

# Original Research Article

## Socio-Environmental Factors as Determinants of Social Well-Being of Adolescents in Foster Homes in Southwestern Nigeria

### ABSTRACT

**Aims:** This study sets to discover the socio-environmental factors as determinants of social well-being of adolescents in foster homes in Southwestern Nigeria.

**Study design:** This study was a descriptive survey research of ex-post-facto type

**Place:** The study was carried out in the six states in southwestern Nigeria

**Methodology:** among adolescents in foster homes. Study participants were selected using stratified, proportionate and simple random sampling techniques, the data collection was done using Questionnaire, Focus Group Discussion and Group Key Informant Interview and data analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

**Result:** The results showed that peer influence, academic performance and attitude of the foster family were significant to social wellbeing. This result shows that although all the components of social factors correlated with the social well-being of the fostered adolescents, there is an insignificant relationship between social well-being and environmental factors of the fostered adolescents. Some (24.5%) of them saw their neighbours as very supportive and friendly and are welcoming to them. 13.7% were unable to decide on their neighbour's character towards them 7.7% noticed their neighbours pitying them always, although most of them cannot say their minds out.

#### **Conclusion**

They undergo more challenges within the child welfare system that may further compromise their social well-being. Adolescents in foster care, as a result of exposure to risk factors such as poverty, maltreatment, and the foster care experience have their social skills affected.

*Keywords: Adolescents, Social Well-Being, Foster Homes, Socio-Environmental Factors.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

According to World Health Organization, adolescents refers to people between the age of 10 and 19. The adolescent period is a very significant period; it is the period of evolution from childhood to adulthood (Gidion, 2010). It refers to the period where major development happens such as identity development, building and renegotiating relationships in conjunction with being equipped with psychological and cognitive resources (Teodorczuk *et al.*, 2016) and it is also a period where adolescent seeks independence. However, accompanying adolescence are concerns and challenges such as acne, menstruation, laziness from hormonal influence and some antisocial behaviour. There are also societal expectations of the adolescents, such as; achieving new and more mature relationships with age mates of both sexes; achieving masculine or feminine social roles; embracing one's physique and using the body effectively; achieving emotional independence from adults; preparing for marriage, family life; and economic career; achieving a set of values and an ethical system as a guide to behavior -developing an ideology; and desiring and achieving socially responsible behavior (Loeb, Hessel & Allen, 2016).

Biological family environment has remained the best and most conducive place to nurture children to adulthood over time (Adeboye *et al.*, 2017). However, because of the economic situation in the Nigeria, many parents cannot afford to take care of their kids, they are sent out as helps, or left to fend for themselves this is very dangerous because they become vulnerable to abuse (Nnama-

okechukwu *et al.*, 2020). Foster homes are established to help children who have been neglected by their parents or guardian. However, in as much as the foster homes are there to help assist supervision is not as detailed as parental supervision and it could lead to low academic achievement, substance abuse and other problem that affects social adaptation of the adolescent. (Adeboye *et al.*, 2017; Widom, DuMont, and Czaja, 2007). Therefore, instability in foster care placement affects the social wellbeing of adolescents. It causes problems such as identity crisis low academic achievement, low self-esteem drug use and juvenile arrests (Negussie *et al.*, 2019). In situations where children have been scarred through their experience with staying with foster parents/homes, it may affect their esteem; some suffer posttraumatic stress disorder and might find it difficult to interact in the society. Notwithstanding, fostered adolescents who report positive relationships with their foster families are significantly more likely to experience improvements in behavioral and social well-being and less likely to experience decline in subjective well-being in the society (Leve *et al.*, 2013). Every adolescent needs a relationship found on trust and security. The feeling of neglect or rejection lingers in the minds of foster kids, which affect their emotional security and social conscience, and if foster homes lack trust/security it can cause frustration, disappointments and not being able to relate. When adolescents have a sense of safety and security, there are able to interact with their society. Vast and rich research works exist on adolescence and the fostering system in Nigeria, although most of these past studies have been conducted outside the realm of socio-environmental as predisposing factors of better and solid social well-being of the fostered adolescents. Therefore, this study sets to discover the socio-environmental factors as determinants of social well-being of adolescents in foster homes in Southwestern Nigeria.

