

**FAMILY CONFLICT, POVERTY AND ADJUSTMENT NEEDS
PREDICTORS OF IN SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS
SUBJECTIVE WELLBEING**

**Dr. Otolehi, Kingsley Ugochukwu; Onyeka Gospel-Tony .C.
& Prof. G.G. Agulanna**

Department of Educational Psychology
Imo State University, Owerri

Abstract

The study sought to investigate family conflict, poverty and adjustment needs as predictors of in school adolescent subjective wellbeing in secondary schools in Owerri (Imo State). One hypothesis and one research questions guided the study. The design of the study was a correlational survey design. The population of the study was 6,300 JSS2 students in all secondary schools in Owerri Education Zone II. Using proportionate stratified random sampling technique, 398 JSS2 students were chosen. Four researchers' made instruments: Family Conflict Rating Scale (FCRS), Family Income Rating Scale (FIRS), Adjustment Needs Rating Scale (ANRS) and Students Subjective Wellbeing Rating Scale (SSWRS) were used for data collection. The internal consistency estimates of FCRS, FIRS, ANRS and SSWRS were established using Cronbach Alpha method as: .763, .812, .791 and .820 respectively. The findings indicated that, family conflict, poverty and adjustment needs, predicted the subjective wellbeing of JSS2 students in Owerri (Imo State). The educational implication of the findings is that students' poor academic achievement could be attributed to family conflict, poverty and adjustment needs. Based on the findings and implication of the study the researcher recommended that parents should settle family conflicts amicably to avoid breakdown of law and order in the home which could result to poor academic achievement on the side of their children.

Key Words: *Family, conflict, poverty, adjustment, subjective wellbeing*

Introduction

The issue of students' subjective wellbeing has been given adequate investigation through research in order to ascertain how it affects the healthy development of a child. It will be necessary to address the emotional state of students in school because research has shown that instability in a student's emotion may have serious consequences on; health, social interaction and educational outcomes. What then is subjective wellbeing? According to

Terzungwe, Aondoware, Usman and Tiki (2016) subjective wellbeing is the level of life satisfaction, positive feelings of contentment, happiness and negative feelings of anxiety, dejection, frustration, anger and depression experience by a student. Another definition of subjective well being is given by Diener, Lucas and Oshi (2002, p.63) as a person's cognitive and affective evaluations of his or her life. The cognitive element refers to what one thinks about his or her life satisfaction in global terms (life as a whole) and in domain terms (in specific areas of life such as work, relationship, etc). The affective element refers to emotions, moods and feelings. Affect is considered positive when the emotions, moods and feelings experienced are pleasant (example joy, elation, affection etc). Affect is deemed negative, when the emotions, moods and feelings experienced are unpleasant (example, guilt, anger, shame etc).

A person who has a high level of satisfaction with his life, and who experiences a greater positive affect and little or less negative affect would be deemed to have a high level of subjective wellbeing (or in simpler terms be happy). Definition of wellbeing is therefore expressed in terms of happiness of an individual in the context of maximizing pleasure and avoiding or minimizing pain. According to Nnadozie and Otolehi (2016) when psychologists measure subjective wellbeing they are measuring how people think and feel about their lives. The three components of subjective wellbeing are life satisfaction, positive affect and negative effect. These independent factors are therefore measured separately to determine one's subjective wellbeing. However, in determining subjective wellbeing, Okon, Pool and Rachiman in Terzungwe, Aondowase, Usman and Tiki (2016) stated that, the presence of positive effect does not mean the absence of negative affect and vice versa. It is the difference existing between these positive effects and negative effects that account for one's level of life satisfaction at any given time.

The balance between positive feelings (positive effect) and negative feelings (negative) if tilting towards a higher positive feelings guarantees life satisfaction and vice versa. It is not out of place to state here that the affective domain has an important role to play in a students' academic pursuit. Many research findings have shown the importance of positive emotions, in the performance of students in school tasks, therefore no concerned citizen will ignore this simple fact that the feelings of students must be cared for if the desired result of good educational outcomes from is to be realized.

