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PERSONALITY TRAITS, LIFE SATISFACTION, DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES AND PRO-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN BENUE STATE UNIVERSITY, MAKURDI



FACULTY: Social Science

DEGREE: Psychology (B.Sc)

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Appendix I

Appendix II



ABSTRACT

This study investigated personality traits, life satisfaction, demographic variables and pro-social behaviour among undergraduate students in Benue state university, Makurdi. The study employed cross-sectional survey design where 336 participants consisting of 161(47.9%) males and 175(52.1%) females were used for the study. Their ages ranged from 17-41years with the mean of 27.4(SD=5.09). Three instruments were used to collect data from the participants. Statistical analysis involved the use of hierarchical regression. Findings indicated that, personality traits significantly produced a joint influence, but individually, only extraversion and conscientiousness had significant contributions to pro-social behaviour among Benue state university undergraduates. Similarly, life satisfaction significantly predicted pro-social behaviour among Benue state university undergraduates. Finally, age, sex, religion, educational level and ethnic group jointly influenced pro-social behaviour, whereas individually, only age and educational level proved to be significant. It was therefore recommended that students should be well built with collective and social values so as to increase their propensity to indulge in pro-social behaviour. Finally, subsequent researchers should endeavour to use more participants by embracing more universities.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

For centuries humans have taught, recognized and fostered the vast benefits associated with charitable behaviour. In fact, both philosophical and religious teachings have long argued that charitable giving leads to prosperity. This also becomes apparent in the many proverbs and metaphors that have persisted throughout human history; “to give is to receive” or “give and it will be given to you”. To that extent, there exists empirical evidence for such common claims, numerous recent studies have identified that charitable behaviour stimulates mental as well as physical well-being (Brooks, 2007). A quick overview of the most recent international comparison of charitable giving (CAF, 2010) indicates that in most western countries, the percentage of the population that donates to charity (in a given month) varies roughly between 50% and 70%. While this covers a considerable range in the face of the recent spike in natural disasters (New Orleans, 2005; Haiti, 2010; Japan, 2011) and in support of other important pressing regional and local causes (e.g., climate change, cancer research, poverty) charitable giving is never unwelcomed. In fact, it is much needed at present and arguably, even more so in the future. In support of this need, establishing a better understanding of the

psychological conditions that underlie charitable giving intentions will play an important role in eliciting and stimulating charitable behaviour.

So far, most research has focused solely on the descriptive role of demographic and socio-economic factors in explaining charitable behaviour. For example, Drollinger (1998) found that income, education and religious affiliation are all associated with charitable giving. While evidence on religious influence is mixed (Brooks, 2003; Borgloh *et al.*, 2010) ample research (Pharaoh & Tanner, 1997; Schervish & Havens, 1997; Borgloh *et al.*, 2010) has indicated that individual willingness to donate increases with education, age and income. A compelling finding by Borgloh *et al.* (2010) suggests that people prefer to donate to small organizations rather than larger ones when presented with information on the organization's revenue stream. A possible explanation for this preference includes Duncan's (2004) "impact model of philanthropy", which postulates that donators try to obtain maximum impact with their contributions. In addition, field experiments have shown that individuals are more willing to give if they know that others are giving as well (Frey & Meier, 2004; Croson & Shang, 2008; Martin & Randal, 2008) a phenomenon known as 'conditional cooperation'. Still, other research explored the decision making process in charitable giving (Burgoyne *et al.*, 2005), as well as the role of trust and commitment (Sargeant & Lee, 2004) and the role of social relations (Radley & Kennedy, 1995).

Yet, the literature that contributes to a social-psychological understanding of the factors that underlie an individual's decision to donate to charity has been extremely limited. This is surprising, as a grounded theoretical and empirical understanding of the psychological factors that contribute to the formation of an individual's charitable intention(s) should be regarded as a prerequisite for designing effective behavioural interventions. Particularly, because people are expected to carry out their intentions when the opportunity arises. There is significant merit in understanding how underlying intentions are formed, even considering the fact that intentions do not always translate into behaviour (i.e., intention-behaviour gap), this does not necessarily mean that individuals do not form their intentions, it could be for example, that there are simply structural-situational or control barriers preventing individuals from carrying out their intentions (Ajzen, 1991). Thus, while the stimulation of actual charitable behaviour is undoubtedly the end goal, the insights gained from understanding what psychological factors are important in the formation of charitable intentions should be regarded as a crucial step towards achieving this goal. It is against this backdrop, that the researcher will investigate personality traits, life satisfaction, demographic variables and pro-social behaviour among undergraduate students of Benue state university, Makurdi.

1.2 Statement of problem

In any contemporary society, all behaviours are as a result of one factor or the other and this behaviour can be positive/negative or rather beneficial or otherwise.

