

Research Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47434/JEREDA.4.3.2023.316> eISSN: 2735-9107

EFFECTS OF ADOLESCENT PERIOD ON STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN OYO EAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, NIGERIA

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Received: 14th November, 2023; Revised: 30th January, 2023; Accepted: 15th March, 2024

ABSTRACT

Introduction: The thrust of this research centred on adolescence period (a period that is full of emotional, psychological and social adventures for the adolescents) and its impacts on the academic performance of public senior secondary school students.

Purpose: This study was to investigate the effects of adolescent period on students' academic performance with a particular reference to the public senior secondary schools in Oyo east local government area of Oyo state, Nigeria.

Methodology: This study adopted a survey design method. The data collection tool was mainly a structured questionnaire of Likert type items with four response options of strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. The sample size consisted of 508 public senior secondary school students who responded to the questionnaire. The validity of the instrument was conducted by three (03) experts in the fields of personnel management and human psychology. The reliability coefficient of the instrument was .92 in the test – retest analysis.

Findings: The study found that adolescent students were likely to reach their full potentials when their parents actively support their direction and goals; peer influence did not significantly affect adolescents' academic performance, and there was a significant difference in the academic performance of male and female adolescents.

Recommendations: The study recommended that parents should feel concern about the growth, development and academic performance of their adolescent children. Also, school counsellors, teachers, administrators, and other executors of the educational policy should also feel concern about adolescence stage.

Keywords: academic performance, adolescent period, public senior secondary schools, students.



Cite paper as:

Animasaun, A. G., & Bello, A. E., Abisoye, F. M., & Animasaun, A. M. (2023). Effects of adolescent period on students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Oyo east local government area, Oyo state, Nigeria. *Journal of Educational Research in Developing Areas*, 4 (3), 316 - 326. <https://doi.org/10.47434/JEREDA.4.3.2024.316>.



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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

A lot of factors are hindering academic attainment of adolescent students in public senior secondary schools in Oyo east local government area of Oyo state, Nigeria; prime among them are: physical, psychological, emotional and stress problems. The research findings will therefore be of immense benefits to principals of senior secondary schools, school counsellors, teachers, parents, senior secondary school students, policy makers, and the general public on the remedies available to solving adolescents' academic challenges. Also, findings from the study will enable school teachers and counsellors to appreciate the need for cordial, warmth and good relationships with their adolescent students with a view to improving on their academic performance.

INTRODUCTION

It has been observed that adolescents are facing quite a number of challenges that impede on their academic performance. D'mello and Govindaraju (2016) have identified some of the problems affecting educational progress of adolescent students which include: physical, psychological, emotional and stress problems. However, it has been noticed from a biological point of view that adolescence should be the best of life due to the fact that most physical and mental functions like intelligence, speed, strength, reaction time, knowledge recall, and divergent ideas are fully developed and materialized during the period which could be of immense support to the educational pursuit of the adolescents (Csikszentmihalyi, 2022). Bistal *et al.* (2016) have however cautioned that if the stage is now well managed, it can lead to a period of "storm and stress" and thereby negatively affect adolescent students' academic performance.

The home is of the greatest essence to the adolescent. It transmits to him/her the norms and standards of the society and helps him/her in his adjustments to the outside world. The school and other environmental agencies are not as important as the home. Though, both parents and teachers can render great assistance to the adolescent by permitting him/her to work as an independent individual in many ways. It is (no doubt); the attitude of parents that often affects their growing up processes and academic performance. According to Masud *et al.* (2019), academic performance is among the several components of academic success; and many factors, including socioeconomic status, students' temperament and motivation, peer influence, teachers' methodologies and class control strategies, and parental support affect academic performance of adolescent students. In view of the enormous challenges and tasks ahead of every adolescent and the need to ensure that their academic pursuits are not negatively affected necessitate this study.

Since adolescents are predominantly found in the secondary school sub-sector of education, though a few of them who are late school starters may still be seen in Basic Six classes, this study will assist their parents, secondary schools' authorities and of course, the government to effectively plan for them in order to be living positive and purposeful lives with a view to contributing their quota meaningfully to the progress of the society; hence, the justification for this study.

Etymologically, the concept of 'adolescence' was coined from a Greek word, 'adolescere', which means 'to grow to maturity' (Ogbodo & Olajojo, 2015). Adolescence is regarded as a bridge between childhood and adulthood. They see adolescence as a period of storm and stress – that is, the stage in life when an individual is erotic, socially egocentric, emotionally unstable and unpredictable. The World Health Organisation (WHO) in Csikszentmihalyi (2022) defines an adolescent as any person between ages 10 and 19; and that it is the stage of an intense and often stressful developmental period characterized by specific types of behaviour.

