



Adolescent Neglect, Students' Psychotic Trait and Academic Performance in Sokoto

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ABSTRACT

The paper examines the correlation between adolescent neglect, psychotic traits, and academic performance among school students in Sokoto. The study adopts a descriptive research design with a correlational approach. The research population comprises 17,235 students enrolled across 28 senior secondary schools in Sokoto metropolis. The sample selection involves five schools, encompassing three boys' schools, three girls' schools, and three mixed-gender schools, resulting in a total of 7,421 students. The sampling process employs a multi-stage technique, combining stratified, purposive, proportionate, and random sampling methods. The sample size of 365 is determined using the Research Advisors Sample Determinant (2006). The research tools encompass two questionnaires: the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ: Adult Version for ages 16-69) and a self-constructed Adolescent Neglect Scale (ANS). The analysis of data employs the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient to examine the relationships posited by the first and second hypotheses. Additionally, an independent sample t-test is conducted to assess the third hypothesis. The findings of the study reveal a significant correlation between adolescent neglect and students' psychotic traits, as well as a notable relationship between adolescent neglect and academic performance. Notably, while no statistically significant gender difference is observed concerning academic performance among adolescents facing neglect in their homes and schools, the study underscores the imperative for caregivers to ensure that children and adolescents under their supervision are not deprived of essential life necessities.

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INTRODUCTION

Psychotic trait is characterized by a deficiency or absence of superego function, which represents the internalized moral standards derived from an individual's societal environment. These moral standards encompass principles, conventions, norms, and values that align with society's accepted norms. The development of the superego occurs gradually, beginning from infancy to adulthood, shaping an individual's sense of morality.

During the critical stage of childhood and adolescence, the foundation of an individual's moral standards is established. Freud, as discussed in Roundy (2021),

theorizes that the superego embodies the social aspect of one's personality, represented by their conscience and influenced by their ideal of perfection. Conscience relates to the recognition of wrong actions based on accepted moral values, while the ego ideal reflects the concept of rightness based on established moral principles in one's environment.

As elaborated by McLeod (2021), the superego incorporates the values and morals instilled by parents and others, developing around ages 3 to 5 during the phallic stage of psychosexual development. Straying from established moral values is referred to as psychoticism within psychoanalytical contexts.

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It's noteworthy that Eysenck's original theory of personality, which primarily focused on extraversion and neuroticism, introduced psychoticism (P) as an additional factor, representing a bipolar dimension encompassing egocentrism, hostility, impulsiveness, and antisocial tendencies (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1976).

High P scorers exhibit traits such as aggression, impulsivity, and nonconformity. In contrast, low P scorers tend to display altruism, empathy, cooperation, and conformity (Eysenck, 1992). Notably, individuals scoring high on psychoticism may manifest behavior problems, learning difficulties, criminal tendencies, and resistance to social norms.

The concept of moral standards (superego) varies across societies due to religious beliefs, cultural diversity, laws, and civilization. Universal acceptability of certain behaviors is limited, and cultural contexts shape perceptions of normality and morality. For instance, behaviors like early marriage, premarital sex, and alcohol consumption may be considered normal in some societies but morally unacceptable in others.

Moreover, same-sex behavior's acceptability varies widely among different cultures, highlighting the influence of societal norms on perceived morality. Symptoms of individuals with psychotic features, including disorganized behavior and social withdrawal, have been linked to poor academic outcomes (Counselling Center, 2022).

Adolescent neglect involves the failure to provide essential care for physical, intellectual, and emotional development, which can include shelter, education, medical care, and emotional support (Watson, 2005). Neglect encompasses physical, medical, environmental, emotional, educational, and supervisory aspects. Each category reflects different dimensions of neglect, such as abandonment, undernourishment, denial of healthcare, lack of emotional support, and inadequate supervision.

It's crucial to distinguish between neglect and abuse, where abuse involves acts of commission and neglect pertains to acts of omission (Good Therapy, 2022). Recognized forms of neglect include physical, medical, environmental, emotional, educational, and supervisory neglect.

Statement of the Problem

It has been observed that in Sokoto State, adolescent neglect is a common problem. Caregivers, particularly parents, pay little or no attention at all to the implications of factors that affect the life of young people. In Sokoto and environs, just as in other parts of Nigeria, children and adolescents raised by well-to-do homes also experience different forms of neglect which cause detrimental long lasting effects during developmental stages of such individuals.

