

# Teaching/Learning of the Topic “Individual Obligation in the Family” and Students’ Performance of House Obligations

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study was to find out the impact of the “teaching of individual obligation in the Family” on the attitudes of SHS students towards the performance of household chores in their homes. The study was conducted at Tema Metropolis. The descriptive cross-sectional design was adopted for this study. The method was chosen because the study did not focus on causal effects in the population. Also, it was chosen because it is based on a representative sample of the population, the results can be generalized to the overall population from which the sample came. A sample size of 240 first year students and 260 second year students were used for the study, with questionnaires being administered to the sample. The researchers had 220 and 245 complete questionnaires from first years and second years respectively. The simple random sampling was adopted for this study. The main data collection tool used was the questionnaire, and Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for the collation and presentation of the results. The results revealed that the main household chores performed by the respondents are running errands for their parents/guardians, cooking, ironing of clothes, baby-sitting, home repairs and maintenance, and hawking. In addition, the majority of respondents, irrespective of their academic year of study, agreed that it is their responsibility to perform house chores at home. The findings also showed that most of the respondents, especially the second year students, felt they are obliged to perform household chores. It was recommended that a forum should be organised to educate parents/guardians on how to nurture and engage their children in chores in order not to affect their academic performance. Finally, it was recommended that the Government of Ghana and the Ministry of Education should ensure that the topic “Individual obligations in the family” is moved from the second year syllabus to that of the first years so that students will get to know their obligations in the family at a very early age.

**Keywords:** Teaching/Learning, obligation, student, attitudes, house obligations

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## 1.0 Introduction

The performance of household chores by children, particularly adolescents, is an age old practice which spans different cultures and countries. In traditional African societies, the performance of household chores by children while growing up is seen as one of the pillars of the traditional educational system (Adeyemi & Adeyinka, 2002) and thus as a means of socialising young people to become functional and effective in the society. This is explained to imply the kind of education that seeks to equip boys and girls with the skills appropriate for their gender in preparation for their distinctive roles in the society, which is to enable them fulfil socially defined masculine and feminine responsibilities respectively (Adeyemi & Adeyinka, 2002).

In as much as doing household chores is a tradition in Africa, and thus Ghana, traditionally children are seen as economic assets to their families and must therefore work to improve their well-being and that of their families. Tadam (2015) is, for instance, of the view that children are expected to assist parents by offering services in the form of chores to reciprocate the support they enjoy from their parents or guardians. A study by ILO (2006) indicates that children are active driving forces in the unpaid household work where parents/guardians rely greatly on the services of children in the enterprise. Weisner (2001), on the other hand, stresses the significance of children contributing to the family for their own successful development. A work by Jackson and Tein (1998) indicated that experiences within the family of origin are meaningful for self-efficacy development. The above indication has been strengthened by a study conducted by Riggio, Valenzuela and Weiser (2010), which revealed that there exist a “*significant positive correlations between housework, regular chores, meal preparation, and work self-efficacy*”

In Ghana, the topic “Individual Obligations in the Family” was introduced into the Senior High School (SHS) Social Studies syllabus to help strengthen the knowledge on individual responsibilities in the family and at the same time address the problem of some people trying to enjoy family privileges, but not fulfilling their family obligations, therefore causing dislocation in the family system. According to Bekoe (2006), the topic was deliberately introduced in connection with the subject’s philosophy and purpose; to inculcate in learners the relevant knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to enable them make reflective decisions and act on these

decisions to solve both their personal and societal problems. This topic has for its objectives/outcomes like learners' ability to identify and explain the roles and obligations of various members of the family, and the learners' ability to explain the importance of the family as an institution. It is therefore assumed that learners who have been taught this topic would necessarily develop a positive attitude/attitude towards the performance of household obligations, particularly household chores, and thus acquire a much more positive practical inclination towards them.

Children's understanding of their obligations in the family is not a subject of much research although children are central to family life. The literature on children's performance of household chores indicates that children's views on uncompensated housework have not been researched (Brobbe, 2011). Much of the research addressing children's contribution to household work in various countries, have been conducted by sociologists and psychologists (Brown, 2010) and according to Punch (2001), most of the studies relied primarily on information provided by parents and did not examine children's perspectives of their responsibilities and actual participation in domestic activities. Mayall (2002), emphasizes that children's own perspective of their daily experiences is very important in the understanding and construction of childhood account.