In the same vein, Cutis (2015) sees adolescence as a complex, multi-system transitional process involving progression from the immaturity and social dependency of childhood into adulthood with the goal and expression of fulfilled developmental potential, personal voyage, and social accountability. That is, it is a period when both boys and girls begin to wear a new look. Gicharu (2016) stresses that adolescence is accompanied by dramatic physical, cognitive, social, and emotional changes that present both opportunities and challenges for adolescents, families, health professionals, school counsellors, educational administrators, teachers, communities, and even, government at all levels. Cutis (2015) concludes that adolescence is a process of physical and psychological "rebirth" and advises that the developmental transition requires reciprocal

reorganization of the individual adolescents and 'the context influencing cognition, emotion, behaviour, and relationships'.

Csikszentmihalyi (2022) has reported that in adolescence, both boys and girls experience a swift increase in body size, a change in shape and composition of the body, and a rapid development of the reproductive organs and other characteristics indicating sexual maturity. The following features, according to Cleveland (2022), Csikszentmihalyi (2022), and Rogers (2022) are some of the physical characteristics of identifying an adolescent:

An Adolescent Boy:

1. An accelerated growth of the testes and scrotum with reddening and wrinkling of the scrotal skin;
2. Appearance of first public hair;
3. The growth spurt i.e. increase in height and weight;
4. Growth of the penis, seminal vesicle, the prostate, and the bulbo-urethral glands;
5. Spermathe i.e. first ejaculation of seminal fluid;
6. Growth/appearance of hair on the armpits, face and chest;
7. Enlargement of laryngeal cartilages which increases vocal sound and lower voice pitch as a result of the male hormone testosterone i.e. a deeper voice and larger Adam's apple; and
8. Expansion of chest and hips;

An Adolescent Girl:

1. Appearance of budding breast;
2. The development of sexual characteristics like the uterus, vagina and the public hair;
3. The development of the labia and clitoris;
4. Widening of the pelvis;
5. Secretion of oil from the subcutaneous glands which makes her looks attractive;
6. Rounding of the shoulder and increase in the buttocks; and
7. Menarche or first menstrual flow.

D'Mello and Govindaraju (2016) have identified the following factors as some of the causes of academic stress among adolescents:

1. **Parental Pressure:** Parental beliefs, expectations, dispositions, and behaviours may cause both psychological and physical discomfort

to the adolescents because some parents often pressurize their adolescent children by being over anxious and ambitious towards their academic success even, beyond their actual capabilities.

2. **School:** the unfavourable environment and stressful situation in some schools may often be influenced by some variables like: emotional climate of the school, student-teacher relationship, inadequate facilities, bullying by senior students, overcrowding of students in the classroom, manual labour, examination, etc. Aside these factors, stressful situation in the school may equally be related to undesirable teaching strategies, uneventful learning styles, and poor interpersonal relationship, among others.

A number of solutions have been proffered to solving the problem of academic stress among adolescent students, some of them according to Cleveland (2022) are:

1. **Priority Setting:** adolescent students need to be educated on why they should set their priorities and as well, set schedules for different activities throughout the day. When setting schedules, it will be of manifest importance to include time for leisure activities as a way of dosing tension and stress of rigorous academic activities. In the same vein, they need to have adequate sleep, a well balanced diet, and mild physical exercises. The support of associates, peers, friends, counsellors, psychologists, teachers, and most essentially, the home can ensure that an individual adolescent student cope better with the school stress or pressure.

2. **Family/Parental Support:** Parents need to give their adolescent children undivided attention by listening calmly to their concerns. They must understand their feelings, and avoid humiliating and laughing at what may seem to them to be naive about their behaviours. Parents should assist their adolescent children to build self-confidence in their academic, emotional and social lives.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Over the years, academic performance of public senior secondary school students in Oyo state, more importantly in Oyo east local government area, has been abysmal. Recently, academic performance of public senior secondary school students in Oyo State in the 2021 West African Senior School Certificate Examinations (WASSCE) was also not encouraging, as Oyo State was ranked 33 out of the 36 States and Federal Capital Territory (FCT)'s candidates that sat for the examination; while Imo State came first in the ranking (Legit.ng, 2022). There are controversies among scholars as to what contribute singly or jointly to students' poor academic performance. However, the researcher considers the effect of adolescent period as the possible cause of discouraging students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Oyo east local government area due to the fact that adolescence has been described as 'a period of stress and storm' and majority (if not all) of the students in senior secondary schools are adolescents – hence, the gap in knowledge that the study intends to fill.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The specific objectives of the study of the study included:

