



VALUE RE-ORIENTATION FOR YOUTHS: AN IMPERATIVE FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract:

This study was conducted to examine value reorientation for youths as an imperative for national development. The study was carried out because of the observed growing rate of moral decadence among youths in Nigeria. The youths seem disoriented and this calls for value reorientation. The study adopted descriptive research design of the survey type. Population of the study consisted of all youths in Ekiti state within the age of 15 and 35 years. The sample consisted of 500 youths in Ado Ekiti selected through simple random sampling technique. A self-designed questionnaire titled "Value Reorientation for Youths Questionnaire" (VRYQ) was used for data collection. The instrument was validated while reliability test conducted yielded 0.79 coefficients. Findings of the study revealed that self-discipline, humility, hard work among others are the societal values required by youths. The study showed lack of value based leadership, parents' failure to inculcate values in children at early stage and impunity as factors militating against youths' development of societal values while demonstration of positive habits by all citizens and value based leadership were suggested as means of reorientating the youths. It was concluded that youths need reorientation to develop values and attitudes that will make them contribute meaningfully to national development.

Keywords: value reorientation, youths, national development, moral decadence, positive habits

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1. Introduction

Value is a rule or standard especially of good behavior. It can be described as action or cultural practice that a society considers important for its members and is highly cherished. Values are standards and guides to peoples' actions. Value provides a means of judging quality of actual behaviour. Olaogun (2012) asserted that values meaningfully impact on an individual and prompts one to determine what one regards as rights, good, worthy, beautiful and ethical and provide standards and norms by which one guides his/her day to day behaviour. According to Oluwagbohunmi (2013), values are defined as accepted principles or standards of behaviour. Values are used to characterize individuals and society and to explain the basis of behaviour. Value orientation is the principle of right and wrong that is accepted by an individual or a social group. Wikipedia (2014) described value system as a person's standard and self-discipline set, based on the common sense and wisdom of knowing what the proper moral rules and discipline are and the amount of willingness to see themselves and others abide by them. However, it appears the youths are disoriented and drifting away from the moral rules of the society and there is need for value reorientation. Reorientation means to orientate anew. It is the act of changing the way things are done for better. For the youths, it can be described as doing what is right, just, acceptable and culturally approved by the society. It can also mean putting up good behaviour and acting responsibly.

The growing rate of moral decadence among youths and even some adults in Nigeria has reached an alarming rate and become a source of worry. The problem can be attributed to certain factors such as decreased family values, weakened marriages, poor upbringing, poverty among others. The values of honesty, truthfulness, hard work, dedication, respect for elders, respect for human dignity, loyalty, humility, decent dressing, integrity, fairness, discipline, justice and discipline among others seem to be gradually diminishing in our society. What is experienced instead is socially unacceptable behaviours such as dishonesty, laziness, disrespect, injustice, disloyalty, pride, indecent dressing and indiscipline that negate what the society approves. This actually calls for hands-on steps by all stakeholders to ensure that positive habits are inculcated into the lives of the children and youths in order to guarantee their development into responsible adults

However, Iwere (2014) believed that impunity is another factor contributing to moral decadence in Nigeria. Impunity means doing wrong without being held accountable. Impunity thrives because citizens, corporate bodies and regulatory agencies fail to discharge their civic responsibilities and obligations to society as expected of them. Iwere (2014) averred that impunity occurs when people willfully,

brazenly do what is wrong or neglect to do the right thing with the confidence that there will be absolutely no consequence to them, no price to pay, no punishment or sanction. This actually accounts for the reason the youths emulate the adults, leaders, political office holders who acquire wealth through unscrupulous means. In our society today, people of such questionable wealth are not prosecuted but celebrated. The effect of this on the youths is their quest for quick money through any available means. They also engage in other negative acts as The Tide (2012) submitted that the Nigerian society now looms large with kidnapping activities, unemployment, bare-faced banditry, corruption, blood-letting, restiveness, religious and ethnic intolerance, and other forms of unethical dispositions. Clearly, there is a dying moral culture and an ethical failure leading to total collapse of societal values. All these total up to high rate of moral and behavioural rottenness.

While supporting this view, Aremu (2014) claimed that our value system is grossly eroded, parents no longer have time to take good care of their children. Aremu (2014) stressed that inter personal contacts have been replaced with e-parenting. A situation where a parent asks the children on phone: Have you eaten? Are you in bed? What are you doing? etc. simply shows e-parenting and the children in return will put up e-behaviour and that usually results in e-consequences.

While stressing the need for early inculcation of patriotic ideals and values in pupils, 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. This will help to ensure rounded growth and develop national consciousness in them. Youths can constitute a nuisance or threat to national survival and stability if they are misguided, unemployed, indisciplined, allowed to drift away and be morally bankrupt (Egbunefu, 2014). In his own view, Olaopa (2016) disclosed that the whole nation needs widespread reorientation on national values as basis for re-engineering of fundamental governance institutions to infuse public institutions with cultural and spirituality service. Olaopa (2016) added that National Orientation Agency (NOA) should be elevated to create values, attitude guidelines, and practical initiatives that could be integrated into development policies, planning and programmes.

