

# Moderating Effects of Socio-Economic Status and Resilience On Psychological Wellbeing of In-School Adolescents from father-Absent Families in Ekiti State

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## Abstract:

Psychological well-being is highly important in the lives of in-school adolescents to function well generally and academically. Children solely raised by mothers without a father-figure usually become delinquents and suffer from maladaptive behaviour. This study however examined the moderating effect of parental socio-economic status and resilience on psychological well-being of in-school adolescents from father-absent families in Ekiti State, Nigeria. This study adopted the pre-test post-test control group quasi-experimental design of 3x3x3 factorial matrix. Simple random technique was used to select one Local Government Area (LGA) from each of the three senatorial districts in Ekiti State, while one Senior Secondary School (SSS) was randomly selected from each LGA. The Father-Absence Involvement Screening Scale was used to select 166 senior school I and II students across the three schools. Participants were randomly assigned to Cognitive Restructuring (CR-57), Problem-Solving (PST-59) and control (50) groups. Treatment lasted 10 weeks. Instruments used were Ryff's Psychological Well-Being ( $\alpha = 0.84$ ), and Resilience ( $\alpha = 0.83$ ) scales, and Parental Socioeconomic Status Questionnaire ( $\alpha = 0.73$ ). Data were subjected Analysis of covariance and Multiple classification

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analysis at 0.05 level of significance. There was a significant main effect of parental socioeconomic status on psychological well-being ( $F_{[2;140]} = 4.67$ ; partial,  $\eta^2 = 0.063$ ) of in-school adolescents from father-absent families. Participants with high parental socioeconomic status have higher psychological well-being ( $\bar{x} = 148.64$ ) than their counterparts (moderate and low parental socioeconomic status). There was no significant main effect of resilience on psychological well-being ( $F_{[2;140]} = 1.98$ ; partial,  $\eta^2 = 0.028$ ) of in-school adolescents from father-absent families. Parental socio-economic status has effect on psychological wellbeing of in-school adolescents and has moderate effect of treatment in enhancing psychological wellbeing of in-school adolescents from father-absent families in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Resilience on the other hand does not moderate the effect of treatment in enhancing psychological wellbeing of in-school adolescents. It is recommended that socio-economic status and resilience should be manipulated positively in a way to contribute to psychological wellbeing of in-school adolescents from father-absent families.

**Keywords:** Father-absent families, Psychological well-being, In school adolescents, Parental socio-economic status, Resilience,

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## Introduction

Adolescence is a stage of human development in which father influence is critical. Adolescents have long been regarded as a group of people who are searching for who they are in order to find some form of identity and meaning in their lives. They struggle to find a meaning of self. One of the challenges adolescents' face, which is crucial in the formation of their identity is living without a father or having no father-figure to look up to. Research revealed that boys who live without a father or father figure in their lives show insecurity about their gender identity (Agbo, 2015). The boys also show high rate of identity diffusion, low self-esteem, lack of interest in social and school activities. As adolescents grow up, the boys may have trouble in forming intimate relationship, and may encounter many unanswered questions about their background. These may lead to depression, worry and anger. All these may expose them to emotional and physical risks such as behaviour disorders, high rate of chronic health problems and psychiatric disorders (Agbo, 2015).

Several studies have established that adolescents whose fathers are absent suffered from psychological distress and maladaptive behaviours which in turn leads to psychological ill-health (Balogun, Bada and Adejuwon, 2013). Various studies have revealed that adolescents from father-absent homes in Nigeria have low Psychological well-being as adolescents growing up in fatherless households are more likely to be at risk of experiencing a number of internalizing and externalizing problem behaviours such as sadness and depression, aggression, gender role difficulties, early initiation of sexual activities, poor social and adaptive functioning as most often times they are not able to cope in school and stay in school and subsequently become problem to themselves, families and finally the society at large. There are also empirical evidences that there is a high rate (15-50%) of psychological distress among adolescents from father-absent families (Akanni and Otakpor 2016, Taiwo 2011). This in turn led to hindrances to academic functioning.

