

Adjustment Need and Coping Strategies of Internally Displaced Secondary School Adolescents in Sokoto State, Nigeria

By

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Abstract

The study determined adjustment need and coping strategies of internally displaced secondary school adolescents in Sokoto State, Nigeria. The design of the study was ex-post factor design that adopted an exploratory descriptive research type. The study addressed four questions: What are the adjustment needs of internally displaced secondary school adolescents in Sokoto State? What are their coping strategies? Are there significant differences in the adjustment needs of internally displaced secondary school adolescents in Sokoto State on the basis of gender? Are there significant differences in the coping strategies of internally displaced secondary school adolescents in Sokoto State on the basis of gender? Adjustment Needs and Coping Strategy Questionnaire (ANCS) was developed for the study. The questionnaire has Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of .973 for Section B and .893 for Section C. It was administered to 250 internally displaced secondary school adolescents. The responses to the questionnaire were summarized using percentages. Chi-square was computed to test for differences due to gender. The study found that overcoming examination fears, preparing for examination, concentrating in class, asking questions in the class and remembering facts learned were the adjustment strategies of internally displaced secondary school adolescents. Discussion with friends, discussion with parents and pretending were the coping strategies of internally displaced secondary school adolescents. Male and female internally displaced secondary school adolescents significantly differ on adjustment strategies but do not significantly differ on coping strategies. It was recommended among others that the Sokoto state government and relevant agencies should cater for the needs of internally displaced secondary school adolescents for them to be able to adjust effectively to their new found environment.

Key Words: Adjustment, Coping, Strategies, Displaced, Adolescents

Introduction

Adolescence is a period of marked change in the child's cognitive, physical, psychological and social development and his/her relations with the people and institutions of the social world. Young adolescence is a period of change more rapid than at any other time in human development other than infancy. For the adolescent, this period is a dramatic challenge, one requiring adjustment to changes in the self, in the family, and in the peer group and also in the institutions. Security to a great extent may determine the personality of adolescents. Security is a state of mind in which one is willing to accept the consequences of one's behaviours. All the aspects of an individual's behaviour in all areas of his life may be interpreted in terms of security. The insecurity state of a person appears to be an emotional problem, a state of being in disturbance due to the feeling of tension, strain and conflict together with other consequences of tension e.g. nervousness. An insecure adolescent may perceive the world as a threatening jungle and most human beings as dangerous and selfish, may feel rejected and isolated, anxious and hostile, maybe generally pessimistic and unhappy, may show signs of tension and conflict, may tend to turn inward, may be troubled by guilt feelings, may tend to be neurotic and selfish. Thus emotional security may prepare the ground for mental health and creative activities of an individual by which they may make adjustments to their environment.

On the other hand, the adolescents who appear to have a sense of insecurity in them may be quiet, reserved, withdrawn, nervous and prone to anxiety. Such adolescents generally may have normal intelligence, be well behaved, amenable and conscientious, may not pose much trouble to their parents, but they may be internally perturbed and appear quiet, fearful of what might happen to him/her and may be full of anxiety. Emotional insecurity may not be an inborn trait but it may be the product of environmental influences and is susceptible to

change. Children's security is likely to show some continuity into late adolescence. Patterns of continuity have been found in security of attachment (Thompson & Limber, 1990) and self-confident and self-efficacious children (Bandura, 1997). Parents' behaviours experienced during early adolescence affects later young adults' feelings of security (Weinfield, Sroufe, & Egeland, 2000). Chauhan, (1980). defined adjustment as an organism's reaction to demands of the social environment. Adjustment may imply behaviour that permits people to meet the demands of the environment. It may also be seen as a response to stress and adjust. The concept of adjustment may also imply adaptation to survive in the physical world. Peel (1980) observed that adjustment can be seen as a process by which an individual seeks to maintain physiological and psychological equilibrium necessary for self-enhancement. Chauhan (1980) observed that learning and positive behaviours are enhanced when students adjustment needs are catered for within and outside the school. Whenever students' needs are not met, the needs become adjustment problems to the adolescents especially at the secondary school level. Empirical evidence suggests that adjustment can be a significant predictor of success and failure. A comparative study of Agarwal (2003) on adolescents' level of adjustment in relation to academic success and failure revealed that successful adolescents were significantly superior in their social emotions and educational adjustment in comparison to unsuccessful adolescents. Chauhan, (2013) Study on adjustment of higher secondary school students of Durg District found a significant difference in adjustment of higher secondary school's students. Female students were found to have good adjustment level when compared to male students Singh (2006) examined the effects of socio, emotional and socio emotional climate of the school and sex on the adjustment of students along with their interactions effects. Boys were found to be significantly better than girls in their health adjustment at different levels of socio-emotional climate of the school. Ajimati (2001) found that adjustment needs of secondary school students include learning to pass examination,

