

Relationships of Some Nigerian Secondary School Students' Rating on Upward School Behaviours and Experienced Care and Concern from Their Care-givers

T. O. Owuamanam, A. O. S. Adegoroye and J. O. Babatunde

Department of Guidance and Counselling, Faculty of Education, University of Ado-Ekiti, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT The mean scores of 550 secondary school students (a random sample) in Ekiti State, one of the thirty-six in Nigeria on the inventories of Upward School Behaviour (USB) and Experienced Care and Concern (EXCACO) of significant people were correlated. The results show a significant positive correlation between the rather low scores on the two variables. The coefficient of determination, however, shows mutual contributions of over 60% between the two variables. The findings seem to support the claim that expected behaviors that help students to achieve in schools cannot be legislated unless complimentary and enhancing conditions are provided and guaranteed as reported of nations with increased tune of upward School Behaviors among their high school students. Suggestions were on how to improve the situation beyond the yearly considerable financial, material and intellectual budgetary resources allocations been invested to activate Upward School Behaviors but without notable improvement or change in the desirable construct.

INTRODUCTION

Developing and maintaining the wide spectrum of upward school attitudes and behaviours among youths of secondary (high) school age and indeed the other segments of the education ladder is fundamental to the objectives of schooling. These attitudes and behaviors embrace learning about changes in technological, scientific and cultural developments as well as acquiring and constantly displaying literacy in them, possessing a rich perception of eagerness of participation in science and other groupings of school subjects, being alert and disciplined as in controlling impulsive reactions and not being involved in crimes and violence, developing physical, mental and emotional skills as to be self-reliant, developing and displaying agreeable morality, understanding ethics and abiding by them. That is learning to do the right things as well as having links with intellectually rewarding sources. Further along this line is the fact that students who have imbibed of these upward school attitudes and behaviours understand punishments and are able to appreciate them when meted to them. Further, they are able to manifest acts of volunteering for community service, understanding of the immediate and distance environments.

In these wide spectrums of contents of the universe of the variables of upward school attitudes and behaviours are reports of researches

indicating a global trend of their increased measure among high (secondary) students, for example, in America, Meyer et al. (2003) reported high grade point averages in the academic results of high school students. These set of students were among those in other 15 nations of the world who staged a peaceful demonstration to protest the plight of children (that are being used as soldiers) in the Goma region of Uganda. In Britain not only are the youths grade point average on the increase, statistics that was frightening about their involvement in various crimes in the past decade is on the decrease (Abudu 2000; Muthukrishna 2001)

In the Scandinavian region, the reports are similar as reports from Poland and other East European nations about high school students highlight impressive academic reports and social reports are constant and steady (Ying 2003; Wilkins 2004; Williams 2006; Wang 2006). In Libya, Ghana, Zambia, Kenya and Botswana as well as South Africa similar reports emerging (Tomasevski 2003; Maimbolwa-Sinyanwe and Chilangwa 2005). In all of these impressive trends in the measures of upward school attitudes and behaviours there have been established significant relationships with the care and concerns shown by the government and other significant others in the life of these youths (Swart 1996; Lee and Chroninger 1994; US Department of Education 2001; Sue-Chie and Williams 2001; National Literacy Trust 2003).

According to Bighon and Praise (1985), Mutava (1998), Herran and Rodriguez (2006), and Wang (2006), the reforms that led to these improved quality in American education fall into three categories: those dealing with rules, those involving resources and those concerned with incentives. He emphasized that spending more money on education does not translate to better education but that incentives as showing care and concern for the well-being of students on one hand and the teachers on the other has. He cited the example of the impact of the reform and incentives of introducing improved and state of the art size swimming pool, under-water viewing room, television and animation studio, a 25-acre wildlife sanctuary, a zoo, a robotic lab, field trips outside the nation that turned out to be a challenge to make students adjust and adopt the expected upward school behaviors. Their guiding idea was common sense, involving parents and teachers in mutually productive and beneficial ways.

