



Psychological Implications of Adolescents Attaining Sex and Physical Maturity before Attaining Independence from Parents

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ABSTRACT

The paper discussed the psychological implications of adolescents attaining sex and physical maturity before attaining independence from parents. It explained psychology, adolescence and pubescence. It itemized the sex differences in physical growth and development of adolescents. It also discussed the stages of adolescence, physical maturity and psychological implications of early sex and physical maturity. Some of the suggestions made are; a good home should provide love, support and security to the adolescents, schools should set guidance and counselling service unit and teachers should build good relationship between themselves and their students.

Keywords: Psychological, Adolescents, Sex, Physical Maturity, Independence, Parents.

INTRODUCTION

After childhood comes adolescence period. The adolescence period extends from the time of puberty up to around 20 years. In this period of life, the hormonal influence plays a leading role in order to attain sexual maturity. During this period there is a marked acceleration of growth which is known as adolescence growth spurs (Bose, 2014). Most developmental characteristics attain their peak growth during this period. Some of these traits are physical growth, intellectual, moral, biological and social development. The adolescents experience rapid biological changes which give rise to the astronomical increase in all aspects of their development. At this period adolescents are expected to accomplish a lot of tasks expected of adolescents, the drastic changes they experience internally and frustrating environmental factors they often encounter throw them into a lots of conflicts adolescents problem besieged tendency make many call the period 'storm and stress' period or turbulent period (Nkwocha, Onyemerekeya, Ekeada, Ogwudire & Emenogu, 2007)

Psychology

Psychology is a science concerned with understanding, predicting and controlling the actions, feelings and thought of people (Callahem & Clark, 2007). Psychology is the scientific study of behaviour; it is the science of the mind and soul. It studies human behaviour, his experience and activities (Morris & Summer, 2015). Psychologists define psychology as a scientific study of the behaviour of man and the higher animals as shown by their behaviour from time before birth through maturity to the declining years. It is concerned with responses of individuals and their physical and social environment (Oladele, 2004). It is the science or study of the mind and how it functions (Hornby, 2009). In contemporary times, psychology is defined as the science of behaviour (Chauhan, 2002).

Adolescence

The word “adolescence” is derived from a Latin verb *adolescere* which means “to grow up” grow into maturity. Adolescence therefore refers to the period the individual inevitably passes through in his growth from childhood to adulthood or maturity. It is created out of a child. It is the time in teens when individual approaches the peak of his physical, physiological, intellectual, emotional, social as well as maturational growth and development (Oladele, 2004). The change is a constant phenomenon and occurs in all children, though it differs in intensity and duration from one child to another. In girls the change or spurt begins about 10-12 years while in boys, it takes place on the average age 12 to 15. Differentiation in primary and secondary sexual characteristics marks the adolescence period. These are changes in the reproductive organs, in body size and shape, in the relative proportions of muscle, fat and bone and in a variety of physiological functions (Kandemir &Yordam, 2015).

Pubescence

It corresponds to puberty; it refers to the first phase of adolescence when sexual maturation becomes evident (Oladele, 2008). Girls usually start puberty between ages 10 and12, while many boys begin between 12 and 14. These are just average though each person has his or her own special biological time clock that dictates when the various changes of puberty will occur (Oladele, 2004). Pubescence involves three related kinds of changes; firstly, there is the gradual maturation in size and functioning of primary sexual characteristics such as the penis, scrotum and testes of the male, the vagina, uterus and ovaries of the female, secondly, related to this is the appearance of secondary sexual characteristics, for pubescent girls are the broadening of the hips and thighs, enlargement of the breast, uterus and vagina and distribution of the fat in the breast and buttocks, the growth of public hairs in public region and the armpits. In male penis increases in length and width, laryhenlarges, vocal cords, increase in length and thickness and voice becomes deeper. Beard, wiskers, moustaches appears on face. Thirdly pubescent changes also involve a marked acceleration of growth called the adolescent growth spurt which lasts for about year or tin before the body or girls becomes sexually matured (Oladele, 2008)

Sex Differences in Physical Growth and Development of Adolescents

S/N	Boys	Girls
1.	They grow facial hair on the chest	They grow more hairs on the head than the body
2.	Their legs and necks becomes muscular	They develop long and smooth legs
3.	They experience increase of testes and scrotum	They experience enlarged beasts and maturity of sexual organs like vulva
4.	Wide shoulder	they develop wide hips and wide pelvic
5.	They develop deep voice	They develop mellow voice
6.	They experience nocturnal emission	They experience menstruation

Stages of Adolescence

Lefrancois (2007) identified three stages of adolescence:

Early adolescence: During this period, adolescents form isolated single sex cliques with people of their gender. They interact mostly with friends within their group and shun others or have little contact with them. Early adolescence still maintains cordial relationship with their family members. They look forward for their families for the satisfaction of their social, emotional and physical needs.

