

BURYING NUTS: A PSYCHOSOCIAL ACTIVITY OF THE SQUIRREL IN AN INDIVIDUALISED WORLD

The Vice-Chancellor and Chairman of this Occasion,
Honourable Members of the University Governing Council,
Principal Officers of the University,
Deans and Directors,
Heads of Department,
All Professors and Distinguished Members of Senate,
Esteemed Academic Colleagues, other Members of the Congregation
and Staff of the University,
Your Royal Highnesses and Chiefs here present,
Highly Esteemed Relations and Friends,
Distinguished Guests,
Great Nigerian Students,
Gentlemen of the Press,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

1.0 Introduction

An inaugural lecture is an academic obligation which a person appointed or promoted to the exalted position of a professor is required to fulfill in the course of his/her career in the University. Therefore, it is an opportunity for the learned professor so honoured, to give account of his research efforts to the university community and the general public in a way that will benefit mankind. An attempt is usually made to relate the subject area to general societal or national needs and goals.

This occasion of the University's 15th inaugural lecture has therefore offered me such a unique opportunity to furnish my colleagues, the

university Community and the general public with the account of my research work to date: how life experiences have sharpened my research focus and my future research interest.

It is with the above objective, Mr Vice-Chancellor Sir, that the title of this inaugural lecture "Burying Nuts: A Psychosocial Activity of the Squirrel in an Individualised World" was conceived.

In the course of my academic journey in the field of psychology, life experiences have become a tool for me to find explanation for human behaviour with the aim of proffering solutions to human psychosocial complexities: hence the squirrel, a bushy-tailed rodent found all over the world, becomes a metaphor in this lecture for our understanding of human behaviours vis-à-vis my research findings.

1.1 Growing through Adversity: Concept of the Squirrel and the Nuts

I was born in Ghana to Nigerian parents from Offa in Kwara State. I was growing up in that country when it dawned on my parents that they had to relocate back home. So we all returned to Nigeria. On getting to Nigeria, my dad found that the house he had been sending money home to build, which his people claimed had been completed was actually at the "initial stage". He was so sad that he broke down in tears.



Painfully breaking the wall of obstacle.

The only option was to use all the money he had on him (being the proceeds from his houses he sold in Ghana) to complete the building so we could have a place call our own. All his life savings were exhausted. Thus, he became a subsistence farmer just to feed his family. At this point, my mother had to follow and stay with him where he got land to farm, far away from our home town. Things became difficult to the extent that as a primary school pupil, I had to work as a labourer and as a bus conductor to raise money to pay school fees. This, I did throughout my primary school days till I completed my First School Leaving Certificate (FSLC).

I was offered admission at the Igbaja Baptist Grammar School, but the person who collected the admission letter on my behalf did not release it because to him "who will sponsor you?" At least he should have released it since it was addressed to me. Thus, I could not honour the admission. What else would a small boy be doing at home? My dad negotiated with one Alhaji, a business man staying in Osogbo to have

me as his house boy. Alhaji had 17 wives and so I had to work for all of them if I needed to eat. One day I woke up crying when I looked at my life. What would I do as a house boy? I was not being trained to be independent. It was a sad day in December of that year. The following day I told Alhaji, I was not interested in the job anymore. He threatened not to pay my monthly stipend which my parents asked him to be keeping for me and pay once at the end of every year. He took me back to Offa from Osogbo and told my parents that since I did not complete the three years they both agreed, he would not pay me anything and he did not. There, 25 months were wasted. My parents could not protest against a rich man.

**When everything
seems to be going
against you,
remember that the
airplane takes off
against the wind,
not with it.**

- Henry Ford

Luckily, after three months of waiting, I got a job at Heinemann Educational Books, Ibadan as a Cleaner (not office attendant). However, something happened one day, which I can never forget. A new Clerical Officer who assumed duty in less than two weeks was in his office when he had epilepsy attack. Everyone in his office ran outside until he regained his consciousness. I, the cleaner was invited to pack the "epileptic saliva" that littered the floor. This happened on three occasions until the management of the company disengaged the young man on health grounds. What a "wonderful and everlasting" experience!

