

## Impact of Hope and Self-Affirmation on the Psychological Well-Being of Out-of-School Adolescents in Ondo State, Nigeria

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigated the impact of hope and self-affirmation on the psychological well-being of out of school adolescent in Ondo State, Nigeria. In the study, the researcher made use of questionnaires which were administered to two hundred respondents. The data collected from the respondents were analysed using descriptive statistical measures such as mean, standard deviation and regression analysis method. However, from the result and analysis of data collected in this research, it could be deduced that the impact of hope and self-affirmation on the psychological well-being of out of school adolescent cannot be over emphasised. Such that hope and self-affirmation had significant relationships with psychological well-being of out of school adolescents and that the combined effect of hope, and self-affirmation on psychological well-being of out of school adolescents was significant and produced an F-ratio value significant at 0.05 level to be 37.57.

**Keywords:** *Hope, Self-Affirmation, Psychological Well-Being, Out-Of-School, Adolescents*

Adolescence can be a particularly turbulent watershed, as a matter of fact; it can be a climacteric period in one's life. It has been identified as a period in which young people develop abstract thinking abilities, become more aware of their sexuality, develop a clearer sense of psychological identity, and increase their independence from parents (Viner and Christie 2005). As far back as the beginning of the twentieth century, Stanley (1904) described this period as one of "Storm and Stress" and, according to him, conflict at this developmental stage is normal and not unusual. This shows that the problematic period of the adolescence is not a modern attribution. It has been in existence from time immemorial.

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Psychological well-being is one of the most central concepts in psychology. It plays a crucial role in theories of personality and development in both pure and applied forms; also provides a baseline from which psychopathology is assessed. Psychological well-being, according to Amichai-Hamburger (2008) is a term that defies a single definition. It has been used interchangeably with such concepts as happiness, health, welfare, comfort, security, and safety. In addition, there are associated terms, for example psychological well-being, subjective well-being, and so on. Psychological well-being is generally interpreted as “happiness along with one’s cognitive appraisal of how satisfying his or her life has been and is also encompassing positive future prospect of life hope” (Nishizawa 1996). Khan (2009) gave six distinct components of psychological well-being. They include self-acceptance, purpose in life, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others and autonomy. Findings by Mosazadeh, Boromand, & Narimani (2014) revealed a significant difference on psychological well-being factors (positive relationship with others, mastering the environment, self-acceptance factors, independence, having purpose in life, and personal development). Human beings always and necessarily live on the basis of some understanding of what is a better, more desirable, or worthier way of being in the world (Christopher, 1996; Christopher & Fowers, 1996, 1998; Coan, 1977; Taylor, 1988, 1989).

With regards to understanding psychological well-being of adolescents, it then can be argued that much depends on the parents. This is because parents are the key provider of what constitute adolescents quality of life; that is, their state of health, foods, dress, drinking water, interaction among peers and emotional status whether pleasant or unpleasant and if parents failed to provide these needs at this stage the resultant effects could result in child labour. This could also be otherwise if the financial status of the parent is nothing to write home about. When parents most especially the ‘poor’ or ‘low’ income parents seems failing in their responsibilities they tend to make use adolescents as alternative to contribute and support the family in generating income to the household (Ubajaka, Duru, Nnebue, Okwaraoha and Ifeadike, 2010). This alternative support has today seen many adolescent drop out of school to become street hawkers and street urchins which appears to be fast becoming a culture among Nigeria adolescents.

Psychological well-being is a multi-dimensional concept. Cheerfulness, optimism, playfulness, self-control, a sense of detachment and freedom from frustration, anxiety and loneliness had been accepted as dimensions of psychological well-being (Sinha & Verma, 1992). McCulloch (1991) has shown that satisfaction, morale, positive effect and social support constitute psychological well-being. The construct is a point of much emphasis in society today. Whereas insurance companies and society in general once thought of a person’s health mainly in physical terms, in modern society personal wellness has come to refer to a more thorough definition that includes psychological well-being. In regard to psychological well-being, within the literature, happiness has generally been viewed as the outcome variable (Ryff, 1989). Post (2005) found out that individuals who are emotionally and behaviourally humane are likely to experience greater well-being, Boghle & Prakash

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(1995)observed that a person high on psychological well-being not only carries high level of life satisfaction, self-esteem, positive feelings and attitudes but also manages tension, negative thoughts, ideas and feelings more efficiently. Considering the hazardous life style that out-of-school adolescent are exposed to knowing and understanding how to provide them happiness is beneficent. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the influence of hope and self-affirmation on the psychological well-being of out-of-school adolescent in Ondo State, Nigeria.

