



INFLUENCE OF RELIGION ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-CONCEPT IN ADOLESCENTS

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Abstract- This study sought to identify the influence of religion on the development of self-concept in adolescents. The study was limited to two secondary schools in Enugu metropolis, Union Boys Secondary School and Queens College. 200 adolescents participated in the study. Religion Conviction Scale and Sematic Differential Self-Concept were used for data collection. Data were analyzed using t-test and Pearson moment correlation statistics. The findings of the study revealed that there is a relationship between religion and self-concept. It also revealed that the self-concept of girls is more affected by religion than that of boys. Discussion focused on the necessity of exposing young people, especially girls, to sound religious teachings so as to prepare them early to face the challenges of life.

Keywords- religious belief, self concept, gender, religion, adolescents

Introduction

Religion is an important institution of social control it discourages antisocial behaviours by highlighting their negative consequences both in the present life and the future. Several persons see religion as exerting greater influence among the adolescent who desire a social world where divine providence is mated out in the scheme of things. The most common pattern in adolescent and religions research is to conceptualize religion as an effective control mechanism within society. Thus adolescents are seen as opting against antisocial, aimed robbery, etc. because of the threat the religions institutions hold over thinking, feeling and acting that way. The desire to avoid hellfire consequences of his behaviours is seen as the chief motivator against engaging in antisocial behaviours. Whitehead [1] said that religion is what we do with our solitariness. In other words, religion is a matter of individuality. Religion is the feelings, acts and experiences of individuals in their solitude; so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine. Since the relation may involve every facet of the individual's life. Such as moral, physical, or virtual. It is evident that out of religion in the sense in which we take it, theologies, philosophies, and ecclesiastical organization may secondarily grow [1]. It is obvious that scholars find it difficult to come up with a definition of religion that would include every religion, past and present. A lot of people believe that the ideal of the supernatural is universal to religion and should therefore be a part of its definition. While religion may be a private set of beliefs of only one person or it may be a shared set of beliefs of many. This concept of religion is often practiced in a formal organization [2]. Religion often merges into magic in primitive societies but the two are fundamentally different. Religion often involves the worship of the supernatural forces, while magic deals with means of controlling them to gain certain ends. At present, religion sometimes merges into philosophy but again, essential and clear-cut differences are observed. Philosophy deals with understanding and logic, while religion is all about salvation

and faith. The more comprehensive definition is the outward act or form by which man indicate their cognition of the existence of God or gods having power over their lives, to whom absolute obedience and reverence are due, the feeling or expression of human love, fear or awe of some superhuman and over-ruling power, whether by profession of belief, by observance of riles and ceremonies or by the conduct of life [3].

Self-concept is our ideal which has received great emphasis in modern psychological writings particularly in the field of clinical work but its significance has not been fully appreciated by teachers. This concept is equally important in the area of education, particularly in the more personal aspects such as motivation, purposes, goals and adjustment, which in the final analysis, are the foundations upon which success and failure in life most ultimately rest. A young child is relatively neutral at first as to the kind of concept he builds for himself, since he has no point of reference, he becomes progressively less free in his choice of the experiences he assimilates or of the interpretation he places upon them. The human organism is equipped at birth to seek out those responsive elements in the environment that allows for maximal growth and development. This fact can be seen as a position that emphasizes the biological base for human behaviour. It should not be misread as merely statement similar to Maslow's formulation that reduces ethics to biological self-concept. According to [4] the judging self is not reducible solely to hedonistic motivation that mediates between social influence and the resultant of high and low self-esteem.

There are many theories and research that focused on identity formation in adolescent and young adults [5,6]. A significant period of psychological crisis is apparently requisite for the eventual formation of a workable and viable identity as an adult. Then crisis would be an important and quite natural, component of the self concept of adolescents' psychological make-up. According to [7] early maturing adolescents would address adolescent's stressors at

an early age and would be more likely to engage in an identity-related crisis late in adolescence, compared with late matured adolescents. The researchers used a standard identity status interview that covered four topic areas (political, religion, sex and occupation) with 59 first semester college women. They found that pubertal timing was strongly related to identity based crises whereas those who reported late menarche were more often in a non-crisis status.

Other constellations of personal issues seem especially relevant to concept. As adolescents with high self-concept would pose a reasonable awareness of the physical features including weight and height. The judgment about the degree and depth of contact that adolescents have with religion depends largely on what range of knowledge and experience they considered relevant. Regular attendance at a place of worship is one of the activities that is associated with religion. The meaning such occasional associations with institutional religion have for the adolescents are difficult to ascertain. At worst, there is little more than a superficial familiarity being a part of a communal tradition that a family's or nation's religion provides which is another frame within which personal identity is forged. Most of our religious beliefs are inherited from parents and grandparents. Alongside all the explicit contact with religion in terms of belief and belonging, certain spontaneous musings on the part of individual adolescent may also count as relevant to his or her association with religion. Adolescents from time to time experience certain feelings and are moved to ask particular questions, any of which may be potentially religious. A sense of wonder and awe provoked by some sound or sight of great beauty, feelings of trust and security, of gratitude of joy prompted by some act of kindness or playful moment, or grief and sadness at some loss, these can all be the occasion for 'wordsworthian' sensation of mystery or presence, of greater purpose or meaning. Now such experiences are widely attested in adults and it seems from children's talk, personal writing and play ground that they abound also with them. Without presuming that the true claims of religion are publicly proved by such stirrings, it is important to recognize that they are commonly human and religious [8,9]. The use of the concepts of the control and support as important dimensions of the religion sphere allows us to call attention to the two important functions that religion performs namely. That is being both a supportive/motivating force and a controlling and guarding force [10,11]. Here, the support and control constructs in the religions sphere will help in assessing religions influence upon self-concept. This study aims at determining whether there will be a statistically significant difference between religions conviction and self-concept among adolescent. Also whether there will be a statistically significant difference on the influence of religion on the development of self-concept among adolescent.

