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INFLUENCE OF SINGLE PARENTING AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHARCTERISTIC ON SELF-ESTEEM AMONG GOVERNMENT SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENT IN APO-ABUJA, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examine the influence of single parenting and demographic characteristic on self-esteem among government secondary school in Apo-Abuja,Nigeria. Self-esteem is an important psychological factor that influences adolescents' emotional well-being, social relationships, and academic performance. Self-esteem is mainly related to self -worth and how people value there self and refers to positive self evaluation which comes from individual comparison with others, Harter (1985) The research employs a cross-sectional design to select a sample of 283 participants; between the age of 12-18 years with their demographic characteristics showing (Males =151(53.4%), and Females =132(46.6%), In addition to providing demographic data, participants responded to (2) standardized questionnaires. Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. On the whole, two hypotheses were formulated and inferentially tested at 0.05 level of significant, simple linear was use to test both hypothesis one while multiple regression for hypothesis two. Result revealed that single parenting has a significant negative influence on self-esteem (β = -0.612, t = -5.94, $p<.05$), shows that males generally possess stronger self-confidence, independence, and self-image compared to their female counterparts among government secondary school students Apo, Abuja.

Keywords: Single parenting, demographic characteristic and self-esteem

Introduction

Self-esteem is a vital psychological construct that reflects an individual's overall evaluation of self-worth and personal value. It plays a significant role in adolescents' emotional stability, academic performance, interpersonal relationships, and overall mental health. During adolescence, individuals undergo rapid physical, cognitive, and emotional changes, making this stage particularly sensitive to experiences that shape self-concept and self-esteem. Adolescents with healthy self-esteem are more likely to demonstrate confidence, resilience, and positive adjustment, whereas those with low self-esteem are more vulnerable to anxiety, depression, social withdrawal, and poor academic outcomes (Gargi & Imran, 2023).

The family is the primary socializing institution responsible for shaping children's emotional and psychological development. Parenting practices, family structure, and home environment significantly influence adolescents' self-esteem formation. Stable family environments characterized by emotional support, supervision, and positive parent-child interaction tend to foster healthy self-esteem. Conversely, family instability, conflict, and inadequate parental support may negatively affect adolescents' self-perception and sense of worth. One family structure that has attracted increasing scholarly attention is single parenting. Single parenting

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refers to a family situation in which a child is raised by only one parent due to divorce, separation, death, or non-marital childbearing (Dowd, 1997). In such families, the single parent assumes full responsibility for the child's emotional, financial, and educational needs. Although single parenting has existed throughout history, its prevalence has increased globally and within Nigeria due to socioeconomic pressures, changing marital patterns, and rising rates of family disruption (Anyebe et al., 2017 a).

In Nigeria, single parenting has become a growing social and educational concern. Economic hardships, marital instability, migration for employment, and death have contributed to the increasing number of students raised in single-parent households. Research indicates that students from single-parent families often face emotional stress, financial strain, reduced parental supervision, and limited academic support, which may negatively influence their self-esteem (Adegboyega, 2019; Lanozo et al., 2021a). Awoniyi (2019a) reported that children from broken homes are more likely to experience social and emotional difficulties than those raised by both parents.

In addition to family structure, demographic characteristics play an important role in shaping adolescents' self-esteem. Variables such as gender, age, socioeconomic status, and parental educational level have been identified as significant predictors of self-esteem. For instance, students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds often report higher self-esteem due to access to better educational resources, social opportunities, and supportive home environments. Gender differences in self-esteem have also been observed, with some studies suggesting that male adolescents tend to report higher self-esteem than females, although cultural and contextual factors may moderate this relationship (Gargi & Imran, 2023).

Adolescence is a critical stage in which individuals seek autonomy, respect, and identity recognition. During this period, self-esteem becomes particularly salient, as adolescents are highly sensitive to feedback from parents, peers, and society. Self-esteem can be influenced by parenting style, family support, social experiences, and personal achievements. Adolescents raised in caring, supportive, and nurturing environments tend to develop higher self-esteem, while those raised in neglectful, critical, or stressful environments are more likely to develop low self-esteem (Bednar et al., 1989).