"The flower that blooms in adversity is the rarest and most beautiful of all."

Walt Disney

Relief finally came my way when Igbaja Baptist Grammar School, Igbaja offered me admission AGAIN.

In the secondary school, not that it was so smooth but God was with me and I passed all the subjects I registered for in the West African Examinations Council, WAEC). While at the University of Ibadan, it was

so bad to the extent that I wore the same jacket and trousers that I used in my secondary school days for about 10 years. In fact, I was a commercial barber in the Halls of Residence. I felt bad the day somebody reminded me that he had been seeing me with the same cloth for over 10 years (correct!). He advised me to go and throw it away. It was as if he reminded God about my case. Years later, at that same spot, another person asked me "you too, is it every time you buy new clothes? You are just changing clothes at will".

Thus, in those days when I used to follow my late father to the farm during holidays, I remember the periods I would get so tired that I would climb a tree to rest. That time, I used to watch squirrels jump from one tree to another in search of nuts. I became interested in their activities to the extent that many a time, I devoted more time to watching them than working on the farm. But the more I have learned about squirrels, the more I have realised that they are skilful.

The squirrels promote germination by hiding nuts far from the trees. In warmer months when food is more abundant, squirrels hoard nuts for the winter. They dig small holes in the ground to bury their food, to hide them for a later date.

Although squirrels store food in different locations throughout their ranges, they do not always remember where they bury it. Unrecovered nuts and seeds give way to germinating trees, which is why squirrels are known to play an important role in growing and maintaining forest tree populations.



Source: [Annaliese Griffin](#)

In fact, I saw the squirrel at this activity most of the time, either hiding nuts or attempting to find them later. Therefore, most of the trees in the wild are the result of the squirrel's failure to find most of the nuts he buries! This probably explains that popular Yoruba adage: "ojo jije okere, ojo ti okere p'ebi sun lopo!" {Translation: In spite of the squirrel's crave for food satisfaction, the number of days that it goes hungry are many}. One is challenged by why the squirrel still goes hungry in spite of the fact that it saves for the rainy day and how this act of his has turned out to benefit it or mankind!

2.0 Helping in an Individualized World

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, Sir, from what I passed through while growing up and my experience as a Psychologist, I have discovered that what sustains humanity is the act of kindness extended to people. However,

such a prosocial behaviour may not necessarily be in anticipation of any form of reward just like a squirrel. How is this prosocial behaviour connected with psychology as a field of study?

2.1 What is Psychology?

The discipline of psychology has been defined in different ways by many scholars. According to Efoghe, Maliki & Efoghe (1995), psychology is the scientific study of human and animal behaviour and its mental processes. Afolabi and Imhonde (2003) defined psychology as a discipline that is involved in solving behavioural and attitudinal problems. The discipline has four major goals which are to describe, explain, predict and to control behaviour and mental processes. From the several definitions and my research efforts, I wish to re-define psychology as *the science that studies human and animal behaviour with its mental processes and seeks to proffer solutions to problems that arise from such behavioural processes.*

2.1.2 Areas of Specialisation in Psychology

We have many areas of specialisation in psychology. These include but not limited to the following:

Social, Brain Science and Cognitive, Climate and Environmental, Clinical, Counselling, Developmental, Forensic and Public Service, Health, Human Factors and Engineering, Industrial and Organisational, Quantitative/Psychometric, Rehabilitation, Sport and Performance Psychology, etc.

Social Psychology (**my area of specialisation**) uses psychological science to understand how we perceive ourselves in relation to the rest

of the world and how this perception affects our choices, behaviours and beliefs. It is the study of how individuals affect and are affected by other people and by their social and physical environments (Baron, Byrne & Suls, 1989).

