

INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL CAPITAL ON RESILIENCE CAPACITY OF YOUNG ADULTS RESIDING IN MARGINALIZED NEIGHBORHOODS IN LAGOS STATE

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Abstract

Resilience is increasingly becoming a necessity for young adults considering the unpredictable nature of the world today and the adversity that characterizes living in poor and marginalized areas. The need to understand the social processes that facilitate building of resilience capacities in young adults who live in volatile and marginalized communities is the major motivation for this research. The study was conducted among 250 young adults from public high schools located in Ajegunle, Oshodi and Mushin areas of Lagos, neighborhoods considered as slums and characterized by poverty and social vices. The participants were mostly from Igbo and Yoruba ethnic groups who were in their final year in secondary school. They responded to a set of questions in a scale designed to measure their resilience capacity, and were also measured on their perception of the social capital of their community. The study found a significant relationship between social capital and resilience competence of the participants. However, the hypothesis that participants from different (selected) communities would differ on resilience could not be supported in the study. The study suggested the need for those in leadership of various levels of government to do more to lessen the hardships of the people in marginalized areas and also leverage on the social capital of the people in these areas in the implementations of policy aimed at developing these areas and in moving the people out of poverty.

Keyword: adolescents, poverty, perception, resilience, social capital.

Introduction

Priorities to many areas of needs especially in the urban area of Nigeria may have brought about the neglect and marginalization of rural and inner poor communities. The resultant effect of this marginalization is the little or no opportunities available for young people to maximize their potentials. But surprisingly, there is a substantial number of Yoruba, Igbo and people from other tribes who lived in these deprived communities and yet turn out successful in life. This phenomenon can be attributed to the resilience capacity of these young adults. Resilience can be

simply defined as the ability to cope in spite of challenges (Alvord & Grados, 2005). For example, among the ethnic groups studied, Igbo demonstrated this ability particularly, after the civil war in which they suffered unprecedented loss of lives and property, no sooner than the war came to an end that the people surprisingly bounced back to life, they have since excelled in all areas of life like their counterparts in Yoruba and other places in the country, including education, technology, commerce among several others. They can be found in different parts of Nigeria and even around the world striving to make a decent living for themselves sometimes, under very harsh and difficult conditions, and eventually making success out of their endeavors. (Adichie, 2013)

Although, there has been some disagreement among researchers and practitioners over definition of resilience and its operationalization e.g., there are questions as to whether it is a process, an individual trait, a dynamic developmental process, an outcome or all of the above. (Zautra, Hall, Murray, 2010). In this study, it is conceptualized as an ability that can be acquired through social relationships and networks, i.e, through social capital - the cultural values, and attitudes that encourage the residents of a community to cooperate, trust, understand, empathize and support one another to achieve goals that are of mutual benefits (Newton, 1997). Resilience as an area of research can be credited to Holling (1973), who used it to describe the capacity of an ecosystem who though is subjected to change and disturbance resist damage and recovers quickly, Such perturbations or disturbances could be events such as flooding, fire, windstorms, etc. Different fields have drawn from this conceptualization of resilience; this includes psychology, sociology, socio-ecological systems. Resilience in the field of psychology is the ability of a person to effectively respond and overcome a challenge; It is the ability to rise above a debilitating problem and return to normalcy. Not all persons recover from crises without a psychopathology, some are not able to ‘bounce back’ after a serious life event. In the last ten years, ideas generated through studies on resilience as a concept have been applied to develop innovations in formal organizations and in informal social networks. In such applications, the term resilience emphasize the need for organizations to constantly reinvent themselves (Hamel & Valikangas, 2003)

Objectives

The present study is guided by the following objectives:

- i. To examine how communities in areas of study organize themselves in social network to help the young adults succeed in their chosen endeavours.
- ii. To examine the relationship between social capital and resilience capacity of young adults in the areas of study.
- iii. To compare levels of resilience among different communities studied and examine if differences relate to the level of social capital