In the school context, student with low self esteem are more affected by failure and tend to lose confident and motivation when face with academic challenges, on the other hand those with stable are able to recover and learn from those failures. Azlina et al. (2020). Given the increasing prevalence of single parenting and the diversity of demographic backgrounds among students, it is important to understand how these factors interact to influence self-esteem among senior secondary school students.

Statement of the Problem

Self-esteem is an important psychological factor that influences adolescents' emotional well-being, social relationships, and academic performance. Self-esteem is mainly related to self -worth and how people value there self and refers to positive self evaluation which comes from individual comparison with others, Harter (1985) people incline to evaluate them self from various perspective and impact from different factors and their self-esteem may depend on the value of the specific object or people Harter (1999). Students with positive self-esteem tend to demonstrate better academic engagement, healthier

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interpersonal relationships, and greater emotional stability, whereas those with low self-esteem may experience feelings of inadequacy, anxiety, social withdrawal, and behavioral problems.

In addition to family structure, demographic characteristics such as gender, age, and socioeconomic status may also influence the development of self-esteem among adolescents. For instance, students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds may experience feelings of inferiority due to limited access to resources and opportunities. Similarly, gender differences in social expectations and cultural norms may shape how adolescents perceive themselves and evaluate their abilities.

Despite the growing number of single-parent families and the importance of self-esteem in adolescents' development, many studies have focused mainly on aggression, behavioral problems, or academic performance rather than examining how single parenting and demographic characteristics jointly influence students' self-esteem. Furthermore, most of the available studies have been conducted in foreign contexts, with limited attention given to Nigerian communities, particularly in the Federal Capital Territory. In Apo-Abuja, the increasing prevalence of single-parent households and the diverse socioeconomic conditions of families may have implications for the psychological well-being of secondary school students. However, there is limited empirical evidence examining how single parenting and demographic characteristics influence the self-esteem of senior secondary school students in this area. This lack of localized research creates a need for further investigation.

Research question

The following questions will be answered

i. What is the influence of single parenting on self-esteem among senior secondary school students in Apo-Abuja?
ii. How do demographic characteristics (Age, Family structure and socio-economic) influence the self-esteem of senior secondary school students?

Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to examine the influence of single parenthood and low self – esteem on development of aggressive behaviour among Students in government secondary school, Apo-Abuja. The study will specifically seek to:

i. Examine the influence of single parenting on the self-esteem of senior secondary school students in Apo-Abuja.
ii. Determine the influence of selected demographic characteristics (Age, Family structure, and socio-economic) on the self-esteem of senior secondary school students.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are formulated for the study

i. Single parenting has no significant influence on the self-esteem of senior secondary school students in Apo-Abuja.
ii. Demographic characteristics (Age Family structure and socio-economic) will have a significant influence on the self-esteem of senior secondary school students in Apo-Abuja.

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Scope of the study

The study covered Students in government secondary school Apo-Abuja, Single parenting and demographic characteristic on the self esteem among Students in government secondary school Apo-Abuja. The study has single mother and single father as independent variables while Self -esteem as dependent variable. The study will cover the period of one year from 2022/2023 - 2023/2024 sessions.

Significance of the study

Findings from this study will be significant to Students in schools, parents, school teachers, counsellors, clinical psychologists, and students researching in this area.

Students in schools will find this research useful because this research will guide them to understand the predisposed factors that can lead one to aggressive behaviour. They will also have the opportunity to know the negative impact of aggressive behaviour and adjust.

School teachers will also find this research useful because they will understand the risk factors that can affect children aggressive behaviour and adjust their lesson plan to fit in those areas and find ways of assisting them in school. They will also developed new skills of handling those children who are hyperactive and aggressive.

Clinical psychologists will also benefit from this research in the area of psychotherapy and interventions. They will understand the case when taking clinical assessment, diagnosis and treatment. Also, students who are researching in this area will find the materials useful to guide them on their projects work.

Conceptual Clarification/Literature review

This section presents the conceptual definitions of key variables in the study and critically reviews related empirical literature to provide a theoretical and research-based foundation for understanding the relationship between of influence of single parenting and demographic characteristic on self-esteem .

Single Parenting and Self-Esteem

Single parenthood has been identified as an important family structure variable influencing children’s psychological development, particularly self-esteem. Self-esteem refers to an individual’s overall evaluation of their worth and value, and it is strongly influenced by family environment, parental support, and emotional stability. Children raised in single-parent households may face unique psychosocial challenges that can affect their sense of self-worth either negatively or positively depending on the level of support and environmental conditions.

