

Strategies for Enhancing Parent-Adolescent Relationship within Households in River State

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Abstract

The study evolved strategies for enhancing parent-adolescent relationships within households in Rivers State. Specifically, it determined strategies related to parents; adolescents themselves; and siblings of adolescents. Three research questions guided the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population for the study was made up of parents and adolescents within households in 10 local government headquarters of Rivers State. Sample size of 500 parents and 500 adolescents were randomly selected from the population. Data were collected with a questionnaire. Mean was used for data analysis. Findings include 13 parent-related, 12 adolescent and five other siblings-related strategies for enhancing Parent-Adolescent relationship. These include that parents should identify adolescents' ethical dilemma ($\bar{X}=3.0$), provide needs and wants of adolescents ($\bar{X}=3.5$), among others. Adolescents' related strategies include that: they should appreciate their parents ($\bar{X}=2.7$), their usage of mass media should respect family values ($\bar{X}=3.3$), and others. Adolescents' related include, among others, sibling cooperation ($\bar{X}=2.8$), mentorship of adolescents by older siblings ($\bar{X}=2.8$). Thus a total of 28 strategies for enhancing parent/adolescents relationship were identified. Based on the findings, recommendations were made to improve parent-adolescent relationship in households in Rivers State.

Keywords: Adolescents, Discipline, Education, Parents, Relationship, Strategies, Household.

Introduction

Family relationships are long-lasting and often strong. This is because family members depend upon each other for

many things. Parents-child relationship is one group of relationships that exist in the family. This relationship starts from infancy and continues into

adulthood for every child. Along the continuum of this relationship is the parent-adolescent relationship. This relationship can be both interesting and challenging for both the parents and the adolescents.

An adolescent is neither a child nor adult. Adolescents have some needs and problems which affect their relationships with their parents and other (Anyakoha 2015). For instance they always face problems of adjusting to their physical changes; attempting to achieve adult status, gain independence, and so on. (Umukoro and Obidua 2011; Ikenyiri and others 2010; Uzoka 2013). As adolescents deal with their challenges with some seeking independence from parents on who they hitherto depended upon, the parent/adolescent relationship often suffer some conflict.

Besides, adolescents are exposed to technological revolution with 24 hours service provision by various electronic media and social network platforms. How adolescents cope with this trend depends on their relationship with their parents at home. By reciprocity, Okeke (2009) noted that adolescents on their own part should learn to appreciate love and attention given to them by their parents. According to Atser and Kembe (2018) adolescents may be characterized by maladaptive behaviors and emotional disturbance. According to Umukoro and Obidua (2011) many parents do not see reasons why the adolescents' behavior should change, therefore see adolescents' behavior as stubbornness and rebellion. However, instead of forcefully trying to correct them, parents should present

themselves as good models, so that their children will behavior like them.

Siblings are children (brothers and sisters) of the parents. According to Okeke (2009), siblings enjoy the companionship of each other; learn how to respect each other's points of view; and protect and support one another. In addition to the above, Anyakoha (2015) stated that adolescent siblings can check each other on manners and etiquette, clothes, language, ways of making hair and so on. However, sometimes siblings are jealous of each other, and also compete for their parents' or other people's love and attention. Parents should endeavour to encourage bonding among siblings by working at a task together and spend quality time together amongst themselves and with them. Parents should avoid favoritism and preferential treatment to their children at the expense of others. According to Berk (1999), like parent-child relationship, sibling interactions adapt to change at adolescence. As younger siblings mature and become more self-sufficient, they may be less accepting to directives from older siblings. Adolescents may not want to interact as much with siblings, as they seek autonomy from the family.

Household consists of all the people living together in a house. Most households in Rivers State have a parent, adolescent and sibling who are connected with looking after the house and the people. Komolafe in China, Mbah and Anozie (2019) defined household as a group of people living together in a common residence as consuming units in a physical

environment. Concerning the wellbeing of adolescents in the household, UNICEF in Nwosu (2011) reported that 71 percent of adolescents claimed that they work for people other than their parents for a fee after school hours, 29 percent of them stayed in more than one household, and 3.5 percent had been sexually abused by their relative or by others. The condition of the Nigerian adolescent is bad and pathetic in all parts of the country, especially in Rivers State as a result of youth restiveness, hence there is need to evolve strategies to enhance parents-adolescents relationship within households.

