

An Assessment Of Adolescents Developmental Challenges And Coping Strategies: The Case Of High Schools In Kellem Wollega Zone, Oromia, Ethiopia

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Abstract

The study was aimed to assess Adolescents Developmental Challenges and Coping strategies. To conduct the study descriptive survey research design was employed with stratified and systematic sampling technique. 15 high schools from 5 woredas were included in the study that consisted of 181 male and 109 female, totally 290 adolescent students were participated. The finding of the study regarding Developmental Challenges of Adolescents shows that, majority of the respondents challenged by family marital problems (lack of complete parental care) (50.4%), frustration due to family economic hardship and social unrest (55.5%), lack of parental guidance as they engage in bad acts/bad parental role model (52.4%), and entering in to the world of confusions (56.9%), teaching learning process inefficiency, and challenged by impact of arresting and detaining. Majority of the respondents does not challenged by issues such as difficulty of sleeping, difficulty of making friends, feeling of loneliness, drinking alcohol, smoking cigarettes, harming themselves physically, feel nervousness & sad and attempts suicide while some respondents were challenged by those issues in their development. As coping strategies, Adolescents take both positive action such as think of some things that will make them feel happier and allow them to relax; let them-self calm down first and think of how to reconcile the negative emotions; eat and have fun to decrease the stress first; and negative action such as blame themselves, retreat or shut themselves away when they face stress; generalize that they have bad luck when they face stress; give up and blame God for being unfair when they face stress; put themselves anger or fretful emotions on others; and make themselves numb by drinking alcohol or drug abuse as coping strategies to overcome their challenges.

Key words: Developmental concerns, Coping strategies, Resilience level, Adolescent

Introduction

While the definition of adolescent can differ from culture to culture, it is generally accepted that the time referred to as adolescence is the period between childhood and adulthood (Seiffge-Krenke & Klessinger, 2000).

Adolescence is the transition between childhood and young adulthood during which young people experience physiological, cognitive and social changes. The age bracket for adolescence varies according to different literature; however this paper defines adolescents as between 15 and 29

years of age in Ethiopian context depending Ethiopian national policy (1994). During this transition, young people have difficulty adjusting and often struggle with unfamiliar issues. (Dumont & Provost, 1999).

According to Geldard, K., Geldard, D., & Foo, R. Y. (2006), adolescence is a time in a young person's life where they move from dependency on their parents to independence, autonomy and maturity. The young person begins to move from the family group being their major social system, to the family taking a lesser role and being part of a peer group becomes a greater attraction that will eventually lead to the young person to standing alone as an adult.

Theories and research findings indicates that Adolescence is a time when youth face a variety of new potentially stressful experiences, but also have strong desires to deal with life events independently. Adolescents avoid stressful situations, change their appraisals of stress, locate social resources, or improve their own capacity to cope adaptively Aldwin, C. M. (1994). Generally, different study findings show that there were differences among adolescents regarding their developmental challenges they face and coping strategies they use from individual to individual, place to place, culture to culture, male to female, poor to wealthiest family back ground and the likes factor.

So, the present study was conducted based two reasons: First, the fact that adolescents found in Kellem Wollega Zone will have their own developmental concerns and coping strategies which the present study may address. Second, as far as we know by the researchers, until now there is no studies conducted on Kellem Wollega Zone adolescents' developmental concerns, coping strategies and resilience level. Therefore, the present study would be an attempt to address developmental concerns, coping strategies and

resilience level of adolescents found in Kellem wollega zone high schools.

Objectives:

- **General Objectives:** The general objective of the study was to assess the developmental challenges and coping strategies of adolescents in high schools of Kellem Wollega Zone
- **Specific Objectives:**
 - To identify the challenges of adolescents to lead their life successfully.
 - To examine coping strategies that adolescents use to overcome the challenges they face.

Materials and Method

Mixed method of Research approach and Descriptive research design was adopted. The Study populations were 181 male and 109 female, totally 290 adolescent students' selected stratified sampling technique and systematic sampling technique.

Sample size determination and Sampling procedure

Regarding sampling technique, to select the sample participants of the study, the researchers used stratified sampling technique and systematic sampling technique for selecting adolescents in fifteen selected high schools from five different districts in Kellem Wollega zone.

