Investigating the Value Preferences among In-school Adolescents in Nigeria

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the value preferences of in-school adolescents. The study employed a survey design. The population was 2803 in-school adolescents in the senior secondary II in the urban and rural in the Ankpa education zone of Kogi State, Nigeria. Then, 280 senior secondary II was used as a sample through multistage sampling techniques. The value preferences of in-school adolescents questionnaire (VPOAQ) instrument developed was used to collect the data. Mean scores and standard deviations were used to answer the research questions while one-way ANOVA was used to test the null hypotheses. The study found that both male and female in-school adolescents have preferences for the same values like fulfillment, family life, competitiveness, creativity, religion, and hard work except friendliness and leadership irrespective of their locations. Despite the multicultural nature of our society, there is a core value that is undisputable anywhere in the world but is rapidly being eroded, hence, constant enlightenment campaigns on core values should be carried out in our towns, villages, and cities to help educate and guide the adolescents on value-related issues.

Keywords: Value preferences, school, adolescents, rural, urban, gender.

INTRODUCTION

The desire for meaning and purpose in life is at the core of what it is to be human (Çalışkan et al., 2015). Individuals nowadays frequently discuss their life objectives and future aspirations while describing their ideas for a happy and meaningful existence. This is because values are at the core of human emotions, ideas, and behavior (Brdar et al., 2009). Value means the importance attached to issues, things, or phenomena. It is a belief in a reason for existence that is preferred to its opposite. Psychology researches into values mostly in terms of needs, interests, and human motivation (e.g., Himes & Muraca, 2018).

Values emerge in the process of interactions and activities of individuals in society (Ramaswamy & Ozcan, 2018). It defines the choice between different ways of behavior in a certain condition. When people attach great worth to something,

they are usually ready to publicly proclaim or stand up for it (Perkins et al., 2008). The value construct is applied to a particular type of lasting belief centrally concerned with modes of behavior and end states of being (Glenn, 2001). Nigerians, for example, pay greater attention to political office holders than university professors, indicating that power is more important to Nigerians than knowledge.

Value preferences are choices people make on what they consider important (Warren et al., 2011). Alfirević et al. (2021) stated that in the area of value preferences all agents of socialization will transmit values embedded in a cultural context that is characteristics for the society as a whole choice of value is a powerful indicator that differentiates attitudes and behaviors of people. Hoff et al. (2018) stressed changes in value preferences are expected from middle to late adolescence, as school influence

lessens and contacts with the working environment become established.

As demand on adolescents intensify, different areas of their lives may come into conflict (Santrock, 2005). Similarly, Hoff et al. (2018) has observed that interest and attitudes on things among adolescents are far removed from adult responsibilities. The adult values often referred to as traditional values conflict with the adolescents' values (García et al., 2018). Adults want to preserve cultural values and transmit the same to the adolescents who are often found to repudiate them. This is because the adolescent often than not considers adult values as old. Godfrey et al. (2019) maintained that adolescents develop their own set of values and beliefs. These are values that can probably give adolescents social acceptability among their peers.

Gender also is an important issue that may influence the value preferences of in-school adolescents. Clear-field and Nelson (2006) stressed, through gender role socialization activities with mothers, girls were verbally more expressive than boys and that mothers tended to spend more time interacting with girls than boys. This reinforces the notion that girls should ask for help while boys should explore their environment independently to find meaning and answers. This process certainly sampled an individual's ability to deal with the world. Genders are not necessarily caused by biological forces but are culturally determined (Silfver. 2007). Due to this phenomenon, both boys and girls may be living together but exist in different psychological experiences which may influence their preference for values in no small measure.

The difference between the urban versus the rural way of life could constitute a strong influence on the value preferences of the inschool adolescents (Schmitt-Wilson et al., 2020). For example, rural inhabitants may emphasize independent, hard, diligent work and social relationships. Such values, according to Krau (1987) could have followed from the very nature of agricultural work. Inhabitants in the urban may prefer individualism, cut-shorts to successes facilitated and enhanced by modern technologies. The urban and rural adolescents have different levels of exposure which may consequently result in different world views. In this study, in-school adolescents are referred to

as that adolescents in senior secondary schools in the study areas.