Observations from across schools showed that, students express varying rates of pro-social behaviour as witnessed during help demanding situations like lending textbooks, helping others during calculations, sacrificing for other students and sharing of materials amongst roommates in hostels, some students overlook incidents that demand their help while others are always eager to rescue a fellow victim of circumstance, this dynamics are baffling and the question remains if this behaviours are associated with difference in satisfaction with life, emotional stability, interpersonal relationship, gender difference, ethnicity and one's personality traits which are stable across place and time, can be related to student's propensity to display pro-social tendencies. There is this controversy that this tendency to help emerges due to ones level of satisfaction with life as supported by Martin & Huebner (2007) who found that a higher rate of pro-social interactions was linked to greater life satisfaction and pro-social acts for middle school students, although on the contrary, Anderson (2009) in his study concluded that satisfaction with life did not account for any of the variance of pro-social behaviour, this suggests that those who demonstrate pro-social behaviour are not significantly motivated to do so because of life satisfaction, but as a result of other factors. Perhaps, pro-social behaviour is too complex and too broad to be significantly accounted for by satisfaction with life. These and other human factors are assumed to have contributed to the rate of charitable behaviour been witnessed in the society today. And instead, a lot of researches have focused on anti-social behaviour, only few have actually investigated pro-social behaviour. The few studies on pro-social behaviour have usually been

among children and infants or the aged, there are virtually few if not none that tried to investigate pro-social behaviour among youths/undergraduates. Research has shown strong correlation between agreeableness and pro-social behaviour (Graziano & Eisenberg, 1997) although less is known about other factors of the big-five personality and pro-social behaviour. Bearing all this contradictions and loopholes in mind, the study will look at the other side of the coin and focus on pro-social behaviour, specifically helping behaviour among undergraduates in Benue state university. It will thus investigate personality traits, life satisfaction, demographic variables and pro-social behaviour among Benue State University undergraduate students.

1.3 Aim and objectives of the study

The aim of this research work is to investigate personality traits, life satisfaction, demographic variables and pro-social behaviour among undergraduate students of Benue state university, Makurdi. The research will thus seek to achieve the following objectives:

- i. To examine if the personality traits such as openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism will independently and jointly influence pro-social behaviour among Benue state university undergraduates, Makurdi.
- ii. To establish if life satisfaction will significantly influence pro-social behaviour among Benue state university undergraduates, Makurdi.

- iii. To examine if age, sex, religion, education and ethnic group will independently and jointly influence pro-social behaviour among Benue state university undergraduates, Makurdi.

1.4 Research questions

The study intends to provide data to answer the following research questions:

- i. Will the personality traits such as openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism, independently and jointly influence pro-social behaviour among Benue state university undergraduates?
- ii. Is there any significant influence of life satisfaction on pro-social behaviour among Benue state university undergraduates?
- iii. Will age, sex, religion, marital status, education and ethnic group, independently and jointly influence pro-social behaviour among Benue state university undergraduates?

1.5 Significance of the study

The study will instil in to parents and guardians, the importance of inculcating social values and encouraging positive emotional expression in the up-growing youths as this could trigger their predisposition to act pro-socially. The educational sector will also gain insight from such study as more knowledge will be laid at

disposal for students, lecturers and other research oriented bodies who may want to explore more on these and other aspect of pro-social behaviour.

The government and non-governmental organizations will also appreciate the relevance of the study, for the study will intimate these bodies through the mass media, to implement policies that will help educate and restructure public views on the importance of social interaction, helping, charity and cooperation.

1.6 Scope of the study

The study is limited to undergraduate students from 100-500 in Benue state university, Makurdi. It is also limited to personality traits, life satisfaction, demographic variables and pro-social behaviour of undergraduates in Benue state university, Makurdi.

1.7 Operational definition of concepts

Major concepts used in this chapter are operationally defined as follows:

Personality: These are those affects, behaviours and cognitions that characterize a person in a variety of situations over time and which distinguish them from others.

Demographic variables: They are attributes peculiar of a given population that provides data about their identity.

Pro-social behaviour: Pro-social behaviour is voluntary behaviour intended to benefit others or society as a whole, such as helping, sharing, donating, co-operating and volunteering.

Altruism: This involves self-sacrifice for the benefit of another or others.

Empathy: The ability to understand other's feelings either because you have experienced same.

Neuroticism: It examines the level of adaptability or emotional instability. It distinguishes between individuals that are prone to psychic exhaustion and unrealistic ideals.

Extraversion: It reflects the quality and quantity of interpersonal interactions, need of stimulation and activation level. It is the personality trait of seeking fulfilment from sources outside the self.

Openness to experience: It measures the tendency to seek new experiences, intellectual pursuit and to uncover and tolerate the unknown.

Agreeableness: It examines the quality of interpersonal orientation on a compassion-hostility continuum manifested in thoughts, emotions and actions. It also involves how people adjust their behaviours to fit others.

Conscientiousness: It is a measure of the level of motivation, hardworking, endurance and organization of goal-oriented behaviour and distinguishes between reliable self-demanding individuals and those indifferent and negligent.

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