



ROLE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PARENTAL SOCIAL FACTORS IN PRO-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AMONG PRE-ADOLESCENTS AND ADOLESCENTS IN LAGOS STATE

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ABSTRACT

Engaging in positive behaviours could contribute to a peaceful society. Positive behaviours such as pro-social behaviour especially among pre-adolescents and adolescents appear to be declining. It is in this light that this study examined the roles of psychosocial variables (empathy, self-efficacy, peer pressure and religion) on pro-social behaviour among pre-adolescents and adolescents. Relevant theories provided explanation for the variables linkage. Using a cross-sectional survey design, a structured questionnaire consisting of standardized scales was administered on 260 conveniently sampled senior secondary school adolescents consisting of 111 (42.7%) males and 149 (57.3%) females with age ranged between 10-18 years. Among the participants, 209 (80.4%) were Christians, 42 (16.2%) were Muslims, and 9 (3.5%) were of other religions. Four research hypotheses were tested using both descriptive and inferential statistics for analysis at $p < .05$. Significant findings revealed that the predictor variables independently and jointly predicted pro-social behaviour among participants, [$R^2 = .34$, $F(4, 255) = 32.42$, $p < .005$]. Also parental marital status significantly influenced pro-social behaviour among the participants [$F(3, 253) = 3.89$, $p < .01$], so was the occupation of parents which significantly influenced pro-social behaviour among the participants [$F(2, 254) = 16.69$, $p < .005$]. The findings of the study were discussed exhaustively and sufficiently in relation to existing and relevant empirical studies, implications were observed and suggestions made.

Keywords: Pro-social behaviour, adolescents, Empathy, Self-efficacy.

INTRODUCTION

Pro-social behaviour can be defined as a vicarious emotional reaction that involves feelings of sorrow or concern for a distressed or needy person (Eisenberg, Fabes, & Spinrad, 2006). Human development and behaviour are consequential effect of a number of factors working in isolation or together with societal and psychological factors playing protuberant role. Pro-social behaviour is one of the relevant positive behaviour requisite for positive development from adolescent period to adulthood. Positive behaviours that can be observed among adolescents include helping or comforting a distressed person. Recent progresses in research on pro social behaviour have identified several types of pro social behaviours (Carlo & Randall, 2002). Precisely, compliant pro social behaviour is helping when asked, public pro social behaviour is helping in the company of others, anonymous pro social behaviour is helping incognito, dire pro social behaviour is helping in crisis situations, emotional pro social behaviour is helping in emotionally evocative circumstances and altruistic pro social behaviour is voluntary helping motivated by concern for others rather than anticipation of personal rewards.

Adolescents show some pro-social behaviour that is designed to alleviate another person's negative affective state. Socio-demographic variables, psychological and environmental variables play a very important role in pro-social behaviour (Damen, 2000). Adolescence here refers to the period of development between childhood and adulthood, which is characterized by a number of physiological and psychological changes. In Nigeria, adolescence corresponds to the secondary school and university/college years. Adolescents' behaviour is influenced by a number of psychological and environmental happenings around them, which often push them into experimentation and few of such factors are empathy, self-efficacy, peer influence and religiosity. These factors which can be classified as psychosocial factors often predispose adolescents to act in some socially acceptable manner to a child development. Kindness, care, comforting, altruistic behaviours, compassionate attitudes and help which characterize what are considered by many to be the finest qualities of human nature. Since, helping attitude has been regarded as a form of behaviour demonstrated towards



another person by an individual (Afolabi, 2013). Such helping attitude which can be regarded as pro-social behaviour therefore has lot of importance to adolescents' development.

Eisenberg & Mussen, (2009) sees pro-social behaviour to be a voluntary action that is intended to help or benefit another individual or group of individuals. This makes pro-social behaviour to be highly valued in all cultural communities, and for that reason is a central part of the socialization process (Eisenberg & Mussen, 2009). First in the homestead, later in the community, and school yard, the child participates in interactions that help him or her to understand and follow the cultural scripts for helping, nurturing, showing affection and attention, and offering guidance. A range of affective and behavioural elements comprise the scope of pro-social development (Radke-Yarrow, Zahn-Waxler, & Chapman, 2003), including empathy, self-efficacy, sympathy, peer pressure, religiosity, compassion, concern, comforting, helping, sharing, cooperating, volunteering, and donating.

Empathy is a basic human capacity that is important in daily social life. It refers to the ability to respond effectively to emotions in others, aiming at reacting adaptively to another's needs, e.g. to console, support or spare the other person (Decety & Jackson, 2004). Deficits in empathy can play a critical role in the development of externalising behaviour and other behavioural problems (Jolliffe & Farrington, 2006; LeSure-Lester, 2000). In fact, empathy training is important to enhance empathetic feelings, understanding and increase pro-social behaviour among adolescents (Stiff, Dillard, Somera, and Sleight, 2008).

