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Relationship Between Adverse Childhood Experiences, Family Type, Socioeconomic Status of Parents and Alienation Among Adolescents

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Abstract

The present study examined the relationship between adverse childhood experiences, family type, socioeconomic status of parents, and alienation among adolescents. Participants were one hundred and forty-eight (148) adolescents comprising males (73) and females (75). Participants were randomly selected from SS1, SS2, and SS3 secondary school students. Their ages ranged from 13 to 17 years with a mean age of 15.26 (SD = 1.03). A cross-sectional design was adopted. Two instruments were used for data collection. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Questionnaire and The Rowlands Parental Alienation Scale (RPAS). Three hypotheses were tested. Stepwise multiple regression was the main statistic used for data analysis. Results of Stepwise Multiple Regression analysis showed that Adverse Childhood Experiences significantly predicted alienation among adolescents. The result showed that family type and socioeconomic status of parents did not significantly predict alienation among adolescents. A practical implication of the findings is that adolescents who grow up in families where they are exposed to adverse childhood experiences are more likely to be alienated. Limitations and Suggestions for further studies were equally made.

Keywords: Adverse Childhood Experiences, Family Type, Socioeconomic Status of Parents, Alienation and Adolescents

Introduction

Adolescence is a transition period from childhood to adult life. During this age, many changes occur like increased peer relations, autonomy, striving for social identity, and more sensitivity to social issues. Research review revealed that social alienation was observed among 53% of adolescents who often felt alone and depressed (Dixon et al., 2013). Psychological alienation is an significant concept in the study of adolescents' health and behavior (Rayce et al., 2018). Adolescents who are suffering from social alienation, are physically present but mentally away from the external world and they exhibit aggressiveness and deviant behaviours. Alienation is common among teenagers and can be a side effect of attachment to a parent or caregiver in early childhood or big changes in their comfort zone.

It has been described among adolescents as '...to lack a sense of belonging, to feel cut off from family, friends, school or work – the four worlds of childhood' by Bronfenbrenner (Bethell, et.al., 2014) and is a serious psychological strain for a young person. Seeman (1959) conceptualized alienation and identified six dimensions on the basis of how they had been used empirically and theoretically. The six dimensions focus on personal experiences; powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, self-estrangement, cultural estrangement, and social isolation. Alienation has been measured in various ways and no golden standard exists, although most scales take their starting point in Seeman's conceptualization. Alienation is well associated with deviant behavior such as drug use, alcohol use, crime, truancy, and suicide (Rayce, 2012).

Alienation transpires when an individual retreats or becomes separated from their surroundings or interpersonal connections. Those displaying signs of alienation frequently distance themselves from loved ones or societal bonds. Additionally, they may exhibit emotions of detachment and estrangement, even from their own feelings. Experiencing exclusion from social circles to which you are a part of, such as being shunned by neighbors due to a breach of societal norms. Social alienation refers to an individual's sense of detachment from a group, whether it be friends, family, or the broader society, with which the person has a connection. This form of alienation has been characterized as "a state within social connections marked by (1) limited integration or shared values and (2) considerable distance or isolation, either (3a) among individuals or (3b) between an individual and a community or workplace group" (Ankony & Kelley, 1999). It represents a sociological idea formulated by various classical and modern theorists. This notion serves various purposes within specific disciplines. It can pertain to an individual's psychological condition (from a subjective perspective) and a particular form of social relationship (from an objective standpoint).

Self-hatred is a particularly troubling characteristic observed in alienated children. Their feelings of self-hatred and depression stem from a sense of being unloved by one parent and the resulting separation from that parent (Warshak, 2015b). Moreover, various studies indicate that these alienated children display significant psychosocial issues, including disrupted social-emotional development, a lack of trust in relationships, social anxiety, and social isolation. As adults, they tend to enter partnerships at an earlier age, exhibit a higher likelihood of divorce or dissolution of cohabiting unions, and are more prone to having children outside of any partnership. Additionally, they are more inclined to become alienated from their children (Ben-Ami & Baker, 2012).

