

## **HOME BACKGROUND AND ADOLESCENTS' MALADJUSTED BEHAVIOURS: THE NEED FOR VALUE RE-ORIENTATION COUNSELLING**

**Joel DOGO**

*Faculty of Education,  
Department of Educational Foundations,  
Gombe State University, Gombe.  
E-mail: [joeldogo70@gmail.com](mailto:joeldogo70@gmail.com)  
08068411441*

**Luka GAYUS**

*Counselling Unit  
Federal University Kashere,  
07066419611*

**Roseline EZEKIEL**

*Federal Government College, Billiri,  
Gombe State, Nigeria.  
07034949162*

### **Abstract**

*This paper reviews home background and its influence on adolescents' maladjusted behaviours and the need for counselling remediation. Some variables that forms home background were saliently reviewed. Other variables like socio-economic status, home location, life style, kinds of family and their practices are also mirrored in this discourse. More importantly, the concept of adolescents and their characteristics were also deliberated. Not only that, the developmental tasks of the adolescents and its effects on their psychosocial adjustment were also reviewed. Above all, the issue of counselling implications in containing with the adolescents' maladjusted behaviours are also considered in this discourse. As a way forward, the review submitted that parents should provide good home background to their children, by not only providing comfortable accommodation and their basic needs, but also creating good family psychosocial climate that can ethically promote the acquisition and exhibition of good morals that are conforming to societal norms and values. Also, parents, guardians or care givers at home to always endeavor to show good examples because the home is the children's first learning environment. It is also suggested that good house location should be one of the determinants of a good home background. Hence, residential homes should not be built too close to hotels, hospitals, market areas or event centers where children can easily have access to. To that effect, the review suggested the need for counselling remediation especially among the maladjusted adolescents and their families as a whole. Finally, the review concluded that because of the sensitivity of the adolescence stage of growth, good home background should be promoted as an antidote of maladjustment during their developmental task experiences.*

**Keywords:** Home Background, Adolescents' Maladjusted Behaviours, Value Re-orientation Counselling

### **Introduction**

Home background is a fundamental environment from which a child's behavior modification begins. The behaviours acquired by the child from home is later transferred to school and society at large. A home is a temporary or permanent place of abode where one live to have comfort and protection. The home even though contextual, is made up of the secured building/structure and family members. The family members could be father, mother, stepmother, stepfather, grandfather/mother, siblings or half siblings, care givers, house help/mate or guardians. Home is the first environment that every born child first starts coming in contact with. The psychosocial climate which include, the family value, morality, family cohesion, love, care, concern for one another, cordialness, respect etc. are important ingredients of the family psychosocial climate which has great influence in the children's behaviour modification. What is invested into to the child is what is manifested in his/her behaviours in later life. Thus, this article argues that families hold significant responsibilities in molding the culture and providing the needed security for children's positive attitude development

However, children learn by imitation, particularly the adolescents who are the most fragile and complicated set of beings in the human categories. Therefore, parents, guardians or care givers at home should be careful on how they relate with the children as the relationship forms good recipe of the family background. Generally, familial dynamics and cohesion contribute significantly to shaping individuals' beliefs, values, and behaviors, which in turn influence broader societal norms and cultural practices (Wiraszka, 2019). Hence, home background could also mean a family background that qualifies the kind of family one is coming from; it types, history, socio-economic status (rich or poor, educated or uneducated, employed or unemployed or the kind of occupations of the parents) and other variables that greatly influence the education and understanding of the child's world around him/her. These variables affect the child's growth and development physically, socially, intellectually and emotionally. Facilities obtain in the home like the well located, good and comfortable house itself, good beddings, social media like radio, television, smart phones, internet connection and adequate basic needs like food, clothing and improved health and good parenting; all have a huge influence on the children growth, development and psychosocial adjustment (Denga, 2015; Nyambura, Ndungu, & Mwaura, 2021). However, adolescents coming from a poor home background, such as those leaving in slums or bad house condition, those family houses that are closer to market areas, hotels and event centers, their behaviors are often influenced by these variables that depicts their home environment (Wiraszka, 2019). Unless the parents, guardians or care givers stand their ground in ethically training them otherwise they imbibe the practice of extraneous influences beside their home background. If these extraneous variables are not rightly contained, it may hamper with their home values orientation. Poor home condition, like lack of enough rooms and space for the children in the family can have a negative influence on their behaviours which calls for re-orientation. For instance, in an overcrowded home, putting more than ten children of different sexes in a room can

create avenue for maladaptive behaviour like sexual delinquency; where adolescent siblings will be having sexual relationship among themselves, which is incest (Dogo & Oniye, 2018)

More so, as part of home influence on the adolescents' maladjusted behaviours, according to Dogo and Oniye (2018) a poor family climate where seductive dressing and nudity is not frowned at and also parents watching nude movies in the presence of their children contribute to poor home background that triggers maladaptive behaviours in adolescents. Undoubtedly, family unit serves as a cornerstone of society. It shapes perspectives on norms and values of society and playing a pivotal role in nurturing a security-conscious populace. Contrary to this, a good number of contemporary parents tend to pamper and spoil their children extensively by disregarding their shortcomings entirely. It is commonplace to observe parents assigning blame for their children's misdeeds to external sources, particularly mothers.

