

The Relationship between Adolescents Family Structures' and their Psychosocial Adjustment Among Bate Senior Secondary School Students, Haramaya, Ethiopia

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Abstract: The present study examined the relationship between adolescent's family structures' and their psychosocial adjustment among Bate senior secondary school students. To obtain the required information randomly selected 112 (50 males and 62 females) adolescent students from (intact 72 and non-intact 42) were participated in the study. Data were collected employing psychosocial adjustment scale that was adapted from previous versions. Data were analyzed using a blend of both descriptive such as mean and standard deviation and inferential statistical methods such as Pearson product moment correlation coefficient, two way ANOVA and pair wise comparison (Scheffe test) were employed. Findings indicated that there is a statistically significant relationship between adolescent's family structures and their psychosocial adjustment. It means that, adolescent from intact families found to be better in their psychosocial adjustment than adolescents from non-intact families. Male and female adolescents from intact families are found to be better in their psychosocial adjustment over adolescents from non-intact families. Males are found to be better in their psychosocial adjustment than female adolescents regardless of family structures' they came from. Attempts were made to explain findings within the existing ecological and socio-cultural practices of the study area. Recommendations were also suggested as to how to properly address the gaps noted in this research.

Keywords: Adolescence; family structure and psychosocial adjustment.

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a period during which a number of physical, psychological and social influences are brought to bear on the individuals. It is also a time when a great adjustment is needed for the individual wellbeing [1]. Home environment (family structure) is the most significant among other factors in influencing adolescents' psychosocial adjustment in several ways.

The family which plays an important role in the psychosocial development of adolescents is undergoing structural transformations [2]. Structurally, a family is either intact or broken. Broken family in this context is one that is not structurally intact for various reasons. Single parent family consists of one parent raising one or more children on his or her own. Often single parent family is a mother with her children, although there are single fathers as well. Usually individuals who end their previous marriage in divorce choose to get remarried and this creates stepfamily, which involves two separate families merging into one new unit [3]. At present about half of all marriages in United States and many other countries end in divorce. Even in Ethiopian context, as the Ethiopian Central Statistical Agency [4] indicates, 14 % of adolescents children under the age of 18 live with their only mothers and no fathers; 3% live with their only fathers

and 11% live with neither of their natural parents. These figures tell us that approximately 28% of adolescents are living in non-intact family. This means that large proportion of children's and adolescent would spend at least part of their life live in one parent family, typically with their mothers. Single parents may be the product of divorce or in some other causes like death (widowhood) and long term separation death of parents, divorce, and separation and in which case the family is incomplete [5].

It is noticeable that children's and adolescents make better psychosocial adjustment when they live in a home with two married biological parents Santrock [6, 5]. Santrock also argued that Children and adolescents from non-intact families are poor in their self-esteem, exhibit emotional problems, poor social interactions, less satisfied with their work, this shows that non-intact families' especially single parents are poor in their psychological and social adjustment. Transition in the family structure will lead to psychological tension that will have negative impact on adolescences physical, psychological and social welfare. Leading life in a single parent family has a tremendous effect on adolescent development. For example, children's of single parents showed greater stress, higher aggression and less productive, depression, low self-esteem, low

social interaction [7]. Indeed, the effects of divorce on children's and adolescents emotional wellbeing depends on many different factors including the quality of care they received before divorce and the nature of divorce itself. The negative feeling of the parents toward each other's the more likely is emotional harm to adolescents.

Presence and absence of fathers and mothers in a family has play a remarkable role in children's/ adolescent's development. For example, fathers contribute specific vital things to their children's development like sexual identity, role model of husband/fathers, behavioral skills, self-control, responsibility and higher level of intelligence/problem solving skills. Mothers also offer to their children like nurturance care giving, role modeling, instructing relationship and moral formation [8]. As regard to the role of mother- child attachment in children's wellbeing Bowlby [9] stated that mother child interaction is the most important factor in how human attachment develops. He added that maternal deprivation in infancy could lead to the serious problems in later including juvenile delinquency, affectionless, psychopathy (avoiding opportunities to attachment) and affects the children's overall aspects of later development.

