

INFLUENCE OF LOCALITY ON ALTRUISTIC BEHAVIOUR AMONG TEACHERS

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Abstract

This study investigated the influence of locality on altruistic behaviour among teachers. Four hundred and eighty (480) secondary school teachers (275 from the urban and 205 from the rural) who were present in their duty posts and agreed to participate in this study were used. They were drawn from seven secondary schools in Enugu North (Urban) and another seven secondary schools in Igbo-Etiti (rural), Local Government Areas in Enugu State of Nigeria. The Self-Report Altruism (SRA) Scale developed by Rushton, Chrisjohn and Fekken (1981) and validated for use in Nigeria by the researcher was used in measuring the teachers' altruistic behaviour. The design used was a cross-sectional survey design, while a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used for statistical analysis of data generated. The result indicated a significant locality main effect $F(1,472) = 17.31, p < .001$. This shows that teachers in the rural areas were more altruistic than the teachers in the urban areas, thereby rejecting the null hypothesis which stated that there will be no significant influence of locality on altruistic behaviour among teachers. It was recommended that attention be given to the development and sustenance of altruistic behaviours especially in urban areas in Nigerian to discourage individualism currently ravaging the nation.

Keywords: Locality and altruistic behaviour.

Introduction

For the fact that man lives by influencing as well as being influenced by his environment, very many stimuli requiring different responses get him challenged, especially during the course of his interaction. Sometimes, these stimuli or information require him to engage in behaviours that benefit others only, or behaviours that are beneficial to others and self. Our everyday experiences provide us with many examples of altruistic behaviours. For the fact that no man is an island, man lives by either giving or receiving one form of help or the other from friends, family members, co-workers, religious groups, strangers, and even from our enemies.

The term altruistic behaviours have received many attentions from many researchers and social psychologists. Altruistic behaviours refer to only helpful behaviours or actions that are intrinsically motivated and are intended to benefit another without expectation of any reward. Taylor and David (2006) explained altruistic behaviour as the act of giving support or assistance to someone in need of such, without request or intention of any reward. According to Hoffman (1981) altruistic behaviour is that action which promotes the welfare of others without conscious regard for one's own self-interest. Coleman (2010) maintains that altruistic behaviour is composed of three elements; namely (1) giving or its desire (2) empathy and (3) no motives of reward from the beneficiary of the altruistic behaviour.

McQuire (1994) listed some examples of altruistic behaviour to include: changing a flat tyre for a stranded person, giving a stranger road direction, donating blood to an accident victim or sick person in hospital, sponsoring an indigent child through a career development, offering lift to strangers, counseling or advising someone after listening to his or her problems, etc. Batson(1998) grouped altruistic behaviour into two, namely behaviours of long or short durations. He identified behaviours such as training someone in school,

or vocation, getting job appointment, and resolving marriage problems as altruistic behaviours of long duration, while behaviours such as changing a flat tyre for stranded person, giving financial aid, giving a road direction, donating blood to an accident victim, etc are seen as altruistic behaviours of short duration. In addition, our daily lives are supposed to be filled with altruistic behaviours such as telling someone he has his headlights on or that he has a flat tyre, giving free ride to people, etc. The biblical story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:31-39) is a case in point. The Good Samaritan helped a person at some cost to himself without any apparent thoughts of reward. In fact, the belief that people should help one another is entrenched in the moral fabrics of most nations. Often we help others not because we have consciously calculated that such behaviour is in our interest but simply because something tells us we ought to. The belief that people should help those who need help without regard to future exchanges, is the norm of social responsibility (Berkowitz, 2000). However, they usually apply the social responsibility norm selectively to those whose needs appear not to be due to their own negligence.

Furthermore, people offer help at different situations and for different reasons or motives. For Levine (2008) men offered help mostly to the person of the opposite sex and in the presence of bystanders. Eagly and Crowley (1986) stated that help is offered more when someone is in a negative mood, that is, Negative-state-Relief Model. Bryn and Test (1999) maintained that people are more likely to offer help if they have observed someone carry out the helping act-modeling.

According to Noddings (2010), we need care giving and the special attitude of caring that accompanies care giving if we are to survive as a care giving social group. Those who care for each other come forward to help, comfort, encourage, support, stimulate and cheer one another.