Literature Review

Frequent social contacts among people of same or even different tribe, class, ethnic background can engender trust which can serve as the basis of cooperative efforts aimed at achieving mutually beneficial goals and objectives among the people in the community. The trust people have built through social engagements enables individual members to sacrifice their self-interests and act in the interests of the collective (Coleman, 1988). This is reinforced by social support, status, honor, and other rewards that generally contribute to individual work that is focused on the public good. Communities that are high on social capital have been found to overcome poverty and social vulnerability (Moser, 1996). Social capital has been subdivided in literature to include: (1) horizontal and vertical (2) structural and cognitive. Horizontal refers to the connections between groups that have an equal standing in the community, while vertical social capital refers to interactions within a hierarchical society (Whitley and McKenzie, 2005). They went further to state that the second category points to overt and covert dimensions of social capital — structural and cognitive. According to them structural social capital is made up of relationships, networks, associations, and institutional structures that link people and groups together. Social capital consists of values, norms, reciprocity, altruism, and civic responsibility. It has to do with shared ways of thinking and behaving and “collective moral resources” (Whitley and McKenzie, 2005, p. 74).

Moore and Westley (2011) identified properties of social networks that contribute to proper conditions for fostering social innovation. They concluded that the actual invention of the innovation may require lots of weak and diverse links, but the adoption of the innovation requires strong bonds and trust so the network structure must evolve throughout the process. It has been

stated by researchers that when a community that has social capital faces a crises, it draws on this resource (social capital) to foster community resilience, in order to “bounce back” after the crises (Aldrich, 2010, 2012; Pfefferbaum, Wyche, &Pfefferbaum, 2008). Social capital is a resource that has been deployed to overcome a crisis (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000, p. 226). Aldrich (2010) identified the social networks that form the foundation of a community’s social capital, these include: (1) facilitating information dissemination, (2) enhancing community organization,(3) and motivating community engagement in rebuilding efforts. Though there are evidences to suggest that social capital can also have undesirable affects in the disaster recovery process (Aldrich, 2010). One of the benefits that social capital offers is making people have access to information (Coleman, 1988). For example, people have the ability to gain access to information about job opportunities (Fernandez & Weinberg, 1997), innovations (Rogers, 1995), and mobility opportunities (Portes & Sensenbrenner, 1993). In reference to disaster information dissemination, social capital within predominately poor and marginalized communities has the ability to increase information diffusion about evacuation orders, response efforts, and vulnerability, which can decrease overall losses in a specific location, when traditional government sources of information are inaccessible or not trusted (Aguirre, 1988; Morrow, 2000; Peguero, 2006; Perry &Greene, 1982; Perry & Lindell, 1991; Perry & Mushkatel, 1986; Rogers, 1992; Yelvington, 2000)

Past studies have majorly examined the relationship between social capital and resilience at community level, this is the first attempt as far as this study knows that explores the influence of social capital on individual’s resilience.Existing studies onresilience seeks to assess positive as well as negative patterns of adaptation after a disaster and also seeks to examine the factors or conditions that appear to promote or protect good functioning during crisis or recovery period (Masten and Osofsky, 2010).For example, Klasen et al. (2010) sought to establish the risk as well as protective factors in 330 former Ugandan child soldiers, The factors identified were divided up into losses of family or exposure to violence, psychological-dispositional traits, post-traumatic psychological relationships to the trauma event, and post-traumatic social setting. Almost three-quarters of the children interviewed (72.4%) showed evidence of psychopathology; the remaining 24.6% were operationally defined as resilient. The question asked was: Which variables could

differentiate the resilient from the vulnerable? , Findings showed that it had little to do with the duration or extent of the trauma itself: only age of abduction contributed; the other contributing factors found in the study were: levels of post-traumatic exposure to familial or community violence, assumptions of guilt, motivation for revenge, and spiritual support.