Sample high schools and class rooms was selected through stratified sampling technique since stratified sampling technique is more appropriate for participants distributed geographically. Then, systematic sampling technique used to select adolescents from selected high schools and class rooms.

With regard to sample size determination, Yamane (1967) statistical calculation formula $n =$

$N/(1+N(e)^2)$ Where, n = Sample size N = Total population e = error (0.05) used and sample size was determined. Accordingly, from total 24,989 student participants of the study, who are from Kellem Wollega Zone, 290 adolescent students in fifteen selected high schools from five different districts were used as sample size.

Data Collection Instrument and Procedures

In order to gather relevant information for the study the researchers used questionnaire. Some of the instruments were adopted from different studies while some was developed from literature review. The questionnaire would include the likert scale type since Likert scale is the most commonly used scale to determine the opinion or attitude of a subject and close and open-ended items.

In order to make the participants feel at ease in understanding each item of the questionnaire and give their responses appropriately, the questionnaire was translated into the languages spoken at that area, Afan Oromo. To collect data

from the participants the researchers used recruited data enumerator with the researcher guide. Prior to questionnaire administration, the recruited data enumerators would made to familiarize them-selves with each item of the questionnaire and given orientations on how to record the responses of the participants to minimize social desirability effects.

The overall analysis of collected data to describe Developmental challenges and coping strategies was done using the statistical analysis software 'Statistical Package for the Social Sciences' (SPSS) Version 23.0

Results

Part I: General information

This section focuses on examining results intended to provide answer for the questions raised. The data was collected from the total of 181 male and 109 female totally 290 adolescent student. It indicated that 75.8% of sample adolescent respondents were males and only 24.2% of the samples were females.

Table 1: Respondents Socio Demographic Characteristics

No	Variable	Label	F	%	No	Variable	Label	F	%
1	Sex	Male	181	62.4	4	Religion affiliation	Orthodox	58	20
		Female	109	37.6			Protestant	176	60.7
							Muslim	34	11.7
							Catholic	8	2.8
							Other	14	4.8
		Total	290	100		Total	290	100	
2	Residence area	Rural	101	34.8	5	Educational level	Grade 9	31	10.7
		Urban	189	65.2			Grade 10	49	16.9
							Grade 11	70	24.1
							Grade 12	140	48.3
							Total	290	100
		Total	290	100		Total	290	100	

3	Age interval	15-17 years	29	10					
		18-20 years	155	53.4					
		21-23 years	49	16.9					
		24-26 years	23	7.9					
		27-29 years	34	11.7					
		Total	290	100					

Table 1 of item 1 indicated that 62.4% of sample respondents were male and 37.6% of the samples were female. Regarding to resident area of sample respondents, 65.2% of respondents were living in urban areas where as 34.8 was from rural area. Similarly the majority of 53.4% were in the age interval of 18-20 years and 16.9% were in the age interval of 21-23 years, 11.7% were in the age interval of 27-29 years, 10% were in the age interval of 15-17 years and 7.9 were in the age interval of 21-23 years respectively. The data indicated that almost all the respondents were in the age of Adolescent.

Table 1 of item 4 revealed that the largest number (60.7%) of the respondents are protestant churches religion follows and 20% of study participants are following Orthodox Church religion. Muslim religion followers are 11.7%. But insignificant numbers of respondents are following Catholic and other religion that indicated by 2.8%, and 4.8 % respectively. As it can be seen from Table 1 of Item 5 the majority percent (48.3%) of the respondents were attending grade 12th and 24.1%, 16.9% and 10.7% were attending grade 11, 10 and 9 respectively.