Altruism is a vital attribute of human species capable of being influenced by some variables such as locality. Locality in this study simply means urban and rural areas, where the altruistic behaviours of teachers in those areas were measured. Binham (1980) study on influence of locality on helping behavior among Metropolitan workers using 406 participants, reported that participants in the interdependent communities helped more than the participants in the individualistic communities. People with an interdependent view of the self are more likely to define themselves in terms of their social relationships and have more of a sense of “connectedness” to others, we might predict that they would be more likely to help a person in need than those in individualistic communities. People in all cultures are more likely to help someone they define as a member of their in-group, the group with which an individual identifies. People everywhere are less likely to help someone they perceive to be a member of an out-group, a group with which they do not identify (Brown & Omoto, 2005). Cultural factors come into play in determining how strongly people draw the line between in-groups and out-groups. In many interdependent communities, the needs of in-group members are considered more important than those of out-groups, and consequently, people in these communities are more likely to help in-group members than members of individualistic communities (Taylor & Wright, 1999). Because the line between “us” and “them” is more firmly drawn in interdependent communities, people in those societies are less likely to help members of out-group than people in individualistic communities (Jambor & Lether, 2010). Thus, to be helped by other people, it is important that they view you as a member of their in-group, that is, as one of them, and this is especially true in interdependent communities (Ting & Pilliavin, 2014).

Some theories (individualistic/interdependent theories) were used to explain some issues in this write-up. Individualistic theory states that urban areas have larger populations are more likely to be exposed to many different cultures, and that when two or more cultures exist together, people tend to be allowed more individuality (Brehn & Kasson, 2013). Furthermore, it was suggested that people living in cities are constantly bombarded with stimulations and that they keep to themselves in order to avoid being overwhelmed by it, and as such, do not value helping others.

This theory lacks merit for pointing out that when two or more cultures exist together, people tend to be allowed more individuality. This is because, most of the vigilante groups, football teams, students, religious worshippers, political organizations, etc in urban and rural areas come from different cultural backgrounds with different orientations in life, yet they come together, identify and help themselves in times of need without any cultural interference.

The interdependent theory states that people who are originally from rural areas tend to share similar characteristics that help to hold them together than people who are from the urban communities (Brehn & Kassin, 2013). Furthermore, it was pointed out that rural communities are more homogenous, meaning that people within the same place share the same languages, religion and social customs that help to keep them closely together. The current researcher agrees with this assertion by making reference to Donner and Meyer (2013) report of their research finding, where they pointed out that one's own place of origin is a better indication of how one behaves than his or her present resident. In other words, to know whether people will help, it is more important to know where they were born and brought up than to know whether they are currently in a rural or urban community.

Brown and Colleagues (2005) in their study on locality differences in helping behaviour, sampled opinions of the urban and rural dwellers about helping others, and reported that cultural and religious affiliations come into play in determining how strongly people draw the line between in-groups and out-groups, pointing out that in many interdependent (rural) communities, members are considered more important than those of out-groups. Binham (1980) study on role of altruism in attitude to appear religious, reported that those participants who showed attitude to appear religious showed more altruistic behavior than those who did not show such attitude.

Isiwu (2012) study on influence of locality on helping behaviour among students, reported that students in the rural areas were found to be more altruistic than their urban counterparts.

In Nigeria, with the introduction of Western values particularly individualism and capitalism, there appears to be a tendency for Nigerians to be uncaring for one another whereas helping behaviour is seen as the principle of living and acting for the interest of others. Moreover, the problem of sycophancy which is identified in psychology as a "need to appear socially desirable" has characterized inter-personal and inter-group relations, and they appear to undermine helping behaviour in Nigerians. This is a dangerous development for the human race and Nigerians in particular since helping others is a behavior that endears people to one another and could, therefore, enhance national unity.

Furthermore, critical observations show that in the past, particularly before the Nigeria civil war, families, villages, towns, tribes, both males and females lived happily, receiving and giving mutual assistance to one another. Then community, village and family meetings contributed money and sponsored education or business career programmes of their indigent sons and daughters. For example, Egwu (2002) reported in his work that many of our successful businessmen and University graduates before and during 1960s were products of community, villages and family sponsored career/education programmes. Family bonds of love and empathy were then very strong then in social relationship. Car snatching, kidnapping, child trafficking, armed robbery, ritual killings, etc, were strange stories then.

