

Causes and Management of Conflict between Teenagers and Parents in Isoko North Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria

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Abstract: The world we are living in is characterized by violence which has extended to the home between parents and children. This study was designed to find out the causes and management of conflict between teenagers and parents in Isoko North Local Government Area of Delta State. This study is an empirical paper which employed the survey research design. The sample size of the study was 260 respondents which consisted of 200 teenagers and 60 parents randomly selected from five quarters in Isoko North Local Government Area. A structured questionnaire contently validated was used as instrument for data collection. Data collected were analysed through percentage. Findings from the study showed that lack of mutual understanding of intention between teenagers and their parents as the major factor causing conflicts between teenagers and parents in Isoko North Local Government Area of Delta State. The three null hypotheses stated were rejected at 0.05 significant level. Based on the results of the study, conclusion was drawn and recommendations was mad, among others that there should be peer education through different channels such as television, radio, social media, etc on the causes and effect of conflict between parent and children as it will help them to avoid its occurrence.

Key words: Conflicts; teenagers; peer education

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I. Introduction

Human beings are social animals who constantly interact with one another to live and survive in their environment. This interaction can be conscious or unconscious, planned or unplanned. The aim is to express themselves and transmit messages from one person to another. The family is not an exemption to this form of practices. The family is a primary social institution which made up of father, mother and children including relatives in case of extended family. The family is the first agent of socialization where a child learns the first basic rudiment or skills that is needed for future skills acquisition through communication and constant interaction.

Apart from it being socializing agent, the family also serve as a place of unity where peaceful coexisted is promoted. This function of the family is achieved when there is mutual understanding among every members of the family. In recent times, the family which presume to be a place of unity is becoming a war zone to many, particularly among teenagers and their parents due to disagreement and lack of understanding resulting to conflict and some ethnic violence (Razali, 2013). Conflicts between teenagers and parents are gradually gaining public attention in recent times. Conflict occurs when two people differ in their own values or beliefs and opinion. It is a state of clash or disagreement which is often associated with violence between two opposing groups or individuals. Conflict occurs when there is an incompatibility in ideas, view and opinion between two or more persons (Onongha, 2015).

Parents and adolescent innately have many opportunities to have conflicts (Flannery, 2013). Conflicts are ever-present part of all families at some times in their history. Conflict on the side of adolescents which are refers to teenagers in this study occurs when parents are not providing the emotional support they (teenagers) want, or because parents believe they (teenagers) are not meeting the expectations held for them, or because of a lack of consensus about family or societal values (Flannery, 2013). According to Ng (2006), the reasons why parents and adolescents are in conflict are multi-faceted and they include: contrasting and conflicting values (i.e. adolescents embrace values that are different from their parents). Adolescents value freedom, friendship, and fun.

Adolescents enjoy humour and sarcasm but parents see that as being disrespectful which results in conflict; irritating and exasperating habits (i.e. adolescents tend to feel that their parents are too controlling, too organized, too critical, they complaints); hidden and unrealistic expectations, mismatched expectations);

ineffectual and negative communication patterns (strong words and aggressive actions among other factors are perceived ingredients that can infuriate both parents and adolescents (Onongha, 2015).

Growing literature on parenting styles provides a solid foundation for understanding the relationship between parenting and academic achievement (Baumrind, 2011). Positive interactions between parents and adolescents are associated with higher academic achievement (Amato & Fowler, 2012). Conversely, negative or coercive family relationships convey negative messages to adolescents (teenagers) about themselves and their worth which can lead adolescents to violence and as well perform poorly in school (Onongha, 2015). Crosnoe and Elder (2014) found that emotional distance in the parent-adolescent relationship was associated with many social and academic problems such as teenage pregnancy, joining bad gangs, early sexual involvement, poor grades and school suspensions.

