

Socio-Demographic Factors and Media Exposure as Correlates of Adolescents' Death Anxiety in Aroro Community Grammar School, Akinyele Local Government, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.

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Abstract- Death anxiety is a societal phenomenon that has been with us from ages past, while it could be rational for the aged to experience increased death anxiety, intensive fear about death among adolescents is worrisome but has been traced to heightened insecurity, pandemic and other disasters experienced in the society. Many studies on death anxiety had been done outside Nigeria considering age, gender, religious and media factors which need to be replicated in Nigeria. This study therefore investigated Socio-demographic factors (Age, family, religious) and media as correlates of death anxiety among adolescents in Aroro Community Grammar School, Ibadan. Terror management theory was a guide to this study. Simple random sampling was used to select 120 participants comprising 52(43.3%)males and 68(56.7) females. Structured questionnaire of three sections containing demographic variables (age, family type and religious affiliation), media factor scale ($r = 0.81$) and Death Anxiety scale ($r = 0.87$) were used for data collection. Descriptive statistics of frequency counts, percentage, mean, standard deviation, multiple regression at 0.05 of significant level were used for data analysis. Findings revealed that frequency of Adolescents' media utilization and death anxiety were high. Age, family, religious and media factors jointly contributed to death anxiety (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.189$; $F_{4, 95} = 6.786$) and accounted for 22.2% contribution. Age ($\beta = .146$, $P, >.05$, Religious affiliation ($\beta = .150$, $P. > .05$ and Family type ($\beta = -.102$, $P. > .05$) did not contribute to death anxiety while media factor ($\beta = .411$, $P.< 05$) only contributed to death anxiety of adolescents. It is recommended that counsellors should help to develop interventions that will help to reduce adolescents' high death anxiety and media experts should present issues in a way that will not horrify adolescents.

Index Terms- Media factors, Death anxiety, Adolescents, Aroro Community Grammar School, Ibadan.

I. INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a critical stage of development in which a child is socializing into societal values and culture. Many adolescents experience shock as a result of unpalatable occurrences like death of loved ones or parents, family members

pandemic such as Ebola and Voronavirus (SARS COVID-19). Death is one of the principles of development indicating that all living things will surely die. Death is a biological and psychological phenomenon that adolescents think about as it occurs. Death anxiety is the thinking about dreadfulness of death and anxiousness about death (Philip, 1992). Death anxiety is seen as the fear or unpalatable belief about death or dying (Fortner & Neimeyer, 1999) and a common concept in all societies. Everybody experiences death anxiety when insecurity, accidents or natural disasters occurred. In another dimension, death anxiety is an emotional reaction to occurrence or incidence of death and belief that one is not safe from dying. It is a problematic reaction after loss of loved one (Association for Death Education and Counselling, 2015). Sometimes death anxiety could be intense and accompanied with apprehension as result of traditional thinking of what may happen to someone after death or during the processes of death (M'Esmale, 2012). Adolescents is not excepted from thought of death because of the critical stage of developing thought and learning to comprehend issues. In a critical view, death anxiety is a common phenomenon and everybody is believed to have little or small fear about death but it is abnormal when high death anxiety occurs in an individual because it could lead to maladjustment, feeling of emptiness and frustration about life (Sargent – Cox, Anstey and Luszcz, 2014). It is related to physical, mental deterioration, unhappiness, loneliness, anxiety, loss of self and high level of anger (Firestone & Catlett 2016) and a potential risk for depression Syndrome (Thorson and Powell, 2000).