## 2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

### 2.1 Study design

A descriptive survey research of *ex-post-facto* type was employed which allowed the researcher to get accurate and detailed information about the opinion of the population in relation to the influence of social and environmental factors as the determinant of social well-being of adolescents in foster homes in Southwestern Nigeria.

### 2.2 Study area

This study was carried out in the Southwestern Nigeria. The Southwestern Nigeria comprises of 6 states namely; Oyo, Ondo, Ekiti, Osun, Ogun and Lagos. Ekiti state has 16 Local Government Areas (LGAs), Lagos has 57 LGAs, Ogun has 20 LGAs, Ondo has 19 LGAs, Osun state has 30 LGA's and Oyo state has a total number 33 Local Government Areas. The population of Southwestern Nigeria was estimated to be 32.5 million as at 2012.

### 2.3 Study Population

The population of this study comprised of all adolescents in foster homes in Southwestern Nigeria. The foster homes selected for the purpose of this study are:

**Table 1. List of foster homes in Southwestern Nigeria**

S/n	Name of homes in southwestern nigeria	Population of fostered adolescents
1.	Juvenile Correctional Home, Sango, Ibadan	18
2.	Jesus Children Missions Outreach, Bodija, Ibadan	38
3.	Oyiza Orphanage Home, Oke-Ado, Ibadan	15
4.	Galilee Foundation (Kings kids Children Village), Ibadan	19
5.	Covenant Children Home, New Bodija, Ibadan	10
6.	Jesus Kids Home, Manotan, Ibadan	5
7.	Living Word Mission Home, Isale-Ososami, Ibadan	21
8.	Rosarian Voice, Sango, Ibadan.	21
9.	His Heritage Home, Oluyole Extension, Ibadan	10
10.	The Care People Foundation, Ibadan.	13
11.	Correctional Home, Ondo Road, Akure	23

12.	El-Rol, Street Children Rehabilitation Home, Ondo	13
13.	Children's Home Oba-Ile, Akure, Ondo State	18
14.	Correctional Home, Ikenne Road, Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State	22
15.	Home for Jesus Children, Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State	5
16.	Correctional Home, Testing ground, Osogbo, Osun State	31
17.	Abiye Orphanage Home Agowande, Oke-Onitea Osogbo, Osun State	19
18.	Our Lady of Fatima, Jaleyemi, Osogbo, Osun State	28
19.	Correctional Centre for Junior Boys, Birrel Yaba, Lagos	33
20.	Correctional Centre for Senior Boys, Isheri, Lagos	24
21.	Special Correctional Centre for Girls, Idi-Araba, Lagos	20
22.	S.O.S Children's Village, Isolo, Lagos	14
23.	Living Foundation Orphanage, Victoria Island, Lagos	19
24.	Little Saints Orphanage, Palmgrove Estate, Lagos	33
25.	Juvenile Correctional Home, Asero, Abeokuta, Ogun State	39
26.	Stephen Children's Home, Aregbo, Obantoko, Abeokuta, Ogun State	44
27.	S. O. S. Children's Village, Owu-Ijebu, Ogun State	20
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>575</b>

## 2.4 Inclusion and Exclusion criteria

This study included adolescents (10-19 years) in foster homes in the six states in Southwestern Nigeria and this study excluded persons in foster homes in Southwestern Nigeria younger than 10 years and older than 19 years of age.

## 2.5 Sampling Procedure

In the selection of the sample population, stratified, proportionate and simple random sampling techniques were adopted. Simple random sampling was used to select 27 foster homes for this study; while a combination of proportionate, simple random and stratified sampling techniques were used respectively to select 575 respondents (i.e. 339 boys and 236 girls). The sample population was stratified into three (3) strata based on age; below 14 years, 15-18 years and 18 years and above.