1. to ascertain parental concerns on the growth, development and academic performance of adolescents in public senior secondary schools in Oyo east local government area;
2. to find out whether peer influence negatively affect academic performance of public senior secondary school students in Oyo east local government area;
3. to investigate if stress significantly affect the academic performance of public senior secondary school students in Oyo east local government area; and
4. to examine if there is any significant difference in the academic performance of male and female public senior secondary school students in Oyo east local government area.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the parents' concerns on the growth, development and academic performance of adolescents in public

senior secondary schools in Oyo east local government area?

2. Does peer influence negatively affect academic performance of public senior secondary school students in Oyo east local government area?
3. Does stress significantly affect the academic performance of public senior secondary school students in Oyo east local government area?
4. What is the significant difference in the academic performance of male and female public senior secondary school students in Oyo east local government area?

METHODOLOGY

Design

Survey design was adopted for the study because survey method focuses on the entire population and captures accurately the significant characteristics of the population that are fundamental to the research without manipulating any variable (Animasaun, 2012).

Population and Sample

The target population for the study comprised all five thousand and sixty six (5,066) students in public senior secondary schools in Oyo east local government area (SS I - 1,720 + SS II - 1,635 + SS III - 1,711 = 5,066 students); and all eleven (11) public senior secondary schools in Oyo east local government area of Oyo state, Nigeria (Oyo State Bureau of Statistics, 2019).

A multi-stage sampling technique was used for the study. At stage one, simple random sampling technique was used to choose one hundred and seventy two (172) SS I students (10% of 1,720), one hundred and sixty four (164) SS II students (10.03% of 1,635) and one hundred and seventy two (172) SS III students (10.05% of 1,711) totaling five hundred and eight (508) public senior secondary school students (10.03% of 5,066) for the study. At stage two, simple random sampling technique was used to choose five (5) public senior secondary schools out of the eleven (11) public senior secondary schools in Oyo east local government area. At stage three, one hundred and two (102) students were purposely chosen from four (04) senior secondary schools ($102 \times 4 = 408$), and one hundred (100) students from one of the randomly selected senior secondary schools in the local government area amounting to five

hundred and eight (408 + 100 = 508) senior secondary school students.

Instrument for Data Collection

A structured questionnaire was constructed using Likert type items with four response options of strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree for data collection. The questionnaire had two sections. Section A contained demographic information on the respondents, while section B had question items that the respondents appraised based on Likert four response options. The structured questionnaire was named "Questionnaire on the Effects of the Adolescent Period on Students' Academic Performance in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Oyo East Local Government Area (QEAPSAPSPS)" and administered on five hundred and twenty (508) randomly chosen SS I, SS II and SS III students in the five (5) randomly chosen public senior secondary schools in Oyo east local government area.

The validity of the instrument was conducted by three (03) experts in the fields of personnel management and human psychology. The reliability co-efficient of the instrument was .92 in the test – retest analysis.

Procedure of Data Collection

The instrument was administered personally by the researcher on the respondents with the help of three research assistants who had been trained for the exercise, and who were teachers in public secondary schools in Oyo east local government area. All the five hundred and eight (508) copies of the instrument administered on respondents were properly filled and returned for analysis.

Method(s) of Data Analysis

The research questions were structured on a four point Likert type scale. In order to score the scale, each answer or response to the research questions was given a number from 4 to 1 – Strongly Agree (SD), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD). Weighted mean was calculated for each table based on the respondents' responses to each item and was used to evaluate whether to accept or reject each research question.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: What are the parents' concerns on the growth, development and academic performance of adolescent students in public senior secondary schools in Oyo east local government area?

Table 2: Level of parents' concerns on the growth, development and academic performance of adolescent students in public senior secondary schools in Oyo east local government area.

S/N	Statement	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	Mean x	Decision
1.	My parents are too anxious about my academic performance.	148 28%	205 40%	111 22%	52 10%	2.85	Accepted
2.	My parents feel concerned about my accelerated physical growth.	160 31%	220 43%	84 17%	44 9%	2.97	Accepted
3.	My parents expect adult-like behaviours from me.	150 30%	250 49%	78 15%	30 6%	3.02	Accepted
4.	My parents place a lot of responsibilities on my shoulder.	138 27%	262 52%	82 16%	26 5%	3.00	Accepted
Weighted Mean						2.96	

From the table above, a computed weighted mean value of 2.96 was considered significant and accepted for table 2 in response to research question 1 and any mean that falls below 2.96 would be considered not significant and rejected. The analysis of the level of parents' concerns on the growth, development and academic performance of adolescent students in public senior secondary schools in

Oyo east local government area presented in table 2 indicated that the mean values of items 1, 2, 3 and 4 were greater than 2.96 and decision on each of the items was accepted. This implied that the level of parents' concerns on the growth, development and academic performance of adolescent students in public senior secondary schools in Oyo east local government area was very high.

