

Effects of Socialisation Agents on Moral Sense of Duty among the Adolescents Attending Baptist Churches in Odo-Ona, Apata Suburb, Ibadan, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study sought to examine the effects of socialisation agents on the moral sense of duty among the adolescents attending Baptist churches in Odo-Ona, Apata Suburb, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. The lack of a moral sense of duty has caused many adolescents to see corruption as a means to an end or a way of success in life.

This study has examined the failure of all social agents: family, religious

institutions, school, peer groups, and social media to identify and address one of the fundamental root causes of this problem and how it has affected adolescents' lives. Four theories guided it: Jean Rousseau, Cognitive Development Theory; Jean Piaget, Theory of Moral Development; Lawrence Kohlberg, Theory of Moral Development; and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System Theory. Mixed method research was adopted for the study to substantiate this write-up. The sampling population of the study involved 20 adolescents attending Baptist churches in Odo-Ona, Apata suburb of Ibadan. Questionnaires were given to adolescents to understand their perceptions of agents of socialization to substantiate the survey. This was coupled with interactions with adolescents daily through an interview section. Consequently, the findings disclosed a significant relationship between adolescents' lack of moral sense of duty and the failure of socialisation agents' involvement.

Keywords: Adolescent, Moral, Sense of Duty, Agent of Socialisation, Development

Introduction and Statement of the Problem

Socialisation is the process whereby a new member of society adapts to the values and norms of the environment. Socialisation helps new members to achieve a discrete sense of self. Children, from infancy, become grafted and aware of self as they develop knowledge about persons and skills of the environment. The transmission that occurs between one generation to another and how a child acquires the culture of his people, selfhood, and personality are effects of socialisation. Many theorists have written to postulate that the early years of a child

are vulnerable to different teachings and doctrines which may lay the foundation for healthy development. (Cooper et al., 2009).

There are distinctive aspects to socialisation during adolescence; parenting progressively occurs at a distance as children become more independent, and peer relationships emerge and assume prominence. Socialisation processes are dynamic and reciprocal. Teens actively participate and engage agencies in their development. Immigration status, acculturation, ethnicity, and social class influence adolescents' developing values, beliefs, and behaviour.

Internet fraud reached its height in Nigeria as those involved are primarily adolescents and youths. To curb this social menace, the government set up a watchdog known as the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC), a law enforcement agency that investigates financial crimes such as advanced fee fraud, 419 and internet fraud, and money laundering. However, an average adolescent is not afraid of this watchdog, believing there is always a way out if caught. Some newspaper headlines have these captions; "Analysis: Despite govt. Clampdown, 'Yahoo-Yahoo' thrives in Nigeria" (Premium Times. May 3, 2021). "Filthy Riches: The audacity of Yahoo Boys" (Vanguard News October 24, 2021). Techniques and Underground Networks of Yahoo-Boys in Ibadan. "Meet the 'Yahoo Boys'— Nigeria's Undergraduate Conmen" (July 26, 2021). It is rare to be in any suburb of Ibadan without seeing a group of Yahoo boys, as they do not hide their identity from people. Their culture is seen through their haircut style and clothing accessories. Odo-Ona, Apata, a suburb of Ibadan, Oyo state, is the centre of this write-up. Due to the high rate of Yahoo boys residing there and at the same time

attending church programmes, especially prayer programmes, this study is designed to identify how agents of socialisation affect adolescents' sense of moral duty; among the adolescents attending Baptist churches in Odo-Ona, Apata suburb of Ibadan.

Theoretical Framework

Much past research has been written on adolescents' socialisation and divergent stages of individual development. However, little has been written about adolescents who are not considered 'at risk' yet engaged in criminal activity. Early theorists have also established that adolescence develops from growing the physical body to maturing emotions or cravings and is completed by the growth of the intellect. Adolescence is a period of frequent turmoil, frustration, insecurity, and struggle. Psychologists have described adolescents' struggles from puberty to adulthood as a time of storm and stress. (Petersen, et al. 1996).