Both parents and children in some single parents home suffer not only the change in family structure but from other sources as well like socio-economic changes also effect parents and children from single parent household. Amato [10] found that children's in single parent families perceived themselves as having less control and less punishment and having autonomy more house hold responsibilities, more conflict with siblings and less family cohesion.

There is evidence that emotional problems are more likely in single parent families' children's. The children's from single parents house hold were more likely to have school adjustment problems. If the parents were divorced acting out behaviors was more common. If the father had died the child was more likely to show moody withdrawal. Father absent boys consistently scored lower than father presents boys on variety of indices of moral development [6]. In support of this idea Allison [7], stated that the adolescent from single parent due to separation or divorce tried to stay out from the family to protect themselves from pain. The withdrawal manifested itself in increased social activities or prolonged period of staying away from home. Children's may feel afraid of future, guilty, who moves out and at both parents. Children's of single parent families due to divorce tend to have more social, academic and behavioral problem than children's from intact homes they may become aggressive, hostile, disruptive disobedient, depressed or withdrawn and may lose interest in school work and social life [10]. In contrast to this idea [11, 12], argued that there is a great deal of similarity than difference between children in

step and single parent families and children in intact families [10], substantial number of stepchildren actually score higher on adjustment measures than the average child in an intact biological family [13], and even if single parent children exhibit problems mainly during a transition period or immediately after their parent's remarriage, most show considerable resilience, and three-quarters have no long-term problems.

As regard to sex difference among adolescent's in their psychosocial adjustment Ferry [14] cited in Amato [10] found that boys from motherless families due to divorce or separation obtained lower arithmetic score than boys from intact families. Girls in mother absent homes due to divorce or separation had lower self-esteem, lower performances, dissatisfaction with others and more depressed than intact family children. On his part [15] stated that fathers involvement, modeling and availability may facilitate adjustment for boys than girls. Because boys most of time waste their times with their fathers which facilitates psychosocial adjustment development for boys than girls. Study on father custody found that fathers custody girls where less feminine, less independent, more demanding than mother custody girls. Boys reported themselves as more depressed than girls Ferry [14, 10].

However in the study area , though problem related with living in single parent family on adolescents' psychosocial adjustment is undeniable no attention has been given for the problem so this study is intended to contribute the to gap. Therefore, it is most reasonable to conduct the present study because of the following justifications:

First, despite the fact that as research studies have been conducted on the effects of family structure demonstrated children and adolescent from single parents have the significant psychosocial problems, the influence of family structure on adolescents' psychosocial adjustment especially single parent family is not well understood in Ethiopia. It is with in this context stressing the overriding importance of the issue that our knowledge of single parent family structure and his impact on adolescents must be set

Second, notwithstanding, as the studies have been conducted in diverse context evidenced, controversial result has been reported, thus, in face of such contradicting findings, it's difficult to take stand, therefore, further study need to be conducted.

Therefore, because of the aforementioned justifications and other factors, it's worth to study the present problem.

In an attempt to address the concerns raised thus far, the following research questions were raised in this study: 1) Is there a statistically significant relationship between adolescents family structures and

their psychosocial adjustment? 2) Is there a statistically significant psychosocial adjustment difference between adolescents from non-intact and intact family 3) Is there a statistically significant psychosocial adjustment difference between male and female adolescents' from different family structures?

METHODS

As mentioned earlier, the purpose of this study is to assess adolescent's family structures' and their psychosocial adjustment among Bate Senior Secondary School Students, Haramaya, Ethiopia. In order to obtain the required information, descriptive survey research design was employed. This section describes, the study site, sampling techniques, instrument of data collection, and procedure followed in data collection.

Study Site

This study was conducted in a school located in Haramaya Town. Haramaya is an East-central Ethiopian town located 510 KMs East of Addis Ababa. Located within the Hararge Zone of the Oromia Region, it has a latitude and longitude of 9°24'N 42°01'E Coordinates: 9°24'N 42°01'E with an elevation of 2047 meters above sea level. As per the Census conducted by the Central Statistical Agency of Ethiopia [4], Haramaya has an estimated total population of 15,317; of whom 7,796 are men and 7,521 are women. The largest ethnic group reported to live in the area is the Oromo (96.43%); all other ethnic groups making up the remaining 3.57% of the population. Afan Oromo is spoken as the first language by 97.6%. While the overwhelming majority of the inhabitants (98.51%) are Muslims, the remaining few are (orthodox and protestant) Christians. Concerning education, 53% of all eligible children are enrolled in primary school, and 10% in secondary schools. The dominant activity serving the inhabitants as a means of income in this town is cash crop products like chat which in turn may affect students' academic engagement and motivation.