Looking back at the history of Nigeria, a child within the community was regarded as a collective responsibility of community members to mold him/her up morally (Esere, Idowu & Omotosho 2012). The community's elders would reprimand a child for an abnormal behavior not minding whoever the parent of the erring child would be. However, this narrative has changed significantly in our contemporary time. Presently, parents unwaveringly rally behind their children's supporting even unruly attitude, fostering undesirable conduct that ultimately poses threat to maladaptive behaviours (Wiraszka, 2019).

The past practice of children collective moral inculcation by community members in Nigeria contrasts sharply with the present. Our once virtuous attributes have undergone a complete transformation, shifting from positive to negative. Undoubtedly, families bear the greatest responsibility for the degradation observed in their children's behavior and this has to be checkmated for a better society. Hence, value re-orientation counselling becomes eminent to re-trace the ancient paths of adolescent's children training.

### **Who are Adolescents?**

The term adolescents have synonyms like youngsters, teenagers or youth. They are being described by many experts in the fields of psychology and counselling as category of individuals who emerges from childhood but not fully developed into adults. However, in this discourse, adolescents equally are group of individuals going through what is called puberty or adolescence period. Thus, adolescence period is the age of change. It is a vulnerable time when children can develop unhealthy habit that grows into problem in their adult life. Behaviour issues of adolescence, which are quite common, also crops up during this time making it so difficult for parents to reach out to their teenagers. Adolescence is not an easy time for children, teachers and parents alike. It is a period of identity confusion, trial and error and curiosity. Untimely intervention especially in those who could not rightly aligned themselves, such group negatively adjusted by taking to drugs mis-use, prostitution, violence among others, due failed expectations and other strange experiences of this stage of growth.

Adolescence period is therefore a moment where an adolescent prepares him/herself for adulthood life; such as critical decision making, relationship development skills, goal setting skills, spousal relationship development and responsibilities tendencies formation, all are so critical at this stage of the adolescents. The classification periods as mentioned earlier are contextual and not rigid but vary with communities or cultures, country and individual. However, adolescents are roughly estimated universally to fall within the chronological ages of 13-19 years old (Mangal, 2007)

### **Adolescents and Developmental Tasks**

Developmental tasks are basic skills and experiences which must be acquired and exhibited in each stage of human growth and development (Sam, 2018). The success of expression of each stage tasks lead to happiness and feeling of fulfillment in an individual. In contrast, failure in expressing these skills or experiences may alter the expression and success of the next stage of growth. These skills and experiences encompass physical skills, cognitive or intellectual ability development, emotional adjustment, social competency, ethical value formation, goal setting and positive decision making.

Thus, developmental task has to do with the adolescents learning to get along with friends of both sexes, accepting one's physical body and keeping it healthy, becoming more self-sufficient, making decisions about marriage and family life, preparing for a job or career, acquiring a set of values to guide behaviours, becoming socially responsible among others. However, these and many other needs and challenges of the adolescents create crisis in them which if not timely and rightly curbed may develop into menace. These encounters tend to be a turbulence as the adolescents navigate through this volatile stage of growth. The developmental task variables tend to set intense stress and pressure that when not rightly guided some youth ended up developing maladjusted behaviours due to negative adjustment mechanism as they could not contain with the strange experiences. Thus, to many that could not adjust positively, some may have ended in drugs misuse as means of adjustment, while some gave-in to bad peer influence in the quest for happiness, identity and acceptance, and others taking up to all manner of maladaptive behaviours such as restiveness, destructive tendencies and other heinous activities.

### **Effects of poor developmental tasks attainment in adolescents**

It is observed that adolescents' developmental tasks greatly help in the adolescents' physical, emotional and social changes. The effects are therefore either positive or negative. For instance, evidence shows that their well-being and substance abuse tend to increase at this period. The misuse of substance is as a result of their curious and exciting characteristics of wanting to know, to be independent and feelings of being matured. Common negative experiences of the

adolescents according to Denga (2015) and Valmiki, Anttila, and Lahti (2017) include:

1. Sexual delinquency
2. Substance abuse
3. Forming/or joining of bad groups
4. Destructive behaviours
5. Restiveness
6. Aggression and violence
7. Poor decision and goal setting
8. Anxiety, frustration and depression
9. Suicide ideation
10. Poor achievement and hopelessness.

