

## **Teenagers' Social Aptitudes for Managing Behavior Disorders in Wadata Community Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria**

Aniekwe, Ngozi Louisa

Federal Medical Centre, Makurdi, Benue State

### **Abstract**

This study focused on social skills as a means of curbing conduct disorders among adolescents in Wadata Community of Benue State. The purpose of the study was to investigate the social skills needed by Adolescents for Curbing conduct disorders along River Benue Bank. The study answered two research questions. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. The population of the study was 570 adolescents drawn from four settlements in Wadata Community. Sample of 343 adolescents was drawn using proportionate stratified random sampling technique. Questionnaire (RABQ) was used for data collection. Frequency and percentage were used for answering of research questions. Major findings show that factors reveal that the factors influencing conduct disorder among the adolescents were lack of home training, lack of good mentorship, lack of formal education, drinking of alcohol, poverty and bad friends. The most important social skills needed to curb conduct disorder among adolescents were parental good mentorship, exhibiting good temperament, patience and calmness in all situations, acknowledging individual's worth and asking polite questions to clarify issues when not understood. It was recommended that among others that parent should encourage adequate social skills among their children such as good communication skills, honesty, patient, respect to constituted authority.

**Key words:** *Social Skills, Adolescents, Conduct Disorders.*

## INTRODUCTION

Social skills are one of the most important skills children and adolescents develop, as they often serve as predictors of future success. Researchers from Pennsylvania State University and Duke University found that youth who scored higher on social skills measurements were four times more likely to graduate from an undergraduate institution. Social skills have also been linked to job success, independence, and emotional well-being. Those with adaptive social skills often demonstrate superior ability to observe, problem solve, and respond in social situations. They are behaviors and other forms of communication necessary to effectively create and maintain relationships. Social skills might include things like initiating conversations, making friends, having good sportsmanship, and handling bullying effectively. Social skills or social value skills have been conceptualized in broad terms in the literature with the main focus on their functionality in interpersonal communication and interactions. Social skills have been defined as the ability to express feelings, or to communicate interests and desires to others (Tsang, 2003); the ability to express both positive and negative feelings in interpersonal context without sufferings consequent loss of social reinforcements (Segrin and Giretz, 2003). Social skills therefore are behavior that help people communicate emotions and needs accurately in-order to achieve interpersonal goals.

It is the common consensus that social skills are the behavior that enables people to interact with other people in a way that is both appropriate and effective within the norms of society (Segrin, 2000). To achieve appropriateness, the actor's behavior needs to conform to social norms, values, or expectations and not be viewed negatively by others. To achieve effectiveness, the actors' behavior needs to attain their intended goal(s) (Segrin, 2003). Successful fulfillment of appropriateness and effectiveness criteria requires complex coordination of different mental and physical abilities available in an individual in a specific interpersonal situation. Any deficit or disruption in the process may affect the outcome of "Social Skill" or social or competence which may lead to anxiety, frustration, aggression, peer rejection, loneliness, social dissatisfaction, academic failure, school drop-out, contact with the legal system, substance abuse and difficulty maintaining employment and relationships of the individual (Maag, 2006). Bullis *et al* (2001) categorized social skills into three elements: non-verbal, verbal and conversational skills. Non-

verbal skills include body posture, gestures, or physical proximity. Verbal skills include tone, pitch, and volume. Conversational skills refer to skills of initiating, maintaining and ending a conversation. Social skill is demonstrated in a wide variety of interpersonal contexts, which involve the coordinated delivery of appropriate verbal and non-verbal responses. Socially skilled individuals are attuned to realities of the situation and are aware when they are likely to be reinforced for their efforts because social skills are behavior that help people communicate emotions and needs accurately and achieve interpersonal goals (Tsang and Pearson, 2000).