Alienated children are also more prone to truancy and early school departure. They have a diminished likelihood of achieving academic and professional qualifications in adulthood, often facing unemployment, low incomes, and reliance on social assistance. Their lives often appear to lack direction, marked by difficulties in impulse control and struggles with mental health, addiction, and self-harm (Otowa, et al., 2014). Furthermore, they are more likely to engage in smoking, alcohol consumption, and drug abuse, frequently succumbing to behavioral addictions. Additionally, they tend to engage in promiscuous behavior, neglecting contraception and becoming parents at a young age.

Some scholars describe alienation among adolescents as '*...to lack a sense of belonging, to feel cut off from family, friends, school or work – the four worlds of childhood*' by Bronfenbrenner (Bethell, et.al., 2014) and is a serious psychological strain for a young person. Positive youth development greatly relies on encouraging supportive social connections and empowerment (Chapman et al. in 2004). The literature underscores the adverse psychosocial outcomes associated with social withdrawal and rejection during adolescence, (Kelly-Irving, 2013; Chartier, 2010). Certain studies suggest that the emotional impacts are more pronounced in adolescents when compared to adults (Duke et al. in 2010). The concept of alienation holds significance in the examination of adolescent behavior and health because the emotions of alienation may indicate a living situation that hinders healthy development during adolescence. Hence, it is crucial to have reliable measurement scales for assessing alienation among adolescents. Alienation is approached as both a psychological and a sociological concept. The sociological perspective centers on the social processes contributing to alienation, whereas the psychological viewpoint focuses on the individual's subjective sense of alienation (Appleyard et al. in 2005). There is no universal definition of alienation, as the term encompasses various

ideas, leading to potential uncertainties about its meaning, classifying it as an ambiguous concept (Appleyard et al., 2005).

In psychological research, the understanding of alienation often relies on Seeman's conceptualization (Flouri, 2011). Seeman's approach involves identifying and describing different forms of alienation based on theoretical and empirical applications, with the goal of clarifying these variants to enhance the use of the concept (Appleyard et al., 2005). This conceptualization comprises six alternative variants of alienation: powerlessness, normlessness, meaninglessness, self-estrangement, cultural estrangement, and social isolation, all of which reflect aspects of an individual's personal expectations and values (Appleyard et al., 2005). Seeman suggests that the study of alienation should address its specific variants rather than treating it as a collective measure (Lorenzo-Blanco, 2013). Since the six alienation variants are considered alternatives, there is no necessity to combine them when studying alienation. Furthermore, there is no established theoretical relationship among the alienation variants, although some variants may be related to each other (Appleyard et al., 2005).

Alienation serves as a predictive factor for various deviant behaviors such as truancy, bullying, drug use, crime, and suicide (Fan & Chen, 2012; Conger, 2010). Additionally, it is associated with psychological and health-related outcomes, including physical and psychological symptoms, alcohol use, drunkenness, reduced physical activity, and unhealthy eating habits (Evans et al., 2013; Edwards et al., 2003). While alienation has relevance in health-related research, it has not been extensively studied in this particular group of participants. A contribution to the understanding of alienation involves the development of measurement tools aligned with Seeman's conceptualization, focusing specifically on three independent variants of alienation relevant to adolescent health research: feelings of powerlessness, meaninglessness, and social isolation.

Studies indicate a growing connection between Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) – a combination of factors such as abuse, neglect, and household difficulties – and overall poor health throughout one's life. More specifically, a higher count of ACEs has been correlated with feelings of alienation among adolescents, contributing to an elevated likelihood of various health issues, including physical, mental, sexual, and behavioural problems (Bethell et al., 2014). While there is extensive research on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) in certain regions such as the United States, there is a notable scarcity of global data, particularly from low and middle-income countries (LMICs). Limited studies have explored the effects of ACEs on the sense of alienation in young individuals, and even fewer have investigated their impact on the mental health of adolescents.

