Kinship Ties and the Development of Resilient Behaviour among Nso Adolescents of the Bamenda Grassfields of Cameroon

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Abstract

Aim: This study looked at the influence of kinship ties on the development of resilient behaviour among Nso adolescents of the Bamenda Grassfields of Cameroon. Adolescence is a phase of development that involves many changes and challenges in different areas. Consequently, adolescents need tools for navigating tough times and building resilience. The Nso adolescents are not exempted from the challenges especially now with the ramification of the Cameroon’s Anglophone crisis in Nso, that has created significant risks for these adolescents like post-traumatic stress and internal displacement. The ability to adapt positively after such adversities and problems is becoming quite challenging nowadays for some Nso adolescents.

Methods: This study was carried out in the Nso Fondom in the Bamenda grassfields of Cameroon. The study employed a convergent parallel design using a sample of 374 adolescents and 25 parents who were conveniently selected for the study. A questionnaire was used for collection of quantitative data from Nso adolescents while interviews were used to collect qualitative data from parents of Nso adolescents. Data obtained was analysed descriptively using frequencies, percentages, mean, standard deviations and multiple responses set. For inferential statistics, linear regression analysis was used to verify the hypothesis at the 0.05 level of significance. Qualitative data was analysed using thematic analysis.

Results: Findings showed that kinship ties significantly predicted the development of resilient behaviour, and accounted for 13.4% of its variance, \( R^2 = .134 \), \( F (1,372) = 57.527, p< 0.01 \).

Conclusion: The study concluded that Nso adolescents facing adversities could benefit from resources in their local environment such as kinship ties.

Recommendations: The study recommend that parents, counsellors and leaders of Nso cultural development associations should socialise the adolescents in to sociocultural values of kinship ties by helping them to stay close to their extended family members such as grandparents, uncles and aunts, cousins and in-laws. As the support the adolescents receive from the extended family members, can counteract the effects of risk exposure and also buffer the negative effect of mental disorders.

Keywords: Kinship ties, Nso adolescents, resilient behaviour

DOI: https://doi.org/10.58425/ijpce.v2i2.220
INTRODUCTION

In Nso, anchorage for supportive fellowship especially in childrearing and emotional security are provided by social ties and extensive kinship networks (Nsamenang, 1992). These supportive, healthy, positive and nurturing connections to kinship networks seems to be very vital tools for flourishing and cultural continuity and can also promote greater individual as well as collective resilience against adverse life experiences. The importance of kinship ties in relation to resilience is seen in the fact that kinship ties gives room for formation of strategic connections within extended families as well as providing social and economic security to its members through sharing and redistribution (Di Falco & Bulte, 2009). Equally research has shown that when one maintains ties with a larger kinship network, he/she will have more family members to count on during tough times (Werger, 2009). Furthermore, Lang (2004) claims that activation of extended kinship ties is linked to lower risk of loneliness.

Resilience which is the ability to adapt positively despite significant adversity is influenced by both culture and context of the individual (Masten & Wright, 2010; Ungar, 2011). Although there seems to be universal mechanisms of resilience, research has proven that the processes of resilience function in unique ways across cultural contexts (Cicchetti, 2010; Masten et al., 2010). The development of resilient behaviour is very important during adolescence because adolescence is an intense and demanding time of physical, socio-emotional, intellectual and personality development. Some aspects of development like physical changes and formation of identity, can be overwhelming for some adolescents and thus they need resilience to be able to bounce back and learn from the challenges and so enter adulthood with good chances of coping well. Therefore, adolescents may need tools for navigating tough times. Such tools could be local resources within the culture that could help them develop resilient behaviour.

By highlighting the indispensability of kinship ties, this study attempts to bring to limelight the development of resilient behaviour from the Africentric perspective. Although, some recent studies of resilience have drawn attention to the Africentric paradigm (Lo-oh & Atemnkeng, 2019; Theron & Theron, 2013; Neblett, Hammond et al, 2010), the criticality of kinship ties to the development of resilient behaviour among adolescents in Cameroon and particularly in the Nso Community has not been foregrounded.

