

Background Variables, Social Responsibility and Academic Achievement among Secondary School Students in Bayelsa State of Nigeria

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KEYWORDS Parental Education. Parental Age. Social Responsibility. Academic Achievement. Sex

ABSTRACT This study investigated the relationship between background variables, social responsibility and academic achievement among senior secondary school students in Bayelsa State of Nigeria. The sample of the study was made up of 450 senior secondary three students randomly selected from the secondary schools in Bayelsa State. From the data analyzed, it was found out that various dimensions of social responsibility are significantly related to academic achievement. The study also revealed that parental educational attainment and number of siblings are related to sex. It was also discovered that there was no significant relationship between social responsibility and age of parents.

INTRODUCTION

The need for the stimulation and promotion of socially responsible behaviour through the display of various forms of moral behaviour, adoption of positive styles of interaction and conformity to existing social rules and norms is generally appreciated by all members of the society. It is in the light of this that the National Policy on Education recognized the essence of bringing up socially responsible individuals through the educational system in its stipulation of the national educational aims and objectives Federal Republic of Nigeria (2006) as incorporating: (i) 'the inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society (ii) the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competences, both mental and physical as equipment for individual to live in and contribute to the development of his society.'

It has in recent times been suggested that social responsibility and its dimension are positively related to various aspects of school performance (Denga 1999). Such a depiction of positive relationship is not unexpected given that development of appropriate social skills and moral

character as may be defined by societies are all parts of national education aims in most nations of the world. Similarly, school programmes and the associated values are designed in a manner that stimulate, nurture and reinforce the display of socially responsible behaviours. Students whose behaviours do not conform to the expectations in schools often have a great deal of problems to contend with.

There is astronomical increase of social problems in schools. Students no longer respect school rules and regulations; they disrespect their teachers and constituted authorities. Denga (1999) revealed that the rising waves of student revolutionary and militant behaviour on campus tend to suggest that schools are fast becoming a disordered misconstruction. The social menace created as a result of these responsible behaviours often leaves society enduring pains.

In the classroom, teachers consciously seek to establish harmonious setting for effective teaching and learning through operation of rules that reinforce acceptable behaviour. Teachers abhor socially responsible behaviours and consider them as most detrimental to classroom order and the achievement of both school and related social goals.

It is against this background that this study sought to determine the relationship between background variables, social responsibility and

academic achievement among secondary school students in Bayelsa State of Nigeria.

To guide this therefore, the following hypotheses were raised

1. There are no significant relationship between sex, parental educational level, number of siblings, parental age, the five dimensions of social responsibility such as interpersonal relationship, social and civic obligation, health and moral duties, within family behaviours and within school behaviours and academic achievement.
2. There are no significant differences in the level of social responsibility exhibited by secondary school students on the bases of sex, parental education, and number of siblings, parental age and academic achievement.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Some related literature was reviewed. According to Entwisle et al. (2000) posited that there is a general tendency of females to exhibit greater levels of socially responsible behaviour as compared to males.

An understanding of the above finding may be obtained from a consideration of psychosocial differences among males and females. Specifically, in this context, it is noted that gender – based differences in aggression and confidence may contribute to differential degrees of conformity or acceptance of existing social rules, regulations and ethos. Analysis of studies on psychosocial differences among males and females point to the fact that the differences are heterogeneous, interact with situational and cultural factors and may decline and increase according to changing social roles (Lin and Hyde 2006).

Benbow and Stanley (2001) revealed that sex differences do exist in levels of confidence, with males having a greater degree of confidence than females in terms of their abilities and the capacities to take risks. Thus, even when gender differences in ability are controlled and held constant more males will enroll in difficult science and mathematics course than females (Lin and Hyde 2006).

Given the complexity of the social processes to which boys and girls are differentially exposed to, and the social reinforcement that accrue to the display of sex appropriate behaviours, it would follow that raising females to be pliable, conforming, accommodating gentle, loving etc. only

serves to predispose them towards social acceptance rather than challenge of limits of behaviours as spelt out or specified by society (Kelly 2002).

