



IMPLICATION OF MORAL DECADENCE ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AMONG STUDENTS IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS OF ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA

Grace Chinyere Nnadi;

Uzoekwe, H. E.;

Ofojebe, Edna Nkechi;

Chigbu, Eberechukwu Franciscaⁱ

PhD, Department of Guidance and Counselling,

Nnamdi Azikiwe University,

Awka, Nigeria

Abstract:

The study examined the implication of moral decadence on the academic performance of students in tertiary institutions of Anambra State. The design of the study is a cross-sectional survey research design. Three research questions were formulated to form the study. The population of the study was 400 students. The population was made up of 8 tertiary institutions of learning in Anambra state which includes Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Tansian University Umunya, Madonna University Okija, Paul University Awka, Federal Polytechnic Oko and Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe. Out of the 8 tertiary institutions, 4 were selected through a simple random sampling technique. A total sample size of thirty (30) students drawn through the purposive sampling technique was used in the study. The instrument for data collection in this study was developed by the researchers with the title Moral Decadence on Academic Performance (MDAPQ). The questionnaire was divided into two sections: A and B. Section A contains personal information about respondents while section B has 23 items. Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. Any item having a mean score of 2.5 and above was accepted while below 2.5 was rejected. The result of the study showed that the causes of moral decadence are Poor parenting style, poverty and bad peer influence among others. The implication of moral decadence to academic performance among students of tertiary institutions are an exhibition of illicit sexual behaviour affects the academic performance of students, parent's negligence to their parental role has a negative impact on their academic study, indulging in prostitution affect the academic performance of students and environmental violence affects students' academic performance. In view of these findings, the implications and recommendations were also highlighted.

ⁱCorrespondence: email ef.chigbu@unizik.edu.ng

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1. Introduction

Moral decadence in our various tertiary institutions needed urgent attention by the government and general public to address and sanitize the impunity and negative effect it may cause in our academic exercise and in the ramification of life. Moral decadence may result in people losing their moral virtues, values and ethics. When our societal values are lost, it will lead to various immoral acts like stealing, prostitution, corruption, delinquency among others. Problems that emanate from the disposition of moral decadence reduce the value of education and academic integrity of institutions, destroy peace and security of the society, under societal development and institute indiscipline with anti-social behaviour (<https://iproject.com.ng/education/cause-and-effect-of-moral-decadence-on-tertiary-institution-students-in-Nigeria/index.html>). Moral decadence demoralizes process, destabilizing society and rendering great harm to the nation. Corruption as a major vice of moral decadence affects us all. It threatens sustainable economic development, ethical values and justice; it destabilizes our society and endangers the rule of law (Samson & Allida, 2018). The moral decadence that can be experienced in the school environment is examination malpractice, drug abuse, bullying, truancy and illicit sexual activities (Britwum, Britwum, Nyamekye & Adjei, 2020).

However, it is of great concern to note that our tertiary institutions especially in Anambra state are mostly associated with such social vices that are referred to as moral decay. Among such are substance abuse, disrespect to elders, stealing, armed robbery, rape, illicit sexual behaviour and assault, gangsterism, cultism, indecent dressing among others. Afuge (2015), states the different forms of moral decadence as cultism, rape, examination malpractice, teenage pregnancy, students prostitution, sexual harassment, sale of grades, students demonstration, drug abuse, indecent dressing and so on. Idensi (2010), indicated rape, sexual abuse, drug abuse, school violence and killings as part of moral decadence. Moral decadence is an extreme delinquent, disorderly, irregularity, destructive unjust and non-conforming behaviour characteristics of stratified people or individuals which continue to spread on our campuses (Adedoyin, 2012).

Operationally, moral decadence is any behaviour that contradicts the ethical values and norms that govern an individual and the society at large. Among such are drug abuse, disrespect to elders, stealing among others. It is of great concern to note that our campuses are mostly associated with such social vices that are capable of endangering educational institutions. As a result of all these vices stated above students are mostly seen dropping out of school, some may drop out as a result of poor performance in their academic or school activities and some end up as truck pushers, beggars, fraudsters, prostitution, thieves among others. If urgent rehabilitation and counselling are not given, the society will eventually decline in the growth and development of both economic and social-political affairs of the state. The rate at which youths engage in the immoral act and the aftermath of the vices calls for quick attention