Social psychologists, therefore, deal with the factors that lead us to behave in a given way in the presence of others, and look at the conditions under which certain behaviour/actions and feelings occur. It is about the way these feelings, thoughts, beliefs, intentions and goals are constructed and how such psychological factors, in turn, influence our interactions with others.

3.0 What is Prosocial Behaviour? - Natured or Nurtured?

Many scholars have defined prosocial behaviour in various forms. Prosocial activities involve attention and assistance towards other people, displaying of love, loyalty and service to individual or group of people without any expectation to get any reward in return. In the view of Afolabi (2017b; 2013) prosocial behaviour is any voluntary actions willingly enacted to help another individual or set of people. It refers to the activities that are conducted or planned to help individuals without expecting anything in return. Thus, it includes behaviours such as helping, sharing, or providing comfort to another.



Dust cloud from 9/11 terrorist attack

Source: Mount Sinai School of Medicine

The concepts of prosocial behaviour have their roots in many religious doctrines. For example, one of the doctrines of the Bible says "love your neighbour as yourself" (Mark 12:31; Romans 13:9; Galatians 5:14; James 2:8). Same way, the story of the Good Samaritan who assisted an injured man (Luke 10: 29-37) is always used by Christians to encourage people to help others. Even among animals, prosocial actions have frequently been observed.

4.0 Why People Help

Mr Vice-Chancellor Sir, for this purpose of my academic enquiry into why people help, my research interest in the area of prosocial behaviour can be categorized under the following headings:

- a. Socio-demographic Variables and Prosocial Behaviour
- b. Personality and Prosocial Behaviour
- c. Emotional intelligence and Prosocial Behaviour
- d. Perceived Similarity, Culture and Prosocial Behaviour
- e. Gratitude and Prosocial Behaviour

4.1 Socio-demographic Variables (gender, age and social class) and Prosocial Behaviour

Socio-demographic characteristics include, for example, gender, age, education, migration background and ethnicity, religious affiliation, marital status, household, employment, and income. Thus, in my studies, I have concentrated on just three out of these which are gender, age and socio-economic status.

Based on stereotypic gender roles, females generally are expected and believed to be more responsive, empathic, and prosocial than males, whereas males are expected to be relatively independent and achievement oriented (e.g., Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1975). Further, cross-cultural works have verified that gender differences in prosocial responding are not limited to only a few cultures and may develop with age.

In a study among Nigerian drivers, Afolabi and Idowu (2014) randomly selected 200 individuals (100 males and 100 females) who are either private or commercial drivers to participate in their study. The results showed that the effect of gender on prosocial behaviour was not significant among the participants. This could be as a result of the general aggressive behaviour among Nigerian drivers. Therefore, despite the prevailing view that females are more prosocial than males, findings varies depending on the age of the actor and the type of prosocial behaviour.

Again, Onyencho and Afolabi (2018) found that age and gender have no significant effect on prosocial behaviour among a sample of Nigerian police officers. However, in the study by Afolabi earlier in 2014a, he found that age and gender have significant relationship with prosocial

behaviour among 294 undergraduates in Nigeria. The study found that age positively influences prosocial behaviour amongst the students. The result revealed that level of study of the students influences prosocial behaviour.

Social economic status of individuals is also expected to influence their prosocial behaviour. Lower class is characterized by fewer resources, greater exposure to threat and a reduced sense of personal control. For these and other reasons, one would expect that individuals from lower socio-economic status would engage in less prosocial behaviour.

Compared to the upper class individuals, those on the lower class have fewer economic resources, fewer educational opportunities, less access to social institutions and subordinate rank in society relative to others (Adler, Epel, Castellazo & Ickovics, 2000).

Afolabi (2018a) also examined how social class influences prosocial behaviour and found that lower class individuals demonstrated greater prosociality than individuals from upper class backgrounds among a sample of civil servants in Ondo State. This may be because high-income people spend a larger portion of their income on costly consumer goods, (like automobiles) and disproportionately less on assisting others in need. In nationwide surveys of charitable contributions in America, lower income individuals give proportionally more of their incomes to charity than do their higher income counterparts (James & Sharpe, 2007). Thus, Afolabi (2018a) concluded that behaving generously and helping those in need, lower class individuals may promote trust and cooperation from others, thus ensuring that in times of hardship, their needs will also, be met.