### **Adolescents Indiscipline and Heinous Activities**

The danger of poor home background and orientation in adolescents is lethal because of their fragility in terms of behaviours, emotions and even physical characteristics. No wonder as some could not be able to weather the storms of this stage of growth positively, ended up involving in heinous acts such as stealing, robbery, fraud, kidnapping arm banditry etc. For instance, recently Johnson (2023) reported that residents in Jekadafari, Gombe were thrown into confusion and mourning as a 58 years old woman by name Aishatu Abdullahi met her death. Unfortunately, on investigation and arrest made by the police, the heinous act was discovered to be perpetrated by two young boys within the age of adolescence who robbed and slaughtered the aged woman in her residence. This is a mark of indiscipline and could be unconnected with the maladjustment effects of their developmental tasks. Indiscipline is the opposite of discipline which simply described the act of breaking down set rules and regulations or is a way of behavioural exhibition that is contrary to the norms and values of a society (Shrum, 2005) in Dogo et al (2020). Most families contributed to the adolescence waywardness by not giving attention to their needs whether physically, socially or emotionally. And so, by the time they get confused of the so much pressures of their stage of growth, they may unfortunately fall into the trap of maladjusted behaviours. On the other hand, affluent parents contributed immensely today in the adolescents' moral decadence by buying them smart phones, subscribing bad TV channels that gives children access to nude movies and information that are not meant for their consumption.

In this digital age, internet access contributes greatly to the adolescents' maladjusted behaviours as many indulged into online criminal activities that characterized internet indiscipline. Internet indiscipline is demonstrated by exhibition of the following activities; adolescent students surfing their phones, interacting with friends and fans via the social media networking sites without minding the ongoing lesson in the class. Jecoson & Forte (2011) and Malcolm (2015) held that the adolescent students do engage in 'charting', 'pinging', 'tweeting', 'flexing' and 'Facebooking' as

they used to say while lesson is going on. Malcolm (2015) maintained that adolescent students also engages in unruly activities in the internet like mimicking the bad life styles of celebrities and fans seen online. No wonder today in most Nigerian families and societies, indecent dressing especially among girls and bad hair styles among young boys are becoming uncurbable. The internet addictive attitude among the adolescents even extents to non-attendance to religious or faith rituals (prayers and other activities) and inner chores at home, which some parents pay no attention to. It is indeed a bad phenomenon that should be curbed right from the family level through good value orientation counselling by the parents, care givers or guardians.

Social media and internet resources influences adolescence students both positively and negatively (Sreenivasan, 2014). Some use social media short hand form of messaging to write to their teachers while others use unofficial terms when communicating to parents, elders or teachers. Most adolescent students engage in examination malpractices by hiking website of examination bodies, using smart phones and cheating with it during examinations. Internet indiscipline causes many youths to become hackers and frauds, cyber lusts and promiscuous, internet bullies and riot or crisis instigators through hate speeches and fake rumor posts on social media flat forms. Most adolescents today disregard the norms and values of societies, especially with the advent of digitization. Computer age adolescents talk to parents with their ears blocked with ear-piece and their attention glued to the phone and busy surfing the internet. This is morally sarcastic an unacceptable and should be corrected with all concerns.

Similarly, in another issue of adolescents' maladjusted behaviours, Egobiambu (2023) in his report submitted that, recently 70 youth (50 males and 20 females) were arrested in Gombe who are suspects of same sex marriage plan by the Nigerian Security Civil Defense Corp (NSCDC). According to him same sex marriage is unlawful in Nigeria under 2014 law, but these youth who are at the crucial stage that is characterized by risk taking, curiosity and excitement, defiantly violated this law, by organizing a birthday party for one of them and even planning for same sex marriage as the report reaches the security. However, all the culprits were coming from a home background where they would have been guided rightly in handling the challenges of their developmental tasks. Hence, the need to re-echo to the populace that the significance of ethically keeping the accepted societal norms and values is not debatable. The adolescents, parents and the society at large need re-orientation in observing the moral set standard so that to project good self-image of our society.

### **Counselling implications on the Adolescents' Maladjusted Behaviours**

Counselling is an inevitable service and remediating means of mitigating psychological anomaly that cannot be clinically contained. Thus, it is worthy of note that human experience is not devoid of psychological and other challenges as one interacts with his/her environment. Thus, adolescents are human beings borne with innate tendencies, feelings, wishes and aspirations as they interact with their environment. They are individuals who just transients from childhood experiences and are not fully metamorphosed into adults.

Thus, they are still struggling with developmental tasks that make them vulnerable to psycho-social adjustment challenges. Hence, to make the adolescents adjust positively to psycho-social challenges such as frustration, anxiety, worry, desperation, need for recognition, need for acceptance and leadership, fear, stress, poor parental love and care, poor relationship skills; counselling intervention is pertinent.