In relation to the above indications, it is clear that there is little knowledge regarding the effects of the topic "Individual Obligations in the Family" on the attitudes and behaviours of children in the house. This therefore makes it very imperative to conduct research on the attitudes of Senior High School (SHS) students on the performance of their obligations in the family. This study is in line to the provisions in Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of a Child that children should be allowed to express their views in all matters.

There is the need therefore to conduct a study to find out whether this is the case, and also to serve as an evaluation of the effectiveness/relevance or otherwise of the topic in the SHS Social Studies syllabus. Although individual obligation in the family has been included as a topic in the syllabus for Social Studies in Senior High Schools, there is little knowledge regarding the effects of the attainment of its learning outcomes on the attitudes and behaviours of learners.

### **1.2 Study Area**

Tema Methodist Day Senior High School (Great MEDASS), is the first Second Cycle Mission School in Tema Metropolis and it was established on October 11, 1983. The establishment of the school was the outcome of a decision taken by St, Paul Methodist Church (Community 1, Tema) as a secondary school to help the products of the St. Paul Preparatory School access to Secondary Education after their Basic Education. The absolute location of the school is 5.6708°N 0.0197°E.

Programs read in the school are General Science, General Arts, Business and Vocational (Visual Arts and Home Economics). Currently, as at 2018 when the study was being conducted, the school's population was about 2,055, of which 920 were males and 1,135 were females.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to find out the effect of the study of the topic "Individual Obligation in the Family" on the attitudes of SHS students towards the performance of household chores in their homes.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

The study was directed by the following questions:

1. What are the main household chores students perform as their obligations in their homes?
2. What is the state of obligation, satisfaction and willingness towards household chores by students who have studied "Individual Obligation in the Family" and students who have not?
3. What are some of the views of second year students on their understandings gained from the topic - "Individual Obligation in the Family"?

### **2.0 Methodology**

The study was conducted in the Tema Metropolitan area which is made up of eleven (11) Senior High Schools. The cross sectional descriptive survey design was used because according to Peck, Oslen and Devore (2001), cross-sectional data represents information about what is going on at only one point in time, involving different groups of respondents/participants.

Out of the eleven Senior High Schools in the Tema Metropolitan area, the study made use of only the Methodist Senior High School due to time and financial constraint that the researcher considered. The population for this study was the number of students in the first year and second year classes i.e. 1,450 students of which 700 were first years and 750 were second years. Using Epi-Info Statistical software and the known population at a confidence level of 95%, the researcher arrived at a sample size of 240 for first year students and 260 for second year students. With the use of the students' register as a sample frame, the simple random sampling method was applied and the respective sample respondent were gotten.

The data collection instrument used by the researcher was questionnaire because the students were capable of reading and writing. With reference to the rate of response to the questionnaires, in all, 220 out of the 240 first year and 245 out of the 260 second year students were able to complete and return their questionnaires. Data processing and analysis were done using the SPSS version 21 and results were presented in tables and graphs with frequencies and percentages.

### 3.0 Results

#### 3.1 Background Information of Respondents

**Table 1: Background information of respondents**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Sex:</b>		
Male	210	45
Female	255	55
<b>Total</b>	<b>465</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Age:</b>		
Less than 13years	5	1
13-15years	300	65
Above 15 years	160	34
<b>Total</b>	<b>465</b>	<b>100</b>

Result from Table 1 revealed that 210 which represent 45% of the respondents were males whilst the remaining 255 representing 55% were females. The results portrays that more females took part in the study than males. With the background information on age, majority of the students were between 13 – 15years, which in totality were 300 representing 65%. Also, 160 representing 34% of the sample size were above 15 years whilst only 5 representing 1% of the students involved in the study were below 13 years.

#### 3.2 Kind of household chores students perform at home

Figure 1 below presents on the various household chores that students do whilst Table 2 presents on the main household chores performed by students at home.

