

PARENTAL EXPECTATION AS A CORRELATE OF SOCIAL VALUES OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN SOUTH-EAST, NIGERIA

Ugwu, Jude Chigozie;¹ Nbisike, Gyna-sam Ogechi¹ & Ngwoke, Dominic Ugwuoke²

¹Department of Educational Psychology/Guidance & Counselling

Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education, Owerri

²Department of Educational Foundations, University Of Nigeria, Nsukka

Abstract

This study investigated parental expectation as correlate of social values of undergraduate students in South-East, Nigeria. The study adopted a correlational survey design. The population of the study comprised 18, 200 male and female undergraduates of public and private universities in South-East, Nigeria. Multi-stage sampling techniques were adopted to select a sample of 910 respondents for the study. The study was guided by 2 research questions and 2 null hypotheses. Two instruments: Parental Expectations Questionnaire (PEQ), and Social Values Questionnaire (SVQ), were used for data collection. The instruments were validated by five experts. Data were analyzed using Regression Coefficient and PROCESS MACRO t-test through SPSS version 25.0. Hypothesis one was tested using Regression ANOVA while hypothesis two was tested using PROCESS MACRO t-test at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that: there was a significant relationship between parental expectations and social values of undergraduate students; the moderating influence of gender on the correlation between parental expectations and social values of undergraduate students was not significant. Based on the findings, it was recommended that: parents should be sensitized on the associated impact of the kind and level of expectations they place on their wards; Policy makers, stakeholders and curriculum planners should design and implement programmes that would help students to recognize, appreciate and show regards for social values; lecturers should focus more on the students' behaviours and attitudes within and outside the university environment; rather than relying only on the course contents.

Keywords: Parental expectations, social values, undergraduate students, and gender

Introduction

The kind and level of expectations parents have towards their wards, seem to be associated with social values of undergraduate students in South-East, Nigeria. Within societies, there exist certain values that are generally acceptable by the people. Among these values or ideals are human dignity, equality of rights, social progress, freedom, and peace (Kofi, in Williams, 2014). These values are universal and applicable to every individual of all ages (Sagive, Roccas, Cieciuch & Schwartz, 2017); and thus, could be referred to as social values.

In an ideal world, social values are standards that most members of a society agree with and that help them realize a better society (Dogan, in Mean & Tojerow, 2018). According to Yazici (2014), social values are moral convictions that represent the shared views and emotions of the people that make up the society. Such moral convictions are: being nice to one another, being honest and supportive (Zach, 2019); equal rights, honesty, freedom, respect, peace, conformity and accomplishment. There are many components of social values as already pointed out above; but this study focuses on the following: peace, conformity, social progress, human dignity and freedom. These components of social values are chosen because they seem to mostly address the prevailing youths' problems. For instance, the present day societies seem to be in a state of chaos (lack of peace and

unity); members of the society especially the youths hardly conform to some of the societal rules and regulations; social progress is seriously dwindling as seen in denial of rights and marginalization. There are observable lack of respect and regard for human dignity; and abuse of freedom among the youths. Social values are fundamental tools for an individual to survive in the society (Mohd & Saima, 2014). This implies that, adherence to social values would likely prevent and address some societal challenges thereby, improving individuals' chances of survival. Operationally, social values could be seen as those cherished goals and standards that are generally or universally acceptable to guide, direct and coordinate human behaviour and livelihood.