In Africa in general and Nso in particular, the young are socialized into a good number of sociocultural values such as kinship ties amongst others that act as standards for social behaviour (Nsamenang, 1992; Yovsi, 2014). Unfortunately, there is a shift seen in a good number of Nso adolescents due to the increasing influence of globalization and tendency to neglect kinship ties by not associating with members of their extended families. Even some parents prevent their children for associating with their extended family members. This may mar the chances of such adolescents to adapt positively after experiencing significant challenges because these adolescents are unable to benefit the support from the extended family members. The context in which Nso adolescents develop places them under a high burden of adversities such as pervasive poverty, health related problems, limited educational opportunities and high unemployment. Furthermore, the ramification of the Cameroon’s Anglophone crisis in Nso has equally created significant risks for these adolescents. Unfortunately, many of these adolescents are overwhelmed and resort to unhealthy ways of coping. Some of these adolescents have developed psychopathologies such as anxiety disorders, depression and even suicidal behaviours. It is hoped that if the adolescents are
properly socialized into associating with members of their extended family, these extended family members might provide the much needed support to these adolescents who face significant challenges. This study is thus an attempt to salvage and promote the development of resilient behaviour by answering one research question which is: how does kinship ties influence the development of resilient behaviour among Nso adolescents?

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Columbus (2014), the sense of kinship in Africa is seen in the everyday acts of living together and interacting within the extended family system. That is prove that the African family is not an atomized enclave of a nuclear family made up of only father, mother and children. The term family in Africa is much flexibility and include one's direct parents, grand and great grandparents, brothers, sisters, uncles, and aunts, cousins, nieces and nephews; and to all traceable blood relatives. Consequently, it is not out of place for a child to refer to any of his uncles or aunts as his father or mother and his nephews and nieces as his brothers and sisters. Read (2015) on his part, posits that kinship involves social interactions and organizations based on social norms. He identifies kinship concepts of relatedness such as the universally recognized statuses of motherhood, fatherhood, and spousehood. He further indicates that motherhood involves not only the nurturing of biological children by a female, practices such as adoption, suckling or sharing a residence, among others.

Similarly, fatherhood can go beyond a male’s biological role to including providing and caring for non-biological children. Dasser (1988) argues that fatherhood is the role a man engages in, that relates to establishing the social identity of a newborn and not only the biological role. Similarly, Nsamenang (1987) maintains that the terms father and mother are used for people of one’s father’s or mother’s generation. In many parts of Africa, kin take responsibility to socialize and care of children, a role that may mean grandparents, in-laws, uncles, cousins, even fictive kin may have, and frequently do have authority to make important decision affecting kin’s children (Nsamenang, 1992).

Resilience, as seen by Bonanno (2004), is the ability to maintain a stable trajectory after significant adversity. Ungar (2004) on his part, sees resilience as an outcome from the interactions between personal characteristics and the environment to benefit from resources that keep individuals healthy despite adverse and challenging conditions. Therefore, the assessment criteria of resilience are based on specific cultural norms within the historical and social contexts (Luthar & Cushing, 1999). Panter-Brick (2014) on her part, argues that determinants of resilience include cultural, genetic and social psychological factors that interact with one another to control how one reacts to stressful experiences. She thus defines the concept of resilience as a process of exploiting available resources to promote wellbeing. According to Shean (2015), the two most frequently used indicators of resilience are lack of psychopathology and signs of competence. Competence could be academic or social.

One of the studies carried out in relation to kinship ties, is that of Theron and Theron (2013), whose objective was to examine the effects of kinship ties on positive adjustment to poverty. The study that was conducted in South Africa, took a purely qualitative approach using case study as the study design using a sample of 14 resilient black students from South African who showed signs of adjustment to the complex challenges associated with poverty. The sampling technique used in this study was a combination of gatekeepers and snowball sampling. The conclusion of the study

DOI: https://doi.org/10.58425/ijpce.v2i2.220
was that resilience among black youths follows communal pathways and kinship ties was identified as positively influencing adjustments among these black students.

