



## Most Potent Age and Sex-Related Problems of the Adolescents: Implications for Adolescence Education in Bayelsa State

Dr. T. E. Ganagana

Department of Educational Foundations Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Amassoma, Yenagoa, Bayelsa State

### ARTICLE INFO

Published Online:  
07 December 2020

### ABSTRACT

This study assessed the most potent problems of the adolescents and the educational implications in Bayelsa State of Nigeria. A sample of 1593 adolescents was randomly selected for the study from the senior secondary schools in the State. The purpose of the study is to find out the most potent age and sex-related problems of the adolescents in Bayelsa state of Nigeria. The Adolescents' Problems Questionnaire (APQ) was used to collect data from the adolescents. The hypotheses of the study were tested with descriptive statistics, one-way anova as well as two-way anova with Scheffe's test of significance in order to be able to take appropriate decisions. Results indicated that adolescents in Bayelsa State were mostly affected by personal, social and psychological issues, and that the severity of these problems were more of age and sex differences interaction. The study recommended that society should pay attention to the adolescents with a view to understanding their nature and the kinds of problems they encounter, and that appropriate education with emphasis on adolescence guidance and counseling services should be given to them, periodically, in Bayelsa State, to provide the adolescents opportunity to explore their nature.

Corresponding Author:  
Dr. T. E. Ganagana

### INTRODUCTION

Adolescents, all over the world are seen as peculiar and unique people. Their uniqueness is not necessarily because they possess special features but because of the pattern of their growth and development. Often times, issues of the adolescents are found to be more complex, probably, because of the way that the society handles them. In most cases, however, it is observed that society strives to give the best to the adolescents without achieving the intended goals. Besides, the adolescents themselves pass through many physical experiences that may cause discomfort to them, which may not be publicly known. Sometimes, too, these conditions are individual in nature - that is, these conditions may not appear general or uniform with all the adolescents as we may be made to think. This is the reason why different people described the period of adolescence in different terms. In most of these studies, adolescence is portrayed in negative perspectives. Engel (1993) described it as 'a period of crisis'; Glenn, Dement and Coleman (1990) referred to it as 'No man's land'. Erikson (1968) described adolescence as the 'turbulent period' of growth and development, whereas, Hall (1976) referred to it as 'the period of storm and stress'.

Adolescents' problems emanate from various sources ranging from physiological to psychological. Ekeruo, Ekwe, Ikediashi and Nwamuo (1989) and Onyejiaku, (1991), specifically, categorized adolescents' problem areas into

seven, viz; personal, emotional, psychological, vocational, social, physiological and religious. Each of these conditions borders on series of issues that the adolescent needs to adjust and resolve (Denga, 1990; Smart and Smart, 1973, Muus, 1975; Rice, 1975). Although, adolescence is portrayed as turbulent, the adolescents have the capability to resolve these critical conditions prevalent with them. It is therefore, imperative to state that adolescents often display defence mechanisms in a bid to resolve these problems (Freud, 1965).

The complexity and severity of the problems that could affect the adolescent is derived largely on the nature of the society. Societies that are democratic, supportive, accommodating and guidance oriented may present a better background for a balanced growth and development of the adolescent than societies that are individualistic, rigid and competitive. Papalia, Olds and Feldman (2001) stated that in most societies, young men and women do not grow in the same psychological environment because of cultural constraints. Haruna (2006) supported this view in his assertion that in Northern Nigeria female adolescents are more or less confined to the home, whereas, their male counterparts are not. This is true of the traditions of most people in Nigeria, where the males are nurtured to associate freely in the society and the females are forbidden to do so, on account of religious or moral grounds. Such differential lifestyle could also define

## “Most Potent Age and Sex-Related Problems of the Adolescents: Implications for Adolescence Education in Bayelsa State”

the types of problems that adolescents in these areas are confronted with, and also how prevalent or severe such problems are. It could also suggest age and sex differences in the problems experienced.