Research Question 2: Does peer influence negatively affect academic performance of public senior secondary school students in Oyo east local government area?

Table 3: Influence of peers on academic performance of public senior secondary school students in Oyo east local government area.

S/N	Statement	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	Mean x	Decision
1.	I frequently engage in group discussions with my classmates.	140 28%	260 51%	82 16%	26 5%	3.01	Accepted
2.	I regularly study in the school library with my peers.	130 25.5%	254 50%	94 18.5%	30 6%	2.95	Accepted
3.	I often attend night parties with my friends.	92 18%	136 27%	208 41%	72 14%	2.48	Rejected
4.	I strongly detest copying notes from the chalkboard.	90 18%	160 31%	198 39%	60 12%	2.55	Rejected
Weighted Mean						2.74	

From the table 3 above, a computed weighted mean value of 2.74 was considered significant and accepted in response to research question 2 while those means below 2.74 were considered not significant and rejected. The analysis of the influence of peers on academic performance of public senior secondary school students in Oyo east local government area presented in table 3 indicated that the mean values of items 1 and 2 were greater than 2.74 which was the computed weighted mean for table 3 and the decision on each of the items was accepted while items 3

and 4 had mean values less than the weighted mean of 2.74 and the decisions on the items were rejected. This implied that peers had a great deal of influence on academic performance of public senior secondary school students in Oyo east local government area.

Research Question 3: Does stress significantly affect the academic performance of public senior secondary school students in Oyo east local government area?

Table 4: Influence of stress on academic performance of public senior secondary school students in Oyo east local government area.

S/N	Statement	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	Mean x	Decision
1.	Attending school seems boring to me.	94 19%	160 31%	180 35%	74 15%	2.53	Rejected
2.	I hate wearing school uniform.	102 20%	176 35%	184 36%	46 9%	2.65	Accepted
3.	I feel like going for picnics during school period.	88 17%	140 28%	200 39%	80 16%	2.46	Rejected
4.	I dislike being verbally corrected by my teachers.	96 19%	180 35%	198 39%	34 7%	2.66	Accepted
Weighted Mean						2.57	

From the table 4 above, a computed weighted mean value of 2.57 was considered significant and accepted in response to research question 3 while those means below 2.57 were considered not significant and rejected. The analysis of the influence of stress on academic performance of public senior secondary school students in Oyo east local government area presented in table 4 indicated

that the mean values of items 2 and 4 were greater than 2.57 which was the computed weighted mean for table 4 and the decision on each of the items was accepted while items 1 and 3 had mean values less than the weighted mean of 2.57 and the decisions on the items were rejected. This implied that stress is a contributing factor to poor academic

performance of public senior secondary school students in Oyo east local government area.

performance of male and female public senior secondary school students in Oyo east local government area?

Research Question 4: What is the significant difference in the academic

Table 5: Level of academic performance of male and female public senior secondary school students in Oyo east local government area.

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean x	Decision
		4	3	2	1		
1.	Female adolescent students usually perform better in English language than male students.	118 23%	240 47%	94 19%	56 11%	2.82	Accepted
2.	Male adolescent students often do well in Mathematics than female ones.	110 22%	220 43%	102 20%	76 15%	2.71	Rejected
3.	Male adolescent students seldom take their studies seriously.	98 19%	212 42%	120 24%	78 15%	2.64	Rejected
4.	Female adolescent students are usually regular in the classroom than their male counterparts.	106 21%	244 48%	108 21%	50 10%	2.79	Accepted
Weighted Mean						2.74	

From the table above, a computed weighted mean value of 2.74 was considered significant and accepted for table 5 in response to research question 4 while those means below 2.74 were considered not significant and rejected. The analysis of level of academic performance of male and female public senior secondary school students in Oyo east local government area presented in table 5 indicated that the mean values of items 1 and 4 were greater than 2.74 and decision on each of the items was accepted while items 2 and 3 had mean values less than the weighted mean of 2.74 and the decisions on the items were rejected. This implied that the level of academic performance of male and female public senior secondary school students in Oyo east local government area was not at par.