The subjective wellbeing of students according to Kalu (2018) is very important for good educational achievement. Buttressing the need for the improvement of students wellbeing. Atsua and Umaru (2016) assert that most

students in conflict zones hardly report satisfaction with life events. Chauhan in Atsua and Umaru (2016) reports that students who are frustrated, in life or have consistent negative effects, are always confronted by withdrawal instinct from school. Research findings of Lucas and Dyren forth (2006) shows that many students who commit suicide are either dejected frustrated or not satisfied with life events. In a similar view, Chauhan (2012) reports that the higher number of drop out in high schools in Southern Indian provinces are students who reported low satisfaction in life events. There is no doubt based on the reported findings of different authors that students subjective wellbeing is an integral component of the successful development of the adolescent in every department of life starting from the family.

In consideration of the role of the family, Asikhia (2014) reports that it is only family cohesion that guarantees the subjective wellbeing of the adolescent in school. In the same vein Keachari and Mann (2013) asserts that the unity of the family decides the level of an adolescent's school engagement. School engagement is operationally defined here as the vigor, confidence and optimism with which a student attends to school tasks. Consequent upon proper functioning of the adolescent in school, Lucas and Dyremforth (2006) argues that social relationships matter for an adolescents subjective wellbeing to flourish. No argument could suppress the fact that family conflict hampers the successful development of the adolescent in school. Kalu (2016) view cannot be ignored because the proper functioning of the school adolescent must anchor on the unity of parents and caregivers. If subjective wellbeing is all about good feeling and life satisfaction, then a child who is not adequately provided for may be frustrated, resulting in poor academic achievement in school.

Against this backdrop, poverty may not be wished away as an integral component of an adolescent wellbeing. Following Terzungwe's, Aondowase, Usman and Tiki (2016) report, adolescents from poor homes show signs of frustration anxiety and may likely drop out of school before sitting for the senior secondary school certificate examination. According to Otolehi and Nnadozie (2016), poverty constitutes serious problems to the development of the child. Poverty according to Atsua and Umaru (2016) denies children access to good life, good education and good health. Good life, good education and health are very important components of life satisfaction hence, supports subjective wellbeing of the adolescent. An early marriage and prostitution among female students was reported as been attributed to high level of poverty in (Ahiarakwem, 2018) study Invariably, it is not out of place to say that adjustments needs of the child if absent just as poverty may hamper the subjective wellbeing of adolescents in secondary school.

Adjustment needs is defined by Chauhan in Atsua and Umaru (2016) as an organisms reaction to the challenges of the environment. Adjustment needs of the child in simple terms include school fees, uniform, textbooks, health facilities, security, care love, quality teaching facilities in school. Undoubtedly, it is clear that inadequate provision of a child's need in school will affect the child's thought about the future. A child's thought about the future according to Scheur and Caver (2005) affects his/her circumstance because by expecting to do well, one will work more effectively and persist and also set more goals. Being more likely to achieve set goals leads to a greater sense of subjective wellbeing of an adolescent.

Subjective wellbeing of a child explained in context of the functions of the family, shows that the family provides the needed love and affection, care, in terms of health related problem, emotion and physical security. Studies from Atsua and Umaru (2016) reports that many boko haram adherents are adolescents who were denied love, care and affection by the family because of conflict, divorce or separation. Many students who dropped out of school according to Kalu (2018) were reported to have come from conflict ridden homes, broken homes and single parent homes. The child apart from the provision of social needs also needs, the family for his/her all round development. If the subjective wellbeing of the child is defined by life satisfaction and positive feelings, then conflict hidden will definitely hamper the sense of security, happiness and contentment of a child.