Adolescents in Bayelsa State may or may not be comparatively better than those in other areas in terms of problems and their adjustment styles. Nevertheless, identifying the type and nature of adolescent problems in a given area might be largely helpful in order to assist them to resolve their common daunting problems. Knowledge of how well the adolescent fair in the society would help the government and other concerned agents to evolve ways of nurturing the adolescents for proper growth and development and for societal upliftment. Therefore, this study is aimed at assessing the most potent age and sex-related problems of the adolescents in Bayelsa state of Nigeria. Specifically, it examines the problems affecting the adolescents and how severe these problems are amongst the different adolescent groups such as early, middle and later adolescence. Further more, it tends to find out which is more severely affected between male or female adolescents.

In this regard, the study tested the following hypotheses.

- (1) There is no significant difference in the severity of adolescents’ problems amongst different adolescent groups
- (2) There is no significant difference in the severity of adolescents’ problems between age and gender groups amongst the adolescents.

### METHODOLOGY

The study employs the expost facto research design. The population of the study is all the adolescents in the secondary schools in Bayelsa State. Bayelsa State is made up of eight Local Government Areas, and in the senior secondary schools there are, currently, a total of about 15,934 adolescents (Post Primary Schools Board, 2013) distributed among 54 schools. The stratified random sampling technique was used to draw 1593 adolescents for the study. This number was derived from the senior secondary schools in all the eight Local Government Areas comprising the State. The sample breakdown was 44% for SS1, 35% for SS2 and 21% for SS3

which led to 701; 558 and 334 respondents, respectively in the study with a total of 8694 male and 7239 female adolescents. The percentages mentioned above were also maintained for the age groups, respectively. A questionnaire titled the Adolescents Problems Questionnaire (APQ) which was developed by the researchers was used for the study. It was made up of sections ‘A’ and ‘B’. Section ‘A’ sought demographic data. Section ‘B’ contained 29 items describing various problem areas of the adolescents as derived from literature. These problem areas were in the dimensions of personal, physiological, social, emotional, psychological, vocational as well as religious with 4 items each, except the emotional dimension with 5 items for the measurement. A trial test was thereafter conducted with 30 adolescent respondents outside the sample and analyzed with the Cronbach Coefficient alpha. The dimensions yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.73 - 0.87. The instrument was therefore seen to have high validity properties and was considered reliable enough to be used in this study. The instrument was personally administered by the researchers. Respondents spent an average of 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire. After completion, copies of the distributed questionnaire were collected back immediately. This assured 100% rate of return of questionnaire. The instrument had options of ‘Strongly Agree’, ‘Agree’, ‘Undecided’, ‘Disagree’ and ‘Strongly Disagree’, and was scored 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively, for positive items and the reverse for negative items. The research question was analyzed with descriptive statistics. For the research question, the least score that could be obtained was 46197, while the maximum, 230985 and the two hypotheses were tested with one-way anova and two-way analysis of variance, respectively, and a post hoc was done to determine the level of significance

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section deals with the results obtained from data collected for the research question and the two hypotheses. The results in percentages, one-way anova and the two-way analysis of variance are all indicated in tables 1 -6 as follows. What are the problems that most affect the adolescents in Bayelsa State?

**Table 1:** Adolescents’ Problems In Bayelsa State In Percentages

S/NO.	PROBLEM AREAS	SCORES (X)	%	RANKING
1.	Personal	439177	26.17	2 <sup>nd</sup>
2.	Physiological	16354	7.21	5 <sup>th</sup>
3.	Social	57733	30.73	1 <sup>st</sup>
4.	Emotional	2851	1.52	7 <sup>th</sup>
5.	Psychological	41352	22.01	3 <sup>rd</sup>
6.	Vocational	14676	7.81	4 <sup>th</sup>
7.	Religious	8555	4.55	6 <sup>th</sup>
	Total	187890	100.00	

Table 1 shows categories of problems, confronting adolescents in Bayelsa State secondary schools. The table

indicates that the adolescents were most affected by problems on social issues (30.73%), This was closely followed by

“Most Potent Age and Sex-Related Problems of the Adolescents: Implications for Adolescence Education in Bayelsa State”

personal problems (26.17%) and psychological problems (22.01%). Other problems affecting adolescents in descending order of importance were vocational (7.81%),

physiological (7.21%), religious (4.55%) and emotional (1.52%) issues, respectively.