Age is a factor contributing to death anxiety. Research on death anxiety has shown that 47% of elder in nursing homes demonstrated mild death anxiety, 52% had moderate death anxiety (Swathi, 2014). In a study by Depaola, Griffin, Young and Neimeyer, (2003) it was reported that older people, less religious and women showed higher death anxiety and aging process within socio-cultural environment and perception of age are predictors of death anxiety (De Freitas; Queiroz and de, souze, 2010; Wurm and Benyamini, 2014; Muhammadpour, Sadegh-ghadana, Shareinia, Jahani and Amiri, 2014).On effect of family factor on death anxiety, studies had shown that parental loss is strongly associated with death anxiety which is regarded as psychopathology (Tiaman, et al 2005 and Lizardi, et al, 2009) and

maternal loss is also a strong indices offspring psychiatric disorder in which death anxiety is associated than paternal loss (Kunugi et al 1995). Parental death and parental separation were associated with phobia and psychopathology (Otawa, York, Gardner, Kendler and Hettena, 2014) while separation from same-sex parent at childhood stage contributed to severe depression syndrome. (Takeuchi, et al 2002).

Religious factors such as religious belief, teaching or practices (Wu, Schimmele & Chappell, 2012; Krause, 2003) and religious doubt which is struggle within individual faith, religious teaching and belief are associated with death anxiety (Henrie and Patrick, 2014; In gram and Leitner, 1989; Putney & Middleton, 1961). Religious factor has also been found to be associated with understanding of death acceptance or attitude (Menyweather – Woods, 2008) and fear of death is associated with religious individual who thinks more about judgement day (Campbelim, 2003) and this also occurred among college students (Aflakseir, 2014). On the other hand, in a study by Lieser and Abdel – Khalek, (2008), religious belief had not been established on death anxiety and strong religious belief is associated with lower death anxiety (Ali Akbar dehkordi, Oraki, Barghi, and Kimiakarad, 2011) and intrinsic religious believers exhibited lower level of death anxiety compared to extrinsic religious believers (Mansumjad & Kajbaf, 2012).

Media factors such as time spent, activities and investment and addiction on media and other related factors had been investigated on anxiety, psychological distress, depression among others (Keles, Alcræ and Grealish, 2020). It was submitted that time spent activity, investment and addiction on media correlated with anxiety depression and psychological distress (Keles, et al, 2020). Social media which can be seen as internet based network that allows users to collaborate or interact with other categories of people verbally or visually (Carr and Hayes, 2015). According to Paw Research Centre (2015) at least 92% of teenagers (adolescents) are actively utilizing social media and Lenhart Smith, Anderson, Duggan and Perrin (2015) also presented in their study that 13-17 age group are heavy users of social media. It could then be said that information on media on insecurity, fire disaster, earthquakes, armed robbery attacks, terrorism among others could activate death anxiety in adolescents. King and Hayslip, (2001) submitted that greater death anxiety was related to portray and reference to death on media while Primack and Escobar – Viera (2017) showed that social media accounts correlated with level of anxiety, and inverse correlation existed between online interaction on social media and anxiety and depression (Seabrook, Kern and Rickard, 2016).

Terror Management Theory is a guide towards this study. Backer (1973) and Circirelli, (2002) presented that all human beings are internally driven toward surviving and continuing existence but the belief that individual has towards death could make them to consciously experience terror of death and annihilation which is the extinction of mind, spirit and soul and destruction of body.

It is important to mention that many studies had been done on death anxiety using variables like media (Kings and Hayslip, 2001), parental factors (Otawa, York, Gardner, Kendler and Hettema, 2014), Age (Wu, Schimmele and Chapped, 2012) and Religious Factors (Henrie & Patrick, 2014). All these studies were done outside Nigeria and there are paucity of data on work done

in Nigeria on death anxiety among adolescents. Therefore, this study investigated age, family, religious and media factors as correlates of death anxiety among adolescents in Aroro Community Secondary School, Aroro-Kole, Ibadan.

II. METHODS

Research Design

Descriptive research design was adopted for this study. Data were randomly collected among adolescents in secondary school using structured questionnaire. There is no manipulation of existing variables used in the study.

Population and Sample

The population of adolescents in Aroro Community Grammar School comprises 300 students and simple random sampling was adopted to select 120 in-school adolescents. This is supported by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) who recommended a sample size between 5% and 10% for a population that is in thousand and sample size of 384 out of 20,000.

Research Instrument

A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The questionnaire was divided into sections.

