

SOCIAL VALUES AWARENESS AND COMPLIANCE LEVEL AMONG UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATES IN SOUTHWEST NIGERIA

Alonge, Rufus Ajayi

Department of Social Science Education, Faculty of Education, Ekiti State University,
Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria.

e-mail: topeajavio3@gmail.com

Abstract

In the traditional African societies, an educated person is considered to be an individual who manifests societal cherished values like nobility, integrity, good character, discipline, self control, modesty, refined manners and being responsible. The relation between values, knowledge of values (awareness) and its manifestation are of central concern for any society in Africa. The question is, are social values not adequately inculcated as of old? If no, why is the compliance level seems to be on the negative? It is on this premise that this paper x-rays the level of social values awareness and its compliance level among university undergraduates in southwest Nigeria. A self-designed instrument tagged: Values Awareness and Compliance Questionnaire (VACQ) was used to collect data for the study. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient test was used to determine the reliability coefficient which stood at 0.92 after the face and content validity had been ensured by experts in Social Studies, Tests, Measurement and Evaluation. The data collected were analysed using range, frequency counts and percentage scores. The study revealed that university undergraduates had a good knowledge of social values but their most preferred value is respect as against discipline. The study also revealed that the level of values compliance among university undergraduates is moderate. Based on the findings, it was recommended that parents and guardians should intensify their efforts in the inculcation of right values to their children and wards. Furthermore, university administrators should make it a priority during fresh students' orientation programmes to expose the students to the core values of the society and that of the university.

Keywords: social values, value awareness, value compliance, socialisation, chieftaincy titles and honorary awards.

Introduction

Egbue and Alawari (2013) defined values as the reflection of person's sense of right and wrong or what ought to be. Lamorde (2013) defined value as a belief that something is good and worthwhile and noted that values denote what is worth having and worth striving for. In another perspective, Ndubueze (2013) saw values as the important lasting beliefs or ideals shared by people about what is good or bad, desirable or undesirable, acceptable and unacceptable. He went further to state that values are the things to which we assign desirability of importance shared by the society and are generally shared principles which define standard code of behaviour. Thus, value is the worth, merit or esteem given to a person, or an object or an idea. Values are the building blocks of society and they are derived from a society's judgement or perception of virtue and vices and judgement of social behaviours that are acceptable in society. These tend to vary from one society to another. Noah (2003) supported this assertion by seeing values as acceptable principles or standards of behaviour of a society, the ideals which most members of a society have collectively accepted.

In conformity with what the society considers to be good and desirable, Olutayo and Akanle (2007)

noted that the society creates parameters within which its members are expected to operate and reinforce and dissuade certain behaviours. The society do strives to make its members to conform with the principles and standards as laid down and deviation from such are greatly frowned at. Deviation from values is sanctioned while conformity is rewarded to reinforce that particular expected behaviour. However, Igbanibo cited in Alonge (2014) emphasised that in the society today, rogues, criminals and fraudsters have become highly respected with chieftaincy titles and honorary awards without given a sound thought to their sources of wealth. Values are of importance in every human society since they are the standards through which the essential and cherished are measured. They were of the opinion that the implication of this is that a society or community without a clear value system is bound to be bedevilled with confusion ultimately defocused; because values are the nexus that connect the past with the present and guides the future. Thus, if there is no clear value system (or there is no value consensus) or the values are precipitately changing without intervention, the consequences might be dire. It is in this context that Ekiti State Government (2015) at the Education Summit resolved among other things that parents should

inculcate moral values into their children to shun social vices especially sexual assault, cultism, illegitimate quest for money and many more.

In recent times, the society is undergoing some changes as regards what its members now cherish as against what is used to be in the past. Observations have shown a prevalence of deviations from societal values among University undergraduates as regards the values of chastity, integrity, among others. The Nigerian tertiary institutions seem to be grossly immersed in moral decadence which has been a source of great concern to parents, educational institutions, and individuals. It has also been observed that value possession or non-possession by University undergraduates could probably connote their level of compliance and non-compliance to the societal cherished values. This could be attributed to the contacts with external influences and poor socialisation processes. Jekayinfa cited in Alonge (2014) reported that due to the lapses in the inculcation of societal cherished values, it has now become increasingly difficult for the youths to lead a desirable way of life founded on social acceptable and cherished values like integrity, honour, honesty, contentment, respect, being responsive and responsible. The glory that is attached to success without consideration to its source is a great bane to the society social value compliance and social development. It has been observed by the researcher that the cherished values of the society are not adequately inculcated to the younger generation and this could possibly affect the awareness level coupled with the compliance level.