Another study that applies to kinship ties was conducted by Greene (2019) to verify the benefits of different types of ties among newly settled refugees. The study adopted a mixed-method approach in which quantitative and qualitative data were collected simultaneously and the analysis of both elements was conducted in concert. The study had a sample of 290 refugees from the Great Lakes region of Africa, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria. Quantitative results showed that kinship ties significantly promoted psychological wellbeing ($p < .01$).

The Eco-cultural theory of Social Ontogenesis of Nsamenang (1992) has been used to explain the fact that for Nso adolescents to acquire physical, cognitive, social, and emotional competencies, they are required to engage fully in family and society. Consequently, they need the family and other community members in their journey towards the acquisition of these competencies. In Nso, people are linked through birth as well as marriages into extensive social networks. Consequently, the socialisation of Nso adolescents is not only by their parents but also my members of their extended family like grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, in-laws and other members of the community. Nsamenang (1992) in his theory of social ontogenesis, posits that human development is inextricably associated to the ecology and social system in which development occurs. He further advocates that young people co-participate in social and cultural life, and noted that the community and other people are very important resources in the development of young persons. To Nsamenang (2006), development in African social cognition is the acquisition and growth of the cultural, social, emotional, cognitive and physical competencies required to fully engage in their family and society.

Furthermore, the resilience theory of Ungar (2005), was used to explain how resources in the local environment of Nso adolescents can influence their positive adaptation after significant challenges. The principle of cultural relativity by Ungar explains the fact that the way Nso adolescents try to resolve the seven tensions of resilience is dependent on the interaction between the sociocultural context and the adolescents’ characteristics. Cultural adherence is another tension of resilience in which Ungar suggests that if adolescents adhere to their local practices such as maintaining ties with their extended family members, they stand a better chance to navigate their way through challenges. Ungar (2005) posits that, it is the interactions between the individual and the environment that enhance positive adaptation when faced with significant challenges. Ungar et al (2007) pinpointed seven pathways to resilience visible in almost all cultures and called them tensions. These seven tensions include: relationships with loved ones, identity, access to material and financial resources, power and control, adherence to culture, social justice, and cohesion.

**METHODS**

This study took a mixed method approach specifically using a convergent parallel (concurrent triangulation), design where the researcher simultaneously conducted quantitative and qualitative elements in the same phase of the research. However, the results are analyzed independently, and results from both are compared, contrasted and merged for interpretation. The mixed study design was chosen for complementary purposes in order get a comprehensive picture of the influence of kinship ties on the development of resilient behaviour where the qualitative component complemented the quantitative component and vice versa.
The sample of the study was made up of 374 late adolescents and 25 parents of adolescents. The selected adolescents were late adolescents whose ages range from 16 to 24 years. The sampling for this study was done in stages; the selection of the Nso Fondom for investigation in this study was partly based on convenience and accessibility. Cluster sampling technique was used to select the two subdivisions (Jakiri and Kumbo central) out of the four subdivisions that made up the Nso Fondom. The adolescents as well as their parents were conveniently sampled from the two subdivisions. The convenience sampling technique was employed because there was no possibility of bringing all the adolescents together for any probability sampling procedure. However, the sampling was done in a way that the proportion of adolescents from each subdivision was proportionate to the accessible population of the respective subdivisions.

Two tools were used to collect data for this study. A questionnaire was used to collect the quantitative data for this study from the adolescents while interviews were used to collect qualitative data from the parents. Data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. For descriptive statistics, frequencies, percentages, mean score, and standard deviations were used to answer research questions. For inferential statistics, linear regression analyses were used as a statistical tool to verify the influence of respect for elders the respective indicators on the development of resilient behaviour. The qualitative data obtained from the interviews were analyzed using the thematic analysis.

In order to ensure the protection of the research participants and the validity of findings, the ethical issues that were taken care of include: informed consent and voluntary participation, anonymity and confidentiality, avoidance of harm (nonmaleficence), access to the research community, avoiding plagiarism, and non-falsification of data.

FINDINGS

Research question: How do kinship ties influence the development of resilient behaviour among Nso adolescents?

