# EFFECTS OF VALUES CLARIFICATION AND GENDER ON SUCCESS ORIENTATION AMONG UNDERGRADUATES IN SOUTH WEST, NIGERIA

OSARENREN, N. A., NWADINIGWE, I. P. & OWODUNNI, Olalekan
Department of Educational Foundations,
Faculty of Education, University of Lagos, Akoka

**Abstract**

*University undergraduates are faced with numerous challenges of life fulfillment, which trap them in the intricate web of conflict between the need to compete in a perceived highly corrupt society where mediocrity is exalted, and the need to focus on values adjudged right for their drives towards success. This discord is a concern for youths in general and more for university undergraduates because their plans, goals and aspirations are webbed around preparation for a diversity of careers. This study examined the effects of values clarification and gender on success orientation among undergraduates in South West, Nigeria. Quasi experimental pre and post-tests control group research design was employed. The target population comprised all 300Level undergraduates in federal universities in South West, Nigeria. Multistage sampling process was used to select a sample of 175 from the finite population of 351 undergraduates. Two research questions were raised and two research hypotheses were tested in the study. Baseline Assessment Questionnaire (BAQ), Values Clarification Questionnaire (VCQ) and Success Orientation Questionnaire (SOQ) were the three research instruments used for the study. Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 significant levels. The results revealed that values clarification was effective in enhancing success orientation of undergraduates. The results showed no significant differences in undergraduates' success orientation due to gender. Based on these findings, it was recommended that university authorities should design and regularly expose undergraduates to values clarification training in order to enhance their success orientation.*
**Keywords:** *Values clarification, Success orientation, Moral values, Academic values, Goal determination*

## Introduction

University undergraduates are the core and future of the society because without them, the society will inevitably go into extinction as people grow old and die. In a nurturing society, they will ordinarily develop into well-adjusted and integrated adults who are able to contribute meaningfully to the advancement of the society. This is so because their physiological, social, emotional, psychological and spiritual needs are adequately met and they are also empowered with the necessary education, as well as the vocational and life skills which are essential for their development and self-actualization (Bello, 2018).

On the contrary, they are also faced with numerous challenges of life fulfillment, which trap them in the intricate web of conflict between the need to compete in a perceived highly corrupt society where mediocrity is exalted, and the need to focus on values adjudged right for their drives towards success. This discord is a concern for youths in general and more for university undergraduates because their

plans, goals and aspirations are webbed around preparation for a diversity of careers (Cohen, Garcia, Apfel & Maseter, 2010). This influence the management of their lives for their desires and drives towards success orientation as they are subjected to values exploration exercise in which individuals are asked to rank order their values and describe values that are most important to them. Mosconi and Emmett (2012) were of the opinion that much of the focus on success orientations has been mainly on career development. Those charged with the career development of children want them to become self-sustaining, productive, successful members of society. However, educators, parents, and students often have not questioned the measures of success by which they have evaluated their drives toward achieving it.

Kirschenbaum (2013) examined values clarification as an approach designed to help people make choices and decisions to enable them achieve their goals, directions, and priorities and take action to implement them. The researcher defined values clarification in terms of value-rich areas in people's life that `can be sources of satisfaction, joy and meanings; sources of confusion and conflict around which people welcome or seek help. It was also seen as being designed to help people in making life's complicated decision and choices- in clarifying and actualizing their priorities, goals, and values in these and other value-rich areas. Addressing client values in clinical behavior analysis, Bonow and Follette (2009) defined values clarification as a psychotherapy technique that can often help an individual increase awareness of any values that may have a bearing on lifestyle decisions and actions. Our values are who we are. Not who we would like to be, not who we think we should be, but who we are in our lives. Our values serve as a compass pointing out what it means to be true to oneself. Co-Active Coaching Crew-Henry Kimsey-House, Karen Kimsey-House, Philip Sandahl and Laura Whitworth (2011) were of the opinion that when we honour our values on a regular and consistent basis, life is good and fulfilling. With recent happenings in the world economy, one current issue that is worth further research exploration is the effects of values clarification on the way people go about achieving success.

Values clarification can be used with people of virtually all ages, from a few years through old age. The youths are involved in a variety of life contexts. They are accused of being tough to manage, self-interested, unfocussed and lazy by the older generation .This defines in most cases youths' aggression towards their success orientations .Understanding and clarifying people's values would provide an insight to give them an insight to career choices and decisions, understand their environment, friends, peers, life coaches, religious leaders, government leaders who will positively influence their drive towards success orientations.