Uche (1995) observed that in any classroom, some students come from well-to-do homes where they are well-fed and their various needs met to a large extent, while others come from economically deprived homes where the basic need for food cannot be assured. According to him, some parents may place great values on education and emphasize on the need for hard work while in school. They may also take the extra step of inspecting the ward's school work on a regular basis and offer a helping hand in terms of instruction. Yet others are nonchalant about the students and what they do at school.

The student might be the product of a broken home or both parents may be under stress at home maybe non – existent or the student may be kept so busy with household chores after school that he has little or no time for his home work. Generally, the variables that related to the home are powerful determinants of what a student can do at school. They may determine his interest, his aspirations, achievement level and his level of commitment to academic work (Uche 1995).

The influence of parents is one of the most persistent factors determining the child's interests in school. Not only do parents influence children attitudes toward school in general, but they have profound influence on their attitude towards the importance of education, towards studying, toward different school subjects and towards his teachers and classmates. When parents show an interest in the child's schooling and pride in his achievements, the child usually lives up to his capacities. When parents are indifferent, the child is likely to be indifferent also while most parents, even if their own education has been limited, feel that their children should have good education, they unfortunately foster – often unconsciously – unfavorable attitudes in their children, also the children's social responsibility (Cobb 1992).

The studies of Feshback and Feshback (1997), Kohn and Rossman (1993), Green et al. (1999) affirmed that social responsibility is directly related to various forms of intellectual outcomes at different levels of education. They further explained that academic achievement in school situations were positively related to the display of appropriate school conduct.

Responsible behaviour at school is an important social competency that links the overall

quality of family functioning to children's academic achievement. For instance, parents' marital satisfaction and the use of child centered and consistent child – rearing practices are positively related to social responsibility in pre-adolescence as measured by consideration for others, obedience to rules, suppression of aggression and impulse control (Feldman et al. 1990).

METHOD OF STUDY

This study was a survey research employing an ex-post factor design. It was an ex-post factor because the researchers had no control over the independent variables. The variables were measured as they exist in the respondents.

Population consisted of 66,345 senior secondary school students from all the secondary schools in the 39 local government areas that make up Bayelsa State.

The sample consisted of 450 senior secondary three students. A stratified random sampling technique was used to derive sample. The state was stratified into three urban, sub – urban and rural areas. From these areas, three secondary schools were elected using the random sampling procedure involving the 'hat and drop' method given a total of 9 schools, 50 senior secondary school three students were randomly selected from the 9 schools for this study.

The instruments used for this study are (Social Responsibility Scale (SRS) and Achievement Test (AT). The social responsibility scale is a 57 items scale. Section A of the instrument sought personal information. Section B of the instrument consists of 50 items focused on eliciting information regarding student' social responsibility and its various dimensions. All items were raised on a four – point Likert format, ranging from always, most times, hardly and never. On the other hand, achievement test had a total of 90 items with 30 items each for English Language, Mathematics and Biology which are all compulsory subjects. The items were 5 items multiple choice tests. A time limit of two hours was given for the test.

The instruments were content validated by Professor for Education Psychology, Guidance and Counselling, Educational Administration and Measurement and Evaluation. The experts' judgment were sought to guarantee that each of the items measured what they were supposed to measure. They certified the instrument for use in this study.

The reliability of the instruments was determined by a test-retest for social responsibility scale and a split-half for achievement test. The social responsibility scale was administered to a total of 100 senior secondary school three students in two secondary school in Cross River State. Two weeks later, the same items were re-administered to the same 100 students. The derived reliability estimates for the various dimensions for the test are 0.93, 0.86, 0.89, 0.94 and 0.85. It was considered that the instruments have the requisite stability for use in the study.

The reliability of the achievement test was derived by administering the test to the same respondents the second time the social responsibility scale was administered and the reliability co - efficient test using spit half yielded 0.85. This level of reliability was considered high enough.

The data were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment, Point Biserial and Phi-Coefficient correlation procedures, and independent t-test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Hypothesis One

This hypothesis states that there are no significant relationships between sex, parental educational level, number of siblings, parental age, the five dimensions of social responsibility (interpersonal relationship, social and civic obligations, health and moral duties within family behaviours and within behaviour) and academic achievement. This hypothesis was tested using Pearson Product Moment, Point Biserial and Phi-Coefficient. The results are presented in table 1.

