
Impact of Mother- Child Relationship On Moral Behaviour of Secondary School Science Students in South West, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: *This study investigated the impact of mother- child relationship on moral behaviour of secondary school science students in South west, Nigeria. The study adopted descriptive design of the survey type. The population of the study consisted of 804,278 public secondary school science students in South West Nigeria and the sample consisted of 1,500 public secondary school science students in South West Nigeria which was drawn out of population using multistage random sampling procedure. The instrument used in the study was tagged 'Mother-Child Relationship and Moral Behaviour Questionnaire (MCRMBQ)'. Face and content validities were determined by experts in science education. Corrections were effected based on their observations and instructions. Reliability of the instrument was ascertained through test-retest method and the reliability coefficient of 0.72 was obtained. The data collected was analysed with descriptive and inferential statistics. The result showed that the level of moral behavior of secondary school science students based on mothers' educational level was moderate. It was also revealed that there is significant difference in moral behavior of secondary school science students based on mothers' educational levels and that students whose mothers' educational level were above secondary school had the highest moral behavior among the students. From the findings, it was recommended that adult literacy should be organized for parents especially mother with children in science classes in secondary schools so that they can contribute to their children's moral behavior which will definitely affect their learning outcomes.*

KEYWORDS; mother- child relationship, moral behaviour, mothers' educational level, science education and communication pattern

INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria's secondary schools, science subjects make up a significant portion of the curriculum. National Policy on Education (2013), which was created by the federal government, emphasises the significance of teaching certain subjects. The Secondary School Education should offer skilled workforce in the science and technology as stated in Section 5, Item 22 (c). Furthermore, it specifies that science subjects are included in the required curriculum for both elementary and secondary schools. One possible explanation for the government's emphasis on science is the widespread view that learning about science may help students develop better abilities, attitudes, and ways of thinking by broadening their understanding of the world (Ogunyemi & Ogunyemi 2015).

The belief that education is adopted as an instrument for national development and social change and that education maximises the creative potentials and skills of the individual for self-fulfillment and general development of the society are the two fundamental tenets that underpin Nigeria's philosophy of education. Science subjects could be considered to be these fundamental considerations. In order to do this, education encompasses the generation of ideas, their integration for national growth, and the interaction of people and ideas.

Sharing scientific knowledge and methodology with those who are not traditionally regarded as part of the scientific community is the focus of science education. In Nigeria, scientific education focuses on teaching science topics, teaching strategies, and correcting student misunderstandings (Aina, 2013). The majority of recent advances in technology may be traced back to improvements in science education, particularly at the secondary school level. There would have been no advancements in information communication and technology or in the fields of science and technology if not for the widespread dissemination of scientific knowledge through formal education.

It would appear that the official education system in Nigeria promotes a systematic exposure to science. Chemistry, Biology, Basic Science, Basic Technology, Mathematics, Agricultural Science, and Physics are just a few of the specialised science subjects that are taught to students in secondary schools. In the tertiary level of education, it is a requirement for practically all scientific and technology-related degrees (Aina, 2013). Considering or studying variables unique to scientific students' learning of these subjects in secondary school, such as the mother-child relationship and moral conduct, is crucial because of how crucial these are.

A mother's love for her child is often described as the "closest relationship an individual experiences" by members of the Yoruba ethnic group in Southwest Nigeria. This matters because a mother-child relationship can have long-lasting effects on both the child and the mother. For a

child's healthy growth as a person and as a contributing member of society, it provides one of the most crucial contexts (Alan, et al, 2008).

The unique and everlasting link between a parent and a child, whether biological or adopted, is often compared to the mother-child relationship. While the mother and child in an adopted mother-child relationship do not share genetic DNA, there exist legal arrangements that create a permanent mother-child relationship. When considering a child's physical, cognitive, and social development, the quality of the mother-child relationship is a significant consideration since it can affect a child's learning, especially between the ages of 13 and 17, when students are often enrolled in secondary schools (Makinde 2014).

