

# **GENDER DIFFERENCES AMONG YOUTHS' MORAL MALADJUSTED BEHAVIOUR IN NIGERIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

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## **Abstract**

This study investigated the effects of moral skills training on the moral behavior of boys and girls in Nigerian Secondary schools. 60 senior secondary school students constituted the sample size for the study. Multi stage sampling technique and simple random technique were used to select the local government and secondary schools used. Stratified random sampling technique was also used to select the sample across gender. A 4 X 2 X 2 factorial design was used. This comprises of two experimental and two control groups. Data derived from the post treatment were analysed through analysis of covariance (ANCOVA), while multiple classification analysis was used to determine the effect of treatments on the groups. The results of the study show that moral skills training was effective in correcting the moral maladjusted behaviour of boys and girls. However, moral skills training was found to be more effective in treating the moral maladjusted behaviour of boys than girls. Based on the findings of this study, moral skills training is recommended to be used for treating moral behaviour problem of both sexes by creating serious moral awareness.

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**Keywords:** Moral skills, awareness, gender, maladjusted.

## **Introduction**

Nigeria seems to be a nation in moral crisis characterised by high rate of crime, official corruption, political and ethnic violence, fraudulent behaviour with seeming general lack of or diminished ethnic standard and moral values. These are being exhibited daily by both boys and girls that are youths. Gerry-Eze (2000) is of the opinion that youths moral maladjustment could

include, lying, incessant cheating, habitual smoking and drinking, violation of school rules and regulations, fighting, resisting control and others.

Moral maladjustment among boys and girls is perceived to have eroded the moral values expected in the society. These are viewed to have caused conflict of ideas, interest between the youths and the elders. The loss of the moral value has led to consciencelessness in relationship and harms to others with serious damage to the development of the nation. Many factors seems to be influencing moral behaviour, however, Walsh (1990) is of the view that moral training should assist in the development of moral knowledge and mental ability thereby creating more moral awareness.

This is expected to promote truthfulness, justice, positive assertion, empathy for others, dependability and the like. On this note, it is considered that moral skill training may assist in remediating the maladjusted behaviour of boys and girls.

A large body of research from contemporary psychology revealed that maladjusted behaviour varies with gender (Bar-On, 1997). He submitted that females appear to have stronger interpersonal skills than males, but the later have a higher intrapersonal capacity, they are better at managing emotions and more adaptable than the former. In a study carried out by Eisenberg, Valiente, Morris, and Fabes (2003), it was discovered that children's low self regulation was linked with greater aggression, teasing and inability to delay gratification. Santrock (2005), in his contribution to this, inferred that because of genital structure, males are more intrusive and aggressive, females are inclusive and passive. In addition to this Gillgan (1982), Lahey (2004), Adebayo (2007) submitted that, women operates and developed on the ethic of care, concern for others, while males' development begins with selfish self-interest and moves toward greater reliance on abstract principles of justice in making moral decisions. Block and Block (1980) found that males usually show less self regulation of emotions and behaviour than females. This low self control can translate to all sorts of moral maladjustment being exhibited by the gender.

### **Research Rationale**

Moral maladjustment appears more frequently demonstrated among male and female youths probably because they are not given rationales for their moral behaviour. Previous efforts and programmes for correcting these behavior problem may be defective in inculcating expected moral values and awareness probably they lack other important human developmental skills. The

study becomes necessary to inculcate skills that seems to be lacking in boys and girls which often prone to them into moral maladjusted behaviour. It provides the rationale for understanding the effective training skills for male and female, which may assists in suggesting various skills training and treatment to be developed and sustain the moral behaviour of young people.

### **Methodology:**

The 4 x 2 x 2 factorial quasi experimental, pretest, post test, control group design was adopted in this study. The design is shown thus:

Group	pre test	treatment	post test
Experimental	O <sub>1</sub>	X <sub>1</sub>	O <sub>2</sub>
Control	O <sub>3</sub>	-	O <sub>4</sub>
Experimental	O <sub>5</sub>	X <sub>2</sub>	O <sub>6</sub>
Control	O <sub>7</sub>	-	O <sub>8</sub>

Where O<sub>1</sub>, O<sub>3</sub>, O<sub>5</sub>, O<sub>7</sub> are pre tests; O<sub>2</sub>, O<sub>4</sub>, O<sub>6</sub>, O<sub>8</sub> are post tests, X<sub>1</sub>, X<sub>2</sub> are Moral Development Training (MDT), while – is no treatment.