4.1.1. Developmental Challenges of Adolescents

Table 2: Socio-economic Related Developmental Challenges of Adolescents

Item	Variables		Labels/ Responses							Mean	SD
			SD	D	UN	A	SA	Total			
1	Family marital problems (lack of complete parental care).	F %	87 30	23 7.9	34 11.7	95 32.8	51 17.6	290 100	3.00	1.523	
2	Frustration due to family economic hardship, social unrest.	F %	58 20	35 12.1	36 12.4	93 32.1	68 23.4	290 100	3.27	1.454	
3	Lack of parental guidance as they engage in bad acts/bad parental role model.	F %	83 28.6	31 10.7	24 8.3	85 29.3	67 23.1	290 100	3.08	1.572	
4	The world of confusions.	F %	49 16.9	36 12.4	40 13.8	51 17.6	114 39.3	290 100	3.50	1.519	
5	Teaching learning process inefficiency.	F %	50 17.2	31 10.7	48 16.6	80 27.6	81 27.9	290 100	3.38	1.432	
6	Have been arrested and detained	F %	106 36.6	32 11	41 14.1	53 18.3	58 20	290 100	2.74	1.580	

Item 1 of the table 2 revealed that the majority of the respondents shows their agreement by agree

with 32.8% and strongly agree with 17.6% for that family marital problems (lack of complete

parental care), which also indicated with mean value of 3.00. This shows that the family marital problem background can affect the developments of Adolescents. On the other hand 37.9% of respondents were shows their disagreement (Strongly disagree 30% and disagree 7.9%). But 11.7% of respondents were unable to decide whether a family marital problem challenges the Adolescents development or not.

Similarly item 2 of table 2 indicated that the agreement (agree with 32.1% and strongly agree with 23.4%) of respondents that frustration due to family economic hardship and social unrest as the developmental challenges of Adolescents with mean values of 3.27. But the respondents were rated as strongly disagree by 20%, disagree by 12.1% and unable to decide by 12.4%.

Item 3 of table 2 indicates that the majority of Adolescent respondents show their agreement on lack of parental guidance as they engage in bad acts/bad parental role model challenges the developments of Adolescents by 29.3% Agree and by 23.1% strongly agree.

Adolescence stage is a very critical in life that needs great care of the teachers and adults. They enter the world of confusions and other

challenges. As indicated in Table 2 of Item 4 the majority of the respondents were shows their agreement as the world of confusions challenges by 56.9% with the mean value of 3.50. But 16.9% strongly disagree, 12.4% disagree and 13.8% of respondents were unable to decide either or not the world confuses the adolescents in their development. The result shows that they engage in smoking, alcoholism, improper dressing, they look world the way they wish and other sorts of challenges can affects their development.

Similarly, the majority of respondents were agreed that teaching learning process inefficiency can challenges the development of Adolescents with 55.8%, which also indicated by mean values of 3.38. This data indicated that if teachers are inefficient and ineffective in teaching and management their students will obviously engage in indiscipline.

Regarding to the impact of arresting and detaining adolescents on their development, the response of the respondents shows strongly disagree with 36.6%, disagree with 11%, undecided with 14.1%. But minor numbers of respondents agreed with the issues with 18.3% agree and 20% strongly agree.

Table 3: Personal Developmental Challenges of Adolescents

Item	Variables	Labels/ Responses	Labels/ Responses						Mean	SD
			F	SD	D	UN	A	SA		
1	Difficulty of sleeping	F	83	49	35	73	50	290	2.86	1.497
		%	28.6	16.9	12.1	25.2	17.2	100		
2	Difficulty of making friends	F	76	41	40	75	58	290	2.99	1.502
		%	26.2	14.1	13.8	25.9	20	100		
3	Feeling of loneliness	F	89	41	42	80	38	290	2.78	1.459
		%	30.7	14.1	13.8	25.9	20	100		
4	Drinking alcohol	F	134	23	21	57	55	290	2.57	1.646
		%	46.2	7.9	7.2	19.7	19	100		
5	Smoking cigarettes	F	151	14	12	49	64	290	2.52	1.721
		%	52.1	4.8	4.1	16.9	22.1	100		
6	Harming themselves physically	F	141	26	24	44	55	290	2.47	1.635
		%	48.6	9	8.3	15.2	19	100		

7	Feel nervousness and sad	F %	100 34.5	31 10.7	45 15.5	67 23.1	47 16.2	290 100	2.76	1.522
8	Attempts suicide	F %	139 47.9	18 6.2	9 3.1	44 15.2	80 27.6	290 100	2.68	1.773
Grand Mean									2.70	

Table 3 illustrates that the list of personal developmental challenges variable of Adolescents. Accordingly, the respondents were requested to rate the difficulty of sleeping, difficulty of making friends, feeling of loneliness, drinking alcohol, smoking cigarettes, harming themselves physically, feel nervousness and sad and attempts suicide in the development of Adolescents.