In the same vein, inadequate provision of the child's needs in school will constitute negative feelings of hate, envy, frustration, anxiety and depression. Apart from antisocial behaviours, and negative attitude, academic achievement of students may also be lowered by non-provision of school needs. A child who is denied the necessary textbooks in a particular subject may feel rejected, hence poorly motivated to achieve good results in that subject. Feelings of failure breeds, frustration, hate, depression, and isolate behaviour among victims. It is obvious according to Myers (2011) that if poverty hampers feelings of satisfaction, contentment, happiness and fulfillment, adjustment needs when absent also may constitute negative feelings resulting to lowered subject wellbeing of the child. In like manner, Argul (2012) attributed low levels of life satisfaction to absence of social support for the adolescent. A child whose development needs are not adequately catered for, may rate life satisfaction very low. Similarly, Atsua and Umaru (2016) correlated adjustment needs of children in Maiduguri metropolis to social unrest, wars, and other forms of insecurity. War and social conflict has resulted in the death of many adolescents in North East of Nigeria and the lives of many adolescents are consistently compromised resulting to

low levels of life satisfaction among adolescents in such conflict ridden zones. Adjustment needs of the child such as security, health care, nutrition, educational needs, care, love and belongingness are all necessary in the development of the child because they provide the desired backup for the child's career aspirations. When these needs are not met adolescents react adversely by taking drugs, girls becoming prostitutes or joining cults.

Studies from Diener and Seligman (2012) have shown that adolescents from intact homes, participate actively in school task, and are the happiest people. Mastekaasa (2014) have also found that happily married couples are well involved in their children educational pursuit. On the other hand, children from broken homes show signs of frustration, appear unkempt, wear thorn cloths to school and constitute problem to teachers in class discussions. This finding impliedly suggests that intact homes, provision of a child's adjustment needs, may help reduce negative feelings among students. Myers (2012) also reported that the unhappiest people (students) are those stuck in broken homes. One explanation of the luck between intact homes and feelings of happiness, contentment, security and affection is the range of benefits that couples who are happily married brings in terms of intimacy companionship, sharing care, love, communication flow and commitment.

However, contrasting findings was revealed by Chauhan (2012) study in which street children who dropped out of school declared satisfaction with life events without projecting frustration, and anger. Subsequent revelation came from Finch, Okon, Pool and Ruchiman in Terzungwe, Aondowase, Usaman and Tiki (2016) where students from poor homes whose educational needs were hardly met, and drug addicts from broken homes expressed satisfaction with life events. If people (students) in Terhan province in India who had no place of their own, virtually stuck in streets, could declare satisfaction with life events then any argument put forward that conflict ridden home may give rise to students who are happy, contented devoid of anxiety, anger and depression could be true. On the other hand, if children from poor home according to Njoku (2014) reports good academic achievement, then it suggests that subjective wellbeing expressed by the feelings of happiness, contentment, positive effects may not be predicted by conflict in homes, poverty and adjustment needs of students. Against this backdrop, further research is evident to add to the body of literature on variables that successfully predict subjective wellbeing of adolescents in secondary schools. This study would significantly impact on educators who are in dire need of determining factors that positively and negatively affect wellbeing of adolescents. Knowledge of these factors will provide access to intervention

programmes channeled towards improving life satisfaction, academic achievement of students and other educational outcomes.

Statement of the Problem

The terror propagated by different cult groups in secondary schools and tertiary institutions is a concern to many patriotic citizens of Nigeria. The increase in robbery, kidnapping, abduction, banditry and militancy among adolescents calls for urgent attention. Prostitution, inspite of incurable venereal diseases is on the increase. Political touts is also on the rise. A common factor in all these incidents is that majority of the culprits are adolescents and many are either in secondary school or tertiary institutions.

Many reasons have been adduced for this indecent behaviour, among our adolescents. It is important to look at some of these reasons such as: parenting style, cultural beliefs, government inability to carter for the youths, unemployment and lack of commitment by law enforcement agents to implement laws already enacted in the country. The researcher although in agreement to these spillover effects as reasons, still belief that the problem is hugely on the question of students subject wellbeing not being addressed to by parents, and other stakeholders in education.

Research has shown that students who are not adequately catered for may vent their anger on the society by embracing cultism, robbery, banditry and other forms of antisocial behaviour. Students who are not satisfied with life events may express their frustration through avenues such as robbery, terrorism, militancy and even abduction and kidnapping. Researches from Kalu (2018) and Chauhan (2014) explained in simple terms the hazards of family conflict, poverty and not addressing the needs of a student. Children from broken home live in streets some in foster homes. Similarly, those from poor homes see the future as blink hence resort to behaviours that are antisocial. Many whose needs are not met go out to carter for themselves anyhow.