### ***Hope***

Hope is an optimistic attitude of mind that is based on an expectation of positive outcomes related to events and circumstances in one's life or the world at large. Hopeful people are like the little engine that could, because they keep telling themselves "I think I can, I think I can". Such positive thinking bears fruit when based on a realistic sense of optimism, not on a naive "false hope"(Ben-Zeev, 2000).Positive psychologists teach strategies to help boost people's hope and optimism, which would benefit individuals coping with illness by improving their life satisfaction and recovery process (Ross, 2006). Hope can be both a state and a trait. Trait hope represents long-term levels of hope. State hope reflects short-term forms of hope (Monsson, 2010). Persons scoring high on hope will pursue their goals actively and energetically. They can pursue their goals in a unique and challenging way as compared to individuals with low hope. People with low hope have fewer and more avoidance based goals than their counterparts (Snyder & Fromkin 1980, Langelle 1989).

### ***Self-Affirmation***

Self-affirmation is an act that demonstrates one's adequacy. Although big accomplishments such as winning a sports contest can obviously affirm one's sense of adequacy, small acts can do so as well. But there are times when sources of self-affirmation may be few or threats to the self may run especially high. Times of high need can be identified making possible well-timed self-affirmation interventions (Pettit, 2010).Self-affirmation theory begins with the premise that people are motivated to maintain the integrity of the self. Integrity can be defined as the sense that, on the term "appropriate" to refer to behaviour that is fitting or suitable given the cultural norms and the salient demands on people within that culture. Thus, the standards for what it means to be a good person vary across cultures, groups, and situations (Heine, 2005).Self-affirmations remind people of psychosocial resources beyond a particular threat and thus broaden their perspective beyond it (Hartson, 2011).

Although much is yet to be known of how certain psychosocial factors such as hope and self-affirmation could influence out-of-school adolescents. More so, the fact that many studies report findings that are either undocumented or inconsistent and difficult to integrate conceptually into a unified understanding of the prevailing occurrence of out-of-school adolescent has raised more questions than answers. It is not yet known how these psychosocial factors interact to influence out-of-school adolescent and may create the ambience where adequate interventions may be well targeted for managing and probably eradicating the menace among adolescents.

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The literature on psychological well-being has progressed rapidly since the emergence of the field over five decades ago. As recent surveys show psychologists and other social scientists have taken huge steps in their understanding of the factors influencing psychological/subjective well-being. However, its relatedness with hope has sparsely been investigated. This is because in most times it is considered as a strong basis in the development of psychological well-being. Hope is however, not a typical form of positivity. Most positive emotions arise when we feel safe and satiated. For instance, psychological well-being is equal to the good life or satisfaction with life in a hedonic sense. It has been regarded as synonymous with mental health and quality of life. It is based on subjective experiences and has both positive and as well as negative effects (Okun & Stok 1987). It is being studied by using both subjective and objective indicators. It is the subjective feeling of contentment, happiness, satisfaction with life experience, sense of achievement, utility, belongingness, no distress and dissatisfaction or worry. Psychological well-being is highly related to the emotional status of an individual (Bradburn 1969). Gull and Nizami (2015) found in their own study that a positive, strong and statistically significant correlation between hope and psychological well-being between these two variables.

Scientific research in adolescent and educational psychology over the years has focused mainly on the understanding of certain factors impinging on the development of adolescent students with the sole aim of improving upon their quality of life. The psychological well-being of out-of-school adolescent is one problem often neglected when such factors are considered. This study would therefore be of great significance as it would add to the existing body of knowledge in adolescent and educational psychology.

### ***Research Hypotheses***

The following research hypotheses were tested in this study at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There would be no significant relationship among hope, self-affirmation and psychological well-being of out of school adolescents.
2. There would be no significant combined effects of hope, and self-affirmation on psychological well-being of out of school adolescents.
3. There will be no significant relative contributions of hope, and self-affirmation to psychological well-being of out of school adolescents.