4.2 Personality Traits and Prosocial Behaviour

Afolabi and Dahunsi (2013) defined personality as "made up of the characteristic patterns of thoughts, feelings and behaviours that make a person unique. Thus, based on my interest, Mr Vice-Chancellor, Sir, I have concentrated my researches on the Big Five personality traits and their relationship/effects on prosocial behaviour. This is because according to Afolabi and Ehigie (2005), the Big Five is the most talked about personality theory. Personality traits are "dimensions of individual differences in tendencies to show consistent patterns of thoughts, feelings and actions" (Afolabi, Odetunde & Oviasuyi, 2001; McCrae & Costa, 1990). These traits shape how individuals direct their attention and activate specific goals (Afolabi, 2013; McCrae & Costa, 1995). These five traits include: a. *neuroticism*, individuals who are high in this trait tend to experience mood swings, anxiety, irritability, and sadness. Those low in this trait tend to be more stable and emotionally resilient); b. *extraversion*, people here are more assertive, sociable, talkative, and higher participation rate in activities compared to introverts; c. *openness to experience*, people who are high in this trait also tend to have a broad range of interests. They are curious about the world and other people and eager to learn new things and enjoy new experiences); d. *agreeableness*, people high on agreeableness are selfless, sympathetic to others, tend to help others, and tend to cooperate with others and e. *conscientiousness*, defined as individual differences in the tendency to be purposive, to adhere to social norms and rules, and to be able to delay gratification.

Individuals who score high on neuroticism are more likely than average to be moody and to experience such feelings as anxiety, worry, fear, anger, frustration, envy, jealousy, guilt, depressed mood, and loneliness. Emotional stability has been considered primarily with regard to the

prediction of psychological disorders and very rarely in relation to prosocial behaviours. Based on theoretical rationale on why personality traits have consequential effects on important life outcomes. Guo, Sun and Li (2018) adopted multiple mediation analysis to investigate the mechanisms by which neuroticism leads to less prosocial behaviour. Social anxiety, empathy, social self-efficacy, self-esteem, and emotional intelligence were introduced as mediators. Self-reported measures of the above mentioned traits were administered to 1461 undergraduate students. The results showed that: (1) there was a negative association between neuroticism and prosocial behaviour; (2) lower levels of social self-efficacy, emotional intelligence, perspective taking, and empathic concern could primarily account for the negative association between neuroticism and prosocial behaviour; (3) neuroticism might facilitate prosocial behaviour via higher levels of personal distress; (4) the above mentioned mediators completely mediated the effect of neuroticism on prosocial behaviour, and the multiple mediation effect was not moderated by gender. They inferred that if prosocial behaviour does not require interpersonal interaction, or the social interaction is less anxiety provoking, the negative effect of neuroticism on prosocial behaviour may disappear.

Prosocial tendencies give rise to responsible and helpful behaviour constructs that characterise agreeableness; prosocial behaviour requires self-regulation and self-control, constructs that define conscientiousness (Caspi, Roberts, & Shiner, 2005). Agreeableness and conscientiousness have been concurrently and prospectively linked to prosocial behaviour during adolescence (Pursell, et. al. 2008). It was concluded that the construct of prosocial behaviour overlaps considerably with the constructs of agreeableness and

conscientiousness. Taken together, the findings are consistent with the view that cooperative, helpful behaviour is uncharacteristic of aggressive, antisocial individual. Given their conceptual overlap, it is not surprising that evidence ties prosocial behaviour to agreeableness and conscientiousness.