In an attempt to answer this research question, responses from the questionnaire were analyzed and presented in the form of frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation as follows;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My family members always support one another</td>
<td>198(52.9%)</td>
<td>147(39.3%)</td>
<td>29(7.8%)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My family members always stick together no matter the sacrifices required.</td>
<td>200(53.5%)</td>
<td>128(34.2%)</td>
<td>44(11.8%)</td>
<td>2(.5%)</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel comfortable when addressed using my family name</td>
<td>226(60.4%)</td>
<td>92(24.6%)</td>
<td>44(11.85)</td>
<td>12(3.2%)</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinship Ties</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I see the husband/wife of my siblings as family</td>
<td>214(57.2%)</td>
<td>136(36.4%)</td>
<td>16(4.3%)</td>
<td>8(2.1%)</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My grandparents care and support me and my siblings</td>
<td>200(53.5%)</td>
<td>130(34.8%)</td>
<td>38(10.2%)</td>
<td>6(1.6%)</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I see my uncles as my fathers and go to them when in need</td>
<td>139(37.2%)</td>
<td>123(32.9%)</td>
<td>86(23%)</td>
<td>26(7%)</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My aunts have played motherly roles to me and my siblings</td>
<td>187(50%)</td>
<td>117(31.3%)</td>
<td>46(12.3%)</td>
<td>24(6.4%)</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that in case my parents die, my extended family members like uncles and aunts will take good care of me and my siblings</td>
<td>197(47.9%)</td>
<td>111(29.7%)</td>
<td>56(15%)</td>
<td>28(7.5%)</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I consider my cousins to be my brothers and sisters</td>
<td>239(63.9%)</td>
<td>102(27.3%)</td>
<td>33(8.8%)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>we have fora where we communicate and stay in touch with extended family</td>
<td>194(51.9%)</td>
<td>96(25.7%)</td>
<td>54(14.4%)</td>
<td>30(8.0%)</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>.96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Multiple Response Set (MRS)**  
199(53.3%) 118(31.6%) 44(11.9%) 13(3.6%) 3.33 .79

*Source: Researcher's fieldwork (2023).*

Summarily, as seen from the multiple response set on table 1, the percentage of those who indicated that they practiced kinship ties always was 53.3 while 31.6% of the adolescent claimed that they often practice it. A minority of 11.9% indicated that they rarely practiced it and 3.6% of them claimed that they never practiced kinship ties at all. The mean for kinship ties is 3.33 which is higher that the hypothesized value of 2.5 on a 4-point scale. This is evidence that kinship ties were highly practiced by the respondents.
**Table 2**

*Thematic analysis on kinship ties based on data from interviews*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Code description</th>
<th>Grounding</th>
<th>Quotations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you believe that it is important for your children to stay close to your extended family member?</td>
<td>Knowing their roots</td>
<td>Parents’ view about their kids interacting with extended family members</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Yes, they need to know their roots and family tree so as to stay connected and maintain the bond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why do you believe it is important for your children to stay close to extended family members?</td>
<td>Social cohesion/social capital</td>
<td>Why parents view adolescents’ relationship with extended family is beneficial</td>
<td>Majority</td>
<td>It help the children in building positive relationships which are beneficial especially when they face challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which extended family members provide support the most and how?</td>
<td>Financial/ Material support</td>
<td>How extended family members provide financial support</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Uncles and aunts and grandparents often support to give shelter, pay fees and pay hospital bills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Giving advice</td>
<td>How extended family members provide Guidance</td>
<td>Majority</td>
<td>Their uncles/ aunts in the city often guide them on career issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If yes, how do you help them to stay close to their extended family members?</td>
<td>Role modeling</td>
<td>How parents model their children into kinship ties</td>
<td>Majority</td>
<td>I teach them by example. I take them along when I have to visit other family members, let them participate in extended family fora. I let them spend holiday with some extended family members.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Field work (2023)*
Table 2 shows that all the 25 parents were positive about their children associating with extended family members. Concerning why they were positive about their children associating with extended family members, themes such as knowing their roots and gaining support emerged. The parents identified their parents, brothers/sisters as top on the list of extended family members that provide support to their children. In relation to how the extended family members provide support, themes such as financial/material support, psychological support and giving advice emerged. Parents equally identified how they socialize their children to stay connected to their extended family with themes such as role modelling, participation in extended family fora, encouraging bonding, and care giving were identified.

