

The Influence of Religion and Age On Cognitive Behaviours of Out-Of-School-Adolescents in Southwest, Nigeria

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Abstract:

The study examined the influence of religion and age cognitive behaviours (nationalism, altruism, religious faith, and achievement motivation) of out-of-school adolescents in Southwest, Nigeria. The study specifically assessed the extents of components of cognitive behaviours of out-of-school-adolescents; and determined the difference in cognitive behaviours of out-of-school-adolescents based on religion and age. The descriptive research of the survey type was adopted in this study. The population of the study consisted of out-of-school-adolescents, both male and female in Southwest Nigeria. The study sample was 1500 out-of-school-adolescents in Southwest Nigeria consisting of 948 adolescent boys and 552 adolescent girls using multistage sampling procedure. The research instrument used was a questionnaire titled "Religion and Age Influence on Adolescents Cognitive Behaviours" (RAIACB) designed by the researcher. Face and content validity of the instrument were ensured by experts in Guidance and Counselling, Educational Psychology, and Tests and Measurement. Spearman Brown Prophecy formula was used and the reliability coefficient of 0.78 was obtained which implies that the instrument was reliable. The responses obtained were collated and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings of the study revealed that extents of components of cognitive behaviours which are nationalism, altruism, religious faith and achievement motivation among out-of-school-adolescents were moderate. It was

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also revealed that religion has no influence on cognitive behaviour while age has influence as out-of-school-adolescents within the age group of 17 – 19 have the highest level of cognitive behaviour. It was recommended among others that the government through professional counsellors should fund cognitive restructuring behaviour intervention programme for out-of-school-adolescents.

Keywords: Religion, Age, Cognitive, Behaviour, Out-of-School-Adolescents,

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Introduction

The adolescence stage or period of development which occur between the ages of 10 and 19 years has been explained as a phase of physical, cognitive, and psychological development that appears occurs generally during the period of puberty to adulthood. Out-of-school-adolescents at this stage may present a degree of negative thinking, or illogical reasoning evidenced in acts related to violent behaviour, substance abuse, drug addiction, bullying, and sexual abused behaviour (Charlton & David, 2014). UNICEF (2015) observed that out-of-school-adolescents today are faced with challenges ranging from poverty and deprivation, gender inequality, and other forms of discrimination, conflict, economic upheaval and displacement.

Survey reports on Nigeria's population of out-of-school-adolescents and children by United Nations and UNICEF (2018) in collaboration with Nigeria's National Demographic health survey NDHS, (2018) affirmed their rising in population from 10.5 million in 2015 to 13.2 million in 2018, and this also appears to be the highest in the world affirming that one in every five out-of-school-adolescent is a Nigerian. Nigeria's estimated population as at 12th May, 2019 numbering 200,209,652 shows a mean age of 17.5 years (an adolescent age bracket). And more pertinent is the Southwest Nigeria data of out-of-school-adolescents by Nigeria Bureau of statistics (NBS) and United Nations International Children Fund (2018) showing that Lagos State has 229,264, out-of-school-adolescents, Ekiti State has 99,778, Oyo State has 463,280, Ondo State has 113,746, Ogun State has 158, 797, and Osun State has 260,522. The sum total of out-of-school-adolescents is about 1,325,387, in Southwest Nigeria (Punch, 28th June, 2019).

Cognitive behaviour in this study therefore refers to an individual's thinking style as it relates to their emotions, feelings, and thinking which may be rational or irrational on issues they considers in their mind. Their thinking may consequently influence their behaviours and personality. Rachey (2018) referred to cognitive behaviours as one's thinking pattern, how one links ideas together to make one's personal decision, that is, how one's thought influences one's behaviour and actions.