However, counselling services play a vital role in individuals as it provides a framework upon which one can recognize, accept and develop the skills needed to adjust positively with the unfriendly environment (Vishala, 2008). Adolescents struggling with developmental task adjustment can therefore be counselled rightly by specialists i.e. counsellors on how to contained with the psycho-social issues so that not to give birth to unpleasant condition. In doing such, the adolescents are to made to see their developmental task experiences as healthy and natural which prepare them for succeeding stages of growth. Hence, there is need of supplying them with alternative actions that can make them overcome the challenges. Counsellors can do that by encouraging them calibrate their thinking, always envisaging the consequence aftermath of any decision. Violence, vandalism, lawlessness, destruction of valuables, chaotic demonstration as common developmental tasks adjustment attributes of the adolescents are never effective means of expression of their dissatisfaction, but are rather restive, evil and heinous. Erroneously, many youths do take up these as yardsticks of voicing their feelings and seeking attention.

### **Value Re-orientation Counselling**

Empirically, the outcomes for individuals' personalities differs based on family contexts, which relatively reflect the kind of societies they will build. And in African's orientation, no family wishes to be identified with a bad behavior. Therefore, parents always try their best to inculcate good virtues into their children to protect the image of their families. Children raised within stable and peaceful families tend to show lives characterized by contentment, well-being, and accomplishments, compared to those that are poorly brought up. Children from good family background tend to enjoy meaningful life, with reduced vulnerabilities to mental health problems and involvement in heinous activities. They easily and positively navigate through the developmental tasks with less susceptibility to substance abuse and addiction and so also resistance to the ill-ideas of peers. Thus, helping the individual adolescents to gain understanding of themselves, learn to clarify personal views, to reach self-determined goals through well informed choices and resolution of emotional challenges are values that can be transmitted through effective counselling (Biam, Agbe & Igbo, 2022).

Additionally, disciplined children from good home background demonstrate good virtues and compliance to norms and values of the societies. But our communities today in Nigeria are besieged with youths that do not think of how their tomorrow can be better, rather just anxious to enrich themselves by all means (Olubusayo, 2022). Therefore, adolescence training and equipment with the norms and values of the society should begin right from home level. Each family remains

the strongest agent of transforming the child's life and future. To that effect, parents, guardians, care-givers and other family members are enjoined to do well in guiding the adolescents especially during their developmental tasks experience stage so that they would have positive psychological adjustment and become useful members of societies.

The positive psychological adjustment promotes the adolescent's mental well-being, thereby affecting how they think, feel and act. Families therefore hold the primary role of children good upbringing; the school, peers, religious institutions, social media and the society at large only supplement and complement the investments families make. Therefore, the place of families in term of children training cannot be replaced because of its cruciality. More so, the neglected traditional custom of communal training of children should be re-visited and embraced and parents who feel bad whenever their erring children are reprimanded should know that in the African setting, a child is not meant for a family alone but relevant also in the society he/she lives. Thus, the need for drawing the attention of parents especially young ones who overtly support their erring children is necessary because of the high rate of moral decadence in our societies today (Olubusayo, 2022).

### **Suggestions:**

In containing with the adolescents' maladjusted behaviours, parents should provide good home background to their children, by not only providing comfortable accommodation and their basic needs, but also creating good family psychosocial climate that can ethically promote the acquisition and exhibition of good morals that are conforming to societal norms and values. Also, parents, guardians or care givers at home to always endeavor to show good examples because the home is the children's first learning environment. It is also suggested that good house location should be one of the determinants of a good home background. Hence, residential homes should not be built too close to hotels, hospitals, market areas or event centers, they seem to have negative effects in the children's behaviours; especially adolescent children. The olden practice of collective community children training to be re-traced and sustained. Finally, maladjusted adolescents to be identified and counselled appropriately by therapists as well as parent who support erring children by negating communal reprimand should also be counselled rightly.

### **Conclusion**

Adolescents are individuals with unique attributes phasing out from childhood to early adulthood. Successful adjustment of their new experiences in this stage of growth can result to stable adulthood. But where the characteristics and experiences are unsuccessfully achieved, the consequence is poor psychosocial adjustment and maladaptive behavior; as they may wrongly indulge into drug abuse, violence, restiveness due to family or home failure of meeting their needs. This is not unconnected to the fact that, adolescence is a stage of strange experience, confusion, exploration through trial and error and curiosity to know more about themselves, the world and the happenings around. Hence, they need to be guided by experienced individuals. However, to enable the adolescents navigate this difficult terrain of growth, guidance and counselling is the most appropriate tools to be employed in helping them soar above the adjustment challenges. Parents



are called to revisit that which the society holds as values with high esteem. Teachers, faith-based leaders, elders, community leaders and above all, the professional counsellors have the role to play in modeling the adolescents behaviours who will be future care takers and leaders of our future societies by giving effective value orientation.

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