**Verification of hypothesis**

**Ho:** Kinship ties has no significant influence on the development of resilient behaviour among Nso adolescents.

In an attempt to verify hypothesis two, bivariate linear regression analysis was conducted to verify the influence of kinship ties on the development of resilient behaviour among Nso adolescents. The hypothesis was verified at a 0.05 level of significance.

**Table 3**

*Model summary for kinship ties*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.366a</td>
<td>.134</td>
<td>.132</td>
<td>3.90999</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A bivariate linear regression analysis was conducted to verify the strength of kinship ties on the development of resilient behaviour among adolescents of Nso as shown on table 3. The coefficient of determination (R Square) was .134 indicating that 13.4% of the variance in resilient behaviour was accounted for by kinship ties.

**Table 4**

*Coefficients of influence for kinship ties*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>18.987</td>
<td>1.372</td>
<td>13.844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kinship ties</td>
<td>.317</td>
<td>.042</td>
<td>.366</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From table 4, the regression equation is; Predicted resilient behaviour = 18.987 + 0.317 kinship ties. When a kinship tie is zero, resilient behaviour will be 13.844. According to the slope, for each additional unit change in kinship ties, resilient behaviour will increase by 0.317. The constant term is positive. This means that there are still some factors not included in the model that aggregatedly influenced positively resilient behaviour among Nso adolescents within the period of study. Increase in these factors will positively impact the development of resilient behaviour everything being equal. Considering the t-value of kinship ties, the result is significant at 5% level of
significance. This explains that kinship ties are an important factor influencing the development of resilient behaviour among adolescents of Nso. As such any policy decision in relation to the development of resilient behaviour among Nso adolescents requires that serious considerations should be granted to kinship ties.

**Table 5**

*F-test showing the fitness of the model to test of influence of kinship ties on the development of resilient behaviour.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>742.075</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>742.075</td>
<td>57.527</td>
<td>.000b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>6062.858</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>16.298</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>6804.933</strong></td>
<td>373</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 reveals that kinship ties significantly influence the development of resilient behaviour ($F = 57.527, df=372, P=0.000$). The P-value=0.000 which is less than 0.05 indicating a significant effect of kinship ties on the development of resilient behaviour. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative which states that kinship ties have a significant influence on the development of resilient behaviour among adolescents of Nso of Cameroon is upheld.

**Characterization of the dependent variable**

In an attempt to characterize resilient behaviour of Nso adolescents, questionnaire items on resilience were analyzed and presented in the form of frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation as follows:

**Table 6**

*Characterization of resilient behaviour*  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>True nearly always</th>
<th>Often true</th>
<th>Rarely true</th>
<th>Not true at all</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am able to adjust when changes occur</td>
<td>14(3.7%)</td>
<td>204(54.5%)</td>
<td>149(39.8%)</td>
<td>7(1.9%)</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have been able to deal with difficult moments in my life</td>
<td>9(2.4%)</td>
<td>191(51%)</td>
<td>168(44.9%)</td>
<td>6(1.6%)</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I try to see the humorous side of things when I am faced with problems</td>
<td>5(1.3%)</td>
<td>175(56.8%)</td>
<td>167(44.7%)</td>
<td>27(7.2%)</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having to cope with stress can make me stronger</td>
<td>3(.8%)</td>
<td>84(22.5%)</td>
<td>244(65.2%)</td>
<td>43(11.5%)</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I tend to get better quickly after illness, injury or other hardships 11(2.9%) 157(42%) 194(53%) 12(3.2%) 2.46 .86
I believe I can achieve my goals, even if there are obstacles 34(9.1%) 156(41.7%) 154(41.2%) 35(9.4%) 3.01 .94
I stay focused and think clearly even under pressure 19(5.1%) 246(65.8%) 109(29.1%) 1(0.3%) 2.46 .74
I am not easily discouraged by failure 24(6.4%) 179(47.8%) 163(43.6%) 8(2.1%) 2.71 1.10
I think of myself as a strong person when dealing with life’s challenges and difficulties 30(8%) 190(50.8%) 152(40.6%) 2(0.5%) 2.87 .83
I am able to handle unpleasant or painful feelings like sadness, fear, and anger 4(1.1%) 80(21.4%) 259(69.3%) 31(8.3%) 2.56 .79

| Multiple Response Set (MRS) | 15(4%) | 166(44.4%) | 176(47%) | 17(4.6%) | 2.68 | .84 |