**Table 2:** Means and Standard Deviations of Severity of Adolescents’ Problems Areas with Age and Sex Differences

Groups	Age	$\sum X$	Mean	SD
Early (Puberty)	12-15	47389	84.93	9.83.
Middle	15-18	43476	80.96	9.14
Later	18-20	31783	63.82	7.03
Male	12-20	58676	65.78	7.92
Female	12-20	69013	98.45	10.57

Table 2 shows the mean points and standard deviations of the influence of age and sex on the severity of adolescence problems. For the age groups, early adolescents seem to be worst affected ( $X = 84.93$ ,  $SD = 9.83$ ), while, for gender, the

female adolescents were more affected ( $X = 98.45$ ,  $SD = 10.57$ ).

There is no significant difference in the severity of adolescents’ problems amongst different adolescent groups.

**Table 3:** One-Way Analysis Of Variance (Anova) of the Severity of Adolescence Problems in Their Age Differences

SOURCES OF VARIANCE	SUM OF SQUARE	DF	MEAN SQUARE	F-RATIO
Between	357.71	2	178.86	9.63*
Within	29580.45	1592	18.58	
Total	29938.16	1594		

\*Significant;  $P > 0.05$ ;  $Df = 2 \text{ \& } 1592$ ;  $f = 2.99$

Table 3 indicated the one-way analysis of variance (Anova) of the severity of adolescents’ problems. The null hypothesis was rejected, because the F-ratio of 9.63 is greater than the critical F-ratio of 2.99 with  $df = 2, 1592$ , and  $N = 1593$  at 0.05

significant level. This implies that the severity of the adolescents’ problems in Bayelsa State is influenced by age.

In order to determine the direction of the significance, the Scheffe’s test of significance was applied. The summary of the analysis is presented in table 4.

**Table 4:** Summary of Scheffe’s Test for the Mean Scores of the Influence of Age of Adolescents’ Problems

S/NO	COMPARISON OF VARIABLES	PAIRED MEANS	F-RATIO	RESULTS
1.	Early vs Middle	84.93 & 80.96	15.39	*S
2.	Early vs Later	84.93 & 63.82	46.75	S
3.	Middle vs Later	80.96 & 63.82	51.36	S

\*Significant  $P > 0.05$ .

Table 4 indicates the level of significance of the f-values of group means and it occurs as follows: puberty versus middle adolescence (significant), puberty later adolescence (significant) and middle adolescence versus later adolescence (significant). Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. It means

that there is significant difference in the severity of adolescents’ problems amongst the groups.

There is no significant difference in the severity of adolescents’ problems between age and gender groups amongst the adolescents

**Table 5:** Two-Way Analysis Of Variance (Anova) Of the Severity of Adolescence Problems with Age and Gender Differences in Bayelsa State

SOURCE	SUM OF SQUARES	DF	MEAN SQUARE (MS)	F	REMARKS
Rows	2111.62	1	2111.62	25.45	*SG
Columns	89821.07	2	44.91	10.82	SG
Interaction	65223.83	2	32.61	7.86	SG
Within	131649.00	1587	82.96		
Totals	158357.86	1592			

\*Significant;  $P > 0.05$ ;  $Df = 2 \text{ \& } 1592$ ; critical f-ratio=2.99

## “Most Potent Age and Sex-Related Problems of the Adolescents: Implications for Adolescence Education in Bayelsa State”

Table 5 indicated two-way analysis of variance (Anova) of the severity of adolescents’ problem based on gender and age. The null hypothesis was rejected. The F-ratios of 25.45, 10.87 and 7.86 are all greater than the critical F-ratio of 2.99 with

df= 2, 1592, and N= 1593 at 0.05 significant level. This implies that the severity of the adolescents’ problems in Bayelsa State is influenced by sex and age differences