Middle adolescence: At this stage different single sex cliques begin to interact on group to group bases not as individuals. Towards the end of this stage adolescents from upper class may begin to engage in heterosexual relationship in group. For example a group of girls could visit a group of boys. Adolescent at this period begin to have conflict with their parents and family members. This is because certain aspects of their developed social behaviour like heterosexual relationship violate family standards the ever increasing attachment with peers and increase in financial expenses by the adolescents may anger parents, who may want to choose peers for them. Adolescent in turn look at this attitude as interference.

Late adolescence: Adolescents at this stage move in heterosexual cliques now give way to formation of couples. By this stage adolescents here gained conservable independence from family ties. Parents now intrude less into their affairs and give them more freedom to do what they want.

Physical Maturity

Physical maturity is an age related concept and is said to occur where the level of physical development is commensurate with a given age level (Fandom, 2018). In girls the physical maturity starts around 11 years of age. But it may start as early as 6 or 7 years of old. In boys maturity begins around 12 years but may start as early as 9 years of age. Most girls are physical maturity by the 14 years of age. Boys mature at about 15 or 16. The first sign of maturity in most boys is an increase in the size of the testicles. In girls breast develop first, then hair starts growing in the public area, next, hairs starts growing in the armpits, in girls acne usually starts around 13 years of age. Menstruation usually happens last. In boys the testicles and the penis get bigger first, then hair grows in the public areas and the armpit. A small amount of breast tissue might develop at this time, the voice becomes deeper. Muscles grow fast, acne and facial hair show up. (American Academy of Family Physician, 2018).

Psychological Implications of Early Sex and Physical Maturity

Some adolescents mature early while others mature late, these differences cause corresponding change in their behaviour (Denga, 2008). Early maturation for boys appears meritorious and late maturation demeritorious. Early maturing boy is big for his age. His muscles are well- built and well coordinated. As a result, he is likely to be rated by his peers as more physically attractive, better dressed, more relaxed and more often chosen as leader in games and recreational activities. His social experiences are like those of an adult. He is treated as an adult (Dash, 2008). Early maturity adolescent boy also enjoys social prestige and popularity especially among peers. He is self-concept. However, late maturing boy is small for his age. He is often regarded and seen as less attractive physically. He is not too successful at sports therefore, less popular with his peers fewer of them are chosen as leaders. He also suffers feeling of inadequacy, negative self-conception and self-rejection because of the unfavourable social attitude towards him. As a result of these he may withdraw and becomes isolated. He sometimes tries to compensate for his inferiority feelings by bragging, arguing or being aggressive or rebellious searching for autonomy and freedom from restraint (Dwortzky, 2011).

Girls who mature early tend to have favourable reputability based on large size and social interest. They are often aggressive with boys because their expectations may be too high as a result of their appearance. They often lack the emotional maturity to deal with the situation that may arise from that attractiveness to older boys. Early maturing girls are more sought after as dates and have better self-esteem than late maturing girls (Robert, 2000)

Late maturing girls are however, resentful of being treated as children. They tend to be in consonant with boys of their own age and hence not subjected to excessive criticisms and ridicule but they are often plagued by doubt about normally they may be scared that they will remain flat chested or that boys won't like them and if boys don't like them may be left out of activities considered important by their peer. They hold relatively low social status and they may be overlooked in dating and other male- female activities (Schacher & Singe, 2000).

The early maturing boys and girls should be helped to manage their skills or strength as well as the attendant popularity so that these do not work to the detriment of their academic work. The late maturing

adolescents must be given plenty support. They should be re-integrated into the class if their tendency to boast and to be aggressive has started to isolate them from their mate (Olayinka, 2011).

CONCLUSION

The home is of greatest importance to the adolescent. A good home provides love, support, encouragement and security to cope with life's demands. It transmits to the adolescent's traditional customs and standards of society. It helps him/her in his/her adjustment to the outside –world. The resolution of identify crisis depends greatly upon the adolescent's society, family and peer groups. A warm and rewarding parent –adolescent relationship helps keep the process of identify formation on a smooth course; parents should spend time with their children, discussing with them giving opinions on a number of issues and allowing them to put their view – point across, parents and should render great assistance to the adolescent by permitting him to work as an independent individual in as many wages as possible, the adolescent should be given positions of responsibility and they should be made to feel that they are controlling their own lives by being allowed to plan and execute their own programmes.

Schools should set up a guidance and counseling service unit all in a bid to assist students to solve their educational, vocational and personal social adjustment. Teachers should be good examples and should build up good relationship between themselves and their students and among themselves and colleagues; teachers can be of great help to adolescents by noting and building them through the phase of hero-worship which often leads to new ideals interests and which can also lead to disillusionment.

Altitude of adolescents in school should be maintained by: making them feel that they are really being taught, making them realize that there are many worthwhile things to do, counting on their opinions and feeling, recognizing the status they wish to have and assuring them that the school has a real bearing on what they belief.

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