However, the case appears different in Nigeria. Virtually every research reports on the state of education and status of student's upward school behaviors indicate a negative trend. Ying (2003) submitted a high grade of illiteracy among junior secondary school students in his evaluative study of gradational literacy in mathematics. Wilkins (2004) provided data to reflect the students' poor perception of and participation in science. Abudu (2000) highlighted poor communication skills and use of English (the 'official') language among the secondary (high) school students. Braidi (2006) highlighted a high tendency of venality amongst them with a tendency to be readily involved in financial crimes. Further along were the reports of their unbecoming attitudes and behaviors. Oluwatayo (2007) highlighted their involvement in promiscuity and other transient pleasurable acts than academics or other socially enhancing services.

Along this line of thought, Diamond (2005) was categorical in his submission of the Nigerian school child as being poorly educated and offered the social, cultural and physical environment as a major reason for Nigerian youths' poor response to developing and embracing upward school attitudes and behaviors. He highlighted some of the practices of the supposed care and concern givers to include using them to hawk during times they should be resting and studying, not providing needed materials even

when they have to go to school and not giving them balanced diet as required of their age. These are inimical to the rights and well-being of the youths. He further advanced these as reasons to equate Nigerian cultural and social environment to a ground where neglect and in the extreme, abuse is freely flourishing. The questions to ask and answer then is, to what extent is the reported poor demonstration of upward school attitudes and behaviors of Nigerian secondary students related to the care and concern they experience from their supposed care givers. Of relevance in this bid would be empirical data on the status of their upward school behavior scores/ rating on a validated scale of measures on one hand as well as their rating of their experience with their care and concerns givers on a scale of measure on the other hand. It would be interesting to see how much each of these two variables contribute to each other in the social and school performances of typical Nigerian secondary school student.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to identify the extent to which the upward school behavior of a sample of Nigerian secondary school is related to the measure of their experienced care and concerns. Specifically the study sought to put on record the impressions and the ratings of the secondary school students of the care and concern given or being shown by their care-givers and what percentage of variation observed in their upward school behaviors is accounted for by the experience of care and concern they claim come from their care-givers.

Research Question

- (i) How much of the expected upward school attitudes and behaviors describe Nigerian secondary school students?
- (ii) How do Nigerian secondary school students consider the care and concerns shown by their care- and concerns- givers?
- (iii) To what extent can these two variables be related?

Null Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between the upward school attitudes and behaviors of

Nigerian secondary school students and their experienced care and concerns from the expected givers.

METHODOLOGY

Design

The research design adopted was the descriptive survey of the correlation type. The design enabled the researchers to measure the variables of upward school behaviors and the care and concerns that the sample of the study experienced in their schooling lives and the relationship that exist between the two variables.

Population

The population of this study comprised all Nigerian secondary school students in Ekiti State.

Sample

The sample consisted of 550 stratified and randomly selected secondary school students drawn from the diverse statistics of location, school type, class, age, socio-economic status and the religion practiced by the respondents.

Instrument

The instruments used for data collection were 2 sets of self designed inventories on the variables of: Upward School Behaviors and The Experienced Care and Concern. The wide spectrum of upward school and behaviors were considered and factor analyzed into 7 classes and presented on 21 items. The respondents are to indicate how descriptive they are of these attitudes and behaviors. 3 response patterns of very descriptive (3), sometimes descriptive (2) and not descriptive (1) were attached to each item. The items were presented for the respondents to indicate how much they considered themselves descriptive of the items, a maximum score of 63 rating all as descriptive and a minimum of 21 rating all as not descriptive is possible on this inventory. High scores are taken from 45 and above.

On the Care and Concerns Experienced Inventory, responses as Always (3), Once a While (2) and Never (1) were attached to the 32 items

classified into 8 major factors. A maximum score 96 rating all the items as always experienced and a minimum of 32 rating all as never experienced are possible on the inventory. High scores are marked from 67-96. The items were presented for the respondents to indicate how often they experience these expected cares from their care -givers.

