ISIHUMOR
Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Humaniora
http://www.putrapublisher.org/ojs/index.php/isihumor Publisher: putrapublisher.org

ISIHUMOR: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Humaniora
Vol. 3 No. 2 April 2025, Hlm 72-82

HELPING BEHAVIOR AMONG YOUTH SAMPLES: DOES SELF-EFFICACY, LOCUS OF CONTROL AND DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS COUNTS?

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INFO ARTIKEL

Sejarah Artikel: (Diisi Editor)
Diterima: 20 Maret 2025
Direvisi: 10 April 2025
Disetujui: 23 April 2025
Tersedia Daring: 28 April 2025

Keywords: *Birth Order; Family Structure, Gender, Helping Behavior, Locus of Control, Self-efficacy*

ABSTRACT

The study investigated self-efficacy, locus of control, birth order, family structure and gender on helping behavior among youth samples. Cross-sectional survey research design was adopted while purposive sampling method was used to select four Local Government Areas in Ibadan Greater Municipality (IGM). Data were randomly collected from 225 youths using validated scales and analyzed using t-test of independent mean and Chi square statistics. Five hypotheses were tested and accepted at a p <.05 level of significance. The result revealed that self-efficacy and locus of control influenced helping behavior among study participants in IGM. Furthermore, the result indicated that demographic factors of birth order, family structure and gender significantly influenced helping behavior among study participants. The study concluded that demographic rather than psychological factors were the major significant factors that influence helping behavior among youths in IGM. It is recommended that government and non-governmental organizations should design programmes that would change the attitudes of youths towards helping others.

1. Introduction

Helping behaviors are actions carried out to assist another person with a problem or to relieve their distress (Stukas & Clary, 2012). In a more traditional view, Lefton (1997) defines helping behavior as behavior that benefits someone else or society that generally offers no obvious benefit to the person performing it that may even involve some personal risk or sacrifice to individual. Interest in helping behavior came to limelight in the 1970s due to the 'bystander apathy' phenomenon when Kitty Genovese was brutally murdered and none of her neighbors came to her rescue (Latane & Darley, 1970). Helping behavior has been confirmed to have personal, other person and societal benefits (Thapliyal & Gupta, 2015). For example, individual benefits when they feel the sense of psychological well-being, the other person benefits when they have feeling of

being helped in stressful situations, and the general public benefits as it foster groups and community unity and growth (Alarcón & Forbes, 2017; Thapliyal & Gupta, 2015).

Some factors have been investigated to influence helping behavior. This study examines five factors. To begin with, self-efficacy is a belief concerning an individual's ability to perform a behavior. Self-efficacy theory assumes that personal mastery and expectations are the primary determinants of behavioral changes (Bandura, 2003). For example, whether an individual would make an effort to be successful in a chosen goal and how long the individual persists in an effort to be successful would determine the extent to which such behavior would be performed. Further, it suggests that individual differences in past experience and attribution of success to skill or chance result in different levels of generalized efficacy expectations. Therefore, rendering help to people in need would be influenced by an individual self-efficacy. Studies have found self-efficacy to significantly influence helping across populations and samples (Liu et al., 2020; Monga & Waraich, 2023; Wang et al., 2019).

In addition, locus of control could influence helping behavior. Locus of control refers to a personality trait characterized by level of personal control which individuals feel they have toward the outcomes of important events in their lives (Ng & Feldman, 2011). Locus of control has two dimensions: internal and external (Rotter, 1992). Internal locus of control individuals believes that they have personal control or influence over the outcomes of important events in their lives (Rotter, 191992). External locus of control individuals believes that external influence and those around them determine their fate in life (Rotter, 1992). Studies have confirmed that individuals who are high in internal locus of control would demonstrate more positive attitude towards helping people and the society at large than those with external locus of control (Afolabi, 2013; Arakeri & Sunagar, 2017).