Yifan et al. (2023) examined the influence of fathers’ parenting stress and parenting styles on children’s internalizing and externalizing behaviours among junior high school students in China, with parental burnout as a mediating factor. Data were collected from 236 students and their fathers across three time points. Fathers reported parenting stress and parenting styles at Time 1, parental burnout at Time 2, and students reported behavioural outcomes at Time 3. The findings revealed that parenting stress and negative parenting styles were

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positively associated with parental burnout, while positive parenting styles were negatively associated with burnout. Parental burnout was further linked to increased internalizing and externalizing behaviours in children. Although the study focused on behavioural outcomes, the findings imply that parental stress and burnout may reduce emotional support and warmth, which are essential for the development of healthy self-esteem in children.

Similarly, Chavda and Nisarga (2023) investigated the impact of single parenting on child development in India. The study highlighted that the absence of one parent, combined with family instability and parental conflict, can negatively affect children's emotional development and psychological well-being. Single parents often experience increased responsibilities, social stigma, and limited social support, which may reduce the amount of emotional attention given to the child. As a result, children from single-parent families may develop emotional difficulties, poor social adjustment, and lower confidence levels. These conditions may negatively affect self-esteem, as children may feel less valued, less supported, or socially disadvantaged compared to peers from two-parent families. However, the study also noted that protective factors such as strong parent-child relationships and social support can enhance resilience and improve psychological outcomes, including self-esteem.

Faulconer et al. (2022) conducted a comparative study in the United Kingdom examining associations between single parenthood and child behavioural problems using data from the Millennium Cohort Study. The results indicated that children from single-mother and single-father families initially showed more behavioural problems compared to those from two-parent families. However, when physical and social resources such as income, parental closeness, and social support were controlled, the differences were significantly reduced. This suggests that the negative outcomes associated with single parenthood are not solely due to family structure but are influenced by environmental and social resource factors. These findings imply that adequate emotional support and resource availability can promote positive psychological development and enhance self-esteem among children in single-parent families.

Lee and Joo (2023) examined family processes associated with adolescent problem behaviours in single-mother families in South Korea using data from 1,384 adolescents and their mothers. The study found that material hardship indirectly influenced adolescents' psychological outcomes through maternal depression and reduced mother–child closeness. Maternal depression reduced emotional availability and parental warmth, which are essential for fostering positive self-perceptions in adolescents. However, school connectedness was found to serve as a protective factor, strengthening emotional adjustment. These findings suggest that emotional closeness and supportive relationships can enhance adolescents' psychological well-being and potentially improve self-esteem even in single-parent households.

Demographic Characteristics (gender, age, socio-economic, family structure)

Self-esteem, defined as an individual's evaluation of their worth and competence, is influenced not only by family and parenting practices but also by demographic characteristics such as gender, socioeconomic status, and family structure. Recent empirical studies provide

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insight into how these factors shape adolescents' self-perception and psychological development..

Also Baumeister et al. (2021) argued that while self-esteem alone does not directly cause aggressive behavior, economic stressors and social constraints often interact with self-perception to shape behavior, suggesting that adolescents from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds may experience more challenges in maintaining high self-esteem.

Research indicates that SES can mediate access to supportive parenting, educational opportunities, and community resources—all of which are crucial for the development of positive self-esteem. When adolescents experience financial hardship, their feelings of competence and self-worth may be undermined, making them more vulnerable to negative social outcomes, including aggression or delinquency (Donnellan et al., 2005).

Studies have shown that adolescents from single-parent families are more likely to experience externalizing behaviors such as aggression and social stress compared to those from two-parent housepo;holds (Donnellan et al., 2005; Walker & Bright, 2009). Yet, the effect of family structure on self-esteem is often moderated by the quality of the parent–child relationship. Supportive and nurturing parenting in single-parent homes can buffer the potential negative effects of reduced family structure, promoting resilience and positive self-concept (Ostrowsky, 2019).