More interestingly, other variables in this vein one might expect to be important, such as social support, having a hardy personality, a positive outlook on life, loss of parents, and even gender, did not contribute significantly to the prediction of resilient outcomes. Adversity, although painful and something we all hope to avoid, can have a positive impact on our character. We acquire qualities such as persistence, self-control, conscientiousness, self-confidence and curiosity from experiences with adversity.

Hypotheses

1. There would be a relationship between social capital and resilience capacity
2. Participants from different Communities would differ significantly on resilience capacity on account of the social capital of their groups

Research Design

It is a field study which adopted a survey design and sought to measure the capacity of the participants and the social capital of their communities through two adapted and validated scales.

Study Location

The study was carried out in three different communities which comprised of Ajegunle, Oshodi and Mushin. These neighborhoods were largely poorly planned old communities, lacking in many basic amenities. It was characterized by poverty and many crimes such as hooliganism, street fighting, robbery and other vices.

Participants

The participants were mostly from Igbo and Yoruba ethnic groups. The study particularly targeted those who were about to complete secondary school, this was to ensure that they would need little or no

assistance to fill the question, however, a few of the participant had also quit school towards their final year in secondary school, such category of participants were given more attention to be able to understand the questions in order to fill them properly.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The study targeted all the young adults residing in three communities, a purposive sampling technique was adopted to select 250 young adults on three criteria, the first was that the participant must have passed from junior secondary school to senior secondary school, this was to be sure that the participants would be able to read and understand the questionnaire, secondly, the participants indicated that he was from an indigent family, this was necessary because there were comfortable people who also lived in this community where the study was conducted, finally, a consent had been secured from either the parent or teacher, and the child too to participate in the study.

Procedure

The selected participants were given the questionnaire to fill, they read to the researchers after which they were asked if they understood what they read, those question items that they pointed out that they did not understand were explained to them, it took them an average of twenty minutes to complete the questionnaire administered to them. The researcher collected them; this took an average of six days to be completed in each of the three communities. The instruments used for the study are below:

Demographics, here participants were asked questions on age, gender, position in the family, class in high school.

Measures

Resilient Scale for Adults (RSA): This consists of a revised 10-item scale. It is a self report originally developed by Fiborg, Hjemdal, Rosenvinge & Martinussen (2005) to measure individual's protective resilience elements. It has five dimension among which are: personal competence, social competence, family coherence, social support and personal structure. Cronbach's alpha, 0.90, 0.83, 0.87, 0.83 and 0.67 respectively. Present coefficient value in the study is .86 'Personal competence' assessed the level of self-esteem, self-efficacy, self-liking, hope, determination and a realistic orientation to life. The

second class was comprised by the dimension amount of family conflict, cooperation, support, loyalty and stability. The third and last class ‘external support systems’ was consisted of the ‘social support’ that assessed external support from friends and relatives, intimacy, and the individual’s ability to provide support (Friborg et al 2003). The present study used a seven-point semantic differential scale in which each item has both positive as well as negative feature at each end of the scale continuum, higher scores on the scale demonstrates high levels of resilience competence.

Personal Social Capital Scale 8. Social Capital Scale 8 (PCSC 8)’ consisting eight items, four measuring bonding and bridging each. The PSCS used two 5-point Likert –type scales for item scoring. The response scale for questions for assessing participant’s rating of their ‘network size’ (of persons willing to support their aspiration) was 1(a few), 2 (less than average) 3 (average) 4(more than average) and 5, (a lot). The response scale for questions assessing participants’ perception of how many network members was 1 (none), 2(a few), 3, some 4 (most) and 5 (all). Mean scores were calculated. This scale were tested for validity and reliability, it was found to have good psychometric properties Wang et al., (2014) reported Cronbach’s alpha of .90. The present study found Cronbach alpha of .81

Result

Table 1: Showing the frequency distribution of the demographic variables

	Categories	N	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	137	56.8

	Female		104	43.2
		N	241	
Ethnicity				
	Igbo		133	55.2
	Yoruba		60	24.9
	Others		49	19.9
		N	241	
Age				
	10-13		152	63.1
	14-17		51	20.7
	18-21		48	15.8
			241	