**Table 6:** Summary of Scheffe’s Test for the Mean Scores of the Severity of Adolescents’ Problems by Gender and Age

S/No	Comparison Of Variables	Paired Means	F-Ratio	Remarks
1.	Early Adol. Vs Middle	84.93 vs 80.96	37.52	*S
2.	Early vs Later	84.93 vs 63.82	1061.03	S
3.	Early vs Male Adol	84.93 vs 65.78	873.15	S
4.	Early vs Female	84.93 vs 98.45	435.71	S
5.	Middle vs Later	80.96 vs 63.82	699.48	S
6.	Middle vs Male	80.96 vs 65.78	548.65	S
7.	Middle vs Female	80.96 vs 98.45	728.33	S
8.	Later vs Male	63.82 vs 65.78	9.15	S
9.	Later vs Female	63.82 vs 98.45	2855.33	S
10.	Male vs Female	65.78 vs 98.45	2541.26	S

\*Significant; P>0.05; Df=2 & 1592; critical f-ratio=2.99

Table 6 shows Scheffe’ test of significance. It indicates that all the f-ratios are highly significant. This means that there is significant interaction between age and sex in determining the severity of adolescents’ problems. This is quite revealing, so that adolescent issues will be handled with more seriousness in the society.

### DISCUSSION

Adolescents’ problems are many, but the study confined all of them to only seven categories. From the results, it was discovered that adolescents’ problems among others ranged from personal to psychological as well as emotional. They were also traced to age and sex differences in this study.

Specifically, adolescents in Bayelsa State are mostly affected by personal problems. This is followed by social issues and lastly, psychological problems. While personal, social and psychological issues represent about 70% of the obstacles they encounter, only 20% out of it, was psychological in nature, yet, the remaining 30% were diverse and derived from emotional, vocational, physiological and religious issues. It further suggests that the adolescents in Bayelsa State of Nigeria, may have been experiencing great difficulties in their adjustments on personal, social and psychological matters. Bayelsa society is highly competitive in nature, and this might be the reason why personal, social as well as psychological issues find themselves on the top hierarchy of adolescents’ problems in the State. This is in conformity with assertions of Onyejiaku (1991) and Ekeruo et al(1989) which state that adolescents experience problems in many areas including those of personal, social and psychological domains.

Table 2 implied that adolescents’ problems are related to age. It was discovered that while early adolescents experienced more of psychological problems and little of personal, those in the middle and later adolescents experienced mostly of social and personal problems. This difference may be that at

puberty the adolescents might not have bothered about personal issues with the mind that they would outgrow their effects. Another possible explanation is that in early adolescence, the adolescents may have been so naïve in tackling psychological problems but at older age, the adolescents may have acquired better adjustment mechanism and greater experience in dealing with such situations. The social problems encumber the adolescents at later part of this period as found in this study is also clear because at this stage, adolescents have strong inclinations to issues like independence, peer association and personal comforts (“big dreams”), and this largely explains why they encounter social and personal problems at this stage.

The study also indicated that the severity of adolescents’ problems is somewhat peculiar to their sex differences. There was observed significant difference in the kinds of problems that adolescents are facing between male and female. For while the male adolescents perceived psycho-social problems as severe, the females saw physio-personal issues as severe. This is in line with the reports of Papalia et al (2001) and Haruna (2006), which stated that cultural barriers created in the society put male and female on different pedestals, so while the male adolescents are constantly exposed the female adolescents are more or less confined to their homes. The implication is that such issues should be seen as crucial to the adolescents in Bayelsa State.

### IMPLICATIONS FOR ADOLESCENCE EDUCATION IN BAYELSA STATE

Adolescents have several problems which largely depend on their peculiar nature. The study revealed that, in Bayelsa state, adolescents’ major and severe problems spanned from personal, social and psychological. These are specifically based on physical development (physical appearance), social interaction, self-assertiveness and the like. Adolescents’

emotional problems seem to outweigh and appear more severe than any others but sub-summed in their social activities, especially, when taken in terms of age perspectives. This is because adolescents are experimental and their lack of experience always threw them into severe problems of different dimensions in the society. This also impinges on their education.