Accordingly, Item 1 revealed that 45.5% of the respondents were showed their disagreements regarding to difficulty of sleeping as the challenging problem of adolescent's development with 28.6% strongly disagree and 16.9% disagree. But 42.4% of the respondents were agreed as the challenging problem and 12.1% of respondents unable to decide whether difficulty of sleeping as the challenging problem of adolescent's development or not.

Similarly they were asked to rate the difficulty of making friends as the challenges of Adolescents development. Item 2 of Table 3 portrays that 26.2% of respondents were strongly disagree, 14.1% were disagree, 13.8% were undecided, 25.9% were agree and 20% were strongly agree that difficulty of making friends as the challenges of Adolescents. This data shows that almost half of them were showed disagreement. Friends have power to influence one another to act contrary to their good developmental approach.

Regarding to their feeling of loneliness, the respondents were rated as strongly disagree with 30.7%, disagree with 14.1% and strongly agree with 20%, agree with 25.9%. However, 13.8% of respondents were unable to determine either or

feeling of loneliness can be challenges of adolescents' development as indicated in Table 3 of Item 3.

This data shows that the majority of respondents were shows their disagreement with 44.8% which greater than those agree with the issue with 39.7%.

Item 4 of Table 3 revealed that majority of respondents (54.1%) were disagreed with that drinking alcohol affects the development of Adolescents. 38.7% of respondents were showed their agreement as that drinking alcohol affects the development of Adolescents.

In similar manner Item 5 shows that the majority of respondents were disagreed with Smoking cigarettes as challenging problem of Adolescent's development with 56.9%. Whereas 39% of respondents were agreed and only 4.1% of respondents were undecided. It is also showed by mean values of 2.52.

As it can be seen from Table 3 Item 6 the respondents were asked to rate the Adolescents harming themselves physically as challenges of their development. Based on this 48.6% of respondents were strongly disagree and 9% of them were rated as disagree. But 8.3% of respondents were rated as undecided, 15.2% were agreed and 19% were strongly disagreed. This was also indicated by 2.47 mean values.

Items 7 and 8 of Table 3 also show the disagreement by the majority of respondents with the raised issues of Feel nervousness and sad and Attempts suicide by 45.2% and 54.1%. The Items

were also indicated by 2.76 and 2.68 mean values respectively.

Generally, according to the responses of the respondents the Items 1-8 variables expected to be Personal Developmental Challenges of Adolescents listed in Table 3 shows their

disagreement by majority of percentages, which also indicated by grand mean (average mean) of 2.70.

4.1.2. Coping Strategies Adolescents use to overcome their Challenges

Table 4: Coping strategies Adolescents use to overcome their challenges

Item	Variables		Labels/ Responses				Mean	SD	
			Mostly	sometimes	Never	Total			
1	Positive action		F	96	175	19	290	1.73	0.572
	I try to do or think of some things that will make me feel happier and allow myself to relax		%	33.1	60.3	6.6	100		
2	I let my-self calm down first and think of how to reconcile the negative emotions		F	133	129	28	290	1.64	0.652
			%	45.9	44.5	9.7	100		
3	I eat and have fun to decrease the stress first		F	100	144	46	290	1.81	0.686
			%	34.5	49.7	15.9	100		
4	I do usual things such as watching TV, reading comics, listening to music, sleeping, eating or going out to temporarily forget these frustrating things		F	118	135	37	290	1.72	0.677
			%	40.7	46.6	12.8	100		
5	I discuss issues with teachers, family, seniors or friends and classmates and ask for their opinions		F	105	136	49	290	1.81	0.704
			%	36.2	46.9	16.9	100		
6	I look for religious hope or comfort for my soul		F	208	56	26	290	1.37	0.644
	Average		F	127	129	34	290		
		%	43.8	44.5	11.7	100	1.68	0.655	
7	Negative action		F	42	128	120	290	2.27	0.698
	I blame myself, retreat or shut myself away when I face stress		%	14.5	44.3	41.2	100		
8	I generalize that I have bad luck when I face stress.		F	32	82	176	290	2.50	0.687
			%	11	28.3	60.7	100		
9	I give up and blame God for being unfair when I face stress		F	100	141	49	290	1.82	0.696
			%	34.5	48.6	16.9	100		
10	I put my anger or fretful emotions on others.		F	49	143	98	290	2.17	0.693
			%	16.9	49.3	33.8	100		
11	I make myself numb by drinking alcohol or drug abuse.		F	36	93	161	290	2.43	0.704
	Average		F	52	117	121	290		
		%	17.8	40.5	41.7	100	2.24	0.695	

