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Moral Values and Self-Efficacy of Senior Secondary School Students in Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to determine the influence of sound orientation to moral values on the self- efficacy of senior secondary School Students in Cross River State, Nigeria, in terms of their social self-efficacy, academic self-efficacy, language self-efficacy and moral self- efficacy to wit. Ex-post facto design was employed in the study. The sample comprised of 1,543 students randomly drawn from 47 public schools in Cross River State. The questionnaire used for data collection was designed by the researchers and was titled Moral Value Orientation and Self-efficacy Questionnaire (MVOASEQ). To ascertain the validity of the instrument, four research experts in Educational Psychology and in measurement and evaluation were contacted while the reliability of the instrument was ascertained using Cronbach Alpha reliability method. One Way Analysis of Variance was used to analyze data collected from 1,529 subjects, tested at .05 level of significance. The results revealed a significant influence of moral value orientation on social self-efficacy, academic self-efficacy, language self-efficacy, moral self-efficacy and overall self-efficacy. Based on the findings, it was recommended that Parents, teachers, school administrators and curriculum planners, should as a matter of fact, emphasize moral education in the school curriculum, educate students on respect for elders and the dangers of protecting friends who commit crimes.

KEY WORDS: Moral Values, Self-Efficacy, Secondary School Students, Cross River State, Nigeria.

Introduction

Education is a process through which the individual grows into a functional member of the adult society, Education process is largely through school. In school, the child acquires skills necessary for adult role playing in the society.

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However, school education requires that each child should carry the whole of herself or himself into interaction with the forces at work in the school learning environment. As noted by Isangedighi (2011), learning results from the interaction between the learners' characteristics and the forces operating in the learning environment. By implication, the extent of learning the child can receive depends on the self he or she carries into the learning situation. The self in this context is the complexity of the diverse traits and characteristics the child is made of. To that extent the more qualitative the various characteristics of the child are, the more his or her potentiality for learning. One of the most important personal characteristics essential for learning is one's self-efficacy. In school, students manifest varying aspects of self-efficacy, some of such dimensions are social self-efficacy, academic self-efficacy, language self-efficacy and moral self-efficacy, which constitute the subject for discuss in this study.

Self-efficacy is a person's belief about his capability to produce a designated level of performance under a given life situation. It is one's self judgment about his ability to direct effectively his actions to achieve the set goals and succeed in completing a specific task (Bandura, 2012). Bandura (1977) cautions that though self-efficacy is domain specific, it is also task-and situation-specific.

Over the years as teachers, the researchers observed that most secondary school students in Cross River State display poor self-efficacy. Students feel helpless, unable to exercise control over life situations, and believe that any effort they make is futile so do not even attempt to cope. They lack the ability to organize and execute given task as they tend to shy away from responsibilities, and are convinced that nothing they do is important. In secondary schools today, most students do not believe in their ability to carry out academic activities without giving in to compromising pressures like cheating. Among secondary schools today, morality has been eroded and the show of confidence in their capabilities has left students seeking compromising ways to get their academic work done. When assignments are given, some students would, without making attempt, rule out every possibility of successfully accomplishing it. Since they have poor problem solving and cognitive abilities, they resort to copying assignments from classmates, they are seen cheating, involving in examination malpractice and other forms of self-help. Research has revealed that most students are unable to recover their sense of efficacy after failing, they avoid complex activities, show poor commitment to set goals, dwell on their personal shortcomings, and get frustrated easily when they encounter difficult assignment which predisposes them to stress and depression (Bekomson & Ntamu, 2019)

Bekomson and Mgban (2019) observed that students exhibit poor cognitive abilities, are poorly motivated and shun responsibilities they perceive as challenging which could be the reason for the poor self-efficacy they display. This worrisome situation left the researchers wondering that the poor level of self-efficacy displayed by secondary school students in Cross River State if not improved will portray the parents, teachers and the government in bad light. With all these laxities emanating from students' attitude towards their school activities and social relationship, one begins to wonder what becomes of the future of the younger generation since they are the leaders of tomorrow. Parents try as much as possible to send their children to school to not only learn how to read and write, but to equally develop skills that will build them physically, and prepare them for the challenges of life, and consequently boost their self-efficacy. The school management in conjunction with Parent Teachers' Association has made some improvements in the school curriculum by introducing activities which are meant to enhance students' self-efficacy like inter-schools, and inter-states sport competitions.

In addition to these efforts qualified teachers have been employed by government at all levels for purposes of better service delivery. Furthermore, counseling services as well as equipped libraries have been made available in schools in order to ensure that students get all round instructions that are likely to make them feel adequate and efficacious. Bekomson, Amalu, Mgban and Abang (2019) recounted the efforts of parents, who organize extra-lessons for children that would help equip them academically and make them feel capable to handle academic activities. All these efforts appear to yield little or no results. Based on the abovementioned, the researchers tried to verify if moral value orientation have influence on self-efficacy of students. Moral value orientation as used here is in context of one's moral adjustment towards the principle of right and wrong that is acceptable by an individual or a social group. Peoples' values and beliefs determine their behaviour and the concern in this study is on moral value orientation.