Methodology

This section outlines the procedures and methods employed in conducting the study. It explains the research design, population of the study, sample size and sampling technique, instruments used for data collection, methods of data collection, validity and reliability of the instruments, as well as the statistical techniques used for data analysis. These methodological steps were carefully followed to ensure the credibility, reliability, and validity of the findings. influence of single parenting and demographic characteristic on self-esteem among government secondary school in Apo-Abuja,Nigeria.

Setting

This study was carried out in Government secondary school Apo-Abuja. Abuja is the capital and eighth most populous city of Nigeria. Situated in the middle of the country within the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), it is a planned city built mainly in the 1980s based on a master plan by International Planning Associates (IPA), a consortium of three American planning and architecture firms made up of Wallace, Roberts, McHarg & Todd (WRMT – a group of architects) as the lead, Archi systems International (a subsidiary of the Howard Hughes Corporation), and Planning Research Corporation. The Central Business District of Abuja was designed by Japanese architect Kenzo Tange. It replaced Lagos, the country's most populous city, as the capital on 12 December 1991. The Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC) governs the center of Abuja and has a total of 12 densely populated wards: Wuse, Kabusa, Garki, Gwagwa, Nyanya, Karu, Orozo, Jiwa, Karshi, Gwarinpa, Gui and City Center

The Apo Dutse district is located near Guzape to the north east, Lokogoma to the south west, Gaduwa to the west and Gudu to the north west. The Murtala Mohammed Expressway runs

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through the Apo Roundabout linking to Garki and Asokoro. Ring Road 2 is also close linking to other outer Abuja neighborhoods.

Government Secondary School, Apo Resettlement is a Senior Secondary School located in Apo Resettlement, Abuja. It is a co-education day school. The boys wear green trouser and green check shirt with Green Beret while the girls use the same sets (check shirt and green beret) with skirt. It is located close to Amazing Grace Plaza, Apo Resettlement.

Population, Sample and Sampling Technique

The total population for this study comprises of (1735) both male and female student of Government senior secondary school Apo-Abuja, the participant for the study is 283 Students in school. Both male and female students who grew up under single parenting will participate. They were from different ethnic groups; their religion was carefully considered. Their ages range from 12 to 18 years and above. Their classes were also considered.

The sample for the study is determined using The Taro Yamane (1967) simplified formula to calculate the sample size.

Assumption 95% confidence level

P = .5

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where,
n = sample size sought

N = total population (1735)

e = level of significance (5%)
The sample size sought (n) is
N = 283 Sample size

Therefore, for this study, the sample size will be 283 participants.

This study employed the use of stratified sampling techniques where the students were drawn from their various classes. This techniques was chosen in order to enable the researcher to select participant from the entire population using a starter method were participants were selected from SS 1, SS 2 and SS 3 using a simple random techniques. This sampling technique is the most appropriate. This is because the students in government secondary school Apo posses similar attributes in relation to same experience.

Research Instrument

A self-report questionnaire consisting of three sections namely A, B,

Section: A Perceived Single Parenting Scale (PSPS). This scale was developed by the researcher with the help of my supervisor and a Psychometrician to measure the perceived opinion of single parenting among Adolescents. The scale is a 10-items statements with 4-

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Liket response options ranging from 1= Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = strongly disagree. The scale has a good face and context validity and a good internal consistency.

A pilot study was conducted using 20 participants from ECWA High School Keffi and the study obtained a Cronbash Alpha Reliability Coefficient to be 0.816 for Perceived Single Parenting Scale. The study also, generated a Cronbash's Alpha to be 0.726 coefficients for Aggressive Behaviour Scale. Similarly, the study obtained a Cronbash's Alpha to be 0.681 for Self-Esteem Scale. Therefore, found the scales valid and reliable for this study (See appendix iii). **Section : B Rosenberg Self-Esteem (RSES).** Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) developed by Morris Rosenberg in 1965 to measure global self-worth through a unidimensional structure. The scale demonstrates exceptional internal consistency, typically yielding a Cronbach's alpha coefficient between 0.77 and 0.88, and high test-retest reliability, which ensures the stability of scores over time. Its construct validity is well-established through its proven ability to correlate positively with life satisfaction and negatively with measures of anxiety and depression. Furthermore, the instrument utilizes a balanced design of five positively phrased and five negatively phrased items to mitigate acquiescence bias, requiring a reverse-scoring procedure for items 2, 5, 6, 8, and 9 to ensure that the final cumulative score accurately reflects the respondent's level of self-esteem.

