

# Relationship between Parents and Peer Influences on Qualities of Adolescent Friendship

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## Abstract

The study investigated the relationship between parents and peer influences on the qualities of adolescent friendship. Relevant literature in the field of adolescent friendship qualities and parental interaction were investigated. The problem of the study is the increasing incidences of emotional, imbalance among young people that manifest in maladaptive behaviours. In investigating this problem, two research hypothesis were developed. The design for the study was the survey research design. The population comprised of 867 senior secondary school students selected from five schools in Ethiope East Local Government Area of Delta State. The simple random sampling technique was used select 100, 20 from each schol for the study. The instrument for the study was title Qualities of Adolescent Friendship as Correlates of Coping with Stress. The instrument had a reliability of 0.84 using the piercing moment correlation coefficient. Regression and t-test were used to analyse both research questions and research hypothesis. The findings indicated that there was no statistical significance between parents interaction and parents/children interaction. The conclusion therefore for the population studies was that there may be other factors that influence qualities of adolescent friendship.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The adolescent period is a transitional period of physical and psychological development. It is usually the period between puberty and early adulthood. It is a period associated with the teenage years that is characterize by stress, crises and conflicts in resolving identity issues, and strong sense of independence in decision making. It is generally a difficult developmental stage for adolescents.

Friendship is a stage in interpersonal relationship where those concerned share common interest and feelings at a certain level. It is a supportive relationship that provides resources for adjusting and coping with developmental tasks of that stage and even beyond.

There are levels of friendships, which determines the degree of commitment that exist in such relationships. Basically, friendship relation act as a support process to strengthen the values and qualities that are shared by those in the such a relationship. It is also known to contribute significantly to individual wellbeing and adjustment. (Knickmeyer, Sexton, Nishimura 2002). Good friendship helps those involve in it to be able to adjust to life situations that might be challenging. The reason is that it provides the psychological and physical back up that people need to face tough times. That is Daley and Hamen (2002) states that by providing support, friendship, facilitates adaptation to difficult life events and chronic stress.

There are variations that exist in the qualities of friendship between people. This is more evident in relationships between men and women. A noticeable difference between male and female friendship qualities according to Belle (1991) is that female friendship is characterized by high levels of shared confidence, while that of male is based more on shared activities. Generally, the female folk are perceived to be more likely to give support when their friends either male or female are in difficult situations than men. The point here is that it helps their sense of self expression which is innate in them.

Adolescent friendship more precisely has been observed to relate and have effect on the adjustment process of the individual in such areas like loneliness, self esteem, etc. (Nangle, Erdley, Newman, Mason, and Carpenter, 2003). Adolescent perception of friendship is a key factor to the development of the qualities of friendship. This perception is important for their adjustment in such relationships. The point here is that if the perception is positive it will have positive effects, but if it is negative, the effects will also be negative to the extent that it will affect adjustment. (Kistner, Balthazor, Riski, and Burton, 1999) Confirming the foregoing, Demir and Uberg (2004) stated that adolescent perception of friendship is very important to the quality of friendship relationship that exists among them.

Another aspect is the adolescent evaluation or interpretation of the qualities of friendship. Research evidence indicates that high quality friendship has a positive effect on friendship among adolescents. High friendship qualities correlate to high levels of self esteem, while low qualities of friendship correlate to delinquent and other forms of dysfunctional behaviour among adolescents. (Bendt & Keefe, 1995, Parker & Asher, 1993, and Wndle, 1994). Conflict is an inevitable occurrence in social relationships. The way the adolescents perceives these conflicts also affects the qualities of friendship. Persistent and continuous conflicts in adolescent friendship relationships will lead to withdrawal and loneliness. This becomes a negative effect on

the quality of friendship. If on the contrary the conflicts are resolved, it could be an opportunity to strengthen the bond of friendship that exists among people.