In an attempt to ensure value reorientation for Nigerian citizens, the Federal government introduced National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS). NEEDS which was launched on 29th, May 2004 by Nigeria government had value reorientation as one of its four major goals (National Planning Commission (NPC, 2004). The portion reads 'NEEDS will lay a solid foundation for sustainable poverty reduction, employment generation, wealth creation and value reorientation'. The Change Catalyst (2013) opined that 'NEEDS is anchored on the imperative to restore the fundamental values of Nigeria, which have been weakened over the years. The

elements of this value system as clearly spelt out in NEEDS include respect for elders, honesty and accountability, cooperation, industry, discipline, self-confidence and moral courage. To realise this vision, NPC (2004) stated that the National Orientation Agency would be strengthened to lead a campaign to re-instill the virtues of honesty, hard work, selfless service, moral rectitude and patriotism' (in the citizens). With the assumed implementation of NEEDS strategy in Nigeria for over a decade now and what operates presently in terms of value reorientation, one can easily say that nothing has changed. In fact, observation shows that the situation is getting worse.

It is pertinent to instill discipline and socially acceptable behaviours in the young ones who are being prepared to take up future leadership roles. Oluwagbohunmi (2013) maintained that positive traits of togetherness, comradeship and cooperation towards a healthy nation as well as change of attitude by young and old in the areas of human relationships and in governance are expedient ingredients to move the nation forward.

Egwuatu (2013) maintained that Nigeria can be a better place, and the system working effectively if Nigerians begin to have a change of mindset; get the right people and put them in leadership positions. Egwuatu (2013) also added that the leaders should 'walk the talk. That is, leaders should allow the followers see them do what they advocate.

2. Statement of the Problem

Social vices have reached an alarming rate. This is observed to be caused by high rate of moral decadence among the youths. There seems to be different forms of unethical dispositions that have led to total collapse of societal values. The values of honesty, hard work, dedication, respect for elders, respect for human dignity, decent dressing, humility and discipline among others seem to be gradually diminishing in our society and most importantly among the youths.

Lack of respect, dishonesty, laziness, pride, indecent dressing, lack of discipline among others have taken over. These seem to be the root causes of different sorts of misdemeanor that make youths get involved in negative activities such as political thuggery, crisis, violence, get rich syndrome, armed robbery, rape, prostitution etc. It was on this background that this study was carried out to examine the need for value reorientation for youths as a mean of enhancing national development.

2.1 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine societal values required by Nigerian youths to aid national development, to determine factors militating against development of

societal values among the youths and suggest means of reorientating the youths to develop societal values.

2.2 Research Questions

The following research questions were raised for the study:

1. What are the societal values required by Nigerian youths for national development?
2. What are the factors militating against the development of societal values among Nigerian youths?
3. What are the means of reorientating the youths to develop societal values?

3. Research Method

This study adopted descriptive research design of the survey type. Population of the study consisted of all youths in Ekiti state within the age of 15 and 35 years. The sample was made up of 500 youths selected through simple random sampling technique from Ado Ekiti in Ekiti state. The youths were selected in the following order: University students (125), College of Education students (125), Secondary School students (125), Teachers (50), Civil Servants (50) and Clergy (25). A self-designed questionnaire titled "Value Reorientation for Youths Questionnaire" (VRYQ) was used for data collection. The instrument was divided into four sections. Section A sought bio-data information of the respondents while Sections B, C and D contained items on societal values required by the youths, factors militating against development of the values and means of reorientating the youths respectively. The instrument was validated by social studies experts while reliability test conducted yielded 0.79 coefficients. Copies of the questionnaire were administered on the respondents with the help of some research assistants. The study being a descriptive research, data collected were analysed using frequency counts and percentages only.

4. Results

A. Research Question 1: What are the societal values required by Nigerian youths for national development?

Table 1: Societal values required by Nigerian youths for national development

Respondents	N	Societal Values											
		Obedience		Honesty		Humility		Discipline		Hard work		Patriotism	
		A	D	A	D	A	D	A	D	A	D	A	D
Universities	125	74 (59)	51 (41)	54 (43)	71 (57)	117 (94)	08 (6)	120 (96)	05 (4)	97 (78)	28 (22)	54 (43)	71 (57)
Colleges of Education	125	81 (65)	44 (35)	61 (47)	64 (53)	119 (95)	06 (5)	118 (94)	07 (6)	100 (80)	25 (20)	48 (38)	77 (42)
Secondary Schools	125	121 (97)	04 (3)	73 (58)	52 (42)	99 (80)	26 (20)	115 (92)	10 (8)	115 (92)	10 (8)	79 (63)	46 (37)
Teachers	50	50 (100)	-	50 (100)	-	50 (100)	-	50 (100)	-	50 (100)	-	41 (82)	09 (8)
Civil Servants	50	50 (100)	-	35 (70)	15 (30)	45 (90)	05 (10)	45 (90)	05 (10)	48 (96)	02 (4)	45 (90)	05 (10)
Clergy	25	25 (100)	-	25 (100)	-	25 (100)	-	25 (100)	-	25 (100)	-	25 (100)	-
Total	500	398 (80)	10 (20)	298 (60)	202 (40)	455 (91)	45 (9)	473 (95)	27 (5)	435 (87)	65 (13)	292 (58)	208 (42)
Ranking		4 th		5 th		2 nd		1 st		3 rd		6 th	

- A – Agree D – Disagree
- Percentages shown in Parentheses. All percentages were rounded up except in few cases

This table shows that 95% of the respondents agreed that self-discipline was the best societal value required by youths for national development. This was followed by humility (91%), hard work (87%), obedience (80%) and honesty (60%). The least perceived to be required by Nigerian youths for national development is patriotism with 58%.