However, in the recent past, the undiluted, love, trust and unity that characterized the social relationships of our people is quickly fading away. Everybody seems suspicious of one another. Conflicts seem to abound in families, accusations and counter accusations, apathy and hatred exist now as in lawless society, that is, society without human feelings. To support this claim, AberCrombie and Warde (1992) pointed out that periods of 1960s to 1980s represented an assertion of peace, justice, security, and caring, while the 1990s marked the beginning of greed, materialism, hatred, lack of caring, insecurity, selfishness and apathy. Following this development, this study was set to investigate whether differences in locality will influence altruistic behaviour among teachers.

Aim of the Study

This study was aimed to explore the influence of locality on altruistic behaviour among teachers. Therefore, this study in line with the ongoing efforts to create or restore friendly relationships among persons, strive to fill these yearning gaps created by dearth of empirical evidence in our environment by finding answer to this problem:

1. Will locality significantly influence altruistic behaviour among teachers?

Operational definition of Terms

1. Locality: Locality in this study refers to urban (Enugu-North) and rural (Igbo-Etiti) Local Government Areas of Enugu State. Urban areas refer to those areas that have good access road networks, good hospitals, electricity, pipe-borne water, higher institution of learning, regular market, high population density, etc while rural areas refer to those areas that have little or none of the above things in place.
2. Altruistic behaviour: In this study, it means any voluntary action directed to benefit another without intention or expectation of any reward, as it is measured by scores of Rushton, Chrisjohn and Fekken (1981) 20-item Self-Report Altruism (SRA) scale.
3. Teachers: This means both male and female teachers teaching in secondary schools in Enugu State and living within the place of their primary assignment.

Hypothesis

1. Locality will not significantly influence altruistic behaviour among teachers.

Method

Participants

Participants for this study comprised four hundred and eighty (480) secondary school teachers (210 males and 270 females) were drawn using available or incidental sampling technique ,from fourteen secondary schools in Enugu North and Igbo-Etiti Local Government Areas of Enugu State of Nigeria . Two hundred and seventy-five (275) of the participants were drawn from seven secondary schools in Enugu-North Local Government Area (Urban), while two hundred and five (205) of the other participants were drawn from seven secondary schools in Igbo-Etiti Local Government Area (Rural). Their ages range from 25-45 years and their minimum educational qualification was NCE.

Instrument

The self-Report Altruism (SRA) Scale developed by Rushton, Christjohn and Fekken (1981) was used for data collection. Section A of the scale contained demographic variations and participants were instructed to indicate their gender locality and religious denomination. The scale is in self-report format and consists of 20 items. Participants were instructed to rate the frequency with which they have engaged in the altruistic behaviour using the categories “Never” 1 point “Once” 2 points, “more than once” – 3points “Often” 4 points and “very often” 5 points.

The researcher revalidated the scale for use in the Nigerian context using 10 participants randomly drawn from four secondary schools in Nsukka and Enugu-East Local Government Areas of Enugu State. A Cronbach Alpha Reliability value of .81 was obtained. The data were also subjected to split-half reliability and a co-efficient value .77 was found.

Procedure

Fourteen secondary schools (7 schools from Enugu-North (Urban) and 7 schools from Igbo-Etiti (rural), were systematically sampled and used for this study. Four hundred and eighty-five copies of the questionnaire were administered, and collected back on the spot. Two hundred and seventy-seven copies of the questionnaire were distributed, filled, and returned on the spot from the urban schools. In all the copies of the questionnaire administered in urban schools, all were returned but only two copies were wrongly filled and were discarded, while in the rural schools, two hundred and eight copies of the questionnaire were distributed, filled and returned on the spot. In all the copies of the questionnaire administered here, all were returned but only three copies were wrongly filled and discarded as well.

Design/statistic

The design for this study was a cross-sectional survey design, while One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used for statistical analysis of data generated.

Result

Table 1: Table of Mean and Standard Deviation for Location and Altruistic Behaviour.