A critical observation of the result indicated that academic achievement at secondary school level was negative but significantly related to sex ($p < .05$), thus depicting the tendency for females to score less than males in achievement test. It indicates that 6.3 per cent of the variance in achievement is attributable to sex. Achievement was significantly related in a positive manner to fathers' education ($r = .34$), mothers education ($r = .36$) within school behaviours ($r = .28$), health and moral duties ($r = .24$), within family behaviours ($r = .22$) as well as social and civic obligations ($r = .2$). these values suggest respectively that 11.56 per cent, 12.96 per cent, 7.84 per cent, 5.76 per cent and 4.84 per cent of the variance in academic achievement are

Table 1: Correlation Matrix depicting relationship between sex and background variables and five dimensions of social responsibility

S. No.	Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1	Sex	1.00											
2	Father's Education	-.25*	1.00										
3	Mother Education	.32**	.19	1.00									
4	No of Siblings	.09	.11	.05	1.00								
5	Father's Age	.03	.05	.03	.05	1.00							
6	Mother's Age	.04	.02	.06	.04	.16*	1.00						
7	Interpersonal Relationship	.22**	.10	.09	.07	.08	.11	1.00					
8	Social & Civic Obligation	.26*	.23*	.34**	.11	.09	.06	.51*	1.00				
9	Health & Moral Duties	.38**	.31**	.42**	.03	.07	.03	.36**	.25*	1.00			
10	Within Family Behaviour	.33**	.37**	.48**	.04	.06	.05	.24*	.38**	.41**	1.00		
11	Within School Behaviour	.45**	.39**	.36**	.07	.11*	.08	.49**	.36**	.45**	.20*	1.00	
12	Achievement	.25*	.34**	.36**	.11*	.15	.12*	.19*	.21*	.24*	.22*	.28*	1.00

*P>.05**P<.01

accountable by fathers' education, mother education, within school behaviours of students, perceived health and moral duties, within family behaviours and students' perceived social and civic obligations. At the same time academic achievement was also found to be significantly related to number of siblings ($r = .11$), fathers age ($r = .15$), mothers age ($r = .13$), and interpersonal relationships ($r = .19$). These indicate that the amounts of variance in academic achievement that are accountable by these later variables are relatively lower as compared to the former.

The results also show that a high degree of relationships exist between the various dimensions of social responsibility. This implies that interpersonal relationship is significantly related to social and civic obligations ($r = .51$) health and moral duties ($r = .36$), within family behaviour ($r = .24$) and within school behaviour ($r = .49$). The results, which indicate direct positive relationships also, suggest that variations in student's interpersonal relationship may be accounted for by the above variable to the degree of 26.01 per cent, 12.96 per cent, 5.76 per cent and 24.01 per cent respectively. Civic obligation, health and moral duties, within family behaviours and within school behaviours as individual variables are of no difference from the above.

Results also indicate that significant relationships exist between individual dimension of social responsibility and three other variables: sex, father education and mother's education. Thus, sex significantly relate to interpersonal relationship ($p = .22$), social and civic obligation ($p = .26$), health and moral duties ($p = .38$), within family behaviour ($p = .33$), and within school behaviours ($p = .45$). these cases suggest that the

amount of variance attributable to sex in these variables are respectively 4.84 per cent, 6.76 per cent, 14.44 per cent, 10.89 per cent and 20.25 per cent. Given these results, it is deduced that to a large extent the hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis Two

The hypothesis stated that there are no significant differences in the levels of social responsibility exhibited by secondary school students on the bases of sex, parental education, and numbers of siblings, parental age and academic achievement.

This hypothesis was tested using independent t-test. The results are shown in table 2.

Result presented in table 2 depicts that there were significant differences in the level of social responsibility among secondary school student on the bases of sex, father's education, numbers o siblings and academic achievement. In this regard female students achieved significantly higher in social responsibility scores ($X = 63.49$, $SD = 10.43$) as compared to their male counterparts ($X = 56.21$, $SD = 11.36$). Similarly, students whose fathers had higher educational attainment exceeded their counterparts whose father had shad lower educational attainments. Their mean scores were 61.75 ($SD = 11.48$) and 58.32 ($SD = 11.15$) respectively. Also students from larger families were superior in their social responsibility scores as compared to those from small-sized families with their observed mean scores being 62.63 ($SD = 10.74$) and 57.28 ($SD = 9.98$) respectively. Finally, students with higher academic achievement scores were also found to have higher social responsibility score as compared to their counter-