## 2.6 Data Collection

### 2.6.1 Instrument for data Collection

The data collection was done using quantitative (Questionnaire) and qualitative (Focus Group Discussion and Group Key Informant Interview) methods were used.

#### **Questionnaire**

The questionnaire used for data collection in this study contained four separate standardized instruments: Socio-Environmental Factors Scale (SEFS), Emotional Well-Being Scale (EWBS), Social Well-Being Scale (SWBS) and Adolescent Fostering Questionnaire (AFQ). These instruments were used to collect information on the impacts of Socio-Environmental factors on fostered adolescent well-being in private and government foster homes.

#### **Focus Group Discussion (FGD)**

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) sessions were used to complement the questionnaires to ensure that some information which were not captured by the questionnaire were obtained through physical interaction between researcher and the respondents. The discussion was to ascertain more on the impacts of Socio-Environmental factors on fostered adolescent well-being in private and government foster homes.

#### **Group Key Informant Interview (GKII)**

Group Key Informant Interview (GKII) was used for the officials in the foster homes to get more information on the impacts of Socio-Environmental factors on fostered adolescent well-being.

### **2.6.2. Validity of Instruments**

The EWBS, SWBS was validated by the researcher's supervisor, the internal/external examiner and experts in the area of the social work for vetting, proper structuring, adequacy and contents validity of each of the items.

### **2.6.3. Reliability of Instruments**

EWBS, SWBS, SEFS, AFS was pilot-tested, and was conducted on 28 fostered adolescents from Helpline Initiative for the less privileged, Ikeja, Lagos, Olakunle Oluwole Foundation, Sadiku Street, Lagos with an internal reliability coefficient of 0.65, 0.67, 0.72, 0.69 respectively.

### **2.6.4. Procedure for Data Collection**

Introduction letter was taken from the school authority, introducing the researcher to the directors of institutions to be visited; prior permission from the directors of all the registered fostered homes was sought. Member of staff of the homes were approached for their cooperation and requested to spare their time for administering the questionnaires.

On the days of visits to the different homes by the investigator, all the fostered adolescents were present and were used for the research work. The fostered adolescents were made to sit in the comfortable places that were provided by the directors of the homes and the questionnaires were administered. They were asked to fill the personal information and education background. The questionnaire was self-administered with the help of trained research assistants and the member of staff of the homes after they had rehearsed the entire routine of data collection technique. Instructions were given to the fostered adolescents before filing the questionnaire.

## **2.7 Data Management, Analysis and Presentation**

The completed questionnaire was serially numbered to avoid repetition of data and the FDG sessions were tape recorded to capture accurate responses from the respondents. Data collected in this study were analyzed using descriptive statistics, such as simple percentages for the demographic data, multiple regression analysis for research questions and Pearson product moment correlation for the hypotheses and presented in tables.

## **2.8 Ethical Consideration**

Ethical approvals were gotten from the directors of the foster homes, National Director, the Permanent Secretaries of the States Ministry of Women Affairs and social welfare, and Ministry of Youth and Social Development of the participating states. Informed consent was sought before administering the instruments and the participation was voluntary.

## **2.9 Limitation to the study**

The study covered the six states in Southwestern, Nigeria, Oyo, Ogun, Lagos, Ondo, Ekiti and Osun. If not for financial constraints, the study could have been carried out to cover the thirty-six states of the federation, for a wider coverage. Again, in the six states, only government and private registered foster homes were covered. This is because others that are under the kinship foster care or non-kinship foster care did not want to declare their foster care status because they are ashamed of how people judged those who declare themselves, they were seen as if they did something wrong and this is a big constraint because they saw fostering as a stigma to them. There was also the problem of bureaucracy and bottlenecks in getting ethical approvals from the directors of some homes, National Director, the Permanent Secretaries of the States Ministry of Women Affairs and social welfare, and Ministry of Youth and Social Development in some other states to administer questionnaires and conduct the interviews. Even with the ethical approval at hand, some of the carers still refused to be recorded neither did they grant any discussion with the adolescents in their custody. Notwithstanding

the identified problems, the outcomes of the study are cogent and empirically sustainable and could be generalized for all the fostering homes/institutions in Southwestern Nigeria.