Students' belief in society's rigid and limited definition of success can create barriers for those for whom these definitions are not in congruent with their success orientations- ways that human beings go about achieving success in life ( Kurucz, 2018).  By expanding students' definition of success, values clarification may help reduce barriers that are based on students' perception of success. Providing students with the desired opportunities through values clarification process can make them explore and identify their own values, this will enhance their success orientations and may permit or

influence their career development of a realistic and future oriented set of career and life expectations and, correspondingly, an increased satisfaction with one's life. Evaluation of students' perception provides valuable insight into a strong predictor of their success orientation. Mayhew, Vanderlinden, and Kim (2010) concluded that students' perception was one of the most important predictors of the impact of values clarification on students' success orientation.

Mackenzie, Fritz and Guthrie (2017) defined values clarification as a dynamic process in which people come to understand what they individually view as important in their lives by placing a name or label on what one values. This clarification often happens during the early school years and it is a critical period of decision making in their respective drives towards setting goals and desires for success. It is the understanding of what individuals' view as important to their lives by assisting them place values on it providing meanings to what one values. There are many value-rich areas in life that can be sources of satisfaction in terms of endearment to one's success orientations. Kirschenbaum (2013) enumerated these value-rich areas to include, but not limited to: friendship and relationship, work, money and material success, family, health (diet, drugs, exercise etc.), love and sex, religion, personal tastes (clothes, hairstyle, etc.), leisure time, politics and social action, school, age into death, diversity and identity issues, meaning and purpose in life.

Values clarification is designed to assist people in making life's complicated decisions and choices; in clarifying and actualizing their priorities, goals, and values in these and other value- rich areas. Values clarification can be used in a developmental or preventive way, helping people work on the value-rich areas appropriate to their success orientations, as a way of helping them live a richer more meaningful life and avoid problems that result from the lack of clarity. Kirschenbaum (2013) sees values clarification as a remedial counselling tool, helping people work on the issues that are currently causing them, from mild to serious unhappiness or other difficulties resulting from lack of value clarity or seeming inability to act on their goals and priorities.

Values researchers have long been interested in the discovery of gender-related patterns of value priorities. Rokeach (2003) argued that gender-based differences in value priorities were likely to emerge because society socializes men and women to play different gender roles. This argument is representative of the social structural origin theory, which posits that gender-based psychological differences are the results of men's and women's adjustment to the gendered social roles into which they are socialized (Eagly, 2015). Rokeach (2003) found American men and women differ significantly in their rankings of 20 of the 36 items in the Rokeach Value Survey (RVS). The results suggested that men were more materialistic, hedonistic, achievement-oriented and intellectually oriented than women were. Women, on the other, were more oriented toward religious values, personal happiness, love self-respect and an absence of inner and interpersonal conflict than men. In studies of Australian undergraduates and their family members, Feather (2004) observed than female respondents consistently placed more importance on being honest, harmony and self-respect than male respondents.

## Statement of the Problem

One of the seeming challenges facing youths is the problem of success orientation definition and values in life, one's perception of success, and drives toward achieving it. The issue of the perception of the older generation about youth as being difficult to manage entitled, self-interested, unfocused and lazy. The fundamental questions such as: what kind of person do I wish to be? How do I want to live? What is the meaning and purpose of my life? What values do I want to guide my life? How do I go about achieving my desired goals and ambitions in life are some of the problems encountered by youth's success orientation. It is more of a problem, because of the notion youths have the legal right to something, be it family heritage or other benefits. This reflects in the way they conduct themselves in their drives towards their success and it reflects in their set goals and priorities. In their attempts towards being successful, Frisch (2006) explained, that this sets them in a confused state with regards to their life choices and dilemma of success orientation.

The resultant effects of youths' inability to meet up with goals, ambitions and wrong perception that they could have anything they want due to their absolute dependence on their parents make them to be in a hurry to prove a point. Due to this, they delve into activities which manifest in the form of social vices like internet frauds, cultism, armed robberies, kidnappings and ritual killings as a face saving measure to cover their failures and their unattainable goals and ambitions in life. This has had a visible influence on the youths' perception of success and how to achieve their set goals and ambition and still conduct themselves with values acceptable to their world of influence.

