Sheikh 2006).

Hypotheses 3

H₀₃ There is no Significant Relationship Between Parents' Level of Education and Social Functioning of Youths in Abeokuta South Local Government.

Table 9: Relationship between Parents' Level of Education and Social Functioning of Youths

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	R	P	Remark
Parental Level of Education	20.7848	7.3420	250	.895	.010	sig.
Social Functioning	23.5688	4.69220				

Table 9 shows that there is significant relationship between parental level of education and Social Functioning of youths ($r = .895$, $P < .05$). Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected and this implies that parental level of education has a significant relationship with social functioning of youths. This finding is supported by Feinstein, **Duckworth and Sabates** (2008) who posit that children raised by highly educated parents tend to do well in school more than children raised by less educated parents.

One possible mechanism is that highly educated families earn more income which is associated with good schooling and better educational outcomes. They conclude that since schooling is a form of social activity, such children tend to function well socially than those who are not educated.

Hypotheses 4

H_{04} There is no Significant Relationship Between Family Size and Social Functioning of Youths in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Table 10: Pearson Correlation Showing the Significant Relationship between Family Size and Social Functioning of Youths

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	r	P	Remark
Family Size	22.0341	4.75411	250	.770	.000	sig.
Social Functioning	23.5688	6.75880				

Table 10 shows that there is significant relationship between family size and social functioning of youths ($r = .770$, $P < .05$). Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected and this implies that family size has a significant relationship with social wellbeing of youths.

This finding is supported by Thomson and McLanahan (2012) whose research proves that family size is inversely related to childrens' social functioning. Children from larger families have poorer social functioning outcomes than children from smaller families. This may be due to factors such as time available for the parents to spend with the children and not just economic factors. Adler (2009) and Seigal (2007) also posit that birth order influences social functioning with first-born children outperforming those born lower down in the birth hierarchy.

Conclusion

What happens in the family unit is as important as what happens outside the family. Social functioning is a complex process that shapes one's social experiences through one's interactions with family members and the environment at different phases of one's family life cycle. The study discovers that family type has significant relationship with youths' social functioning. On the issue of parental educational level, it is concluded that the level of parental education has significant relationship on their children's or youth's social functioning. On family socio-economic status, it is concluded that there is a direct relationship between parental socio-economic status on youths social functioning in the society. It is also concluded that family size has a significant relationship with youths social functioning.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, it is hereby recommended that;

Parents should know that they are the architect of their children's life; how children function in society depends, to a large extent on their family background, therefore they should raise their children with love and care. This can only be achieved with less conflict in the family. Parents should endeavour to be close to their children in order to monitor their activities especially when they are in school and show the love which will improve their emotional stability. Social workers should organise seminars and workshops on the importance of youth's social functioning and the need for families to ensure that their children are properly socialised as they grow up. Parents should give birth to the number of children they can adequately cope with in terms of socio-economic resources. For parents to meet the basics needs of their children, family planning is encouraged among couples. Parents should know that they wield a large influence over their children's life, therefore they should rise up to the task of bringing up their children properly by inculcating moral discipline into them as they develop.

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