### 3. RESULTS

#### 3.1 Social and environmental factors on social well-being of the fostered adolescents in Southwestern Nigeria

This portion deals with the joint and relative influence of the independent variables on the dependent variables, it is derived from the result presented in tables 1a, 1b and 2 which were obtained from data collected on the null hypothesis two (Ho2) which states that: there is no significant relationship between social and environmental factors (peer influence, academic performance, attitude of foster family, domestic influence, neighbourhood characteristics and drugs/substances abuse) with social well-being of fostered adolescents in South-west, Nigeria. The data collected from the respondents on this, were subjected to multiple regression as well as correlation matrix while the result obtained.

It was shown in table 1a that the joint effect of all the two composite independent variables (social and environmental factors) on social well-being of fostered adolescents were significant  $F(6,568) = 11.650$ ;  $R = .331$ ,  $R^2 = .110$ ,  $Adj R^2 = .100$ ;  $P < .05$ ). Besides, 11.0% of the variation was accounted for by the independent variables while the remaining 89.0% was due to chance. This, therefore, reveals that social well-being of fostered adolescents in Southwestern Nigeria, to a large extent, is being determined by one or combination of the two independent variables.

Also, the result of table 4.2b shows the relative contribution of each of the two independent variables on the social well-being of fostered adolescents for the study were as follows: Peer Influence ( $\beta = .127$ ,  $P < .05$ ), Academic Performance ( $\beta = .093$ ,  $P < .05$ ), Attitude of the foster family ( $\beta = .206$ ,  $P < .05$ ), Domestic Influence ( $\beta = -.002$ ,  $P > .05$ ), Neighbourhood characteristics ( $\beta = -.023$ ,  $P > .05$ ) and Drug/substance abuse ( $\beta = -.005$ ,  $P > .05$ ) respectively.

It is noted from the results that while peer influence, academic performance and attitude of the foster family were significant, domestic influence, neighbourhood characteristics and drugs/substance abuse were not.

**Table 2a. Joint effect of social and environmental factors on social well-being of fostered adolescents in Southwestern Nigeria**

Model	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	676.417	6	112.736	11.650	.000
Residual	5496.452	568	9.677		
Total	6172.870	574			

$R = .331$ ,  $R^2 = .110$ ,  $Adj R^2 = .100$

**Table 2b. Relative predictions of social and environmental factors on social well-being of fostered adolescents in Southwestern Nigeria.**

Source	Unstandardised Coefficient		Standardised Coefficient	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta Contribution		
(Constant)	11.074	1.239		8.935	.000
Peer Influence	.133	.046	.127	2.911	.004
Academic Performance	.123	.059	.093	2.094	.037
Attitude of the Foster Family	.140	.032	.206	4.373	.000
Domestic Influence	-1.724E-03	.038	-.002	-.045	.964
Neighbourhood Characteristics	-3.012E-02	.055	-.023	-.548	.584
Drugs/Substance Abuse	4.706E-03	.038	.005	.123	.902

### 3.2 Social well-being, peer influence, academic performance, and attitude of the foster family, domestic influence, neighbourhood characteristics and drugs/substances abuse

To complement the tables 1a and 1b, table 2 shows that there is a positive significant relationship between social well-being of the study's respondents and the components of social and environmental factors; they are as follows: social well-being and peer influence ( $r = .234^{**}$ ,  $P < .01$ ), social well-being and academic performance ( $r = .212^{**}$ ,  $P < .01$ ) and social well-being and attitude of the foster family ( $r = .294^{**}$ ,  $P < .01$ ) but no significant relationships between social well-being and domestic influence ( $r = .070$ ,  $P > .05$ ), social well-being and neighbourhood characteristics ( $r = .019$ ,  $P > .05$ ) and social well-being and drugs/substances abuse ( $r = .022$ ,  $P > .05$ ). This result shows that although all the components of social factors correlated with the social well-being of the fostered adolescents, there is an insignificant relationship between social well-being and environmental factors of the fostered adolescents.

