
**INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL SKILLS ON UNDERGRADUATE
TEACHER TRAINEES' ATTITUDE TOWARDS SOCIAL
RESPONSIBILITIES**

¹Issa Nasiru **OLOKOBA**, ²Adedayo Bensen **AROMOLARAN** &
²Eniola Abioye **ADEYEMO**

¹*Social Sciences Education Department, University of Ilorin, Ilorin*

²*Department of Educational Foundations and Counselling
Psychology, Lagos State University of Education,
Otto/Ijanikin, Lagos State*

Abstract

This study examined the influence of social skills on undergraduate teacher trainees towards social responsibilities in Kwara State, Nigeria. This study adopted the descriptive type of survey, the population consisted all undergraduate teacher trainees in Nigerian universities. Three hundred and fifty students were sampled using purposive sampling techniques from the three institutions. A researcher-designed questionnaire was used with psychometric properties of construct validity. The data were analysed using mean score and standard deviation to answer the research question. The findings revealed that communication skill, listening skills, problem solving skills, voluntary engagement in self-motivated activity and the ability to seek help and help others are the patterns of social skill possessed by undergraduate teacher trainees. Undergraduate teacher trainees' often display their social skills, which means the extent to which social skills are displaced by undergraduate teacher trainees is on high

level. The findings of this research also show that loyalty to institutional authority, political participation, engaging in charitable acts, participation in community development and respect for institutional authority are social responsibilities expected of undergraduate teacher trainees in the society. Undergraduate teacher trainees show positive attitude towards social responsibilities in the society. It was concluded that Good manners, problem solving skills and critical thinking skills among others are the social skills which influence undergraduate teacher trainees' attitude towards social responsibilities in the society. Given these outcomes, the study recommended that university education is more than just technical instruction to prepare students for professional career; it should also contribute to students' overall personal development.

Keywords: Social skills, Undergraduate teacher trainees, Attitude, Social responsibilities.

Introduction

Social responsibility is the commitment to behave ethically and contribute to people's development while improving the quality of life of other individuals, groups, teams as well as society at large (Emmett, 2017). It is the responsibility of every individual to follow a manner of behaviour that benefits the society and not just the individual as stated by (Nicolaidis, 2021) that actions being ethically validated before procession is the foundation of social responsibility. A system where all actions that could cause harm to the society are deemed socially irresponsible and the society's moral values depict what is right or wrong. Social responsibility for the individual, in many cases has been seen as giving alms and doing charity works but this is only a part of it. It is about being humane. It is about living in sync with not just the immediate surroundings, communities, but also the society and world at large. It is about integrity, generosity sustained by etiquette and an intention to invest emotionally in others (Gurnani, 2018). The new millennium has started to recognize serious concerns that affect undergraduates, some of which have always been there. However, there have been

new obstacles beginning to surface in the eyes of the public, and these issues have affected the way they relate with others. They are single parent households, drug/alcohol abuse, violence in schools, stress and time management, shifting economies and socio-political issues among others (Park *et al*, 2019).

Social responsibilities among Nigerian undergraduates have garnered attention over the years, with firms coming up with ways to offer a wide range of group training. This is due to the realization that there was a gap in the system, and besides having a lot of brilliant people in Nigeria, the social skills, the ability to relate and interact with colleagues when they find themselves in the international gathering was difficult for some undergraduates (Onyenucheya, 2017). The idea of social responsibility is aimed at developing the undergraduates' social skills to appreciate the community, the environment and their participation in the social and political processes (Elmadam, 2020). Interactions with people are not always smooth therefore strategies need to be implemented when challenges in relationships and communication come up. This also requires being able to put yourself in the other person's shoes, or to "read the room" as it aids a more preferable response entailing care, concern and understanding towards the other person or people. Social Studies, as referenced by (Poatob, 2015), at the basic level must develop self-confidence and initiative of undergraduates based on an understanding of their own accomplishments and potentialities, and their power of imagination and resourcefulness, their own worth, their desire for knowledge and continued learning, their sense of compassion for the less fortunate, their appreciation for the dignity of man and of liberty, their willingness to accept necessary changes with a system of law and order deriving from the will of the people and their sense of respect for and tolerance of the opinion of others even in disagreement. These virtues are very necessary in solving our day-to-day interpersonal issues that sometimes result into social problems.