Captured in table 1 is the distribution of participants based on specific demographics. There is 137 male representing 56.8 percent of the sample, while there are 104 females representing 43.2 of the total sample. The study had more Igbo young adults and thus has the highest number of respondents totaling 133 representing 55.% of the sample followed by Yoruba ethnic group which has a total number of 60 participants representing 24.9 percent. On age distribution, 152 (63.1%) of the participants were between the age of 10 to 13, while 51 (20.8%) were between the age of 14 to 17 (20.7%) and 38 (16.1%) of the participants were between the age of 18to 21

Table 2
Correlation Result of Relationship between Social Capital and Resilience

Correlations			
		Variable1 (X) Social Capital	Variable 2 (Y) Resilience
Variable1 (X) Social Capital	Pearson Correlation	1	0.252
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	241	241
Variable 2 (Y) Resilience	Pearson Correlation	0.252	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	241	241

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Significant at $P < 0.01$

Based on the above result we can infer that there is a weak but yet significant positive correlation between social capital and resilience.

Hypothesis 2:

Participants from different Communities would differ significantly on resilience capacity on account of the social capital of their groups

Table 3: Summary of One way ANOVA on the difference between young adults of selected communities on social capital

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	231.638	2	114.819	2.032	.122
Within Groups	13190.186	240	54.451		
Total	13425.624	240			

* $p = 0.05$

The result of one way ANOVA in table shows that there was no statistically significant difference between young adults from selected communities as determined by one-way ANOVA ($F(2, 247) = 2.032, P > 0.05$). The hypothesis is therefore rejected and Others ($M=28.54, S.D=5.89$). The result revealed that the communities did not differ significantly on social capital.

Discussion

The result of the first hypothesis which showed that there is a positive relationship between social capital and resilience capacity is consistent with the result of Pfefferbaum, Van Horn & Pfefferbaum (2015) in their seminal paper where they showed that social capital was important in building the resilience of communities. It was also reported by Frakenberger (2016) in a sample drawn from Kenya, Uganda, Niger and Burkina Faso that bonding (i.e., social capital) enabled households in some of the communities studied to recover from crises. The finding of Quinn Bernier and Ruth Meinzen-Dick (2014) also showed a positive relationship between Social Capital and Resilience Capacity. This underscores the role of social capital in resilience capacity of a group of people in a community. The notion of static society remains an illusion, societies go through changes occasioned by social crises often, this reality makes it imperative that peoples of different communities be aware of the need to value the social networks that they have in their society and in fact leverage on this social resource, more so when it is clear from reviewed literature in this study that it has impacts in the way people recover from tragic experiences,

The second hypothesis which states that Participants from different community would differ on resilience capacity could not be supported in the present study, although Frankerbrger (2016) showed that while some communities recovered from a crisis quickly other communities could not recover from a similar crisis, suggesting that there are individual differences among groups of people in different places on resilience capacity. This result perhaps suggests that Lagosians generally have high resilience capacity, this may not come as a surprise to the residents of the city as they are constantly subjected to many life pressures that may have necessitated developing and maintaining a strong social network that could help them deal with the city challenges.

Conclusion

In today's dynamic environment, the capability of an individual, organizations and community to be resilient is very vital. Individuals, communities, organizations as well as countries at large are all vulnerable to environmental uncertainties and changes which present so many repercussions such as diseases, disasters, terrorism, economic shocks, human errors as well as equipment failures etc. (Bhamra, Dani, & Burnard, 2011). In this regard, It has become necessary for communities to build resilience in young people, moreover, humans as social beings find fulfillment and emotional

support in their affiliations to network of other individuals, in times of need or crises this social network becomes valuable in helping overcome some of these social pressures, it thus behooves community leaders in various communities to deliberately leverage on social capital to build resilience into young adults in their domain. People in government can help a great deal facilitate the process by offering necessary support.

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