## Research Questions

The following research questions were raised for this study:
1. Would training in values clarification lead to significant improvement in the post-test success orientation scores of undergraduates?
2. Is there any gender difference in success orientation due to exposure to values clarification training?

## Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were tested at 0.05 significant levels
1. There is no significant difference in post-test success orientation between undergraduates exposed to values clarification training and those in the control group.
2. There is no significant gender difference in post-test success orientation of undergraduates exposed to values clarification and those in the control group.

## Method

The content validity of the research instruments was ascertained by experts in Measurement and Evaluation. The experts were required to look at the comprehensiveness, appropriateness and clarity of the items in the instruments which guided the placement and removal of items in the research instruments for the main study. In order to determine the reliability of the research instruments, a pilot study was carried out in Lagos State University. A test-retest method was employed at two weeks interval to determine the reliability values of the research instruments.

**Table 1: Test-retest Reliability Coefficient of Research Instrument**

| Instrument | No of items | Test Position | Mean | SD | $r_{tt}$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| BAQ | 36 | 1st | 2.68 | 0.61 | 0.66 |
| | | 2nd | 3.52 | 0.68 | |
| VCQ | 45 | 1st | 4.67 | 0.76 | 0.73 |
| | | 2nd | 5.72 | 0.69 | |
| SOQ | 20 | 1st | 3.42 | 0.64 | 0.72 |
| | | 2nd | 1.68 | 0.75 | |

Evidence from Table 1 shows that the Baseline Assessment Questionnaire (BAQ) had a reliability coefficient of 0.66, Values Clarification Questionnaire (VCQ) had a reliability coefficient of 0.73 while Success Orientation Questionnaire (SOQ) had reliability coefficients of 0.72. Based on these results, the instruments were found to be reliable and suitable for the study.

The research design adopted for this study was a pre-test, post-test, control group quasi-experimental design involving one treatment group and one control group. The participants in treatment group were given Values Clarification Training while those in the control group were not given any treatment. All the groups were pre-tested and post-tested in order to generate baseline data as well as post intervention data which made it possible to measure the effects of the treatment.

Multistage sampling process was used for the study. At the first stage, simple random sampling of hat and draw method was used to select two states out of the six states in South West, Nigeria where Lagos and Oyo States emerged. At the second stage, the two Federal universities in the two states were assigned treatment and control groups where the one in Lagos State was assigned the treatment group and that of Oyo state was assigned the control group through simple ballot system. The third stage involved the use of table of random numbers to select one faculty in each of the two federal universities selected for the study where Faculty of Education and Faculty of Social Sciences emerged respectively. At the fourth stage, simple random sampling of lucky dip was used to select two departments in each of the faculties selected in order to ensure that the participants had the same environmental characteristics.

All the intact 300 level undergraduates in the two departments selected in the federal University in Lagos were administered Baseline Assessment Questionnaire (BAQ) where the cut off mark was 40. It was discovered that out of 285 undergraduates that responded to the instruments, 109 comprising 54 male and 55 female undergraduates scored below the cut off mark which showed that they had low values clarification and they formed the treatment group. In Oyo State, all the 66 intact 300level undergraduates (male =37 & female 29) in the two departments selected from the University of Ibadan formed the control group because they scored below the cut off mark.

## Results

The data generated from various instruments were computed statistically to show means and standard deviation. Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was used to test all the hypotheses formulated at .05 significant levels.

**Hypothesis One:** There is no significant difference in post-test success orientation between undergraduates exposed to values clarification training and those in the control group. One-Way Analysis of Covariance was used to test the hypothesis.

**Table 2: Descriptive Data of Pre and Post Test Scores of the Participants across the Experimental Conditions**

| Group | N | Pretest | | Posttest | | Mean Difference |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | |
| VCT | 109 | 77.90 | 4.52 | 86.07 | 4.74 | 8.17 |
| Control Group | 66 | 69.14 | 3.66 | 75.45 | 4.24 | 6.31 |
| Total | 175 | 62.99 | 4.38 | 68.72 | 6.33 | 5.73 |

Evidence from Table 2 shows that before the training intervention, the success orientation of the undergraduates, irrespective of the experimental condition to which they were assigned was relatively low as indicated in their respective mean scores of 69.14 (sd= 3.66) for the control group and 77.90 (sd=4.52) for the treatment group. The grand mean score of the two groups was 62.99 (sd=4.38).

