Analytical Study of Styles of Love among Secondary School Adolescents in Anambra State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Adolescence is an important developmental period when there is increase in adolescents’ quest for romantic relationships; love at this period can become confusing. This study analysed the styles of love among adolescents of secondary schools in Anambra state, Nigeria. One research question guided the study and two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. A sample size of 1015 secondary school adolescents was selected from a population size of 32,217 adolescents through simple random sampling technique. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. Research question was answered using range of summated scores and percentages while z-test and ANOVA were respectively used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings from the study revealed among others that majority of the adolescents are aware of the different styles of love. Based on the findings, implications of the study were noted and recommendations made that school guidance and counselling services and programmes for educating the students should focus on how to make the best of relationship choice based on the styles of love and the dangers of making the wrong choice of love in such early stage of development.

Keywords

Adolescence, Adolescents, Love Styles, Secondary Schools, Analytical Study, Anambra State

1. Introduction

Adolescence years are times of intense challenge and change. For many adolescents in secondary schools, romantic relationships are an important source of extreme feelings of love, both positive and negative. It is during this time period that many adolescents begin dating and forming relationship bonds with friends. In fact, researchers (Joyner & Udry, 2000; Silliman & Schumm, 2004) suggest that the quality of adolescent relationships at this stage is one of the strongest predictors of adolescent well-being indicators; including self-esteem, depression, suicide attempts and school completions. Adolescence thus is an important developmental period when there is increase in the quest for romantic relationships. Love at this period tends to take on new and an entirely different meaning, from what it had been to the child and this could portend danger if not properly addressed. World Health Organisation (2014) identifies adolescence as the period in human growth and development that occurs after childhood and before adulthood which ranges from ten (10) to nineteen (19) years of age. Also, Mwale (2008) defined adolescence as a period of life from puberty to maturity. It is a period of physical, biological, emotional and social maturation and transition. In the context of this study, a child in the transitional period of life in human development between the ages of 12 and 20 years of age is referred to as an adolescent.

A child within this adolescence period has the tendency of growing up to develop romantic feelings and sexual attractions towards another. According to Arnett (1999), it is the developmental period during which individuals are most likely to face the triple strain of conflict with parents, severe mood swings, and a propensity toward risk-taking. This period as Kabiru and Ezeh (2007) noted is largely characterised by the clarification of sexual values and experimentation with sexual behaviours. The ability to feel romantic love develops during the adolescence period. Romantic feelings of love can be exciting at this stage, and many a time confusing at first.

The term love is perceived by various people and groups from different perspectives, and for each category it conveys distinct meaning. The construct of love has received considerable attention and discussion in numerous studies and articles. There is love between husband and wife; between father/mother and family; among immediate family members, between a boy and a
In this study, the focus is on adolescents, especially those at the secondary level of education. According to Fisher (2004), love is a variety of different feelings, status and attitudes that range from interpersonal affection to pleasure. It is an emotion of strong attraction and personal attachment (Lewis, Amini, & Lannon, 2000). For an adolescent however, the term love can be magical, confusing and difficult to understand. This perhaps may be the reason why many of them tend to misunderstand it.

Lee (2012) indeed acknowledged this notion when he stated that love is wildly misunderstood. Lee sees love as a highly desirable malfunction of the heart which weakens the brain causes eyes to sparkle, cheeks to glow, blood pressure to rise and the lips to pucker. Moore (2012) however posited that love is a lot more than feel stages. According to him, it is what keeps one from giving up and it is what puts one to sleep at the end. For this study however, love is conceptualized to mean a feeling of attraction towards another person, usually the opposite sex. The attraction could be so strong that all the individual does is to think continually about the person because of the deep affection he/she has for the loved one.

It was in 1973, that a researcher, by name John Lee, conducted extensive interviews with people on love. At the conclusion of his work, he asserted that humans think of love in different ways which he called “love styles”. He used Greek nouns to denote them. According to Lee (1976), there are six different love styles, namely; eros (red), ludus (blue), storge (yellow), pragma (green), mania (violet) and agape (orange). Love styles in the context of this study refer to the mindset adolescents have and their approach towards love relationships, based on Lee (1976) classification.

Hendrick and Hendrick (2011) further pointed out that attitude that people about love direct their behaviour and influences their experiences towards the individual they love. Hendrick and Hendrick further opined that the way individuals perceive love also differs in terms of gender. This simply means that male and female differ in their approach and perception of love. Hendrick and Hendrick (2011) further stated that men tend to perceive love more in terms of the romantic, intense Eros love, or the game-playing love of Ludus while women often have a more logical outlook in the practical pragma love.