B. Research Question 2: What are the factors militating against the development of societal values among Nigerian youths?

Table 2: Factors militating against the development of societal values among Nigerian youths

S/N	Items	Agree		Disagree	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%
1	Poor family values	255	51	245	49
2	Parents' failure to inculcate values in children at early stage	481	96.2	19	3.8
3	Weakened marriages	397	78.4	103	20.6
4	Lack of value based leadership	492	98.4	08	1.6
5	Impunity (doing wrong things without fear of being prosecuted)	475	95	25	5.0
6	Government's failure to make value based subjects compulsory in schools	365	67	165	33
7	Wealth accumulation through unlawful means	426	85.2	74	14.8
8	The 'get rich syndrome'	433	87.6	67	12.4
9	Corruption in high places / everywhere	359	71.8	141	28.2
10	Love for affluence living and materialism	360	72	140	28

Table 2 shows that lack of value based leadership (98.4%), parents' failure to inculcate values in children at early stage (96.2%) and impunity (95%) were the factors militating against development of societal values among youths.

C. Research Question 3: What are the means of reorientating the youths to develop societal values?

Table 3: Means of reorientating the youths to develop societal values

S/N	Items	Agree		Disagree	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%
1	Demonstration of positive habits by all citizens	500	100	-	-
2	Value based subjects like social studies, moral education and religious studies must be made compulsory like civic education	497	99.4	3	0.6
3	All youths must be encouraged to have a change of attitude and be ready to imbibe socially acceptable behaviours	413	80.6	87	19.4
4	Youths must be ready to imbibe the core values of honesty, love, peace, unity, faith etc as enshrined in the national symbols	429	85.8	71	14.2
5	Value orientation programmes must be organized for youths through all the levels of government	434	86.6	66	13.4
6	Religious institutions must make teaching of morality a priority	486	97.2	14	2.8
7	Political office holders must demonstrate value based leadership	500	100	-	-
8	Teachers of value based subjects should teach with appropriate methods to ensure that students understand what they are taught.	285	57	215	43

Table 3 shows that demonstration of positive habits by all citizens (100%), political office holders must demonstrate value based leadership (100%) value based subjects must be made compulsory in schools (99.4%), religious institutions must make teaching of morality a priority (97.2%) and value orientation programmes must be organized for youths through all the levels of government (86.6) are the means of reorientating the youths.

5. Discussion

The finding of this study revealed that discipline, humility and hard work were described as societal values required by youths to be able to contribute meaningfully to national development. This is not-unexpected, because every sane human being knows what is right and what type of behaviour the society approves. Most of the respondents did not see patriotism as societal value required for youths. This can be attributed to the current situation in Nigeria where most peoples' behaviour does not portray love for the nation. Most political office holders only express love for their family members: this is the reason nepotism, ethnic rivalry, militancy among others thrive in the society today. This also accounts for lack of value based leadership that constitutes an hindrance to development of societal values by the youths.

The study also showed that parents' failure to inculcate values in children at early stage is one of the factors militating against youth's development of values. This agrees with Abah (2014) who was of the opinion that early exposure of pupils to values would elicit in them a local and national consciousness of societal values. That impunity is another factor contributing to youths' inability to develop societal values agrees with Iwere (2014) who claimed that impunity occurs when people willfully, brazenly do what is wrong or neglects to do the right thing with the confidence that there will be absolutely no consequence to them, no price to pay, no punishment or sanction.

From the findings, all respondents agreed that all Nigerian citizens need to develop positive habits. That is, the people must have a change of attitude, change the way they do things so that the youths will be able to emulate them and put up positive behaviours required of them. This finding corroborates the submission of Olaopa (2016) who disclosed that the whole nation needs widespread reorientation on national values as basis for re-engineering of fundamental governance institutions to infuse public institutions with cultural and spirituality service. In addition, for all youths to be reorientated, there must be value based leadership. This implies that leaders in politics, offices, homes, organisations etc must lead by example and have the believe that the youths are watching and will grow up to take up leadership positions after them. It is what the youths learn from them that would be practiced when their turn comes.

Egwuatu (2013) supported this finding by confirming that the leaders should 'walk the talk'. That is, leaders should allow the followers see them do what they advocate.

6. Conclusion

From the findings of this study, it can be concluded that youths need reorientation to develop values and attitudes that will make them grow into useful, responsible, disciplined, patriotic citizens and future leaders that will be able to make meaningful contributions to the development of the nation. In order to achieve this, it is mandatory for all leaders to operate value based leadership while all citizens are required to demonstrate positive habits.

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