The categorization of ACEs questions as a construct, index, or scale is a subject of debate. This study aims to fill gaps in existing literature by utilizing ACEs data from the Global Early Adolescent Study (GEAS), which examines factors that make young people susceptible to various forms of adverse experiences. In childhood, the connections between ACEs and health status appear less straightforward. In the global LONGSCAN Study, for instance, there was no relationship at age 12, but somatic complaints were increased at age 14 among those who had encountered 2 or more than 3 ACEs (Felitti, et al., 1998). Nevertheless, correlations have been identified between ACEs and behavioural issues in adolescents, stemming from difficulties such as alienation, stress, and mental health challenges in college students (Appleyard, et al., 2005; Duke, et al., 2010). However, the prevalence of ACEs is higher in certain global contexts, such as 72% of adolescent respondents reporting four or more ACEs in a study in Malawi (Kidman, et. al., 2020) compared with about 64% of respondents in the United States.

Nonetheless, similar studies in Europe, Asia, and Latin America have generally found similar relationships between ACEs and poor health outcomes (Hughes, et. al., 2017) with alienation as an after effect. ACEs are linked to chronic health problems, mental illness, substance use problems and violence in adolescence. ACEs can also negatively impact education, job opportunities, and earning potential (Merrick et al., 2019). However, ACEs can be prevented to avoid further escalating detrimental health outcomes in adolescents. This study aims to examine how ACEs and alienation among adolescents are related.

The upbringing within a family can lead to alienation in adolescents. Alienation manifests when an individual distances themselves or is isolated from both their surroundings and others. Those exhibiting signs of alienation may reject close relationships and societal connections. Additionally, they might display a sense of detachment and estrangement, even from their own emotions. Alienation is a complex, yet common condition that can cause serious challenges in families. The primary and crucial set of factors shaping a child's development is the family. This initial social context, where an infant is born and begins the process of learning, responding, and behaving, is known as the Family environment. The term "family environment" is composed of the words "Family" and "Environment."

A family comprises individuals connected through marriage, blood, or adoption, engaging in the processes of procreation and child-rearing. Within this unit, family members assume social roles, contributing to the creation and preservation of social culture. Conversely, the term "environment" refers to the entirety of surrounding elements, encompassing all biological, physical, and social aspects on Earth or within habitable spaces beyond the Earth's atmosphere. According to Lakhota and Dubey (2020), the family is composed of individuals who care for us, play a vital role in shaping the development of adolescents, and impart life lessons to them. They view the family environment as a system where the behavior and relationships among all family members are interdependent. A deficiency in this interdependent quality of relationships may lead to adolescents feeling alienated.

An enriching physical setting, support for accomplishment, and expressions of affection are consistently associated with improved performance in children, whereas their absence can give rise to problems like alienation. The surroundings in which an individual is raised significantly affects them. Among the various environmental factors, family plays a particularly significant role in shaping the initial formative years of an adolescent's life. The family environment is closely connected to the features of an adolescent's personal development and social interactions. While the effects may vary between males and females, decreased family cohesion and heightened conflict between parents can unintentionally create family settings linked to heightened feelings of loneliness. These feelings may, in turn, be connected to issues in adolescents' social interactions, such as social anxiety and avoidance. Cudak (2015) claimed that the family forms a unique social, emotional, biological, and axiological setting that is difficult to substitute with other environments. The importance of the family in an adolescent's development, particularly in the initial stages, is remarkably significant. Negative occurrences in the family environment expressed through indifference or even partially conscious emotional alienation, can elicit feelings of alienation in a child. Kumari and Kumar (2017) demonstrated that students experiencing highly restrictive parental behavior tend to experience increased alienation, while those with extremely permissive parents may become normless, representing a dimension of alienation.

Another variable indicated to play a role in adolescents' alienation is the socioeconomic status of parents. The socio-economic status is recognized as a significant stress factor for everyone