Rousseau, who made an early contribution to adolescence's discrete stages of development, stressed that is a relative relationship between individual growth and society (Fleming, 2015). In the early 1970s, Musgrave wrote that; adolescent socialisation is significantly built on the foundations laid in childhood, and whatever is learnt as a child is more permanent than what is known in later life (Musgrave, 2012, p. 22). In the 1920s, Jean Piaget postulates the cognitive theory of child development, which is closely tied to moral development and deals with how children think about moral changes over time. According to him, younger adolescents develop morality in cooperation which in later life produces a cooperative society (Oswalt & Zupanick, 2021). Creating a harmonious society

helps people work together and make good decisions. In Piaget's opinion, at this stage, adolescents begin to comprehend that morals represent the social agreement between people, which will promote the common good of society. It shows that individual differences make people approach moral issues differently and that moral decision does not depend on the outcome.

The mid-age adolescent's reason, in fairness, ideally reciprocate beyond simple reciprocity in such that consideration is placed on other people's interest. To Piaget, moral development is completed when ideal reciprocity reaches a climax in adolescence (Oladele, 2005).

Lawrence Kohlberg's moral development theory is a modification of Piaget's theory. He hypothesises that people pass through a series of stages in the evolution of their senses of justice and in the kind of reasoning they use to make judgments. Kohlberg believes that; children come into the world with particular characteristics concerning moral development and are later manifest as they interact with their environment. Likewise, children who develop cognitively can reach their height of moral stages if allowed to interact with other individuals from varying viewpoints. Adolescents' understanding of their physical and social worlds changes significantly. They become better able to plan, make decisions, and think about the future; they also face new psychosocial challenges around identity, autonomy, intimacy, and sexuality. These result in significant transformations in adolescents' time with parents, peers, and significant other individuals (Kohlberg, 1984).

Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory views child development as a multifaceted system of relationships affected by multiple levels of his surrounding

environment, meaning that a child cannot grow beyond his background. He began from the immediate settings of the family and school to the broader cultural values, beliefs, and customs. Bronfenbrenner divided a child's environment into four different systems: the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem, and the macrosystem; due to early criticism, it was later considered the fifth stage of the bioecological model, called the chronosystem.

The bio-ecological model theory of educational psychology studies humans over time. The model suggests the connections between the individual and their environment, categorised into various systems that shape their development over time. Bronfenbrenner's four ecological systems that an individual interacts with are nested within each other.

All theories mentioned reflect that adolescents could shift in society's standard norms, values, and beliefs. It is usually reflected in the opposite behaviour, such as; seeking independence from family and church, skipping school, and joining a gang becoming prominent. However, this paper's concern is those adolescents still attending church despite their waywardness. Therefore, this study attempted to fill the existing gap in the literature. It sought to find out the effects of agents of socialisation on the moral sense of duty and how it led adolescents into many variances.

Research Methods

This research was conducted in Odo-Ona, Apata suburb of Ibadan, the capital of Oyo State, Nigeria. The state slogan is "the pacesetter." The state is known for setting the pace in the western region in many areas, such as leadership, education,

politics, agriculture, and many more. However, all efforts from different socialising agents to educate adolescents from childhood to young adulthood have been failing. Every adolescent has interpersonal variations in reasoning on how the situation appears to them. The sudden change in moral responsibility, and inability to apply a sense of duty to tasks, and take responsibility for Godly things and those that others could benefit from rather than crime, is the subject of discussion in this paper. Odo-Ona, Apata was chosen for this research because: 1) it has a higher catchment of Yahoo boys living under the same roof with their parents and those who have detached from homes, 2) parents joined hands in supporting their adolescents by seeking external help for them, such as introducing the adolescents to prophets and herbalists for reinforcement, some of such parents have an association, 3) it was accessible and familiar to the author, making it easy to trace respondents. The study population comprised 20 adolescents attending Baptist churches in the area.