It appears that some Nigeria's out-of-school-adolescents are not seeing much good in the unity and existence of Nigeria as a nation from their thinking. They seem to feel and think that, Nigeria does not have anything good to offer them for their socio-economic survival hence their engagement in fraudulent activities and social vices such as corporate begging, hooliganism, kidnapping, and armed robbery in the society at large, and perhaps dependent on rich persons within the family for their social and economic wellbeing. They also appear not to believe that they can initiate small scale business of their own and work gradually to achieve success and eventually become employer of labour. All these unbecoming attitudes appear to emanate from their negative thinking.

This self-defeating cognitive behaviour among some out-of-school-adolescents appears vocationally challenging. It appears their low qualification has subjects them to low employment status. This low employment status appears a factor influencing their cognitive behaviour, especially when faced with employment challenges, entrepreneurship opportunities and the need for initiative and creative ideas for self-employment. The question often asked by these adolescents are where, what, when, and how to start the

business of their own that will ensure their self-employment, self-sustainability, and their contribution to national development.

Nationalism as an ideology is all about a patriotic citizen identifying with one's own nation's belief, philosophy, tradition, culture, and pride as a people occupying a given geographical space within the globe. It is equally an act of patriotism and or belief among a given people that ensures the building and maintenance of a single national identity as a people and the sharing of common social characteristics such as culture, language, religion, political ideology, and perhaps a common historical background. It appears out-of-school-adolescents cognition on nationalism looks different in recent times from the real meaning. Nationalism, as a concept means identifying with one's own nation's belief, philosophy, tradition, culture, and her pride as a people occupying a given geographical space within the globe. It is equally an act of patriotism that ensures the building and maintenance of a single national identity of a people sharing social characteristics such as culture, language, religion, politics, and perhaps a common historical background.

Altruism as a psychological concept is defined as an act of selfless concern for the welfare, wellbeing, and happiness of others without necessarily expecting or attempting to secure a personal reward. It is a behavioural attribute that promotes someone else's welfare and the beneficiary may not be related to the care-giver who may be at risk or cost to the person offering the assistance. Evolutionary scientist posited that it appears altruism has a deep root in human nature because helping oneself promotes cooperation that ensure survival of the human races (Kendra, 2020). However, some out-of-school-adolescents whose mind-set and cognition appears to be a built-up of logical errors may not be interested in providing selfless service for the benefit of others, they may be self-centred, may not show the interest of rescuing people in distress, and or be of help to others. These un-altruistic behaviours are issues begging for counselling.

Religious Faith is a spiritual act in which someone or a group of people express their believe in the worship of a Supreme Being or Supernatural God whom it is belief to be exercising power and control over the entire world as expressed by a given sect or religious organization and her followers. Philip, Julican, and Jaanette (2016) posited that religion involves a communal and transmittable body of doctrinal teachings and prescribed religious practices that are sacred and this calls for reverence that guides her worshippers into what it described as salvation through emancipation of members into a relationship with God through transformative life of prayer, meditation, and moral practices like repentance and personal regeneration. It is also believe that the reverence for and the expressed genuine fear of the Almighty God in sacred and doctrinal teaching as enunciated in God's Holy Book appears to moderate man's life and prevent him or her from doing evil, committing crimes and build in him/her a religious life embedded with moral behaviour that enable man live in peace and harmony with one another. Religious faith also involves a faith-based free association that satisfies human basic needs, mutual relationship, and peaceful co-existence among citizens of a given country - all these being the acknowledgement of the right to life guided by religious rules, regulations, laws, embedded in doctrinal beliefs and teaching.

Investigating the measure of religious trait among out-of-school-adolescents appears pertinent to generate an empirically informed data on their level of religious reasoning. It also

appears a person influence by good religious virtue reason rationally and is expected not to get himself involved in crime and social vices. Achievement motivation may be defined as the basic need and drive in man for success and attainment of excellence (Scott, 2005). It also appears to be the key to learning and achievement in an educational, vocational and in an entrepreneurship tasks. It is the drive in man for the attainment of his basic needs, desires, and ambition in life (Scott, 2005). Motivation for achievement may therefore be seen a psychological spurred in an individual to take responsibility for the outcome of an endeavour, as he also anticipates that the result or outcome of his success or failure may be rewarded.