and holds an important role in the academic achievements of students (Jain, 2017). It is commonly defined as the social standing or class of an individual or a group. According to the American Psychological Association (APA), Socioeconomic status is defined as “a measure of one's combined economic and social status that focuses on the three common measures, education, income, and occupation” (Sonali, 2016). On this basis, individuals are categorized into various classes and statuses. Studies in this area suggest that children from households and communities with low socioeconomic status tend to acquire academic skills at a slower pace than those from higher socioeconomic status groups (Morgan et al., 2009). Many students from low socioeconomic backgrounds experience alienation, emotional distress, and social instability. The absence of emotional support can result in feelings of alienation, inadequacy, depression, anxiety, and social instability, leading to a sense of insecurity during early childhood years (Van et.al, 2004). Parents residing in low socioeconomic status (SES) communities may lack the financial means to provide resources like books, computers, or tutoring services, which are essential for fostering a positive literacy environment. Consequently, students may experience stress due to insufficient study resources (Sonali, 2016), potentially leading to feelings of alienation. Literature search indicated a dearth of research of this kind especially among adolescents who are victims of alienation. This is why it is necessary to find out the relationship between the socioeconomic status of parents and alienation among adolescents. This is because stress from a shift in the socioeconomic status of parents may create some negative association with alienation and socio-economic status.

Statement of the Problem

Adolescence represents a stage that sometimes faces serious challenges. Among these challenges associated with the adolescent stage is alienation which negatively impacts them. Worrisome is that alienation can hinder development and good functioning among adolescents. Unfortunately, alienation and the havoc it has caused adolescents and families in this part of the world have been understudied or overlooked. The present study believes that addressing the challenges associated with alienation among adolescents who represent the future of Nigerian society and families is a plus to knowledge and is research-driven. Indications are that some variables like adverse childhood experiences, family type, and socioeconomic status of parents may be playing huge roles in the way adolescents are exposed to alienation. The association between adverse childhood experiences and alienation is that unfriendly experiences may lead to it. The nature of the family an adolescent is raised in will hugely play a role, as well as the family's socioeconomic status. In addressing the problems, the following research questions are stated to guide the study.

- 1) Will adverse childhood experiences significantly predict alienation among adolescents?
- 2) Will family type significantly predict alienation among adolescents?
- 3) Will the socioeconomic status of parents significantly predict alienation among adolescents?

Purpose of the Study

The main aim of the present study is to examine if there is any relationship between adverse childhood experience, family type, socioeconomic status of parents, and alienation among adolescents. Specifically, the study aims to;

- 1) Determine whether adverse childhood experiences will significantly predict alienation among adolescents.
- 2) Find out whether family type will significantly predict alienation among adolescents.
- 3) Investigate whether the socioeconomic status of parents will significantly predict alienation among adolescents.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested in the study;

- 1) Adverse childhood experiences will significantly predict alienation among adolescents.
- 2) Family type will significantly predict alienation among adolescents.
- 3) Socioeconomic status of parents will significantly predict alienation among adolescents.

Method

Participants

One hundred and forty-eight (148) adolescents comprising seventy-five (75) females and fifty (50) males participated in the study. The participants were drawn from SS1, SS2, and SS3 secondary school students. Participants' age ranged from 13 years to 17 years with a mean age of 15.26 years (SD = 1.03). Convenient sampling technique was used to select the participants. Information on participants' demographics such as religion, ethnic group, and birth position was equally obtained using the questionnaire. One hundred and thirty-three (133) are from nuclear families while only fifteen (15) are from polygamous families. All the participants indicated that their religion is Christianity. One hundred and forty-three (143) are Igbos, one (1) is Yoruba while the remaining four (4) indicated they are from other ethnic groups that are not Hausa. Fifty-two (52) participants are the first child, eighteen (18) are the last child, seven (7) are the only child and seventy-one (71) belong to other birth positions.

Instruments

A questionnaire comprising demographic information and two instruments namely, the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Questionnaire and The Rowlands Parental Alienation Scale (RPAS) was used for the data collection.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Questionnaire (Felitti et al., 1998)

The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Questionnaire (Felitti et al., 1998) is a 10-item measure used to measure childhood trauma. The questionnaire assesses 10 types of childhood trauma measured in the ACE Study. Five are personal: physical abuse, verbal abuse, sexual abuse, physical neglect, and emotional neglect. Five are related to other family members: a parent who's an alcoholic, a mother who's a victim of domestic violence, a family member in jail, a family member diagnosed with a mental illness, and the disappearance of a parent through divorce, death, or abandonment. The instrument was subjected to a pilot study and the result indicated that it is valid and reliable with Cronbach's alpha of .68.