Section A: Socio-Demographic factors.

The demographic factors included age, school, family type, class and religious affiliation.

Section B: Media factor scale (MFS). The media factor scale was 10 item self-constructed scale developed by the researchers to elicit information from the adolescents on media factors promoting death anxiety in them. Some of the items are whenever, I see statistics of people who died on TV, I feel depressed; I don't like watching death film, it is horror among others. It was a five-Likert format scale ranging from strongly disagreed (1) to strongly agreed (5), The reliability coefficient of the scale ($r = 0.81$), after two weeks of test-r test.

Section C: Death Anxiety Scale (DAS). Death Anxiety Scale was constructed by the researchers to elicit information on death anxiety of the adolescents. It was 15 item scale. Some of the items are: The subject of life after death troubles me greatly; I am afraid when close friend died among others. It is a Five-Likert format scale ranging from strongly disagreed (1) to strongly agreed (5). The reliability coefficient after two weeks of test – re-test is ($r = 0.87$).

Procedure for Data Collection

The researcher sought for the permission to conduct the study from the school authority and was granted. All necessary ethical procedures were observed in the conduct of the research. Two assistant researchers were used in the course of collecting data from the adolescents. Out of 120 questionnaire distributed only 118 were collected back and 100 were found useful for analysis.

Method of Data Analysis

Descriptive method of frequency count, percentage, mean and standard deviation were used to analyze research questions one and two while multiple regression analysis was used for research questions three and four.

Results

Ogunwuyi (Dr.): Interpretation of results of data analysis

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of adolescents in Aroro Community Grammar School, Ibadan

Demographic	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Age	11-15 years	43	43.0
	16-20 years	50	50.0
	21-25 years	7	5.0
School type	Public	100	100.0
Family type	Polygamous	53	53.0
	Monogamous	47	47.0

Religion affiliation	Muslim	46	46.0
	Christian	54	54.0
Total		100	100.0

Table 1: shows that 43.0% of the respondents were within 11-15 years old, 50.0% were within 16-20 years old, 70% were within 21-25 years old. 100% were attended public schools 53.0% were from polygamous families and 47.0% were from monogamous families. 46.0% were Muslims and 54.0% were Christian.

Research question

Research question one: What is the level of media factor of adolescents in Aroro Community Grammar Secondary School, Ibadan?

Table 2: Media factor of adolescents in Aroro Community Grammar Secondary School, Ibadan

S/N	Items	1	2	3	4	5	x	S.D
1	Whenever I see the statistics of people who died of terrorism attack or disease on TV, I feel depressed	26 26.0%	11 11.0%	7 7%	31 31.0%	25 25.0%	3.18	1.57
2	I don't like watching deaths film, it is horror	17 17.0%	21 21.0%	12 12.0%	30 30.0%	20 20.0%	3.15	1.41
3	Displaying obituary on television screen troubles my heart	16 16.0%	22 22.0%	16 16.0%	32 32.0%	14 14.0%	3.06	1.32
4	Many of the media are full of news of death of people	16 16.0%	27 27.0%	14 14.0%	21 21.0%	22 22.0%	3.06	1.42
5	Pictures showing dead people may not make me sleep for days	20 20.0%	31 31.0%	5 5.0%	21 21.0%	23 23.0%	2.96	1.50
6	Death films are worrisome	22 22.0%	20 20.0%	13 13.0%	31 31.0%	14 14.0%	2.95	1.40
7	Whenever I recall the death film had watched I feel bad	24 24.0%	22 22.0%	15 15.0%	17 17.0%	22 22.0%	2.91	1.50
8	Newspapers/magazines present death issue in a horrible manner	29 29.0%	26 26.0%	6 6.0%	21 21.0%	18 18.0%	2.73	1.52
9	Obituary of young people on social media gives me impression that I may soon die	34 34.0%	20 20.0%	10 10.0%	20 20.0%	16 16.0%	2.64	1.51
10	Whenever I watch death film on television in the night I feel I will die before the next day	34 34.0%	20 20.0%	14 14.0%	18 18.0%	14 14.0%	2.58	1.46
	Weighted mean = 2.92							