The study revealed that children run errands for their parents/guardians, cook at home, iron clothing for the home, do home repairs and maintenance, baby-sit and go for hawking as part of the chores they undertake at home.

From the figure, as many as 164 (84%) of the respondents run errands for their parents/guardians. The next chore both boys and girls are likely to be engaged in is cooking; 151 (77%) of the students do cooking as part of their household chores. Ironing of clothes ranks next to cooking on the chore list; 142 (72%) of both boys and girls do ironing as part of their chores at home. Baby-sitting ranked fourth among the chores; it was indicated 40 (20%) of which 31 were girls and the remaining 9 were boys. 38 (47%) of the respondents stated that they do home repairs and maintenance as part of their chores. The chore with the least representative was hawking and only 18 (9%) of respondents stated that they go hawking.

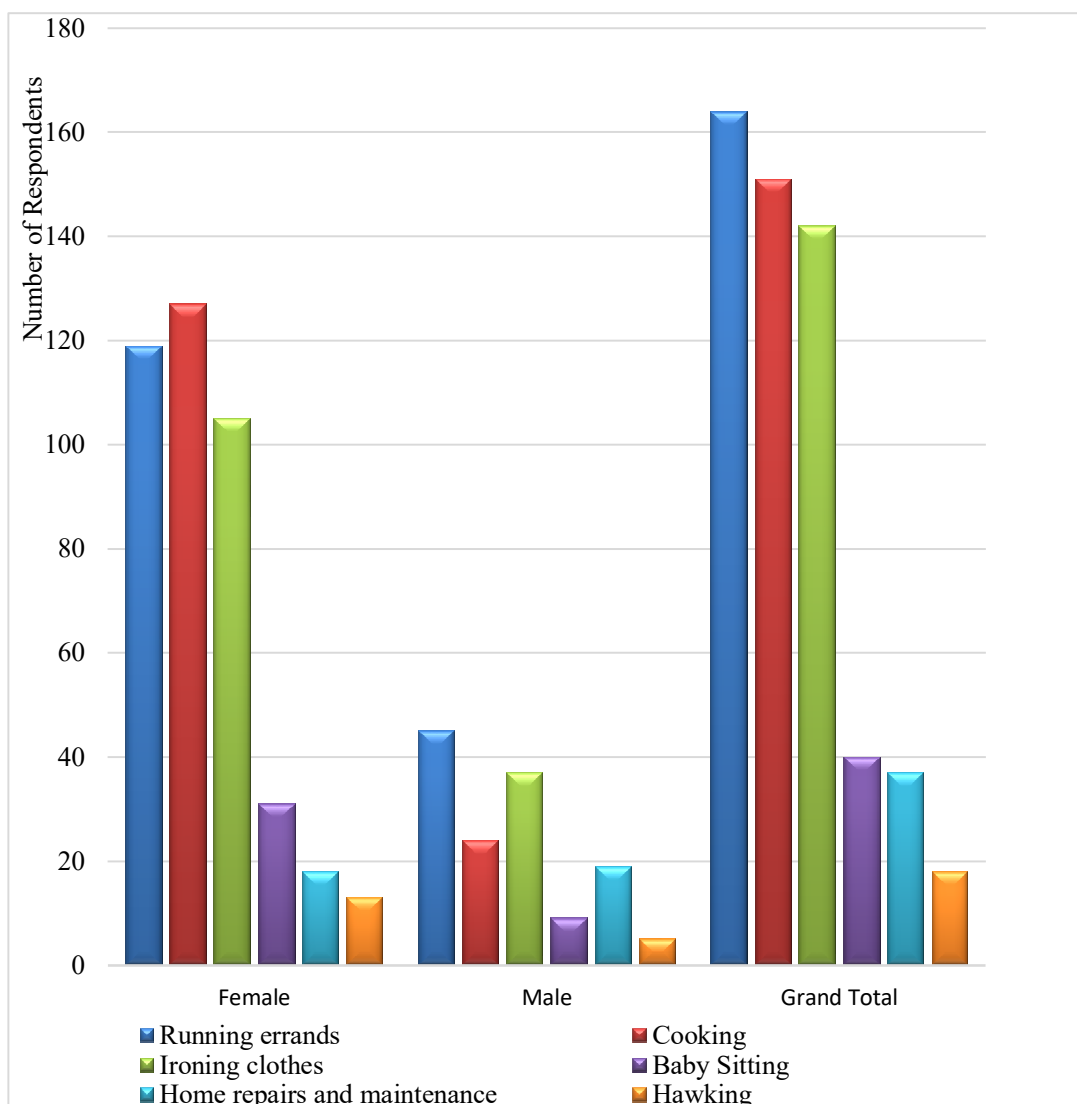


Figure 1: Kind of chores students perform at home

Table 2: Main household chores performed by student at home

Main Chores	Frequency	Percentage
Running Errands	213	46
Ironing Clothes	62	13
Home Repairs and Maintenance	15	3
Cooking	112	24
Baby Sitting	39	9
Hawking	24	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>465</b>	<b>100</b>

From Table 2 above, 213 (46%) of the respondents indicated that running of errands for parents or guardians is the main chores performed in the house. This was followed by 122 (24%) of them attesting that cooking is the main chores they perform in the house. About 62 (13%) of the respondents do clothes ironing as the main chores. Baby-sitting was ranked fourth among the chores children do, which is 39 (9%), whilst 24 (5%) of the respondents were of the view that hawking was the main chores done. The least main house chore done by students was home repairs and maintenance; only 15 (3%) of them stated that home repairs and maintenance is the main chore done in the house.

The above stated chores done by the respondents are in conformity with the chores that were also outlined by [McDaniel and Barksdale \(2013\)](#) in their study as they identified several responsibilities that children have to perform at homes.

### 3.3. State of Obligation, Satisfaction and Willingness towards Household Chores by students who have studied “Individual Obligation in the Family” and students who have not

#### 3.3.1 Student obligation to perform household chores

**Table 3: Student’s response on their obligation to perform household chores**

Decision	First Year		Second Year	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	81	37	185	76
Disagree	130	59	52	21
Not Certain	9	4	8	3