The Rowlands Parental Alienation Scale (RPAS)

The Rowlands Parental Alienation Scale (RPAS) was developed and administered to the study sample to measure the presence and severity of parental alienation. The RPAS was designed to capture the eight manifestations posited by Gardner as distinct domains. An item pool was generated to reflect these domains, items were shared with recognized experts in the field, and as a result of the experts' review, redundant items and items not related to the construct of parental alienation were removed. The final item count was 42 (see Table 2). A measure was designed using a Likert-type scale response format asking respondents to rate each item on a 5-point scale: 0 = never, 1 = rarely, 2 = sometimes, 3 = often and 4 = almost always. The Baker and Darnall (2007) 33-item survey was administered to measure convergent validity. The survey was designed to assess the presence of the eight manifestations of parental alienation in children identified as severely alienated. Responses are coded on a 5-point frequency scale or a 5-point quantity scale. Baker and Darnall (2007) found that their survey supported Gardner's

formulation of eight manifestations that comprise parental alienation. However, no reliability or validity data were reported for the survey. The Child–Parent Relationship Scale - CPRS (Pianta, 1992) was administered for the purpose of establishing discriminant validity. The CPRS is a self-report instrument that assesses the parents' perceptions of their relationships with their children using 15 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale. The ratings are summed into groups of items that comprise conflict and closeness subscales. Driscoll and Pianta (2011) found many statistically significant correlations between the CPRS (parent reports) and observer reports. Dyer et al. (2017) found that the CPRS closeness scale demonstrated measurement equivalence across time and both reliability and validity; the conflict scale showed both convergent and predictive validity. The instrument was subjected to a pilot study with Nigerian participants. Result of the pilot study indicated that it is valid and reliable with Cronbach's alpha of .72.

Procedure

Researchers obtained permission from the principal and management of the school selected for the study through an official letter from the Department of Sociology and Psychology, Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu. The principal signed informed consent on behalf of the participants as they are not yet ethically due to sign the consent form. Researchers created rapport with the participants before administering the questionnaires. The rapport took the form of explaining the nature of the study, the aim, and the need to participate as well as the usefulness of its findings in advancing knowledge about alienation, and how to curb it. Participants were assured that their responses would be treated with confidentiality and that participation in the study was voluntary. The questionnaires were administered alone by the researchers and a research assistant. Completed questionnaires were collected after the participants had filled them correctly, and each questionnaire was scrutinized properly at the point of collection. Out of 150 questionnaires administered to the participants and returned, 148 questionnaires that were properly filled after cross-checking were used for data analysis. After collecting the questionnaires from the participants, they were individually thanked for participating and contributing to knowledge. Questions from the participants pertaining to the items in the instruments were properly addressed.

Design/Statistics

The design of the study is a cross-sectional design. Regression analysis was employed to analyze the data. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was equally employed in the data analyses.

Result

The data obtained from respondents were analyzed by computing the means, standard deviations, and correlations among the study variables. Thereafter, to test the hypotheses, Hierarchical Multiple Regression was conducted in which alienation was the dependent variable. The variables were entered into the equation in steps. In the first step of the equation, demographic variables (gender, age, ethnic group, and birth position) were entered in order to control for the likely impact they may have on adolescent's alienation. Adverse childhood experience was entered in step 2 of the equation, socioeconomic status of parents was entered in step 3 while the third independent variable – family type was entered in step 4 of the equation all in a bid to test the extent to which they serve as determinants of adolescent's alienation.

Table 1: Correlations of demographic variables, adverse childhood experience, socioeconomic status of parents, family type and alienation among adolescents

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1 Gender	1.51	.50	-							
2 Age	15.26	1.03		-						
3 Ethnic Group	1.10	.51	.19**							
4 Birth position	2.66	1.38	.02	-.06	-					
5 Adverse Experience	2.97	2.16	.15*	.01	.06	-				
6 Socio-economic Status of parents	2.27	.52	.03	.01	-.03	.11	-			
7 Family Type	1.10	.30	-.03	.09	.03	-.02	.07	-		
8 Alienation	36.15	3.90	.02	.03	-.06	-.10	.14*	-.01	-	
			-.15*	-.03	-.07	-.02	.19**	.09	.03	-