In a study carried out by Saric and Sakic (2014) to examine the effects of mother's and father's perceived parenting style and friendship quality on several indicators of adolescents' well-being, they found out that the perceived parenting style of both parents as well as the quality of friendship had significant effects on adolescent's well-being, while the interaction effects of friendship quality and either parent's parenting style were not significant. Adolescents of authoritative and permissive mothers reported higher self-esteem and life satisfaction than adolescents who had authoritarian mothers. Also, adolescents who considered their mothers authoritative were happier than those with authoritarian mothers. Adolescents who perceived their fathers as authoritative or permissive showed higher results on all assessed indicators of well-being than adolescents whose fathers were authoritarian. Furthermore, adolescents with a higher quality of friendship reported more happiness, life-satisfaction and self-esteem. The obtained results highlight the importance of the role of parents and peers in fostering positive development in adolescence. Further research indicates both parents and peers influence child and adolescent adjustment outcomes. Friendship quality buffered the effect of positive parenting on internalizing symptoms over time. However, no moderating effects for externalizing symptoms were found. Implications and further directions are discussed.

In another related study by Knoester, Haynie and Stephens (2006), measuring parenting practices and adolescent friendship network, the results revealed that in general, parent-child relationship quality, selecting a neighborhood because of its schools, and parents supervision are negatively associated with having a more delinquent friendship network but positively associated with having a more prosocial network. These results suggest that parents have the capacity to shape the characteristics of their child's friendship networks, even after taking into account the likelihood that adolescents have friends who are similar to themselves. Friendship quality, Peer group affiliation, and peer anti social behaviours as moderators of the link between negative parenting and adolescents externalizing behaviours,

Quality of peer relationships and perceived peer antisocial behavior were examined as moderators of the link between negative parenting and externalizing behavior problems in school from middle childhood to early adolescence. High levels of friendship quality and peer group affiliation attenuated the association between unilateral parental decision making and adolescent externalizing behavior in school; this was particularly true when adolescents associated with peers perceived to be low in antisocial behavior. In addition, having low-quality peer relationships and having peers perceived to be highly antisocial further amplified the association between unilateral parental decision making and adolescent externalizing behavior problems. Finally, high levels of friend and peer group antisocial behavior exacerbated the productiveness of harsh discipline for adolescents' externalizing behavior.

Many researches indicates that friendships increases and influences individual well-being (e.g. Hintikka, Koskela, Kontula, Koskela, & Viinamaeki 2000; Knickmeyer, sexton, & Neshimura, 2002). By providing support, adolescent friendship influences or spurs adaptation to difficult life situations and chronic stress (e.g Daley & Hammen, 2002). In this regard, a few research studies have suggested that adolescent friendship qualities differ in terms of gener. The nature of friendship relations among female adolescents is more intimate and very supportive in style than that of male friendships (Bank & Hansford; 2000). This also suggest that adolescents wish to share quality time with close friends of same sex in hard times and to celebrate with their close friends who has just experienced a positive event (Roy, Benenson, & Lilly, 2000).

Women's friendships are characterized by high levels of shared confidence while that of men are based on shared activities and successes (Belle, 1991). This implies that in adolescent friendships, females are more likely to support their same sex peers in times of difficulty (e.g Wheeler, Reis, & Nezlala, 1983) than that of males. This is because, for women (female adolescents) they see helping their fellow peers as a means of maintaining and facilitating or reinforcing their friendship, whereas for men, they see help from their peers as being dependent and incompetent (De Paulo, 1982). The potency of supportive bond between female adolescents leads to adulthood women friendship. This study investigated the unique contributions of family and friendship relationship amongst adolescents leading to adulthood support.

Several researchers and clinicians have agreed that family is a key factor for a child's acquisition and maintenance of social skills throughout his life. According to systemic theories (Minuchin & Nichols, 1993), family is a dynamic entity (Microsystem) in which marital relationship quality are inter related. Marital communication quality would therefore be related to parent-child communication quality, and dysfunctional communication between the two parents would be transmitted to parents in child communication, resulting in a general climate of family conflict. In line with the systemic theories studies have shown that observed marital conflicts are positively associated with observed confrontation between mothers and adolescent daughters during problem-solving discussions (Dube et al, 2001). According to role construct theory (Burr, 1973), high levels of marital conflict hinder marital partners' parental roles. This also means that the after effect of family members' relationship quality are not limited to family but generalize to children's social relationships with their

adolescent friends outside the family. Several studies have also supported.