The adolescents were chosen because some were in senior secondary and tertiary institutions and could understand and communicate in English. This study adopted a mixed-method focus on collecting, analysing, and mixing quantitative and qualitative data in a single analysis or series of studies. (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient (γ) was used to identify the five agents of socialisation. The research used two (2) instruments to collect data: a questionnaire and an interview schedule. Follow-up questions were fused along with the counselling sections. The questionnaire was based on five sub-endings of adolescents' relationship with their social agents of socialisation; family, religion, peer influence, social media, and school. The data analysis was a

deductive approach since the aspects of the data were determined before data analysis. The study has one independent variable: agents of socialisation, measured using a questionnaire.

Procedures employed include purposive sampling, proportionate sampling, and simple random sampling; Purposive was used in interview sections with some adolescents from senior secondary classes and tertiary institutions, ranging from ages 16-18 to 19-24 years. It involved a mixed-gender group. Proportionate stratified sampling was used to select secondary and tertiary students attending Baptist churches in the same catchment area. Hence, random sampling was used to establish every independent variable who could write and understand English as one who could not stylishly withdraw from the questionnaire. Likewise, one identified as a Yahoo boy was interviewed alongside his father, a policeman, even though he denied understanding his boy's involvement in Yahoo. Notwithstanding, the research yielded data that can be generalised for an error that can be determined statistically (Ogundare, 2013).

Results and Discussion

The agents of socialisation were grouped into five categories: religion, family, peer group, school, and social media. The results show that spiritual lessons learned that keep adolescents in the way they need to live as Christians strongly correlate with a sense of moral duty ($\gamma=1.000$, $p\leq 0.001$). Also in this category is obedience to pastors and Sunday school teachers, which is positive and correlated with a sense of moral duty ($\gamma=0.339$, $p\leq 0.078$).

In the family subgroup of agents of socialisation and sense of moral duty, it was found that skipping family devotion or not observing it at all has a negative correlation with a sense of moral obligation ($\gamma = -0.081$, $p \leq 0.371$). When asked if there were any deliberate teachings they had passed through as a child that taught them to do the right constantly, it was shown that it has a negative correlation with the moral sense of duty ($\gamma = -0.081$, $p \leq 0.001$). Asking them who among both parents spent quality time with them, it was observed that there was a failure in fathers' closer relationship with adolescents' sense of moral duty ($\gamma = -0.369$, $p \leq 0.001$). In response to the question of whether there is strong moral teaching from both parents, it was observed that there is a positive correlation between strong moral teaching and a moral sense of duty ($\gamma = 1.000$, $p \leq 0.001$). It was discovered that breaking moral laws or not has a negative correlation with the moral sense of duty ($\gamma = -0.160$, $p \leq 0.256$). Responding to the question of there were times they had been punished for any immoral act, it was discovered that there was a negative correlation with their sense of moral duty ($\gamma = -0.102$, $p \leq 0.339$). When asked if they remember any lesson taught by their parents that has become their watchword and has helped them to stand against crime, there was a negative correlation with the moral sense of duty ($\gamma = -0.028$, $p \leq 0.455$). Lastly, in the family subgroup of agents of socialisation was the question of how often they break parental rules. Likewise, there was a negative correlation with the moral sense of duty ($\gamma = -0.514$, $p \leq 0.012$).

In the religion subgroup of agents of socialisation and sense of moral duty, the result showed that lessons learnt that keep the adolescents in the ways they live

as Christians have a positive correlation with the moral sense of duty ($\gamma = 1.000$, $p \leq 0.001$). When the question of how often they disobey their pastor, Sunday school teacher or counselor's instructions on living morally acceptable rules, it was discovered that there was a negative correlation with the moral sense of duty ($\gamma = -0.339$, $p \leq 0.078$).