The main purpose of this study is to find out the value preferences of in-school adolescents. Specifically, the study sought to investigate the influence of gender on the value preferences of the in-school adolescents and ascertain the influence of location (urban and rural) on the value preferences of the in-school adolescents. The findings of this study will be of great benefit to the field of educational psychology, curriculum developers, adolescents, teachers, and the public. Curriculum developers could be helped by the results of the findings to come to understand the influence of location on adolescents' attitudes and behaviors. Such knowledge and understanding can help the curriculum developers to carefully plan curricula that could be location friendly for the nation's schools.

Literature Review

Value simply refers to anything's worth; for example, an item is valued if it is worth something (Okafor, 1994). Value serves as a benchmark for standardizing and justifying our overall sentiments (Udeoba, 2012). Customs, institutions, and other aspects of a society that the members of a group hold in high respect, according to sociologists, are values (Miller, 2019). Honesty, respect, justice, and fairness are examples of universal values. Many principles, known as community standards of behavior, exist at a society level that is anchored in universal ideals passed down from generation to generation, such as communal obligations. moral values, self-actualization, values of thrift, self-sufficiency, and independence (Ochiagha, 1997).

Value may signify what has value or worth in itself without reference to any objective (intrinsic value) or maybe something which supports a goal (instrumental value)(O'Connor & Kenter, 2019). Also, whether goods have means or ultimate purposes, they may be appreciated. Value for reward (extrinsic value) is found in anything, individual, or country, but the intrinsic value is found in perfection that is "devoid of all chance of recompense. At home, the virtues "values" of cleanliness, diligence, honesty, and independence, among others, are instilled in the kid. And these values influence

overall attitude in society as well as his place in life (Gungor, et al., 2012).

Values can be personal or cultural (traditional). Personal values evolve from situations with the external world and can change over time. These are unique conceptions an individual possesses of him or herself. This means personal knowledge of the appropriate values for their feelings and experience (Emmons, 2003). Personal values developed early in life may be resistant to change. However, they are not universal. For instance, Ronald (2008) posited that the United States of America values might include material comfort, wealth, competition, individualism, or religiosity. One's family, nation, generation, and historical environment help determine one's values (Ronald, 2008, Ikwumelu, 2000). Cultural (traditional) values are values largely shared by the members of a particular culture (Ronald and Christian, 2008). The value identifies those objects, conditions, or characteristics that members of the society consider important. As such those things receive more respect and honor among the people.

Value can also be classified as core and ephemeral respectively. Core values are those values one cannot compromise. These may include personal accomplishment, career values, happy family, competition, friendliness, or fear of God (religion). Others are creativity, leadership, and hard work. Values like affluence, domination, and popularity are ephemeral in the sense that they can only last for a short time.

Experts and non-experts have differing perspectives on value preference. Some of their points of view will be discussed here to provide a better grasp of the word. Value preference refers to secondary school students' general attitudes and beliefs in their interpersonal connections, as well as their views and attitudes about how things should be. They are concerned with what is essential to them. Politics, religion, money, sex, education, helping others, family, friends, profession, cheating, self-respect, and everything else are all valued by them (Santrock, 2007). Adolescents have preferred values of personal well-being, self-expression, financial well-being, and physical health well-being overvalues that enhanced society's overall wellbeing in recent decades (Sax, 2004; Conger, 1998). Self-destruction, loneliness, estrangement will follow if the aforementioned become their primary aims. Young people must also acquire a feeling of responsibility for the well-being of others.

In terms of value preference, there are three schools of thought: Idealism, Realism, and Pragmatism. The idealists think that values are intrinsic and supplied by God, that people instinctively know what values they should acquire, and that values cannot be taught. Realists think that values will be taught so that individuals can learn acceptable values. While pragmatism is an individualized trait, it may be learned or natural (Ochiagha, 1997). It involves senior secondary school II students in the areas. Investigations centered on how gender and location (urban or rural) influence the value preferences of in-school adolescents. Pragmatism emphasizes personal beliefs in life (life philosophy), but idealism has a theological undertone that covers moral ethics and is based on the act of God parts of morality. The realism school of thought is in line with our national educational system, and it should be instilled in pupils at the secondary school level, which is the focus of this study. Finally, value preference may be described as the overall attitudes and ideas that secondary school pupils adopt in their social interactions. This definition was chosen since it encompasses all of our value preferences requirements. As a result, we'll use it as our working definition in this exercise.