These claims may be questioned by many hence, the need to back them with a research to ascertain whether, family conflict, poverty and adjustment needs predicts subject well being of adolescents in secondary schools.

Research Question

The researcher posed one research question to guide the study.

Research question 1: To what extent do, family conflict, poverty and adjustment needs predict junior secondary school II students subjective wellbeing?

Hypothesis

The researcher formulated one hypothesis to guide the study and the hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

H₀₁: Family conflict, poverty and adjustment needs do not significantly predict subjective wellbeing among junior secondary school II students

Methodology

The researcher adopted correlational survey design to determine if family conflict, poverty and adjustment needs predict subjective wellbeing of secondary school students in Imo State. The independent variables in this study are family conflict, poverty and adjustment needs whereas the dependent variable is subjective wellbeing of secondary school students.

The population of the study is 6,300 JSS2 students in secondary schools in Owerri Education Zone II. The sample of the study was (398) three hundred and ninety eight, JSS2 students. The sample was chosen based on Taro Yamen (1998) sample selection formula. The researcher adopted a multistage random sampling technique to select the sample size twenty junior secondary schools in Owerri Education Zone II.

For the purpose of data collection, four instruments were used. They instruments are: Family Instability Rating Scale (FIRS); Family Income Rating Scale (FIRS), Adjustment Needs Rating Scale (ANRS) and Subjective Wellbeing Rating Scale (SWRS). Family Instability Rating Scale (FRS) contains 10 items and was developed by the researcher based on the principle of content relevance that is to ensure that items reflect the content (Anastasi & Urbina, 2008). Consequently items for the rating scale were derived from literature. The rating scale was divided into two sections namely; Section A and B. Section A, sought information on the demography of respondents, Section B contained information on the nature of conflicts in the family. On rating the scale, 25 points and above on the family conflict rating scale signifies instability, separation or divorce whereas 24 points and below shows family stability, intact home and happy family. The maximum points that could be obtained on the scale is 40 points whereas the minimum point that could be obtained on the rating scale is 10 points. Students who scored 25 points to 40 points were selected for the research study. The rating scale has four response key of Strongly Agree (SA)+4, Agree (A)+3, Disagree (D)+2 and Strongly Disagree (SD)+1. The second instrument is Family Income Rating Scale (FIRS). Family Income Rating Scale (FIRS), is a researcher made rating scale. It contains 15 items developed based on the principle of content relevance. The rating scale has four response key of Strongly Agree (SA)+4, Agree (A)+3, Disagree (D)+2 and Strongly Disagree (SD)+1.

Scoring, 60 points is the maximum point that could be obtained by any respondent while 15 points is the minimum score that could be obtained by any respondent, 37.5 points to 60 points signifies poverty or low income while 36 points and below signifies sufficiency or economic stability. Students who scored 38 points and above were selected for the study.

The third instrument is the Adjustment Needs Rating Scale (ANRS) developed by the researcher. It is a 12 item rating scale developed by the researcher. The rating scale has four response key of Strongly Agree (SA)+4, Agree (A)+3, Disagree (D)+2 and Strongly Disagree (SD)+1. The maximum point that could be obtained by respondents is 60 while 12 points is the minimum score obtainable on the rating scale. Students who scored 37.5 and above show the presence of adjustment needs. The fourth instrument is Subjective Wellbeing Rating Scale (SWRS). Subjective Wellbeing Rating Scale is a researcher made 20 item rating scale developed based on content relevance that is to ensure that items reflect the content (Anastasi & Urbina, 2006). Consequently, items for the rating scale has four response key of Strongly Agree (SA)+4, Agree (A)+3, Disagree (D)+2 and Strongly Disagree (SD)+1. The maximum point that could be obtained by any respondents is 20 whereas 20 points is the minimum score that could be obtained by any respondent. 50 points and above signifies low levels of subjective wellbeing whereas 49 point and below signifies high levels of subjective wellbeing.