However, a mother is anyone who has a mother-child relationship with a child, whether the child is biologically hers or was adopted. Adoption and biological parenthood both qualify as "legal" relationships under the law. One definition of "mother" is "one who cares for another," which might involve providing for a person's physical and mental wellbeing. Essentially, the Bible tells women to "Train up a child in the path to follow and when he is old he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). A mother's relationship with her child is essential for effective training. The relationship between a child and their mother is a major factor in how the child develops as an adult. Some aspects of a mother's relationship with her child are Mother-child relationships that foster bonding, communication, mentorship, monitoring, and participation (Diana, 2016).

Attachment to one's mother may be defined as any relationship between a mother and her child that makes the child feel safe and loved. A child who has developed an attachment to another person is less likely to do anything to hurt that person's feelings (Diana, 2016). A child's attachment to their mother prevents them from taking actions that might cause their mother to feel hurt. When students in secondary school have a weaker bond to their mothers, they are more likely to engage in inappropriate behaviours, as reported by Higgin et al. (2010). Adolescents, that is, students in secondary schools, need some sort of link or attachment that makes them responsible for listening to their mothers' instructions. Curatorial observation revealed that children who are woken up with love in the morning by calling them by their pet names or eulogising them may be happy and lively throughout the day and be responsive to teachers' instructions, which could determine the responsiveness of the child to learning and teachers (Akinola & Bolarinwa 2016).

Another factor that might weaken or strengthen a mother's attachment with her child is communication. Adolescents, according to Pagani et al. (2009), develop a sensitivity to their moms' judgemental comments as they become older. This form of critical remark, as noted by Pagani et al. (2009), distances mothers from their offspring and, as a result, may impair or diminish the mother-child relationship. Members of the family are able to readily express their needs, wishes, and worries for one another when they are able to communicate effectively with one another via both verbal and nonverbal means.

However, the mother-child relationship is significantly impacted by the family's communication style, which can either hinder or promote it. According to Pumerants (2016), there is more to communication than just words. Mothers should work on their communication skills by being open and honest about their emotions and their expectations of one another. One's relationship may be elevated to a new level and stress and tension at home can be reduced by learning to communicate better.

There are two components to family communication: talking to and listening to the child. Mother-child relationships are unquestionably shaped by the language used and the tone used when conversing with the child, as well as the child's reactions and ideas. Bahram, et al. (2011) argue that open lines of communication within a family can serve as a buffer against the negative effects of stress. The strength of a family's relationship is mostly based on the frequency and consistency with which members speak to one another. One type of family communication emphasises a climate of homogeneity of attitudes, values, and beliefs (conformity orientation) while another type, conversation orientation, encourages open and honest discussion among all family members on a wide range of topics (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2011). Thus, the child's moral behaviour at home and in school is based on these contacts.

A factor that improves the mother-child relationship is mother participation. Mother participation is defined as "a mother's commitment to, or interest in, and engagement with her child's life." A good example of a mother's involvement in her child's school life and academic performance is the study's finding that some mothers visit their children's schools unexpectedly to see how their children are getting along with their peers and how seriously they take their studies. Such actions invariably make the child more serious about school and committed to succeeding academically (Adegboyega & Adu 2017). Therefore, moms should play a significant role in their children's life, both academically and behaviorally, since this will affect how they approach learning, especially in science subjects at the secondary school level. The PTA meetings, where the school's regulations and guidelines will be laid forth, should be held with strict requirements for mother's attendance. Mothers will be better equipped to support their children's academic and behavioural success at school if they are more actively engaged in and knowledgeable about the school's policies.

Mothers' educational attainment is viewed as a social and psychological factor that may influence their child's moral development and academic achievement. Mothers with higher levels of education are more likely to have financial and social resources at their disposal, which can have a positive impact on their children's upbringing and the quality of their relationships with one another.