Key: 1= Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly disagree

Table 2, shows media factor of adolescents in Aroro Community Grammar school, Ibadan. It shows that “Whenever I see the statistics of people who died of terrorist attack or disease on TV, I feel depressed” (x=3.18) ranked highest by the mean score rating and was followed by “I don't like watching deaths film, it is horror” (x = 3.15), “Displaying obituary on television screen troubles my heart” (x=3.06). “Many of the media are full of news

of death of people” (x=3.06), “Pictures showing dead people may not make me sleep for days” (x = 2.96), “Death films are worrisome” (x=2.95), “Whenever I recall the death film I had watched I feel bad” (x = 2.91), “Newspapers/magazines present death issue in a horrible manner” (x = 2.73), “Obituary of young people gives me impression that I may soon die” (x = 2.64) and

lastly “whenever I watch death film on television in the night I feel I will die before the next day” ($x = 2.58$) respectively.

Inference drawn from the above result is that majority of the adolescents in the study indicated that whenever they see the statistics of people who died of illness or disease on TV, they feel depressed, they don’t like watching deaths film, it is horror, displaying obituary on television screen troubles their heart, many of the media are full of news of death of people, pictures showing dead people may not make them sleep for days and death films are worrisome.

Table 3: Test of norm showing the level of media factor of adolescents in Aroro Community Grammar School, Ibadan

Interval	Mean index	Level of media factor	Frequency	Percentage
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1-25		Low	30	30.0
26-50	29.2200	High	70	30.0

Table 3; shows the level of media factor of adolescents in Aroro Community Grammar Secondary School, Ibadan, 30.0 (n=30) of the adolescents had low level of media factor and 70.0 (n=70) had high level of media factor. Hence, it could be deduced generally from the test of norm above that the level of media factor of adolescents in Aroro Community Grammar Secondary School, Ibadan is high.

Research question two: What is the level of death anxiety of adolescents in Aroro Community Grammar Secondary School, Ibadan?

Table 4 Death anxiety of adolescents in Aroro Community Grammar School, Ibadan.

S/N	Items	1	2	3	4	5	X	SD	
1	I am not afraid of my environment because of insecurity	17 17.0%	11 11.0%	12 12.0%	31 31.0%	29 29.0%	3.44	1.4	
2	I am afraid when I hear people talking about kidnapping	11 11.0%	28 28.0%	13 13.0%	26 26.0%	22	3.20	1.36	
3	Sighting a dead body makes me afraid	12	24	14	34	16	3.12	1.31	
4	I am really scared of armed robbery attack	14	22	18	30	16	3.12	1.3	
5	I am not nervous when people talk about death	17	20	15	33	15	3.09	1.35	
6	Issue of life after death troubles my mind	16	25	13	28	18	3.07	1.38	
7	I think frequently about how people died untimely	14 14.0%	29 29.0%	11 11.0%	31 31.0%	15 15.0%	3.04	1.33	
8	I fear dying unpeacefully	19 19.0%	26 26.0%	14 14.0%	20 20.0%	21 21.0%	2.98	1.44	
9	I think of death when people are buried	18 18.0%	30 30.0%	15 15.0%	16 16.0%	21 21.0%	2.92	1.43	
10	Ritual killers and bokoharam attacks make me afraid of death	23 23.0%	23 23.0%	14 14.0%	23 23.0%	17 17.0%	2.88	1.44	
11	I am afraid of death	31 31.0%	22 22.0%	1 1.0%	22 22.0%	24 24.0%	2.86	1.63	
12	I am not afraid to die	33 33.0%	21 21.0%	9 9.0%	22 22.0%	15 15.0%	2.65	1.50	
13	I dread to dying about motor accident	33 33.0%	23 23.0%	12 12.0%	21 21.0%	11 11.0%	2.54	1.42	
14	The thought of death never bothers my mind	37 37.0%	19 19.0%	12 12.0%	23 23.0%	9 9.0%	2.48	1.42	
15	I am not afraid of any disease	35 35.0%	27 27.0%	10 10.0%	15 15.0%	13 13.0%	2.44	1.43	
Weighted mean = 2.96									

