

Social Values Demonstrated by Secondary School Students in Selected Local Government Areas of Ekiti State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper focuses on determining the social values displayed by secondary school students in selected local government areas of Ekiti State. The study examined the influence of gender and location on social values exhibited by the students. Descriptive research design of the survey type was adopted with a sample of 540 students selected through multistage sampling procedure. This was done using simple and stratified random sampling techniques with one research question and two research hypotheses. A self-structured questionnaire tagged 'Questionnaire on Social Values' (QSV) was the instrument used for data collection. The instrument was validated and tested for reliability. Test-retest reliability coefficients of 0.77 was obtained and found appropriate for the study. Research question was analysed descriptively using percentages, means and standard deviation while the two hypotheses were tested using t-test statistical analysis at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that hard work and honesty were the most demonstrated values, while obedience and patience were the least social values demonstrated by the students. The study also showed a significant difference between social values demonstrated by male and female students and between students from rural and urban areas. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that parents should intensify efforts to give traditional value education to their children to help them develop into morally upright and responsible adult citizens.

Keywords: Social values, moral decadence, secondary school students, gender, location

Introduction

Observed growing rate of moral decadence among youths in the society that manifests through increase in social vices suggests that social

values are no longer cherished by the people. With the teaching of value based subjects in secondary schools, it is expected that students should be able to demonstrate some social values. However, it is worrisome to observe that morality is deteriorating while social vices are increasing in the society. A thorough examination of the situation of things in the country shows that the values of honesty, truthfulness, hard work, dedication, respect for elders, respect for human dignity, loyalty, humility, decent dressing, integrity, fairness, justice, and discipline seem to be gradually diminishing. The Nigerian society is characterized by all forms of anti-social behaviours ranging from armed robbery, ritual and political killing, fraud, rape, cultism, lawlessness among adults to disrespect, dishonesty, indiscipline, disobedience, laziness among the young ones and the youths. These acts negate what is expected from a society where people hold morality, values, positive habits, societal norms, and socially acceptable behaviours in high esteem. Okpilike (2010) averred that a careful study of all sectors of the society clearly show that there is an unbalanced equation as regards the input and output of societal values in the school system. Okpilike (2010) emphasised that it is either there is a reduction of the necessary and compulsory societal values which must be introduced and imbibed in the school system or there is a wanton disregard, disrespect or negligence of the excellent societal values already introduced or made available to the Nigerian school system.

In a study carried out by Ugwuegbu (2004), it was found that out of the 17 values examined, the least demonstrated by Nigerians is 'law abiding'. This implies that people do not obey rules and laws of the land. From experience, politicians seem to be the worst as most of them flout orders with impunity. Falade and Falade (2012) noted that the rank and file of the Nigerian citizens do not demonstrate the value and trait of obedience. Thus, this has compounded the problem of moral decadence and cases of youth restiveness in the nation. Adeoluwa (2017) reiterated that traditional values education appear to have collapsed in Nigeria. Young people seem not to believe any longer in the dignity of labour and the courage to act right.

In their write up on development of core values for national integration in Nigeria, Falade and Falade (2012) opined that the lives of many Nigerian youths are ridden with vices such as stealing, drunkenness, rape, drug abuse, examination malpractice, vandalism, sexual harassment, robbery, etc. Oluwagbohunmi (2017) posited that socially unacceptable behaviours such as dishonesty, laziness, disrespect, injustice, disloyalty, pride, and indiscipline that contradict what the society approves is rife among the youths.

Value is defined as a principle or standard of judgment of what is valuable and important in life. It is a rule or standard especially of good behaviour. It is also defined as an action or cultural practice which is highly cherished and considered important for the members of a society. Tiwari (n.d)

(2019) described values as the criteria people use in assessing their daily lives, arranging their priorities, measuring their pleasures and pains, and choosing between alternative courses of actions. Values such as fundamental rights, patriotism, respect for human dignity, rationality, sacrifice, individuality, equality, democracy, etc guide our behaviour in many ways. According to Olaogun (2012), value has meaningful impact on an individual and prompts one to determine what is regarded as right, good, worthy, beautiful, and ethical. It also provides standards and norms by which one guides his/her day to day behaviour. Mondal (2018) defined values as standards of social behaviour derived from social interactions which are accepted as constituent facts of social structure. Wikipedia (2019) described value as broad preference concerning appropriate courses of actions or outcomes. It also reflects a person's sense of right and wrong or what 'ought' to be.