Social skills are considered as one of the factors in the success or failure of every individual in a society. Social skills are a collection of learned behaviors giving the individual the ability to have influential relationships with others and to abstain from socially

unreasonable reactions. Not many would argue against the fact that there are skills and abilities necessary for success in life. These skills may also be malleable and amenable to intervention (Cox *et al.*, 2019). Social responsibility involves developing a sense of commitment to the community, and service-learning, a concept that involves the application of learned knowledge to procuring solution during community activities is a part of this. Undergraduates learn different skills and gain more knowledge as they engage in activities. Service learning can be initiated by the undergraduates themselves by designing and implementing community projects (Elmadam, 2020). Structure is needed when engaging undergraduates in social responsibility explaining that organizations seeking to partner with undergraduates should consider including as many stakeholders as possible which will include the staff, profit and non-profit organizations, and the community which will make the initiative vibrant with ideas, funding and formal endorsement. This is apart from involving the undergraduates in leadership positions and allowing them to participate in decision-making which is more than volunteering as it imparts skills and develops them as leaders.

Social responsibility has implications for development of ability, intellectual and exposure of undergraduate. For example, volunteers in community service and childcare have all affirmed improved knowledge of themselves and others and participation in volunteer organizations had increased selective forms of political expression and the voting rates years later. Undergraduates' participation in Scouts and similar groups increased the likelihood of membership and leadership positions as adults in community and civic organizations. Developing social responsibility is complex as it encompasses not just issues of control and agency for adolescence, but also the need for recognition of the contributions they make. In addition, there is a need for undergraduates to practice various adult roles without having to suffer the full consequences of their decisions or having to make lifetime commitments before their adulthood stage (Polk, 2010). Social skills help an individual to enhance academic achievement, productivity, personal development, employability, better understanding, and career success (Johnson & Johnson, 2015). In university education, faculty and staff do not

expect students to cast their emotions aside, focusing solely on academics anymore. Today, besides benefiting students financially and academically, a college education equips the students with emotional benefits that help them cope with their daily challenges. Students cultivate excellent skills in emotional management and problem-solving while attending university. Such benefits guarantee long-standing effects that benefit the society, the schools, and the workplace (Williams, 2020).

Personality difference is already an acknowledged fact and is, to an extent, already put into consideration in many relationships as they inform the way to interact with different people and keeping relationships positive and healthy generally help most individuals, no matter how introverted to thrive. Social skills are an integral part of social interaction, and displaying good manners, communicating effectively with others, being considerate of the feelings of others, and expressing personal needs are all cogent components of solid social skills (Elmadam, 2020). In Nigeria, students are referred to as the leaders of tomorrow. As leaders there is the expectation of a level of consciousness of social responsibility and participation. However, the effectiveness of the students in carrying out these responsibilities is dependent on the level of social skills they possess. In response to this problem, this study attempted to examine the influence of social skills on undergraduate teacher trainees' attitude towards social responsibilities.

Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study was to examine the Influence of social skills on undergraduate teacher trainees' attitude towards social responsibilities in Ilorin, Kwara State. Specifically, the study investigated the:

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- iv. attitudes of undergraduate teacher trainees towards social responsibilities in the society.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

- i. What are patterns of social skills possessed by undergraduate teacher trainees?
- ii. What are the levels of social skills displayed by undergraduate teacher trainees in the society?
- iii. What are the social responsibilities expected of undergraduate teacher trainees in the society?
- iv. What are the attitudes of undergraduate teacher trainees towards social responsibilities in the society?

Methods

This study adopted the descriptive survey method. The population for the study comprised undergraduate teacher trainees in universities in Kwara State. The target population was 300 level students in the above universities. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 290 students in university of Ilorin, 40 students in Kwara state university and 20 students in Al-Hikmah University which made a total of 350 students as the respondents. The questionnaire consisted of two sections: Section A contained the demographic information of the respondents, while Section B contained self-developed items which sought information on; Influence of social skills on undergraduate teacher trainees' attitude towards social responsibilities in Ilorin, Kwara State. The Items in Section B of the Instrument dealt with items related to patterns of social skills with a likely scale of SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree and SD = Strongly Disagree, extent to which social skill are displayed among undergraduate teacher trainees with the likely scale of O = Often, ST = Sometimes, R = Rarely, N = Never, Social responsibilities, with the likert scale of SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree and SD = Strongly Disagree, and Attitude of undergraduate teacher trainees towards social responsibilities