Education is the panacea in the first instance. Educating the adolescent, generally, will have to affect all the domains – cognitive, affective and the psychomotor – for easy adjustment in the society. Educating the cognitive domain in the adolescent will equip him or her knowledge of more effective adjustment strategies to cope with circumstances they find themselves. For the affective, it is clear that, emotional development which has been a crucial issue in adolescent growth and development can be boosted through education. This will also give leverage to a better social development of the adolescent. For the psychomotor, education will be geared towards the development of appropriate skills meant for survival in this ever-increasing complex society.

Adolescents in Bayelsa State need the kind of education described above. In addition to meeting peculiarities, educating the adolescents in Bayelsa State needs an emphasis of the affective and psychomotor domains. This paves way for their self-assertiveness and utility in the society. This process needs active guidance and counseling services. It is through transforming the adolescents’ characteristics and utility in the vehicle of quality education as described above that the adolescent can easily be integrated and developed healthily in all ramifications in the society.

Then again, the curriculum must be designed such that age specifications can be actively taken care of. The curriculum should be sensitive to the age implications in learning as it affects the adolescents and be able to tailor the curriculum in such a way that adolescents’ learning and subsequent integration in the society can easily be possible without encountering such problems. Emphasis on Guidance and counseling with special focus on the adolescents in the society is crucial in this respect.

## CONCLUSION

Adolescents are exposed to experiences that lead to erratic changes in their behavior due to growth. The hormonal and other physiological reactions taking place in the adolescents exposed them to different adjustment demands and behavior options. Consequently, most adolescents find themselves in cross-roads and vividly manifest problem areas which may be difficult for them to resolve.

The study indicated that the most common problems or problems in which the adolescents in Bayelsa State are most affected were those of social, personal, and psychological. On

the other aspects of adolescents’ issues, it was discovered that adolescents’ problems become more or less individualistic with the above three domains of problems being emphasized to the implication of age and sex differences, tending towards severity or non-severity. Thus, it can be said that most of the network of adolescents’ problems has largely been unknown in the society with regards to individuality.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are therefore made:

- i) Society should pay attention to the adolescents with a view to understanding their nature and the kinds of problems they encounter.
- ii) Adolescents should be made to understand themselves and should be educated on coping skills.
- iii) Guidance and counseling should be offered periodically to the adolescents or that they should be psychologically oriented to avail them opportunities to explore their nature.
- iv) Adolescent’s focus, energy and diversity should be positively channeled for healthy growth and development and to achieve societal goals.

## REFERENCES

1. Denga, D. (1990). *Introduction to Education*. Calabar: University of Calabar Press.
2. Ekeruo, A.I.C.; Ikediashi, A.E.; Ekwe, A.O. and Nwamuo, P.A.(1989). *Essentials of Educational Psychology*. Agbor: Central Books.
3. Engel, T.I, (1993). *Adolescence*. In *Encyclopaedia Americana* (170-176). USA: Grolier Incorporated.
4. Erikson, E. H.(1968). *Identity of youths in crisis*. London: Faber & Faber.
5. Freud, S. (1965). *The ego and the mechanisms of defence*. London: Hogarth.
6. Glenn, M.B., Dement, B.D. & Coleman, A.T. (1990). *Psychology*. New York: McGraw Hill.
7. Hall, C.S. (1976). *A Guide to Psychologists and their concepts*. San Francisco: W. H. Free and Co.
8. Haruna, A. (2006). *Cultural configurations in Nigeria*. Lagos: Shadom.
9. Muus, R.E. (1975). *Adolescent Behaviour and Society*. New York: Random.
10. Onyejiaku, R. (1991). *Psychology of Adolescence*. Calabar: Rapids.
11. Rice, F. P. (1975). *Adolescent Developmental relationships and culture*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
12. Smart, M.S. & Smart, R.C. (1973). *Adolescents development and relationships*. New York: Macmillan.
13. Papalia, D. E., Olds, S.W. & Feldman, R. D. (2001). *Human development*. New York: McGraw Hill.