The analysis result regarding Coping strategies Adolescents use to overcome their challenges indicates that, adolescents take both positive and negative action as coping strategies to overcome their challenges.

Particularly, 127 (43.8%) and 129(44.5%) of adolescents mostly and sometimes respectively take positive action such as do/ think of some things that will make them feel happier and allow them to relax; let them-self calm down first and think of how to reconcile the negative emotions; eat and have fun to decrease the stress first; do usual things such as watching TV, reading comics, listening to music, sleeping, eating or going out to temporarily forget these frustrating things; discuss issues with teachers, family, seniors or friends and classmates and ask for their opinions; and look for religious hope or comfort for their soul to overcome their challenges and 34 (11.7%) of adolescents never take positive action rather than negative action at mean level of 1.68.

Not only positive action, adolescent also takes negative action to overcome their challenges 52(17.8%) of them mostly and 117(40.5%) of them sometimes while 121(41.7%) never take negative action such as blame themselves, retreat or shut themselves away when they face stress; generalize that they have bad luck when they face stress; give up and blame God for being unfair when they face stress; put themselves anger or fretful emotions on others; and make themselves numb by drinking alcohol or drug abuse to overcome challenges at mean level of 2.24.

4.2. DISCUSSION

In this chapter, an attempt was made to discuss the results found with respect to the research questions described in the first chapter in light with the existing body of literature.

The finding of the study regarding to Socio-economic Related Developmental Challenges of Adolescents shows that, majority of the respondents challenged by family marital problems (lack of complete parental care) (50.4%); frustration due to family economic hardship and social unrest (55.5%); lack of parental guidance as they engage in bad acts/bad parental role (52.4%); and entering in to the world of confusions (56.9%).

This is supported by Richard M. Lerner (1998) as he stated that “Adolescence can be a confusing time for the adolescent experiencing this phase of life, for the parents who are nurturing the adolescent during his or her progression through this period, and for other adults charged with enhancing the development of youth during this period”.

Similarly, the majority of respondents were agreed that teaching learning process inefficiency can challenges the development of Adolescents with 55.8%, which also indicated by mean values of 3.38. This data indicated that if teachers are inefficient and ineffective in teaching and management their students will obviously engage in indiscipline. Regarding to the impact of arresting and detaining adolescents on their development, the response of the respondents shows that majority (47.6%) of them does not challenged by it while 38.3% of respondents agreed with the issues as they were challenged by it. But, Jessor et al (1995) stated that “As the presence of protective factors increases, there are decreases in adolescents' involvement not only in alcohol and drug abuse but in delinquency and sexual precocity”.

Concerning Finding of the study related to Personal Developmental Challenges of Adolescents, Table 3 illustrates that the list of personal developmental challenges variable of

Adolescents. Accordingly, the respondents were requested to rate the difficulty of sleeping, difficulty of making friends, feeling of loneliness, drinking alcohol, smoking cigarettes, harming themselves physically, feel nervousness and sad and attempts suicide in the development of Adolescents. Accordingly, the study result revealed that 45.5% of the respondents were responded as they have not difficulty of sleeping as the challenging problem of adolescent's development while 42.4% of the respondents were agreed as the challenging problem and 12.1% of respondents unable to decide whether difficulty of sleeping as the challenging problem of adolescent's development or not. Similarly 26.2 % of respondents have no difficulty of making friends as the challenges of Adolescents development while 45.9% of respondents have difficulty of making friends and 13.8% were undecided response. Regarding to their feeling of loneliness, the respondents were rated as strongly disagree with 30.7%, disagree with 14.1% and strongly agree with 20%, agree with 25.9%. However, 13.8% of respondents were unable to determine either or feeling of loneliness can be challenges of adolescents' development. This data shows that the majority of respondents were shows their disagreement with 44.8% which greater than those agree with the issue with 39.7%. Majority of respondents (54.1%) were disagreed with that drinking alcohol affects the development of Adolescents. 38.7% of respondents were showed their agreement as that drinking alcohol affects the development of Adolescents. In similar manner that the majority of respondents were disagreed with Smoking cigarettes as challenging problem of Adolescent's development with 56.9% Whereas 39% of respondents were agreed and only 4.1% of respondents were undecided. It is also showed by mean values of 2.52. Regarding the respondents believes whether Adolescents harming themselves physically as challenges of their development, 57.6% of respondents were