Another important factor in personality issues is **self-efficacy**, which refers to one's self judgments of personal capabilities to initiate and successfully perform specified tasks at designated levels (Afolabi & Balogun, 2017; Afolabi & Obuseh, 2013). Individual differences in traits, values, and self-efficacy beliefs have been found to account for significant portions of the variability in prosociality. Regarding the relationship between self-efficacy and prosocial behaviour, Afolabi and Alade (2015) just like Sonnentag and Grant (2010) reported that self-efficacy is a strong predictor of prosocial behaviour.

In a study conducted by Grant and Gino (2010) which investigated the role of self-efficacy in predicting prosocial behaviour, their results showed that self-efficacy significantly predicted prosocial behaviour. To confirm this, Afolabi and Owoola (2014) randomly selected 230 commercial bus drivers from different motor parks in Ibadan. The result of the study revealed that self-efficacy had significant effect on the prosocial behaviour of the drivers. Earlier in 2013, Ugwu and Oji among a sample of Nigerian bank workers also confirmed that individuals high in self-efficacy demonstrated high prosocial behaviour. Thus, self-efficacy beliefs, just like self-esteem (Afolabi, 2014b) contribute to prosociality and account for a significant portion of unique variance in the tendency to behave prosocially (Caprara, Alessandri, Di Giunta, Panerai & Eisenberg, 2010).

Even though Baumeister, Masicampo and Dewall (2009), in their study, found that self-efficacy is negatively related to prosocial behaviour, however, in a study by Afolabi (2017a) to test the relationship between empathic concern and some specific prosocial behaviours, like helping individuals informally, the results showed that there was a significant correlation where the individual needing help was directly present. The findings indicate that self-efficacy is not an important motivator for planned helping decisions and decisions to help others who are not immediately present, such as volunteering, charitable giving, and blood donation.

In a similar study by Afolabi (2018b) among a sample of paramilitary personnel, he also confirmed the importance of self-efficacy in helping others. One could adduce from the findings of this study that belief on one's ability is an impetus to helping behaviour. The study established that among those that are high in self-efficacy it was found that they are also willing to help their colleagues including those who may not seek for help. This is due to the fact that in the traditional African settings, people provide social support in the time of difficulty and/or joy. Such behaviours could be regarded as part of social expectancies. This is because prosocial behaviour in African context may be classified as "intrinsic-reward associated behaviour and it's done without any consideration of who the other individual is".

4.3 Emotional Intelligence and Prosocial Behaviour

Emotional intelligence has experienced a wide range of research with prosocial behaviour (Afolabi & Olusa, 2019; Afolabi, 2013). Emotional intelligence is the "ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and

emotions, to discriminate among them and use this information to guide one's thinking and actions" (Afolabi & Balogun, 2017; Afolabi, Ogunmwonyi & Okediji, 2009; Afolabi, 2004; Salovey and Mayer, 1989). Individuals high on emotional intelligence defer immediate gratification and exhibit self-control in order to optimise pleasure over their lifetime. Also, they display enlightened self-interest by engaging in activities that are both pro-individual and prosocial (Goleman, 1995). Thus, emotionally intelligent individuals exhibit a high sense of self-interest through activities that are beneficial to the individuals themselves and the society in general. This is why Afolabi, Awosola, and Omole (2010, p. 147) concluded that "an individual's emotional intelligence is an indicator of how he or she perceives, understands and regulates emotions".

Findings suggest that lower emotional intelligence is related to involvement in self-destructive behaviours such as alcohol abuse and cigarette smoking (Afolabi, 2017a; Afolabi, 2013; Brackett, Mayer, & Warner, 2004), whereas higher emotional intelligence is related to positive outcomes such as prosocial behaviour, parental warmth and positive peer and family relations. For example, Afolabi, et. al, (2010) examined the influence of emotional intelligence and gender on job performance and job satisfaction among Nigeria Police Officers. One hundred and nineteen (119) police officers were randomly selected from Esan Area Command of Edo State. The results show that Police Officers who are of high emotional intelligence are more satisfied and perform their duties better than Police Officers who are of low emotional intelligence.

