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FAMILY STRUCTURE AS A PREDICTOR OF PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN EDO STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship that exists between family structure and the psychological well-being of adolescents in secondary schools in Edo State, Nigeria. Two research questions and one null hypothesis guided the study. The population of the study comprised 27,704 SSS 3 students. The sample size comprised 1,023 students. The sampling method that was used is the multistage sampling method. Questionnaire was the instrument that was used to collect data. The validities of the instrument were carried out through experts' judgement and factor analysis. Cronbach alpha was used to estimate the reliability of the instrument. Mean, standard deviation and Pearson's coefficient of determination were used to answer the research questions while Linear Regression statistics was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that the level of psychological well-being among adolescents in secondary schools across Edo State is high. The finding also found that there is no significant relationship between family structure and the psychological well-being of adolescents in secondary schools across Edo State. It is recommended amongst others, that schools should sustain existing support systems, such as counselling services and positive school climate initiatives, to maintain and further enhance students' well-being.

KEYWORDS: Family Structure; Psychological Well-Being; Adolescents; Secondary Schools.

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is the developmental stage that bridges childhood and adulthood, typically starting around the onset of puberty and concluding with early adulthood. This period generally spans from ages 10 to 18 but can vary depending on cultural and individual factors (Smith & Johnson, 2020). It is characterized by rapid physical, cognitive, and emotional changes that transform the individual from a dependent child into an autonomous adult (Williams, 2021). Such changes can negatively impact the psychological well-being of individuals. For instance, physically, the onset of puberty may bring about changes in body image, which can lead to insecurities, body dissatisfaction, or feelings of inadequacy (Thompson & Hall, 2022). Adolescents who experience these changes earlier or later than their peers may feel isolated, which can heighten stress and anxiety (Brown & Jones, 2023).

Cognitive changes during adolescence can also contribute to psychological challenges. As adolescents develop more complex thinking abilities, they may become more aware of social comparisons, criticisms, and expectations from peers and adults (Greenwood et al., 2020). The brain's delayed development in areas responsible for impulse control and decision-making can make them more susceptible to risky behaviours, including substance use or delinquency, which can lead to negative consequences such as legal issues, addiction, or strained relationships (Jessa & Agbontien, 2025). Psychosocially, adolescence is marked by the search for identity and the increasing importance of peer relationships. Adolescents may experience emotional turbulence as they navigate conflicts between their emerging independence and continued reliance on family support (Parker & Evans, 2021).

Psychological well-being refers to the state of being mentally and emotionally healthy, where an individual experiences positive feelings, effective functioning, and a sense of purpose in life (Khan et al., 2020). It encompasses a person's ability to manage stress, maintain fulfilling relationships, and handle everyday challenges with resilience and optimism (Taylor & Lee, 2021). A key aspect of psychological well-being is the balance between positive emotions such as happiness and satisfaction, and the ability to cope with negative emotions like sadness, anxiety, or frustration healthily (Chang & Wang, 2023). This form of well-being is multidimensional and includes aspects such as self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth (Fisher & Davis, 2022). Self-acceptance refers to having a positive attitude towards oneself, despite flaws or past mistakes (Roberts, 2021). Positive relationships involve the ability to form deep, trusting connections with others (Anderson et al., 2020). Autonomy is the sense of control and independence in one's actions, while environmental mastery reflects the capability to manage

life's demands effectively (Walker & George, 2023). Purpose in life involves having goals that give direction and meaning, while personal growth emphasizes continual development and realization of one's potential (Taylor, 2021). When psychological well-being is compromised, individuals may experience mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, or low self-esteem (Lopez & Reed, 2022). Conversely, high psychological well-being is linked to higher life satisfaction, better physical health, and more resilient coping strategies (Cameron et al., 2020).

Psychological well-being encompasses various components. One central aspect is self-acceptance, which involves maintaining a positive attitude toward oneself, acknowledging personal strengths and limitations without undue self-criticism. People with high psychological well-being tend to value who they are and feel comfortable in their own skin. Alongside self-acceptance is the ability to form positive and trusting relationships with others. Meaningful connections contribute to emotional support and help individuals feel valued and understood, which strengthens their overall psychological health.

Another important component is autonomy, the sense of self-direction that allows individuals to make independent choices in alignment with their values and beliefs. This aspect empowers people to navigate their lives confidently, even in the face of external pressures. Closely linked to this is environmental mastery, or the capacity to effectively manage life's responsibilities and external surroundings. People with strong environmental mastery feel capable of influencing their circumstances and adapting well to change, which enhances their sense of control and stability.