In the social media subgroup of agents of socialisation and moral sense of duty, it was found that the number of adolescents with mobile phones, the type of phone they have, and what they do on the phone have a negative correlation with the moral sense of duty of, ($\gamma = -0.686$, $p \leq 0.001$); ($\gamma = -0.296$, $p \leq 0.117$); ($\gamma = -0.324$, $p \leq 0.095$), respectively. When the question on their belief in internet fraud (Yahoo Yahoo) as the quickest means of becoming rich in life was asked, and fraud is the game of the smart, it was discovered that there is a negative correlation with the moral sense of duty ($\gamma = -0.141$, $p \leq 0.283$), ($\gamma = -0.394$, $p \leq 0.047$), respectively. It was also observed that online dating responses could mean a lack of moral sense of duty; it has a negative correlation ($\gamma = -0.130$, $p \leq 0.297$). Moreover, what adolescents do on their phones has a high input on their moral sense of duty ($\gamma = -0.136$, $p \leq 0.289$).

In the peer influence subgroup, it was discovered that adolescents have friends that influence their moral decision and negatively correlated with the moral sense of duty ($\gamma = -0.248$, $p \leq 0.153$). When asked if they could go the extra mile with their friends to make money and how often they find themselves doing what is wrong. It was discovered that peer influence has a negative correlation with an adolescent sense of moral duty with ($\gamma = -0.309$, $p \leq 0.099$), ($\gamma = -0.180$, $p \leq 0.230$). At

the same time, some adolescents feel free when taking what is not theirs and cannot go the extra mile to assist a friend in a Godly assignment, which negates the moral sense of duty with a negative correlation of ($\gamma = -0.544$, $p \leq 0.008$), ($\gamma = -0.130$, $p \leq 0.304$). When asked about having sex before marriage, especially when it is not rape, there was a negative correlation with the moral sense of duty ($\gamma = -0.394$, $p \leq 0.047$).

In the school subgroup, when asked if teachers relate subject topics with the moral sense of duty and if teachers relate subjects to acceptable behaviour of their environment, both have a negative correlation with the moral sense of duty ($\gamma = -0.102$, $p \leq 0.338$), ($\gamma = -0.082$, $p \leq 0.001$). When asked if ganging up against the school authority's decision and vandalisation of school properties are mere protest which has no effects on adolescents' morale, both have a negative correlation with the moral sense of duty ($\gamma = -0.514$, $p \leq 0.012$) ($\gamma = -0.160$, $p \leq 0.256$).

The distribution of some of the respondents' attributes and their implications on a sense of moral duty is shown in Table 1. The table shows that most of the respondents are male (73.7%), and most (79.1%) are between the ages of 16 - 21. The education status shows that 84.2% have already gained admission into tertiary institutions. This implies that a moral sense of duty is better inculcated in the family while the adolescents are still under the guidance of their parents before exposure to the outside world. The correlation between strong moral teaching from both parents and a moral sense of duty is established here. However, these adolescents often forget what they learned at home, as shown by the negative correlation on if they remember any lesson taught by their parents that has become

their watchword and has helped them to stand against crime. Many respondents (94.7%) said they are born-again Christians, but the majority (73.7%) had not attended any form of discipleship in their respective churches. This implies they have not developed a strong will for a moral sense of duty. This is shown in the rate at which most (78.9%) of the adolescents break moral laws and regulations, coupled with the fact that many (89.5%) own phones which could tempt them to go against the moral sense of duty through abusive use of phones.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents' Attributes on The Moral Sense of Duty

		Frequency	%
Gender	Male	14	73.7
	Female	5	26.3
Age	16-18	9	47.5
	19- 21	6	31.6
	22- 24	4	21.1
Education	Secondary	3	15.8
	Tertiary	16	84.2
Born Again	Yes	18	94.7
Christian Status	No	1	5.3
Attended Discipleship programme	Yes	5	26.5
	No	14	73.7
Possess a Phone	Yes	17	89.5
	No	2	10.5

How often do you break moral law and regulations?	Very often	4	21.1
	Often	15	78.9
Teacher's influence and subject matters.	Yes	16	84.2
	No	3	15.8

The Themes of the Interview Carried Out

Through responses from the questionnaires, one of the respondents, who had responded that he attended church and at the same time would not stop his involvement in internet fraud, was identified. He was invited, and fortunately, he owned up to the fact that his participation was due to peer influence from school, and his father supported him by taking him to the prophet for prayers. Since he is a church person, he will continue to pray because prayer works.