As can be seen, a mother's engagement in her child's upbringing is crucial. A healthy mother-child relationship is characterised by a mutual investment in providing the necessary care and direction for the child, without which the latter is vulnerable to negative peer pressure. According to Benson

and Buehler (2012), competent mothering, which involves open communication about household norms and regulations as well as general welfare, reduces the likelihood that adolescents would associate with violent peers. Essentially, women need to do things that will make their children appreciate them in order to maintain a strong relationship with their children. Parents should avoid using force in any situation involving their children and should be actively involved in their lives. Therefore, moral behaviour may be described as how one acts towards another based on what is considered acceptable and wrong in a certain culture. Morals are the norms and standards established by a culture or community that individuals are expected to follow when determining what is and is not appropriate behaviour. Therefore, moral behaviour may be described as acting in accordance with what is generally agreed upon as wrong or right in one's community. Dishonesty, disobedience, laziness, lateness, truancy, and misbehaviour are not accepted in today's culture, but honesty, obedience, hard effort, and punctuality are. These norms control students' daily life and are universally accepted. However, it is widely accepted that mothers' engagement has a significant impact on children's behaviour at home and in the classroom. That is, moms and educators should collaborate to improve students' social skills and manage behavioural issues. Truancy, for instance, is a behavioural issue that may be readily eliminated if the school and family work together. Children's interactions with others reveal their moral growth from infancy through adolescence and into maturity.

Mothers provide crucial early nurturing and are powerful agents of socialisation for their children. Mothers not only stand in for the societal authority in regards to the necessary training and discipline of students, but they are also expected to exercise this power over their own children. Importantly, Mothers are given the authority to instill the values and motivations that set humans apart from animals. Mothers have the difficult task of helping their children acquire the moral character traits that society requires of them.

Some students in secondary schools are observed to be wearing untidy attire, including uniforms with holes and loose buttons, unbuttoned shirts, school sandals that have not been polished, and uncombed hair. Most of these students seem indistinguishable from hooligans or garage boys and girls as they make their daily commute to and from school. Some of them even get into fights on the street, causing disruptions in public order, while others play football with stones or plastic bottles. Some of them are also using filthy language freely while fighting and assaulting one another. Furthermore, some of these students are spotted wandering the streets aimlessly even while they should be in school or at home with their Mothers relaxing and preparing for the following day's work.

A child can only acquire moral behaviours through watching others, and this is how children learn. Since moral development is the part of a child's growth that instills the capacity to conform to the norm acceptable to society, it is essential if we want our children to grow up to be morally upright.

Simply said, it comes down to following the social norms. The morally upright individual follows the norm, whereas the immoral person acts in ways that are harmful to society as a whole.

On the other hand, discipline is associated with ethical growth since it involves the management of one's own actions. A morally upright individual is self-controlled since he or she does not partake in destabilising practises. He is less prone to participate in antisocial actions such theft, dishonesty, sex crimes, rudeness, tardiness, exam offences, and noisemaking. Therefore, moral development focuses on how our moral capacities, personalities, and practises mature through time. Lack of self-consciousness, high emotions, authoritarian mothering, permissive mothering, neglectful or uninvolved mothering, single mothering, non-collectivist society, drug abuse, and improper education can all act as roadblocks to moral development among secondary school students (Adnan, et al., 2014). Hence there is a need to investigate the impact of mother-child relationship on moral behaviour of secondary school science students in South West, Nigeria.

This study focused on the investigation of impact of mother-child relationship on moral behaviour of secondary school science students in South West, Nigeria. The purpose of the study was also to determine the influence that mother educational level has on moral behaviour of secondary school science students.

Research Question

What is the level of moral behaviour among secondary school science students in South West, Nigeria?

Research Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in moral behavior of secondary school science students based on mothers' educational level.