**p < .01; *p < .05

Result of table one above showed that amongst the demographic variables (gender, age, ethnic group, and birth position), only gender has significant relationship with adolescent alienation ($r = -.15, p < .05$). However, age, ethnic group, and birth position all had non-significant relationships with adolescent's alienation. Results of the correlation coefficient equally showed that adverse childhood experience was positively significantly associated with adolescent alienation ($r = .19, p < .01$). This implies adolescents who grew up in families and places where they are exposed to adverse childhood experiences are more prone to being alienated. Meanwhile, the socioeconomic status of parents and family type had a non-significant relationship with adolescent's alienation. Gender had a significant relationship with age ($r = -.19, p < .01$) and birth position ($r = .15, p < .05$). Adverse childhood experience had significant relationship with family type ($r = .14, p < .05$).

Table 2: Hierarchical multiple regression predicting adolescent's alienation from adverse childhood experience, socioeconomic status of parents and family type.

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Gender	-.16	-.16	-.16	-.16
Age	-.05	-.05	-.06	-.06
Ethnic Group	-.06	-.06	-.06	-.06
Birth Position	.01	-.02	-.01	-.01
Adverse Childhood Experience		.19*	.18*	.18*
Socioeconomic Status of Parents			.08	.08
Family Type				.02
R	.19	.27*	.28	.28
R ²	.04	.07*	.08	.08
R ² change	.04	.04*	.01	.01
F value	F(8, 147)=.75	F(9, 124)=.32	F(10, 124)=.35	F(11, 124)=.43

Note: *= $p < .05$, ***= $p < .001$ (significant). Gender= 0-male, 1-female

The results of the Hierarchical Multiple Regression in Table 2 above indicate that the demographic variables (gender, age, ethnic group, and birth position) entered in step 1 of the

equation were not significant predictors of adolescent's alienation. Adverse childhood experience entered in step 2 of the equation, accounted for a statistically significant 27% variance as a predictor of adolescent's alienation ($\Delta R^2 = .27, p < .05$), however making a unique and statistically significant positive impact in predicting alienation among adolescents ($\beta = .19, p < .05$). The more adolescents are exposed to adverse childhood experiences, the more they are being alienated. The socioeconomic status of parents and family type entered in steps 3 and 4 respectively were not significant predictors of adolescent's alienation. This implies that the two variables are not potential factors that play a role in adolescents being alienated.

Discussion

The study investigated the relationship between adverse childhood experiences, family type, socioeconomic status of parents, and alienation among adolescents. The result of the study shows that adverse childhood experiences significantly predicted alienation among adolescents. Exposure to different forms of adverse childhood experiences makes adolescents prone to alienation. The hypothesis, that adverse childhood experiences will be a significant predictor of alienation among adolescents was confirmed. According to Bethell, et.al., (2014) a greater number of ACEs has been associated with alienation among adolescents leading to an increased risk of many physical, mental, sexual, and behavioral health problems. The result agrees with the view of some previous researchers like, Duke, et. al., (2010) who indicated a significant relationship between adverse childhood experiences and alienation among adolescents. The finding is positive implying that adolescents who experience more ACE are more likely to be alienated in their families and in society. The prevalence of ACEs has been found to be higher in certain global contexts, such as 75% of adolescent respondents reporting at least one ACE in a study in the Philippines (Masten, et. al., 1999) compared with about 64% of respondents in the United States. Nonetheless, similar studies in Africa, Asia, and Latin America have generally found similar relationships between ACEs and poor health outcomes (Banyard, et. al., 2001) with alienation as after effect. ACEs are linked to chronic health problems, mental illness, and substance use problems in adolescence. ACEs can also negatively impact education, job opportunities, and earning potential (Merrick et al., 2019).