Unfortunately, undergraduate students in South-East, Nigeria, show little or no regard for social values. According to Saima (2014), some youths especially undergraduates show little or no regard for social values. They are found to indulge in social vices such as, internet fraud, kidnapping (abduction), rape, and suicide, to mention but a few. Indulgence in these vices may likely affect undergraduates' personal and interpersonal relationships; psychological well-being, and academic engagement/achievement; and also, hamper social and economic stability of the people of the society in general. Undergraduates' involvement in these social vices could be attributed to some factors like: unemployment, poverty, religion, politics, illiteracy, corruption and greed (Uzochukwu, 2023); peer pressure, cultism, uncontrolled sexual urge, indecent dressing and indiscipline (API, 2019); dissatisfaction with academic performance, mental and physical health illness, poor relationship with parents, financial stress, hopelessness, depression, and social isolation (Mark, Arinaitive & Rukundo, 2022); moral decadence or depreciation (Aminu, 2017); low standard of living (low socio-economic status) (Oyeoku & Azikiwe, 2013). In spite of all these researches, the incidents of kidnapping (abduction), internet fraud, rape and suicide among undergraduate students still persist. This creates tensions and worrisome situation in higher institutions of learning, as well as the entire society. Therefore, this study sought to investigate if this disregard for social values is associated or related with parental expectations. While there are a variety of definitions for the phrase "parental expectations," the majority of researchers (Dockery, Kosh and Li, 2022) defined parental expectations as the reasonable assumptions or assessments that parents have about their children's potential as demonstrated by their course grades, greatest level of education reached, or college enrollment (Jeynes, 2022). Natalia, Nina, Zoya, and Elena (2016), carried out a study on the link between parents' and teenagers' views on future careers and life values. The findings indicate that universalism, self-direction in cultivating one's own ideas and abilities, accomplishments, and reputation (protection and influence through upholding one's public persona); hedonism, stimulation, and security, are the most significant values for teenagers. The categories receiving the lowest marks were upholding customs, tolerance, and compliance. These findings are in line with research by Tulviste & Tamm (2014), which demonstrated that early adolescence places a higher value on stimulation and hedonism (pleasure) and a lower value on kindness and conformity. The values of tradition, compassion, self-direction, security, and universalism had the greatest average scores among parents.

The values of stimulation and hedonism were estimated to be the lowest. Adolescents and their parents share similar basic value hierarchies, with the exception that parents place a higher value on upholding and preserving cultural, familial, and religious traditions and place a lower value on hedonism—the pursuit of sensual pleasure and satisfaction and stimulation the desire for a variety of activities and novel experiences.

Lastly, there were no discernible changes in the values between the dads' and mothers' groups according to the study. In this study, parental expectations has to do with parental attitude, behavior, and anticipation towards their children's academic, vocational, occupational, and social achievement/attainment in life. Parental expectations could be categorized into: anticipatory, satisfactory, and obligatory expectations. These expectations could be realistically/unrealistically high, moderate, or low as the case may be.

In general, high parental expectations may have a dual effect on young people's development; while they are positively correlated with young people's social values, they can also act as a stressor and cause young people to experience depression (Ying, Sin, & Wai, 2018). Parents may react negatively to their children's failures when their high expectations are not met, which can lead to stress and sadness in young people (Ma, Siu and Tse, 2018; Hangen, Elliot and Jamieson, 2024). Research has indicated a correlation between elevated expectations from parents and heightened criticism from them (Curran and Hill, 2022; Madjar, Votssis, & Weinstock, 2015). It could lead to bad emotions in young people, like depression. The implication behind unrealistic parental expectations is that, an undergraduate may victimize oneself, lose sense of reasoning, or become maladjusted, while trying to meet up with the expectations; thereby, affecting their social life and academic pursuit.

Undergraduate education is defined as education conducted after secondary education and prior to postgraduate education (Ellett, 2019). According to Sethna (2023), an undergraduate is a college student pursuing a bachelor's degree or a comparable degree; these students come into both happy and terrible circumstances both inside and outside of the academic setting. Some of those experiences ranges from; sexual harassment, stealing, addiction, poor environmental conditions and overcrowded classrooms, indefinite strike, inhumane lecturers, lack of basic amenities/learning materials, poor feeding, to exam malpractice (Saminu, 2016). In universities, one would observe or come across undergraduates with different beliefs, attitudes, values, interests, manners, and overall lifestyles. Tobi (2016), & NL official (2016), pointed out some types of students one would meet in Nigerian Universities such as: the party goers, the fashionistas, the bookworms, the library goers, the student's right activists, the mobile kiosks, the talkative, the fellowship brothers/sisters, the dubbers, the borrowers, the drug addicts, the big planners, the kleptomaniacs, the phone lovers, the anxiety dwellers. In this study, undergraduate students could be seen as those students who are still in the university or higher institutions of learning, struggling to obtain a bachelor's degree or its equivalent. These students may be between the ages of 17 to 30, as the case may be. The correlation between parental expectations and social values could be influenced by gender.