Psychological well-being also includes having a clear purpose in life—a sense of meaning that motivates and directs one's actions. Individuals with purpose tend to set goals, find value in their experiences, and remain resilient in the face of adversity. This forward-looking orientation is complemented by personal growth, which reflects a continuous desire to develop one's potential and evolve through new experiences. People who feel they are growing as individuals often report higher levels of satisfaction and adaptability.

Although psychological well-being is critical for healthy development, the researcher has noted with concern an increasing prevalence of psychological distress among adolescents. This distress frequently manifests in risky behaviours, academic pressure, and deteriorating mental health, particularly in secondary schools across Edo State, Nigeria (Oluwaseun & Okeke, 2022). According to the National Bureau of Statistics, about 20-30% of Nigerian adolescents face significant mental health challenges (NBS, 2021). In Edo State, school heads and principals have reported a rise in mental health issues among students, especially those

linked to bullying, academic stress, and social pressures (Ibrahim et al., 2023). Newspaper report in the region have also highlighted an uptick in juvenile-related crimes, often attributed to underlying mental health issues such as depression and anxiety (Vanguard, 2022). Anecdotal evidence from schools and health departments in Edo State indicates similar patterns, with school counsellors reporting increased cases of students requiring psychological intervention due to stress, anxiety, and depression (Ogunleye & Adewale, 2021). The lack of adequate mental health infrastructure in schools and the community further exacerbates this issue, making it difficult for adolescents to access the help they need (Kalu & Nwogu, 2023).

The above psychological problems have several detrimental effects. One of the primary consequences is a decline in academic performance. Adolescents facing anxiety, depression, or other mental health issues often struggle to concentrate, leading to poor grades and reduced participation in school activities (Peterson & Lasky, 2020). They may also exhibit behavioural problems, such as aggression, truancy, or even self-harm, which further disrupts their education and social interactions (Williams et al., 2022). It can also lead to an increase in risky behaviours. Adolescents may resort to substance abuse, early sexual activity, or engage in delinquent behaviours as coping mechanisms (Ahmed & Thomas, 2023). These actions not only endanger their physical health but can also contribute to the breakdown of social relationships with peers, family, and teachers, isolating them further and worsening their mental state (Davis & Martin, 2021). In severe cases, poor psychological well-being can escalate to suicidal thoughts or attempts. Studies have shown that untreated mental health issues can significantly increase the risk of suicide among adolescents, making it a critical public health concern (Baker et al., 2022).

The researcher believes that a study of the factors responsible for psychological well-being can significantly contribute to addressing the problem of psychological distress, particularly among adolescents. This is because it may help to identify the specific conditions, behaviours, and environmental influences that promote positive mental health. Various factors can play a role in the psychological well-being of adolescents. One such factor is economic hardship. Individuals, especially young people, who grow up or live in environments of financial instability often face chronic stress, insecurity, and hopelessness. The inability to meet basic needs, afford quality education, or participate in social activities due to financial constraints can diminish self-worth and increase vulnerability to anxiety and depression.

Another critical contributor is trauma and exposure to violence, whether in the home, school, or community. Experiences such as domestic abuse, sexual harassment, or witnessing violence can lead to long-term emotional and psychological scars, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), emotional numbness, and a general mistrust of others, all of which deteriorate psychological well-being. Lack of access to mental health services is another factor. In many developing contexts, including parts of Nigeria, mental health is still stigmatized, and there is a shortage of trained professionals and infrastructure to support individuals facing psychological distress. This lack of professional help leaves many to deal with their issues in isolation, often worsening their mental health outcomes. Personality traits such as neuroticism, low self-esteem, and lack of resilience have also been linked to poor psychological well-being. Individuals who are more emotionally reactive or self-critical may struggle to cope with life's challenges, thereby increasing their susceptibility to mental health issues. Substance use, particularly among adolescents and young adults, has also been found to contribute to poor psychological well-being, often acting as both a symptom and a cause of mental health struggles.

While the above factors have been well-documented in existing literature, there remains a notable research gap in understanding the specific influence of family structure, peer pressure, academic pressure, and social media use on psychological well-being, particularly within the context of senior secondary school students in Edo State, Nigeria. Most existing studies tend to examine broader socioeconomic or clinical determinants of mental health, often neglecting the everyday social and institutional experiences of adolescents within school and family environments. There appears to be limited empirical work that investigates how these specific factors interact and contribute to psychological well-being within the culturally diverse and socioeconomically stratified context of Nigerian secondary schools. Hence, the focus of this study is on family structure and peer pressure.