on the best way to reduce it and also its implication to academic performance. Thus, this gave rise to the following question: do moral decadence has any implication on the academic performance of students, what are the causes of moral decadence? Our educational sector had been beclouded with immoral acts (moral decadence) which breed hoodlums, rapists, prostitutes, victimization of students. Numerous factors have been associated with moral decadence which includes; genetic factors, ineffective parenting and environmental factors (Santrock, 2005), poverty, lack of education, family orientation and drug abuse (Mbatia, Jenkins, Singleton & White, 2009), social media, cultural heritage and technological advancement (Rwechungura, Olotu, Mathias, Minja & Goodluck, 2010). Kenneth (2011) posits that our educational system is losing its moral and social values as a result of the existence of moral decadence among and within the school environment. The exhibition of moral decadence among secondary school students showed a negative impact on the academic performance of secondary school students in the Kumasi Metropolis, Ghana (Britiwum, Britiwum, Nyamekye, Adjei, 2020). Students practice examination malpractice, cultism, truancy, sexual misconduct, dishonesty and these hinder the progress of their academic performance (Njoku, 2016).

Despite the above review of the literature and its findings on moral decadence, causes and its implication on academic performance it is not sufficient to draw a conclusion on the ways to ameliorate it. Therefore, the researchers deemed it necessary to help solve the problem of moral decadence by embarking on the present study that examines the implication of moral decadence on academic performance among students of tertiary institutions in Anambra.

2. Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine the implication of moral decadence on the academic performance of students in tertiary institutions of Anambra State.

2.1 Research Questions

The study is guided by the following research questions;

- 1) What are the causes of moral decadence among students of tertiary institutions in Anambra State?
- 2) What is the implication of moral decadence to academic performance among students of tertiary institutions in Anambra State?
- 3) What are the strategies for curbing moral decadence among students of tertiary institutions in Anambra State?

3. Methodology

The study used the cross-sectional survey research design. Cross sectional study design is an observational study design which the data collected from the survey is statistically analysed to draw meaningful research conclusions (Akuezuilo & Agu, 2007). The

population of the study was 400 students. The population was made up of 8 tertiary institutions of learning in Anambra state which includes Nnnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Tansian University Umunya, Madonna University Okija, Paul University Awka, Federal Polytechnic Oko and Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe. Out of the 8 tertiary institutions, 4 were selected through a simple random sampling technique. A total sample size of thirty (30) students drawn through the purposive sampling technique was used in the study.

The instrument for data collection in this study was developed by the researchers with the title Moral Decadence on Academic Performance (MDAPQ). The questionnaire was divided into two sections: A and B. Section A contains personal information about respondents while Section B has 23 items. Data was analyzed using mean and standard deviation. Any item having a mean score of 2.5 and above was accepted while below 2.5 was rejected.

3. Results

Research Question 1: What are the causes of moral decadence among students of tertiary institutions in Anambra State?

Table 1: Respondent mean ratings on the causes of moral decadence among students of tertiary institutions of Anambra State

Statement	Mean	SD	Remarks
1. Poor parenting style results in the involvement of immoral behaviour.	3.25	0.70	Accepted
2. Indulging in drug abuse is a source of moral decadence in our campuses.	3.15	0.69	Accepted
3. Poverty is a lead way to immoral practices among students.	3.20	0.91	Accepted
4. Absence of religious practices/values is a factor that brings about immoral practices in our environment.	3.18	0.99	Accepted
5. Technological awareness promote moral decay.	3.16	1.04	Accepted
6. Bad peer influence lead to the involvement of bad behaviour.	3.10	1.00	Accepted
7. Participating in sports activities result to immoral acts in our society.	2.35	1.26	Rejected
Grand Mean/SD	3.05	0.2	Accepted

Data in Table 1 shows that, out of 7 listed items on the causes of moral decadence among students of tertiary institutions, respondents rated Accepted on 6 items, while 1 was on disagreement item. The grand mean score of 3.05 falls within the Accepted category. Therefore, it indicates that students in the area of the study (Anambra State) accepted the causes of moral decadence stipulated in Table 1.

Research Question 2: What is the implication of moral decadence to academic performance among students of tertiary institutions in Anambra State?