Conduct disorders are characterized by socially disapproved aggression, substance abuse, alcoholism, delinquency, prostitution, moral decadence, defiance, mistreatment of others and vulgarity, disobedience, physical assault, damage to property, verbal abuse to minors and seniors, indecent dressing, lack of empathy, misperception of others intent, lack of guilt or remorse, low self-esteem and suicidal ideas Okonkwo, (2013). Predisposing factors for adolescents conduct disorders include negative parental influences (Ekong, 2014), environmental factors (Holmes, 2001) bad peer group influences (Gideon, 2009) as well as adverse conditions of living such as poverty (Halvgind and Whitbourne, 2007); UNICEF, 2008).

Most common conduct disorder behaviors exhibited by adolescents in Nigeria include sexual immorality (Harden and Mendel 2011). Others include loss of respect for elders, constituted authority, substance abuse, cultism, bullying and other forms of aggressive behaviors, armed robbery and kidnapping among others which constitute a big problem to the healthy development of the adolescent and society at large (Royse, 2008; Holmes, 2001: and Sylod, 2002).

The scale of the problem in Nigeria of adolescents exhibiting conduct problems has been estimated at about 75% among college students (Gideon, 2009). It has been observed that many adolescents of school going age engage in out of school business activities due to reasons that range from poverty, deviancy and those who have run away from homes and live and survive on the streets (Egger and Angold, 2006; Okonkwo, 2013). In Benue State, a lot of concern, shock and horror has been expressed by individuals as well as mass media on the activities of adolescents that has been expressed by activities of adolescent that live and work on the banks of River Benue when they should be in school. (The Nation, April 3, 2015; The New Times, March 5, 2013 and Daily Sun,

July 18, 2015. These adolescents engage in conduct problems such as alcohol abuse, smoking of Indian hemp, fighting, verbal and physical aggression, rude behaviors to their clients and among themselves. They are suspected to be involved in cult activities, rape, robbery and even kidnapping. This study was carried out to investigate what social skills are needed by these adolescents to curb the observed conduct disorders among them.

### **Objectives of the Study**

This study investigated social skills as means of curbing conduct disorders among adolescents along River Benue banks in Benue state. Specifically, the study;

1. Identify factors that cause conduct disorders among adolescents along River Benue Banks.
2. Determine social skills adolescents need to curtail conduct disorders along River Benue Banks.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions are raised to guide the study:

What are the factors that cause conduct disorders among adolescents along River Benue Banks?

What social skills are needed by adolescents to curtail conduct disorders in Wadata Community?

### **Methodology**

#### **Area of the study**

The study was carried out in specific settlement areas around River Benue banks in Benue state. These were North Bank in Makurdi, tyulen (Kwatan sule) in Guma, Buruku in Buruku, and Kastina-Ala Local Government Areas. These settlement areas provide business activities for the youth/ adolescents along the bank of River Benue in Benue state

#### **Design of the study**

The study employed the descriptive survey research design.

#### **Population for the study**

The population of the study comprised 570 adolescents who work full time and live in this specific settlement areas of the study in the Wadata community as well as those that work part time and go to school. It also includes commuters who travel in and out along the settlement areas.

### **Sample for the study**

The sample for the study was 343 adolescents drawn from the four settlement areas along the banks of River Benue in Benue state. The sample comprised 86 school going and 257 non-school going adolescents respectively. The stratified proportionate to size random sampling technique was used to draw the sample.

### **Instrument for Data collection.**

The Riverine Adolescents Behavior Questionnaire (RABQ) was used for data collection for the study. The RABQ is a Likert scale format instrument with four-point response rating options namely strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and strongly Disagree (SD), scores of 4,3,2 and 1 respectively were assigned to SA, A, D, and SD for positively worded items while scores of 1, 2, 3 and 4 respectively were assigned to AS, A, D, and SA for negatively worded items.

The instrument was validated by three experts from the Department of Home Science and Management, University of Agriculture, Makurdi, Benue state. The instrument initially comprised 30 items which were pruned down to 20 in the validation process. The face validation was done with regards to content, appropriateness of items, and clarity of language used. After validation, 20 copies of the RABQ were administered on 20 adolescents who were part of the tangent population but did not participate in the actual study. The scores obtained were analyzed to establish the reliability of the questionnaire using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient method. A reliability of 0.77 was obtained. This was considered adequate for reliable data collection.