On each of these 2 inventories, it is possible to compute the sample's mean scores on each of the sub-groupings and further get the sample's mean scores on each of the inventories. These set of scores may further be correlated to determine the nature and strength of their relationships (Swart 1996).

Validity

The authors adopted the process of convergent construct validity for the two sets of inventory. In the attempt, a well- financed, privately owned and run and strategically located (serene and semi-urban) secondary school that had the patronage of the high class in the society as well as good report of high academic reports in the south-western part of the country was selected to test the efficacy of the traits being tested by the items on the final forms of the inventory. The mean scores rating of the sample of 50 drawn from JSS II – SSS III, that is, 10 students of equal representation of the sexes mean scores on the 2 inventories classified the sample that generated them as having high traits of upward school behaviors and also as having a high measure of care and concern from their care givers.

Reliability

Through the method of test-retest with 25 senior secondary school students in a community High School in Ekiti state, but who were not part of the participants in the study, a coefficient of 0.57 for the EXCACOI were obtained and considered sufficient and strong enough to be used for this study.

Administration of the Instrument

The instrument was administered on the sample at their schools after the intent of the use had been explained to them. Research assistants collected the instruments at the expiration of the 45 minutes allowed to complete the

instruments. These were later collated for machine assisted analysis. (Data for this study was collected during the 2004/2005 Nigerian School Academic Calendar Year)

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the location, school type, class, age, socio-economic status and the religion practiced by the respondents.

Table 1: Statistics of respondents

		<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Total</i>
A	Sex			
	M	244	44.4	550
	F	306	55.6	
B	Age			
	10-14	117	32.2	550
	15-17	433	67.8	
C	Location			
	Urban	250	45.4	550
	Rural	300	54.6	
D	Class			
	JSS	230	41.8	550
	SSS	225	58.2	
E	S.E.S			
	High	103	18.1	550
	Medium	109	19.8	
	Low	338	61.1	
F	Religion			
	Christianity	200	36.4	550
	Islam	211	38.4	
	TR	39	7.2	

Sample means score indicate the response pattern tendency of the sample on the issue. For example, 1- 1.5 represent never as well as not descriptive, 1.6 -2 represent sometimes/ slightly descriptive and 2.5- 3 represent always as well as very descriptive.

Table 2 reveals that the mean scores of the sample on upward school behavior indicate the

Table 2: Mean scores of respondents on upward school behavior inventory

	<i>Upward school behaviors/attitudes</i>	$\bar{\alpha}$	<i>S.D</i>
1	Devotion to study, spending at least two hours alone every day	2.01	0.41
2	Having specific times for activities	1.95	0.16
3	Participation in community enhancing activities	1.76	0.31
4	Concern for others' well-being	1.53	0.23
5	Maintaining personal integrity	1.94	0.17
6	Being pious and observing social rules and regulations	1.92	0.22
7	Making effort to understand the concepts that one have to work with	1.87	0.31

sample as only slightly descriptive of the expected upward school behavior and attitudes.

Table 3 reveals the mean scores as indicating that the respondent rarely experienced the expected care and concerns from their care givers.

Table 3: Sample's mean scores on the 8 aspects of experienced care and concern

	<i>Issues / items</i>	$\bar{\alpha}$	<i>S.D</i>
1	Health care provisions	2.63	0.46
2	Material provisions	2.01	0.51
3	Teachers monitoring	2.44	0.41
4	Parental monitoring	2.68	0.36
5	Enhancing environmental provisions	1.97	0.73
6	Understandable and tolerable sanctions	2.84	0.64
7	Constant repairs of damaged learning instruments	1.89	0.77
8	Replacement of obsolete learning instruments	2.06	0.66

Table 4 shows that the correlation between experienced care and concern and expected upward school behavior is 0.78 and the coefficient of determination r^2 is 0.6084 implying that over 60% of variance in the two variables are mutually contributed by them.