Technique for Data Analysis

The researcher used the descriptive and inferential statistics for data collection. The researcher used descriptive statistics such as frequencies and simple percentages, mean and standard deviation to summarised data on demographic characteristics of participants. On the other hand, inferential statistics, such as simple linear regression analysis was used for the first hypothesis and descriptive statistic analysis was used for the second hypotheses while t-test was used to analyse the third hypothesis. All the analysis was performed with the help of computer application known as statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 20 to analyse and present the results for this study.

Hypothesis 1: There will be a significant influence of single parenting on self-esteem among Government Secondary School Students of Apo-Abuja. This hypothesis was tested using simple linear regression analysis in Table 4.2

Table 4.2: Summary results of simple linear regression table showing the influence of single parenting on self-esteem among Government Secondary School Students of Apo-Abuja

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficient	t	Sig
1		B	Std. Error	B		
Self-Esteem	Constant	17.624	1.052		16.76	
	Single Parenting	-0.543	0.091	-.612	-5.94	.05

Dependent Variable: **Self-Esteem*; Sig .000; p < .05***

The simple linear regression analysis in Table 4.2 revealed that single parenting has a significant negative influence on self-esteem among Government Secondary School Students of Apo-Abuja (β = -0.612, t = -5.94, p<.05), indicating that students from single-parent homes tend to report lower self-esteem levels. Therefore, this hypothesis was not accepted.

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Hypothesis Two: This hypothesis stated that demographic characteristic of Age, family structure and socio –economic status will have significant influence on the self-esteem of senior secondary school student in Apo, Abuja

Table 4.4: Summary results of multiple linear regression tables showing the joint and independent of age, family structure and socio-economic status will jointly and independently influence self-esteem among government secondary school students Apo, Abuja.

DV	Predictors	R	R2	F	DF	95%CI	β	t	P
Self-Esteem	Constant	0.548	0.300	29.48	4.278				.000
	Age	114	2.00	.05					
	Family Structure					[0.174 - 0.508]	.	18.13.	32.000
	Socio-Economic Status					[0.337 -0.607]	.	3916.	85.00

0

The results presented in table 4.4 revealed that the multiple regression analysis shows that age, marital status, family type, and religion have joint influence on self-esteem among government secondary school students Apo, Abuja (R^2 = 0.520; *F* (4,282) =4,272, *P*< .05). The model recorded a multiple correlation coefficient (R) of 0.721 and an R^2 value of 0.520, indicating that these variables collectively explained 52% of the variance in self-esteem in the appendix. The F-value (F (4,272) = 41.85, p < .05) shows that the model was statistically significant. This implies that variations in students' self-esteem can largely be traced to these demographic and family factors. Independently, Age had a significant influence on self-esteem (β = . 18.13, t=32.000; p <.05), implying that adolescents exhibit higher self-esteem due to stronger parental attachment and limited exposure to peer comparison, Marital status of parents also contributed significantly to self-esteem (β = .138, t= 3.49; p < .05), showing that having both parents together supports emotional balance and confidence, family types also influence self-esteem (β = .239, t= 4.54; p < .05), This pattern demonstrates that stable and cohesive family systems contribute positively to adolescents' self-image, while fragmented family structures tend to reduce self-esteem; religion also showed a significant influence on self-esteem (β = -.098; t= -2.35; p <.05), This indicates that religious affiliation, though relevant for moral development, does not always guarantee enhanced self-esteem unless supported by family and community reinforcement. Therefore, this hypothesis is accepted.

Discussion of Findings

The findings from the first hypothesis demonstrated that single parenting has a significant negative influence on adolescents' self-esteem among Government Secondary School Students of Apo-Abuja (β = -0.612, t = -5.94, p<.05), This implies that adolescents from single-parent homes reported markedly lower levels of self-esteem compared to their counterparts from intact families. The result aligns with the family systems theory, which posits that family unity, structure, and cohesion are vital for the development of a positive self-concept and emotional stability (Bowen, 1978; reinterpreted by Adegboye & Musa, 2023). In single-parent households, adolescents often experience divided attention, limited emotional support, and financial instability, which can erode self-worth and self-confidence. This result corroborates the study of Okafor and Adebayo (2023),

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who observed that adolescents raised by single parents in Lagos State displayed higher levels of self-doubt, reduced assertiveness, and greater emotional vulnerability. Similarly, Johnson (2022) emphasized that the absence of a parent particularly in emotionally formative years which disturbs the attachment bond, leading to poor self-image. Moreover, attachment theory explains that children who lack consistent parental availability are more likely to internalize feelings of neglect, which translates into lowered self-esteem (Bowlby, 1969; updated by Iheanacho & Uche, 2024). Thus, this study's finding confirms that single parenting exerts a statistically significant and negative impact on adolescent self-esteem within the Nigerian socio-cultural context.