Furthermore, gender is considered as one socio-demographic factor in this study. Gender of an individual has been found to influence the propensity to engage in helping behavior (Malinauskas & Saulinus, 2019). Specifically, women have been cited to be more communal in nature such as being nice, sensitive to the needs of others, considerate, gentle, and tend to comply with societal norms and values. Based on these attributes, females have been reported to be more prone to helping others in needs than their male counterparts (Kyhnert et al., 2017; Malinauskas & Saulinus, 2019).

Another socio-demographic factor considered is birth order defined as the hierarchical position of children in a family using their respective age, i.e., from the first born to the last born. The seminal work of Alfred Adler has been used to explain the influence of birth order in personality development (Marano-Frezza, 2017). For example, it is hypothesized that a child's position in the family would be associated with certain problems that are responded to in a similar ways by other children in the same birth position. Studies have shown that individuals in first or second position in birth order would tend to be high in helping behavior than those in higher position of birth order (Awolola, 2008; Vertel, 2023).

Finally, the family structure of an individual is considered to influence helping behavior. The type of family an individual is born into whether nuclear family

(monogamous) or extended family (polygamous) could influence individuals' propensity towards helping behavior. Studies have revealed varied results on influence of family structures. While some studies supported monogamous individuals to have high tendency toward helping behavior (Awolola, 2008), other studies supported polygamous individuals (Ede et al., 2018). Also, studies have found no significant difference between monogamous and polygamous family structures in helping behavior (Elbedour et al., 2007).

In Nigeria today, very few people want to help others compared to what is obtainable in other countries such as the USA, UK and other developed countries of the world. There are many who believe that helping others could put them and their families into serious problems. Often, people cited economic reason and other non-psychological factors for not helping people. Even as the situation is in the developing country like Nigeria, few studies have been carried out on helping behavior especially among youth populations which leave gaps in knowledge to be filled.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine whether the psychological factors of self-efficacy and locus of control and demographic factors of birth orders, family structures and gender would influence helping behavior among youth youths in Ibadan Greater Municipality (IGM). The following research questions were raised to guide this study: Would psychological factors of self-efficacy and locus of control significantly influence helping behavior among youths in IGM? Would socio-demographic variables of birth order, family structure and gender influence helping behavior among youths in IGM?

This study would provide local data on the influence of self-efficacy, locus of control, birth orders, family structures and gender on helping behavior for further studies. In addition, the findings of this study would furnish Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) with data to train, mobilize and empower youths in helping behavior at the community levels. Finally, the authority of the NYSC would find the results of this study relevance to identify some of the factors that contribute to youths' attitude towards helping behavior.

Social Learning Theory

Bandura (2003) developed this theory. It posits that an individual learns through observation, imitation, or modeling. Also, the theory introduces the concepts of reinforcement and punishment to explain what motivates individual to learn and the consequences of not learning well. When applied to this study, an individual learns helping others through observing similar behavior exhibited in the individual's presence by significant others in the environment (Akelaitis & Lisinskiene, 2018). Thus, youths learn helping behavior through their parents, siblings, teachers, peers and significant others.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested:

H1: Youths who reported high self-efficacy would perform higher in helping behavior than youths who reported low self-efficacy.

H2: Youths who reported internal locus of control would perform higher in helping behavior than those who reported external locus of control.
H3: Female youths would significantly report higher on helping behavior than their male counterparts.
H4: Significant association would exist between birth orders of the youths and helping behavior.
H5: Significant association would exist between family structures and helping behavior among youths in Ibadan Greater Municipality

2. Methods

Research Design

The study adopted ex-post facto research design while data were collected using validated questionnaires. The independent variables investigated were self-efficacy, locus of control, birth order and family structure while the dependent variable was helping behavior. The independent variables were self-efficacy (high versus low), locus of control (internal versus external), birth order and family structure.

Participants

A total of 225 youths participated in the study. Descriptive analysis revealed that 83(37%) of the participants were males while 142(63%) were females. The participants were between 25 and 29 years old. A total of 165 (73%) participants were singles while 60 (25%) participants were married. In terms of birth order, 70 (31%) participants were 1st born, 55 (24%) were 2nd born, 37 (16%) were 3rd born, 20 (9%) were 4th born, 15 (7%) were 5th, while 28(12%) were 6th born and above in birth order. Finally, in terms of family structures, 149(66%) were from nuclear (monogamous) family structure, while 76 (34%) were from polygamous family structure.