Neglect of adolescents is indeed a common phenomenon in Sokoto State. Sometimes parents and other stakeholders fail to recognize the need to support adolescents just as they support younger children. Observably, many homes in Sokoto apparently assume that their children require little guidance when they reach puberty and should be allowed to have independent decisions or fend for themselves. This attitude of neglect denies adolescents the opportunity to realize their goals in life and develop into adults their society will be proud of. There are different ways in which adolescents in Sokoto are being neglected at home and within the school environment.

The researchers, having taught for years in both private and public institutions in the state, have observed that some adolescents are into drugs, out-of-school, drop-out, delinquent, lack adequate school materials, often look depressed, lack enough medical care, environmental hygiene, and so on. Similarly, some schools, across Sokoto State, which are supposed to compensate the hope and serve as source of hope for students, are not taking proper adequate care. The researcher has observed that some young people in schools in the state exhibit certain behaviours that serve as surface traits of psychoticism, which include bullying, thuggery, substance misuse, rudeness to teachers, stealing, etc. These immoral habits, coupled with the signs of neglect experience in such senior secondary school students in the state, pushed the researcher to conduct this research in order to find out how adolescent neglect relates to psychoticism trait of personality particularly with respect to adolescent students in senior secondary schools located in Sokoto metropolis.

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Objectives of the Study

The following are objectives of the research in relation to senior secondary school students in Sokoto metropolis:

1. To examine the relationship between adolescent neglect and students' psychotic trait.
2. To study the relationship between adolescent neglect and academic performance.
3. To examine the gender difference on the basis of academic performance.

Research Questions

The research studies the following questions in relation to senior secondary school students in Sokoto metropolis:

1. Is there significant relationship between adolescent neglect and students' psychotic trait?
2. Is there significant relationship between adolescent neglect and academic performance?
3. Is there significant gender difference on the basis of academic performance?

Hypotheses

The research tests the following null hypotheses in relation to senior secondary school students in Sokoto metropolis:

1. There is no significant relationship between adolescent neglect and students' psychotic trait.
2. There is no significant relationship between adolescent neglect and academic performance.
3. There is no significant gender difference on the basis of academic performance.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research is based on three relevant theories: Attachment Theory by Bowlby, Parental Investment Theory by Triveres, and Trait Theory of Personality by Hans Eysenck. The major assumption of Bowlby's attachment theory is that parents are a sanctuary of safety throughout pre-adult life (i.e adolescence). Secure attachments help children and adolescents to develop an internal model of self-competence and a model of dependability for others. While insecure attachments, however, promote feelings of threat, rejection, and personal unworthiness.

The Parental Investment Theory, however, suggests that parents sometimes decrease or completely cease investment in their children when they think that not doing so is more beneficial than the amount of benefit to be derived from investing in their child's education, medical care or other things. Children and adolescents who have abnormal physical features or mental disabilities are at greater risk for experiencing neglect according to the Parental Investment Theory. Another thing that could affect parental investment is the financial burden of childrearing. If parents see a greater benefit in a different use of their finances than investment in their children, they are likely to take advantage of the more lucrative option. In Sokoto State, generally, certain children are neglected due to this.

Eysenck's trait theory revolves around neuroticism, extraversion and psychoticism. With psychoticism observed on a continuum of psychoticism and superego. A respondent on Eysenck's scale can score zero in psychoticism questions unlike in neuroticism and extraversion; this is why *superego* is not depicted along with psychoticism in hypothesis testing.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted for the study is descriptive research of correlational type, which primarily focuses on describing the extent of relationships or differences between quantitative variables. A descriptive research helps provide answers to the questions of who, what, when, where, and how with regard to a particular research problem (Baron, 2001).

However, the target population for this study was the population of SS I and SS II students from 28 senior secondary schools in Sokoto metropolis, which was 17, 235. The students' average age was 17. A multi-stage sampling technique was used to arrive at 365 respondents out of nine schools using the Research Advisors table (2006). Stratified, purposive, proportionate and random sampling techniques were employed.