Participants of the study

The study involved students selected from Bate Senior Secondary School. In this school, there were a total of 852 (415 males and 437 female) students regularly attending their classes from grade nine to ten during data collection; of whom (n=623) were from intact family and the remaining (n=229) were from non-intact family. Out of the total of adolescent students from intact family (n= 623), 72 (34 males and 38 females) were selected randomly. 40 (16 males and 24 female) students those from non-intact family, were participated. Therefore, the sample consisted of a total of 112 adolescent students. In fact, data analysis was based on 109 participants who provided complete data. Since adolescents from other family structures (for example, only 7 from step parent family) were insignificant in number there were included under non intact family. Sample size was determined using Drapper and Smith's formula for non-single population

[13]. According to Drapper and Smith, sample size (n) is a function of the factors (Xi) and categories (Ck) involved in a research such that a minimum of 10 observations is required for each category of a factor: $n = 10 \{ C_{f1} \times C_{f2} \times C_{f3} \times C_{fn} \}$ where n=sample size

- Cf1=number of categories of factor 1
- Cf2=number of categories of factor 2
- Cf3=number of categories of factor 3
- Cfn=number of categories of factor n

There are three factors in our present research (i.e., sex, family structure and grade) such that there are two categories in the first factor (male and female), two categories in the second factor (intact and single families), and two categories in the third factor (grade 9 and 10) Hence, a minimum sample size this researcher has to draw is $2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 10 = 80$ students.

After fixing on the total sample size using the above formula, then proportional allocation method was used to determine on the amount to be drawn from each of the two family types. For example, the proportion of those from intact family was calculated by multiplying the sample size by p where

$$P = \frac{n}{N} \times (623) \times 80 = \frac{59}{852}$$

which was adjusted to 72 for statistical precision

$$P = \frac{n}{N} \times (229) \times 80 = \frac{22}{852}$$

which was adjusted to 40 for statistical precision

Accordingly a sample of 112 were participated in the study. In fact data analysis was made based on data collected from 109 students who provided complete information

Tools of data collection

The questionnaire has two major parts: part one comprised demographic questions focused on background information and the second part of the instrument was psychosocial adjustment measure, the scale was adopted from different standardized psychosocial adjustment scales. In this study psychosocial adjustment have two constructs or elements. These are self-esteem and depression. Self-esteem will be measured by a scale known as Rosenberg's Self-esteem Scale (RSES) (Cronbach alpha 0.83). State of Depression measured by a scale developed by Pertoric [16] with internal reliability of $\alpha = 0.89$. All items were presented on a 4-point Likert-scale. With regard to scoring, those positively stated items were assigned scores from 4 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree). But, those negatively stated items were scored inversely that from 4 (strongly disagree) to 1 (strongly agree).

In order to check the feasibility of the study and adequacy of the questionnaire, pilot study was conducted on randomly selected 40 (20 males and 20 female) participants. Accordingly the observed internal reliability of the scales is as follows: Self-esteem scale ($\alpha = .75$) and depression ($\alpha = .79$) respectively. Therefore, the scales were worth to use as it is devoid of modifications.

FINDINGS

This section shall present obtained findings based on data analysis. Collected data were analyzed employing both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Following summarization of background of

the participants, descriptive statistical methods were employed as to summarize descriptive data and to set out the relationship among variables of interest person product moment correlation coefficient employed followed by ANOVA to scrutinize adolescents sex, family structure and psychosocial adjustment.

Background of Participants

As indicated in the previous section, the independent variables of interest in the study are sex, age, and family structure. The dependent variable of interest is adolescents' psychosocial adjustment. The family structure and age of these participants are summarized in Table-1.