According to Mishra (2015), social values are one of the most important aspects of a social system which plays a predominant role in running and maintaining the social order. They provide not only the general guidelines for social conduct and behaviour but also establish the norms in the society. Mishra gave example of honesty as the most appreciated behaviour of an individual in a social system. Tiwari (n.d) (2019) opined that social values, norms, and institutions explain the way in which social processes operate in a given society. They are the social sources of patterned interaction while values account for the stability of the social order and provide general guidelines for conduct. Goetz (2017) gave examples of social values as:

showing good will towards others, being self-sufficient so as not to be a financial burden..., being accountable for our actions and behaviour towards others, having the awareness that our personal choices will always impact others..., raising children to be honest and productive citizens..., expecting nothing in return for all you do for others.

Adewuya (2002) classified social values into five: social values for interaction between people and institutions; moral values derived from written and unwritten code of ethics of the people; economic values of profit and loss; political values of democracy, freedom and patriotism; spiritual values of redemption, salvation and others. Ketsdever (2015) identified seven social values namely: respect, fairness (justice), honesty, giving back (service), responsibility, family, and community. On the other hand, Wikipedia (2019) identified personal values, cultural values, positive/negative values, protected values, etc. Personal values provide an internal reference for what is good, beneficial, important, useful, beautiful, desirable, and constructive. Positive

value generally correlates with something that is pursued or maximized while negative value correlates with something that is avoided or minimized. Cultural values, which members of a culture broadly share, are values that relate to the norms of a culture while protected value is one that an individual is unwilling to trade off no matter what the benefits of doing so may be.

The aim of the school is to produce responsible and well informed citizens by inculcating the right values and attitudes in them for effective survival and functioning in the society. Fasuyi (2011) maintained that the school educates for good character, intellect, decency, literacy, virtue, and knowledge. In addition, schools try to raise citizens who would utilise their potentials for the benefit of the society and the world at large. In order to instill good traits, norms, and attitude in the citizens through the formal school system, social studies was included as a core subject for students at the secondary level of education in the Nigeria curriculum. The subject therefore focuses on developing right values, attitudes, and skills that will help the child to become a responsible citizen. It also helps the child to interact effectively with others and perform civic and national duties. The objectives of social studies show that the subject does not only aim at cognitive development of the learners, but it also develops some values and attitudes that allow them grow into useful, responsible, disciplined, patriotic citizens, and future leaders. Abah (2014) was of the opinion that early exposure of pupils to values would elicit in them a local and national consciousness of societal values and respect for public property.

However, most of the social values which are supposed to be upheld, maintained, cherished, and sustained seem to have been neglected or abandoned by the people especially the youths (secondary school students inclusive). Olayiwola (2012) supported this by adding that the right/positive societal values which Nigerians are supposed to uphold have been given up for its negative counterparts such as disrespect, unfaithfulness, indiscipline, corruption, intolerance, selfishness, naked disregard for national symbols, materialism, etc. Aremu (2014) noted that our value system is grossly eroded and parents no longer have time to take good care of their children. In an attempt to ensure that Nigerians have a change of attitude, President Buhari initiated and flagged off the “change begins with me” campaign on Thursday, 8th September, 2016. The main aim of the programme is to instill discipline and patriotism in Nigerians. While stressing the need for the programme, the President said “we must also change our poor attitude to our country and one another” (Vanguard News, 2016).