Value awareness is expected to be created through education which is the totality of learning processes made available for individual whether formal, informal or non-formal aimed at developing the attitudes, abilities and other positive, acceptable societal way of life in the individuals (Duyilemi, 2016). The National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004) emphasised that the quality of instruction at all levels of educational institutions should be oriented towards the inculcation in learners the following values among others:

- Respect for the worth and dignity of the individual.
- Faith in man's ability to make rational decisions.
- Moral and spiritual principles in interpersonal and human relations.
- Shared responsibility for the common good of the society.

It is therefore dawn on us to ask whether the values articulated in the National Policy on Education have been effectively transmitted or inculcated to the learners and if the response is in the affirmative, then why is the society still faced daily with a barrage of anti-social behaviours among the youths with particular reference to University

undergraduates. It seems that the compliance level is low which could be responsible for their involvement in more social vices. It is believed that high level of values awareness should bring about high level compliance and vice-versa.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to determine the extent of social values awareness and the level of compliance among University undergraduates. It is also to determine which social values do University undergraduates hold as important in Southwest Nigeria.

Research Questions

In order to address the problems and views arising from the background to this study, the following research questions have been raised:

1. To what extent are University undergraduates aware of social values in Southwest, Nigeria?
2. What social values do University undergraduates hold important in Southwest Nigeria?
3. What is the level of University undergraduates' social values compliance in Southwest Nigeria?

Methodology

The research design used for this study is a descriptive research which employed the survey technique for the data collection. It provided the researcher the opportunity to utilise qualitative approach in data collecting and analysing data collected for the purpose of the study. The population consisted of all University undergraduates in both private and public Universities in Southwest, Nigeria. A total number of 1581 University undergraduates were selected through multi-stage sampling procedure. A self-designed research instrument titled "Values Awareness and Compliance Questionnaire (VACQ)" was used for the study. It consisted of 25 items drawn on level of values awareness and compliance on University undergraduates. The instrument was validated by experts in Social Studies, Tests, Measurement and Evaluation, while its reliability was ensured through Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient test. The Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.92 at 0.05 level of significance was obtained and this was considered high and appropriate for this study. The instrument was administered by the researcher with the help of trained research assistants in each University. Data collected were statistically analysed with the use of range, frequency counts and percentage scores.

Results

Research Question 1: To what extent are university undergraduates aware of values taught in schools?

In order to answer the above question, responses on items relating to university undergraduates' awareness of values in the questionnaire were obtained and subjected to statistical analysis

involving frequency counts and percentages. The result is presented in Table 1

Table 1: Extent of university undergraduates' awareness of social values

S/N	Values	Taught in School		Not Taught in School	
		N	%	N	%
1.	Obedience	1523	96.3	58	3.7
2.	Respect	1521	96.2	60	3.8
3.	Freedom	1347	85.2	234	14.8
4.	Modesty	1457	82.2	124	7.8
5.	Love	1448	91.6	133	8.4
6.	Peace	1461	92.4	120	7.6
7.	Chastity	1282	81.1	299	18.9
8.	Integrity	1447	91.5	134	8.5
9.	Self-control	1426	90.2	155	9.8
10.	Assertiveness	1293	81.8	288	18.2
11.	Discipline	1448	91.6	133	8.4

Table 1 presents the extent of university undergraduates' awareness of values. The result shows 93.3% of the total sample as being aware or being taught obedience; 96.2% are aware of respect, while 85.2% are aware of freedom. Others include modesty (92.2%), self-control (90.2%), assertiveness (81.8%) and discipline (91.6%). This implies that the extent of awareness of values in Southwest Nigeria is high.

Research Question 2: What values do university undergraduates hold important?

In answering the question, the ranking of each value by the university undergraduates were obtained using section B of 'Values Awareness and Compliance Questionnaire (VACQ)'. The scores were subjected to statistical analysis using frequency counts by considering the first three values that were ranked by respondents as the best three among the values, and the ranking was done accordingly.