Table 2: Means, standard deviations and t-values depicting differences in social responsibility on the basis of some back variables and academic achievement

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Dimension</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t-Values</i>
Sex	MaleFemale	228222	56.2163.49	11.3610.43	7.14*
Father's Education	HighLow	110340	61.7558.32	11.4811.15	2.79*
Mother's Education	HighLow	100350	60.8158.94	10.5711.32	1.59
No of Siblings	LargeSmall	240210	57.2862.63	9.9810.74	5.46*
Father's Age	OldYoung	208242	60.2859.41	10.669.89	0.90
Mother's Age	OldYoung	236224	60.7259.04	10.4710.68	1.68
Academic Achievement	High low	249201	62.8757.13	10.5410.85	5.22*

P>.01

parts with lower academic achievement scores. There social responsibility scores were 62.87 (SD = 10.54) and 57.13 (SD = 10.85) respectively while the calculated t-value was 5.22; in the light of this result, the hypothesis therefore is rejected.

However, there are no observed significant differences in social responsibility of the students on the basis of mother's education, father's age and mother's age. In spite of this, mothers who had attained higher educational levels had children with superior social responsibility scores (X = 60.81, SD = 10.57) that those, whose mothers had respectively lower educational attainment (X = 58.96, SD = 11.32). In the same vein, students whose parents were older in terms of age were slightly superior in their scores on social responsibility as compared to those whose parents were younger. The hypothesis as it relates to those later data is therefore retained.

DISCUSSIONS

The findings of the study indicated that there are significant differences between male and female students in their measured levels of social responsibility and the various dimensions of social responsibility such as interpersonal relationship, social and civic obligations, health and moral duties, within family behaviours and within school behaviours in all cases, females subjects were found to significantly exceed male counterparts in their demonstrated levels of social responsibility. These findings are consistent with those of Entwisle et al. (2000), Lambert and Nicoll (2001) and Rubble (2001). These investigators established a general tendency of females to exhibit greater levels of socially responsible behaviours as compare to males.

This study also revealed that there is marked differences in social responsibility among secondary school students on the basis of their parental level of education. Especially, students

whose parents (mother and father) were more educated had higher social responsibility scores as compared to those whose parents were less educated. When the individual dimensions or components of social sensibility were taken separately, father's education constituted a more potent factor than mother's education in providing differences in social responsibility levels among the students. This is supported by the study of Uche (1995).

Results also revealed that the number of siblings was not significantly related to social responsibility; it was also shown that students from smaller families in terms of number of siblings were on the average more socially responsible than those from large families. An effective understanding and explanation of this finding may be found in the family structure that exists in small and large families. However, it must be noted that large families are for the most part a characteristic or feature of the lower class most of who are poorly educated or completely lacking in formal education. On the other hand, educated people who comprise the middle class of any society have relatively smaller families in terms of number of children.

A major finding of this study is that socially responsible measure relate to parental education, family size, age of parents and academic achievement. Students with high levels of social responsibility were also shown to achieve higher scores in their examinations. These findings are supported by those of Cobb (1992), Feshback and Feshback (1997), Kohn and Rossman (1993). These researchers in their various studies revealed that social responsibility is directly related to various forms of intellectual outcomes at different levels of education. Similarly, Green et al. (1999) demonstrated that academic achievement in schools situations were positively related to the display of appropriate school or classroom conduct. At the high school level, Ford and Tizak

(2001), as well as Wentzel (2003) in their study of factors related to learning showed that social competence as assessed by teachers and peers as well as by self reports of social responsibility in decision making situations are all positively related to academic achievement.

CONCLUSION

Data resulting from this study do point to the fact that not only is social responsibility related to academic achievement but also demonstrate that differences do exist in regard to sex of the students with different degrees of social responsibility and academic achievement. The study also suggests that good measure of social responsibility not only in school but also out of school situations could predispose students to enhanced academic achievement. It is recommended that a psychological programme with high reliability be developed for the purpose of promoting socially responsible behaviour within and outside classroom as a means of ensuring orderly human conduct in the society and more effective and result oriented learning in schools.

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