Total	220	100	245	100

When the students were asked whether they are obliged to perform household chores or not, more than half, which is 185 (76%) of second year students and 81 (37%) of first year students, felt that they are obliged to do household chores. On the other hand, majority, about 130 (59%) of the first year students, disagreed that they are obliged to do household chores whilst less number and percentage, 52 (21%) of the second year students, also disagreed same. In proportion, second year respondents who disagreed with the statement that they are obliged to perform household chores, which was 21%, were far less than that of the first year respondents which was 59%. This result implies that the topic has had a great influence on the second year students by informing them that it is their obligation to perform household chores and this conforms to the assertion made by Wijckmans and Bavel (2013) that children obligation in the house even move beyond household chores to include care taking of young siblings and grandparents.

#### 3.3.2 Satisfaction of students with household chores that they do at home

**Table 4: Students’ satisfaction with household chores**

Decision	First Year		Second Year	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Satisfied	115	52	140	57
Unsatisfied	103	47	101	41
Uncertain	2	1	4	2
Total	220	100	245	100

Generally, majority of both first year students, i.e. 115 (52%), and second year students, i.e. 140 (57%), were satisfied with the kind of chores they do at home. Although second year students have been thought the topic on family obligations, more of them, 101 (41%), seemed to be unsatisfied with the kind of chores they do at home, which is close to that of the first year student, 103 (47%), who have not been taught the topic. This can mean that household chores which are assigned by parents or guardians to students in second year are above what their strength can handle or not assigned at the right time of the day, since majority of the second year student accepted that they are obliged to perform house chores.

Although less than half of both first and second year students are not satisfied with the kind of chores they do, it is very imperative that parents and guardians take into consideration the kind of house chores that they assign children to do. This is because student’s academic performance can be affected in one way or the other as a result of what he/she does in the house. For children to be satisfied with household chore, parents can reward their children after completion of work, and according to Ricker, Calmes and Sneyd (2006), this can lead to the child’s sense of intrinsic motivation and personal satisfaction.