Psychological well-being is about lives going well. It is the combination of feeling good and performing effectively. Psychological well-being does not demand a person to feel good all the time; the knowledge of painful emotions such as, disappointment, failure, grief is a usual part of life, and being able to manage these negative or painful emotions is needed for long-term well-being. Psychological well-being is, however, reduced when negative emotions are intense or last long and interfere with a person's capability to function in his or her daily life.

The psychological well-being of adolescents raised in father-absent families is compromised when they are denied of paternal involvement. Psychological well-being comprises of six components which includes; self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environment mastery, purpose in life and personal growth. Psychological well-being is usually conceptualized as some combinations of positive affective states such as happiness in the hedonic perspective and functioning with optimal effectiveness in individual and social life in the eudaimonic perspective (Winefield, Gill, Taylor and Pilkington, 2012).

Psychological well-being is defined as the individual potentials capacity for good decision making, effective stress management, good communication skills, effective parenting and caring for oneself emotionally (Franklin, 2003). It refers to how people evaluate their lives; it is the combination of feeling good and functioning effectively. Sustainable well-being does not require individuals to feel good all the time; since the experience of painful emotions (e.g.

disappointment, failure, grief) is a normal part of life, and being able to manage these negative or painful emotions is essential for long-term well-being.

Socio-economic status is one of the most researched and controversial element among educational specialists that contribute towards the academic performance of students. The most predominant debate is that the socioeconomic status of learners influences the quality of their academic performance. Most of the professionals maintain that low socioeconomic status has negative influence on the academic performance of students because the basic needs of students remain unmet and hence they do not achieve well academically (Adams, 1996). The low socioeconomic status causes environmental deficiencies which results in low self-esteem of students (US Department of Education, 2003).

Wilson (1993) asserts that, father-absent families are far more susceptible to poverty than other family types, with these types of families having poverty rates almost five times than that of married-couple families. In addition, non- resident father families are more likely than father-headed families to be persistently poor. Moreover, female-headed households typically have less earning potential than other family forms and less labour force attachment activity (Wilson 1996). Not only is there a relationship between economic deprivation and family structure at the individual level, but female headed families are more likely to be found in areas of concentrated poverty. The lack of economic means found in regions with many absent fathers may create settings conducive to crime for adolescents, which invariably affect their psychological well-being and academic self-efficacy. Adolescents who live without their fathers are, on average, more likely to be poor and experience health problems (Horn and Sylvester, 2002).

Parental education and family SES level have positive associations with the student's quality of achievement (Caldas and Bankston, 1997; Jeynes, 2002; Mitchell and Collom, 2001). The students with high level of SES perform better than the middle class students and the middle class students perform better than the students with low level of SES (Garzon, 2006). It is also observed that the economically disadvantaged parents are less able to afford the cost of education of their children at higher levels and consequently they do not work at their fullest potential (Rouse and Barrow, 2006). Scholars have shown that socio-economic inequality in the primary school years has lasting consequences. Particularly, as low SES children get older their situation tends to deteriorate. Due to their relatively poor skills, they are prone to leave school early (Alexander, Entwisle, and Kabbani, 2001). In the longer term, they are less likely to enter the labour market successfully or pursue post-secondary education (Alexander, Entwisle and Olson, 2007).

Resilience is another moderating variable considered in this study, which refers to a dynamic developmental process of responding more positively than expected after facing risk (Glennie, 2010). It is measured by how well one reacts to a threat using his own abilities and available support systems (Condly, 2006). Pitsoane (2014), in his study discovered that when fathers are emotionally present, the level of resiliency in adolescent increases. An individual's response to risk cannot be seen as fixed attribute. Some individuals succumb to stress whereas others overcome the hardships or challenges of life. The respondents in his study indicated low levels of resilience when fathers are absent in their lives. Adolescent from father absent families responded negatively to risk. They are unable to deal with stressors in

their lives.