Love, among adolescents of both sexes seems to put them into such depth of caring that is rather compelling, and deeper than what they had experienced before puberty. The experience may become so consuming that each is always on the other’s mind. They may feel part of each other even when they are not together. The irony is that some of these adolescents that declare that they are in love do not seem to comprehend much about love, apparently because of their immaturity. Although the situation is not just peculiar to the adolescents alone, adults too tend to struggle with the issues of love and tend to become confused the same way adolescents do. However, the focus of this study is on adolescents, especially those at
skills and the evaluation of facts and information relative to the research being conducted. From analytical research, a person finds out critical details to add new ideas to the material being produced. By this analytical study, the present researcher, who is a concerned mother and a teacher, examined in a rather comprehensive way the awareness of students on love, that is; the extent to which they are cognizant of different types of love styles in existence and what they entail.

2. Objective

The main objective of this study is to analyse the styles of love among adolescents of secondary schools in Anambra state, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to determine:
1. Adolescents’ awareness of the styles of love
2. Male and female adolescents’ awareness of love styles.
3. Adolescents’ awareness of love styles based on their age.

3. Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide this study and were tested at 0.05 level of significance.
1. There is no significant difference between male and female adolescents’ scores on their awareness of love.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean awareness scores of adolescents on the styles of love based on their ages.

4. Method

A survey research design was used in conducting the study. The design enabled the researcher to collect and analyse the characteristics of a whole population or situation by studying a representative sample. The study was carried out in Anambra State of Nigeria. The study population comprised 32,217 adolescents in coeducational secondary schools, in the six education zones in Anambra State.

The sample size for this study comprised 1,015 students, selected through a Multi stage sampling Method. Different sampling techniques were applied at different sampling stages. Participants in this study were students randomly selected from 18 secondary schools in urban and rural areas of Anambra State. For students, the median age for male (range 13–20 years). Participating schools were those that served people in both low and high income stratum of the Nigerian society. The intention was to include non-resident schools that captured love styles of students from different physical locations socio-economic backgrounds and gender. The rationale for choosing schools where students were non-residents was the likelihood of a high frequency of contact and interaction between students in such day-schools.

The Questionnaire was used because factual information was desired on students’ awareness (perception) of love styles. The instrument for this study titled “awareness of love scale” was validated by measurement experts. The experts were requested to vet the items of the questionnaire items in terms of its logical arrangement, clarity of expression, and suitability of the items to the content of the work.

Internal consistency reliability coefficient of 0.87 was obtained after a trial testing. Direct approach was used in the administration of the questionnaire on the respondents with the help of research assistants who were briefed on the research process. The data collected were used to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses. Research question was answered using range of summated scores. Hypothesis one was tested using z-test, while hypothesis two was tested with ANOVA.

5. Ethical Considerations

Love style is a sensitive issue in Nigeria as the mention of love is easily linked to sexual desire. So, approaching such sensitive issue involves careful consideration of how to address people, for instance, how to ensure that an individual’s integrity is protected and how to show respect for existing social values and existing subcultural values. The researcher thus sought consent from all of the participants and their parents (some of them are below 18 years which is the legal age of maturity) before they were allowed to participate in the study. They were briefed about the research topic and informed that they were not obliged in any way to respond to any item of the questionnaire that they felt uncomfortable with. They were also informed that they were free to withdraw from participating at any time of the research. Participants were also assured of the confidentiality of the research and that the findings would be used for academic purposes only and their names were not required in the study.

6. Results

From the data analysed, the results were as follows:

| Styles of love | Range of scores | N  | %   | Remark       |
|---------------|----------------|----|-----|--------------|
| EROS         | 3-7.47         | 108| 9.50| Not Aware    |
|              | 7.50-12        | 881| 81.60| Aware       |
| AGAPE        | 3-7.47         | 160| 16.20| Not Aware    |
|              | 7.50-12        | 827| 80.50| Aware       |
| MANIA        | 3-7.47         | 330| 33.40| Not Aware    |
|              | 7.50-12        | 657| 66.60| Aware       |
| PRAGMA       | 3-7.47         | 182| 18.40| Not Aware    |
|              | 7.50-12        | 805| 81.60| Aware       |
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Table 1 shows that 881 (91.50%) of the adolescents are aware of Eros type of love while 827 (83.80%) of them are aware of Agape type of love. Again, as 657 (66.60%) of the adolescents are aware of Mania type of love, 805 (81.60%) of them are aware of Pragma type of love only. 496 (50.30%) of the adolescents are aware of Storge type of love. Finally, only 484 (49.00%) of them are aware of Ludus type of love, 503 (51.00%) of them are not aware of Ludus type of love.