### ***Research Design***

The research design adopted for this study was descriptive survey research design. This is because it gives room for generalization of the results to broader population.

### ***Population of the Study***

The study population constitutes out-of-school/drop-out students residing in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State, Nigeria.

### ***Sample and Sampling Technique***

The sample population for the study covers ten (10) streets in Ondo State, Nigeria. Twenty (20) people from each street were selected using simple random sampling technique in each

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street to give a total number of two hundred (200) respondents which comprises the sample for the study.

### ***Instrumentation***

The following instruments were used to carry out the research:

#### **1. Hope scale**

Hope scale is a 12-item measure of a respondent's level of hope. In particular the scale is divided into two subscales that comprise Snyder's cognitive model of hope: (1) Agency (i.e., goal-directed energy) and (2) Pathways (i.e., planning to accomplish goals). Of the 12 items, 4 make up the Agency subscale and 4 make up the Pathways subscale. The remaining 4 items are fillers. Each item is answered using an 8-point Likert-type scale ranging from Definitely False to Definitely True. Confirmatory factor analysis was employed to test several psychometric hypotheses regarding the Hope Scale. The scale has demonstrated extremely good levels of reliability with Snyder et al, (1991) reporting Cronbach alphas of .74 to .84 for overall hope, .71 to .76 for agency thoughts and .63 to .80 for pathway thoughts when sampling student and clinical populations.

#### **2. Self-affirmation scale**

The scale is a 10-item survey instrument developed by Reed and Aspinwall (1998). The scale was adopted for this study with slight changes to suit the current environment. Typical item in the scale is "I have been considerate of another person's feelings". The scale is organized in a 4-point likert format ranging from agree to disagree. The scale has a reliability coefficient of .74 after a two week test re-test reliability analysis.

#### **3. Psychological Well-being Scale.**

This is a version of Ryff's (1989) Psychological Well-being Scale. The scale consists of forty two items with response options ranging from very much like me = 4, to not at all like me = 1 on four likert format. Some of the items of the scale include: my decisions are not usually influenced by what everyone else is doing; I have confidence in my own opinions, even if they are different from the way most other people think; i often feel overwhelmed by my responsibility; I tend to worry about what other people think of me; etc. The minimum and maximum obtainable marks are 12 and 60 respectively. The instrument is reported to have split half reliability coefficient of 0.82. In preparing the scale for the study, copies of the scale were administered to selected seminarians in Ibadan. The data obtained is used to revalidate the scale. The homogeneity and internal consistency of the scale was determined by Guttmanreli ability test which returned 0.76 as reliability coefficient.

### ***Procedure***

Copies of the approved research instrument were produced for two hundred (200) respondents and were personally administered the instrument and were collected immediately to avoid loss of instrument.

### ***Method of Data Analysis***

The data collected in the study was analysed using the Pearson product moment correlation (PPMC), and multiple regression analysis to ascertain the patterns of relationship and the

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contribution of the independent variables to the criterion measure (psychological well-being). In each case, the level of significance set for acceptance or rejection was 0.05).

*Hypothesis 1: There would be no significant relationship among hope, self-affirmation and psychological well-being of out of school adolescents.*

**Table1: Descriptive Statistics and Correlations among Variables.**

Variables	N	MEAN	STD. DEV.	1	2	3
1.Psychological well-being	200	60.51	8.76	1.00		
2.Hope	200	38.07	10.22	.344	1.00	
3. Self-affirmation	200	28.01	10.16	.316	.301	1.00

From the table, the correlation coefficients above all the variables were significant. The results further revealed strongest relationship between hope and psychological well-being.