**Table 3. Correlation matrix between social well-being, peer influence, academic performance, and attitude of the foster family, domestic influence, neighbourhood characteristics and drugs/substances abuse**

	Social Well-Being	Peer Influence	Academic Performance	Attitude of the Foster Family	Domestic Influence	Neighbourhood Characteristics	Drugs/Substances Abuse
Social Well-Being	1						
Peer Influence	.234**	1					
Academic Performance	.212**	.274**	1				
Attitude of the Foster Family	.294**	.406**	.422**	1			
Domestic Influence	.070	.059	.171**	.214**	1		
Neighbourhood Characteristics	.019	.106*	.076	.097*	-.178**	1	
Drugs/Substances Abuse	.022	-.016	-.004	.017	.069	.179**	1
Mean	18.0609	16.7148	12.4122	25.9478	14.4887	13.5930	12.7635
Std. Dev.	3.2793	3.1554	2.4796	4.8353	3.6175	2.4823	3.4701

\* Sig. at .05 level

### 3.3 Social factors and social well-being of fostered adolescent in Southwestern Nigeria

This is the examination of the extent to which components of social factors influence the social well-being of fostered adolescents in South-west, Nigeria. This section is derived from the results presented in table 3a and 3b which were obtained from data collected on the research question which states that: To what extent has social factors (peer influence, academic performance and attitude of foster family) influenced the social well-being of fostered adolescents in South-west, Nigeria. The data collected from the respondents, on this, were subjected to multiple regression while the results obtained were followed by a detailed discussion.

It was shown in the table that the joint predictions of independent variables (peer influence, academic performance and attitude of the foster family) on social well-being was significant ( $F_{(3,571)} = 23.308$ ;  $R = .330$ ,  $R^2 = .109$ ,  $Adj. R^2 = 0.104$ ;  $P < .05$ ). About 11.0% of the variation was accounted for by the independent variables while the remaining 89.0% was not due to chance. The result above shows the relative contribution of each of the independent variables on the dependent; peer influence ( $\beta = .126$ ,  $P < .05$ ), academic performance ( $\beta = .092$ ,  $P < .05$ ) and attitude of the foster family ( $\beta = .205$ ,  $P < .05$ ). Obviously, the attitude of the foster family had highest contribution on the social well-being of the fostered adolescent used for this study.

On neighbourhood characteristics, 54.1% of the respondents involved in the study agreed that they can count on the people in their neighbourhood to help them when the need arises, while 24.5% of them saw their neighbours as very supportive and friendly and are welcoming to them, 13.7% were unable to decide on their neighbour's character towards them 7.7% noticed their neighbours pitying them always, although most of them cannot say their minds out.

This is followed relatively by Peer influence and academic performance. Results above demonstrated that all the social factors were significant. Although, low educational attainment among foster youth is not simply described by a sole reason but is associated with pre-care experience such as neglect, abuse, poverty, emotional challenges and others.