Trauma theory attempts to understand the different ways by which traumatic occurrences are demonstrated, processed, exposed, and repressed throughout an individual's body texts (Bloom, 2019). According to the theory, the human brain has evolved to function as an integrated whole, with mind and body acting in concert, constantly adapting to a wide range of ecological challenges (Bloom, 2019). The complex physiological mechanisms that have developed to accommodate this enormous flexibility are generically known as the human stress response. In the last several decades, the study of traumatic stress—capturing the most extreme mobilization of the stress response has garnered a significant body of knowledge and research. Stress, adversity, and trauma affects everyone, and the earlier it starts in life, the longer it lasts, the more frequently it happens, the more distrust develops, and the more challenging and long-lasting the effects will be. It is because of this complexity and the intersection with so many other dimensions of science and the humanities that it has become possible for a unified field theory of human behaviour to begin to emerge (Bloom, 2019).

The third hypothesis which stated that socioeconomic status of parents will be a significant predictor of adolescent's alienation did not agree with the result of the finding as it did not significantly predict alienation among adolescents. This implies that the experience of alienation among adolescents is not determined by the nature of the socioeconomic status of parents. This may be explained on the premise that alienation may happen irrespective of parent's economic status. In contrast, socioeconomic Status has also been considered to be an

important stressor amongst all and plays an important role in the academic performance of students (Jain, 2017) and many students from a low socioeconomic background are found to suffer from alienation, emotional trauma, and social instability (Van et.al, 2004). The lack of emotional nurturing can lead to feelings of alienation, inadequacy, depression, anxiety, and social instability leading to insecurity during the early childhood years (Van et.al, 2004).

The second hypothesis which stated that family type will be a significant predictor of adolescent's alienation was not confirmed by the result of the finding as it did not significantly predict alienation among adolescents. The finding indicates that it is not the type of family an adolescent comes from that determines the experience of alienation. In support, a stimulating physical environment, encouragement of achievement, and affection are repeatedly linked to better performance of children while lack of it engenders issues like alienation. Although some scholars argue that alienation may be caused by the type of family in which an adolescent is raised. Alienation occurs when a person withdraws or becomes isolated from their environment or from other people. People who show symptoms of alienation will often reject loved ones or society.

According to Lakhotia and Dubey (2020), the family consists of people who look after us, play an essential role in the upbringing of adolescents, and teach them lessons in life. The family environment is considered a system where the behaviour and relationship among all family members are interdependent, and a lack of this interdependent quality relationship may result in adolescents experiencing alienation.

Implications of the Study

The findings of this research have some theoretical and practical implications. The assumptions and postulations of the theories of alienation, adverse childhood experiences, and their relationships among people as adolescents are further improved by the findings of the present study. Adverse childhood experience is a significant predictor of adolescent alienation. The practical implications of this finding can be viewed in different ways. First, constant exposure of an adolescent to adverse childhood experiences makes the adolescent prone to alienation. Another implication of this finding is that ACE has been identified as a potential factor in the explanation of alienation among adolescents. More so, both ACE and Alienation affect the well-being and good functioning of adolescents. The finding has equally shown that both the socioeconomic status of parents and the family type an adolescent comes from are not major functions of being alienated. Therefore, adolescents of parents of different economic statuses and family types may experience alienation.

Despite that the result of this study is highly relevant, it is worthy of mention that it is not without limitations. One limitation of this study is the number of participants which is too small to be used for generalization thereby limiting the external validity of the study's findings. Also, the study was conducted in only one secondary school therefore its findings cannot be used for a wider generalization. Similarly, research of this kind would have been better if conducted in government secondary schools with adolescents of wider coverage of different kinds of experiences.

Suggestions for Further Research

This study has proven to be an important area of study for researchers, practitioners, and institutions interested in adolescent's health and well-being in society. It is important to note that research in the area of alienation among adolescents in Nigerian settings is lacking. Thus,

this study suggests more attention to be given to alienation in order to understand how it affects the growth of adolescents. Future researchers interested in alienation should consider concepts such as parent's childhood experiences, family support, peer influence, and environmental impacts.

Conclusion

Adverse experiences an adolescent is exposed to earlier in life are still the most important factors causing alienation. Both alienation and ACE affect the well-being and good functioning of adolescents. It is important to note that alienation is not caused by the type of family an adolescent comes from nor the level of economic status of the parents. However, addressing alienation and its causes among adolescents impacts families and society positively.

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