For the purpose of estimating the cronbach alpha reliability of the rating scale, the categories of responses were weighted – Strongly Agree = 4, Agree = 3, Disagree = 2 and Strongly Disagree = 1. The rating scales in order of: Family Instability Rating Scale (FIRS), had a cronbach alpha of .763; Family Income Rating Scale (FIRS) had a cronbach alpha of .791; Adjustment News Rating Scale (ANRS) had a cronbach alpha of .812 and Subjective Wellbeing Rating Scale (SWRS) had a cronbach alpha of .820.

An introductory letter was written by the researcher to the school authority seeking for permission to conduct the study. After the approval was granted, the researcher met with the students and teachers and sought their consent to use one lesson period to administer the rating scales. Their consent paved way for the administration of the rating scales on the students. Students on the other hand were properly briefed by the researcher on the reasons of the study. The rating scales were administered to the students in the class and were successfully retrieved. There was 100% return rate. It took an average of 45 minutes to administer the rating scale.

Data were presented using Pearson r , R^2 (coefficient determination) and multiple regression analysis. Analysis of variance was used to estimate the

joint contribution of family conflict, poverty and adjustment on subjective wellbeing of students.

Results

Research Question 1: To what extent do, family conflict, poverty and adjustment needs predict junior secondary school II students' subjective wellbeing?

Table 1:

Summary of Regression Analysis on the joint estimation of family conflict, poverty and adjustment needs on subjective wellbeing of junior secondary school II students

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std error
1	.872	.841	.810	.7420

Data in Table 1 indicated a correlational coefficient of .872 between the observed value of criterion variable (Subjective Wellbeing) and the predicted value by the predictors (Family conflict, poverty, adjustment needs). The adjusted R square shows a value of .84. This means that the model explains 84% of the variance in subjective wellbeing of junior secondary school students in Owerri Education Zone II.

Hypothesis 1: Family conflict, poverty and adjustment needs do not significantly predict subjective wellbeing among junior secondary school II students

Table 2:

Analysis of variance on the joint contribution and prediction of family conflict, poverty and adjustment needs on subjective wellbeing of junior secondary school II students

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Significance
Regression	3948.801	3			
Residual	221.326	382	791.964	1364.021	.000 ^b
		387	.535		

Table 2 indicated that the hypothesis which stated that family conflict, poverty and adjustment needs will not jointly predict subjective wellbeing among junior secondary school II students was not confirmed. $F(3,382) = 1364.046$ $P < .05$. This further suggests that 84% contribution made by family conflict, poverty and adjustment needs to subjective wellbeing of students in

JSS II was statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative accepted. Therefore, it means that: family conflicts poverty and adjustment needs predicted junior secondary school II students subjective wellbeing.

Table 3:

Summary of regression analysis on family conflict, poverty and adjustment needs as predictor of subjective wellbeing of secondary school II students

Model	Unstandardized coefficient		Standardized coefficient		
	B	Std error	Beta	T	Significance
(Constant)	98.673	.880		114.75	.000
Conflict	.861	.021	.712	0	.000
poverty	-1.002	.020	-1.162	35.316	.000
adjustment	-8.31	.031	-.773	-43.126	.000
				-26.516	

Table 3 revealed the individual contributions of estimation variables (family conflict, poverty and adjustment needs) to students subjective wellbeing and the direction of the correlation. The standardized Beta value revealed that poverty made the strongest contribution of -1.162 which is statistically significant at $P < 0.05$. This means poverty could significantly predict subjective wellbeing of students in JSS2, thus rejecting the hypothesis. Family conflict made a contribution of .712 which was also found to be statistically significant at $P < 0.05$. The null hypothesis of no significant status is also rejected. Adjustment needs made a contribution of .773 which was found to be statistically significant at $P < 0.05$. This also necessitated the rejection of the null hypothesis of no significant status, therefore, poverty, family conflict and adjustment needs predicted the subjective wellbeing of adolescents in JSS2.

Discussion

Result indicates that family conflict predicted subjective wellbeing of secondary school students. This result further signifies a positive relationship between family conflict and subjective wellbeing of students. This result means that family conflicts to a large extent decides how students rate their satisfaction to life circumstances, and contentment with programmes in their various schools. The reason for this result could be explained based on variables adolescents adjudge important in their development. When a home is ridden with conflicts, the possibility of a spillover effect on the wellbeing of

children from such homes cannot be ruled out. Research has shown that children from conflict ridden homes confess low levels of contentment with life events and low ratings in life satisfaction.