Self-efficacy is another variable capable of predicting helping behaviour. Fogile, Huebner, & Laughlin (2002) defined self-efficacy as an individual's judgment about how effectively he or she will be able to deal with social tasks in the future. Specifically, they are judgments about how effectively one believes one is able at meeting goals or coping with challenges (Di Giunta, Eisenberg, Kupfer, Steca, Tramontano & Caprara, 2010). Development studies show that a high sense of self-efficacy promotes a pro-social orientation (Bandura, 2001). Self-efficacy is thus a dynamic element that is capable of influencing other mechanisms such as goals, performance and so on.

Peer pressure is another social factor that influences pro social behaviour and according to Oxford English Dictionary, peer pressure is influence from members of the same group. One of the main areas of focus for adolescent behaviour is friend and peer relations which provide support, security, membership, autonomy, self-expression and common experiences to adolescents. It plays a large role in psychosocial development of an adolescent. Peers who see certain similarity in members will lend a helping hand to another who is in need. Gaertner & Dovidio, (2000) opined that "common group identity" increased helping toward others formerly perceived as out group members. Adolescents inevitably look to their peers for approval and support. Peers have a more powerful influence on adolescents (Haynie 2002).

Religion is an organized system of beliefs, practices and symbols, designed to enable closeness to God and the degree of one's involvement and personal significance attached to such a system (Baldachino, 2003; Nonnemaker, McNeelyb, & Blum, 2003). Religiosity is an important factor for youth development, and for most of the adolescents, religious/spiritual importance remained fairly stable as youth progressed through middle and high school (Regnerus, 2003). Regnerus, 2003; Smith, 2003) opined that religiosity is a potential positive influence on adolescent pro-social behaviour.

Why would adolescents run rather than rendering or calling for an assisting hand to help mate who suffers convulsion in the field of play? Why would an adolescent intentionally refuse to help others even in situations that clearly warrant help in an environment? To what extent is it possible for an adolescent to help others for apparently no rewards in the school environment? On the other hand, some worrying trends are becoming more and more expressly present in our society: habituation to the world's misery, a lack of commitment to others, and so on (Mortelmans, Damen & Sinardet, 2008).



Furthermore, the cliché that children of today are leaders of tomorrow predicts a bleak future if bystanders' effect among students are to be reckon with. The importance of solving this problem cannot be over emphasized. Thus the need to promote pro-social behaviour among in-school adolescent is a major priority. It is necessary to interrupt the ugly trend of unacceptable social behaviours among secondary school students by developing and enhancing their confidence, teaching them moral values and encouraging better associations which have been observed to be major determinants of helping behaviour. This investigation has therefore become necessary to x-ray various psychosocial variables (empathy, self-efficacy, peer and religion) and how they influence the pro social behaviour of senior secondary school students in Ibadan metropolis.

Theoretical framework and Literature Review

The importance of empathy in helping has led to many strains of the empathy-altruism hypothesis, including the attribution-empathy model (Betancourt, 1990) which emphasizes the importance of empathy and attribution of responsibility in the decision to help, and the empathic-joy hypothesis, which proposes empathic concern predicts helping only when feedback on helping is anticipated and the helper experiences positive emotions as a result (Smith, Keating, & Stotland, 2009). Therefore, the relationship between empathy and helping has been established in various ways throughout the pro social literature. However, this relationship has yet to be substantiated in the context of the student-faculty interaction. The current study proposes an investigation of the importance of empathy in academic settings, most especially among adolescent, much of which has been previously neglected in research.

A variable that may be related to adolescents helping behaviour is adolescent perceived self-efficacy in a situation. Self-efficacy is one's belief about his or her ability to affect an outcome (Anker, Feeley, & Kim, 2010). Therefore, as Bandura (1977) reported, the stronger perceived self-efficacy one feels about themselves, the more active the efforts. In relation to pro social behaviour, the degree to which a person helps another would be dependent on how capable he or she views oneself as a potential helper. Research investigating the relationship between self-efficacy and pro social behaviour has supported the influential relationship between self-efficacy and empathy. As previously stated, the relationship between empathy and helping behaviour has been strongly supported (Penner et al., 2005). More recent research has developed the relationship in accordance with self-efficacy. Caprara et al. (2010) emphasized the importance of the confidence one feels in their ability to empathize with others, as a crucial component in comforting and meeting others' needs. Empathy has also been shown to mediate the relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and pro social tendencies (Alessandri, Caprara, Eisenberg, & Steca, 2009). In relation to these results, gender differences in empathetic self-efficacy have also been found. Accordingly, females have been found to score higher in empathic self-efficacy and in pro sociality (Caprara, et al, 2010; Alessandri et al, 2009). Researchers have credited these gender differences to the socialization of empathizing, a feminized gender role in which females are more likely to experience feelings of empathy and perceive themselves as more efficacious in experiencing the emotion and applying it to helping situations. Once again, these differences may be apparent in the student-faculty interaction in which there may be a difference not only in perceived self-efficacy among faculty members, but also a gender difference in female and male professors' efficacious helping abilities. In