Table-1: Personal background of respondents

Variables		No	Percent	
Sex	Male	50	45.87%	
	Female	62	54.12%	
	Total	109	100%	
Family structures	Intact	70	64.22%	
	Non intact	39	35.8%	
	Total	109	100%	
Age	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
	12	23	16.3	1.12

As can be depicted in the table 1, while 45.87% of them were male, 54.12% of them were female participants. As regard to family structure large proportion 64.22% of participants were from intact family whereas 35.8% of them were from non-intact family. The descriptive statistics in the same table also shows that the age range of adolescents participating in the study ranges from a minimum of 12 to a maximum of 23 years; with a mean age of 16.3 years.

Correlations among variables of interest

The central objective of the present study is to examine whether relationship exist or not among variables of interest. Thus, in order to examine whether relationship exist among variables of interest person product moment correlation coefficient performed and the obtained result presented as follows;

Table-2: Inter correlation among variables of interest (N= 109)

Predictor variables	1	2	3
Psychosocial adjustment (1)	1		
Sex (2) (= 1, if male, =0, if female)	.61*	1	
Family structure (3) (=1, if intact, = 0, if, non-intact)	.53*	.22	1

As can be indicated in the Table-2, a statistically significant relationship between sex and adolescents psychosocial adjustment was observed ($r_{108} = .61, p < .05$). It means that, male adolescents are found to be better in their psychosocial adjustment than their female adolescent counterparts.

In the same table there is also a statistically significant relationship between family structure and adolescents psychosocial adjustment ($r_{108} = .53, p < .05$). It entails that, adolescents from intact families found to be better in their psychosocial adjustment than adolescents from non-intact families.

Psychosocial adjustment scores by sex and family structures

Below table presents the summary of psychosocial adjustment by sex and family structures .

As can be depicted in the table-3, male adolescents from both family structures i.e intact (mean = 82.2) and non-intact (mean = 68.41) scores on psychosocial adjustment respectively. Whereas, female adolescents from intact family (mean = 72.37) and non-intact (mean = 62.51) scores on the measure of psychosocial adjustment respectively. From this we can easily discern that adolescents from intact families are found to be better in their psychosocial adjustment over adolescents from non-intact families in both sexes.

As regard to scores on psychosocial adjustment by family structures, adolescent from intact families found to be better in their psychosocial adjustment over adolescents from non-intact family

with a mean difference of (M= 77.28, and 65.46) respectively.

Table-3: Psychosocial adjustment Scores by Sex and Family Structures

Sex	Total scores on psychosocial adjustment by Sex and Family structures				Total scores on psychosocial adjustment by Family structures			
	Intact family		Non intact family		Intact family		Non intact family	
	Mean	Sd	Mean	Sd	Mean	Sd	Mean	SD
Male	82.2	4.21	68.41	3.7	77.28	4.02	65.46	3.9
Female	72.37	4.37	62.51	4.41				

The Effects of Family Structures and Sex on Adolescents’ Psychosocial adjustment

To examine whether family structures and sex of respondents have independent and cumulative effect

on adolescents psychosocial adjustment two way ANOVA was performed and reported as follows;

Table-4: ANOVA Summary of the Effects of Family Structures and Sex on Adolescents’ Psychosocial adjustment

Source	Sum squares	df	Mean squares	F	Sig
Corrected model	11531.32	4	3341.1	21.32	.000
Sex	1233.11	1	101.31	8.12	.001
Family structure	9815.01	1	4143.01	87.21	.000
Sex X family structure	812.21	2	2311.21	11.32	.0002
Total	3263.41	108	102.01		

Similar with the resulted reported in the correlation Table-2, in which male and female adolescents from intact family found to be better in their psychosocial adjustment over male and female adolescents from non-intact family, As shown in the table-4, the effect of adolescents’ sex on their Psychosocial adjustment is found to be a statistically significant (F (1,108) = 8.12, p < .05). Moreover, in the same table, the ANOVA result indicated a statistically significant effect of family structure on adolescents’ psychosocial adjustment (F (1,108) = 87.21., p < .000). There is also a statistically significant interaction effect of sex and family structure on adolescents’ psychosocial adjustment (F (1,108) = 11.32, p < .000).

This tells us that there was a significant difference in psychosocial adjustment among male adolescents from various family structures. Likewise there was a significant difference among female adolescents from various family structures.