Enhancing parent-adolescent relationship requires strategies to help family life of households in Rivers State. According to Okeke and Eboh (2011), strategies are well planned series of actions for achieving an aim. Therefore, strategy is a plan that is intended to achieve a particular purpose. In order words, it is the process of planning something in a skillful way.

Bad and good behavior of adolescents starts in the family which is made up of parents, siblings and other relations. According to Onwuadi (2014), education of parents and adolescents is a very powerful tool for the liberation and enhancement of human potentials. This is because an educated person can analyze situations effectively, define strategies, draw up programs of actions and opt for a better deal on any socio-economic and educational matters of family members and prospect of the individuals. However, Lilly (2007), noted that the role the family members play is defined by different positions they occupy in their interactions in the

family, community and society. The lifestyle of parents and adolescents in contemporary society called into question adolescents behavior with their parents could be linked to poor relationship in the family. This constitutes the problem of evolving strategies that would enhance parent-adolescent relationship within households in Rivers State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to evolve strategies for enhancing parent-adolescent relationship within households in Rivers State. Specifically, it determined strategies for enhancing parent-adolescent relationship that are related to:

1. parents of the adolescents.
2. adolescents themselves.
3. other siblings of the adolescents.

Research Questions

What are the strategies for enhancing parent-adolescent relationships that are related to:

1. parents of the adolescents?
2. adolescents themselves?
3. other siblings of the adolescents?

Methodology

Research Design and Area of Study: The research is a survey study. The area of the study was Rivers State covering 23 Local Government Areas (LGAs). Rivers State is a multicultural state with distinctive traditions and norms.

Population for the Study: The population consisted of households in the 23 LGAs in the area of the study. In each household a parent and adolescent were the participants in the study. The

parents were of variety in educational levels from West African Examination Council (WAEC)/GCE and above. The adolescents were aged 10-15 years. They were in junior secondary schools (JSS) at the time of the study.

Sample for the Study: Ten (10) LGAs were randomly selected out of 23 LGAs. Fifty (50) households were purposively selected from each LGA. Only households with adolescents were selected. From each household, a parent and an adolescent were purposively selected. These gave sample was 1000 consisting of 500 parents and 500 adolescents.

Instrument for Data Collection: Questionnaire was used for data collecting. The same instrument was used for parents and adolescents. The instrument had a four-point scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree

(SD). It was developed through literature review based on the specific purposes of the study. It was validated three experts in child development studies.

Data Collection Technique: One Thousand copies of the questionnaire were distributed by hand with the aid of 5 research assistants. Out of 500 each for parents and adolescents, a total of 457 and 432 for parents and adolescents were retrieved respectively. These gave a retrieval rate of 91.4% and 86.4% respectively.

Data Analysis Techniques: Data collected were analyzed using mean. Mean scores from 2.5 and above ($\bar{X} \geq 2.5$) were considered as agreed. Mean below 2.5 ($\bar{X} \leq 2.5$) were considered disagreed.

Findings of the Study

Table 1: Mean Responses on Parent Related Strategies to Enhance Parent-Adolescent Relationship

S/N	Parent-related Strategies	\bar{X}_p	\bar{X}_a	\bar{X}_g	Remark
1.	Identity adolescents' ethical dilemma.	2.8	3.2	3.0	Agree
2.	Acquire knowledge on adolescents' behavior.	2.7	2.6	2.7	Agree
3.	Provide of basic needs and wants of adolescents.	3.3	3.6	3.5	Agree
4.	Encourage adolescents in their endeavours.	3.4	3.6	3.5	Agree
5.	Correct adolescents through modeled behavior.	3.5	3.4	3.5	Agree
6.	Discipline should be from a point of knowledge and love.	3.2	3.0	3.1	Agree
7.	Do everything possible to enhance their potentials.	3.5	3.8	3.7	Agree
8.	Give them responsibilities (roles to play).	3.3	2.8	3.1	Agree
9.	Allow their friends' visitation and vice versa.	2.5	3.2	2.9	Agree
10.	Discuss problems and major issues with adolescents.	2.4	2.6	2.5	Agree
11.	Be an example parent in basic households' issues.	2.5	2.6	2.6	Agree
12.	Parents should create atmosphere of love and friend-lovers.	3.3	4.3	3.4	Agree
13.	Ensure high parental mentorship.	3.4	3.6	3.5	Agree
Cluster mean		3.1	3.2	3.2	Agree

Key: \bar{X}_p = Mean for parents; \bar{X}_a = Mean for adolescents \bar{X}_g = grand mean (of \bar{X}_p & \bar{X}_a).