*Hypothesis 2: There would be no significant combined effects of hope, and self-affirmation on psychological well-being of out of school adolescents.*

**Table 2: Summary of Regression Analysis between Predictor Variables and psychological well-being**

R = .662; R<sup>2</sup> = .438; ADJ R<sup>2</sup> = .430; STD. ERROR ESTIMATE = 5.314

Source Of Variation	Df	Sum Of Squares	Means Squares	F- Ratio	P
Regression	2	1663.81	831.91	37.57	.000
Residual	196	4339.44	22.14		
Total	199	5097.4			

From the results presented in table 2, the independent variables collectively yielded a coefficient of multiple regressions (R) of .662 and an adjusted R<sup>2</sup> of .438 and an adjusted R<sup>2</sup> of .430. This shows that 43% of the total variance of the psychological well-being by the participants is accounted for by the combination of the two predictive variables studied. The table as well indicates that the analysis of variance of multiple regression data produced an F-ratio value significant at 0.05 level (F = 37.57; < .05). The findings thus confirm that the two variables are significant predictors of the criterion measure and that this prediction could not be by chance.

*Hypothesis 3: There will be no significant relative contributions of hope, and self-affirmation to psychological well-being of out of school adolescents.*

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**Table 3: Relative contribution of the Independent Variables to the Prediction of psychological well-being**

Predictor	Unstandardized coefficient		Standardized coefficient	t- Ratio	Sig
	B	SEB	BETA ( $\beta$ )		
Hope	.201	.087	.279	3.474	.000
Self-affirmation	.193	.064	.225	3.009	.015

From the results displayed in table 3 above, each of the independent variables made significant individual contributions to the prediction of the criterion measure (psychological well-being) in varying weights. The results indicated that the following beta weights represent the predictive strength of the independent variables observed in accordance to the most effective to the least; Hope,  $\beta = .279$ ,  $t = 3.474$ ,  $P < 0.05$  and self- affirmation,  $\beta = .225$ ,  $t = 3.009$ ,  $P < 0.05$

**SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

Below are the summaries of findings in this study

1. Hope and self-affirmation had significant relationships with psychological well-being of out of school adolescents;
2. The combined effect of hope, and self-affirmation on psychological well-being of out of school adolescents was significant and produced an F- ratio value significant at 0.05 level ( $F = 37.57$ ;  $p < .05$ ). The two variables accounted for 43% of the total variance of psychological well-being of out of school adolescents;
3. Each of the independent variables made significant individual contributions to the prediction of the criterion measure (psychological well-being) in varying weights. The result indicated that hope was the potent predictor in the investigation.

**SUMMARY**

This research work was embarked upon to investigate the impact of hope and self-affirmation on the psychological well-being of out of school adolescent in Ondo State, Nigeria. In this study, the researcher made use of questionnaires which were administered to two hundred respondents. The data collected from the respondents were analysed using descriptive statistical measures such as mean, standard deviation and regression analysis method.

However, from the result and analysis of data collected in this research, it could be deduced that the impact of hope and self-affirmation on the psychological well-being of out of school adolescent cannot be over emphasize. Thus, it could be summarized that hope and self-affirmation had significant relationships with psychological well-being of out of school adolescents and that the combined effect of hope, and self-affirmation on psychological well-being of out of school adolescents was significant and produced an F- ratio value significant at 0.05 level to be 37.57. Each of the independent variables made significant individual

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contributions to the prediction of the criterion measure (psychological well-being) in varying weights. The result indicated that hope was the potent predictor in the investigation

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. People with low self-esteem should deal with dysfunctional thinking. This means that negative thinking is a linchpin responsible for setting off low self-esteem which becomes destructive making one to be susceptible to poor decisions and abusive situations.
2. People should be self-affirmed irrespective of the circumstances because people with a good and healthy self-esteem are able to feel good about themselves for who they are, appreciate their own worth and take pride in their abilities and accomplishments.
3. Out of school students should seek positive support from people who could celebrate their strengths and not their weaknesses because doing so helps solidify positive thinking.
4. It is also important to redefine failure and keep trying: when someone is hopeless and low self-esteem, it's common to think of oneself as a complete and utter failure but failure is part of success.

### CONCLUSION

It could be concluded from this study that self-affirmation increases the likelihood that participants direct their feelings towards other individuals. That is, after individuals affirm their values, they become more likely to become trusting, open, and loving. These feelings, in turn, reduce the likelihood of defensive reactions. However, engaging in positive affirmations can do harm to people with low self-esteem, and provide only little benefit for those with high-esteem.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The authors colorfully declare this paper to bear not conflict of interests

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