School, Peer Influence, and Church

School, peer influence and church were significant agents influencing adolescents' morals. Respondent 1 commented:

I got involved in the Yahoo business when I got to school; I just confessed to you that it is not easy to survive on camp with the peanut you are being given from home. I was lured by the ways my friends spent on campus. They rarely spent a week on campus; they went to clubs to enjoy themselves and were never seen as an armed robber. I sit with them and listen to their conversations when they are making business transactions. I got to realise it is a game of the smart. Who said I could not be smart? It is the usual thought that passes through my

thinking. Then I woke up one day and asked someone close to me to put me through the deal. That is how I started. I must confess; that there is cool cash in Yahoo. I have promised myself not to be involved in using charm and other diabolic means; that is why I come to church to pray to God always to bless my handwork (Respondent 1).

Family and Social Media

Parents were seen to have a significant influence on the moral decision that their adolescents make. One of the respondents commented, “Apart from my prayers, my dad’s friend took my father and me to a prophet who gave me a hand chain always to put on when I want to make any deal. My phone and my laptop are the instruments for the work. I cannot do without data; at least a month, I buy up to seven to ten thousand naira data” (Respondent 1).

Implications for Research and Practice

The moral well-being of an adolescent depends mainly on all agents of socialisation. Moreover, in the case of this study, the family, peer group, and social media take a larger share of how they interact and are a determinant of how adolescents behave in the larger society, including how they comport themselves and how success is being interpreted. The study discovered that socialisation agents mar the adolescents’ sense of moral duty. The study, therefore, provides a blueprint to all agents of socialisation to keep watch on the moral life of their adolescents, nurture a close relationship of love and the word of God, and teach them to live a life void of greed for worldly things.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The study has shown that adolescents are growing in a multi-faceted mix of interwoven agents of socialisation. It can then be concluded that the basis and bottom line of this growth is the family, where moral sense is expected to be taught. The mix is harmonised before these adolescents go into the world (school or another environment) to form a better value system in the environment or society. However, all other agents of socialisation are important in seeing to the totality of adolescents' moral sense of duty. According to the findings of this study, churches or leaders in the discharge of their duties are also positively correlated and impact the moral sense of duty. As identified in the study, other important variables are teaching moral values; however, variables showing negative impacts on the moral sense of duty are neglect of devotion, involvement in internet fraud, and disobedience.

Therefore, it is recommended that:

1. Parents should endeavour to observe family devotion at all times.
2. Parents should attempt to create enough time for their children to watch them grow with a good sense of moral duty by creating a curriculum with good content that has a basis in the Word of God.
3. The church and its leaders are to improve the strategy of teaching a moral sense of duty and devise a means by which the adolescents would participate in the teaching programs, such as intentional discipleship programs.
4. Public government and mission schools should ensure that subject lessons are tied to moral law. (Integration of moral education)

5. Family and religion should guide adolescents to put to heart the word of Solomon in Proverbs 1:10; “my son, if sinners entice you, do not consent.”

Further Research

The results of this study may not be generalised to all adolescents attending Baptist churches in Ibadan and Nigeria as a whole because a small portion of Ibadan was a sample. Hence, to control the effects of socialisation, geographical and, or class differences, the study should be replicated in other countries and with adolescents in other denominations and religions. To further contribute to the understanding of moral duty, this study can be replicated among the youth aged 25-35 years with samples drawn from youths in tertiary institutions and working-class youths.

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