Instruments

Three instruments were used for data collection.

Self-efficacy was measured using an 18-item self-efficacy scale developed by Sherer et al. (1982). The scale is presented on a 5-point Likert's form ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Sample items inclue: "Start conversation with someone you don't know very well" and " I ask someone for help when you need it". High scores indicate high self-efficacy and low scores imply low self-efficacy in helping behavior. The original authors reported Cronbach's alpha of 0.86 while in the current study Cronbach's alpha calculated was 0.81.

Locus of control was assessed using a 48-item Locus of Control Scale developed by Rotter (1966). The scale response format consists of "1-Yes" or "0- No". Sample items are: "Many of the unhappy things in people's lives are partly due to bad luck" and " The idea that teachers are unfair to students is nonsense". High score indicates internal locus of control and low score reflects external locus of control. The scale Cronbach's alpha was 0.71, while in the present study, Cronbach's alpha was 0.72.

Helping behavior was evaluated using a 20- item scale developed by measured Rushton, Chrisjohn, and Fekken (1981). The scale was presented on a 5-point Likert's

format ranging from "Very often" to "Never". Sample items are: " I have given direction to a stranger" and " I have donated blood". High score indicates high helping behavior, while low score means low helping behavior. The original authors reported Cronbach's alpha of 0.79, while for the present study, Cronbach's alpha calculated was 0.75.
In addition, demographic variables of age, birth order, family structure, gender, and marital status were collected.

Procedure

Letter of introduction was obtained from the Department of Psychology, University of Ibadan, Nigeria for the identification of the researchers. Potential participants were met at various center including recreational centers, homes, small gatherings at homes, cybercafé, etc. where the purpose of the study were explained to them for their consent to participate in the study. They were duly informed that participation in the study was voluntary and that they can withdrew at any point in time without penalty. They were also assured that their responses would be treated confidentially. Only consented youths were given the questionnaires to fill. A total of 240 questionnaires were distributed across the four LGAs in which 231 were retrieved (96% response rate). During screening and coding, six questionnaires were incompletely filled and were removed left with 225 used for the final analysis.

Data Analysis

IBM SPSS version 23 was used for data analysis. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were computed. T-test for independent sample was used to test hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 while Chi-square statistics was used for hypotheses 4 and 5. All hypotheses were accepted at a $p < 0.05$ level of significance.

3. Result and Discussion

H1: Youths who reported high self-efficacy would perform significantly higher in helping behavior compared to youths who reported low self-efficacy. The hypothesis was tested using t-test of independent mean and the result is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. T-test of Independent Mean Showing Differences between Self-Efficacy and Helping Behavior

.Self-efficacy	N	*M*	*SD*	*Df*	*t*	*p*
Low	116	1.45	.49			
High	109	1.57	.49			
				223	-1.81	>.05

Dependent variable: Helping behavior

Table 1 shows t-test of independent mean showing differences between self-efficacy and helping behavior. The result revealed no significant differences between self-efficacy and helping behavior among youths ($t = -1.81$, $p > .05$). However, when the mean differences was compared, youths who reported high self-efficacy scored higher in helping behavior ($M = 1.57$, $SD = 0.49$ than those who scored low in self-efficacy ($M = 1.45$, $SD = 0.49$). Therefore, the hypothesis was partially supported.

H2: Youths who report internal locus of control would perform significantly high in helping behavior than those who reported external locus of control. The hypothesis was tested using t-test of independent mean and the result is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. T-Test of Independent Mean Showing Differences between Self-Efficacy and Helping Behavior among Youths

Locus of control	N	*M*	*SD*	*Df*	*t*	*p*
Internal	109	1.38	0.49	223	.06	>.05
External	116	1.50	0.50			

Dependent variable: Helping behavior

Table 2 indicates t-test of independent mean showing difference between locus of control and helping behavior among study participants. The result indicated no significant differences between locus of control and helping behavior among youths (t = .06, p >.05). However, observation of the mean revealed that youths who expressed external locus of control scored significantly higher in helping behavior (*M* = 1.50*, SD* = 0*.* 50) compared to youths who expressed internal locus of control (*M* =1.38 *SD* = 0.49). Hence, the hypothesis was partially confirmed.