The cognitive behaviours (positive or negative) among out-of-school-adolescents on achievement motivation may be responsible for their negligence or otherwise of viable, valuable, and honest engagement for self-sustainability. Investigating the measure of achievement motivation trait among out-of-school-adolescents therefore appears important to generate an empirically informed data on their level of motivation for achievement and their needs for counselling.

It may be of equal importance to find out the influence of religion on out-of-school-adolescents cognitive behaviour because it appears faith is the basis for religion. It has been observed that religious organizations organize youth's programmes to develop psychologically congruent behaviours through cognitive enhancement seminar that add value to the way youths think and reason. Adolescents not in school devoted to such faith may think rationally, motivated and may have positive views about life. However, other out-of-school-adolescents, who may appear not committed to any religious faith, may be inconsistent in their ways and this might also impact negatively on their cognition resulting in illogical reasoning that may bring about stress, anxiety, and involvement in social vices. It has been observed that good morals maybe developed by listening to religious teaching and this may impact positively on one's thinking and psychological disposition.

Age appears another factor that may influence cognitive behaviour of out-of-school-adolescents. Apart from socio-economic challenges and peer group influence, he or she may feel over-grown and perhaps over-aged for his present class because of consistent class repetition. It appears that developmental age and maturation are related to cognition development of adolescents, and that their cognitive behaviour changes progressively through the manipulation of their mental process as they interact with their peer group. Andrea (2017) admits that meaningful, positive, progressive, and social interaction may help adolescents excel cognitively through conversation, collaboration, modeling, guidance, and encouragement. Accordingly, adolescents may through this process learn better ways of thinking, reasoning, and solving problems from competent peers. Conversely, interaction with some social deviants among out-of-school-adolescents may not positively and meaningfully motivate out-of-school-adolescents to excel cognitively on issues of self-development and national consciousness.

Age, maturation and sexual disorder may be associated with this biological needs, development, and advancement in growth as Adeusi (2015) reveals that there was no significant influence of cognitive restructuring and behavioural rehearsal on conduct disorder of respondents to the study based on age ($F [1,38] = 3.22, P = .574$). Adeusi (2013) investigated a sample size of 90 adolescents purposively selected and were randomly

assigned into experimental and control groups. Findings on the study show the efficacy of cognitive behaviour therapy on behavioural rehearsal on conduct disorder in adolescents at special correctional centre (this group of adolescents were not in school). The study revealed that conduct disorder affects 1-4 per cent of 10 to 17 years old and that conduct disorder begins in early childhood, often from pre-school years.

In view of the above, the study examined the influence of religion and age cognitive behaviours (nationalism, altruism, religious faith, and achievement motivation) of out-of-school adolescents in Southwest, Nigeria. The study specifically:

1. assessed the extents of components of cognitive behaviours of out-of-school-adolescents; and
2. determined the difference in cognitive behaviours of out-of-school-adolescents based on religion and age.

Research Question

This research question was raised for this study;

1. What are the extents of components of cognitive behaviours of out-of-school-adolescents?

Research Hypotheses

The null hypotheses below were postulated for this study;

1. Religion will not significantly differentiate in the cognitive behaviours of the out-of-school-adolescents.
2. Age will not significantly differentiate in the cognitive behaviours of the out-of-school-adolescents.

Methodology

The descriptive research of the survey type was adopted in this study. The population of the study consisted of out-of-school-adolescents, both male and female in Southwest Nigeria. The age bracket of out-of-school-adolescents in the study ranges from 10 years to 19 years. The numbers of out-of-school-adolescents in the Southwest Nigeria from available demographic record are Ekiti -99,778; Lagos -229,264; Osun - 260,552; Oyo- 463,280; Ondo - 113,746; Ogun – 158,797. The study sample was 1500 out-of-school-adolescents in Southwest Nigeria consisting of 948 adolescent boys and 552 adolescent girls using multistage sampling procedure.