They easily become involved in risky activities as Seiffge-Krenke (2006) purport that adolescent who are ambivalent or experience resistant models of attachment and who seek support from others such as a father, but are disappointed in the way fathers provide support, are said to report high level of stress, continuous conflict and anger. Studies conducted by Allen and Daly (2007), Marsh, McFarland, Allen, McElhaney, and Land (2003) further suggest that insecure attachment has been linked with problems such as anger, anxiety, depression and externalising problems such as conduct problems and oppositional behaviour.

Adolescents from father-absent homes are more likely to experience such problems since their level of resistance is low due to insecure attachment with fathers. The attachment figure in this study refers to a father who is very important to the well-being of an adolescent. Studies have demonstrated that if attachment is permeable, adolescents are more likely to be involved in risk factors as hypothesised. Paternal acceptance is significantly and positively linked with psychological adjustment (Allen and Daly 2007). It has also been proven that adolescent with more secure attachment who perceive their parent to be warm and involved in their lives have lower levels of delinquency than those adolescents who perceive their parents to be uncaring and uninvolved (Golstein and Haven 2000; Palmer and Holin 2001; Nikerson and Nagle 2004).

Considering the magnitude of psychological distress of adolescents from father-absent home and the subsequent problems it leads to, there is need to design an intervention programmes in search for ways to increase their psychological well-being. However, few previous studies focused on utilizing some interventions and therapeutic treatment with little emphasis on moderating effect of treatment on psychological wellbeing. Based on the above evidence, this study therefore examines the moderating effect of parental socio-economic status and resilience in enhancing the psychological well-being of in-school adolescents from father-absent families. Hence, in context and content, this study would determine the effects of socio-economic status and resilience on psychological well-being of adolescents from father-absent families in Ekiti State.

The purpose of the study is to investigate the effects of socio-economic status and resilience on psychological well-being of adolescents from father-absent families in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The main effects of parental socio-economic status on psychological well-being of in-school adolescents from father-absent families as well as Resilience on psychological well-being of in-school adolescents from father-absent families will be examined.

### Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses will be tested at 0.05 level of significance

1. There is no significant main effects of the socio-economic status on psychological well-being of in-school adolescents from father-absent families.
2. There is no significant main effects of resilience on psychological well-being of in-school adolescents from father-absent families.
3. There is no significant interaction effect of treatment and socio-economic status on psychological well-being of in-school adolescents from father-absent families

4. There is no significant interaction effect of treatment and resilience on psychological well-being of in-school adolescents from father-absent families.

### Methodology

This study adopted a pre-test, post-test, control group experimental design with 3x3x3 factorial matrix. It consisted of treatment and control groups at three levels, resilience at three levels and parental socio-economic status at three levels to evaluate the effect of two treatment packages on psychological well-being. The target population for the study comprised all in-school adolescents from father-absent families in Ado-Ekiti, Ifaki Ekiti, Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria. Ado, Ifaki and Ikere- Ekiti are three out of the 16 Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Ekiti State. Three public secondary schools were randomly selected for the study. This research adopted multi-stage sampling techniques in selecting the participants. Ekiti State has three (3) senatorial district; Ekiti north, Ekiti-south and Ekiti-central. At the first stage one local government was randomly selected from each of the senatorial district. The next stage was the selection of a senior secondary school from each of the local government selected. The total number of 166 participants was used for this study.

The following described instruments were used for this study:

**Ryff Scale of Psychological Well-Being:** The Ryff inventory was constructed by Ryff in 1995. The inventory consists of 42 questions. The inventory consists of a series of statements reflecting the six areas of psychological well-being: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, and purpose in life, and self-acceptance. Respondents rate statements on a scale of 1 to 6, with 1 indicating strong disagreement and 6 indicating strong agreement. Responses are totalled for each of the six categories and a high score indicates that the respondent has a mastery of that area in his or her life. Conversely, a low score shows that the respondent struggles to feel comfortable with that particular concept. The instrument was however re-validated and Cronbach alpha value of .84 was obtained after administering the instruments in a pilot study to a selected sample of fifty (50) students in Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria

**Parental Socio-Economic Scale (PSES):** The PSES by (Salami, 2000) was used to measure the socio-economic status of the participants' parents since adolescents' behaviours are significantly associated with parent's socio-economic status. The scale comprises eight opened ended questions on parents' occupation, (10 marks) parents level of education (12 marks), parents' type of residence (5 marks), house furniture, type of cars, electronic gadgets and kitchen utensils (29 marks) giving the total of fifty marks maximum score of 56. The highest score obtainable is 56 while the least is 6. The internal consistence Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was 0.73, with correlation coefficient of 0.64.