Hypotheses

The following Hypotheses were Tested

There will be a relationship between religious conviction and self concept development among male adolescent.

There will be a relationship between religious conviction and self concept development among female adolescent.

Materials and Methods

Design/Statistic

The study is a survey research with religious influences and gender as its independent variables (IV) and self-concept as the dependent

variable (DV). There is no manipulation of variables in the study Pearson "r" formular will be used in analyzing data of the two hypothesis.

Participants

A total number of two hundred (200) participants comprising of one hundred (100) females and one hundred (100) males was used for the study, through systematic randomization, the participants were drawn from the population of two secondary school chosen. The schools chosen are single sex schools namely: Union Boys Secondary School and Queens College. 100 participants were selected from each of the schools. The participants age ranged from 12-19 years of senior class only. These groups were chosen because they were considered to be in their adolescent stage and hence most appropriate for this study.

Instrument

Two instruments was used in this study, they are sematic differential self-concept scale used for measuring self-concept and religious conviction scale used for measuring religion. Semantic differential self-concept scale was developed by Ezeilo [12] with a reliability coefficient 0.70. The religious conviction scale was developed by Onyeizugbe and Okoroafor [13] has a reliability coefficient of 0.79.

Procedure

The questionnaire was administered to the participants in their classrooms only a simple face to face encounter. The researcher himself explained the purpose of the study and the instruction to them. The researcher remained with the participants as they completed the questionnaires and collected them immediately they were completed.

Results

Table 1- Summary table for Pearson moment correlation for male adolescents

N	Df	Σx	Σy	Σx ²	Σy ²	Σxy	r	P
100	98	6,107	5,954	3,86,454	3,73,143	3,58,278	-0.34	<.05

Hypothesis: There will be a relationship between religious conviction and self concept among male adolescent.

Pearson 'r' formular was used in seeking the relationship between religion and self-concept for the male. The obtained value is -0.34, while the critical value is 0.196, with significant level of p<.05 and df of 98. This means that the critical value is greater than obtained value. The result is statistically insignificant, therefore we reject the hypothesis, which states that there will be a relationship between religion and self-concept development among male adolescents. This result indicates that there is no significant relationship between religion and self concept of male adolescents.

Table 2- Summary table for Pearson moment correlation for female adolescent

N	Df	Σx	Σy	Σx ²	Σy ²	Σxy	R	P
100	98	4712	5437	2,33,795	3,10,718	259512	0.25	<.05

Hypothesis: There will be a relationship between religious conviction and self concept development among female adolescents.

Pearson 'r' formular was used in seeking the relationship between religion and self-concept at significant level of p<.05 and df of 98 we obtain the critical value of 0.196 with calculated value of 0.25 this

implies that the result of this study is statistically significant, I therefore do accept the hypothesis, which states that there will be a relationship between religion and the development of self-concept in female adolescents. This result indicates that there is a positive relationship between religion and self-concept among female adolescents. This means that as religious consciousness increases, their self-concept will increase as well.

Discussion

The result of the finding shows that religion was found to be an important determinant of development of self-concept in adolescents based on gender. For the relationship between religion and self-concept development among males, there was no significant relationship.

For the second hypothesis which sought the relationship between religion and development of self-concept among females, the obtained value which is 0.25 is greater than the critical value which is 0.196 with a significance level of $p < .05$. This result of this study is statistically significant and the null hypothesis is therefore rejected. The result of this research seems to indicate that religion tends to contribute a lot in the development of self-concept in adolescents and that girls are more affected by the emotional appeal in religious life than boys. The question then should be, why are women more influenced by religion than men? Religious belief is more of an emotional thing than a cognitive thing. For instance, consider the fact that merely thinking about religious beliefs is usually sufficient to reveal they're unwarranted [14]. Women are also raised to be more emotional than cognitive; men are raised to be more cognitive than emotional. In fact, they are encouraged, even taught, to deny their emotions [14]. Religious authority figures, mythological (God, Allah, Zeus, and so on) and real (priests, rabbis, ministers, and so on), are male. And since women are raised to be subservient to males, to regard males as authorities, it's easy for them to accept God, for example, as an authority and subordinate themselves to him [14]. Men, on the other hand, are encouraged to be the authority; they're also encouraged to compete with other men [14]. So accepting God, for example, as an authority and subordinate themselves to him would not be easy. When a man introduces the matter of morality and questions whether it's right to do whatever it is that's about to be done, he is accused of 'going soft', or being weak, or being a 'boyscout', or being a bleeding heart, and so on. These explain why girls in this study were more influenced by religious beliefs which really shaped their self-concept [14].

Suggestions for further Research

Having known this, we suggest that further research should be on how religion adds to the positive dimensions of adolescent growth and development. Another research is needed to show to what extent religion, education, family and peers will have independent effects over and above the effect that self-concept has on young adult well-being.

Limitations of the Study

Apart from the inherent problems associated in studies using questionnaires, the extent to which the study may be generalized has the following limitation.

The study used a small sample. It is suggested that future research in this area will use larger and more distributed samples. To enable them make more valid generalization.

Conclusion

The focus of this study was to find the influence of religion on the development of self-concept in adolescents. In this study, there is no statistically significant relationship between religion and development of self-concept in male adolescents. There is a statistically significant relationship between religion and development of self-concept in female adolescents. The study suggests that there are many components of self-concept such as; social, academic, physical and transpersonal. And each component of self-concept is influenced by religious belief that one has and this integration into religious order is the critical element in preparing people to live better. And it also foretells that females are most influenced by religion than males in their development of self-concept.

Conflicts of Interest: None declared.

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