with the likert scale of SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree and SD = Strongly Disagree. Lecturers in the Department of Social Sciences Education, University of Ilorin, validated the questionnaire to ascertain its construct validity. All corrections were effected immediately to improve the quality of the questionnaire. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained by administering questionnaire to thirty students who were not part of the main sample. The test retest method was used within the interval of three weeks. The two sets of the score were analyzed using Pearson Product Correlation statistical tool with correlation figure of 0.781. The result indicated that the instrument was reliable for the study. The researcher collected the needed data through the use of questionnaire. The Instrument was read out and explained to the respondents for better understanding. Afterwards the completed questionnaires were collected. The data collected were analysed using percentage and research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the Patterns of Social Skills possessed by Teacher Trainees?

Table 1: Mean rating and standard deviation of Patterns of Social Skills possessed by Undergraduate Teacher Trainees

S/N	Patterns of Social Skills	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Communication skill is the most common social skills	3.42	.705	Accepted
2	Listening skills are mostly used in the classroom	3.26	.701	Accepted
3	Problem solving skills are essential for societal development	3.45	.543	Accepted
4	Voluntary engagement in self-motivated activity is an important skill	3.42	.589	Accepted
5	The ability to seek help and help others is a common social skill in the society	3.30	.692	Accepted
Cumulative Mean		3.37		Accepted

Based on the scale, (Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly disagree) the benchmark of 2.5 is used such that if cumulative mean for any item is above the benchmark, it is regarded as the patterns of social skills possessed by undergraduates while it is not regarded as the patterns of social skills possessed by undergraduates if the mean score is below the benchmark of 2.5. Thus, from the table, it can be identified that undergraduates have possessed all the patterns of social skills. This is because they all have a mean which is above the benchmark mean.

Research Question 2: What are the levels of social skills displayed by undergraduate teacher trainees in the society?

Table 2: Frequency count, percentage and mean rating on the extent to which Social Skills are displayed by Undergraduate Teacher Trainees

S/N	Extent of Social Skills	N	R	S	O	Mean
6.	I show critical thinking skills in the classroom	3 (9%)	31 (8.9%)	172 (49.1)	144 (41.1)	3.31
7.	I display good manners	1 (3%)	17 (4.9%)	161 (46.0)	171 (48.9)	3.43
8	I maintain good interpersonal relationship with others	1 (3%)	34 (9.7%)	136 (38.9)	179 (51.1)	3.41
9	I am considerate of the feelings of others.	-	28 (8.0)	124 (35.4)	198 (56.6)	3.49

Based on the scale (Often, Sometimes, Rarely and Never) I Show critical thinking skills in the classroom has a percentage of Never (9%), Rarely (8.9%), sometimes (49.1%) and Often (41.1%), this shows that teacher trainees' Sometimes show critical thinking skills in the classroom. I display good manners has a percentage of Never (3%), Rarely (4.9%), Sometimes (46.0) and Often (48.9%), this shows that Teacher Trainees' Often display good manners. I maintain good interpersonal relationship with others has a percentage of Never (3%), Rarely (9.7%), Sometimes (38.9) and Often (51.1%), this

shows that teacher trainees Often maintain good interpersonal relationship with others. I am considerate of the feelings of others has a percentage of Rarely (8.0%), Sometimes (35.4) and Often (56.6%), this shows that Teacher trainees are Often considerate of the feelings of others. This implies that Teacher trainees' often display their social skills, which means the extent to which social skills are displaced by Teacher trainees is high.

Research Question 3: What are the social responsibilities expected of undergraduate teacher trainees' in the society?

Table 3: Mean rating and standard deviation on the Social Responsibilities expected of Undergraduate Teacher Trainees' in the Society

S/N	Social Responsibilities	Mean	SD
10.	Loyalty to institutional authority is the responsibility of every undergraduate	3.32	.577
11.	Political participation is an essential duty of every undergraduate	3.15	.719
12	Engaging in charitable acts is a social responsibility	3.32	.566
13	Participation in community development is a usual social responsibility	3.31	.604
14	Respect for institutional authority is an important responsibility	3.42	.590
	Cumulative Mean	3.30	

Table 3 shows the cumulative mean of 3.30 which is higher than the benchmark of 2.5. Hence, it can be noted that loyalty to institutional authority, political participation, engaging in charitable acts, participation in community development and respect for institutional authority are social responsibilities expected of Teacher Trainees' in the society.