Research Method

The study adopted descriptive design of the survey type. This was considered appropriate for this study because it enables the researcher in describing and interpreting existing state of affairs that concerned the impact of mother-child relationship on moral behaviour of secondary school science students in South West, Nigeria

The population of the study consisted of 804,278 public secondary school science students in South West Nigeria. The sample consisted of 1500 public secondary school science students in South West Nigeria. This was done through multi-stage sampling procedure. Stage one involved selection of three states in South West Nigeria with the use of simple random sampling technique. Stage two involved the use of simple random sampling technique to select five Local Government Areas in each of the States selected. Stage three involved the use of simple random sampling technique to select school public secondary schools in each of the LGAs selected and stage four

involved the use of simple random sampling technique to select fifty students from each of the secondary schools selected. 1,447 students were finally used as sample due to inability of the researcher to retrieve all copies of the instrument initially given out.

The instrument used in the study was tagged ‘Mother-Child Relationship and Moral Behaviour Questionnaire (MCRMBQ)’. It was prepared to determine the relationship between Mother-Child Relationship and Moral Behaviour among secondary school science students. The MCRMBQ comprised of 30 items and scored on a four points Likert scale of Strongly Agree (4), agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1).

Face and contents validities were determined by experts in Science Education. Corrections were effected based on their observations and instructions. Reliability of the instrument was ascertained through test and retest method. Ten science students from a secondary school outside the sampled schools were used. The instrument was administered to the same students twice at the interval of two weeks, the two sets of score were subjected to Pearson Product Moment Correlation and the reliability coefficient of 0.72 was obtained. This made the instrument dependable and reliable.

The schools were visited to take permission from the school administrator by the researchers and the students to be used were determined and acquainted the purpose of the study. The instrument was then administered to the students and the filled questionnaires were collected from the students. The data collected were collated and subjected to both descriptive and inferential statistics.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: What is the level of moral behaviour among secondary school science students in South West, Nigeria?

Table 1: Level of Moral Behaviour among Secondary School Science Students in South West, Nigeria

Level of Moral Behaviour	No of Respondents	Percentage
Low (22.00 – 55.67)	304	21.0
Moderate (55.68 – 64.82)	957	66.1
High (64.83 – 88.00)	186	12.9
Total	1,447	100

Table 1 revealed the level of moral behaviour among secondary school science students. The mean score and standard deviation of the responses were used to determine the level as either low, moderate or high. The result showed that out of 1,447 responses, 304 responses representing 21.0% had low level of moral behavior. Those who had moderate level of moral behavior were 957

responses representing 66.1% while 186 responses representing 12.9% had high level of moral behavior. This showed that the level of moral behaviour among secondary school science students in South West, Nigeria was moderate.

Hypothesis Testing

There is no significant difference in moral behavior of secondary school science students based on mothers' educational level.

Table 2: ANOVA Summary on Moral Behavior of Secondary School Science Students Based on Mothers' Educational Level s

Groups	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1229.635	2	614.818	30.451 *	.000
Within Groups	29155.295	1444	20.191		
Total	30384.930	1446			

*P< 0.05

Table 2 showed that F- calculated value of 30.451 was significant at 0.05 level of significance because P value (0.000) < 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there is significant difference in moral behavior of Secondary School Science Students Based on Mothers' Educational Levels in order to determine the source of the significant difference, Scheffe Post-Hoc Analysis with the mean difference was carried out.

Table 3: Scheffe Post-Hoc Analysis of moral behavior of Secondary School Science Students Based on Mothers' Educational Levels

Groups	N	1	2	3	Mean
Primary & Below (1)	82				57.18
Secondary (2)	778	*			59.96
Above Secondary (3)	587	*	*		61.07

*p< 0.05

Table 3 found out that there was significant difference between moral behavior of students whose mothers' educational level was primary & below and secondary in favour of those whose mothers' educational level was secondary school. Also, a significant difference was found between moral behavior of students' whose mothers' educational, level was primary & below and above secondary in favour of those hose educational level of mother was above secondary. There was

also significant difference between moral behaviour of students whose educational level of mother was above secondary level. In conclusion, students whose mother's educational levels above secondary school had the highest moral behaviour.