Research has shown that conflict and a lack of warmth in the parent-adolescent relationship are negatively related to social vices and grades (Onongha, 2015). Onongha (2015) compared Chinese adolescents' (aged 12-16 years) conflict with their mothers and fathers with students with relatively higher academic achievement and lower academic achievement; and found that students with low academic achievement reported more conflict with their parents than the higher academic students. Similarly, conflict with parents has been found to correlate positively with delinquency, premarital social engagement, alcohol and drug abuse and other social vices, poor academic performance (Onongha, 2015).

In addition, numerous studies have documented ways in which parent-adolescent relationships may influence adolescents' success in life (Amato & Fowler, 2012). Academic achievement can be a source of tension in families because conflict may arise when youth are not performing as well in school as their parents would like. In a review of research on adolescents' reports of the most common causes of arguments with parents, issues related to school were among the top three causes (Onongha, 2015). In a recent study, Allison and Schultz (2014) found that issues related to school such as homework and school performance were among the most frequent and intense areas of conflict between adolescents (teenagers) and their parents. Parent-adolescent conflict and adolescents' success particularly in their academic are important issues during adolescence. It is against the aforementioned background that the study is carried out to find out the causes and management of conflict between teenagers and parents in Isoko North Local Government Area of Delta State.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The teenage period is a crucial period in the life of an individual. Any mistake made at this period has the potential of almost affecting the entire life of the person. It is on this basis that parents try their possible means to control and curtail their teenagers with the aim of preventing them from being vulnerable to social vices. The teenagers on the other hand always want to seek for freedom, independent and self control thereby seeing parents as intruders and enemies of their personal freedom. This differential in belief and perception is what seem to be conflict factor between teenagers and parents in most family in different countries of the world.

Teenagers – Parents' conflict in recent times is becoming so rampant, destroying the peace and tranquility of the family. Many teenagers run away from home, involved themselves in criminal offenses, engaged in anti-social acts, take drugs, absent from school, and in some cases, drop out of school due to conflict in their home between them and their parents.

Observation by the researcher has consistently shown that, there is hardly any family with children within the ages of 12-18 years where there is no conflict. In spite of this increase rate of conflict occurrence between parents and teenagers, parents, community, concerned individuals, government and non-governmental organizations seem to be doing nothing on how to prevent and manage home conflict between teenagers and parents. It was on this basis or observation that this study was carried out to find out the causes and management of conflict between teenagers and parents in Isoko North Local Government Area of Delta State.

The purpose of this study was to find out the causes and management of conflict between teenagers and parents in Isoko North Local Government Area of Delta State. The objectives of the study were to ascertain whether need for freedom, misunderstanding of views, mismatched expectations were causes of conflict between teenagers and parents in Isoko North Local Government Area of Delta State.

Research Questions

For the purpose of this study, the following research questions were formulated.

1. Would teenagers need to attain freedom be a cause of conflict between adolescent and parents in Isoko North Local Government Area of Delta State?
2. What are the parental behaviours or actions that cause conflict between teenagers and parents in Isoko North Local Government Area?
3. What are the strategies for managing teenagers and parents' conflict in Isoko North Local Government Area?

Hypotheses

H⁰1: The Need to attain freedom among adolescents is not be a significant determinant of conflict between teenagers and parents in Isoko North Local Government Area of Delta State.

H⁰2: There is no significant relationship between parents' actions/behaviours and conflict occurrence among teenagers and parents in Isoko North Local Government Area of Delta State.

H⁰3: Promoting mutual understanding is not a significant strategy for managing conflict between teenagers and parents in Isoko North Local Government Area of Delta State.

It is hoped that the outcome of this study will help to reveal the causes of teenagers and parents conflict in Isoko North Local Government Area of Delta State. It is hoped that parents and teenagers through this result would understand the common causes and impacts of conflict between children and parents and therefore strive to avoid it.