addition to self-efficacy, another identifiable category in pro social behavioural research is religiosity. Given that most religions have teachings that emphasize care and compassion for others, religiosity (defined here as commitment to, identification with and involvement in a religion or system of religious beliefs) is a potential positive influence on adolescent pro social behaviour. However, relatively little research has examined relations between religiosity and pro social behaviour, and it has been almost solely conducted using college-age or adult samples (Darley & Batson, 2003); hence, little is known about links between religiosity and pro social



behaviour, particularly among adolescents. Scholars have proposed several reasons why religiosity might have an impact on adolescent pro social behaviour (Regnerus, 2003; Smith, 2003). For example, it has been suggested that religion is a form of social capital (Smith, 2009), provides opportunities for helping (Mattis et al., 2000; Bridges & Moore, 2002), acts as a source of social control (Annis, 2006; Batson et al., 1989) and provides reinforcement for pro social behaviours (Ritzema, 2009; Ellison, 2002).

However, the most widely recognized mechanism by which religiosity might influence pro social behaviour is through socialization of pro social values (Mattis et al., 2000). Specifically, religious texts (e.g., the Holy Bible, the Koran and the Talmud) and teachings (e.g., the golden rule) typically have a strong focus on doing good to others (Ritzema, 1979; Wuthnow, 1991). Some studies have found religiosity to be positively associated with pro social behaviour (e.g., Mattis et al., 2000; Smith & Faris, 2002; Furrow et al., 2004). However, others have found religiosity either to be unrelated to pro social behaviour (e.g., Darley & Batson, 1973; Annis, 1976; Sundeen & Raskoff, 1995), or only related for some people in some situations (e.g., Batson & Gray, 1981; Batson et al., 1989; Bernt, 1989; Chau et al., 1990; Hansen et al., 1995; Wilson & Janoski, 1995; Wilson & Musick, 1997; Maclean et al., 2004). Thus, although there does seem to be a connection between religiosity and pro social behaviour, it is likely complex, varying across individuals, situations and types of behaviour. Despite inconsistencies in the strength of associations between religiosity and pro social behaviour across studies, there do seem to be certain general patterns in these relations. Hence, more researches is needed to assess the extent to which self-initiated and compliant pro social behaviours are linked to religiosity.

Existing researches using both longitudinal and experimental paradigms indicates that children with pro social peers are more likely to enact pro social behaviour (Bryan & Walbek, 2000; Elliot & Vasta, 2000; Hartup & Coates, 2007; Barry & Wentzel, 2006) and this is hypothesized to occur because pro social peers tend to model pro social behaviour and subsequently reinforce this behaviour in others (Hartup & Stevens, 1997). For example, Barry and Wentzel (2006) examined the association between 9th graders reports of their best friend's behaviour and their own pro social behaviour over time. Results indicated that perceptions of best friends' pro social behaviour predicted youths' pro social behaviour one year later and this relationship was mediated by pro social goals. Research by Ma, Shek, Cheung, and Lee (1996) indicated that antisocial adolescents perceived their best friends as exerting negative influences on their own behaviour, whereas pro social adolescents believed that their best friends exerted more positive influences on them.

However, there is evidence to suggest that the influence of peers on pro social behaviour is less strong than on aggressive behaviour (Keung, Shek, Cheung, & Tam, 2002; Molano, Jones, Brown, & Aber, 2013). This may be the case because, in a quest for identity formation, adolescents seek to establish values and behavioural patterns that are in opposition to adult expectations, making it easier for peers to influence aggressive behaviour (Keung, Shek, Cheung, & Tam, 2002). It will thus be necessary to examine influence of popular peers on behaviour.

Statement of Hypotheses

- 1) Psychosocial variables (empathy, self-efficacy, peer and religion) would independently and jointly predict pro social behaviour among senior secondary school students.
- 2) Age and gender will have significant main and interactive influence on prosocial behaviour among senior secondary school students.
- 3) There will be a significant influence of parental marital status on prosocial behaviour among senior secondary school students.



- 4) There will be a significant effect of parental occupation on prosocial behaviour among senior secondary school students.