### **Sample :**

The target population for the study was the maladjustment youths in Ekiti State Public Secondary Schools. There were 170 Public Secondary Schools at the period of the study. 60 senior Secondary School Students were selected through multi-stage sampling technique from three senatorial districts out of the existing 16 local government areas in the state. Two senatorial districts were also randomly selected. Simple random sampling was used to select two local government areas. Simple random sampling was used to select one school from each sampled local government areas. Initially, a total of 600 youths were involved in the preliminary screening exercise through Maladjusted Behaviour Questionnaire. After scoring, the mean was determined. Any score that is less than mean minus 1 standard deviation is regarded as low maladjustment. Any one that is between mean plus 1 standard deviation is referred to as moderate maladjustment. Any score that is greater than mean plus 1 standard deviation is regarded as high maladjustment. Morally maladjusted mean scores are between  $\leq 35.19$  and  $\geq 44.65$ . 190 respondents were morally maladjusted. Those who were maladjusted in each school

were given Moral Assessment Scale (MSAS) as pre- test for further assistance to prime down the number and determine those who are to participate in the study. This enables the researcher to select 30 subjects from each school through stratified random sampling technique to gather a sample across gender.

The participants who were selected were randomly assigned to groups (experimental and control group).

1. Moral Development Training (MDT)
2. Control group

Each group belongs to a group to avoid interference. Research assistants were the school counsellors of each school with the assistance of a teacher. A day pre-treatment training based on the experiment package was given to the research assistants in each of their schools. This lasted for a week. Four sessions were conducted over four weeks based on treatment packages.

Treatment stages

The experimental groups were exposed to moral Development Training (MDT). The MDT contains training in skills such as Moral awareness, empathy, respect, self discipline. Members took part in the treatments with the aim that acquiring these skills will assist them in correcting their moral maladjustment problems. Participants were given assignment, some exercises during the duration of the treatment while assignments were also given to evaluate their responses to training on each skill. Post test was given after the treatment.

### **Data Analysis:**

The data obtained for this study were analysed to know the effect of moral skills training on the moral maladjusted behaviour of male and female youths. The Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) inferential analysis was employed for the analysis, while Multiple Classification Analysis was used to determine the effect of the treatment on each of the group.

In this section, the results of the data analysis for this study were presented. The results were presented according to the hypotheses that guided the study.

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant difference in the moral maladjusted behaviour of girls exposed to moral training and girls not exposed.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant difference in the moral maladjustment behaviour of boys exposed to moral skills training and those not exposed.

**Table 1:** ANCOVA showing Moral Behaviour of Female Respondents Exposed to Moral Skills Training and those not exposed.

Source	SS	Df	Ms	F-cal	F-table
Corrected model	3411.713	2	1705.856	25.934	3.39
Intercept	14.278	1	14.278	.217	4.24
Covariate (Pre-test)	3062.416	1	3062.416	46.558	4.24
Group	731.426	1	731.426	11.120	4.24
Error	1644.394	25	65.776		
Corrected Total	5056.107	27			
Total	256807.000	28			

P < 0.05

Table 1 shows that F-cal (11.120) is greater than F-table (4.24) at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that moral moral behavior of girls exposed to moral skills training and girls not exposed differ significantly. Among the groups, the table reveals that the treatment is significantly effective with F-cal (46.558) greater than F-table (4.24) at 0.05 level of significance. The interaction of group show that sex has no influence on moral behaviour of girls with F-cal (.217) less than F-table (4.24).

Multiple Classification Analysis was used to know which of the group exposed to moral skills training and those not exposed was more affected by the treatment.

**Table 2:** Multiple Classification Analysis of Moral Behaviour of Female Respondents Exposed to Moral Skills Training and Control Group.