obeying the school rules and regulations, positive relationship with students' colleagues and handling of peer pressure and that male and female as well as Christian and Muslim student were not significantly different in their adjustment needs, .Life is a continuous series of change and challenges. Everyone faces such situations for survival or growth. Individuals may use different ways or strategies to cope with these needs. The strategy used by an individual to manage this is what is called adjustment or coping strategies. Sometimes, the efforts of an individual may be successful and satisfying and then it is a case of good adjustment. But if an individual meets frustration in his efforts continuously, the personality adjustment may not be proper and then it might be a case of maladjustment. Oyinyola (1995) reported prayers, relaxation, sports and acceptance of faith as coping strategies and concluded that in school, it involve the application of different techniques to manage success or failure without disrupting school programmes Yahaya (2004) found that pretending, discussion with peers and parents, application of prayers, relaxation, sports and acceptance of faith as coping strategies. Coping strategies in school may therefore, involve the application of different techniques to manage success or failures without disrupting school programmes.

Internally displaced secondary school adolescents in Sokoto State look forward to the prospect of a new environment, new friends and new experiences but their emotions appear to tinged with a sense of apprehension and loss in that they have left behind that which is familiar, safe and comfortable i.e. their homes and school environment to venture into an unknown environment. They are faced with various challenges because they found themselves in a new environment without adequate preparation and therefore, need to learn to adjust to people both adults and children, to the word of things, to master materials and physical environment hence; they need to adopt new coping strategies, acquire facts, knowledge and skills to cope with various challenges. However, paucity of empirical

evidence on the adjustment needs and coping strategies of internally displaced secondary school adolescents in Sokoto State required answers to these questions.

1. What are the adjustment needs of internally displaced secondary school adolescents in Sokoto State?
1. What are the coping strategies of internally displaced secondary school adolescents in Sokoto State?
2. Are there significant differences in the adjustment needs of internally displaced secondary school adolescents in Sokoto State on the basis of gender?
3. Are there significant differences in the coping strategies of internally displaced secondary school adolescents in Sokoto State on the basis of gender?

Methodology

The study adopted an exploratory descriptive research design that targeted internally displaced secondary school adolescents in Sokoto State as its population. A Sample of two hundred and fifty internally displaced secondary school adolescents were drawn randomly from five secondary schools in Sokoto State. One hundred and fifty (150) from three schools designated for internally displaced students who are in various camps and one hundred displaced adolescents from conventional schools participated in the study (118 girls and 132 boys).

For the purpose of data collection, an instrument - *Adjustment Needs and Coping Strategy Questionnaire (ANCSQ)* was developed by the researchers with thirty items based on the principle of content relevance i.e. to ensure that items reflect the content (Anastasi & Urbina, 2008). Consequently items for the questionnaires were derived from literature. The questionnaire was divided into three sections. Section A sought information on the demography of respondents, Section B contained information on adolescents' adjustment needs while Section C contained information on adolescents' coping strategies. The

questionnaire has four (4) responses key of “Always True of Me,” “True of Me”, “Not True of Me” and “Not Very True of Me”. For the purpose of estimating the Cronbatch alpha reliability of the questionnaire the categories of responses were weighted - Always True of Me = 4, True of Me =3, Not True of Me =2 and Not Very True of Me = 1. The questionnaire has Cronbatch alpha reliability of 973 for Section B and.893 for Section C.