Afolabi (2013) investigated the influence of five-factor personality factors, emotional intelligence and gender differences on prosocial behaviour among undergraduates in Nigeria. Cross-sectional survey design was adopted to tap information from 200 randomly selected undergraduates. The results showed that there were significant relationships among the variables of study. In the third step, results showed that emotional intelligence had significant joint contribution to the overall prediction of prosocial behaviour which increased to 35.3%. Also, with t-Test analysis, it was found that high emotional intelligence increased prosocial behaviour. It implied that individuals with high emotional intelligence had high prosocial behaviour.

4.4 Culture, Perceived Similarity and Prosocial Behaviour

Cultural differences may influence prosocial behaviour in that a person is likely to help, donate or generally extend a positive gesture to a person based on cultural affiliation. The behaviour is more or less collectivist than individualistic as based in the culture.

Cultural differences, in relation to prosocial behaviour, are expressed differently between individualistic and collectivistic societies. For instance, someone living in the U.S. is least likely to help someone in need than someone living in Australia, India or Kenya. Cultural differences can be explained by different socialisation practices that determine an individual's motive for prosocial behaviour.

Afolabi (2014a) investigated the roles of psychosocial factors (religiosity, life satisfaction, perceived social exclusion, family type, type of residence, rural/urban and cultural/ethnic differences) on

prosocial behaviour among undergraduates. Results of the 4 hypotheses tested revealed that there were significant relationships among the variables of study. Besides their significant individual contributions to prosocial behaviour, religiosity also mediated the relationships between life satisfaction, perceived social exclusion and prosocial behaviour. It was also found that respondents residing in a village were more prosocial than those in the city. Also, cultural/ethnic differences significantly influenced prosocial behaviour.

Although there are many gaps in the research findings to provide a definitive picture, there is nonetheless accumulating evidence that from a young age, children selectively act prosocially towards those who are members of their group - even if the groups are arbitrarily defined - and in some cases, act anti-socially towards members of other groups. Children might not be selfish, but they seem "groupish".

An individual tends to be prosocial towards members of their groups (ethnic, cultural, religious, etc.). However, people tend to render assistance to individuals who speak and understand their languages whether the person to be helped is from their ethnic, religious or cultural group or not. This is why Afolabi and Ademiluyi (2019) investigated the effects of perceived similarity and self-concept on social dominance and prosocial behaviour among some undergraduates. Using cross-sectional survey design with a purposive and accidental sampling technique used a total sample of 238 undergraduates. The result confirmed a significant effect of perceived similarity on prosocial behaviour of the respondents.

4.5 Gratitude and Prosocial Behaviour

In psychology, gratitude has been portrayed in diverse ways: as a positive emotion, a personality trait, a positive attitude toward others, a moral virtue, and a constructive approach to interpersonal relations (Afolabi, 2019a; Afolabi, 2017c; Emmons & McCullough, 2003). Therefore, gratitude is the appreciation experienced by individuals when somebody does something kind or helpful for them. Following from the definition, Afolabi, (2019b) in his study posits that gratitude, humour, and love are the most common character strengths to get someone going and it is also associated with optimal functioning, resilience, satisfaction with self, family, friends, community, and satisfaction with life overall. Gratitude is considered a moral affect because it results from and stimulates behaviour that is motivated by a concern for other people's well-being. This is because gratitude has been linked to positive psychological, physiological, and social outcomes in adults and children (Layous & Lyubomirsky, 2014). As such, gratitude serves as a key link in the dynamics between receiving and giving. It is not only a response to kindnesses received, but it is also a motivator of future benevolent actions on the part of the recipient (Froh, Bono & Emmons, 2010).