Table 1 shows that all the items have agreement responses from the parent respondents, except item 10 which is discuss problems and major issues with adolescents. While all the responses to the adolescents' items attracted agreement in respect of parent-related strategies for enhancing parents-

adolescent relationship. The cluster means for parents, adolescents and grand are 3.1, 3.2 and 3.2 respectively. The result implies that both parents and adolescents agreed that the parent-related strategies are relevant in parent-adolescent relationship.

Table 2: Mean Responses on Adolescent Related Strategic to Enhance Parent-adolescent Relationship

S/N	Adolescent Related Strategies	\bar{X}_p	\bar{X}_a	\bar{X}_g	Remark
1.	Adolescents should appreciate their parents.	2.6	2.8	2.7	Agree
2.	Adolescents usage of mass media should respect family values.	3.2	3.4	3.3	Agree
3.	Adolescents should not waste money spent on their education.	2.1	2.6	2.4	Disagree
4.	Adolescents should go out with parental permission.	2.4	2.6	2.5	Agree
5.	Adolescents should communicate their demands politely to the parents.	2.7	2.8	2.8	Agree
6.	Adolescents should not resent parental control.	2.5	2.6	2.6	Agree
7.	Adolescents' character should reflect family positive traits.	2.2	2.6	2.4	Disagree
8.	Adolescents should dress appropriately as per their family values.	3.4	3.2	3.3	Agree
9.	Encourage parental support through high educational performance.	3.3	3.4	3.4	Agree
10.	Ensure your parents know your friends.	2.6	2.8	2.7	Agree
11.	Use of mass media e.g. Tv, Internet for performance.	3.2	3.2	3.2	Agree
12.	Learn to manage their sexual relations with the opposite sex.	2.6	2.9	2.8	Agree
Cluster mean		2.7	3.0	2.8	Agree

Key: \bar{X}_p = Mean for parents; \bar{X}_a = Mean for adolescents \bar{X}_g = grand mean (of \bar{X}_p & \bar{X}_a).

Table 2 shows that parents respondent had agreement responses to all the 12 items with a cluster mean of 3.0 which is above criterion mean of 2.5 The adolescent respondents had agreement responses to items 1-2, 5-6, then item 8-12; while they disagree to items 3,4, and 7. The grand mean rating ranged from

2.4 to 3.4 and gave a cluster grand mean of 2.8 which is greater than 2.5 criterion mean. This implies agreement responses by parents and adolescents to adolescent-related strategies for enhancing parent-adolescent relationship.

Table 3: Mean responses by parents and adolescents on siblings related strategies

S/N	Siblings-related Strategies	\bar{X}_p	\bar{X}_a	\bar{X}_g	Remark
1.	There is need for siblings' cooperation.	2.8	2.8	2.8	Agree
2.	Senior siblings should mentor younger siblings.	2.7	2.8	2.8	Agree
3.	Sibling support has more understanding in gender bases.	3.0	3.4	3.2	Agree
4.	Indifference exists among siblings.	3.0	3.0	3.0	Agree
5.	Sibling jealousy and rivalry could be healthy by discipline.	2.9	2.9	2.9	Agree
Cluster mean		2.9	2.9	2.9	Agree

Key: \bar{X}_p = Mean for parents; \bar{X}_a = Mean for adolescents \bar{X}_g = grand mean (of \bar{X}_p & \bar{X}_a).

Table 3 shows that parents and adolescents responses to the items on sibling related strategies to enhance parent-adolescent relationship in the household have agreement responses to all the items. The cluster mean for parents is 2.9 while for adolescent is 2.9 which gave grand cluster of 2.9 agreements. This indicated that parents' and adolescents' respondents agreed that the items are ways of enhancing sibling relationship in order to strengthen parents-adolescent relationship.