	\bar{X}	SD	N
Locality: Urban	63.66	11.87	275
Rural	66.33	10.96	205

Table 1 above shows that participants in rural areas had a higher mean altruistic score ($x = 66.33$, $SD = 10.96$) than their urban counterparts

TABLE II: ANOVA Summary table for locality and altruistic behaviour

Source	Type III of Square	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Locality	2184.492	1	2184.492	17.306	**
Error	59578.684	472	126.226		
Total	2079490	480			
Corrected Total	63950.800	479			

Keys: ** = $p < .001$

Result as shown in table II indicated a significant locality main effect $F(1,472 = 17.31, p < .001)$. It was found that participants in rural areas tended to be more altruistic than those in the urban areas. This led to the rejection of the null hypothesis which stated that locality will not significantly influence altruistic behaviour among teachers.

Discussion

This study investigated the influence of locality on altruistic behaviour among teachers. The result of the study showed a significant influence of locality on altruistic behaviour among teachers. In other words, the result showed a significant difference between the urban and rural teachers in their altruistic behaviour, pointing out that teachers in rural areas are more altruistic than those in the urban areas. This result agreed with the findings of Isiwu (2012), Hedge and Jousif (1992), Milgram (2007), Yourif and Korte (2010) and Campbell (1996) that found significant difference between urban and rural dwellers in their altruistic behaviours. It was observed that because the line between “us” and “them” is more firmly drawn in rural communities than in the urban, people in rural communities were likely to help themselves more than people in the urban. The significant influence of locality on altruistic behaviour, could be accounted for by the fact that people in the rural areas show feelings of “connectedness” unlike people in the urban areas who show no such feelings, but are rather strange to one another. Brace and Burn (2010) reported that people who grew up in rural communities would be more likely to help even if they were visiting big cities. Furthermore, Carlson, Legge and Lesse (2010) in their study stated that one’s own present residence is not a better indicator of how he/she behaves than his/her place of origin. Following this development, the researcher in this study, would report that to predict whether people will help, it is more important to know whether they were brought up in a rural or urban community than it is to know their places of origin.

On the other hand, the findings of Michael and Norton (2004), Fredrick and Janet (1996), that reported no locality difference on altruistic behaviour between their urban and rural participants, did not support the current researcher’s finding. The reason for non significant locality difference in altruistic behaviour between urban and rural dwellers as indicated by the above researchers could be that majority of the people residing in urban areas came from the rural areas, and as such, have been socialized in the rural life of feeling of connectedness. Furthermore, individual differences among the participants could be another strong contributor to such differences between the rural and urban dwellers.

Implication of the finding

Altruistic behaviour is a vital area of concern to many social psychologists, and as such, maximum attention should be given to those variables that encourage altruistic behaviours among people in our society. It has been found that human altruistic behaviour is regulated by locality difference among people. This input has contributed to the overall extension of the frontiers of knowledge in social psychology, by identifying locality as one of the variables that influence altruistic behaviours. It could be said that social psychological theories have been enriched by the addition of the locality as one of the variables influencing altruistic behaviour.

One empirical implication of this study for social psychology and education is the need to design the type of education that is not only cognitive but also moral in purpose, policy and method, for this will definitely reduce the effect of locality differences in vital aspects of our national life in which altruistic behaviour is an important component.

The researcher therefore recommends that government, schools, churches, military and para-military organizations, etc should encourage both rural and urban dwellers to be more altruistic since they are the watchdogs of the social vices like armed robbery, internet fraud, kidnapping, child trafficking, etc, in the society.

Summary and Conclusion

This study investigated the influence of locality on altruistic behaviour among teachers. The teachers were drawn from the population of urban and rural teachers in Enugu State. The result showed that rural teachers were more altruistic than those in the urban area. The hypothesis which stated that locality will not significantly influence altruistic behaviour of teachers was rejected, following a significant influence of locality on altruistic behaviour found among teachers. In conclusion, locality is now regarded as a variable that has significantly influenced altruistic behaviour of teachers. Since no man is an island, and that man is a social animal, there is every need for altruistic behaviour to be encouraged in our country, both in the rural and local areas. Finally, there is need, to encourage television programmes where people are exposed to models of altruistic behaviour and not acts of violence, aggression and selfishness which seem to characterize the nation. The families, communities, schools, etc should socialize people in altruism to avert the dangers of individualism currently prevalent in Nigeria and which is against African extended family system.

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