*Feed A Dog For 3 Days
They Will Remember
You For 3 Years
Feed A Human For 3 Years
They Will Forget
You In 3 Days*

Somebody once told me that when you feed a dog for three days (prosocial behaviour), it will remember you for three years; but feed a human being for three years, they will forget you in three days. This is

especially common when they want you to continually feed them and there was a pause or stoppage for a period. They begin to castigate and call you different and unpleasant names. This is one of the reasons, according to Afolabi (2019a), why people don't help. Other selfish individuals based their reason on the fact that "helping another person to grow is like bringing up somebody to compete with your own children for the scarce resources in the future".

In a sample of Cadets in a Defence Academy, Afolabi (2019b) found that gratitude was associated with greater social integration (i.e. motivation to help others and contribute to society) with increased life satisfaction and prosocial behaviour.

In another study conducted by Afolabi and Adelus (2019) among a sample of school teachers from 10 randomly selected schools in Akure, Ondo State. The results showed that gratitude significantly predict prosocial behaviour among the teachers. Therefore, expressing gratitude to people who have been kind to us validates their efforts and reinforces such behaviour in the future. And gratitude motivates us to extend kindness in response to those who have been kind to us but to others as well (Afolabi, 2017c). Finally, research has shown that gratitude promotes relationship formation and maintenance, concern, and it strengthens romantic relationships (Afolabi, 2019a). Thus, gratitude appears to help individuals find, remind, and bind to attentive relationship partners (Algoe, 2012).

5.0 Conclusion

Mr Vice-Chancellor, Sir, based on these considerations, it would be reasonable to conclude that prosocial behaviour is the result of a complex interaction of environmental, social and individual factors. These factors, play the most significant role in whether an individual helps or not. Therefore, I conclude as follows:

a. Elderly people tend to be more prosocial than the younger ones. Though it may not be universal, women have also been found to be more willing to help than men. Thus, gender is a good predictor of prosocial behaviour.

b. People from the low social status have also been found to be more prosocial than those from the high social status. In addition, people who live in small and medium-sized towns are more helpful than those who reside in the big towns and cities.

c. Based on the relationship between the five-factors of personality and prosocial behaviour, it is concluded that agreeableness and openness-to-experience are positively associated with prosocial behaviour.

d. From my and other studies, emotional intelligence is another important predictor of prosocial behaviour. Individuals with high emotional intelligence also display high level of prosocial behaviour.

e. The culture and group to which an individual belongs can also determine who they offer to help. Compared to members of individualistic cultures, members of interdependent cultures are more likely to help people they view as members of their in-group and less likely to help people they view as members of an out-group.

f. Gratitude is another important factor in prosocial behaviour. People tend to render more assistance/help to individuals who appreciated and showed gratitude for the earlier help rendered to them. In fact, Yorubas would say "*yin-ni, yin-ni, k'eni o le se mii* (show gratitude to a helper so that he/she can do more).

6.0 Recommendations/Lessons for Our Society

Mr Vice-Chancellor, Sir, there is a great lesson to learn from the activities of the squirrel.

a. The squirrel's cheerful activities are a reminder for us to *play and enjoy life*. Their propensity to hide nuts is a lesson in being prepared. The way the squirrel faces the daunting task of burying and later finding nuts teaches us that we have to face our problems as individuals and as a nation, instead of sitting on them. Sure, the squirrel can sit down and wait for winter, hoping he can scout around for food by then. But instead, it prepares for it carefully and strategically!

b. *Do not depend on ANYONE*, whether your brother, sister, cousin, nephew, uncle, auntie, etc. Take a lesson from squirrels. They often build second and even third homes near food sources and relocate to their back-up dwellings when they need to escape the threat of predators, fleas, or to be closer to food. Perhaps we humans should think more like squirrels and have back-up plans for life emergencies we could face. Think about how you can build back-up plans and escape hatches into your life. Besides, while doing all these, you also need to be prosocial by helping others.

c. *Build meaningful relationships:* Squirrels often scamper around and give chase to one another, up and down trees, jumping from limb to limb and rolling about. But what do all their antics mean? It's all about relationships, and the intent of their chasing depends on the age and sex of the squirrels involved. In addition, for humans, building relationships is an integral part of our development. Research demonstrates that building relationships promotes belongingness, social awareness, co-operation, fairness and altruism.