### **Data collection method**

A total of 368 questionnaires were administered to the sample adolescent participants. However, 343 fully completed questionnaires were returned. 25 questionnaires were not returned. This constitutes a return rate of 93. 21% questionnaires were distributed to the participants while

carrying out their activities in Wadata community of Makurdi, Benue state. Those who were not literate enough to fill out the questionnaires were assisted by the researcher or her research assistant to fill in respondents' response. The completed questionnaires were retrieved, collate and cleaned for data analysis.

### Data Analysis techniques

Data were analyzed using descriptive Statistics namely, frequencies and percentages.

## RESULTS

**Research question 1:** What are the factors that cause conduct disorders among adolescents along River Benue Banks? Answer to this question is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Distribution on Factors Causing Conduct Disorders among Adolescents living in Wadata Community**

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Agree F (%)</b>	<b>Disagree F (%)</b>	<b>Remark</b>
1. Bad friends	246(71.72)	97(28.28)	Agreed
2. Lack of formal education	303(88.34)	40(11.66)	Agreed
3. Lack of home training	294(85.71)	49(14.29)	Agreed
4. Poverty	285(83.09)	58(16.91)	Agreed
5. Lack good mentorship	298(86.88)	45(13.12)	Agreed
6. Drinking of alcohol	289(84.26)	54(15.74)	Agreed

The result in Table 1 indicates that six factors were identified as major causes of conduct disorders among the adolescents in Wadata Community of Makurdi with the following frequency and percentage as follows; bad friends 246(71.72%), lack of formal education 303(88.34%), and lack of home training 294(85.71%), poverty 285(83.09%), Lack good mentorship 298(86.88%), and drinking of alcohol 289(84.26%).

**Research Question 2:** What social skills needed by adolescents to curtail conduct disorders along River Benue Banks? Table 2 provides answer to this research question.

**Table 2: Social Skills Needed by Adolescents to Curtail Conduct Disorders**

S/no	Ways of Curbing Conduct Disorders	Agree F (%)	Disagree F (%)	Remark
1	Talk less, listen more.	257(74.93)	86(25.07)	Agreed
2	Understanding one’s point of view and emotion clear.	245(71.43)	98(28.57)	Agreed
3	Understand others view points and makes them feel happy.	254(74.05)	89(25.95)	Agreed
4	Asks polite questions to clarify issues when not understand.	281(81.92)	62(18.08)	Agreed
5	Parental good mentorship	334(97.38)	9(2.62)	Agreed
6	Honesty and sincerity	198(57.73)	145(42.27)	Agreed
7	Know you right and respect rights of others.	243(70.85)	100(29.15)	Agreed
8	Give respect to human dignities	264(76.97)	79(23.03)	Agreed
9	Acknowledge individuals’ worth.	283(82.51)	60 (17.49)	Agreed
10	Obey rules and laws of the society.	232(67.64)	111(32.36)	Agreed
11	Obey constituted authorities.	219(63.85)	124(36.15)	Agreed
12	Show respect to elder people in the society	199(58.02)	144(41.98)	Agreed
13	Patient and calmness in all ideals.	311(90.67)	32(9.33)	Agreed
14	Exhibiting good temperament	314(91.55)	29(8.45)	Agreed

The result in Table 2 shows that respondents accepted item 1-14 listed as social skills needed by adolescents to curtail conduct disorders with their respective frequency and percentage from item 1-14: one 257(74.93); two 245(71.43); three 254(74.05); four 281(81.08); five 267 (77.84); six 198(57.73); seven 243(70.85); eight 264(76.97); nine 283(82.51); ten 232 (67.64), eleven 219(63.83) and twelve 199(58.02); thirteen 311(90.67) and fourteen and 314(91.55).