DISCUSSION

It was discovered that there was a modest degree of moral behaviour among secondary school science students that was dependant on the educational level of their moms. This may be due to the widespread perception that students who enrol in scientific classes take their studies more seriously than other students who enrol in business or art classes. This is consistent with the findings of Mensah and Kurandue (2013), who found a favourable relationship between the mother's authoritative parenting style and the child's positive social behaviour. Also, Straight (2015) discovered that students whose parents spent time with them, praised them, showed affection, and built strong relationships with their children of varied ages were less likely to require disciplinary action at school or therapy for social and emotional issues. This was true even when the children's ages ranged from preschool to high school.

The finding that the level of moral behavior among secondary school science students in South West, Nigeria was moderate suggests that there is room for improvement in this aspect of students' behavior. It indicates that while some students exhibit positive moral behavior, there is still a significant proportion of students whose moral behavior falls below desirable levels. Students who exhibit a moderate level of moral behaviour are likely to make a range of ethical choices, including those that are questionable. The implications of this finding for educators, parents, and legislators who seek to foster the growth of moral character in their students are substantial.

The moderate morality could be due to the effect of several social and cultural influences. The moral choices that students make may be influenced by a variety of factors, including cultural standards, peer pressure, and social ideals. Developing effective tactics for encouraging moral behaviour among students requires an appreciation for the unique cultural environment and social expectations they must negotiate. The data also show how important moral education is in schools. Educators play a key part in helping students grow morally and intellectually. Improvements in students' moral conduct may result from the widespread adoption of moral education programmes that stress moral thinking, empathy, and social responsibility. Appropriate teaching strategies and assessment procedures should support the incorporation of such programmes into the curriculum. Furthermore, the findings highlight the need of creating a welcoming and safe environment in the classroom. Students' moral growth can be influenced favourably by a supportive educational environment that emphasises respect, empathy, and ethical behaviour. Fostering moral behaviour and providing a secure and nurturing atmosphere for students should be at the centre of all school rules, disciplinary practises, and teacher-student relationships. Having schools, families, and communities work together to instill moral values in their students is also essential. An all-

encompassing strategy for reinforcing strong moral values may be achieved through the participation of parents and carers in moral education initiatives, the encouragement of open communication, and the involvement of community organisations and leaders (Akinola & Bolarinwa 2016).

The precise elements impacting students' moral behaviour in the South West area of Nigeria can be investigated in future studies. A more complete knowledge of the background and potential areas for intervention may be gained by examining the relationship between moral behaviour and other factors including academic performance, socioeconomic position, and parental engagement (Olasehinde & Adedokun 2016). Stakeholders may work towards developing a more ethical and responsible society by addressing the cultural, educational, and social variables that impact moral behaviour among students.

In addition, the study found that students whose moms had completed an education level equal to or higher than that of a secondary school had the highest moral behaviour. This might be due to the fact that a person's exposure level is influenced by the degree of education that they have received; the exposure level of moms who have completed secondary education will be greater than that of mothers who have completed higher education. This is in accordance with the findings of Jacqueline (2015), who found that the level of education of a child's parents has an impact, at least to some degree, on the moral growth of the child.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that science students in South West Nigeria do behave moderately and that the level of mothers' education will positively influence the moral behavior of science students in secondary schools.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that;

1. Adult literacy should be organized for parents especially mother with children in science classes in secondary schools so that they can contribute to their children's moral behavior which will definitely affect their learning outcomes.
2. Schools should develop and implement comprehensive moral education programs that are integrated into the curriculum. These programs should focus on fostering ethical reasoning, empathy, moral values, and social responsibility. Special attention should be given to teaching moral decision-making skills and promoting a sense of moral obligation towards others.
3. Seminars should be organized for mothers who have their children in science classes in secondary schools on different types of parenting and importance of mothering process in moral modification of their children.

4. Mothers should be encouraged to stay close to their children and exhibit good behaviour before them in order for their wards to emulate them and do same in schools which could enhance their dedication to their empirical study leading to improved performance.

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