The research instrument used was a questionnaire titled “Religion and Age Influence on Adolescents Cognitive Behaviours” (RAIACB) designed by the researcher. Face and content validity of the instrument were ensured by experts in Guidance and Counselling, Educational Psychology, and Tests and Measurement. The experts thereafter adjudged the instrument valid. The reliability of this instrument was subjected to split half procedure to ensure its internal consistency. To achieve this, thirty copies of the instrument were administered at Osun state at two weeks interval on 30 respondents that are not part of the sample for the study. The scores on odd and even items obtained from the two separate administration of the test were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient. The value obtained after the correlation was 0.81 which indicated the reliability of the instrument. To obtain the length of the instrument, Spearman Brown Prophecy formula was used and the reliability coefficient of 0.78 was obtained which implies that the instrument was reliable.

The data of the study were collected and collated by the researcher after the administration of the questionnaire in three selected states of southwest Nigeria namely Ondo, Ekiti, and Oyo states. The researcher with the help of trained research assistants, one for each state ensured administration of the questionnaire. The researcher was unable to retrieve all copies of the instruments. In essence, 42 copies of the instruments were not retrieved due to the uncooperative attitude of few respondents. The responses obtained were collated and analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts, percentages, mean, standard deviation and graphs. The hypotheses were tested using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the extents of components of cognitive behaviours of out-of-school-adolescents?

Table 1: Descriptive Analysis showing extents of cognitive behaviours of out-of-school-adolescents

S/N	ITEMS	No of Respondents	Average Mean
1	Nationalism (\bar{x} = 19.52, SD = 2.84)		
	Low (10.00 - 16.68)	265	18.18
	Moderate (16.69 - 22.35)	1001	68.66
	High (22.36 - 40.00)	192	13.17
2	Altruism (\bar{x} = 26.33, SD = 2.53)		
	Low (10.00 - 23.80)	304	20.85
	Moderate (23.81 - 28.85)	874	59.95
	High (28.86 - 40.00)	280	19.20
3	Religious Faith (\bar{x} = 29.02, SD = 2.71)		
	Low (10.00 - 26.31)	185	12.69
	Moderate (26.32 - 31.72)	994	68.18
	High (31.73 - 40.00)	279	19.14
4	Achievement Motivation (\bar{x} = 28.10, SD = 2.92)		
	Low (10.00 - 25.18)	137	9.40
	Moderate (25.18 - 31.01)	1003	68.79
	High (31.02 - 40.00)	318	21.81
		1458	