#### 3.3.3 Willingness of students to do chores at home

The two year groups were asked about their willingness to do chores at home, and the results are presented in the Table 5 below.

**Table 5: Students’ willingness to do chores at home**

Decision	First Year		Second Year	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Willingly	190	86	100	41
Unwillingly	30	14	145	59
Total	220	100	245	100

From Table 5 above, it was revealed that majority, which was 190 (86%) of the first year students willingly do house chores while as less than half, that was 100 (41%) of the second year students do house chores willingly. On the other hand, very few, of about 30 (14%) of the first year students unwillingly do chores while as more than half, which was 145 (59%) of the second year students do not perform house chores willingly. The implication of this result is that majority of the second year students are being forced by their parents or guardians before they perform house chores, which can be because of their feeling of being grown-ups; therefore, they do not need to work in the house. It is very amazing that even though the first years have not receive any tuition on the topic, majority of them are always willing to work in the house.

### 3.4. Views of Second Year Students on the understanding gained from the topic - “individual obligation in the family”.

Every second year respondents was asked to state two major understandings that he/she has gained from the teaching/learning of “Individual Obligation in the Family”. Table 6 presents results on this section.

**Table 6: Students’ views on the impact of the topic.**

Views	Frequency	Percentages
Understand that it is my responsibility to do house chores	230	47
Understand that both boys and girls should do house chores	100	21
Understand that I should not be paid for doing house chores	85	17
Understand that I should not be forced before doing house chores	75	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>490</b>	<b>100</b>

From Table 6 above, 230 (47%) out of the 245 of the second year students were of the view that the topic has helped them understand that ‘it is their responsibility to do house chores’. This was followed by 100 (21%) of them stating that they now understand that ‘both boys and girls should do house chores’. Understanding such as ‘I should not be paid for doing house chores’ was the third highest view on the impact of the topic, and it was stated by 85 (17%) of the student whilst understanding that ‘I should not be forced before doing house chores’ was stated by the least number of second year students- only 75 (15%) second year students stated that. The information from the Table 6 above implies that these are the major understandings that the second year students have made from learning of the topic, and out of the four, ‘Understanding that it is my responsibility to do house chores’ had been gained by almost all the second year students since 230 out of 245 respondents stated that as an impact.

The understanding by second year students that they should not be paid for doing house chores conforms to what Isabella (2002) stated that “household chore refers to unpaid work performed in order to maintain a family and/or a home”.

### 3.5 Conclusions

#### Out of findings from the research, it was concluded that:

- Students are likely to be involved in chores such as running of errands, cooking, ironing of clothes, babysitting, home repairs and maintenance, and hawking.
- Majority of the second year students agreed that they are obliged to perform household chores whilst far less than half of the first year student agreed that they are obliged to perform household chores.
- Majority of both first year students and second year students were satisfied with the kind of chores they do at home.
- More than half of the first year students willingly do house chores while as less than half of the second year students do house chores willingly although the first year students have not been taught the topic.
- Finally, it can be concluded that a second year student understands that ‘it is his/her responsibility to do house chores’, ‘both boys and girls should do house chores’, ‘he/she should not be paid for doing house chores’ and ‘ he/she should not be forced before doing house chores. Out of these understandings, ‘it is his/her responsibility to do house chores’ was the most understood aspect of the topic by the student.

### 3.6 Recommendations

- The topic ‘Individual Obligations in the Family’ should be given much attention because of its numerous benefits. This is because the research findings revealed that even though majority of the second year students are aware that they are obliged to perform household chores than the first year students, less than half of the second year students do house chores unwillingly. I therefore recommend that the government of Ghana and the Ministry of Education should ensure that the topic is moved from the second year syllabus to that of the first years. This will help the immediate first year students to be taught the topic so as to understand at the early stage that they are obliged to perform household chores. The result of this initiative will be their continuous performance of house chores even when they get to second year.
- A forum should be organised to educate parents/guardians on how to nurture and engage their children in house chores in order not to affect their academic performance. This is because although second year students have been thought the topic on family obligations, more of them, about 41%, seem to be unsatisfied with the kind of chores they do at home, which is close to that of the first year student, 47%, who have even not been taught the topic.

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