Discussion of Findings

The study determined some strategies for enhancing parent-adolescent relationship within households in Rivers State. The findings of the study for research question one revealed that parents related strategies are identify adolescents ethical dilemma, acquire knowledge on adolescents' behavior, provision of basic needs and wants, encourage adolescents in their endeavors, discipline should be from a point of knowledge, do everything possible to enhance their potentials, give them responsibility, allow their friends visitation and vice versa, be a rule parent in basic household issues,

create atmosphere of love, and ensure high parental mentorship. These findings concisely agree with Okeke (2009) statement that adolescents need love, understanding as well as discipline and education. According to Glenn, Jones and Simpson (1975) adolescents behavior are all the habits, characters, mannerism, and conducts that are common in adolescence, which may not all be wrong, as long as it is in line with societal expectations of the time. Still in line, American Psychological Association (APA) (2019) noted that low socio-economic status communities are often under resourced which affect children. In similar vein, Berk (1999) noted that parent-child relationship adapt to change at adolescence. However, Uzoka (2013) reiterated the need for the family to be a foundation of human values and sociable behaviours.

Looking at research question two, parents and adolescents agreed to appreciation of parents, usage of mass media based on family values, communicate politely for demands, character to reflect family values, performance in education, parents know their friends, use of mass media for academic performance, and learn to

manage their sexual relations with opposite sex. In agreement Huitt and Hummel (2010) noted that education has brought about congenial relationship in the family. Both parents and adolescents agreed that information and communication technology encourages deviation from old standards. According to behavioural theorists, there is connection between stimulus and response, and overtime connection is formed even though there is no logical or apparent relationship. Also, connection of emitted behavior and its consequences is instrumental in bringing about expected behavior (Huitt and Hummel, 2010; Lopez, 2014; and Cherry, 2019). It also agrees with Atser and Kembe (2018) assertion that adolescents may be characterized by antisocial behavior and emotional problems.

Based on research question three, this study further discovered that on siblings related strategies, both parents and adolescent agreed to all the items which are there is need for siblings cooperation, senior siblings mentor young siblings, sibling support has more understanding on gender bases, indifferences exist among siblings and siblings jealousy and rivalry could be healthy by discipline. In support of this Okeke (2009) noted that siblings enjoy companionship of each other, respect each other's point of view and protect and support each other. However, in agreement, Anyakoha (2015) opined that siblings sometimes are jealous of each other, and also compete for attention and love.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study it was concluded that parents and adolescents should relate based on expected values in the family. The family is a basic structure of the society as such needs to be revisited in its foundation especially in the cultivation of parent-adolescent cordial relationship so as to minimize hiccup in the life of adolescents. In all ages, adolescents behave in a peculiar way because of the issues of biological maturity and being launched into the world space without adequate guidance. It is imperative that parents who are the basic foundational structure of the family need to pay more premium attention to the needs and wellbeing of the adolescents by owning up to their responsibilities. Relationship in the family essentially anchors on communication of the members.

Education may afford the parents to create enabling environment in terms of more resources for their children, but it has been noted that education without parental love and responsiveness at the different periods of children development, could result to adolescents' deviancy. Hence, families in Rivers State should tighten the loose knots in their parental childrearing practices and bring about general improvement in the habit or behavior of the adolescents.

Recommendations

Some recommendations are hereby put forth as provided by the respondents.

1. Parents should talk to their adolescents about their normal

physical and emotional changes at puberty and their likely response to these changes.

2. Parents should talk with their adolescents about risky things friends may pressure them to do like smoking or drinking, dangerous physical desires or molestations and how they could assert themselves in such circumstances.
3. Parents should desist from exhibiting poor character in the home so that their adolescents would not imitate them.
4. Parents should ensure they keep their adolescents positively occupied in voluntary patriotic service, religious activities or long vacation attachment for skill learning/training. Encourage them to join good school, religious and community groups such as team sports, volunteers group such as Red Cross, Civil Brigade, Boys Scout, Girls Guide, Anti-cult Groups, and etcetera.
5. Beyond formal education, parents should bring up their adolescents to imbibe doing household tasks, cultivating saving habits and spending their money wisely, etcetera.
6. Adolescents are the future parents, so they should be trained to respect other people's feeling and being charitable to people in need.
7. Family should have rules; hence parents should make clear rules and stick to them. Use discipline to guide and protect their children instead of punishment.
8. Affectionate parent-adolescent relationship is importance hence

parents should make their children their friends.

9. Adolescents should reciprocate the love and care of their parent by being responsible.
10. Sibling cooperation and respect should be strengthened even beyond adolescence.

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