Family structure refers to the composition and stability of a family unit, which is typically categorized as either intact or blended. An intact family structure involves both biological parents living together with their children, often characterized by a more stable environment. A blended family structure, on the other hand, includes families where parents are divorced, blended, or not cohabiting, which may lead to less stability in the household environment. Family structure can have some influence on the psychological well-being of adolescents. For instance, according to Adamu, et al. (2021), adolescents from intact families often have access to more emotional support, stability, and consistent parental guidance, which are all essential for their psychological well-being. Research has shown that intact families

contribute to lower levels of psychological distress and promote healthier development in adolescents (Simons et al., 2020). This stability can reduce the likelihood of engaging in risky behaviours, such as substance abuse, and mitigate mental health issues such as depression and anxiety.

In contrast, adolescents from blended families are more likely to experience psychological challenges. The absence of one parent, coupled with potential conflict between parents, can lead to emotional strain, feelings of insecurity, and higher stress levels. These adolescents often face difficulties in coping with family transitions, leading to an increased risk of behavioural problems and mental health issues. According to recent research, children from blended families are more likely to report higher levels of anxiety, depression, and lower academic achievement compared to those from intact families (Amato & Sobolewski, 2021). This psychological distress can be aggravated by economic hardship, frequent moves, or the lack of a stable parental figure (Vanassche et al., 2018). The family structure can also affect adolescents' social development. Adolescents from blended families may struggle more with peer relationships and exhibit a higher propensity for risky behaviours, as parental supervision and guidance might be inconsistent.

In view of the above, this study, therefore, aims to examine the relationship that exists among family structure, peer pressure and the psychological well-being of adolescents in secondary schools in Edo State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the level of psychological well-being among adolescents in secondary schools across Edo State?
2. What is the relationship between family structure and the psychological well-being of adolescents in secondary schools across Edo State?

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was tested at 0.05 alpha level:

1. There is no significant relationship between family structure and the psychological well-being of adolescents in secondary schools across Edo State

METHODS

This study adopted a correlational research design, which is appropriate for examining the nature and strength of the relationships among family structure, peer pressure and the

psychological well-being of adolescents in secondary schools. The population of the study comprised 27,704 public senior secondary school III (SSS 3) students in Edo State. The sample comprised 1,023 students drawn from public secondary schools in the study area. A multistage sampling procedure was employed to select the respondents for the study. The procedure involved three successive stages. In the first stage, the Local Government Areas (LGAs) were selected from each senatorial district in the study area. The selection was carried out using a simple random sampling technique to ensure that every LGA within each senatorial district had an equal chance of being included in the study. This approach ensured adequate geographical representation of the three senatorial districts while minimizing selection bias. In the second stage, public secondary schools were selected from each of the selected Local Government Areas using a simple random sampling technique. The number of schools selected from each LGA was determined proportionately based on the distribution of public secondary schools within the respective LGAs. This ensured that LGAs with a larger number of schools contributed more schools to the sample than those with fewer schools, thereby enhancing the representativeness of the sample. In the third stage, SS III students were selected from the sampled schools. A proportionate sampling technique was first used to determine the number of students to be selected from each school based on the school's SS III student population. Specifically, 3.69% of the SS III students in each selected school were sampled. Thereafter, within each selected school, students were stratified according to gender (male and female), and simple random sampling was employed to select the required number of respondents from each gender stratum. This procedure ensured that both male and female students were adequately represented in the sample in proportion to their population within each school. At the end of the sampling process, a total of 1,023 SS III students were selected for the study, comprising 470 males and 553 females. The multistage sampling procedure enhanced the representativeness of the sample by ensuring that the respondents were selected systematically from senatorial districts, Local Government Areas, schools, and finally individual students.

Questionnaire is the instrument that was used to collect data in this study. It is titled Questionnaire on Family Structure, Peer Pressure and Psychological Well-Being. The questionnaire contains three sections; Section A contains the demographic data of the respondents while section B, C and D contains three different rating scales. The Peer Pressure Rating Scale (PPRS) was adapted from Palani and Mani's Perceived Peer Pressure Scale (2016). There are 30 items on the scale in all. The items were however, reduced to 14 after validation. The scale of the items ranged from 1 for strongly disagree to 4 for strongly agree

on a 4-point scale. In adapting the instrument, some items in the original instrument were reworded to reflect the language ability of the students in the location of study. Some items that appear complex to the students were simplified while others were removed during validation. The Psychological Well-Being Rating Scale (PWBRS) was adapted from the Psychological Wellbeing Scale, developed by Ryff (2007). The scale contains 42 items, which measures six aspects of wellbeing and happiness: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. The items were however, reduced to 21 after validation. The items were structured on a four-point scale, ranging from 1 for strongly disagree to 4 for strongly agree.