Findings and suggestions from the study will serve as reference points to health and safety educators and marriage counsellors when counselling couples and members of the family on domestic violence and other related issues. It will also serve as reference material to subsequent researchers who will carry out further studies in this area of study.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed the survey research to find out the causes and management of conflict between teenagers and parents in Isoko North Local Government Area of Delta State. This survey design was chosen and applied in this study as the researcher collected data from the subject in the study area, analyzed it and described the situation the way it occurred in its original forms without manipulating or altering the result.

The population of the study comprised of parents and teenagers in Isoko North Local Government Area of Delta State. This is approximated to five thousand (5000). The sample for the study consisted of two hundred and sixty (260) respondents (200 teenagers and 60 parents) randomly selected from five towns in Isoko North Local Government Area of Delta state. The selected towns were Otor-Iyede, Emevor, Ozoro, Otor-Owhe and Owhegbo in Isoko North Local Government Area of Delta state. In each of the selected areas, a total of 26 respondents (20 teenagers and 6 parents) were randomly selected.

The sampling technique used was the simple random sampling method. This technique was used through the ballot method. The ballot technique without replacement was used to select the sampled areas whereas the one with replacement through the use of pieces of papers was used to select the respondents to avoid bias. The research instrument used for data collection in the study was questionnaire. The questionnaire was made up of two sections. Section A and B. Section 'A' was made up of personal information of respondents (residents), while section "B" consisted of question/statement designed to elicit response from the subjects (respondents) on the topic.

The validity of the self structured questionnaire was done using the content validity methods. The two experts went through the various items in the questionnaire thoroughly at two different intervals considering the objective/ purpose of the study. After proper examination of the instrument, those items in it which were found unsuitable for the purpose of the study were removed and corrections were made. The reliability of the instrument was established using the split-half method. This was done by administering 20 photocopies of the validated instrument to 20 respondents outside the sample area. After the administration, the 20 copies of the administered instrument were split into two equal halves (even and odd numbers). The result of each was counted and correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. From the correlation, a coefficient value of 0.96 was obtained. This indicated that the instrument was reliable. The method used for data analyses in the study were percentage and chi-square test.

IV. RESULTS

Data collected were presented, analyzed and discussed as shown below.

Data Analysis

The data gathered in the study were presented in the following tables and analyzed using the percentage method.

Table 1 - Percentage analysis of Demographic Data

Variable	Option	Frequency	Percentage	Total
SEX	Male	125	48.1%	260
	Female	135	51.9%	(100%)
STATUS	Teenagers	200	76.9%	260
	Parents	60	23.1%	(100%)
PARENTAL STATUS	Father	13	43.3%	30
	Mother	17	56.7%	(100%)

In Table 1 above, the data analysis shows that out of the total of 260 respondents used in the study, 125 which represent 48.1% were male while 135 which represent 51.9% were female (teenagers and parents). 200 (76.9%) of the respondents were teenagers, 60 (23.1%) were parents. Out of the 30 parents, 13 (43.3%) were fathers while (56.7%) were mothers.

Research Question One

Would teenagers need to attain freedom, be a cause of conflict between adolescent and parents in Isoko North Local Government Area of Delta State?

Table 2: Analysis of teenagers’ behaviours responsible for conflict between them and their parents

S/N	Item	Agree	Disagree
1	Which of this do think is responsible for conflict between teenagers and their parents?		
	a. Teenagers need and values for freedom from their parents.	156 (60%)	104 (40%)
	b. Preference for friendship, and fun	212 (81.5%)	48 (18.5)
	c. Disrespect to parents orders.	238 (91.5%)	26 (8.5%)
	d. Going out with friends without parents’ approval.	189 (53.3%)	71 (46.7%)
	e. Frequent use of the mobile phone.	196 (53.3%)	64 (46.7%)
	f. Keeping late outside without informing parents.	188 (72.3%)	72 (27.7%)
	g. Talking back at parents.	152 (59.5%)	108 (41.5%)

From the data analysis in Table 2 above, it was found that out of the total 260 respondents 60% agreed that teenagers need and values for freedom from their parents is a cause of conflict while 40% disagreed, 81.5% that preference for friendship and fun causes conflict while 18.5% disagreed. 91.5% agreed on disrespect to parents order while 8.5% disagreed. 53.3% attested on going out with friends without parents’ approval while 46.7% disagreed. 53.3% agreed on frequent use of mobile phone while 46.7% disagreed. 72.3% agreed on keeping late outside without informing parents while 27.7% disagreed. 59.5% of the respondents agreed that talking back at parents is a cause of conflict while 41.5% disagreed.