Table 2: University undergraduates' social value ranking

S/N	Values	Frequency			Average Frequency	Ranking
		1 st	2 nd	3 rd		
1.	Respect	82	140	86	103	1 st
2.	Love	137	71	72	93	2 nd
3.	Obedience	121	73	75	90	3 rd
4.	Discipline	109	50	110	89	4 th
5.	Freedom	67	76	89	77	5 th
6.	Integrity	57	72	57	62	6 th
7.	Peace	31	76	59	55	7 th
8.	Self-control	36	43	62	47	8 th
9.	Modesty	46	47	44	46	9 th
10.	Chastity	33	45	37	38	10 th
11.	Assertiveness	20	44	35	33	11 th

Key

A: Obedience **B:** Respect **C:** Freedom
D: Modesty **E:** Love **F:** Peace **G:** Chastity
H: Integrity **I:** Self-control **J:** Assertiveness
K: Discipline

Table 2 presents the social values ranking of university undergraduates' awareness in Southwest Nigeria. The result indicates that respect is the most important value. This is closely followed by

love, obedience, discipline, freedom, peace, self-control, modesty and chastity, while assertiveness is the least in the ranking order.

Research Question 3: What is the level of university undergraduates' values compliance?

Scores on undergraduates' value compliance in Southwest Nigeria were computed using items 1–25 of 'Values Awareness and Compliance questionnaire (VACQ)'. Scores relating to elements of undergraduates' value compliance: integrity, modesty, chastity, assertiveness and self-control were obtained using items 1-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16-20 and 21-25 of VACQ, respectively. These scores were distributed using the range 0–33.3% to represent low compliance, 33.4–66.7% to represent moderate compliance and 66.8%–100% to represent high level of undergraduates' value compliance using percentile distribution formula as depicted in Table 3.

Table 3: Level of university undergraduates' social values compliance

Values	Level of undergraduates' values compliance						Total	
	Low		Moderate		High		N	%
	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Integrity	961	60.4	482	30.5	138	8.7	1581	100.0
Modesty	396	25.0	825	52.2	360	22.8	1581	100.0
Chastity	79	5.0	338	21.4	1164	73.6	1581	100.0
Assertiveness	61	3.9	256	16.2	1264	79.9	1581	100.0
Self-control	61	3.9	278	17.6	1242	78.6	1581	100.0
Undergraduates' value	29	1.8	1162	73.5	390	24.7	1581	100.0

The result of undergraduates' level of values compliance in Southwest Nigeria reveals that 29(1.8%) had low level of values compliance while 1162 (73.5%) and 390(24.7%) had moderate and high levels of value compliance respectively. This implies that the level of undergraduates' values compliance in Southwest Nigeria is moderate. The result further depicts that the undergraduates had high level of compliance on chastity (73.6%), assertiveness (79.9%) and self-control (78.6%). However, the level of undergraduates' compliance to integrity (60.8%) and modesty (52.2%) were low and moderate, respectively.

Discussion

The study revealed that majority of the undergraduates and youths under investigation responded that the extent of knowledge of values was high and also indicated that respect was the most preferred social value among the university undergraduates. This finding is contrary to Arogundade (2010) who discovered that secondary school students had a good knowledge about values and that the value most preferred by the students was love. The similarity in the finding of a high awareness level of social values among both the secondary school students and university undergraduates may be due to the fact that Social

Studies is a compulsory subject at the primary and junior secondary school levels while Civic Education at the senior secondary school classes and General Studies on Nigerian Peoples and Culture (GST 113) in the universities (FRN, 2014; WAEC & NECO Syllabuses, 2014, University Handbook, 2014). The reason why respect was the most preferred social value may be linked to the Yoruba cultural belief about respect being core value among the Yorubas. Many parents cherished this value and they ensure that such social value is inculcated to their children and ensure that the children adhere to it. This is because whoever deviates from such is considered as *Omokomo* (a child without character). The high level of knowledge base of values by the university undergraduates could be attributed to social values being one of the major concepts in Social Studies education from primary to junior secondary school classes and its inculcation to children from cradle.

The findings of this study showed that the level of university undergraduates' social values compliance in Southwestern Nigeria universities was moderate. The high level of awareness and moderate or low values compliance among undergraduates in the universities may be due to the corrupt attitude of the people in the society. Other reasons are wrong attitude to life by the university undergraduate coupled with low or lack of enforcement of rules to the values violators. The result of this study notwithstanding, integrity and discipline values compliance were considered low. This is in contrast to the findings of Ogundare (2005) and Awoyele (2007) which submitted a great erosion of values among students in Southwest Nigeria. Why these downward trends in values? Ogundare (2005) reported that there has been public outcry against the erosion of social values in Nigeria in general but with a particular reference to Southwest Nigeria especially among the university undergraduates.