Key: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4= Agree 5 = Strongly disagree

Table 4 shows death anxiety of adolescents in Aroro Community Grammar School, Ibadan. It shows that “I am afraid of my environment because of insecurity (x = 3.44) ranked highest by the mean score rating and was followed by “I am afraid when I hear people talking about insecurity (x=3.20), Sighting a dead body makes me afraid (x=3.18). “I am really scared of armed robbery attack (x = 3.12). “I am not nervous when people talk about death (x = 3.09), issue of life after death troubles my heart (x=3.07). “I think frequently about how people died untimely (x=3.04). “I fear dying unpeacefully (x = 2.98), “I think of death when people are buried (x = 2.92). “Ritual killers and Bokoharam make me afraid of death (x =2.88). “I am afraid of death (x = 2.86). “I am dying” (x = 2.65). “I dried to think about motor accident (x = 2.54). “The thought of death never bother my mind (x = 2.48) and lastly “I am not afraid of any disease” (x = 2.44) respectively.

Inference drawn from the above result is that majority of the adolescents in the study indicated that they feel that they are afraid of insecure environment, afraid when people talk about kidnapping, the sight of a dead body make them afraid, they are really scared of armed robbery attack, it doesn't make them nervous when people talk about death, the issue of life after death troubles their minds, they frequently think about how people died untimely and they fear dying unpeaceful death.

Table 5: Test of Norm showing the level of death anxiety of adolescents in Aroro Community Grammar School, Ibadan

Interval	Mean index	Level of death anxiety	Frequency	Percentage
1-37		Low	22	22.0
38-75	43.8900	High	78	78.0

Table..... shows the level of death adolescents in Aroro Community Grammar Secondary School, Ibadan. 22.0% of the adolescents had low level of death anxiety and 78.0% had high level of death anxiety. Hence, it could be deduced generally from the test of norm above that the level of death anxiety of adolescents in Aroro Community Secondary School, Ibadan is high.

Table 7: Summary of regression analysis showing the relative contribution of age, media factor, religion affiliation and family type on death anxiety of adolescents in Aroro Community Grammar School, Ibadan.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient Beta Contribution	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
(Constant)	35.976	6.465		5.565	.000
Age	-.482	.314	-.146	-1.536	.128
Media factor	.486	.108	.411	4.500	.000
Religion affiliation	2.906	1.816	.150	1.601	.113
Family type	-1.982	1.787	-.102	-1.109	.270

Table 7; reveals the relative contribution of age, media factor, religion affiliation and family type on death anxiety of adolescents in Aroro Community Grammar Secondary School, Ibadan, expressed as beta weights, viz age ($\beta = .411, P, < .05$) religion affiliation ($\beta = .150, P, > .05$) and family type ($\beta = -.102, P, > .05$). Hence, it could be deduced that media factor was

Research question three: What is the joint contribution of age, media factor, religion affiliation and family type on death anxiety of adolescents in Aroro Community Grammar Secondary School, Ibadan?

Table 6: Summary of Regression analysis showing the joint contribution of age, media factor, religion affiliation and family type on death anxiety of adolescents in Aroro Community Grammar School, Ibadan.

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.471	.222	.189	8.7613

ANOVA						
Model	Sum of Squares	D.F.	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Remarks
Regression	2083.511	4	520.878	6.786	.000	Significant
Residual	7292.279	95	76.761			
Total	9375.790	99				

Table 6 shows the joint contribution of age, media factor, religion affiliation and family type on death anxiety of adolescents in Aroro Community Grammar Secondary School, Ibadan. The table also shows a coefficient of multiple correlation of R = .471, and a multiple R² of .222. This means that 22.2% of the variance was accounted for by four predictor variables when taken together. The significance of the joint impact was tested at = 0.05. The table also shows that the analysis of variance for the regression yielded F – ratio of 6.786 (significant at 0.05 level). This implies that the joint contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable was significant and that other variables not included in this model may have accounted for the remaining variance.

significant i.e. could independently and significantly predict death anxiety in the study.