Over the past two decades, adolescents have preferred values of personal well-being, selfexpression, financial well-being, and physical health well-being, against interest in values that will promote the general good of the society (Sax, et al., 2004; Conger, 1998). The literature suggests a shift in values of adolescents from adult values. Adolescents have the characteristic way they view values. They believe that values are not static but change with the changing world. Hence, values identified with the adults often considered outdated and Therefore, adult values seem to conflict with adolescent values. Unfortunately, inculcation of right values in the teaming youths has not received adequate attention; hence, adolescents' value preferences sufficiently explored. Therefore, one of the aims and objectives of Nigeria's educational policy is the inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society (Federal Republic of

Nigeria, 1987). Related studies available to the researcher are mostly foreign-based. Therefore, the problem of this study posed as a question is: (i) what are the value preferences of the inschool adolescents? (ii) Would gender and location be a significant factor in the value preferences of in-school adolescents? The study proposes two research questions and hypotheses:

RQ1. What is the mean difference of value preferences between male and female adolescents?

RQ2. How does location influence the value preferences of in-school adolescents?

H1: There is no significant mean difference between the value preferences of male and female in-school adolescents.

H2: The influence of location on the value preferences of in-school adolescents is not significant.

Methodology

Participants and procedure

The research design adopted for this study is a descriptive survey approach. This is because the phenomenon under investigation is already in existence. No variable was manipulated. The population of the study is 2803 in-school adolescents in senior secondary school II in the Ankpa education zone of Kogi State, Nigeria. Kogi State is a state in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria. Of this population, 1802 are males while 1001 are females. A multistage sampling technique was used to draw a sample of 280 out of the total population which was used for the study, 187 males (66.78%) and 93 females.

Measurement

An instrument called the value preferences of inschool adolescents questionnaire (VPOAQ) was used for this study. The VPOAQ consists of two

(2) sections. Section A sought information on the gender and location of the respondents, while section "ET contains 30 items on values which are in clusters. The clusters for values like a happy life, career, family, competition, and social relationship. Others include religious values, leadership, and hard work. An individual who scores high on this scale was considered to prefer those values being investigated.

Value preferences of in-school adolescent questionnaire (VAOAQ) (Nisha et al., 2016) used a four-point response format to measure students' responses to the items in the questionnaire rated thus: Strongly Disagree, to Strongly Agree. Some of the items are positively skewed while others are negatively skewed. The negatively skewed items had the scores reversed. The instrument was administered to thirty (30) respondents outside those to be used for the study, the scores were calculated using Guttmann split-half Coefficient and the Coefficient value of .715 for value preferences was obtained indicating that the instrument is reliable. The Guttmann Split-Half Coefficient was chosen because the items on the VPOAQ are not dichotomously scored.

Data Analysis and Result

Mean scores and standard deviations were used to answer the research questions. Hypotheses were tested using one-way ANOVA each. A mean score of 2.50 was used as a benchmark for the acceptance of the research questions. A mean score below 2.50 failed to be accepted while a mean of 2.50 and above was accepted. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 levels of significance.

RQ1 asks, "What is the influence of gender on value preferences of in-school adolescents? While null H1 states that, the influence of gender on value presences of in-school adolescents is not significant.

Table 1: Value preferences of male and female in-school adolescents.

Item	Male		Female		
S/N	X	SD	X	SD	
Fulfillment	3.00		3.15		
1	3.61	.46	3.52 3.84	.54	
2	3.75	.67	2.10	.43	
3	1.64	.78		.68	
Wealth	2.68		2.86		
4	2.81	.74	2.74	.83	
5	2.30	.77	2.41 3.45	.99	
6	2.93	.65		.15	
Education	3.15		3.04		
7	3.51	.99	2.77	1.25	
8	3.50	1.19	3.21	.64	
9	2.45	.76	3.14	.96	
Happy family	2.93		3.45		
10	3.61	.94	3.45	.74	
11	2.14	.76	1.73	.94	
12	2.74	1.13	3.25	0.47	
13	3.25	.93	3.46	1.10	
Competiveness	3.54		3.30		
14	3.54	.63	3.49	.84	
15	3.14	.94	2.74 3.56	1.16	
16	3.65	.84	3.41	.99	
17	3.85	.67		.72	
Friendliness	2.33		2.42		
18	2.57	1.12	3.21	.96	
19	2.10	1.72	1.63	.72	
Religion	3.34		3.31		
20	3.51	.67	2.89	.96	
21	3.17	.89	3.74	.70	
Creativity	2.99		3.07		
22	3.14	.84	2.74	.66	