Corroborating the values compliance level by university undergraduates, Moffit (1993) posited that adolescents and youths comply with values and fail to engage in immoral behaviour because such undergraduates have personality deficit. His position was based on the belief that some misconducts are considered normal among university undergraduates. This assertion was in contrast to the report of Brezina and Piquero (2007) that the abstainers chose to avoid immoral acts because they possess values that others do not possess.

Conclusion and Recommendations

University education in Nigeria is facing serious challenges in the area of moral decadence among university undergraduates. It therefore becomes imperative to intensify the inculcation of social values and follow its compliance so as to checkmate their excesses on sexual immorality, quest for money and materialism since values awareness and compliance level have been found out to have the

tendency to solve many social problems among the university undergraduates in the society. It is however obvious that values compliance has made a great positive impact on the society, however, more needs to be done in the inculcation of right social values and its compliance by the stakeholders, so as to increase the level of compliance since it is expected that knowledge of values should bring about high compliance rate. It therefore concluded that, the quality of value awareness and possession will directly or indirectly determine involvement of undergraduates on sexual immoral acts, quest for money and materialism.

Parents should intensify their efforts on the inculcation of right type of social values and discourage their wards from engaging in acts contrary to societal cherished values. University authority and management should make it a priority to expose fresh students to adequate orientation as related to the core values of the institutions and the societal - cherished social values which are going to bring about better graduates. This would go a long way to change the value(s) the undergraduates hold important. Parents, university management and the society at large should look out for means to encourage worthy university undergraduates who complied with the cherished values of the society and reprimand those that run contrary to the societal values.

References

- Alonge, R. A. (2014). Home background and social value system as predictors for social vices among the youth in Ekiti State, Nigeria. *Journal of Education and Practice*. 5 (18) 19-22.
- Arogundade, M. B. (2010). Knowledge and perception of value education among student-teachers and Social Studies teachers in Ekiti State. An unpublished M.Ed. Thesis, University of Ado-Ekiti.
- Awoyele, A. A. (2007). Morality and political reform: Social Studies as a panacea. *Journal of Social Studies Association of Nigeria*.X(1 & 2).
- Brezina, T. &Piquero, A. (2007). Moral beliefs, isolation from peers and abstention from delinquency. *Deviant Behaviour*; 28(5): 435-465.
- Duyilemi, A. N. (2016). Education, corruption and re-orientation in Nigeria. A keynote address delivered during the 2016 annual national conference of the Association of Women in Colleges of Education (WICE) at the College of Education, Ikere-Ekiti; 10th-14th October.
- Egbue, N. G. & Alawari, B. M. (2013). Value orientation and examination malpractice in higher education in Nigeria: A study of Anambra State. *Nigerian Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*. 11(1): 87-100.

- Ekiti State Government (EKSG) (2015). *2015 Education Summit Resolutions*. Item 5. Ado-Ekiti: Government Press.
- Ekiti State University (EKSU) (2014). *University Handbook for 2014 to 2017 Academic Sessions*. Ado-Ekiti: University press.
- Republic Federal of Nigeria (FRN) (2014). *National policy on education* (7th edition). Lagos: NERDC Press.
- Lamorde, I. (2013). Societal values, corruption and security. *Nigerian Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*. 11(1): 1–8.
- Moffitt, T. (1993). Adolescence-limited and life-course persistent anti-social behaviour: A developmental taxonomy. *Psychological Review*. 100(4): 674–701.
- Ndubueze, P. N. (2013). Social values and the *Yahoo-boys'* subculture in Nigeria: Towards a paradigm shift for national value re-orientation. *Nigerian Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*. 11(1): 101–114.
- National Examinations Council (NECO) (2014). Regulations and syllabuses for senior school certificate examination (SSCE) for school candidates. 2014–2015. Minna.
- Noah, E. (2003). *Learn and grow in values education*. Amazon: Rex Bookstore.
- Ogundare, S. F. (2005). Performance of primary six pupils in some social values in schools: Implication for value education in Social Studies. In B. B. Oderinde & O. E. Ekpo (Eds.); *Social Studies in value education*. Nigerian Academy of Education. 314–329.
- Olutayo, A. O. & Akanle, O. (2007). Modernity, McDonaldisation and family values. *Nigerian Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*. 5: 53–72.
- West African Examinations Council (WAEC) (2014). West African Examinations Council syllabus for all subjects (SSCE, GCE) (2014–2015). Lagos. www.waecnigeria.org.