## Discussion

This study investigated the social skills needed by adolescents for curbing conduct disorders among adolescents who embark on business activities along the river banks at River Benue in Benue state, Nigerian. Two specific objectives were investigated, namely, to identify factors that cause conduct behaviors among the adolescents and the social skills needed by them to curtail conduct disorders. With regards to the factors that cause conduct disorder among the adolescents, six factors emerged. These in descending rank order were lack of formal Education, lack of good mentorship, lack of home training, drinking of alcohol, poverty, and bad friends. The finding that lack of formal education is a potent factor in the cause of conduct disorder among adolescents' rimes with the views schools as agent of child socialization serve as an extension of parental authority for continuation of enforcement of both parental and society acceptable norms of behavior for the child (Kembe, 2005; Okonkwo, 2013).

This implies that adolescents who do not attend school, and hence, lack formal education do not have access to the control function of school against conduct disorder behaviors in terms of lack of good mentorship and lack of home training, mentorship for adolescents takes place at home and to some extent at school. The findings that these two are factors in adolescent exhibition of conduct disorders support earlier studies (e.g., Ekong, 2014; Kathryn, 2012). For instance, Kathryn, (2012) posits that it is the duty of parents to mentor adolescents to become great future leaders. The implication is that when parents fail to provide good mentorship and guidance, adolescents tend to become wayward. With regards to influence of bad friends, and drinking of alcohol, the two are positively correlated. Bad friends can negatively influence their peers to engage in bad conducts disorder, while intake of alcohol can expose adolescents to bad friends at drinking joints. These factors have been recognized as gateways to conduct disorders to adolescents (Archibong and Akpan, 2017); Gideon, 2009).

Finally, the study identified poverty as a predisposing factor for adolescents' conduct disorders among the participants in this study. This finding is in tandem with other studies (e.g., Okonkwo, 2013; Egger and Angold, 2006). These studies contend that adolescents who experience poverty and lack school related materials often abandon school and engage in out of school business



activities. The second specific study objective investigated what social skills are needed by adolescents to curtail conduct disorders among adolescents along the river banks of river Benue in Benue State. The finding revealed a total of 14 such skills. The top five skills agreed by the adolescents to be vital to combating conduct disorders among them in other of making include “parental good mentorship”, “exhibiting good situations”, “acknowledge individual’s worth”, and ask polite questions to clarify issues when not understand”.

While it has been found not (objective one) that lack of home training/ lack of mentorship contribute to exhibiting of conduct disorder by adolescents, this reverse is that good parental mentoring will curb the disorder. This finding is in tandem with that of Orhungur (2003; Fiyifolu, 2011). The other four of the top five skills agreed to by participants are interpersonal skills that require emotional control and respect for others. In every day interactions, respect for other breeds respect for oneself, and self-control or emotional control calms nerves. Adolescents who show respect to others through emotional control even in intense provocation will minimize exhibition of conduct disorder among the adolescents. This position is in line with that of Asogwa (2009).

The next five important social skills identified as useful for curbing conduct disorder behavior by the participants were mainly one effective listening skill so as to respond in such a way as to avoid eliciting aggression. These include” give respect to human dignities”, talk less, listen more”, “understand other view points and make them happy”, “understand one’s viewpoint and emotion clear”. All these skills make for effective cordial communication that enhances good interpersonal relation (Nageshwaar et al, 2009).

## **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of this study it is concluded that good parental mentorship is a potent social skill that is needed to curb conduct disorder among adolescents this means that proper parental mentoring and upbringing of children have potential to help adolescents to achieve good social skills which lead to actualization of dreams of being good citizenship in their adulthood. It is the responsibility of parents to provide necessary and adequate mentoring, training, environment and care of for the children to be wholly transformed. Finally, provision of social skills such as good

mentorship, honesty, and respect to constituted authority among others will help adolescents to curtail the conduct problems among them

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of this study.