METHODS

Research Design

The descriptive survey design of the ex-post facto was adopted. This is because the variables under consideration had already existed and will not in any way be manipulated in the cause of the study. The Independent variable of this study is Psychosocial variables which comprise psychological (empathy, self-efficacy, peer pressure and religion) and social variables (parental marital status and parental occupation). Pro social behaviour is the dependent variable.

Participants

The participants were 260 secondary school student randomly selected from Secondary Schools in Agbado/Oke-odo Local Government Area of Lagos state in Nigeria. It consists of 111 (42.7%) males and 149 (57.3%) females with age ranging from 10 to 18 (Mean = 12.20±2.27). Their religious distribution shows 209 (80.4%) were Christians, 42 (16.2%) were Muslims, and 9 (3.5%) were of other religions. In terms of occupation of parents, 126 (52.3%) had working class parents, 74 (28.5%) were traders and 50 (19.2%) had other types of jobs. Parents' marital status distribution showed 32 (12.3%) were separated, 10 (3.8%) divorced, 10 (3.8%) single parents and 208 (80%) were living together.

Instruments

Pro social Personality Battery (PPB)

Developed by Penner, L. A. (2002). It consists of 30 items. High score represent high pro social tendency. The responses to each of the items were rated using 5-point likert scale with anchored labeled. The coefficient alphas for the new versions of the individual scales are: Social Responsibility .65; Empathic Concern .67; Perspective Taking .66; Personal Distress .77; Mutual Moral Reasoning .64; Other Oriented Reasoning .77; Self-reported altruism .73

General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE)

Developed by Schwarzer & Jerusalem (1995). It is a self-scoring questionnaire of 10 items. The responses to each of the items were rated using 5-point likert scale. The internal reliability (alpha) of the GSE according Schwarzer& Jerusalem (1995) is between .76 and .90.

Intrinsic/Extrinsic Religious Orientation Scale (I/E-R)

Developed by Tiliopolos et al. (2007), though originally developed by Gorsuch and MacPherson (1989), containing 14 questions which are answered on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The scale portrays good reliability levels. In particular, its intrinsic dimension has Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.83$ and its overall extrinsic dimension Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.65$. Its validity is well supported in a variety of studies. The scale was further revalidated in this study in order to determine its suitability in the school environment.

Empathy Questionnaire (EmQue)

The scale with 20 items was adapted from Rieffe et al., (2010) on a 3-point scale (0 = never, 1 = sometimes, 2 = often). An initial version of the EmQue consisted of 60 items (formulated by a team of developmental psychologists, school teachers and a child psychiatrist who is working with children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder; and based on and inspired by the many observational studies that are available, e.g. by Eisenberg and colleagues), and was



tested in a pilot study. 33 items were removed due to an insufficient fit with the selection criteria (i.e., 30 items were deleted because the particular item had a missing value rate higher than 75%; 3 items were deleted because they differentiated between boys and girls) and 7 items were deleted due to an insufficient fit on their intended factor. Additionally, 4 items were reformulated in order to represent the three levels of empathy. This resulted in the current 20-item version.

Peer pressure Questionnaire

The scale was developed by Steinberg-Based (2009). The 9 items scale was rated in 3 point rating scale of agree =3, disagree=2 and may be=1. The scale was to elicit information on adolescents' susceptibility to peer pressure. The internal consistency was found to be .87.

Procedure

The researchers collected letter of introduction from the Department of Psychology to selected schools in Lagos metropolis. This gave the researchers the opportunity to have access to the participants. Permission was sought from the Principals of sampled schools to carry out the study. The students were also informed in this regard. The information was collected exclusively from pre-adolescents and adolescents who were willing to fill the questionnaires. The researchers consequently administered the questionnaires and subjected the data collected to statistical analysis.

Statistical Analysis

The major statistics used was frequency count and percentage, for research questions while testing the hypotheses were t-test, multiple regression analysis and the Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient and the data were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Test of Inter-Variables Associations

In order to establish associations among the study variables, pair-wise correlations were used and the result is presented in Table 1 as follows:

Table 1: Summary Showing Zero-order correlation using Pearson Product Moment Correlations Analysis

Variable	Mean $\pm$ SD	1	2	3	4
Empathy	3.22 $\pm$.60	1			
Self-efficacy	29.52 $\pm$ 6.07	.698**	1		
Peer Pressure	19.90 $\pm$ 3.91	.397**	.391**	1	
Religiosity	38.59 $\pm$ 7.38	.624**	.676**	.351**	1
Pro-social Behaviour	99.43 $\pm$ 12.41	.559**	.482**	.148*	.367**

Note: * $p < .01$, ** $p < .01$

The pair-wise correlations above show there was significant positive association between pro-social behaviours and empathy [$r(257) = .56, p < .01$]. This implies that the more their empathy, the more their pro social behaviours. Also, pro social behaviour was significantly positively associated with self-efficacy [$r(257) = .48, p < .01$] implying that as self-efficacy increase among them, pro-social behaviours also increase. There was equally significant association between pro social behaviour and peer pressure [$r(256) = .15, p < .05$]. The indication of this is the less the peer pressure they experience, the less their pro-social behaviour. Lastly on that, pro social also demonstration positive significant association with religiosity [$r(256) = .37, p < .01$] among the students. This implies that the more their religious commitment, the better their pro social behaviours, and if religiosity should decrease, pro social behaviour also decreases.