From the data analysis in Table 2 above, it was found that the percentage of the respondents who agreed to each of the questions item was higher. This means that teenagers need and values for freedom from their parents is a cause of conflict, preference for friendship, and fun, disrespect to parents order, frequent use of mobile phone, keeping late outside without informing parents, keeping late outside without informing parents and that talking back at parents which all geared towards teenagers needs to obtained freedom were the causes of conflict between teenagers and parents in Isoko North Local Government Area of Delta State.

Research Question 2:

What are the parental behaviours or actions that cause conflict between teenagers and parents in Isoko North Local Government Area?

Table 3: Analysis of parental behaviour / actions leading to conflict between teenagers and parents

S/N	Parental behaviour and action leading to conflict	Agreed	Disagreed
1.	Parent restriction of their teen movement in and out of the house often lead to conflict between parent and teenagers in the home.	192 (73.9%)	68 (26.1%)
2.	Telling children not to step out of the house from a specific period of time can lead to conflict in the home.	136 (52.3%)	124 (47.7%)
3.	Monitoring teenagers’ friends and deciding for them who and who not to keep can infuriate conflict between parents and teenagers.	179 (68.9%)	81 (31.1%)
4.	Monitoring teenagers’ school and study habit and performance by parents causes conflict in the home.	125 (48.1%)	135 (51.9)
5.	Mandating teens to do a particular house works all the time causes conflict between parent and teenagers.	180 (69.2%)	80 (30.8%)

The data in Table 3 above show the analysis parent actions and behaviours that cause conflict between parents and teenagers in Isoko North Local Government Area of Delta State. From the analysis in the table above, it was found that the percentage of the respondents who agreed with the different item statement was higher except for item number 4. This shows that the parent restriction of their teen movement in and out of the house, telling children not to step out of the house from a specific period of time, monitoring teenagers' friends and deciding for them who and who not to keep, and mandating teens to do a particular house works all the time are causes of conflict between parents and teenagers in Isoko North local Government Area of Delta State.

Research Question 3

What the strategies for managing teenagers and parents conflict in in Isoko North Local Government Area?

Table 4: Analysis of strategies for managing teenagers and parents conflict

S/N	Strategies for managing teenagers and parents conflict	Agreed	Disagreed
1.	Mutual understanding between parents and teenager can prevent conflict in the home.	180 (69.2%)	80 (30.8%)
2.	Conflict between teenagers and parents can be avoided when parents discussed their reason for restricting them with the children	179 (68.9%)	81 (31.1%)
3.	Making children see reason for over protecting them from joining or moving with some particular set friend can prevent conflict in the home	192 (73.9%)	68 (26.1%)
4.	Praying with children regularly can prevent the occurrence of conflict between parent and teenagers.	136 (52.3%)	124 (47.7%)
5.	Peer education and enlightening of teenagers on the causes and effect of conflict can help to manage conflict between parents and teenagers.	165 (63.5%)	95 (95%)
6.	Media education of teenagers on the causes and effect of parents – adolescent conflict can help to prevent conflict in the home between teenagers and parents	153 (58.5%)	107 (41.5%)

The data presented in Table 4 above show the analysis of strategies for managing conflict between teenagers and parents in Isoko North Local Government Area of Delta State. From the analysis of data presented in the table above, it was found that the percentage of respondents who agreed with various items' statement is higher than the percentage of them that disagreed.