An introductory letter was written by the researchers to the schools authorities seeking for permission to conduct the study. After the approval was granted, the researchers met with the subject teachers and sought their consent to use one lesson period to administer the questionnaire. Their consent paved way for the administration of the questionnaire on the students. Students on the other hand were properly briefed by the researchers on the reasons of the study. The questionnaires were administered to the students in the class and were successfully retrieved. That was 100% return rate. It took an average of 30 minutes to administer the questionnaire.

To answer the questions raised in the study, the percentage of response to each of the response category was computed per item in the questionnaire. To test the hypotheses of the study, Chi- square test was computed and tested for significance at $P<.05$ using SPSS version16 for all computations.

Results

The first research question asked, what are the adjustment needs and coping strategies of internally displaced secondary school adolescents in Sokoto State? The results obtained from respondents were computed into frequency and percentages and the result is presented in table 1.

Table 1: Adjustment needs of internally displaced secondary school adolescents in ranked order

S/N	Statement	Respondents	%	Rank
1	Overcoming examination fears	243	97.2	1 st
2	Preparing for examination	210	84.0	2 nd
3	Concentrating in class	208	83.2	3 rd
4	Asking questions in the class	202	80.8	4 th
5	Remembering facts learn	200	82.8	5 th
6	Interacting with teachers	197	80.0	6 th
7	Learning how to study in group	190	78.8	7 th
8	Working with other students	188	76.0	8 th
9	Sharing knowledge with others	185	75.2	9 th
10	Paying attention in the class	182	74.0	10 th
11	Using the school library	180	72.8	11 th
12	Meeting financial needs	177	72.0	12 th
13	Adjustment to new environment	175	70.0	13 th
14	Obeying school rules and regulations	172	68.8	14 th
15	Getting to school on time	171	68.4	15 th
16	Involvement in sports	150	60.0	16 th
17	Handling pressure from peers	118	47.2	17 th
18	Avoiding disturbances	90	36.0	18 th
19	Interacting with opposite sex	51	20.4	19 th
20	Using school facilities i.e. computers	42	16.8	20 th

Result from Table 1 revealed that overcoming examination fears ranked first as the adjustment needs of internally displaced secondary school adolescents, preparing for examination ranked second, concentrating in class ranked third, asking questions in the class ranked fourth and remembering facts learn ranked fifth while handling pressure from peers, avoiding disturbances, interacting with opposite sex and using school facilities i.e. computers were the least ranked adjustment needs of internally displaced secondary school adolescents.

The second research question asked, what are the coping strategies of internally displaced secondary school adolescents in Sokoto State? The results obtained from respondents were computed into frequency and percentages and the result is presented on Table 2.

Table 2: Coping strategies of internally displaced secondary school adolescents in ranked order

S/N	Statement	Respondents	%	Rank
1	Discussion with friends	220	88.0	1 st
2	Discussion with parents	201	80.4	2 nd
3	Pretending	1996	78.4	3 rd
4	Seeking for help from people	182	72.8	4 th
5	Devoting more time to study	164	65.6	5 th
6	Accepting situations as they come	160	64.0	6 th
7	Praying to God	155	62.0	7 th
8	Asking questions on areas of concern	124	49.6	8 th
9	Joining clubs and societies	52	20.8	9 th
10	Discussing with school counsellor	20	8.0	10 th

Result from Table 2 revealed that discussion with friends ranked first as the coping strategies of internally displaced secondary school adolescents, discussion with parents ranked second and pretending ranked third while asking questions on areas of concern, joining clubs and societies and discussing with school counsellor ranked as the least three coping strategies of internally displaced secondary school adolescents.

To answer research question three (3) that sought to find out if there are differences in the adjustment needs of internally displaced secondary school adolescents in Sokoto State on the basis of gender, Chi-square was computed and tested for significance at the .05 level and the result is presented on Table 3.