Null Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between male and female adolescents’ scores on their awareness of love.

Table 2 shows that at 0.05 level of significance and 985 df, the calculated $z$ for male and female adolescents awareness scores on Agape, Mania, Ludus and Storge styles of love are greater than the critical $z$ of 1.96 while they are less than the critical $z$ for Eros and Pragma styles of love. Then, there is a significant difference in the mean scores of male and female adolescents in their awareness on Agape, Mania, Ludus and Storge styles of love but they do not differ significantly in their awareness on Eros and Pragma styles of love.

Null Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean awareness scores of adolescents on the styles of love based on their ages.

### Table 2. z-test on the mean perception (awareness) scores of male and female adolescents on the styles of love

| Source of variation | N  | $\bar{x}$ | sd   | df | Cal.Z | Crit.Z | P \(\geq 0.05\) |
|---------------------|----|---------|-----|----|-------|--------|----------------|
| EROS                |    |         |     |    |       |        |                |
| MALE                | 435| 10.03   | 1.74| 985| 0.3   | 1.96   | NS             |
| FEMALE              | 552| 9.99    | 1.75|    |       |        |                |
| AGAPE               |    |         |     |    |       |        |                |
| MALE                | 435| 9.44    | 1.73| 985| 5.2   | 1.96   | S              |
| FEMALE              | 552| 8.84    | 1.9 |    |       |        |                |
| MANIA               |    |         |     |    |       |        |                |
| MALE                | 435| 8.39    | 1.9 | 985| 3.68  | 1.96   | S              |
| FEMALE              | 552| 7.84    | 2.6 |    |       |        |                |
| PRAGMA              |    |         |     |    |       |        |                |
| MALE                | 435| 9.47    | 1.82| 985| 1.73  | 1.96   | NS             |
| FEMALE              | 552| 9.24    | 2.2 |    |       |        |                |
| LUDUS               |    |         |     |    |       |        |                |
| MALE                | 435| 8.25    | 2.05| 985| 8.79  | 1.96   | S              |
| FEMALE              | 552| 7.05    | 2.21|    |       |        |                |
| STORGE              |    |         |     |    |       |        |                |
| MALE                | 435| 8.64    | 2.22| 985| 14.23 | 1.96   | S              |
| FEMALE              | 552| 6.53    | 2.38|    |       |        |                |

### Table 3. ANOVA on the mean awareness scores of adolescents on the styles of love based on their ages

| Source of Variation | SS          | Df | MS          | Cal.F | Crit.F | P \(\geq 0.05\) |
|---------------------|-------------|----|-------------|-------|--------|----------------|
| EROS                | Between Groups | 78,335 | 2 | 39,167 | 13.23 | 3.00 | S |
|                     | Within groups Total | 2912.494 | 984 | 2.960 |       |      |    |
|                     | Total | 2990.829 | 986 |       |      |      |    |
| AGAPE               | Between Groups | 289,649 | 2 | 144,825 | 46.15 | 3.00 | S |
|                     | Within groups Total | 3087.810 | 984 | 3.138 |       |      |    |
|                     | Total | 3377.459 | 986 |       |      |      |    |
| MANIA               | Between Groups | 38,155 | 2 | 19,077 | 5.433 | 3.00 | S |
|                     | Within groups Total | 5346.198 | 984 | 5.433 |       |      |    |
|                     | Total | 5384.353 | 986 |       |      |      |    |
| PRAGMA              | Between Groups | 272,147 | 2 | 136,074 | 34.83 | 3.00 | S |
|                     | Within groups Total | 3844.730 | 984 | 3.907 |       |      |    |
|                     | Total | 4116.877 | 986 |       |      |      |    |
| LUDUS               | Between Groups | 115,614 | 2 | 57,807 | 11.98 | 3.00 | S |
|                     | Within groups Total | 4747.361 | 984 | 4.825 |       |      |    |
|                     | Total | 4862.975 | 986 |       |      |      |    |
| STORGE              | Between Groups | 10,587 | 2 | 5,293  | 0.824 | 3.00 | NS |
|                     | Within groups Total | 6320.661 | 984 | 6.423 |       |      |    |
|                     | Total | 6331.248 | 986 |       |      |      |    |
Table 3 reveals that at 0.05 level of significance 2df numerator and 984df denominator, the calculated Fs are greater than the critical F3.00 for Eros, Agape, Mania, Pragma and Ludus styles of love. Again, the table further showed that the calculated F 0.82 is less than the critical F3.00 on the Storge type of love. Then there is significant difference in the mean awareness scores of the adolescents on Eros, Agape, Mania, and Pragma and Ludus styles of love. But they do not differ significantly in their awareness of Storge type of love due to their ages.