23	2.85	1.15	3.40	.74
Leadership	2.91		2.16	
24	2.10	.41	2.16	.43
25	3.42	1.33	2.50	.69
26	3.22	.96	2.74	1.17
Popularity	3.07		3.19	
27	3.51	.76	3.14	.94
28	2.64	.86	3.25	.66
Hard work	2.50		2.69	
29	3.36	.91	3.14	.76
30	1.64	.84	2.24	1.16

Table 1 shows that both male and female inschool adolescents prefer all the values being investigated except friendliness (2.33 and 2.42 respectively) and leadership where there is a little variation. Male prefer leadership (2.91) while females do not with a mean score of 2.16.

Table 2: One-way ANOVA of the influence of gender on value preferences of in-school adolescents.

Source of variance	Sum of square	Degree of freedom	Mean square	F
Between groups	2310.102	29	79.659	
Within groups	6800.178	63	107.939	2.30
Total	9110.280	92		

F-Calculated = 0.738, F - Critical = 2.30, P = 0.05, df = 29, 63 denominator.

The F-calculated (0.738) is less than F critical (2.30), so, the null hypothesis is not rejected.

hypothesis 2 stated that the influence of location on value preferences of in-school adolescents is not significant.

RQ2 asks "how does location influence value preferences of in-school adolescents", while

Table 3: Value preferences of urban and rural in-school adolescents.

Item	Urban		Rural	
S/N	X	SD	$\bar{\mathbf{X}}$	SD
Fulfillment	2.72		2.50	
1	3.41	.83	3.42	.62
2	2.66	.54	3.42	.66
3	2.10	.82	1.34	.44
Riches	3.33		3.04	.67
4	3.82	.78	2.64	.96
5	3.24	.73	3.35	.78

6	2.93	.51	3.13	
Education	3.21		2.20	0.48
7	3.56	.51	2.78	0.84
8	3.46	1.21	3.50	0.67
9	2.63	0.76	3.34	
Happy family	2.85		2.89	.99
10	2.89	1.62	3.26	.86
11	2.14	.67	1.94	1.25
12	3.74	.49	2.96	.94
13	2.66	.85	3.42	
Competitiveness	3.33		2.92	.62
14	3.64	.98	3.21	.98
15	3.42	.48	2.74	.84
16	2.64	.76	3.10	.77
17	3.64	.88	2.65	
Friendliness	3.11		2.78	
18	3.10	.99	2.74	.67 .89
19	3.12	.84	2.83	
Religion	3.54		3.17	
20	3.45	.96	3.45	.64
21	3.64	1.25	2.89	.86
Creativity	2.90		3.31	
22	2.64	.44	3.12	.76
23	3.17	.94	3.51	.68
Leadership	2.97		3.10	
24	3.41	.75	2.64	.99
25	2.87	.48	3.26	1.14
26	2.65	.84	3.42	.98
Popularity	3.14		3.01	
27	2.74	1.12	3.35	.77
28	3.54	.55	2.67	.68
Hard work	2.14		2.83	
29	2.13	.64	3.54 2.12	.87

30 3.15 .77 .96

Table 3 indicates that in-school adolescents in both rural and urban areas prefer all the values investigated except hard work. The mean scores of items 29 and 30 which investigate hard work are 2.14 and 2.83 for urban and rural respectively. This shows rural in-school adolescents prefer hard work while urban in-school adolescents do not.

Table 4: One-way ANOVA to show the influence of location on value preferences of in-school adolescents.