Based on the discussion and observation above, it can be noted that some of the youths who are expected to take up leadership roles in the nearest future are now in the habit of engaging in dubious means of getting money through hacking of bank accounts, yahoo, internet fraud, etc. These acts

disavow the spirit of hard work, honesty, patience, and self-discipline as values cherished by the society. What can one say about examination malpractice, disobedience to rules, regulations, and school authorities? The researcher is of the view that hard work, honesty, patience, obedience, and self-discipline are the significant values appreciated by people which students must imbibe so as to develop into responsible adult citizens. In the study of Oluwagbohunmi (2017), it was found that self-discipline, humility, hard work, obedience, and honesty were the best societal values required by youths for national development as perceived by the youths.

A lot of reasons appear to be responsible for deterioration of values at home, in schools, and in the society. Some of the reasons include failure to inculcate values in children at early stage, weakened marriages, poor leadership, corruption, etc. Observation shows that lack of patience, dishonesty, 'get rich' syndrome, and spirit of materialism have forced many students to join bad companies and engage in unwholesome activities such as 419, yahoo plus, political thuggery, armed robbery, ritual killings, series of corrupt practices, etc. Falade and Falade (2012) reiterated that our cities are in chaos each day because of flagrant disregard for laws. Furthermore, many pupils and students are not obedient to school rules and examination regulations. Thus, they end up getting involved in examination malpractices. Disobedience to school rules and regulations recently resulted in the untimely death of some secondary school students in Ado Ekiti when they jumped the school fence to swim in a river behind the school. Two of the students got drowned while two came out of the river alive.

There seems to be differences in social values exhibited by male and female students. From experience, females are more sympathetic, respectful, obedient, and humane while males are known to be stubborn, disobedient, and unruly. Female students are likely to display positive social habits that are different from that of male students which can be negative. For example, thuggery, cultism, and violent acts are common with boys while a larger percentage of girls are known for non-violent acts. Garmon, Basinger, Gregg, and Cubbs (1996) found that care-related and ethically ideal expressions were prevalent in females' moral judgment than males'. In their own study, Cetin and Kaf (2017) found that there was no significant gender difference in perception of social values of fourth grade primary school students in Turkey. Grosch and Rau (2017) found that men are significantly less honest than women and that women have an average higher social value orientation angles than men. In a study conducted in America by Walker, Bialik, and Kessel (2018) on description of traits that Americans think society does and doesn't value for each gender, it was found that words like kind, responsible, compassionate, and caring were generally used in a positive way and more consistently as valued traits for women but used more negatively for men.

Students in rural and urban areas of settlement can demonstrate different types of social values. Social values cherished by secondary school students can be influenced by geographical location. High standard of living, sophisticated ways of life and civilization that characterize cities and big towns, are likely to make students embrace materialism, corruption, and yahoo as means of meeting up with a particular social class/status. Every human society has its own system of education. Indigenous education in the Nigerian system is geared towards enabling a child to live effectively and efficiently in the culture of the parents. Traditional education is characterized by moral training received by children from their early stage of life. Okpilike (2010) maintained that the basic values of the society virtues are taught to the children right at the family level using myth, legend, proverbs, music, dance, etc. These traditional practices can still be found in rural areas where character training has not been jettisoned and replaced with all sorts of discourteous behaviours that appear to be common in urban areas.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine social values demonstrated by secondary school students. The study also examined the influence of sex and location on their demonstration of social values.

Research Question

What are the social values exhibited by secondary school students in selected local government areas of Ekiti state?

Research Hypotheses

- Ho₁: There is no significant difference in social values demonstrated by male and female secondary school students.
- Ho₂: There is no significant difference in social values demonstrated by secondary school students from rural and urban areas.

Methodology

This study adopted descriptive research design of the survey type. The sample consisted of 540 secondary school students selected through multistage sampling procedure. In the first stage, the local government headquarter of each of the three senatorial districts was selected. Three secondary schools were randomly selected from each local government area. Sixty senior secondary school students were selected from each of the schools using stratified random sampling technique on sex basis to make a total of 540. An instrument titled “Questionnaire on Social Values (QSV)” designed by the researcher was used for the study. The instrument had Section A for bio-data (sex and location) and Section B that contained 25 items on identified social

values which the students were expected to exhibit. Responses to the questionnaire items were based on ‘Yes’ and ‘No’ scale of preference. The instrument was subjected to screening by experts to ensure validity, and it was tested for reliability using split half method. The outcome of the reliability test yielded 0.77 coefficients which was considered high enough to make the instrument reliable. Data collected were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics; frequency counts, percentages, mean, standard deviation for the research question; and t-test for the two hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the social values demonstrated by secondary school students in selected local government areas of Ekiti state?