This means that maintaining mutual understanding between parents and teenager (69.2%), parents discussing their reason for restricting them (68.9%), making children see reason for over protecting them from joining moving with some particular friend (73.9%), praying with children regularly (52.3%), peer education and enlightening of teenagers on the causes and effect of conflict (63.5%) and media education of teenagers on the causes and effect of parents – adolescent conflict (58.5%) are strategies that can help in the management of conflict between teenagers and parents in Isoko North Local Government Area of Delta State.

H⁰1: The Need to attain freedom among adolescents is not be a significant determinant of conflict between teenagers and parents in Isoko North Local Government Area of Delta State.

Table 5: χ^2 Analysis of need for Freedom and Conflict occurrence between Teenagers and Parents

Item	Agree (Exp.)	Disagree (Exp.)	Total	χ^2 Cal	χ^2 Crit	Df	Sig	Decision
1	156 (190.1)	104 (70.4)	260	29,21	12.59	6	0.05	Rejected
2	212 (190.1)	48 (70.4)	260					
3	238 (190.1)	26 (70.4)	260					
4	189 (190.1)	71 (70.4)	260					
5	196 (190.1)	64 (70.4)	260					
6	188 (190.1)	72 (70.4)	260					
7	152 (190.1)	108 (70.4)	260					
Total	1331	493	1820					

From the χ^2 Analysis in Table 5, it was found that the χ^2 calculated value (29.21) was greater than the χ^2 critical value (12.59) under degree of freedom 6 at 0.05 significant level. Thus the null stated was rejected. This means that the Need to attain freedom among adolescents is a significant determinant of conflict between teenagers and parents in Isoko North Local Government Area of Delta State.

H⁰2: There is no significant relationship between parents’ actions/behaviours and conflict occurrence among teenagers and parents in Isoko North Local Government Area of Delta State.

Table 6: χ^2 Analysis of need for Freedom and Conflict occurrence between Teenagers and Parents

Item	Agree (Exp.)	Disagree (Exp.)	Total	χ^2 Cal	χ^2 Crit	Df	Sig	Decision
1	192 (162.4)	68 (97.6)	260	58.35	9.49	4	0.05	Rejected
2	136 (162.4)	124 (97.6)	260					
3	179 (162.4)	81 (97.6)	260					
4	125 (162.4)	135 (97.6)	260					
5	180 (162.4)	80 (97.6)	260					
Total	812	488	1300					

From the χ^2 Analysis in Table 5, it was found that the χ^2 calculated value (58.35) was greater than the χ^2 critical value (9.49) under degree of freedom 6 at 0.05 significant level. Thus the null stated was rejected. This means that there is significant relationship between parents’ actions/behaviours and conflict occurrence among teenagers and parents in Isoko North Local Government Area of Delta State.

H⁰3: Promoting mutual understanding is not a significant strategy for managing conflict between teenagers and parents in Isoko North Local Government Area of Delta State.

Table 5: χ^2 Analysis of Promotion of Mutual Understanding as a Strategy for managing conflict between Teenagers and Parents

Item	Agree (Exp.)	Disagree (Exp.)	Total	χ^2 Cal	χ^2 Crit	Df	Sig	Decision
1	180 (167.5)	80 (92.5)	260	29,87	11.07	5	0.05	Rejected
2	179 (167.5)	81 (92.5)	260					
3	192 (167.5)	68 (92.5)	260					
4	136 (167.5)	124 (92.5)	260					
5	165 (167.5)	95 (92.5)	260					
6	153 (167.5)	107 (92.5)	260					
Total	1005	555	1560					

From the χ^2 Analysis in Table 5, it was found that the χ^2 calculated value (29,87) was greater than the χ^2 critical value (11.07) under degree of freedom 5 at 0.05 significant level. Thus the null stated was rejected. This means that promoting mutual understanding is a significant strategy for managing conflict between teenagers and parents in Isoko North Local Government Area of Delta State

V. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Finding from the study shows that teenagers’ values and need to attain freedom from their parents is a cause of conflict. It was found that teenagers’ preference for friendship and fun, disrespect to parents order, frequent use of mobile phone, keeping late outside without informing parents and talking back at parents were causes of conflict between teenagers and parents in Isoko North Local Government Area of Delta State. This was confirmed by null hypothesis 1 that was rejected whereby its alternative was accepted. That is “the need to attain freedom among adolescents is a significant determinant of conflict between teenagers and parents in Isoko North Local Government Area of Delta State”.