At post-test, the average success orientation scores of undergraduates in the control group improved from 69.14 recorded at pre-test to 75.45 (sd=4.24) thus yielding a gain score of 6.13. For undergraduates who received training in value clarification, their success orientation scores greatly improved from average score of 77.90 obtained before the training intervention to an outstanding score as evidenced from a mean score of 86.07 (4.74) recorded after the treatment intervention. The pre-test and post-test mean difference was therefore 8.17.

To determine if the differences in post-test success orientation between the treatment and control groups were statistically significant, ANCOVA was carried out.

Table 3: ANCOVA Test of Difference in Post-test Success Orientation between Treatment and Control Groups

| Source | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Squares | F |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Model | 159674.38 | 3 | 53224.79 | 2112.93* |
| Covariate | 6854.62 | 1 | 6854.62 | 272.12* |
| Experimental Group | 8517.22 | 2 | 4258.61 | 169.06* |
| Error | 4256.71 | 169 | 25.19 | |
| Total | 163931.09 | 175 | | |

Evidence from the ANCOVA result presented in Table 3 shows that for the experimental conditions, the F-value obtained was 169.06 as against a theoretical F-value of 3.00 given 2 and 169 degrees of freedom at the 0.05 level of significance. This therefore suggests that training was effective in improving the success orientation of the undergraduates. A closer look at the mean scores of the treatment and control groups shows that although the two groups were not too good in success orientation before the training intervention, at post-tests, the participants who received training in values clarification improved significantly better than their control group counterparts. The analysis presented in Tables 1 and 2 therefore led to the rejection of the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in post-test success orientation between the treatment and control controls. On the contrary, the findings showed that undergraduates who received training in values clarification significantly improved in the success orientation more than their control group counterparts.

**Hypothesis Two**: There is no significant gender difference in post-test success orientation of undergraduates exposed to values clarification and those in the control group. The two levels of experimental condition (treatment & control) and gender (male &female) were compared on their post-test success orientation using a 2 x 2 Analysis of Covariance.

**Table 4: Descriptive Data of the Effects of Experimental Condition and Gender on Post-Test Success Orientation of Undergraduates**

| Group | | Pretest | | N | Posttest | | Mean Difference |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Mean | SD | | Mean | SD | |
| Value Clarification Training | Male | 58.72 | 3.76 | 54 | 72.51 | 5.32 | 13.79 |
| | Female | 60.54 | 3.99 | 55 | 78.57 | 4.86 | 18.03 |
| | Total | 77.90 | 4.52 | 109 | 86.07 | 4.74 | 8.17 |
| Control | Male | 50.12 | 2.76 | 37 | 53.45 | 3.12 | 3.33 |
| | Female | 55.64 | 2.44 | 29 | 56.61 | 3.65 | 0.97 |
| | Total | 69.14 | 3.66 | 66 | 75.45 | 4.24 | 6.31 |
| Total | Male | 59.42 | 3.65 | 91 | 69.87 | 4.67 | 10.45 |
| | Female | 57.51 | 3.11 | 84 | 72.55 | 5.19 | 15.04 |
| | Total | 62.99 | 4.38 | 175 | 68.72 | 6.33 | 5.73 |

Evidence from Table 4 shows that the mean success of the female undergraduates was 57.51 with a standard deviation of 3.11 as against 59.42 (sd=3.65) obtained by the male counterparts before the treatment intervention. Table 4 also reveals that after the treatment intervention, the success orientation scores of both the male and female undergraduates improved greatly. For the male undergraduates in the control group, their mean scores slightly increased from 50.12 to 53.45 (Sd=3.12) while the female undergraduates in the same group also improved their group performance in success orientation marginally from 55.64 to 56.61 (Sd=15.13). The mean difference between pre and post-test performance for the female undergraduates in the control group was 0.97 as against 3.33 recorded by the male undergraduates in the same group. As for the male students who received training in values clarification, their average scores in success orientation greatly improved from 58.72 (Sd=3.76) obtained before the training to 72.51 after the intervention, thus yielding a gain score of 13.79. Similarly, the female undergraduates in the treatment group also improved on success orientation from 60.54 at pre-test to 78.57 at post-test thus yielding a mean difference of 18.03.