Table 1. Social Values demonstrated by secondary school students

S/N	Item	Yes	%	No	%	Mean	SD	Remark
1.	Hard work	484	89.6	56	10.4	12.08	1.34	1 st
2.	Honesty	329	61	211	39	9.07	1.21	2 nd
3.	Obedience	265	49.07	275	50.03	10.02	1.33	4 th
4.	Self discipline	319	59.1	221	40.9	9.01	1.11	3 rd
5.	Patience	137	25.3	403	74.7	11.5	1.27	5 th

Table 1 shows that social values demonstrated by most of the students are hard work (89.6%) and honesty (61%). The least demonstrated social value is patience with only 25.3%.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in social values demonstrated by male and female secondary school students.

Table 2. t-test on sex difference in demonstration of social values by secondary school students

Sex	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t _{cal}	Sig.
Male	270	21.14	5.61	538	12.09	0.000
Female	270	32.09	7.29			

Table 2 reveals that there is a significant difference in social values displayed by male and female secondary school students (t_{cal}-12.09; p = 0.000 < 0.005). Therefore, the null hypothesis is not accepted.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in social values displayed by secondary school students from rural and urban areas.

Table 3. t-test on location difference in social values demonstrated by secondary school students

Location	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t _{cal}	Sig.
Rural	252	23.21	9.75	538	13.14	0.000
Urban	288	17.03	6.14			

Table 3 shows that there is a significant difference in social values demonstrated by secondary school students from rural and urban areas ($t_{cal} = 13.14$; $p = 0.000 < 0.005$). The hypothesis is therefore not accepted.

Discussion

The study revealed that social values demonstrated by most of the students were hard work and honesty, while the least demonstrated were disobedience and patience. Demonstration of hard work by the students can be attributed to the desire to complete their education successfully and obtain school certificate which would form the basis for their success or otherwise in life. The finding also revealed that about 49% of the students demonstrated obedience. This is too low in a society where education and moral training are expected to be paramount and the students had gone through value-based subjects that formed part of their basic education. This finding agrees with the study of Ugwuegbu (2004) and Falade and Falade (2012) who maintained that our cities are in chaos each day because of flagrant disregard for laws, and a lot of pupils and students are not obedient to school rules and examination regulations. The authors added that these have compounded the problem of moral decadence and case of youth restiveness in the nation.

The least demonstrated social value among the students in this study was patience. This can be attributed to the urge for affluence, materialism, and 'quick' money by most of the youths of the present generation coupled with the extravagant lifestyle of corrupt politicians who are supposed to be their mentors. The study also revealed a significant difference in social values displayed by male and female undergraduates. This implies that female students displayed more social values than their male counterparts. This finding agrees with the study of Grosch and Rau (2017) and Walker, Bialik, and Kessel (2018) but disagrees with Cetin and Kaf (2017) who found no significant gender difference in perception of social values by primary school students. In terms of location, it was found that there was a significant difference in social values displayed. This implies that secondary school students from rural background displayed more social values than those from urban centres. The reason for this is not far from the fact that traditional values are still found in rural areas where character training is still cherished. Also, some of the students are yet to allow the wind of modernisation to carry them away.

Conclusion

From the findings of this study, it can be concluded that secondary school students in Ekiti State demonstrated hard work and honesty, while the least demonstrated social values were obedience and patience. Female students displayed more and different social values than the males, while students from rural areas also exhibited more social values than their counterparts from urban areas.

Recommendations

Based on the finding of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Parents should intensify efforts to give traditional value education to their children to help them develop into morally upright and responsible adult citizens.
2. Male students must imbibe social values that will make them measure up to the standard of female students in their demonstration of social values.
3. School authorities and government need to organise value reorientation programmes for students to help them develop a change of attitude.

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