The face validity of the instrument was carried out by the experts in the Department of Guidance and Counselling, Science Education and Vocational Education, Delta State University, Abraka. Copies of the questionnaire were printed and handed to the experts. They were required to assess the suitability and appropriateness of the instrument to the objective of the study. The experts suggested that some items should be removed while some should be reworded. The suggestions of these experts were reflected in the instrument before pilot study. The experts suggested that some items should be deleted while some should be rephrased to give more localisation to the instrument. The content and construct validities of the instrument were estimated using the multivariate factor analysis. A face validity by the supervisors and experts, a total of 100 copies of the questionnaire was printed and administered to SS 3 students in Delta State. The Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was used to analyse the data. The content validity of each of the scales was shown by the total Cumulative variance of all items. Peer Pressure Rating Scale has 74.74% content validity, while its construct validity was estimated using rotated component matrix, ranging from 0.68 and 0.90. Psychological Well-Being Rating Scale has 79.01% content validity while its construct validity ranged from 0.72 and 0.94. To establish the reliability of this instrument, the Cronbach alpha method of internal consistency was used (Jessa, 2017). The scales were trial-tested on a sample of 100 SS 3 students in Delta State. The data were analysed using Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient and a coefficient of 0.96 and 0.91 was obtained for Peer Pressure Rating Scale and Psychological Well-Being Rating Scale respectively.

The questionnaire was administered to the respondents by the researcher with the help of five research assistants, who were trained and sensitised on the nature and objectives of the study. The research assistants helped the researcher to administer the test on the respondents. The researcher approached the principal of the various schools, explained purpose of visit and obtained permission for the administration. The researcher was present to clarify the

questionnaire items. The completed questionnaire was retrieved immediately to avoid loss of data. The statistics that were employed for answering the research questions and test the hypothesis include Pearson's coefficient of determination and Linear Regression statistics. Descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation were used to answer research question 1 at a benchmark of 2.50; Pearson's coefficient of determination was used to answer research questions 3 and 4. Linear regression statistics was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The statistical package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 26 was used for the analysis.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: What is the level of psychological well-being among adolescents in secondary schools across Edo State?

Table 1: Mean analysis of the level of psychological well-being among adolescents in secondary schools across Edo State.

S/N	Statement	N	Mean	SD	Remark
1	I often feel overwhelmed by my responsibilities	1023	3.39	0.69	High
2	I feel like many of the people I know have gotten more out of life than I have	1023	3.29	0.70	High
3	My decisions are not usually influenced by what everyone else is doing	1023	3.26	0.66	High
4	I have confidence in my opinions, even if they are contrary to the general consensus	1023	3.26	0.65	High
5	When I compare myself to friends and acquaintances, it makes me feel good about who I am	1023	3.25	0.65	High
6	I often feel lonely because I have few close friends with whom to share my concerns	1023	3.24	0.65	High
7	I gave up trying to make big improvements or changes in my life a long time ago	1023	3.24	0.63	High
8	When I look at the story of my life, I am pleased with how things have turned out	1023	3.22	0.65	High
9	I don't have a good sense of what it is I'm trying to accomplish in life	1023	3.18	0.63	High
10	The demands of everyday life often get me down	1023	3.15	0.61	High
11	I have difficulty arranging my life in a way that is satisfying to me	1023	3.13	0.65	High
12	I enjoy personal and mutual conversations with family members and friends	1023	2.93	1.36	High
13	It's difficult for me to voice my own opinions on controversial matters	1023	2.69	1.42	High
14	My daily activities often seem trivial and unimportant to me	1023	2.66	1.42	High
15	I like most parts of my personality	1023	2.34	1.42	High
16	I live life one day at a time and don't really think	1023	1.82	0.70	Low

	about the future				
17	I tend to worry about what other people think of me	1023	1.79	0.79	Low
18	Most people see me as loving and affectionate	1023	1.78	0.72	Low
19	In many ways I feel disappointed about my achievements in life	1023	1.77	0.68	Low
20	I enjoy making plans for the future and working to make them a reality	1023	1.76	0.70	Low
21	In general, I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live	1023	1.70	0.72	Low
Average Mean			**2.71**	**0.81**	**High**
Criterion Mean = 2.50					

Table 1 showed the mean analysis of the level of psychological well-being among adolescents in secondary schools across Edo State. From the result, the mean scores for items in the table ranged from 1.70 to 3.39. The result also shows that the average mean score is 2.71, with a standard deviation of 0.81. Since the average mean is above the criterion mean of 2.50, this indicates that the overall level of psychological well-being among adolescents in secondary schools across Edo State is high.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between family structure and the psychological well-being of adolescents in secondary schools across Edo State?