not believe to the issue while 34.2% of respondents believe to the issues. Findings Concerning issues of Feel nervousness, sad and Attempts suicide as personal challenges of adolescents show the disagreement by the majority 99.3% of respondents.

The analysis result regarding Coping strategies Adolescents use to overcome their challenges indicates that, adolescents take both positive and negative action as coping strategies to overcome their challenges. Particularly, 127 (43.8%) 129(44.5%) of adolescents mostly and sometimes respectively take positive action such as do/ think of some things that will make them feel happier and allow them to relax; let them-self calm down first and think of how to reconcile the negative emotions; eat and have fun to decrease the stress first; do usual things such as watching TV, reading comics, listening to music, sleeping, eating or going out to temporarily forget these frustrating things; discuss issues with teachers, family, seniors or friends and classmates and ask for their opinions; and look for religious hope or comfort for their soul to overcome their challenges and 34(11.7%) of adolescents never take positive action rather than negative action at mean level of 1.68. Not only positive action, adolescent also takes negative action to overcome their challenges 52(17.8%) of them mostly and 117(40.5%) of them sometimes while 121(41.7%) never take negative action such as blame themselves, retreat or shut themselves away when they face stress; generalize that they have bad luck when they face stress; give up and blame God for being unfair when they face stress; put themselves anger or fretful emotions on others; and make themselves numb by drinking alcohol or drug abuse to overcome challenges at mean level of 2.24.

CONCLUSION

The study was aimed to assess the Developmental challenges and Coping strategies of adolescent

students in the case of selected high schools in kellem wollega zone. To conduct the study descriptive survey research design was employed with stratified sampling technique and systematic sampling technique. Based on sampling procedures, 15 high schools from 5 woredas were included in the study that consisted of a total of 290 respondents mean that the data was collected from a total of 181 male and 109 female totally 290 adolescent student participants.

The study realized that majority of the respondents indicated that Socio-economic Related Developmental Challenges of Adolescents such as family marital problems (lack of complete parental care); frustration due to family economic hardship and social unrest; and entering in to the world of confusions. The study revealed that lack of parental guidance as they engage in bad acts/bad parental role can challenge Adolescents development. In similar manner in the school teaching learning process inefficiency; and challenged by impact of arresting and detaining.

Concerning to the Personal Developmental Challenges of Adolescents, the findings of the study revealed that the majority of the respondents does not challenged by issues such as difficulty of sleeping, difficulty of making friends, feeling of loneliness, drinking alcohol, smoking cigarettes, harming themselves physically, feel nervousness and sad and attempts suicide while some respondents were challenged by those issues in their development.

The result regarding Coping strategies Adolescents use to overcome their challenges indicates that, adolescents take both positive action such as think of some things that will make them feel happier and allow them to relax; let them-self calm down first and think of how to reconcile the negative emotions; eat and have fun to decrease the stress first; do usual things such as watching TV, reading comics, listening to music,

sleeping, eating or going out to temporarily forget these frustrating things; discuss issues with teachers, family, seniors or friends and classmates and ask for their opinions; and look for religious hope or comfort for their soul to overcome their challenges and negative action such as blame themselves, retreat or shut themselves away when they face stress; generalize that they have bad luck when they face stress; give up and blame God for being unfair when they face stress; put themselves anger or fretful emotions on others; and make themselves numb by drinking alcohol or drug abuse as coping strategies to overcome their challenges.

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