- i. Social skills trainings should be provided for these adolescents by the ministry of Social Development to enable them establish businesses of their own or be gainfully employed in businesses in conducive environment.
- ii. Social skills training programmes on communication should be provided by the Ministry of Social Development provided for the adolescents to enable them relate with colleagues and clients in socially approved ways.
- iii. Counseling services should be made available by the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development to these adolescents to help them overcome harmful practices such as drug abuse, prostitution and aggressive behavior.

### **REFERENCES**

- Asogwa, S.N (2009), Nigeria Citizenship Education “A matter of the Constitution and the Law: Enugu John Jacob’s Publishers Ltd Dorn, I. D., & Biro, F. M. (2011). Puberty and its measurement. *British Medical Journal of Research on Adolescence*. 21(1), 180-195.
- Egget, H. L. and Angold, A. (2006). Common emotional and behavioural disorders in preschool children: presentation, nosology, and epidemiology. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 47, 313-337.
- Egger, H. L. & Angold, A.(2006). Common emotional and behavioural disorders in preschool children: presentation, nosology, and epidemiology. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 47, 313-337.

- Ekong, B. E. (2014). *The role of child: And what the parent can do*. Uyo, Nigeria: Grand Printers Business Company.
- Enang, P. I. (2009). Inculcating values in the Nigerian child using direct and indirect counseling techniques. *Journal of Research and Development in Education*, 4, 45-52.
- Gideon, L. (2009). Latency versus certainty means of guiding against relapse. *Quarterly, Journal of Public Opinion*, 17(2), 14-21.
- Halgin, R. P. and Whitbourne, S. K. (2007). *Abnormal psychology : Clinical perspectives on psychological disorders*. 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, McGraw-Hill, Boston.
- Harden, K., & Mendle, J. (2011). Adolescents' sexual activity and the development of delinquent behaviour: the role of relationship context. *Journal of Youth and Adolescents*.40(7), 825-838.
- Hinshaw, S. P. and Lee, S.S. (2010). Predictors of Adolescent functioning: Girls with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD): The role of childhood ADHD, conduct problems and peer status. *Journal of clinical adolescent psychology*, 2 (5), 37-41.
- Holmes, D. S. (2001). *Abnormal Psychology*. 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, Allyn and Bacon press, Boston.
- Ikyaan, F. L. (2005). *Morality and religion as agents of social control in Tiv society*. Unpublished M. A. Thesis, Department of Religion and Philosophy, Benue State University, Makurdi.
- Kathryn, R. (2012). *Parents as mentors*. Retrieved from: <http://www.child-family-services.org/parent-mentor-program>. On 3 November 2017.
- Kembe, E. M. (2005). Influence of family background on patterns of child misbehaviour in Makurdi metropolis. *Journal of Home Economics Research (JHER)* 6(12).
- Okonkwo, L. E. (2013). Institutional homes and rehabilitation of of street children Benue State. *Unpublished Master's thesis University of Agriculture Makurdi*.
- Orhungur, M. M. (2003). Morality and character development for the well-being of Nigerians. *The Journal Counseling and Development* 1(1) 2.
- Reynolds, C. R. and Kamphaus, R. W. (2007). *Behaviour assessment system for children-2*. Circle Pines, MN: American Guidance Service.
- Royse, D. (2008). Mentoring high-risk minority youth. *Evaluation of Brothers Project, Adolescence*. 33, 145-158.

- Slyod, C. (2002). Behaviour problems of adolescents in secondary school of Bulawayo: Causes, manifestations and educational support. *Unpublished master Thesis University of South Africa*.
- Tsang H.W.H. (2003). Augmenting vocational outcomes of supported employment with social skills training. *Journal of Rehabilitation*, 69(3):25-30.
- Tynan, M. F. (2006). Data analysis and statistics for social health sciences. Person, custom publishing, Boston.
- UNICEF (2008). Children and children's rights in Nigeria, A wake up call. Lagos Nigeria: UNICEF.

Received on Aug 07, 2023

Accepted on Sep 20, 2023

Published on Oct 05, 2023