**Table 4a. Joint predictions of social factors on social-well-being of fostered adolescents**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	673.450	3	224.483	23.308	.000
Residual	5499.420	571	9.631		
Total	6172.870	574			

$R = .330$ ,  $R^2 = .109$ ,  $Adj R^2 = .104$

**Tables 4b. Relative predictions of social factors (peer influence, academic performance, attitude of foster the family) on social well-being of fostered adolescents**

Model	Unstandardised Coefficient		Standardised Coefficient	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	B		
(Constant)	10.771	.900		11.962	.000
Peer Influence	.131	.045	.126	2.887	.004
Academic Performance	.121	.058	.092	2.089	.037
Attitude to the foster family	.139	.031	.205	4.428	.000

### 3.4 Environmental factors and social well-being of fostered adolescents in south-west, Nigeria

This examines the extent to which the environmental factors influence social well-being of fostered adolescents in Southwestern Nigeria. This section is derived from the results presented in tables 4a and 4b which were obtained from data collected on the research question 6 which states that: What are the effects of environmental factors (domestic influence, neighbourhood characteristics and drug/substance abuse) and social well-being of fostered adolescents. The data collected from the respondents on this, were subjected to multiple regression, while the results obtained were followed by a detailed discussion.

It was shown in table 4a that the joint effect of domestic influence, neighbourhood characteristics and drug/substance abuse on social well-being was not significant ( $F(3,571) = 1.146$ ;  $R = .077$ ,  $R^2 = .066$ ,  $Adj. R^2 = 0.001$ ;  $P > .05$ ). About 1.0% of the variation was accounted for by the independent variables, while the remaining 99.0% was not due to chance. The result above also shows the relative contributions of each of the components of sub-related environmental factors on the dependent: domestic influence ( $\beta = .077$ ,  $P > .05$ ), neighbourhood characteristics ( $\beta = 0.34$ ,  $P > .05$ ), and drug/substance abuse ( $\beta = -.010$ ,  $P > .05$ ). It is shown in the result above that none of the independent variables were significant.

**Table 5a. Joint predictions of environmental factors on social well-being**

Model	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	36.948	3	12.316	1.146	.330
Residual	6135.922	571	10.746		
Total	6172.870	574			

$R = .077$ ,  $R^2 = .006$ ,  $Adj R^2 = .001$

**Table 5b: Relative predictions of domestic influence, neighbourhood characteristics and drug/substance abuse) on social-well being**

Model	Unstandardised Coefficient		Standardised Coefficient	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	B		
(Constant)	16.554	1.074		15.418	.000
Domestic influence	6.948E-02	.039	.077	1.798	.074
Neighbourhood characteristics	4.525E-02	.057	.034	.792	.429
Drug/substance abuse	-8.995E-03	.040	-.010	-.223	.823

#### 4. DISCUSSION

##### 4.1 Social and environmental factors on social well-being of the fostered adolescents in Southwestern Nigeria

This result corroborates the position of Murnane (2011) in his study, which examined the impact of school resources on the learning of inner-city children. He stated that fostered adolescents may experience school as a positive force in their lives and typically engage in their school community and participate in non-academic activities including athletics, the arts, students' clubs and school sponsored social events, some of them who have adult and peer connections in school are likely to view their schools as a supportive and safe haven. This has shown that either, individually or collectively, the independent variables does impact fostered adolescents, while the findings of Palmer (2002) contradicts the result of the research. In it, he examined children in long term care, their experience and progress and reported that "unfortunately, for many children in foster care, the pressures of school disruptions learning difficulties and school failure diminish their well-being and undermine the family-building efforts of the child welfare system. He further stated that the factors leading to their entry into foster care, along with their experiences in the child welfare system position them at great risk for educational failure. They often lack stability in school, uninterrupted of educational services, and parental participation and support in their school lives, each a crucial prerequisite for school success, it should not be surprising that the vast majority of children in foster care fall well behind their peers in academic achievement and drop out of school at twice the rate of children in the overall population Lieter, Jeffrey and Johnson, (2004).

Bissell and Geen (2006) who concluded in their study on fostering progress, children's voice stated that "child welfare agencies are relying on placement with caring foster parents for maltreated and abandoned children at times, the foster parents often play an vital role in helping birth parents enhance their parenting skills and improve their relationships with their children. In the same vein Cozby, Klee and Worden (2001) buttressed on the above that on a happier note, abuse by foster parents is rare. If there is any contrary opinion, this might have been developed by well publicized tragedies of children abuse in foster care, that often distort public perceptions of the benefits that foster or families provide to children who have experienced maltreatment and abandonment before entering foster care. The majority of the children who underwent mistreatment or neglect were abused by their parents, but less than 1.0% reported abuse by their foster families.