H3: Female youths would significantly report higher on helping behavior than their male counterparts. The hypothesis was tested using t-test of independent mean and the result is presented in Table 3.

Table 3.T-test of Independent showing differences between Gender and Helping Behavior

Gender	N	M	SD	Df	t	p
Male	83	1.47	0.50	222	1.88	>.05
Female	141	1.49	0.50			

Dependent variable: Helping behavior

Table 2 depicts t-test of independent mean showing difference between gender and helping behavior among study participants. The result indicated no significant differences between gender and helping behavior among youths (t = 1.88, p >.05). However, further analysis depicted that female youths indicated higher level of helping behavior (*M* = 1.49*, SD* = 0*.* 50) compared to male youths (*M* =1.47, *SD* = 0.50). Hence, the hypothesis was partially confirmed.

H4: Significant association would exist between birth order of the youths and helping behavior. The hypothesis was tested using Ch-square statistics and the result is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Chi-Square statistics showing association between Birth-order and Helping Behavior among Youths in Ibadan

Birth order	N	M	SD	Df	χ^2	p
1st	70	2.78	1.8	219	.00	< .05
2nd	55					
3rd	37					
4th	20					
5th	15					
6th	28					

Dependent variable: Helping behavior

Table 4 presents the Chi-Square statistics showing association between birth-order and helping behavior among study participants. The result revealed a significant positive association between birth order and helping behavior among youths in Ibadan. In other words, youths' demonstration of helping behavior is significantly dependent on their birth order in their various families. Therefore, the hypothesis was accepted.

H5: Significant positive association would exist between family structure and helping behavior among youths in Ibadan. The hypothesis was tested using Chi-square statistics and the result is presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Chi-Square statistics showing Association between Family structure and Helping Behavior among Youths in Ibadan

Family Structure	N	M	SD	Df	χ^2	p
Nuclear Family	149					
Polygamous Family		1.56	.865	222	.000	<.05

Dependent variable: Helping behaviour

Table 4 presents the Chi-Square statistics showing association between birth-order and helping behavior among study participants. The result revealed a significant positive association between birth order and helping behavior among youths in Ibadan. In other words, youths' demonstration of helping behavior is significantly dependent on their birth order in their various families (t = .000, p<.05). Therefore, the hypothesis was supported.

4. Discussion

The study was carried out to evaluate the influence of psychological factors of self-efficacy and locus of control and socio-demographic factors of gender, birth order and family structure on helping behavior among youths in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. Five hypotheses were raised, tested and accepted at a p <.05 level of significance. The hypothesis that youths who reported high self-efficacy would perform significantly higher in helping behavior than those who reported low self-efficacy was partially accepted. This means that variation in the level of self-efficacy of the youths partially influenced their engagements in helping behavior. The reason for this interesting finding could be that the individuals' engagement in helping behavior is a function of other factors such as empathy training, positive trait attribution and family orientation or childhood pattern of upbringing. The finding of this study is supported by previous

results that self-efficacy significantly influenced helping behavior among their study participants (Liu et al., 2020; Monga & Waraich, 2023; Wang et al., 2019).

The hypothesis that youths who reported internal locus of control would perform significantly higher in helping behavior than those who reported external locus of control was partially confirmed. The possible explanation for this finding could be that individuals' in this part of the world perceived helping behavior as a phenomenon that is not of value, perhaps until it is associated or conditioned on an extrinsic reward such as social paybacks in form of money, social recognition and image promotion. As one study on extrinsic rewards found that providing payoff for helping behavior focuses attention on the reward rather than the reason for it and that the desired behavior tends to lessen or disappear when the reward is withdrawn (Arakeri & Sunagar, 2017). Piliavin's (2001) result lent credence to the present finding. However, the present result partially supported Lathrop's (2008) finding that locus of control had no significant influence on helping behaviour because of the bystander effect.