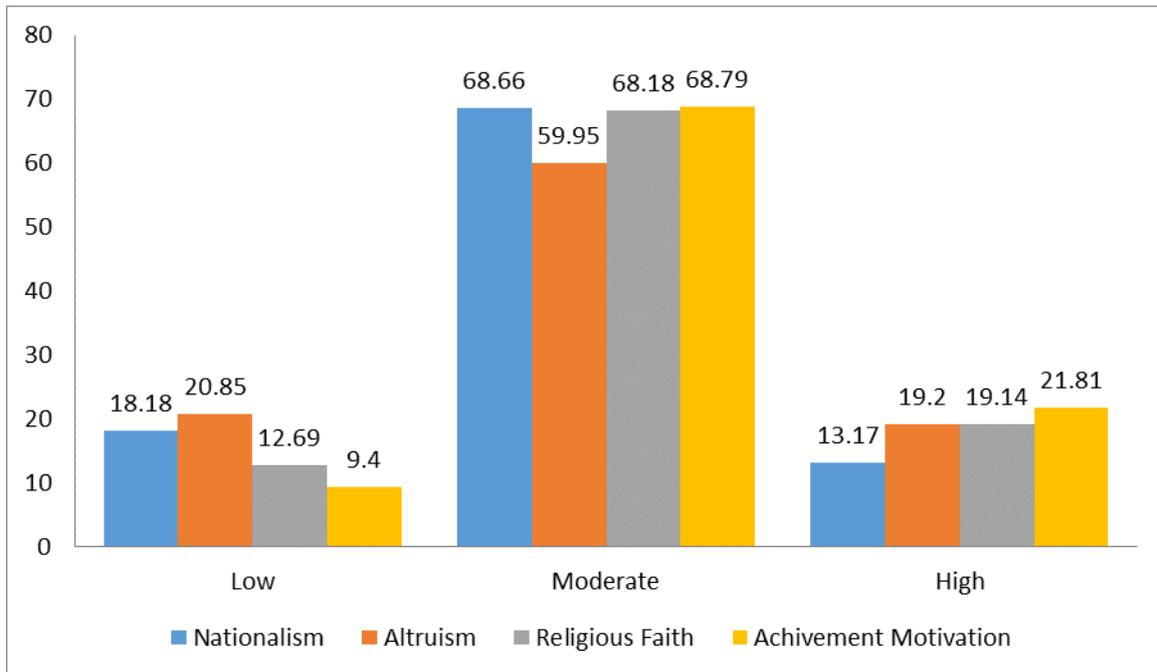


Figure i: Bar Chart showing extent of cognitive behaviours among out-of-school-adolescents

Table 1, figure i and figure ii showed the cognitive behaviours of out-of-school-adolescents. The result indicated that the mean mark of cognitive behaviour on nationalism is ($\bar{x} = 19.52$), altruism cognitive behaviour ($\bar{x} = 26.33$), religious faith cognitive behaviour ($\bar{x} = 29.02$) and achievement motivation cognitive behaviour ($\bar{x} = 28.10$). It is deduced from the above that out-of-school-adolescents have highest exhibition of religious faith cognitive behaviour, closely followed by achievement motivation and altruism while the least exhibition was cognitive behaviour on nationalism.

Table 1 also reveals the extent of cognitive behaviours of out-of-school-adolescents. The result shows that out of 1458 respondents, 265 of the respondents representing 18.18 percent had low extent of nationalism. Those who had moderate extent of nationalism were 1001 respondents representing 68.66 percent while 192 respondents representing 13.17 percent had high extent of nationalism. On altruism, 304 of the respondents representing 20.85 percent had low extent. Those who had moderate extent were 874 respondents representing 59.95 percent while 280 respondents representing 19.20 percent had high extent. On religious faith, 185 of the respondents representing 12.69 percent had low extent. Those who had moderate extent were 994 respondents representing 68.18 percent while 279 respondents representing 19.14 percent had high extent. On achievement motivation, 137 of the respondents representing 9.40 percent had low extent. Those who had moderate extent of nationalism were 1003 respondents representing 68.79 percent while 318 respondents representing 21.81 percent had high extent.

This shows that the extents of sub-variables of cognitive behaviours which are nationalism, altruism, religious faith and achievement motivation among out-of-school-adolescents were moderate.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Religion will not significantly differentiate in the cognitive behaviours of the out-of-school-adolescents.

Table 2: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for difference in cognitive behaviours of the out-of-school-adolescents based on their religion

Groups	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	77.716	2	38.858	0.924	0.397
Within Groups	61175.294	1455	42.045		
Total	61253.010	1457			

$P > 0.05$

The result presented in Table 5 shows that F-cal value of 0.924 was not significant because the P value (0.397) > 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis was not rejected. This implies that religion does not significantly differentiate in the cognitive behaviours of the out-of-school-adolescents.