The result further showed that while social factors have high significant impacts on fostered adolescents, the environmental factors had low significant effects on the dependent measure. It disagrees with the conclusions of Brooks-Gum (2002), who examined neighbourhoods influence, child and adolescent development. In it, he highlighted the significant effects that neighbourhood characteristics can have on fostered adolescents. In his research, he stated that adolescents living in high-income neighbourhood, may have higher cognitive ability and school achievement than those living in middle income neighbourhoods, and children and adolescents living in low income neighbourhoods, may have more mental and physical health problems than those living in middle-income neighbourhoods. The home environment has been presented to be partially responsible for the connection between neighbourhood and the children's development. For adolescents, neighbourhood effect is somewhat accounted for by community social control. Still on the issue of environment, Anderson (2009) stated that when local social controls are weak, youths have greater opportunities to engage in violence and to become involved with violent peers in whose presence of violence is experienced as highly rewarding. While a study by Osgood and Anderson (2004)

examined fostered adolescents residing in neighbourhoods with a high degree of informal social control, indicated that they are probable to experience larger supervision over their behaviour, thus decreasing chances for delinquent peer groups create and draw new participants. This result also clearly indicates that despite recognition that multiple contexts influence adolescent behaviour, it is still difficult to identify the specific mechanisms through which neighbourhood effects occur.

#### **4.2 Social factors and social well-being of fostered adolescent in Southwestern Nigeria**

Findings of researches show that children in foster care face unique challenges to success in the school environment. The experience of foster care placement itself with frequent movement in care, disruption in schooling and educational services and isolation from friends and teachers can disrupt the rhythms of already fragile life of a child in foster care and heighten the risk for poor educational outcomes.

The academic performance which had the least of influence on the foster adolescent shows that the transient nature of foster care often means that children are abruptly and frequently uprooted from one school and placed in another. Every school transfer requires a child to adjust to new teachers, curriculum, classmates and expectations. For some children, a change in school may offer a fresh start, better services or freedom from physical danger or emotional harm. For others, particularly adolescents, it can mean separation from friends, community and support systems that serve as a foundation for future success. A change in school can significantly affect a child's emotional well-being and compromise success in school and at home, creating stress for caregivers and undermining stable placements. Levin (2003) revealed that foster parents, rarely, were mindful of the academic needs of adolescents in foster care and that school staff had little knowledge of the adolescent foster care background. The absence of stable educational decision-makers for children in foster care is alarming, showing that adolescents whose parents are involved in their education have greater success in school. Ayasse (2002) notes that foster youths are more prone, than their non-foster peers, to experience withdrawal, anxiety, depression, inability to concentrate and lack of social skill, while Aldgate's (2004) findings point out that each of these factors can influence the fostered adolescents' ability to focus and perform satisfactorily in school.

Findings of research shows that structural modifications in inner-city neighbourhood led to the social segregation of poor minority youths from middle-class standards and role models and instead increased youths' exposure to unacceptable role models and values, Wilson (2003), similarly, Anderson (2009) argue that due to structural modifications in neighbourhoods, resulting in decreased employment opportunities and increased disadvantage, "the trust and perceptions of decent that once prevailed in the community are progressively absent" and in their place a "code of the streets" has developed, which underscores hardiness, risk-taking, and the use of violence to achieve eminence.

#### **4.3 Environmental factors and social well-being of fostered adolescents in south-west, Nigeria**

As obtained in this study, Calvin (2001) concluded in her work titled, make a difference in a child's life in which she provided manual for helping children and youths get what they need in school, stated that foster parents must fulfil several obligations in order to adequately and successfully care for the children in their custody. By law, they are required to provide for their basic needs, this includes ensuring their growth, safety and health, as well as protecting them from harm.