III. DISCUSSION

It was revealed in the study that media factors aiding death anxiety was high. The rate at which adolescents frequently utilize media is very high (Paw Research Centre, 2015) and adolescents are active users of social media to interact, collaborate and send or receive information (Lenhart et al, 2015). The high media utilization of adolescents occurred as result of the fact that adolescent nowadays wish to seek information on security, educational, religious, social and political issues that affect their lives. As a result of this, they constantly or frequently utilize media resources to elicit information on issues affecting their lives. In the real sense, viewing the result of the study, death anxiety of adolescents was high. The rate at which adolescents in Aroro Community Grammar School fear death and their beliefs toward death was high. Sargent-Cox et al, (2014; Circirelli; 2002). Death anxiety of students could be caused by the feeling of sighting a dead body, terrorism attacks, armed robbery attacks, ritual killings, Fulani herdsmen attacks diseases such as Ebola, Coronavirus and Lassa fever being experienced in many societies.

Then, age, family, religious and media factors contributed to death anxiety of adolescents. Age, family, religious and media factors jointly contributed to death anxiety. The amount of contribution was significant because the adolescents are more exposed to risky behaviour that could cause untimely death, then, the family structure in term of polygamous which are full of unhealthy rivalry among competing wives and loss of any of the parents could initiate thought of death, especially when the other parent is depressed. Really, religious teaching, practices or beliefs being presented constantly on death could promote fear of death in adolescents who are just experiencing developmental and socialization challenges. This finding is a land mark in the study of death anxiety. However, only media factors relatively contributed to death anxiety of adolescents, age, family and religious factors did not contribute to death anxiety of students. By implication, media factor contributed to death anxiety because the rate or pattern of media resources utilization of adolescents is high.

This is similar to studies of (Keles et al, 2020, Kings and Hayslip, 2001; Primack & Escobar – Viera, 2017; Seabrook et al, 2016) that media factors was related to death anxiety of people. Based on the facts, that adolescent age, family and religious beliefs did not contribute to death anxiety; the study contradicted previous studies that older age showed death anxiety (Depaola et al, 2003; De Freitas, et al, 2010, Wurmet et al 2014 and Muhammed pour et al 2016) and of Otawa et al, 2014, Kunugi et al, 1995; Tiaman et al 2005 and Luzardi et al, 2009), and family factors such as parental loss or death contributed to death, anxiety,. Really, the study also contradicted wu, et al, 2012; Henrie et al, 2014, Aflakseir, 2014) that religious beliefs, practice and teaching contributed to death anxiety among others.

IV. CONCLUSION

The study investigated adolescents' age, family, religious and media factors on death anxiety in Aroro Community Grammar School, Ibadan. The findings showed high level of media and death anxiety. Age, family, religious and media factor jointly contributed to death anxiety of adolescents while only media factor individually contributed to death anxiety of adolescents.

The study is unique and a source of reference for other future studies. The following are recommended based on the findings of the study.

- i. School counsellors should help adolescents to overcome high level of death anxiety as revealed in this study
- ii. The adolescents are expected to visit counsellors on the right way to utilize media to motivate them for healthy thought and stakeholders in education is required to see this finding as important to adolescent psychological well-being because high feeling of death is dangerous.
- iii. Media practitioners are charged to systematically provide information on death issue in a way that will not promote death anxiety of adolescents.
- iv. Researchers on death anxiety or related issues should endeavour to see the findings of this study to further their studies on adolescent's death anxiety.

Note:

- I. **Preferred referencing:** Ogunwuyi, B.O & Atibioke, O.P (2020) Social-Demographic Factors, and Media Exposure as Correlates of Adolescents' Death Anxiety in Aroro Community Grammar School, Akinyele Local Government, Ibadan.
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