Table 3: Gender Differences in the adjustment needs of internally displaced secondary school adolescents

S/N	Statement	Value	Df	P-value	Remark
1	Overcoming examination fears	9.830	3	.043	Sig.
2	Preparing for examination	13.654	3	.010	Sig.
10	Paying attention in the class	17.684	3	.001	Sig.
12	Meeting financial needs	12.949	3	.012	Sig.
13	Adjustment to new environment	12.182	3	.016	Sig.
15	Getting to school on time	10.515	3	.033	Sig.

Results from Table 3 indicated that male and female internally displaced secondary school adolescents significantly differ on overcoming examination fears, preparing for examination, paying attention in the class, meeting financial needs, adjustment to new environment and getting to school on time as adjustment needs. Table 4 further illustrates their percentage response into significant items on the basis of gender.

Table 4: Percentage response into significant items by gender

S/N	Statement	%ATM	Male %TM	%NTM	% NVTM	% ATM	Female %TM	% NTM	% NVTM
1	Overcoming examination fears	51 (38.6)	65 (49.1)	5 (4.6)	9 (5.8)	9(8.5)	2(1.9)	60 (50.4)	47 (39.8)
2	Preparing for examination	2 (1.5)	16 (12.12)	74 (56.1)	40(30.3)	16(12.30)	54(58.6)	5 (7.4)	44 (39.6)
10	Paying attention in the class	14 (10.6)	12 (9.1)	35 (26.5)	65(49.8)	8(6.7)	13(11.0)	48 (41.5)	49 (41.5)
12	Meeting financial needs	28 (21.2)	22 (16.7)	38 (28.8)	44(33.3)	31(26.2)	17(14.4)	39 (33.1)	31 (26.3)
13	Adjustment to new environment	59 (44.9)	25 (18.9)	26 (19.9)	22(16.7)	30(25.4)	31(26.3)	33 (28.0)	24 (20.3)
15	Getting to school on time	17 (12.9)	29 (23.5)	22 (16.7)	61(46.2)	28(21.2)	17(14.0)	44 (37.8)	36 (30.0)

Results from Table 4 indicated that as 38.6% male responded that overcoming examination fears is always true of them only 50.4% of female internally displaced secondary

school adolescents responded not true of them. More so, as 58.6% female internally displaced secondary school adolescents responded that preparing for examination is part of their coping strategy 56. 1% of male reports that it is not true of them and so on.

To answer research question four (4) that sought to find out if there are significant differences in the coping strategies of internally displaced secondary school adolescents in Sokoto State on the basis of gender, Chi-square was computed and tested for significance at the .05 level and the result is presented on Table 5.

Table 5: Coping strategies of male and female internally displaced secondary school adolescents

S/N	Statement	Value	Df	P-value	Remark
1	Discussion with friends	4.619	8	.779	NS
2	Discussion with parents	5.073	8	.750	NS
3	Pretending	2.141	8	.976	NS
4	Seeking for help from people	4.355	8	.824	NS
5	Devoting more time to study	1.977	8	.982	NS
6	Accepting situations as they come	10.972	8	.202	NS
7	Praying to God	8.564	8	.380	NS
8	Asking questions on areas of concern	16.908	8	.031	Sig
9	Joining clubs and societies	12.792	8	.119	NS
10	Discussing with school counsellor	11.961	8	.153	NS

Results from Table 5 indicated that male and female internally displaced secondary school adolescents do not significantly differ on coping strategies. However female seems to have expressed difference on asking questions on areas of concern from male adolescents as a coping strategy which is very insignificant.

Summary of Findings

The study found that:

1. Overcoming examination fears, preparing for examination, concentrating in class, asking questions in the class and remembering facts learn were the highly expressed adjustment strategies of internally displaced secondary school adolescents.