Research Question 4: What are the attitudes of undergraduate teacher trainees towards social responsibilities in the society?

Table 4: Frequency Count, Percentage and Mean Rating on the Attitude of Undergraduate Teacher Trainees towards Social Responsibilities in the society

S/N	Attitude towards Social Responsibilities	NT	RT	T	VT	Mean
15	I actively participate in politics	43 (4.7%)	240 (26.3%)	354 (38.8%)	276 (30.20%)	2.61
16	I contribute to the development of the community	3 (3%)	182 (19.9%)	389 (42.6)	335 (36.7%)	3.04
17	I always display obedience to institutional authority	11 (1.2%)	127 (13.9%)	390 (42.7%)	381 (41.7%)	3.13
18	I am a loyal and patriotic citizen	3 (3 %)	110 (12.0%)	400 (43.8%)	400 (43.8%)	3.25
19	I often involve myself in charity	18 (2.0 %)	149 (16.3%)	427 (46.8%)	316 (31.6%)	3.05
	Cumulative Mean					2.91

Table 4 discloses that, majority of the respondents agreed with all the positive statement with having high percentage by choosing True. The cumulative mean shows 2.91 which is higher than the benchmark of 2.5. Hence, it can be noted that undergraduates show positive attitude towards social responsibilities in the society.

Discussions

Findings of the study revealed that communication skill, listening skills, Problem solving skills, voluntary, engagement in self-motivated activity and the ability to seek help and help others are the patterns

of social skill possessed by undergraduates. This means undergraduate teacher trainees possessed the skills which could influence their attitude towards social responsibilities. This finding is in line with the assertions made by Birzer (2017) who reported that social skills is adapting to social situations, expressing oneself and understanding others, to communicate without conflicts and to maintain good interpersonal skills. Findings from this study also revealed that undergraduate teacher trainees often display their social skills, which means the extent to which social skills are displaced by undergraduate Teacher trainees is on high level. It is in agreement with findings of Park (2019) who affirmed that a person who has learnt to solve problems and acquired social skills can change more easily and adapt as insufficient skills make an individual become dependent on the surrounding people.

Findings of this study also revealed that loyalty to institutional authority, political participation, engaging in charitable acts, participation in community development and respect for institutional authority are social responsibilities expected of undergraduate teacher trainees in the society. This finding corroborates findings of Gurnani (2018) who found that social responsibility for the individual, in many cases has been seen as giving alms and doing charity works but this is only part of it. It is about being humane. It is about integrity, generosity sustained by etiquette and an intension to invest emotionally in others. Findings also revealed that undergraduate teacher trainees show positive attitude towards social responsibilities in the society. This finding is in agreement with findings of Emmett (2017) who discovered that social responsibility is the commitment to behave ethically and contribute to people's development while improving the quality of life of other individuals, groups, team as well as society at large. Nicolaides (2021) also asserted that it is the responsibility of every individual to follow a manner of behaviour that benefits the society and not just the individual.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that

Communication, listening, and problem solving skills are the patterns of social skills possessed by undergraduate teacher trainees. The students often display their social skills, which means the extent to which social skills are displayed by undergraduate teacher trainees is on a high level. Loyalty to institutional authority, political participation, engaging in charitable acts, participation in community development and respect for institutional authority are social responsibilities expected of the students in the society. Undergraduates show positive attitude towards social responsibilities in the society.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it was therefore recommended that university education should include courses on social skills and social responsibilities in the content of what is being taught. This will make undergraduates aware and inspired to take lasting responsibility towards contributing to a larger community. Undergraduates should be made to have personal experience in social activities by doing something concrete to contribute to improving society. Students should be assigned a social project in which they must participate in throughout a semester/year. Undergraduates should engage themselves in the community where they currently live, actively participate in its development, and work together to solve community problems. Undergraduates should have a sense of responsibility to act in the manner that is beneficial to society.

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