**Table 5: 2x 2 ANCOVA Tests of Effects of Experimental Condition and Gender on Post-test Success Orientation of Undergraduates**

| Source | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Squares | F |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Model | 125423.74 | 4 | 53224.79 | 229.45 |
| Intercept | 11568.37 | 1 | 11568.37 | 49.87 |
| Covariate | 34276.98 | 1 | 34276.98 | 147.76 |
| Experimental Conditions | 32476.53 | 1 | 32476.53 | 140.00 |
| Gender | 2.35 | 1 | 2.35 | 0.01 |
| Interaction (Experimental Cond / Gender) | 965.65 | 1 | 965.65 | 4.16 |
| Error | 38507.35 | 166 | 231.97 | |
| Total | 163931.09 | 175 | | |

Evidence from Table 5 shows that the effect of gender (F=0.01) was not statistically significant at 0.05 level while the interaction of gender and experimental condition ($F_{cal}$ = 4.16) was statistically significant at 0.05 level of significance with 1 and 166 degrees of freedom. The independent contributions of gender and the interaction term (Gender by experimental condition) to explain variance post-test success orientation were 0% and 1% respectively. Hypothesis two was therefore accepted. It was concluded that the post-test success orientation of male and female undergraduates in the treatment and control groups did not significantly differ.

**Discussion of Findings**
The findings revealed that there was a significant difference in post-test success orientation between undergraduates exposed to values clarification and those in the control group. The reason for the impact of values clarification could be explained by the fact that the training exposed the undergraduates to different value-rich arears. This finding was in line with Mosconi and Emmet

(2003) in their study on effects of a value clarification curriculum on High school student's definition of success.

Furthermore, the result of the analysis showed that there was no significant gender difference in post-test success orientation of undergraduates exposed to value clarification and those in the control group. This finding negates the work of Rokeach (2003) who found out those American men and women differ significantly in their rankings of 20 of the 36 items in the Rokeach Value Survey (RVS). The results suggested that men were more materialistic, hedonistic, achievement-oriented and intellectually oriented than women were. Women, on the other, were more oriented toward religious values, personal happiness, love self-respect and an absence of inner and interpersonal conflict than men

**Conclusion**
Based on the preceding discussion, the following conclusions were drawn:
1. The study has confirmed the efficacy of values clarification on success orientation of undergraduates.
2. There was no significant gender difference in success orientation of undergraduates.

**Recommendations**
Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are put forward for consideration:
1. University authorities should design and regularly expose undergraduates to values clarification training in order to enhance their success orientation.
2. Training in moral and academic values as confirmed by this study are efficacious means of improving success orientation of undergraduates. Based on this, frantic effort should be made to formally integrate these into the university programme.

**References**
Bello, R. M. (2008). Resolving value-conflicts: A focus for counselling for the Nigerian national values. *Journal of Educational Studies, 4*(1), 50-54.

Bonow, J. T. & Follette, W.C. (2009). Addressing client values in clinical behaviour analysis. T*he Behaviour Analyst. 32* (1), 69-84.

Cohen, G. L, Garcia, J., Apfel, N. & Master, A. (2006*). Reducing the racial achievement gap: A socio-psychological intervention science.* Google Scholar Crossref, Medline, ISI, 313, 1307-1310

Eagly, A. H. (2015). The science and politics of comparing men and women. *American Psychologist, 50*, 145-158.

Feather, N. T. (2004). Masculinity, femininity psychology and androgyny and the structure of values. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 47,* 604-620.

Fritz, M. R. & Guthrie, K. L. (2017). Value clarification: Essential for leadership learning. *Journal of Leadership Educations. 16* (2), 47-63

Kirschenbaum, H. (2013). *Value clarification in counselling and psychotherapy*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Kurucz, A. B. (2018). Multitasking: The success ethic in an era of diminished opportunities. *Youth and Society, 18(*3), 127-149.

Mackenzie, E. B., Fritz, M. G., & Guthrie , R. E. (2017). Group counselling of values clarification to increase middle school students' empathy. *Psychological Educativa.* 25, 16-174

Mosconi, J. & Emmet, J. (2003). Effects of a values clarification curriculum on High school students' definition of success. *Professional School Counselling, 7(*2), 68-78.

Rokeach, M. (2003). *The nature of human values*. New York: Free Press.

Vanderlinden, E. G & Kim, Q. R. (2010). Values clarification: A strategy for nurturing values. *International Journal of Education for Peace and Development. 3* (2), 35