Gender (males and females) is a description of the sex of an individual; that is, the masculine and feminine nature of humans. It refers to the behavioural, cultural, or psychological traits typically associated with one's sex. Gender according to Santrock (2005), prescribes sets of role behaviours expected of male and females in their thinking, actions and feelings. Yang (2010), defined gender as social attributes and opportunities related with being male or female and the relationship between men and women, boys and girls, as well as those between men and women that are socially constructed and are learned through the process of socialization. Olubunmi (2001), concluded that, gender differences are intolerable hence, would be right to treat boys and girls in schools differently due to their natural disposition. From the context of this study, gender could be seen as a moderating variable that is likely to influence the relationships between the

independent and the dependent variables. This influence could be attributed to the physiological, psychological, cultural and social state/condition, and experiences of the male and female undergraduates. In view of the above, it is credible to assume that the level of expectation parents have towards their wards is associated with social values of undergraduate students in South-East, Nigeria. Also, gender influences the correlations between the variables of this study. Could these assumptions be true? It is against this background that the researchers sought to carry out this study.

Purpose of the Study

The main objective of the study was to investigate parental expectation as a correlate of social values of undergraduate students in South-East, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to ascertain the relationship between:

1. Parental expectations and social values of undergraduate students.
2. Parental expectations and social values of undergraduate students as moderated by gender.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between Parental expectations and social values of undergraduate students?
2. What is the moderating influence of gender on the relationship between Parental expectations and social values of undergraduate students?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance guided the investigation:

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between Parental expectations and social values of undergraduate students?

Ho₂: The moderating influence of gender on the relationship between Parental expectations and social values of undergraduate students is not significant.

Methods

This study adopted a correlational survey design. This type of research design investigates relationships between variables without the researcher controlling or manipulating any of the variables; a correlation reflects the strength and /or direction of the relationship between two or more variables (Bhandari, 2022). The direction of a correlation can be either positive or negative. It is positive when both variables change in the same direction; but negative when the variables change in opposite direction. While zero correlation implies that there is no relationship between the variables. This research design is considered appropriate since this study sought to ascertain if there are relationships between the variables under investigation. The study was carried out in South-East, Nigeria. This geo-political zone is made up of 5 states (Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo). There are 11 public and 15 private universities in South-East Nigeria. South-East Nigeria is considered appropriate for the study because there are many undergraduates of both public and private universities that would make up the population of the study; from which the sample was drawn. The population of this study comprised 18,200 male and female 300 level undergraduate students admitted in 2020/2021 academic session into the public and private universities in South-East, Nigeria (Ebura, Edet & Okpa, 2020). The sample size of the study is 910 undergraduates (500 males & 410 females) from 4 public and 2 private universities randomly drawn from Abia, Anambra and Imo state Universities. Multi-stage sampling procedure was used to draw the sample. Two instruments were used by the researcher for data collection.

The first instrument titled Parental Expectations Questionnaire (PEQ) was used to collect data from undergraduates based on the perceptions of undergraduates towards their parents' expectations. The second instrument titled Social Values Questionnaire (SVQ) was used to collect data concerning undergraduates' perceptions towards Social Values. The researchers developed the items of the instruments through the information derived from the review of literature. The instruments were subjected to face validation by five experts. The instruments were structured on a four-point rating scale with different response options –Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1); In order to determine the internal consistency of the items, the instruments were trial tested and the data obtained were analyzed using Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficients. The reliability indices for the two instruments are; .83 for PEQ, and .76 for SVQ respectively. Direct delivery method was used to administer the instruments to the students with the help of three research assistants. Data were analyzed using Regression Coefficient and PROCESS MACRO t-test through SPSS version 25.0. Hypothesis one was tested using Regression ANOVA while hypothesis two was tested using PROCESS MACRO t-test at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question One: What is the relationship between parental expectations and social values?