**Resilience Scale:** Resilience Scale was developed by Wagnild and Young in 1993. The scale comprises 25 items which measures the degree of individual resilience, considered to be a positive personality characteristic that increases an individual's adaptation. This scale was adapted to measure resilience level of the participants in this study. The scale items are scored on a 4-point scale ranging from from 1 (strongly disagree), to 4 (strongly agree). Scores on the RS can range from 25 to 100 with higher scores mean greater resilience. Wagnild (2003) categorizes the scores into high (75-100), medium (51-74), and low (less

than 50) levels of resilience. Wagnild and Young report “high reliability with a coefficient alpha of .91, The scale was re-validated and cronbach alpha of .83 was obtained after administering the instruments in a pilot study to a selected sample of fifty (50) students in Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria

A letter of introduction was collected from the Department of Guidance and Counselling, University of Ibadan which was submitted to the administrative office of the selected secondary schools. The research assistants were given some orientation training exercise on the process of data collection as well as manner of dispositions towards the respondents on administration. The researcher explained to the school authorities and the participants the purpose of the study and what they would benefit from it. Having received their consent, the researcher then screened the respondents with father-absent involvement scale. Those that scored above 100 were used for the study. The researcher held an average of forty (40) minutes training session for the two experimental groups for 10 weeks while the control group was given a lecture on communication. However, the same pre-test and post-test instruments were administered for the three groups. After each training session, the participants were given snack as a way of incentive. The data was analysed using the Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) at 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

**Table 1 Summary of 3x3x3 Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) showing significant main and interactive effect of Treatment Groups, Socio-Economic Status and Resilience of in-school adolescents from father-absent families**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Remarks
Corrected Model <sup>a</sup>	137266.910	26	5279.497	3.744	.000	.412	
Intercept	96520.728	1	96520.728	68.447	.000	.330	
Pretest_p	492.250	1	492.250	.349	.556	.003	
<b>Main Effect</b>							
Treatment	21440.962	2	10720.481	7.602	.001	.199	S
PSES	13176.153	2	6588.076	4.672	.011	.063	S
RES	5589.652	2	2794.826	1.982	.142	.028	NS
<b>2-Way Interaction</b>							
Treatment * PSES	7618.984	4	1904.746	1.351	.254	.037	NS
Treatment * RES	2411.873	4	602.968	.428	.789	.012	NS
PSES * RES	8981.362	4	2245.341	1.592	.180	.044	NS
<b>3-Way Interaction</b>							



Treatment * PSES * RES	6942.639	6	991.806	.703	.669	.034	NS
Error	196011.909	140	1410.158				
Total	3544458.00	166					
Corrected Total	333278.819	165					

a. R Squared = .412 (Adjusted R Squared = .302)

\*Significant at 0.05

**Table 2: Multiple Classification Analysis (MCA) showing the direction of the differences of the treatment Groups, Socio-economic status and Resilience in Psychological well-being of Students**

Variable + Category Grand Mean = 139.08		N	Predicted Mean		Deviation		Eta	Beta
			Unadjusted	Adjusted for Factors				
Treatment	Cognitive Restructuring Therapy	57	164.4561	162.2479	25.37580	23.16355	.562	.539
	Problem Solving Therapy	59	145.3898	146.7222	6.30549	7.63787		
	Control	50	102.7200	103.6652	-36.36434	-35.41913		
Posttest Socio-Economic Status	High	32	148.6393	145.3449	9.55501	6.26057	.190	.109
	Moderate	73	137.2192	136.3316	-1.86416	-2.75277		
	Low	61	125.1240	133.4299	-13.95934	-5.65445		
Resilience	High	15	154.5333	151.2612	15.44900	12.17685	.154	.088
	Moderate	59	141.6304	138.5871	2.54610	-.49727		
	Low	92	131.1844	136.7639	-7.89790	-2.32040		
<b>Multiple R Squared</b>		.577						
<b>Multiple R</b>		.333						