Table 4: Correlation index between (a) and (b)

<i>Variables</i>	<i>(b)</i>
(a)	$r=0.78$

$r^2 = 0.6084$

=> Coefficient of determination, that is, percentage contribution of factors in (a) to (b)

(a) Contributes 60.84% to the variance in (b) and vice versa

DISCUSSION

There is positive correlation between upward school behaviors and experienced care and concern of significant others of secondary school students. That the mean scores of the sample are low on these desired traits and behaviors could be hung upon the fact that the care- givers of these students are either paying lip service to them or approaching them half- heartedly which many times leave the students to divert their focus from their study to join their peers in seeking for or creating and engaging in consolatory behaviors and that satisfied more of their physiological needs (Noble 2005). This finding agrees with Orukotan (2007) on secondary school students' involvement in financial crimes which could be born out of the inability

of their guardians, parents and school authorities to provide material needs of the students.

Low possession of upward school attitudes and behaviors could be attributed to poor and unhealthy physical environment, unattractive school activities, lack of commitment and integrity on both teachers and students, and lack of compliance to school time-tables by teachers. These are observable for people transacting in many of the secondary schools across the length and breadth of the nation. Student's lack of devotion to studies and academic exercises could therefore be due to lack of effective monitoring on the part of the parents and school authorities. Sometimes discipline has to be enforced to make students committed. The principals adopting appropriate leadership styles as to elicit the desired behaviors need not be overstressed.

Results for the data in this study appear to support the claims of Diamond (2005) that the care and concern experienced from the caregivers, parents, teachers and government officials (who are the major stake holders in the education industry) contribute as much as 45% variance of the appreciable increase in the upward school behavior of students in many of the advanced nations of the world. It is daily reported in the Nigerian National Daily and tabloids of the huge financial commitments that the government of the day makes to education in the yearly national budgets and that are graciously approved by the legislative bodies in the country.

These budgets of the years past as well as that of the present experiment at democratic governance, however are yet to translate to physical and palpable development in terms of structure and practices intended. As it is apt to claim, between the legislation of acts and policies to achieving commendable goals and the implementation of these, lays the blind spot..., corrupt officials. They sit to mismanage and embezzle the funds and hence frustrate the realization of the objectives of the budgeting.

The issue of this mismanagement needs to be seriously addressed as it has negative influence on the commitment of the teachers, the parents, the administrators and attitudes.

The judiciary and executive arms of government may need to take some more drastic steps to revert the trend. How to do this certainly is another focus of research, but it needs to be done.

For now, principals and administrators in schools as well as the teachers may need to be reminded of the issues in the global trends of upward school behaviors and attitudes and therefore seek for ways to move Nigerian secondary (high) schools students, in the same direction.

May be appeals for funds from the industries and international donor agencies as well as the intervention of their trained monitors to effect these acts of care and concern will be welcome intervention measures. It is also needful to remind secondary school operators and the other stake holders that education at this level is a communal effort, and it need not be restricted to government effort. Nigerian children must become global compliant in increasing their upward school behaviors and attitudes.

CONCLUSION

The mere conception of what constitutes care for minors and showing concern for their welfare and intellectual growth as evidenced by many of such projects, for example, free education, compulsory feeding of students during mid day breaks, free medical treatments, promise to re-build schools' dilapidated buildings and bringing in state of the arts equipments in teaching materials, supply of school text-books and materials, re-training and re-equipment of teachers, institution of national and state awards for excelling students in behaviors and academics, does not translate to effecting them on day –to-day basis as the only way to harness their effects on the students behaviors and school performance. Unfortunately, many of these student-friendly acts only stop at the policy level as the actual practice had been abandoned or being approached in half measures and the governmental officials and agencies who are to supervise the programmes are insincere about fulfilling them. That such programs have gulped so much of government subventions without the expected rise in the upward school behaviors speaks of need for commitment on the part of government and her officials as well as a need for the officials to look somewhere else for embezzling funds.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The appeal is to the conscience of these caregivers to allow practice to cares and concerns

for the students at this level as doing so would not only be doing this generation a large measure of good but the nation and human race. It need be said that both Nigeria and the human race appear to be looking forward to a generation full of disciplined and upward school behaviors descriptive personalities.

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