2. Discussion with friends, discussion with parents and pretending were the highly expressed coping strategies of internally displaced secondary school adolescents.
3. Male and female internally displaced secondary school adolescents significantly differ on overcoming examination fears, preparing for examination, Paying attention in the class meeting financial needs, adjustment to new environment and getting to school on time as adjustment needs.
4. Male and female internally displaced secondary school adolescents do not significantly differ on coping strategies.

Discussion of Findings

The finding of the study in respect to research question one revealed that overcoming examination fears, preparing for examination, concentrating in class, asking questions in the class and remembering facts learned was the highly expressed adjustment strategies of internally displaced secondary school adolescents. This finding aligned with Ajimati (2001) who found Similar results. Agarwal (2003) findings lend credence to the result of the study especially the conclusion made on adolescents' level of adjustment in relation to academic success and failure that successful adolescents were significantly superior in their social emotions and educational adjustment in comparison to unsuccessful adolescents. Therefore, it means that only adolescents who have control over their social emotions can adequately employ different strategies to adjust to changing environment. Peel (1980) observation that adjustment should be seen as a process by which an individual seeks to maintain physiological and psychological equilibrium necessary for self-enhancement is germane. Learning and positive behaviours can only be enhanced when students' adjustment needs are catered for within and outside the school. Whenever student's needs are not met, the needs become adjustment problems to the adolescents especially the internally displaced secondary school adolescents.

Result from research question two indicated that discussion with friends, discussion with parents and pretending were the highly expressed coping strategies of internally displaced secondary school adolescents. The result is not in consonance with Oyinyola (1995) who reported prayers, relaxation, sports and acceptance of faith as coping strategies and concluded that in school, it involve the application of different techniques to manage success or failure without disrupting school programmes but agrees with Yahaya, (2004) who found that pretending, discussion with peers and parents, application of prayers, relaxation, sports and acceptance of faith as coping strategies. Displaced adolescents may therefore, employ the application of these or different coping strategies to manage success or failures in school.

Male and female internally displaced secondary school adolescents significantly differ on overcoming examination fears, preparing for examination, paying attention in the class, meeting financial needs, adjustment to new environment and getting to school on time as adjustment needs the findings is similar with Chauhan (2013) study on adjustment of higher secondary school students and found that female students had good adjustment level when compared to male students whereas Singh (2006) found boys to be significantly better than girls in their health adjustment at different levels of socio-emotional climate of the school but disagree with Ajimati (2001) finding that male and female student were not significantly different in their adjustment needs. This diversity in findings explains the fact that adjustment in itself is a function of an individual's capacity to handle his/her emotion. And since there are different strategies one can employ to adjust to a changing environment, it is possible that internally displaced adolescents may adopt different strategies to handle adjustment related issues.

Male and female internally displaced secondary school adolescents do not significantly differ on coping strategies. This finding is in line with Oyinyola (1995) who

reported no significant differences between male and female students on prayers, relaxation, sports and acceptance of faith as coping strategies and concluded that in school, it involve the application of different techniques to manage success or failure without disrupting school programmes. Yahaya (2004) found similar results that both male and female students employed pretending, discussion with peers and parents, application of prayers, relaxation, sports and acceptance of faith as coping strategies. Coping strategies in school may therefore, involve the application of different techniques to manage success. It is not surprising that internally displaced secondary school adolescents in Sokoto State employed similar strategies coping strategies. This explains that the strategies permit them to meet the demands of the environment.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that internally displaced secondary school adolescents need to be properly cared for so that they can overcome challenged associated with examination fears, preparing for examination, concentrating in class, asking questions in the class and remembering facts learned. Internally displaced secondary schools adolescents need help to enable them develop adequate adjustment strategies to be able to cope properly in their new environment.

Recommendations

1. The study recommends that the state government and relevant agencies should cater for the needs of internally displaced secondary school adolescents for them to be able to adjust effectively to their new found environment.
2. The schools authorities need to encourage those internally displaced secondary school adolescents to overcome fears associated with examination and other related challenges.

3. Counselling services should be provided on a regular basis to help internally displaced secondary school adolescents to overcome challenges associated with their new found environment.

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