Table 2 showed the mean scores of socio-economic status differences are: high socio-economic status (Grand Mean (139.08 - 9.56) = 148.64, moderate socio-economic status (Grand Mean (139.08 - 1.86) = 137.22 and low socio-economic status (Grand Mean (139.08 -

13.96) = 125.12 respectively. And the mean scores of different resilience category: High resilience (Grand Mean (139.08 + 15.45) = 154.53, Moderate resilience (139.08 + 2.55) = 141.63 and Low resilience (Grand Mean (139.08 - 7.90) = 131.18 respectively. The students with high socio-economic status have higher psychological well-being compared to their counterpart with moderate and low socio-economic status. Also, students with moderate socio-economic status have high psychological well-being more than their counterpart with low socio-economic status.

**Ho<sub>1</sub> There is no significant main effect of socio-economic status on psychological well-being of in-school adolescents from father-absent families**

Table 1 showed that there was significant main effect of socio-economic status on psychological well-being of in-school adolescents from father-absent families ( $F_{(2, 140)} = 4.672, p < .05, \eta^2 = .063$ ). Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. This denotes that there is significant difference in the psychological well-being of high, moderate and low socio-economic status of students. Table 2 further revealed the mean score of high socio-economic status students (estimated mean = 148.64), moderate socio-economic status (estimated mean = 137.22) and low socio-economic status (estimated mean = 125.12). The students with high socio-economic status have higher psychological well-being compared to their counterpart with moderate and low socio-economic status. Also, students with moderate socio-economic status have high psychological well-being more than their counterpart with low socio-economic status.

**Ho<sub>2</sub> There is no significant main effect of resilience on psychological well-being of in-school adolescents from father-absent families**

Table 1 demonstrated that there was no significant main effect of resilience on psychological well-being of in-school adolescents from father-absent families ( $F_{(2, 140)} = 1.982, p > .05, \eta^2 = .028$ ). Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted. The MCA on Table 2 further indicates that the mean score of students with high resilience (estimated mean = 154.53), moderate resilience (estimated mean = 141.63) and low resilience (estimated mean = 131.18). This implies that students with high resilience have high psychological well-being more than their counterpart with moderate and low resilience. Also, students with moderate resilience have high psychological well-being more than their counterpart with low resilience but their differences is not statistically significant.

**Ho<sub>3</sub> There is no significant interaction effect of treatment and socio-economic status on psychological well-being of in-school adolescents from father-absent families**

Table 1 showed that there was no significant interaction effect of treatment and socio-economic status on psychological well-being of in-school adolescents from father-absent families ( $F_{(4, 140)} = 1.351, p > .05, \eta^2 = .037$ ). Hence, the null hypothesis was accepted. This demonstrates that socio-economic status did not significantly moderate the efficiency of the treatment in enhancing students' psychological well-being.

**Ho<sub>4</sub> There is no significant interaction effect of treatment and resilience on psychological well-being of in-school adolescents from father-absent families**

The result in Table 1 indicated that there was no significant interaction effect of treatment and resilience on psychological well-being of in-school adolescents from father-absent families ( $F_{(4, 140)} = .428, p > .05, \eta^2 = .012$ ). Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted. This implies that resilience did not influence the effectiveness of treatment in enhancing students' psychological well-being.