		Grand Mean = 94.82			Beta
Variable category	N	Unadjusted Deviation	Eta	Adjusted for Independent + covariate	

Moral	30	-3.29		3.59	4.78
Control	30	3.80		0.11	
Multiple R <sup>2</sup>					.228
Multiple R					.478

Table 2 shows that female respondents exposed to moral skills training had an adjusted post-test mean score of 98.41(94.82+3.59) while those in the control group obtained an adjusted post-test mean score of 94.93 (94.82+0.11). It implies that female respondents exposed to moral skills training exhibit better moral behaviour than those in the control group. Moreover, the independent variables (moral and control) jointly contribute 22.8% to the dependent variable (moral behaviour). As well, the prediction strength of each independent variable to the dependent variable was 47.8%. This was considered moderately enough.

**Table 3:** ANCOVA showing Moral Behaviour of Male Respondents Exposed to Moral skills Training and those not exposed.

Source	SS	Df	Ms	F-cal	F-table
Corrected model	9159.182	2	4579.591	34.893	3.35
Intercept	3280.856	1	3280.856	24.998	4.21
Covariate (pre-test)	10.925	1	10.925	.83	4.21
Group	3904.152	1	3904.152	29.747	4.21
Error	3543.618	27	131.245		
Corrected Total	12702.800	29			
Total	235616.00	30			

P < 0.05

Table 3 reveals that F-cal (29.747) is greater than F-table (4.21) at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is rejected. There is a significant difference in the moral behaviour of boys exposed to moral skill training and boys not exposed. The result further

indicates that the treatment is not significantly effective on groups. This is obvious as F-cal (.083) is less than F-table (4.21) at 0.05 level of significance. However, the treatment has significant influence on the groups with F-cal (24.998) greater than F-table (4.21) at 0.05 level of significance.

Multiple Classification Analysis was used to determine which of the group exposed to moral skill training and those not exposed was more affected by the treatment.

**Table 4:** Multiple Classification Analysis of Moral Behaviour of Male Respondents Exposed to Moral Skills Training and Control Group.

Grand Mean = 90.09					
Variable + category	N	Unadjusted Deviation	Eta	Adjusted for Independent Covariate +	Bela
Moral	30	2.38		12.21	.040
Control	30	-2.09		-21.76	
Multiple R <sup>2</sup>					.002
Multiple R					.040

Table 4 reveals that male respondents exposed to moral skills training had a post test mean score of 102.30 (90.09+12.21), while those in the control group obtained a post test mean score of 68.33 (90.09 + (-21.76)). It can be inferred then, that moral skills training produced better moral behaviour in male respondents than those in the control group. However, the independent variables (Moral and control) jointly contributed 0.2% to the dependent variable (moral behaviour). The relationship of each of the various independent variables to the dependent variable is 4.0%

#### Discussion:

Moral skills training was found to be effective in treating the moral maladjusted behaviour of boys than girls. These results support in part the research findings of Noor and Hairul (2005) who noted that male respondents reduced the level of maladjusted more than female respondents after treatments. However, there may be gender differences on one moral behavioural skills and the other. The genders of the respondents were not able to affect the

influence of the treatments in relation to their moral behaviour. Bar-on (1997) reporting the North America normative sample reported that, males appear to have better self-regard, more self-reliant, cope better with stress, more flexible, solve problems better and are more optimistic than females. In line with this, O'Leary, page & Kaczmarek (2000) submitted from their own research findings that male subjects are more positive self perception compared to female subjects. In this wise male subjects manage to reduce moral maladjustment faster than female subjects.

The study did not venture into knowing gender differences in each of the moral skills and the other.

#### Conclusion:

A significant difference was established between the moral and control groups. These points to the fact that treated subjects were able to use the training acquired to help them in managing their moral maladjustment. Those who did not receive training at all possibly maintained their original tension and maladjustment. In comparing the results, moral skills training was more effective in treating moral maladjusted behaviour of boys than girls. The findings suggest that, it is possible that males were more sensitive to their lapses in moral values and ethics and also show better response to treatment than females.

It is therefore suggested that moral training should still be made available continually to both sexes. Parents should be involved in creating serious moral awareness to their children.



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