7. Discussion

Findings from this study revealed that majority of adolescents are aware of the styles of love. Findings revealed that a high percentage of adolescents as arranged in descending order are aware of Eros, Agape, Mania and Pragma style of love, while only few are aware of Storge style of love. However, compared with Eros, agape and mania, not many of these adolescents are aware of Ludus style of love. This finding is in agreement with previous related studies such as Kokab and Asir Ajmal (2012) which investigated perception of love in young adults. The above study discussed awareness of love and its associated factors in young adults which led to emergence of a three staged theory of love describing how romantic love develops over time. Similarly, the study also agrees with the findings of Perez and Ferer (2009) identifying Eros (Romantic love), Agape (Altruistic love), Pragma (Practical love) and Storge (friendship love) as the love styles that exist among the students.

Moreover, findings from the study revealed that there is a significant difference in the mean scores of male and female adolescents in their awareness on Agape, Mania, Ludus and Storge styles of love, but they do not differ significantly in their awareness on Eros and Pragma styles of love. This finding from the study agrees with the findings of Giebel and Elbert (2014) and Moore, (2012). Although Giebel and Elbert reported that women in relationships scores higher on the Eros and Agape love styles, Moore (2012) stated that men scored higher on Eros and manic love styles. The finding from this study is also in line with Marks and Song (2009) studies which suggested that men and women experienced love in numerous and different ways. Also, Neto (2014) reported that there were statistically significant gender differences for men and women, although noting both men and women did differ more on compassionate love. This is also consistent with research showing that women express more empathy and emotional support for others, a construct which Sprecher and Fehr (2005) found related to compassionate love, than men. However, on the finding that they do not differ significantly in their awareness of Eros and Pragma styles of love may not be unconnected with the fact that both male and female adolescents undergo the developmental process with their hormones pushing them more towards the Eros love style, and perhaps the nature of their upbringing in terms of Pragma.

Furthermore, finding from the study revealed that there is significant difference in the Mean awareness scores of the adolescents on Eros, Agape, Mania, and Pragma and Ludus styles of love; but they do not differ significantly in their awareness of Storge type of love due to their ages. Although the study did not purely address the differences in the awareness of love style based on age, however, the study discussed awareness of love and its associated factors in young adults which led to emergence of a three staged theory of love describing how romantic love develops over time. The essence notably is that as adolescents develop in age, so is likely the more awareness they will have on different loved styles and its meaning. Similarly, Perez and Ferer (2009) noted that individual’s conception of love styles differs with age.

8. Conclusions

This study reveals that majority of the adolescents are aware of the different styles of love. In all, the study identified six styles of love that, to one degree or another, encompass an individual’s awareness of love and relationships. The study shows that an individual’s relative standing on these dimensions may vary with age.

9. Implications of the Study

This study has implications for education, guidance and counselling practices and school sex education. They include:

Since majority of adolescents in secondary school showed awareness of different love styles, this therefore serves as a guide on the best way to package school guidance and counselling services and programmes for educating the students on how to make the best of relationship choice and the dangers of making the wrong choice of love in such early stage of development.

Findings from this study will lead to improvement of schooling and for improving practice in the fields of school-based sexuality education, character education, and social and emotional learning. The outcome of this study may therefore form a comprehensive sex education manual for schools, colleges and homes to properly guide adolescents and adults alike in their love relationships with the opposite sex.

10. Recommendations

Based on the findings from this study, the following recommendations were made:
1. School guidance and counselling services and programmes for educating the students should focus on how to make the best of relationship choice based on the styles of love. The dangers of making the wrong choice of love in such early stage of development should also be made known to them.

2. School guidance counsellors should organise such programmes like orientation exercise, seminars and workshops that will be packaged in a way that it will include information on dangers of early erotic love engagement which may ultimately lead to spontaneous intimate sexual engagements.

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