Table 2: Respondent's mean ratings on the implication of moral decadence to academic performance among students of tertiary institutions

Statement	Mean	SD	Remarks
1. Exhibition of illicit sexual behaviour affects academic performance of students.	3.02	0.69	Accepted
2. Parent's negligence to their parental role has negative impact on the academic performance of students.	3.13	0.70	Accepted
3. Environmental violence affects students' academic performance.	2.90	0.70	Accepted
4. Cultism practices influence academic performance of students.	3.05	0.67	Accepted
5. Negative peer influence affects academic performance of students.	3.11	0.70	Accepted
6. Watching nude pictures through Facebook affect students' academic performance.	3.13	0.65	Accepted
7. Indulging in prostitution affect academic performance of students.	2.75	0.80	Accepted
Grand Mean/SD	3.01	0.77	Accepted

Table 2 shows that the 7 items mentioned depict the implication of moral decadence on the academic performance of students.

Research Question 3: What are the strategies for curbing moral decadence among students of tertiary institutions in Anambra State?

Table 3: Respondent's mean ratings on the strategies for curbing moral decadence among students of tertiary institutions

Items	Mean	SD	Remarks
1. Organization of functional guidance and counselling units in our tertiary institutions can help curb immoral activities.	2.55	1.26	Accepted
2. Establishing an anti-immoral club and society on our campus can go a long way in reducing moral decadence.	2.60	1.02	Accepted
3. Strong teaching about our religious bodies in higher Institution can solve the problem of moral decadence.	2.65	1.20	Accepted
4. Organizing symposium with strong re-percussion for students on malpractice, indecent dressing, can restore sanity in our higher institutions.	2.85	1.15	Accepted
5. Given out reward to those who surrender to cultism, drug addiction and any other form of unwanted behaviour can curb the menace.	2.80	1.20	Accepted
6. Introduction of yearly medical fitness report of students can help in reducing the acts of immoral in our campuses.	2.60	1.05	Accepted
7. Training and recruitment of special personnel to eradicate cultism and gangsterism in our higher institutions can bring a lasting solution to such problems.	2.40	1.08	Rejected
Grand Mean/SD	2.63	1.10	Accepted

Table 3 shows the seven challenges that hinder the good academic performance of students. Six out of seven challenges were agreed upon by the respondent while one statement was rejected by the respondents.

4. Discussion

The findings of this study were discussed based on issues relevant to the Research Questions that guided the study. In the response to research question one, it is revealed that the causes of moral decadence are: Poor parenting styles, indulging in drug abuse, technological awareness, bad peer influence, poverty and absence of religious practices/values. This is in line with Mbatia, Jenkins, Singleton & White (2009), who indicated poverty, lack of education, family orientation and drug abuse as causes of moral decadence.

The responses to research question two indicated that the respondents agreed with the items listed in table two as the implication of moral decadence to the academic performance of students in tertiary institutions. This is in support of Kenneth (2011), an assertion that posits that our educational system is losing its moral and social values as a result of the existence of moral decadence among and within the school environment.

The responses to research question three on the strategies for curbing moral decadence among students of tertiary institutions in Anambra State is in line with Iroegbu (2019), who states that youths should be taught the right path to positive living.

5. Conclusion

The study aimed at examining the implication of moral decadence on the academic performance of students in tertiary institutions of Anambra State. The findings of the study showed moral decadence have negative effects on the academic performance of students in tertiary institutions of Anambra State.

6. Recommendations

The following recommendations were made:

- 1) Government and non-governmental organizations should collaborate with the higher institution of learning towards providing financial and social support towards fighting the menace of immorality in our higher school of learning by building structures for counselling units, rehabilitation centers among others.
- 2) Parents and significant others should help in training and installing moral values, towards achieving and maintaining a better and more functional society.
- 3) The school environment should create a means of sensitizing the students on the dangers of involving in the immoral act through seminars, workshops, and symposiums among others.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

About the Authors

Nnadi, Chinyere Grace occupied a position Lecturer II with PhD in Guidance and Counselling with research interest on adolescent and parental behavioural problems.

Uzoekwe, H. E. occupied a position as a senior Lecturer with PhD in Guidance and Counselling with research interests on behavioural problems, educational problems and family issues.

Ofojebe, Edna Nkechi occupied a position of Lecturer II with PhD in Guidance and Counselling with a research interest on general issues in interpersonal relationships, adolescents' problems/issues, behavioural problems, delinquent issues among others.

Chigbu, Eberechukwu Francisca occupied a position of Lecturer II with PhD in Guidance and Counselling with research interests in counselling psychology and behavioural problems.

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