Source: Field work (2023)

Summarily, table 6 reveals that 4% of the respondents were resilient almost all the time, 44.4% often showed resilient behaviour, 47% were rarely resilient while 4.5% never showed signs of resilience. The mean of resilient behaviour was 2.68 which is a little bit higher than the hypothesized test value of 2.5. This was enough evidence of the fact that the resilient behaviour among the respondents was just average. Generally, the standard deviations for the items were low indicating that the responses were close to the mean, that is to say the respondents had similar responses.

**DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The findings of the study revealed that kinship ties significantly influenced the development of resilient behaviour among Nso adolescents. The extended family was found to be a treasure in the life of adolescents as it was found to be a source of support and strength. This is in line with the study of Theron and Theron (2013) who found out that kinship ties was associated to positive adjustment. The findings indicated that the prevalence of kinship ties was very high within the adolescents as they indicated that family to them was large and included the grandparents, uncles/aunts, cousins, in-laws and members of their big compounds. This is also in agreement with Nsamenang (1992) who posits that kinship among the Nso people extends to blood relations on both the paternal and maternal sides and by marriage extends to the most distant kinsfolk of the spouse. The findings revealed that these adolescents received a lot of support in terms of moral,
material and financial support from their extended family members in ordinary situations and in times of challenges. The support received during trying moments enhanced their positive adaptation. This ties with the study of Greene (2019) who found out that kinship ties were related to better psychological quality of life.

The study revealed that the grandparents especially the grandmothers were a strong source of support to the adolescents. A good number of these adolescents were raised by their grandparents. Those that were not raised by their grandparents maintained good ties with them and received support from these grandparents when faced with challenges. Grandparents were seen to have played a fundamental role in family life as they were a source of wisdom and stability. They often played the role of co-parenting, babysitters, mediators, friends and listeners. These findings in relation to grandparents are consistent with the study carried out by Downie et al. (2010) whose findings revealed that most of the children in this small sample appear to have developed well in the full-time care of their grandparents, despite having experienced significant trauma prior to this. Their findings disclosed that the emotional self-worth and emotional health of children living with grandparents were within the range expected of children of comparative age and sex.

The study findings showed that the adolescents received social support from the network of extended members of the family in form of care, assistance, material, financial, emotional and psychological support. The social support the adolescents receive can counteract the effects of risk exposure and also buffer the negative effect of mental disorders. This is consistent with Armstrong et al. (2005) who found out that social support was a protective factor of resilience that had a buffering effect on psychological disorders.

CONCLUSION

Kinship ties in form of extended family networks do enhance positive adaptation. The positive connections with members of the extended family act as protective factors of resilience. The more the number of kin the adolescents associate positively with, the higher the support they receive when they face challenges.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that the parents of the adolescents should socialize them into maintaining positive ties with members of their extended families by maintaining positive relations the extended families and also helping the adolescents to stay close to members of their extended families such as grandparents, uncles and aunts, cousins and in-laws. This can be done by sending them for visits, asking them to call and greet and equally let them know if they need help. The children should be assisted to know their roots in terms of their big compound and associate with other kin from these compounds.

Counsellors and other mental health specialists working with Nso adolescents should exploit the sociocultural value of kinship ties and develop interventions that involve the extended family members such as grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, in-laws, and members of the ‘big compound’. These persons can provide social support and the necessary assistance for adolescents facing challenges.
Conflict of Interest Declaration
The authors have no conflict of interest related to this publication.

Funding Declaration
No funding was received from any external source for this study.

Acknowledgment
The authors sincerely appreciate all the Nso adolescents and parents of Nso adolescents who took part in this study.

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.58425/ijpce.v2i2.220


DOI: [https://doi.org/10.58425/ijpce.v2i2.220](https://doi.org/10.58425/ijpce.v2i2.220)