Hypothesis 2: Age will not significantly differentiate in the cognitive behaviours of the out-of-school-adolescents

Table 3: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for difference in cognitive behaviours of the out-of-school-adolescents based on their age

Groups	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1138.511	2	569.255	13.778*	0.000
Within Groups	60114.499	1455	41.316		
Total	61253.010	1457			

* $P < 0.05$

The result presented in Table 3 shows that F-cal value of 13.778 was significant because the P value (0.000) < 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that age significantly differentiated in the cognitive behaviours of the out-of-school-adolescents. In order to investigate the source of the differences observed, Post-hoc analysis (Scheffe) with mean difference was carried out in Table 4.

Table 4: Scheffe Post-hoc Test and Mean for observed differences in cognitive behaviours of the out-of-school-adolescents based on their age

Groups			1	2	3
	N	Mean	102.50	102.68	105.04
10 - 13 (1)	165	102.50			
14 - 16 (2)	330	102.68			
17 - 19 (3)	90	105.04	*	*	

* $P < 0.05$

In Table 7, significant difference were found in cognitive behaviour of out-of-school-adolescents within the age group of 10 - 13 and 17 - 19 in favour of 17 - 19 age group; and

those within the age group of 14 – 16 and 17 – 19 in favour of 17 – 19 age group of child. There was however no significant difference in cognitive behaviour of out-of-school-adolescents within the age group of 10 – 13 and 14 – 16. It can be deduced from the table that out-of-school-adolescents within the age group of 17 – 19 have the highest level of cognitive behaviour.

Discussion

The findings of the study revealed that the extents of sub-variables of cognitive behaviours which are nationalism, altruism, religious faith and achievement motivation among out-of-school-adolescents were moderate. This finding is in line with the findings of Chinawa (2014). Amyle (2018) observed in his study that the cognitive behaviour of some out-of-school-adolescents appear to be that of self-defeating, illogical reasoning, which may have generated emotional dysfunctions and lack of self-worth that may have influenced their decision to associate themselves with peers of deviant behaviours. Chinawa (2014) opined that out-of-school-adolescents appear to have different cognitive behavioural problems ranging from violent related behaviour problems, such as substance use and misused, drug addiction, smoking, alcoholism, sexual abuse, and bullying. He also opined that each of these behavioural challenges come with her associated burden ranging from psychiatric manifestations, occasional emotional panics, drug psychosis, homicides, suicidal thoughts and drug addiction.

The findings of the study revealed that religion does not significantly differentiate in the cognitive behaviours of the out-of-school-adolescents. This is in line with the findings of Greeta and Mudita (2016) as they concluded that religious factor has no influence on cognitive behaviours of the out-of-school-adolescents. Jill, Ram, and Richard (2007) study of out-of-school-adolescents risk behaviour and influence of religion on a sample study of 2,004 adolescents of ages 11 – 18 years revealed their level of religiosity. The report indicates that they perceive religion as important, and were fully participating in religious.

The study revealed that age significantly differentiated in the cognitive behaviours of the out-of-school-adolescents. Out-of-school-adolescents within the age group of 17 – 19 have the highest level of cognitive behaviour. Adeusi (2015) revealed that conduct disorder affects 1-4 per cent of 10 to 17 years old and that conduct disorder begins in early childhood, often from pre-school years. The finding however contradicted Adeusi (2015) who revealed that there was no significant influence of cognitive restructuring and behavioural rehearsal on conduct disorder of respondents to the study based on age.

Conclusion

The study concluded that extents of components of cognitive behaviours which are nationalism, altruism, religious faith and achievement motivation among out-of-school-adolescents were moderate. It was also concluded that religion has no influence on cognitive behaviour while age has influence as out-of-school-adolescents within the age group of 17 – 19 have the highest level of cognitive behaviour.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that:

1. The government through professional counsellors should fund cognitive restructuring behaviour intervention programme for out-of-school-adolescents.

2. Counsellors should understand the counselling needs of their needy out-of-school-adolescents when they comes face to face on a one on one counselling session

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