Source of variance	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F
Between groups	3787.799	32	118.337	
Within groups	5438.133	59	92.172	1.284
Total	9224.902	91		

Discussion

Information from Table 1 reveals that the school adolescents prefer most of the selected values (fulfillment, riches, education, happy family, competitiveness, religion, creativity, popularity, and hard work). While only two of the selected values (friendliness and leadership) are not considered as important. This may suggest that in-school adolescents have establishing contacts with the working environment as school influence lessens. This agrees with the assertion that during late adolescence, a shift in value preference related to job and fulfillment is expected (Edgar, 1987, Santreck, 2005).

Also, considered important are affluence and popularity. This agrees with Godson's (2007) assertion that affluence and popularity are fundamental factors driving every young person to town everything even at 25years. From the finding, it is revealed that there is a combination of preferences for values among the in-school adolescents. The in-school adolescent could not clearly distinguish between core and ephemeral values. Core values like fulfillment, happy family, desire for education, religion, hard work are some of the values preferred by in-school adolescents. And some ephemeral values like affluence and popularity were also considered important. In the same vein, friendliness and leadership which are core values show negative indices. The in-school adolescents do not stick to core values in their responses. This finding is supported by the results of similar studies. For example, Decay and Travers (1996) show that adolescents are being fprce4 to make decisions that earlier generations did not have to make until they are older and more mature. Since decisions are at times the functions of one's values, adolescents' decisions that have value context may suffer derailment. ANOVA of null H1, which stated that the influence of gender on value preference is not significant, is presented in Table 2.

The F-calculated is 0.78 while the F-critical is 2.30. And to follow the decision rule, the null hypothesis is accepted since the F-critical (2.30) is higher than F-calculated (0.78). Unlike the finding of Merare (2009), the present study indicated that the observed influence of gender was not statistically significant.

The finding in table 3 reveals that the in-school adolescents in both urban and rural areas prefer all the values investigated in this study except hard work with variance in mean scores (2.14 and 2.83) for urban and rural locations respectively. ANOVA of the null hypothesis 2 in table 4 also indicated that the influence of location on value preferences of the in-school adolescent is not significant. This indicated that does not influence location in-school adolescents' value preferences. Eze (2008) pointed out that values are related to psychological development despite individual differences are not limited to a particular location. Also, adolescents, irrespective of the location are faced with the same developmental tasks which influence their values in no small measure.

Conclusion

This study was designed to determine the influence of gender and location on adolescents' value preferences. The investigations have provided evidence to show that adolescents confuse values. Core values such as a happy family, desire to be used by God, desire to acquire more education, fulfillment, and creativity are such values that appear to be universally important to all in-school adolescents irrespective of their gender and location. Ephemeral values such as popularity and affluence held by some in-school adolescents may be irrelevant. Recommendations on how to meliorate the confusion among the in-school adolescents were made. One of the tasks ahead now is to ascertain whether these findings are representative of other in-school adolescents in various parts of the world as well as other groups like tertiary students, school leavers, and other adolescents.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that efforts by parents should be geared towards inculcating the right values in the teaming youths rather than giving them over to value clarifications as advocated by some. This is because value clarification is an approach that allows individuals to recognize their values and affirm them publicly. By so doing, many times, values simply reflect different people's ideas or preferences. And if values allow persons to hurt themselves, others, or the world, then, we need to examine this. We need to stop and look at whether our values are what we want them to be to make our lives and the world around us a positive place to live in or not.

Many youths cannot stand the ambiguity of decisions that characterizes leaving the youths to recognize and affirm their values. Therefore, the teaching of core values with cultural context should be included in the school curriculum at primary and secondary school levels of education to help the adolescents recognize values that will be of help to them and society. Despite the multicultural nature of our society, there is a core value that is undisputable anywhere in the world but is rapidly being eroded, hence, constant enlightenment

campaigns on core values should be carried out in our towns, villages, and cities to help educate and guide the adolescents on value-related issues.

Study Limitations

The purpose of the study for which it was set has been accomplished. However, the study was not without limitations. First, the subject of the study is limited to secondary schools in Anambra East and Ogbaru Education Areas of Anambra state. The study did not cover all the schools in Ankpa education zone of Kogi State. Moreover, the study was focused Government and community owned secondary schools in Anambra East and Ogbaru Education Areas of the state. The inclusion of private owned schools in the state could influence the findings of the study. Finally, there could have been some faking of responses to the items from the respondents. The extent it occurred may have also influence the findings of the study.

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