Table 2: Pearson's correlation and coefficient of determination of family structure and the psychological well-being of adolescents in secondary schools across Edo State.

Variables	***N***	***r***	r^2	r^2%	**Remark**
Family Structure					Positive Relationship
Psychological Well-Being	1023	0.025	0.001	0.1	

Table 2 showed the Pearson's correlation and coefficient of determination analysis of the relationship between family structure and the psychological well-being of adolescents in secondary schools across Edo State. From the result, the correlation coefficient (r) is 0.025, indicating a weak positive relationship between family structure and psychological well-being. The coefficient of determination (r^2) is 0.001, which implies that family structure accounts for only 0.1% of the variation in the psychological well-being of adolescents.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between family structure and the psychological well-being of adolescents in secondary schools across Edo State.

Table 3: Regression analysis of the relationship between family structure and the psychological well-being of adolescents in secondary schools across Edo State.

Model	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*P*
Regression	17.070	1	17.070	0.632	0.427[b]
Residual	27049.415	1002	26.995		
Total	27066.485	1003			
a. Dependent Variable: Psychological Well-Being **b. Predictors (Constant):** Family Structure					

Table 3 showed the regression analysis of the relationship between family structure and the psychological well-being of adolescents in secondary schools across Edo State. From the result, the F-value is 0.632 with a corresponding p-value of 0.427. Since the p-value (0.427) is greater than the level of significance (0.05), the null hypothesis is accepted. This means that there is no significant relationship between family structure and the psychological well-being of adolescents in secondary schools across Edo State.

DISCUSSIONS

The first finding showed that the level of psychological well-being among adolescents in secondary schools across Edo State is high. This finding suggests that despite the various academic and social pressures faced by students, many adolescents maintain a relatively stable and positive mental state. This implies that students are able to cope effectively with challenges, demonstrate resilience, and maintain a reasonable level of self-acceptance, purpose in life, and interpersonal relationships. This finding may be attributed to supportive family environments, peer interactions that provide emotional backing, and adaptive coping strategies developed by students over time. Cultural values that emphasize communal support, religious engagement, and social connectedness may have also contributed to enhancing adolescents' psychological adjustment and overall well-being. This finding agrees with the finding of Nwoye (2022), who found that adolescents in Nigerian secondary schools exhibit relatively high levels of psychological well-being due to strong family ties and social support systems. The finding is also consistent with that of Bello and Musa (2023), who reported that students who experience supportive peer relationships and positive school environments tend to demonstrate higher levels of psychological well-being. However, this finding disagrees with the study of Carter (2021), who found lower levels of psychological well-being among adolescents, attributing it to increased academic stress and digital distractions in more technologically saturated environments.

The second finding revealed that there is no significant relationship between family structure and the psychological well-being of adolescents in secondary schools across Edo State. This finding implies that the type or composition of the family may not be a decisive factor in determining adolescents' psychological outcomes. This implies that adolescents' well-being is likely influenced more by the quality of relationships, emotional support, and parenting practices within the family rather than the structural arrangement of the family itself. In other words, adolescents from different family structures may experience similar levels of psychological well-being if they receive adequate care, supervision, and emotional stability. This finding may be explained by the adaptive capacity of adolescents, as well as the presence of alternative support systems such as peers, teachers, and community networks that can buffer the potential negative effects of certain family structures. This finding agrees with the finding of Adeyemi (2021), who reported that family structure alone does not significantly predict adolescents' psychological well-being when factors such as parental support and communication are controlled. Similarly, the finding is consistent with that of Obi and Nnamani (2022), who found that emotional bonding and parenting style are stronger determinants of adolescent well-being than family composition. However, this finding disagrees with the study of Thompson (2020), who found that adolescents from single-parent families were more likely to experience lower psychological well-being due to economic and emotional challenges associated with such family structures.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that adolescents in secondary schools across Edo State experience high levels of psychological well-being. Although family structure does not significantly influence psychological well-being. Arising from the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Schools should sustain existing support systems, such as counselling services and positive school climate initiatives, to maintain and further enhance students' well-being.
2. Interventions aimed at improving students' psychological well-being should focus more on school and peer-related factors rather than family structure alone.

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