Test of Research hypotheses

Four hypotheses were tested using appropriate statistical tools and the results are presented as follows. For the first hypothesis which states that peer pressure, religiosity, empathy, and self-efficacy will independently and jointly predict pro-social behaviour, the result of the linear regression is presented in Table 2:

Table 2: Summary of Multiple regression test showing the joint and independent influences of peer pressure, religiosity, empathy and self-efficacy on pro social behaviour

Predictors	R	R ²	F	P	Beta	t	P
Empathy					.469	6.231	<.01
Self-efficacy	.581	.337	32.41	<.01	.221	2.791	<.01
Religiosity					-.037	-.514	>.05
Peer Pressure					-.112	-1.975	<.05

This result shows that, first, peer pressure, religiosity, empathy, and self-efficacy jointly accounted for 33.7% of the total variance distribution of pro-social behaviour among the participants and significantly predicted their pro-social behavioural tendencies [$R^2 = .34$, $F(4, 255) = 32.42$, $P < .05$]. This confirms the joint prediction of the predictors in this hypothesis. Furthermore, in the individual contributions of the predictors, the result shows empathy significantly predicted pro-social behaviour [$\beta = .47$, $t = 6.23$, $P < .05$]. This implies empathy is positively associated with pro-social behaviour such that more of empathy predicted more of pro-social behaviour. Empathy is therefore confirmed. With regard to self-efficacy, the result also showed that self-efficacy significantly predicted pro-social behaviour [$\beta = .22$, $t = 2.79$, $P < .01$]. This also means self-efficacy is positively associated with pro-social behaviour such that higher scores of self-efficacy predicted higher scores of pro social behaviour. Self-efficacy is also confirmed.

Peer pressure on the other hand also significantly predicted pro-social behaviour [$\beta = -.112$, $t = -1.97$, $P < .05$]. This implies that higher scores of peer pressure were associated with lower pro-social tendency among the adolescent. Peer pressure is also confirmed. However, religiosity did not significantly predict pro social behaviour [$\beta = -.03$, $t = -.51$, $P > .05$]. In summary, each of the predictors was significant in predicting pro social behaviour except religiosity. However, they all had joint determining influence on pro-social behaviour.

For the second hypothesis which states that age and gender will have significant main and interactive influence on pro-social behaviour, the two-way ANOVA shows the result in Table 3:

Table 3: Showing Influence of Gender and Age on Pro social Behaviour using 2x2 ANOVA

Source	SS	df	MS	F	P	Effect size
Gender	110.496	1	110.496	.767	>.05	.003
Ages	9439.059	1	9439.059	65.547	<.01	.206
Gender *Ages	374.008	1	374.008	2.597	>.05	.010
Error	36433.342	253	144.005			
Total	2586950.000	257				

From the result, gender showed no significant main influence on pro-social behaviour [$F(1, 253) = .77, P > .05$]. Therefore the main influence for gender is disconfirmed. However, age showed significant main influence on pro-social behaviour [$F(1, 253) = 65.54, P < .05$]. The result further showed age accounted for 20.6% of the total variance of pro-social behaviour. The interactional influence of age and gender was not significant on pro-social behaviour [$F(1, 253) = 2.59, P > .05$].

For the third hypothesis which states that parental marital statuses will significantly influence pro social behaviour, the result is shown in Table 4:

Table 4: Showing Influence of Parents' Marital Status on Pro social behaviour Using One-way ANOVA

Groups	SS	Df	MS	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2031.938	3	677.313	3.891	.010
Within Groups	44035.120	253	174.052		
Total	46067.058	256			

From the result, parental marital status showed significant influence on pro-social behaviour [$F(3, 253) = 3.89, p < .01$]. Therefore the hypothesis is confirmed. In order to determine which of the marital status groups is significantly different from others, the Turkey HSD for unequal groups was used and the result is presented in Table 5:

Table 5: Showing Significant Difference of Pro-social Behaviour in Parental Marital Status using Turkey HSD for Unequal Groups

Groups	1	2	3	Mean±SD
Separated	1			94.97±12.61
Divorced	5.86	1		89.10±19.40
Single parent	-3.53	-9.40	1	98.50±10.27
Together	-5.70	-11.57*	-2.17	100.68±13.05

Note: * $p < .05$

This result shows the significant difference lies between parents in the divorced group and those in the still living together. The indication is that adolescent under parents who live together were significantly better in their pro-social behaviour than those living with parents who were divorced. The mean plot in Fig. 2 shows that pro-social behaviour is lowest among participants whose parents were divorced and highest among those whose parents were together.