Table 1 : Regression analysis of the relationship between parental expectations and social values

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.253 ^a	.064	.063	5.75896

a. Predictors: (Constant), Parental Expectations

Table 1 shows that the magnitude of the correlation between parental expectations and social values is ($R = .253$) with an associated coefficient of determination for ($R^2 = .064$). This means that there is a very low positive correlation between parental expectations and social values; implying that an increase in the parental expectations of students will lead to an increase in their disregard for social values. Besides, the coefficient of determination of .064 indicates that a 6.4% variation in the social values of the students is explained by parental expectations. This means that 93.6% variation in the social values of the students is explained by other factors, not parental expectations.

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between parental expectations and social values.

Table 2: Analysis of variance of the relationship between parental expectations and social values

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1702.292	1	1702.292	51.327	.000 ^b
	Residual	24973.702	753	33.166		
	Total	26675.995	754			

a. Dependent Variable: Social Values

b. Predictors: (Constant), Parental Expectations

Table 2 revealed a significant positive relationship between parental expectations and social values, $F(1, 753) = 51.327, p = .000$. Since the associated probability of .000 is less than the .05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Research Question Two: What is the moderating influence of gender on the relationship between Parental Expectations and social values?

Table 3: Process Macro analysis for the moderating influence of gender on the relationship between Parental Expectations and social values.

Model	Gender	R				
		R	Square	R	t	p
1	Male	.248 ^a	.061	.096	1.364	.173
	Female	.275 ^a	.076			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Parental Expectations

Table 3 shows that the correlation coefficient between male students' parental expectations and their social values is ($R = .248$) with a coefficient of determination of ($R^2 = .061$), while the correlation coefficient between female students' parental expectations and their social values is ($R = .275$) with a coefficient of determination of ($R^2 = .076$). Thus, the correlation coefficient for moderating influence of gender on the correlation between parental expectations and their social values is ($R = .096$).

Hypothesis (Ho₂): The moderating influence of gender on the relationship between parental expectations and social values is not significant.

Table 3 reveals that there is no significant moderating influence of gender on the correlation between parental expectations and their social values, $t = 1.364, p = .173$. This implies that gender does not influence the relationship between parental expectations and their social values. Thus, the null hypothesis is not rejected ($p > .05$).

Discussion

The findings of the study revealed that, there is a significant positive correlation between parental expectations and social values. This indicates that undergraduates' disregard for social values is associated with the kind and level of parental expectations. This is related to the findings of Haiyang, Altonso, and Peng (2009), which revealed that parental expectations (PE) is consistently and favorably associated with adolescents' subjective well-being (SWB); with the SWB of adolescents with higher parental expectations being approximately 0.2 points greater than that of their low parental expectations counterparts. In line with this, Natalia, Nina, Zoya, and Elena (2016), found that there was a significant difference between the values cherished by the parents and adolescents; there was no significant difference in the values between the groups of the fathers and mothers. The agreement amongst these findings could be attributed to the belief that, what parents expect of their wards is always contrary to what the wards expect of themselves.

The moderating influence of gender on the correlation between parental expectations and social values was not significant. This implies that the relationship between parental expectations and social values of undergraduates does not depend on the gender (male or female). The rate at which male and female undergraduates show disregard for social values does not differ significantly. This is not in agreement with the

findings of Washington (2018), which showed that, gender significantly and positively related to conformity. As such, males reported higher levels of conformity than female participants. This disagreement could be linked to the differences in the number of social values examined by both studies.

Conclusion

Since parental expectations are associated with social values of undergraduate students in South-East, Nigeria, it is reasonable to conclude that, undergraduates who show little or no regard for social values, are the ones who perceive their parents' expectations as something unimportant and unattainable. Whereas, undergraduates who show regard for social values, are the ones who perceive their parents' expectations as something meaningful, realistic and achievable.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Parents should be sensitized to the impact that their level of expectations can have on their children's academic performance and overall well-being.
2. Policy makers, educational stakeholders, and curriculum planners should design and implement programmes that help students recognize, appreciate, and uphold positive social values.

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