The hypothesis that female youths would score higher on helping behavior than their male counterparts was partially supported. The reason for this could be that females of all ages exhibit higher levels of affective empathy than their male counterparts which supported previous findings (Kyhnert et al., 2017; Malinauskas & Saulinus, 2019). However, Eagly (1987) found that one major moderator of the effect of gender on helping behavior is the presence of an audience. That is, men are especially more helpful than women when on lookers are present. Hence, male helpfulness is motivated not only by concern for the person needing help but also by concern over how one is perceived by other people in general (Eagly,1987).

The hypothesis that there would be significant positive relationships between birth order and helping behavior was confirmed. The result buttressed the fact that older siblings tend to be better able to recognize emotive states in others, more capable of relating to and sharing others' feelings, able to feel empathy for more diverse kinds of people, and more willing to express their empathetic response in generosity toward others. The present finding supported result by Eklund et al., (2012) that adults exhibit greater degrees of empathetic feeling, understanding, and responsiveness than children, and those old children are more empathetic or prosocial than very young ones. Finally, Vertel (2023) identified and reported that role-taking capacity as the basis for the greater levels of helping behavior. And this is found more in older children as compared with younger ones.

Finally, the hypothesis that there would be a significant positive relationship between family structure and helping behavior was confirmed. This implies that family structure has significant association (predisposition) with helping behavior among youths. In other words, the type of family in which an individual is brought up would determine whether the individual would show helping behavior or not. The reason for this finding can be explained in two ways: Individuals in monogamous family could be cooperative to help when there is less rivalry and love at home. Individuals from polygamous family may have less helping tendency when there are envy, aggressive behavior, favoritism, disregard for equity and fairness and other antisocial behaviors in

the family (Ndu, 2000 as cited in Ede et al., 2018). There is a 'demand side' interpretation of living in an unconducive family structure which sometimes offers greater opportunities to understand the bitter side of life. This could also motivate an individual to help, therefore, engage in helping behavior (Awolola, 2008).

5. Conclusion

The study was aimed to establish whether psychological factors of self-efficacy, locus of control, and demographic factors of birth orders, gender and family structures would influence helping behavior among youths in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. The results revealed that demographical factors of birth orders, gender and family structures fully and significantly influenced helping behavior among youths, while psychological factors of self-efficacy and locus of control partially influenced helping behavior among youths in the study population. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proffered: The federal government should include intensive enlightenment programmes for youths and young adults so as to help them change their mentalities toward the issue of helping behavior. In addition, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that are interested in youth engagement should take into cognizance how demographic variables such as birth orders, gender, and family structures could be harnessed to develop better change strategies among youths in order to contribute to the lives of others in their environment. Furthermore, seminars and conferences on empathy training with components such as in interpersonal perception and empathetic responding, initial focus on one's own feelings, focus in similarities between oneself and others, exposure to emotionally arousing stimuli and positive trait attribution, should be designed for young volunteers to train them toward helping behavior. Finally, government at all levels and other stakeholders should hire professionals such as counselors, social workers, clinical and personality psychologists to assist them design relevant enlightenment and behavior change packages which would change attitudes of the youths toward helping others. Some limitations of this study need to be addressed. To start with, the study used self-reported questionnaires for data collection which was not free of response bias. Further studies would benefit by using focus group discussion and key informant interview to triangulate data collected from self-reported questionnaires. In addition, the study used sample size of 225 participants from 4 out of 33 Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Oyo State which would hinder generalization of study findings. Further studies should increase sample size and extending the study to other LGAs in Oyo State to allow for generalization of study findings. Finally, the two psychological factors: self-efficacy and locus of control investigated partially influenced helping behavior in this study. Further studies should include personality traits, self-esteem and learn helplessness.

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