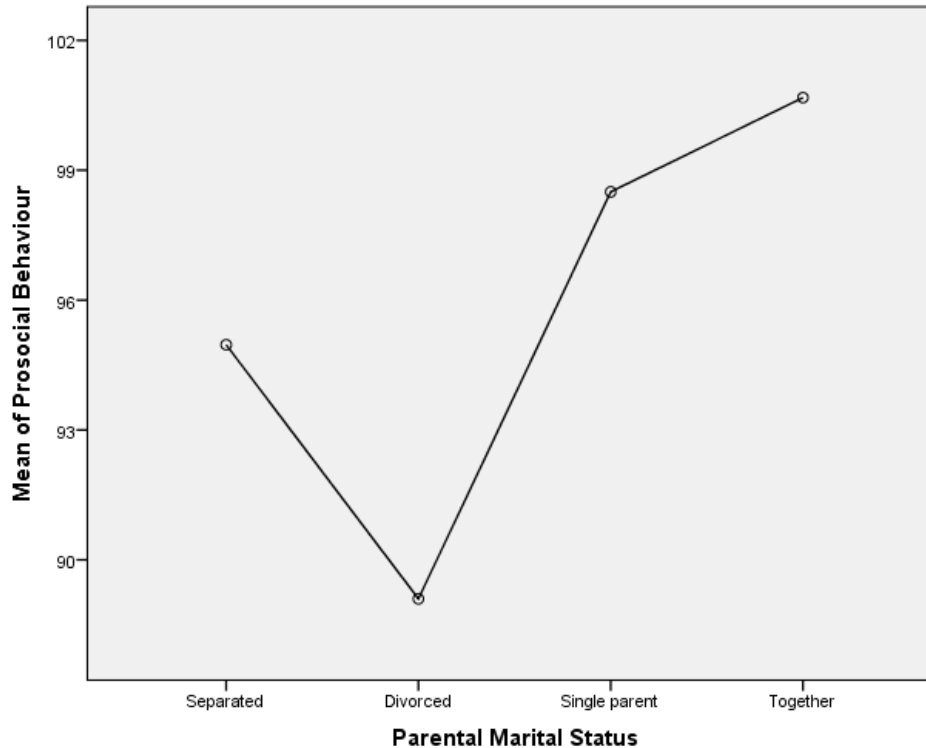


Fig. 2: Mean distribution of Pro social Behaviour among Parents' Marital Status

For the fourth hypothesis which states that parents' occupation will significantly influence pro-social behaviour, the result is presented in Table 6:

Table 6: Showing Influence of Parents' Occupation on Pro social Behaviour using One-way ANOVA

Groups	SS	Df	MS	F	P
Between Groups	5351.54	2	2675.77	16.69	<.01
Within Groups	40715.51	254	160.29		
Total	46067.05	256			

This result shows that the occupation of parents significantly influenced pro social behaviour among the participants [$F(2, 254) = 16.69, P < .01$]. This confirms the hypothesis. In order to show the group significantly different from others, the Turkey HSD for unequal groups was used and the result is presented in Table 4.3.4.1 as follows:

Table 7: Showing Significant Difference of Pro-social Behaviour in Parental Occupation using Turkey HSD for Unequal Groups

Groups	1	2	3	Mean $\pm$ SD
Working class	-			103.74 $\pm$ 12.25
Traders	8.07*	-		95.66 $\pm$ 12.17
Others	10.39*	2.31	-	93.35 $\pm$ 14.38

Note: ** $P < .01$

The result shows significant differences exist between working class and trader parents, and between working class parents and those who do some other jobs unspecified. However,



there was no significant difference between traders and those who do some other unspecified jobs. This implies students whose parents were in working class were significantly higher in pro-social behaviour than those in traders and others' groups. However, those in traders and others' groups were not significantly different. This is further shown in the mean plot in Fig. 3:

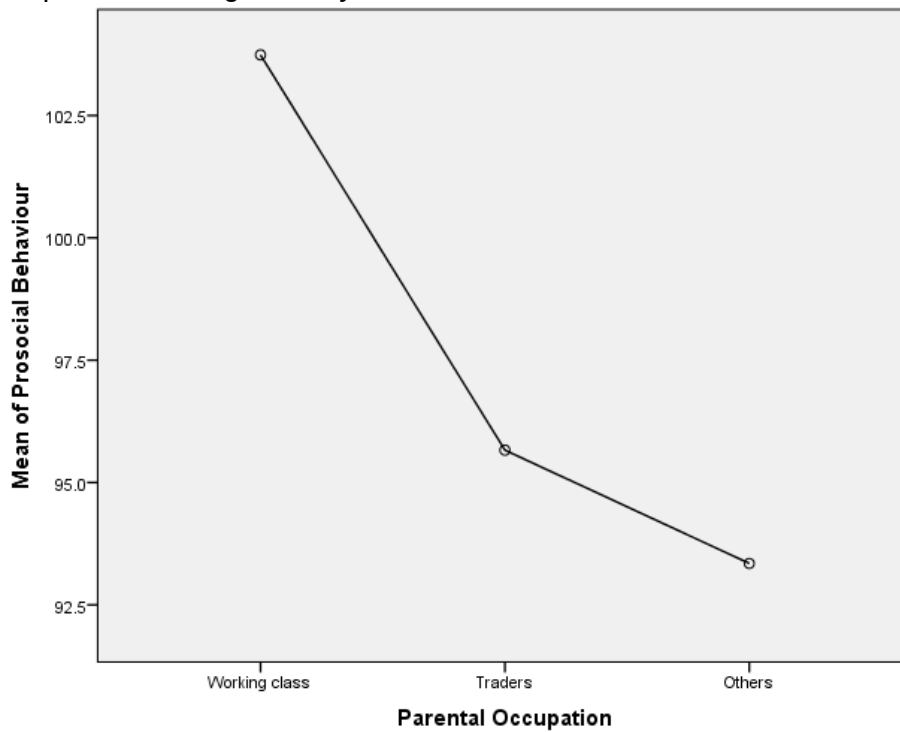


Fig. 2: Showing Graphic Representation of Mean Distribution of Pro social Behaviour in Parental Occupation

DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to investigate the influence of psychosocial variables on pro social behaviour among adolescents in a society.

Hypothesis one examined the extent to which psychosocial variables (empathy, self-efficacy, peer pressure and religion) would independently and jointly predict pro social behaviour among senior secondary school students. The result from linear regression analysis showed that the predictor variables were significant joint predictors of pro social behaviours level of the respondents. It also showed that both predictor variables accounted for a moderate variance of pro social behaviours. However, the result showed that religiosity independently did not contribute to the prediction of pro social behaviour. Meanwhile previous studies such as those of (Hardy, Sam, Carlo and Gustavo, 2005) noted that religiosity was not significantly related to public pro social behaviour. Therefore, there was no possibility for mediation. In general, studies that have failed to find significant positive associations between religiosity and pro social behaviour among adolescents' samples have typically used behavioural measures of pro social behaviour (e.g. Darley & Batson, 1973). These behavioural measures are often simulated emergency bystander situations (Darley & Batson, 1973).

Also, the current study supported previous research findings regarding individuals who were more self-efficacious and tended to be more pro social (Caprara et al., 2010). In the context of students helping students with personal problems, those students who felt more self-efficacious had higher levels of pro social tendencies. Furthermore, the hypothesis of a strong positive association between empathy and pro social behaviour had been repeatedly



substantiated throughout the pro social literature (Batson et al., 1981; 1991). Once again, this relationship was supported by the current study within the context of student interaction, where students who reported empathic concern for their mates were more inclined to report higher degrees of pro social tendencies.

This current study further showed that there exists a significant association between pro social behaviour and peer pressure. This implies that higher scores of peer pressure were associated with lower pro-social tendency among the adolescent. Peer pressure is also confirmed to be correlated with pro social behaviour according to Twenge, et.al, (2007), peer influence in form of social exclusion decreases the likelihood of pro social behaviour occurring. This finding is in line with that of Gest et al., (2001) who found that individuals who are rejected by their peers act less pro socially than do others. So also Wentzel and McNamara (1999) concluded that pro social actions are expected to correlate with social acceptance and pro social behaviour. This is in line with the findings of Zadroet. al (2006) that individuals who are ostracized from a youth activity report lower levels of belonging, control, self-esteem, and meaningful existence, including pro social behaviour (Afolabi, 2013). The same result was established by DeWall and Baumeiser, (2006).

The second hypothesis which states that age and gender will have significant main and interactional influence on pro-social behaviour, The interactional influence of age and gender was not significant on pro-social behaviour. The result from the two-way ANOVA showed that there is no significant joint prediction of predictor variables (i.e., age and gender) on pro social behaviour among adolescents. It is rather not surprising that age was not found to significantly and independently predict pro social behaviour in the current investigation hence; this is evident in various studies (Robbins, 2005; Afolabi, 2014 and Moore, 2012). Perhaps, the reason for the result might be connected to the fact that there were not much differences in their ages. Thus, effect of almost if not the same age group might be responsible for the failure of age to independently and significantly predict pro social behaviour.