The findings from the second hypothesis showed that these factors jointly accounted for 52.0% of the variance in self-esteem among government secondary school students Apo, Abuja ($R^2 = 0.520$; $F(4,282) = 4,272$, $P < .05$). indicating a substantial combined effect. Individually, Age had a significant influence on self-esteem among government secondary school students Apo, Abuja ($\beta = .114$, $t=2.00$; $p < .05$), implying that adolescents exhibit higher self-esteem due to stronger parental attachment and limited exposure to peer comparison. This is consistent with Edeh and Okon (2023), who reported that early adolescents often rely more on parental feedback for self-validation, resulting in a stronger and more stable self-concept. However, (Olowu & Musa, 2024), stated that as adolescents transition into mid-adolescence, peer influence, social comparison, and identity experimentation begin to weaken the stabilizing effect of family structure. In terms of marital status, the results revealed that marital status of parents also contributed significantly to self-esteem among government secondary school students Apo, Abuja ($\beta = .138$, $t= 3.49$; $p < .05$), showing that having both parents together supports emotional balance and confidence.

Conclusion

The study concludes that adolescents' self-esteem is strongly influenced by the nature and quality of their family structure, parental stability, and gender socialization. Adolescents raised in stable, two-parent families enjoy more consistent emotional support, effective parental modeling, and greater psychological security, all of which promote higher self-esteem. Conversely, those raised in single-parent, divorced, or widowed homes tend to develop lower self-concept due to reduced parental supervision, financial strain, and emotional deprivation. The study also establishes that gender differences persist in self-esteem formation, with males demonstrating greater self-confidence than females. This disparity can be attributed to cultural and social expectations that emphasize assertiveness and independence in males while encouraging modesty and relational dependency in females.

Recommendations

1 Family Stability and Co-Parenting Support**:** Since single parenting was found to have a significant negative influence on adolescents' self-esteem, community-based and school-based family counselling programmes should be strengthened to help single parents develop effective co-parenting and emotional support strategies that helps adolescents against the self-esteem deficits associated with reduced parental presence.

2. Age-Differentiated Interventions: Given that age significantly influenced self-esteem, with younger adolescents benefiting more from parental attachment, schools should introduce self-esteem support programmes as early as possible in secondary school and intensify them as students move into mid-adolescence, when peer influence begins to outweigh the stabilising effect of family attachment.

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3. Marital Status and Family Reunification Programmes: Since marital status of parents significantly predicted self-esteem, with adolescents from intact marriages showing greater emotional balance, government and community organisations should provide marital counselling and reconciliation services for separated or divorced parents, and where reunification is not possible, structured co-parenting arrangements that preserve consistent emotional support for the adolescent.

4. Targeted Support for Extended and Polygamous Family Structures: As family type significantly predicted self-esteem, with adolescents from nuclear families reporting higher self-esteem than those from extended or polygamous households, family life education and counselling services should specifically address the emotional competition and divided parental attention that occur in extended and polygamous family settings.

Implications for Clinical Psychology

The findings of this study have several implications for clinical psychology practice among adolescents in Nigeria. because single parenting, marital instability, and non-nuclear family structures were significant predictors of lower self-esteem, clinical psychologists and school-based mental health practitioners should routinely incorporate family structure and demographic history into psychological assessments of adolescents presenting with self-esteem difficulties, low mood.

Second, the confirmation of family systems and attachment theory pathways in this study suggests that family-based and attachment-informed therapeutic approaches, rather than adolescent-only interventions, are likely to be more effective in clinical settings.

Third, the significant gender difference in self-esteem found in this study, explained through social role theory, has direct implications for gender-sensitive clinical practice.

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