It was also revealed that parent restriction of their teen movement in and out of the house, telling children not to step out of the house from a specific period of time, monitoring teenagers’ friends and deciding for them who and who not to keep, and mandating teens to do a particular house works all the time are causes of conflict between parents and teenagers in Isoko North local Government Area of Delta State. This was also confirmed by the null hypothesis that was rejected and the alternative hypothesis retained. That is there is significant relationship between parents’ actions/behaviours and conflict occurrence among teenagers and parents in Isoko North Local Government Area of Delta State.

These findings are in line with Flannery (2013), Ng, (2006) and Onongha, (2015) who stated that the reasons why parents and adolescents are in conflict are multi-faceted and they include: contrasting and conflicting values (i.e. adolescents embrace values that are different from their parents. Adolescents value freedom, friendship, and fun. They further maintained that adolescents enjoy humour and sarcasm but parents see that as being disrespectful which results in conflict; irritating and exasperating habits (i.e. they feel that their parents are too controlling, too organized, too critical); hidden and unrealistic expectations, mismatched

expectations; ineffectual and negative communication patterns (strong words and aggressive actions) among others were factors infuriating both parents and adolescents into conflict.

It was revealed from the study that promoting mutual understanding between parents and teenager, discussing with teenagers to see reason for restricting and making children see reason for over protecting them from joining or moving with some particular set friend and so on as strategies for managing conflict between teenagers and parents in Isoko South Local Government Area of Delta State. This was confirmed by the null hypothesis which was rejected and its alternative retained that indicating that promoting mutual understanding is a significant strategy for managing conflict between teenagers and parents in Isoko North Local Government Area of Delta State.

This result is in agreement with Flannery (2013), in his study on sources of conflict between parents and teenagers who found that the sources of conflict between parents and teenagers can be blocked when there is mutual understanding between them. He further noted that making teenagers to see reasons for certain actions will go a long way to preventing conflict between parents and their teenagers. Ng (2006) in his study on managing parent-teen conflict found mutual discussion and praying together tend to bond better parents and teenagers relationship.

VI. CONCLUSION

The rate of conflict between children and parents is very high in our society. The occurrence of this conflict has been traced to many factors which this study has classified as teen need and desire factors and parental factors. This study has shown that teenagers' need, desire and value for freedom and independent in which parent see as unrealistic were causes of conflict between the teenagers and their parents.

On the other hand, parents act of monitoring and protecting their children from becoming a victim of social vices and problems in the society in which the teenagers perceived as contradiction and hindrance to their freedom they intend to enjoy were factors resulting to conflict in the home between the teenagers and parents.

From the analysis in the study, it hereby concluded that lack of mutual understanding of intention between teenagers and their parents is the major factor generating conflict between them. This in a nut shell can be handled through discussion and airing of views to reach a point of understanding.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings and conclusion drawn from the study, the following recommendations were made.

1. There should be peer education through different channels such as television, radio, social media, etc on the causes and effect of conflict between parent and children as it will help them to avoid its occurrence.
2. Parents should be enlightened on the need to let their children know the reason why they made certain decisions which they may perceived not suitable for them.
3. Teenagers should be educated by their mass media on the need to obey their parents' decision and follow their guidance as no reasonable parents will lead their children astray.
4. Churches and other religion group in the country should regularly organized teen conferences where teens can be oriented against any act that brings violence and conflict in the home.
5. Focussed group discussion on conflict management should be done by teachers and churches on conflict resolution in the home. This will help to reduce the rate of conflict occurrence between teenagers and parents.

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