Family structure differences in psychosocial adjustment

As depicted in Tables-3 adolescents from intact family scored the highest on psychosocial adjustment (Mean = 77.28) followed by adolescents from non-intact parent family (Mean = 65.46). Pair wise comparisons produced results presented in Table-5.

Table-5: Scheffe’s Pair Wise Comparison Test Results in psychosocial adjustment among Adolescents from Different Family Structures

Family structures (I)	Family structures(J)	Mean difference (I-J)	Standard error	Sig.
Intact -parent family	Non intact	11.82	1.48	.000
	Intact	-11.82	1.48	.000

As can be depicted in the Table-5, there is a significant mean difference on psychosocial adjustment between adolescents from intact and no intact parent families.

DISCUSSION

In support of the researchers’ expectation, the present study indicated that there is a statistically significant relationship between adolescent’s family structures and their psychosocial adjustment. It means that, adolescent from intact family found to be better in their psychosocial adjustment than adolescents from

non-intact families. This may be attributed to parental circumstances in such a way that adolescents from intact families could receive parental warmth and support in their times of difficulties which in turn would help them to be better in their psychosocial adjustment over adolescents from non-intact families in which parents of adolescents from non-intact families fail allocate time to discuss with their children and show sympathy to their children which might in turn negatively affect adolescents psychosocial development. In support of this idea, Santrock [6] stated that children's and adolescents make better psychosocial adjustment when they live in a home with two married biological parents. He also added that Children and adolescents from non-intact families are poor in their self-esteem, exhibit emotional problems, poor social interactions, less satisfied with their work, this shows that non-intact families' especially single parents are poor in their psychological and social adjustment. Amato [10] in his part stated that children's of single parent families due to divorce tend to have more social, academic and behavioral problem than children's from intact homes they may become aggressive, hostile, disruptive disobedient, depressed or withdrawn and may lose interest in school work and social life. In contrast to this idea [11], argued that there is a great deal of similarity than difference between children in step and single parent families and children in intact families [10], substantial number of stepchildren actually score higher on adjustment measures than the average child in an intact biological family [13].

As regard to sex and family structure, in the present study, adolescents from intact families are found to be better in their psychosocial adjustment over adolescents from non-intact families in both sexes. In support of the present study Ferry [14, 10]. Found that boys from motherless families due to divorce or separation obtained lower arithmetic score than boys from intact families. Girls in mother absent homes due to divorce or separation had lower self-esteem, lower performances, dissatisfaction with others and more depressed than intact family children. On his part [15] stated that fathers involvement, modeling and availability may facilitate adjustment for boys than girls. Because boys most of time waste their times with their fathers which facilitates psychosocial adjustment development for boys than girls. Study on father custody found that fathers custody girls where less feminine, less independent, more demanding than mother custody girls. Boys reported themselves as more depressed than girls Ferry [14, 10].

Pertaining to sex difference in psychosocial adjustment among adolescents from intact and non-intact family structures, males are found to be better in their psychosocial adjustment than female adolescents regardless of family structures' they came from. This may be because, since in our context males have more

freedom to move and stay out with their friends, this may give them an opportunity to discuss their concerns with their friends so that they can get relief which might lead to be better in their psychosocial adjustment over female adolescents in which female adolescents are denied not to go out and join their friends so that they could discuss their concerns with their friends.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this research generally suggest the following major conclusions:

- There is a statistically significant relationship between adolescent's family structures and their psychosocial adjustment. It means that, adolescent from intact family found to be better in their psychosocial adjustment than adolescents from non-intact families.
- Adolescents from intact families are found to be better in their psychosocial adjustment over adolescents from non-intact families in both sexes.
- Among adolescents from intact and non-intact family structures, males are found to be better in their psychosocial adjustment than female adolescents regardless of family structures' they came from.

The following suggestions would help addressing the gaps noted:

- Psychologists/ school counselors, teachers, and school directors need to provide psychosocial adjustment training particularly to female adolescent students from non-intact families to build their psychosocial adjustment
- Orientation and training be given to parents of adolescent students particularly from non-intact families on how to treat their children with warmth and affection to facilitate the conditions which are essential to foster their children's psychosocial adjustment.
- Further research need to be conducted on the role of parenting to clear possible inconsistencies noted in this and many other research.

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