### Discussion of findings

Hypothesis one was rejected, since the result presented in table 1 revealed that there is significant main effect of socio-economic status on psychological well-being of in-school adolescents from father-absent families in Ekiti State. This implies that socio-economic status has significant impact on the psychological well-being of the study participants. The report of this study aligns with the study of Neal (1999) who observed that parental socio-economic status and parental monitoring with adolescents psychological well-being was stronger for families with higher levels of socio-economic status than those with lower levels of socio-economic status. This result also substantiates Risi, Gerhardstein and Kistner (2003) who maintained that parental socio-economic status could act as a protective factor that could decrease psychological well-being problems among students such as stress. The study of Shehan (1994) also found that parent socio-economic status could help students to cope with everyday life stressor and enhance psychological well-being. Without enough socio economic status, they would be in trouble and are vulnerable to depression and well-being.

Hypothesis two was accepted because the result presented in table 1 clearly shows that there was no significant main effect of resilience on psychological well-being of in-school adolescents from father-absent families. This implies that resilience has no significant impact on psychological well-being of in-school adolescents from father-absent families. The report of this study supports the findings of Rahmani (2012) which showed that there is no significant difference between psychological well-being and resilience. This study also corroborates Mahmood and Ghaffar (2014) who found that there was no difference between psychological well-being and resilience. The finding of this study is also in line with Stallman, (2011) who also reported a non-significant difference of resilience and psychological well-being. This result is surprising because most researches have revealed the effect of resilience on whatever constructs being examined. The explanation for the non-significance of resilience on psychological well-being could be as a result of the fact that they are both different constructs which could either influence each other or not, depending on the participants and considering external factors which researcher cannot influence.

Hypothesis three was accepted because there was no significant interactive effect of treatment and socio-economic status on psychological well-being of in-school adolescents from father-absent families as shown in the result presented on table 1. This indicates that socio-economic status did not significantly moderate the effect of treatment on the psychological well-being of in-school adolescents. However, this study discovered no significant effect of socio-economic status in moderating the effect of treatment on psychological well-being of in-school adolescents.

This study aligns with the findings of Udida, Ukway and Ogodo (2012) who reported non-significant effect of socio-economic status on psychological well-being of in-school adolescents from father-absent families. This result contradicts other findings that

established significant effect of socio-economic status on psychological well-being (Conger and Donnellan, 2007; Boskey, 2009). Despite the inconsistencies in the literature as pertains to the effect of socio-economic status on psychological well-being. The findings of this study did not show the effects of parental socio-economic status in the effects of treatments on psychological well-being of in-school adolescents possibly because the content of the treatment package in both cognitive restructuring and problem-solving techniques did not give any consideration to the socio-economic status of the participants. Participants were given equal treatment regardless of their socio-economic status.

Hypothesis four was accepted because there was no significant interactive effect of treatment and resilience on psychological well-being of in-school adolescents from father-absent families as shown in the result presented on table 1. This indicates that resilience did not significantly moderate the effect of treatment on the psychological well-being of in-school adolescents. However, this study discovered no significant effect of resilience in moderating the effect of treatment on psychological well-being of in-school adolescents from father-absent families. The report of this study aligns with the finding of Rahmani (2012) which earlier showed that there was no significant difference between psychological well-being and resilience. This study also validates that of Mahmood and Ghaffar (2014) who found that there was no difference between psychological well-being and resilience. This study however negates the finding of Stallman (2010) who reported that due to the strong relationship between resilience and psychological well-being, it is important to cultivate resilience among university students.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

This study investigated moderating effect of parental socio-economic status and resilience on enhancing psychological well-being of in-school adolescents through cognitive behavior and problem solving therapy in Ekiti, Ekiti State. Socio-economic status has a significant effect on psychological wellbeing of in-school adolescents while resilience did not. Also both socio-economic status and resilience had no significant interactive effect on psychological well-being of in-school adolescents. It is therefore recommended that the parents and other stake holder as well as the adolescents should learn different ways to increase their psychological well-being. School counsellor can organise academic seminars and workshops for students and parents on ways to facilitate psychological well-being. Effort should be made to improve on socio-economic status and resilience of in-school adolescents so as to facilitate psychological wellbeing of in-school adolescents.

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