The result of this study suggests agreement with the finding from a study on hostility depression symptoms and anxiety as determinants of poor academic performance among adolescents (Abamara, Okoye and Aguanunu, 2013). Family conflicts constitute hostility resulting in anxiety and adjustment needs. These variables may affect the subjective wellbeing of students. The result of this study also agreed with the findings from a study on life satisfaction and social support ratings of prison inmates in Makurdi (Terzungwe, Iorwuese, Usman and Tiki (2017).

The result of the study further revealed that poverty and poor adjustment predicts levels of life satisfaction and contentment among students. The above result shows that unavailability of a child's need in schools creates adjustment problems. In agreement with this result is the finding of Atsua and Umaru (2016) on the adjustment needs and coping strategies of internally displaced adolescents in secondary schools in Maiduguri metropolis. The finding of the authors suggested that poor adjustment among students could lead to poor academic achievement and general development of the school adolescent.

Conclusion/Recommendation

Subjective wellbeing of students over time has not been considered very important to academic performance of students in schools. Research findings from Kalu (2017) study on broken homes shows that frustrated children perform poorly in academic tasks. If students are not satisfied with life events, or are not contented with school problems, academic performance may be lowered. The researcher therefore urges families to strive for peace and seek dialogue and conflict resolution each time there is dispute in the home. This will create a healthy environment for the development of children.

References

- Abamara, N.C., Okoye, C.A.F. & Aguanunu, R.I. (2013). Hostility, depressive symptoms and anxiety as determinants of poor academic performance among adolescents children. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 4(1), 202-208.
- Ahiarakwem, E.A. (2018). Effects of conflict resolution skills training and rational emotive behaviour therapy on marital instability. Unpublished (Ph.D. thesis). Imo State University, Owerri.

- Anastasi, A. & Urbina, S. (2008). *Psychological testing* (7th edition). New Jersey: Upper Saddle River Prentice Hall.
- Argule, F. (2012). Emotional contributions of positive effects. *Journal of Educational Research (IOSR-JRME)*, 1(2):62-67.
- Asikhia, B. (2014). Effects of couple communication and conflict resolution. *Journal of American Board of Family Life*, 20(1), 74-82.
- Atsua, G. & Umaru, A. (2016). Adjustment needs and coping strategies of internally displaced secondary school adolescents. *The Nigerian Educational Psychologist*, vol. 14, No. 1 (pp.78-87).
- Chauhan, S.V. (2013). A study on adjustment of higher secondary students of drug. District IOSR. *Journal of Research and method in Education (IOSR-JRME)* 1(1), 50-53. Retrieved on 15th July, 2013 from www.josrjournals.org
- Diener and Seligman, A. (2012). *Psychology of contentment and flow*. New York: Andreit.
- Kalu, C.J. (2017). Influence of broken home on academic achievement of children in Orlu. Unpublished (M.Ed. thesis) Imo State University, Owerri.
- Mastekaasa, C. (2014). Happily married couple in light of child development. *Asian Journal of Child Science*, 14(2):43-56.
- Njoku, C. (2014). Sex differences in Mathematics achievement of students. unpublished (M.Ed. thesis) Imo State University.
- Nnadozie, E. & Otolohi, K.U. (2016). Relationship between personality traits and stress coping styles among primary school teachers in Owerri. *Journal of Nigerian Society for Psychosocial Research*. 6(1), 192-200.
- Oyafunke, F.B., Falola, A. & Salan, R. (2014). *Effects of domestic violence conflict resolution in our home*. E Header, page, 1-6.
- Terzungwe, A.S., Aondowase, I.P., Usman, A. & Tiki, F.T. (2016). Social support and resilience as predictors of life satisfaction among prison officers in Makurdi, *Journal of Educational Psychologist*, 14(1), 28-46.
- Scheier, M. & Caver, T. (2005). *Subject wellbeing explained in family cohesion*. New York: Trade Hills.