Bronfenbrenner's (1988) ecological model, which proposes interrelations between two or more Microsystems (mesosystem). For example, more intense marital conflict and higher degrees of marital distress have been found to be associated with higher levels of children's problems with peers and lower levels of children's and adolescents' social competence (e.g Marcus, Lindahi, & Malik, 2001; Stocker & Young Blade, 1999). Similarly, high levels of mothers' marital distress have been associated with poor validation and listening skills during adolescent peer-group interactions (Dube, Julien, Lebeau, & Gaynon, 2000)., furthermore, children's exposure to marital violence has been found to be positively associated with children's feelings of loneliness and conflicts with close friends (MicGloskey & Stuewig, 2001). Social learning and socialization mechanisms, such as observing and replicating parents' dysfunctional communication behaviours during marital conflict discussions could account for the associations between family members relationship quality and a child's relationship quality outside the family Bandura, 1977.

This implies that beyond the impact of marital relationship quality on children's relationship quality with peers, studies also have shown that the quality of the parent/child relationship is associated with child/peer communication quality (Stocker & Young blade, 1999). This further explains that the more conflicts experienced by mother /child in their interactions, the same goes in the child's interactions with his best friend (Black, 2002). These findings raise the question of whether relationship quality during childhood and adolescence has an impact on the quality of relationships in adulthood. The quality of relationship in adolescence could also lead to a better relationships among peers in adulthood. Some research studies found out that negative marital communication amongst adolescents' parents contributes to adolescents negative marital communication in adulthood (Andrews, Capaldi, Foster, & Hops, 2000, Flouri & Buchanan, 2002).

Also, other studies have shown that adolescent females' satisfaction with friends predicts satisfaction with friends in adulthood (Robinson, 2000). Some research studies have examined the contribution of relationship quality in adolescence to the quality of friendships in adulthood. Therefore, this study investigated or examined the extent of relatedness or correlation between husband/wife's parent/child's, and Adolescent/friend on the quality of adolescent friendship in coping with stress or in difficult situations.

## **2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

There have been increased incidence on adolescents emotional imbalance, crisis in their behaviours and friendship amongst their fellow peers. The family, child/parent, Adolescent/friend interactions which should be a tool that will help adolescents to cope with stress and challenges that face them in this regard seems not to be effective. There is therefore a gap which raises a question on the role of family, parent/child and child/peer interactions on the quality of adolescent friendship in coping with stress. This study intends to find out the extent to which the family, parent/child and Adolescent/friend interactions and relationships may influence the quality of adolescent friendship in coping with stress.

### **2.1 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES.**

1. There is no significant relationship between parent's interactions and the quality of adolescent friendship.
2. There is no significant relationship between parent/child interactions and the quality of adolescent friendship.

## **3. METHODOLOGY**

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study; therefore, it was not rigorous with sampling. The population of study consisted of 867 senior secondary students (SSC) from selected five secondary schools in Ethiopie East Local Government Area of Delta State. A simple random sampling technique was used to obtain a sample of 100 students (20 each students from a school). The instrument used for data collection was a self developed questionnaire titled "The QUALITIES OF ADOLESCENT FRIENDSHIP AS CORRELATES OF COPING WITH STRESS" (QOAFACOCWS). The instrument was made up of eleven items and has content validity and a reliability level of 0.84. This indicates is reliable and suitable for data collection. The instrument was divided into two sections. Section A consisted of information on biographic data of students while section B consisted of 11 items indicative of the Qualities of Adolescent Friendship as correlates of coping with stress. Regression and t-test was computed and tested for significance at  $P < 0.05$  using SPSS version 16 for all computations.

#### 4. RESULTS

4.1 HYPOTHESIS 1: There is no significant relationship between parent's interaction and the quality of adolescent friendship.

Table 1: Linear Regression of parent's interaction and the quality of adolescent friendship.

Model	R	R Squared	Adjusted R Squared	Std Error of the Estimate	Significance	Remark
1	0.01 <sup>a</sup>	0.00	-0.01	2.47		
<b>ANOVA<sup>b</sup> ON MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS</b>						
Model 1	Sum of Square	Df	Mean Square	F	Significance	Remark
Regression	0.11	1	0.11	0.02	0.89a	Not Significant
Residual	598.65	98	6.11			
Total	598.76	99				
Significance of regression weights of Variables in the Equation 2						
Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t-Ratio	Significance	Remark
Parent's Interaction	-0.02	0.12	-0.01	-0.13	0.89	Not Significant

- a. Predictors: (Constant), parent's interaction
- b. Dependent Variable: adolescent friendship.