Two instruments were used by the study: Self-developed Adolescent Neglect Scale (ANS) and Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ: Adult: 16 -69 years of age) The Adolescent Neglect Scale (ANS) is made up of 30 items on a five-point Likert



scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree answered by the samples. Scores range from 30 - 150; higher scores (91 - 150) indicate adolescent neglect, while lower scores (30 - 90) shows absence of adolescent neglect. While, on the EPQ, the researcher adopted only the Psychoticism (P) scale consisting of 25 yes or no questions

The validity for Adolescent Neglect Scale was provided by the researcher by exposing the scale to experts in the field of Psychology. While, Eysenck and Eysenck (1975) validated the EPQ. Uzoka and Naedo (2013) used EPQ in their study of psychological correlates achievement in sports among Nigerian adolescents and maintained that EPQ had originality of measuring what it ought to measure.

In establishing the reliability of the instruments, test-retest method was used on Adolescent Neglect Scale in a three-week interval, and Eysenck's indices on Psychoticism scale were adopted. The Pearson index obtained on the neglect scale was 0.74, while the alpha coefficients of reliability of the EPQ (Adult) for Nigerian samples were provided by Eysenck, Adelaja

and Eysenck (1978), while Eysenck and Eysenck provided the test-retest reliability coefficients of EPQ (Adult) for samples of English University Students. The test-retest time interval was one month. The coefficients for Nigerian samples were 0.64 (males) and 0.40 (females), while the coefficients for English samples were 0.76 (males) and 0.51 (females).

Pearson correlation was run on the first and second hypotheses, and independent sample t-test was used on the third hypothesis.

DATA ANALYSES AND PRESENTATIONS

Among the 365 respondents to whom the Adolescent Neglect Scale (ANS) and Eysenck's personality scale were exposed, a total of 117 were identified as neglected of which 69 were males and 48 were females. There were 32 neglected adolescents with psychoticism trait 24 of whom were males and 8 were females.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between adolescent neglect and psychoticism trait in senior secondary students in Sokoto metropolis.

Table 1: Relationship between Adolescent Neglect and Students' Psychotic Trait in Sokoto Metropolis

Variable	N	Mean	S.D	Df	r-Cal	p-Value	Decision
Psychotic	32	5.78	2.27	30	0.55	0.04	H ₀ Rejected
Neglect	117	89.38	16.36				

Table 1 shows that the mean and standard deviation of psychotic personality are 5.78 and 2.27 respectively, while adolescent neglect has a mean score of 89.38 and standard deviation of 16.36. The table also indicates that out of 117 neglected adolescents, 32 were psychotic. From the table, it is understandable that r-Cal (0.551) is greater than p-Value (0.036) at 0.05 alpha level, which means a significantly positive relationship between adolescent neglect and psychotic personality trait in adolescents in Sokoto Metropolis. This is in clearer terms an

indication that adolescent neglect is significantly related to the trait of psychoticism of adolescents in Sokoto metropolis. This particular finding deductively says that experience of neglect from parents, teachers, government and other stakeholders worsens the students in terms of psychotic trait of personality.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between adolescent neglect and academic performance in senior secondary students in Sokoto metropolis.

Table 2: Relationship between Adolescent Neglect and Academic Performance in Sokoto Metropolis

Variable	N	Mean	S.D	Df	r-Cal	p-Value	Decision
Perform	117	38.59	12.20	115	-0.41	0.04	H ₀ Rejected
Neglect	117	89.38	16.36				

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Table 2 shows a mean score of 38.59 and a standard deviation of 12.10 for academic performances of 117 neglected adolescents, with 89.38 and 16.36 as mean and standard deviation of neglect at 115 degree of freedom. There is an indication that r -Cal (-0.412) is negatively greater the critical p -Value of 0.035 at 0.05 alpha, which shows the presence of a negative relationship between adolescent neglect and academic performance of senior secondary school students in Sokoto metropolis in Sokoto Metropolis. This is in clearer terms saying that

the rate of failure in academics in Sokoto State often bemoaned by government and other educational stakeholders is connected with the way our children and adolescents are being deprived of essentials of life. The negative relationship means that the higher the neglect of adolescents the lower their academic performance.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant gender difference on the basis of academic performance in senior secondary students in Sokoto metropolis.

Table 3: Gender Difference on the Basis of Academic Performance in Sokoto Metropolis

Variable	N	Mean	S.D	Df	t-Cal	p-Value	Decision
Male	69	38.68	12.40	115	0.10	0.92	H ₀ Retained
Female	48	38.46	12.03				

Table 3 indicates there is no significant difference between neglected male and female senior secondary school students in Sokoto on the basis of academic performance in Sokoto Metropolis. This is because t -Cal (0.097) appears lower than the p -Value (0.923) under 115 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. This finding makes it understandable that there is comparatively no significant difference in the level of pass or fail obtained by neglected male senior secondary school students from the scores obtained by the neglected female senior secondary school students.

DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS

The finding from hypothesis one of the study is a broad indication that adolescents in our schools who basically lack enough of learning facilities, supervision and guidance, and who experience emotional neglect in the home or elsewhere, and encounter a lot of environmental hazards and medical deficits are prone to develop psychoticism which cause tendencies for theft, thuggery, prostitution, robbery, disobedience to parents, sexual assault, murder, insurgency, suicide and so on. From this finding therefore, the researcher builds the view that most adolescents having their hands soiled in drug misuse and other crimes may have experienced certain forms of neglect in the home or other places.

Moreover, from the result of hypothesis one, psychotic personality is significantly positively related to adolescent neglect as earlier reported by Egeland, et al. (1983) in a research that studied relationship between child abuse and neglect and development of behavioural problems such as aggression and depression.

Aggression and depression are both symptoms of psychoticism which happened to be among the five dimensions of personality which the researcher correlated with adolescent neglect. The positive correlation indicates that as neglect increases, psychotic behaviours also increase, thereby making the individual aggressive, depressed, moody, hopeless, suicidal, and so on. Gilbert et al (2009) also reported a positively significant relationship between neglect and aggressive and violent behaviours (psychoticism) in adolescence in the United Kingdom, which also tallies with the above finding.

A research by Jebb (2001) is also in agreement with the finding of this research that anxiety and depression (traits of psychoticism) correlate with child abuse and neglect in Karachi. A research by Harkness & Lumley (2008) also found a relationship between child abuse and neglect and depression (psychotic trait) particularly for adolescents.

The research found a negative relationship between adolescent neglect and academic performance. This is in clear terms

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saying that the rate of failure in curricular activities in Sokoto State often bemoaned by government and other educational stakeholders is connected with the way children and adolescents are deprived of essentials of life. The negative relationship means that the higher the neglect of adolescents the lower their academic performance. This finding is in agreement with the results by Sepp (1989) who also reported a correlation between child abuse and school performance among school pupils in Johannesburg. He used a sample of 380 grade six pupils. Dortmund (1991) agreed with this research by arriving also at a negative correlation between neglectful parenting and child's academic achievement in Miami with a sample of 700 pupils. Margaret (1988) in Freetown also examined how child abuse affected school performance, and she discovered that pupils with indications of abuse had poorer academic scores. In a study by Lamont (2010) in Birmingham with a sample 230 children, it was found that neglected children had the poorest school performance of all maltreated children. The performance of neglected adolescents was compared with that of physically abused, sexually abused, and a group of non-abused ones.

Hypothesis three result of this research affirms the absence of gender difference on the basis of academic performance in relation to neglected adolescents in senior secondary schools in Sokoto metropolis. There was a t-Cal of 0.097 and a p-value of 0.923 under 115 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. This finding makes it understandable that there is comparatively no significant difference in the level of pass or fail obtained by male adolescents from that of their female counterparts. This finding could be as a result of the fact that both male and female adolescents who participated in this research attended schools of the same standards, taught by teachers with similar backgrounds, and sent by parents with similar norms and similar attitudes in terms of social values and family systems.

CONCLUSION

The study has indicated that there is a statistically significant relationship between students' psychotic trait and neglect in relation to adolescents in Sokoto metropolis in contrast to the null hypothesis. There is, however, a significantly negative relationship between adolescent neglect and academic performance of the adolescent respondents. And there is no significant gender difference on the basis of academic performance in relation to the neglected adolescents.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are the recommendations of the study based on its findings.

1. Parents and all caregivers anywhere in Sokoto and elsewhere should play their own role of making sure that basic life's necessities in relation to children/adolescents under their care are addressed so that no form of personality disorder develops thereupon. Parents should not discriminate against any gender concerning such basic necessities.
2. Parents also need to control the behaviours and interactions of their wards against possible encroachment of bad peers, and against substance abuse and watching of and participation in antisocial activities, and so forth.
3. Teachers in Sokoto should ensure that they fully discharge their duties and responsibilities in relation to the curricular and extracurricular activities of their students.
4. Schools in Sokoto should consistently make parents, guardians and government aware of all inadequacies or deficiencies with respect to the pupils/students that are within the schools.

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