DISCUSSIONS

The finding showed that the level of parents’ concerns on the growth, development and academic performance of adolescent students in public senior secondary schools in Oyo east local government area was very high and this implies that parents’ of adolescents in public senior secondary schools in Oyo east local government area have great concerns on their growth, development and academic performance. In support of this finding, researchers like Singh and Devgun (2012), Kaur (2013), Rathore and Sangwan (2014), Angwaomadoko (2023), Menyene-Abasi (2023); and Odeyemi (2024) found that adolescents students are more likely to reach

their full potentials when their parents actively support their direction and goals. In the vein, Pinneo and Nolen (2024) conducted a research on parent involvement and students’ academic motivation (performance) and reported that students are very likely to have a stronger academic motivation (performance) with parents who have higher levels of education.

In affirmation to the study’s finding; Okorie (2014) reported that there was a significant relationship among peer pressure and academic performance of school adolescents based on her research finding on the study conducted on relationship among peer pressure, time management and academic performance of in-school adolescents in Umuahia education zone, Abia State, Nigeria. Also, Filade *et al.* (2019) reported the outcome of their study on peer group influence and students’ academic performance and found that peer group has significant influence on students’ academic outcome. However, Fadare *et al.* (2021) in their study on the impact of peer group pressure on the academic performance of adolescent students revealed that there is no association between peer pressure and the academic performance of adolescent students; and this is contrary the findings of the study.

The study’s finding implies that stress is a contributing factor to poor academic performance of public senior secondary school students in Oyo east local government area. Just like the researcher, Saqib and Rehman (2018) also found out in their study that

academic related stress can reduce academic performance, decrease motivation and increase the risk of school dropout among secondary school students. This is also in agreement with the finding of the study conducted by Pascoe *et al.* (2020) on the impact of stress on students in secondary school and higher education where they reported that stress relating to education has demonstrated negative impact on students' learning capacity and academic performance. Nkiru (2021) in his study on stress management and secondary school students' academic performance reported that low stressed students are more likely to succeed in school (have high academic performance). Furthermore, Barbayannis *et al.* (2022) established that there is a significant correlation between worse academic stress and poor mental well in students which will resultantly affect their academic performance negatively. Akanpaadgi *et al.* (2023) further revealed that stress has a negative impact on students' academic performance and recommended that guidance counselors should be encouraged to stem the tide.

Okorie (2014) on her research on relationship among peer pressure, time management and academic performance of in-school adolescents in Umuahia education zone, Abia State, Nigeria found out that female adolescent students performed slightly higher than the male in-school adolescents academically. Also, Myfanwy *et al.* (2015) on their research on gender differences in adolescents' academic motivation and classroom behaviour found out that girls generally have higher levels of academic motivation (and resultantly, performed better) than boys. The study conducted by Ahmed *et al.* (2021) also revealed that that female students have higher academic achievement than male students in Biology. All these findings align with the study's finding except the study conducted by Wrigley-Asante *et al.* (2023) where it was reported that reported that academic performance of males was better than that of females at the senior high school in Ghana.

CONCLUSION

Education is capital intensive as it consumes a lot of resources both from the government and individual parent's ends. So students (especially, secondary school adolescent students) should justify the huge resources (human and material) usually

expended on their education by being wholeheartedly committed to their studies which will be feasible through their academic achievement. However, due to the fact that majority of the secondary school students fall into the adolescence period, they must be well counseled and monitored so that they do not derail in their pursuit of academic activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the findings, the researcher offers the following recommendations:

1. Parents should feel concern about the growth, development and academic performance of their adolescent children;
2. Adolescent students should be very mindful of the kind of friends or peers they move with because peer influence has a tremendous effect on them; and
3. School counsellors, teachers, administrators and other executors of the educational policy should feel concern about adolescence's period.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declared no conflict of interest.

Acknowledgements: The authors acknowledge the support received from senior colleagues like Drs. P. K. Oso, and R. O. Adebisi of the Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, Oyo State, Nigeria who edited the work to its present standard. Mrs. B. A. Salami of the College Registry, Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo is equally acknowledged for her secretarial inputs.

Disclaimer Statements: This work is the original thought of the researchers, though works of some scholars were also consulted and duly referenced.

Authorship Levels of Contributions:
Akinola Gbadebo Animasaun: coined the topic, drafted and proof read the introduction.
Mr. Abiodun Eniola Bello worked on data modification and analysis, while **Mrs. Fausat Motunrayo Abisoye** and **Miss Abiodun Moridiyah Animasaun** shared and collected the data used in the study and worked on references.

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