Lanyado (2003), in his study on the emotional tasks of shifting from fostering to adoption, concluded that "when a youth has experienced neglect and abuse from his or her parents, followed by abandonment, there is fearfulness about allowing anyone else, particularly an adult close to him or her. In the youth's mind, this is risky, a repeat of the painful rejection, attack, abandonment, or uncertainty of past relationships. The youths may now be convinced that daring to try again' to allow a new relationship to grow is a highly dangerous position". Green (2008), in his study on concept of attachment disorder, supported Lanyado's statement. In it, he found that foster children with a history of abuse or early institutional care were likely to exhibit an insecure attachment and or be diagnosed with Reactive Attachment Disorder. The majority of the respondents (47.3%) were of the opinion that their carers make the home to be loving always, 27.7% still accept that their carers cheer them up

when they are sad or worried, 18.6% still accept that their carers are forth coming in certain areas but not in totality, while the remaining 6.4% are biased about their carers.

It also showed that adolescents residing in these homes where love is shown to them and are not negatively influenced by their neighbours are more probable to form friendships with conventional peers and orient themselves towards conventional behaviours, such as academic achievement. This is further supported by Thornberry (2003), in his study, which was carried out on delinquent test interactional theory. In the outcome of the study, he stated that involvement in delinquent peer networks is of great importance for understanding neighbourhood variation in youths' violence. This shows that delinquent and violent peers ensue most frequently among youths dwelling in structurally disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

However, the result disagree with the outcomes of Fanshel (2008) in his study on children in foster care where he reported that foster children usually experience changes that affects them emotionally, cognitively and physically, contributing to both the internalising and externalising of negative behaviours. Hoffman (2003), in his analysis of differential association, social control and strain theories of delinquency social force, contradicted the outcome of the study when he explained that when social controls (foster family) are too familiar with the youth, they tend to have greater opportunities to engage in violence and become involved with violent peers in whose presence violence is experienced as highly rewarding. Thus, exposure to a violent youth culture is likely to contribute to higher rates of adolescent violence typically found in socio-economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods (Anderson, 2009).

There are indications from the results and the findings of this study that domestic influence has the highest rate among the fostered adolescents. Some of the respondents (65.9%) were of the opinion that they are always free to discuss their personal problem with their carers without any hindrance, while about 11.5% of the respondents said that they are free to discuss their personal problems with their teachers. However, the remaining 12.3% supported discussing their personal problems with their peers. This research was able to deduce from the result that domestic influence on the fostered adolescent has a lot to do in determining the outcome of their character. The more committed the carer on the youth, the more stable their character will be. This study lends credence to some of the past studies on domestic influence - Carlson (2000) and Rossman (2001).

The result showed that neighbourhood impact remains debatable because it is difficult to separate this impact from that of family context, since fostered adolescents has no choice as to where they live. Nevertheless, from all perspectives neighbourhood does matter in the life of the fostered adolescent, as domestic influence is seen as a social phenomenon that impacts every segment of the fostered adolescents, the home environment has been presented to be partially responsible for the connection between neighbourhood and children's development. For the adolescents, neighbourhood effects are somewhat accounted for by community social control (Brooks-Gum, 2002).

## **CONCLUSION**

Children in foster care face a difficult journey through childhood. In addition to the disturbing family conditions that bring them into foster care, they undergo more challenges within the child welfare system that may further compromise their social well-being. Adolescents in foster care, as a result of exposure to risk factors such as poverty, maltreatment, and the foster care experience have their social skills affected. Providing stable social well-being for them and cultivating families can boost the resilience of children in care.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Providing safe, stable, and nurturing homes for the adolescents may wane the deleterious effects of their experiences by exposing them to protective factors that can encourage resilience. Also, government should be encouraged at all levels to strengthen their own administrative legal structures and establish programmes to address the various facets of child welfare supportive services for families and ensure the provision of financial assistance, and placement of children outside the home.

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