d. It is also important that humans should try to *adapt to change*. Squirrels are remarkably adaptable. They can be found in city parks, and rural settings, as well as on trees, on the ground and perhaps even in our living space. So how adaptable are you? Remember that 'times change and you have to adapt'.

e. *Save for the Future:* Squirrels know they will face trying periods when food is scarce, particularly in early spring time around March. It is not uncommon for squirrels to die of starvation before their first birthday. The smart squirrels, however, saves for his future. As human beings, we should learn this act by squirreling enough for our own retirement. With longer lifespan, rising healthcare cost and greater responsibility for individuals to provide our own retirement security, it is important for each of us to save, invest, and save again, **not only in financial terms but in human capacities**. Practicing frugal living will not make us workers forever, and never enjoy fruitful retirement.

f. Note that not everyone will love you, because you are not perfect. Squirrels have learned that not everyone is going to love them. So they have to love themselves. For this reason, they seek protection in parks where they share their common interest. As human beings, seek out hands of those who welcome your company. Learn to appreciate your flaws as an integral part of you, and then get on with the business of living. As human beings, not everyone will love us, but we need to love

ourselves, doing our best to become a better person but not undermining the feelings of others. If we do not lend a helping hand to someone today, that person will become someone tomorrow and you may regret not to have helped that person when you had the chance. Finally, there is no doubt that our society needs prosocial individuals to keep the society alive. Therefore, I encourage us to light another person's candle, it makes everywhere brighter without putting off the one we are holding.

g. The case in Nigeria today is pathetic in such a way that the leaders have it and squander it without recourse to the unborn children. While other leaders in the Western world (with some few ones in Africa) are busy burying nuts, ours are busy "swallowing all the nuts" that is meant for all of us. There is no doubt that the future of Nigerian youths is already mortgaged. Our youths are growing through adversity yet; a bright future is not certain. I think Nigeria should bury nuts that will eventually germinate for everyone to benefit from.



7. Acknowledgements/Appreciation

Mr Vice-Chancellor sir, remember I mentioned earlier that the race was rough. It was very rough because my sister who was instructed by my father to take me to start primary school never expected I would complete the primary education. She uttered it in an exchange with her friend who also brought her (young) sibling to the same school that (*"mo mu eleyi naa wa si ile iwe boya a le pari"*). She brought me to start the elementary school whether I would be able to complete primary education. This never had any meaning to me then until later in life.

Therefore, permit me to start these acknowledgements by thanking my Creator, My Rock, My Refuge, My Strength, My Song, My Portion & Cup, My Joy, My Glory, My Hiding Place, My God and my All, My Treasure, My Father, My Justification, My Righteousness, My Sanctification, My Defence, My Provider and My Salvation. He has been My Everything, God Almighty. May His Name continually be praised.

Mr Vice-Chancellor, Sir, I have spoken about the importance of burying nuts like squirrels. As part of my prosocial activities, I have started an endowment fund in my Church, at home, to cater for some indigent students who are unable to pay their West African School Certificate Examinations fees. This, I named in honour of my mother. We started helping the students since 2015 and as God lives, it will continue. The Coordinator of the foundation, Mr Toro Adesiyun, who has been doing a great job is also here today. I thank him too.

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Another, serious psychological torture for my mother was when I demanded for pocket money from her but she had no money. She just went inside as if she was going to bring the money. I later got to know she was weeping inside her room. I thank God for giving her sound health. Today, people call her "Mama Professor" and she is growing younger every day. She just turned 93 years in February.

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I'm pressing on the upward way
New heights I'm gaining ev'ry day
Still praying as I onward bound,
Lord, plant my feet on higher ground
Lord lift me up and let me stand
By faith on heaven's table-land,
A higher plane than I have found,
Lord, plant my feet on higher ground

Mr Vice-Chancellor sir, distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, this is my story, this is my song. Thank you all for your attention.

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