Furthermore, gender of the respondents in the current investigation was also not found to significantly predict pro social behaviour. The result indicated that gender does not have a significant effect on pro social behaviour. This implies that adolescents' gender is never a determinant of helping attitude. Krebs (2007) supports this when he found out that there were no gender differences in the actual performance of altruistic behaviours. Similarly, Chou (2008) examined the effect of gender and participation in volunteer activities on pro social behaviours. He found that there was no gender difference for the frequency of pro social behaviour. Afolabi(2013) too, found no significant effect of gender on pro social behaviour among a sample of Nigerian undergraduates.

These results contradicted the findings of Eisenberg (2006), Pursell, Rubin, Booth-LaForce and Rose-Krasnor (2008), which found that women tends to display higher level of helping attitude in comparison with their male counterparts. This outcome could be as a result of the new roles of women which are quite different from the normal domestic works at home. Now women are also involved in office jobs that make them take the roles of men along that of women.

The third hypothesis tested the influence of parental marital statuses on pro-social behaviour. From the result, parental marital status showed significant influence on pro-social behaviour. Therefore the hypothesis is confirmed. Meanwhile, the result showed that significant difference lies between parents in the divorced group and those in the still living together. The indication is that adolescent under parents who live together were significantly better in their pro-social behaviour than those living with parents who were divorced. The mean plot in Fig. 2



shows that pro-social behaviour is lowest among participants whose parents were divorced and highest among those whose parents were together. This result is in line with previous studies like the work of (Olukayode, 2004), it was found that students whose parents are together and students from monogamous family tend to be more pro social than those from the polygamous families.

For the fourth hypothesis which states that parents' occupation will significantly influence pro-social behaviour. The result shows that the occupation of parents significantly influenced pro social behaviour among the participants. This confirms the hypothesis. It was discovered that adolescents whose parents were working class were more pro-socially disposed compared to others whose parents were traders and unspecified. This implies students whose parents were in working class were significantly higher in pro-social behaviour than those in traders and others' groups. However, those in traders and others' groups were not significantly different.

This finding is in line with the work of Cook (2012) who opined that occupation of parents tends to influence people's behaviour of caring and sharing due to their social interactions. He concluded that participants whose parents are working class are more likely to help or share due to the fact that their parents have a fixed and stable source of income unlike others and traders whose income are determined by sales made. In working class settings, people are forced to work closely with and have fellow feeling for people who in all likelihood are not closely related. This could predispose them to render different kind of assisting hands to their mates. Children from the like families could learn this attitude from their parents.

Conclusion

The following conclusions were reached based on the findings of this study:

- Psychosocial variables (empathy, self-efficacy, peer and religion) are joint predictors of pro social behaviour.
- Religiosity is not significantly related to pro social behaviour.
- Age and gender, has no significant influence on pro social behaviour.
- Parental marital status is significantly related to pro social behaviour.
- Parental occupation has significant relationship with pro social behaviour.

Implications

The study has both theoretical and practical implications for social/personality experts, guidance/counsellor, teachers, therapists, consultants, etc. Students, families and society at large should be thought and encouraged to engage in pro social behaviour. Also in religious practice, teachings and structures should be designed to encourage the adoption of helping attitudes.

Furthermore, academic curricular, religious groups, stakeholders and indeed public service organization should pay less attention to demographic variables in their policy making and teachings. Lastly, it will help families, counsellors, couples and religious organizations to understand the consequences of divorced and encouraged a family that stays together.

Limitation of Study

One of the limitations is related to the generality of the findings. The researchers distributed this survey study to adolescents schooling in Lagos state, one of the most populated cities in Nigeria to investigate the effect of psychosocial variables (empathy, self-efficacy, peer-pressure and religion) which in turn impacts willingness to exert or render help to someone or others in need. However, each state in Nigeria has different cultures, different number of schools (size), different religion which is common to them and characteristics which may affect



the results. This diversity of situations might affect the perception of pre-adolescents and adolescents' students.

Another one is social desirability bias. Respondents may not be able to recall very accurately the amount of helping behaviours they participated in over the years and so they tend to give a more positive answer. Also, some of the instruments used to tap information on the variables were designed in the Western world and has not been used before now in Nigeria. This might have affected the results of the research.

Future researches should try and consider experimental study of pro social behaviour while increasing the number of participants by using more secondary schools from other geo-political zones in Nigeria. In the future, it is recommended that other variables like self-esteem, self-concept, including the effects of mood, residential mobility, narcissism, and bystander effect can be investigated to determine their relevance on pro social behaviours.



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