The data presented in Table 1 showed that there was no significant correlation between parent's interaction and the quality of adolescent friendship ( $r = -0.01$ ,  $p = 0.45$ ). This lack of correlation implies that parent's interaction does not have any relationship with the quality of adolescent friendship.

4.2 HYPOTHESIS 2: There is no significant relationship between parent/ child interactions and the quality of adolescent friendship.

Table 2: Linear Regression of parent/child interaction and the quality of adolescent friendship

Model	R	R Squared	Adjusted R Squared	Std Error of the Estimate	Significance	Remark
1	0.17 <sup>a</sup>	0.03	0.02	2.44		
<b>ANOVA<sup>b</sup> ON MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS</b>						
Model 1	Sum of Square	Df	Mean Square	F	Significance	Remark
Regression	16.51	1	16.51	2.78	0.10 <sup>a</sup>	Not Significant
Residual	582.25	98	5.94			
Total	598.76	99				
Significance of regression weights of Variables in the Equation 2						
Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t-Ratio	Significance	Remark
Parent's /child Interaction	0.15	0.09	0.17	1.67	0.10	Not Significant

- a. Predictors: (Constant), parent's /child interaction
- b. Dependent Variable: adolescent friendship

The data in presented in Table 4 shows that  $F(1,98) = 2.78$ ,  $p = 0.10$ . This indicated no statistically significant correlation between parent /child interaction and the quality of adolescent friendship. This hypothesis is therefore

accepted. The adjusted  $R^2$  value of 0.02 showed that only 2% of the quality of adolescent friendship was due to parent/child interaction. The Beta ( $\beta$ ) weight of 0.17 (Table 3), shows that parent /child interaction is not a strong predictor of the quality of adolescent friendship.

#### 4.3 . DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Findings of the study in respect to research hypothesis one revealed that there was no significant correlation between parents interaction and the quality of adolescent friendship. This also means that parent's interaction is not a predictor of the quality of adolescent friendship. This finding does not agree with Bronfenbrenner's (1988) who found that more intense marital conflict and higher degrees of marital distress have been found to be associated with higher levels of children's problems with peers and lower levels of children's and adolescents' social competence. Marcus, Lindahi, & Malik, 2001; Stocker and Young Blade, 1999). It was supported by Dube, Julien, Lebeau, and Gaynon, 2000) who found that high levels of mothers' marital distress have been associated with poor validation and listening skills during adolescent peer-group interactions. Furthermore, children's exposure to marital violence has been found to be positively associated with children's feelings of loneliness and conflicts with close friends (Micgloskey & stuewing, 2001. Also, Bandura 1977 social learning and socialization mechanisms, such as observing and replicating parents dysfunctional communication behaviours during marital conflict discussion, could account for the associations between family members relationship quality and a child's relationship quality outside the family.

The findings of the study in respect to research hypothesis two revealed that only 2% of the quality of adolescent friendship was due to parent/child interaction. This also means that, parent/child interaction is not a strong predictor of the quality of adolescent friendship. This finding aligned with Stocker and Young Blade (1999) who found in their study that the quality of the parent/child relationship is associated child/peer communication quality. They further explains that the more conflicts experienced by mother/child in their interactions, the same goes in the child's interactions with his best friend. Black, (2002) also supported by explaining that the quality of relationship in adolescence could also lead to a better relationship among peers in adulthood. Furthermore, Andrews, Capaldi, Foster, and Hops, 2000, Flouri & Buchanan, 2002 added that negative marital communication amongst adolescents' parents contributes to adolescents negative marital communication in adulthood.

#### 5. CONCLUSION

1. The study concludes based on findings that parents interaction is not a predictor of the quality of adolescent friendship in coping with stress.
2. That, parent/child interaction is a predictor of the quality of adolescent friendship in coping with stress.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on findings of the study, there is need for counseling towards a positive or healthy parent/child interactions and relationships in order to enhance the quality within and outside the home in order to enhance the quality of adolescent friendship and also helping them in coping with difficult times or stress.

That, counselors should counsel parents and adolescents on the need for strong and healthy interaction between them within and outside the home. This is because, it leads to a positive interaction and relationship among adolescents and peers and even extend to adulthood.

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