The researchers are of the view that the values a child is oriented towards could have a negative or positive influence on the child's self as he tries to adapt to the ever changing situations at school, home or the larger society. This is because values represent a way of life, thus serve to give direction to behaviour. Moral value orientation refers to the goals, ambitions, wants, ideals of life, variety of rules of the system, installation on various values of material and none material culture of society, that are typically relevant to the society. It is a complexity of generalized systems, value representation, the main channel of change of cultural values and the benefits and motives of practical behaviour of individuals. Individuals' actions in the society depends on the

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values they uphold (Issahanova, Jakupov & Kusherova, 2012, Bekomson, & Amalu, 2019).

Researchers see moral development as an aspect of socialization. They believe that people are not born with morals, they rather learn from family, environment and larger society, to enable them conform to beliefs and ideologies from culture and community. Moral values are therefore regarded as standards acceptable by individuals as correct, with a focus on what is right, wrong, or obligatory in certain situations. Morality is based on examining values than facts, and decisions made by individuals (Sias, Lambie, & Foster, 2006; Brooks & Inman, 2013). Stewart, Kennard, Lee, Huges, Mayes, and Emslie (2004), in a study of Asian adolescents found that in cultures where so much value is attached to obedience and respect for elders and authority, adolescents are less likely to pay attention to their self-efficacy beliefs as cultural norms reduces their ability to strive to succeed. Ambiguous norms, rules and high uncertainty avoidance will lead to a very weak or low self-efficacy belief. This apparently is because whatever values adolescents are oriented towards, influence their perception, action and judgment regarding issues that direct their development level (Iheanacho & Njoku, 2017).

Adolescents' values like helping others, honesty, tolerance, sex, vary with context (Santrock, 2005, Iheanacho & Asaquara, 2007). The value adolescents hold could shape their lives and the society in general. It is therefore important to adopt appropriate measures that will help them acquire values that are acceptable and capable of boosting their self-efficacy (Mahmud, 2005). Melissa (2014) conducted a research on moral development, counseling self-efficacy and counselor's-in training sexual orientation counseling competencies. The sample used for the study included 78 counseling graduate students found in United States. Multiple regression tests were used to examine perceived sexual orientation counseling competencies, with self-efficacy, and moral development. The results of the study revealed that there is a higher level self-efficacy and development of moral reasoning, which leads to higher self-efficacy. The study further explained that graduate students' moral development is a significant predictor of moral self-efficacy.

In another study conducted by Dillion, Worthington, Soth-McNeth and Schwartz (2008) to explore the relationship between some demographic variables, including sexual orientation and moral self-efficacy. They found that moral self-efficacy is highly associated with sexual orientation of participants. This result implies that the moral values of individuals could be responsible for their sexual preferences, depending on what they believe to be right or wrong. Gibbs (2003), supports the above claim when he stressed that individual's basic

values and sense of self regulate activities differently in their social interaction. Moral thoughts deal with individual reasoning to justify his or her moral decision. A person makes choices regarding his moral life, in line with his moral value system.

Kopur (1986) stressed that obedience, precedence to elders and sibling loyalty were the themes of normative interpretation. Children who are oriented towards moral values have a positive outlook when found outside their homes. Hoffman (1991) gave an elaborate view of moral orientation. His focus was on internal moral orientation and the role of empathy in moral motivation. To him, empathy is a driving force for external or societal-based norms to internalize or motivate an action, or moral orientation. External norms are internalized when a person is obligated to act in accordance with norms in the absence of punishment. He added that internalized empathy is the driving force for internal moral orientation. Bandura, Barbaranelli, Carprrara, and Pastorelli, (2001) in their study on multifaceted impact of self-efficacy beliefs on academic functioning, concluded that perceived self- regulatory efficacy is related to academic pursuits. Though, the adherent of moral value orientation, which they described as moral self- sanctions for detrimental conduct and behaviour, can hinder academic activities.

Oztas and Dilmac (2009) in their study on value judgments and perceived self-efficacy of biology teachers' candidate published in the April 2009 issue of Social Behaviour journal, analyzed the relationship between self-efficacy of biology teacher candidates. Their study aimed at demonstrating a correlation between humanitarian and universal values and perceived self-efficacy. The research group was a heterogeneous one consisting of 162 biology teachers studying at the Sulcuk University in 2007-2008 academic year. The group had 44 males and 118 females. The results of the study indicated that there was meaningful correlation between perceived self-efficacy and values. Ariail, Emler, and Abdolmohammadi, (2008) carried out a study on value preference and moral values of certified public accountants. The result of their study indicated that moral value orientation significantly influenced their value preferences. Their orientation towards moral values determined the values upheld.

In a similar vein, Arya, (1993), carried out an experimental study for the development of moral values in adolescents. The sample consisted of 70 boys and 70 girls of class seven as well as 70 boys and seventy girls of class nine, selected from two government schools in Churu district of Rajasthan. The study focused on finding out how oriented students were toward values like regard to authority, justice, avoidance of evil, sacrifice, honesty and simplicity.

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The result showed that moral value orientation for class 7 and 9 was not significantly different. He found out that students of class 9 were significantly more oriented to moral values than students of class 7. The result further showed that students, who were more mature, were more oriented to moral values than those who were younger.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODSS:

The researchers employed the ex-post facto design. The design is aimed at investigating cause and effect relationship between two variables by identifying consequences that exist and collecting data for possible causal factors. The research area for the study is Cross River State, Nigeria. It is one of the states in the South-South Geopolitical Zone of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The population of the study consists of all the 38,514 Senior Secondary I and II Students (18,697 males and 19,817 females) spread across the 246 government secondary schools in Cross River State under the State Secondary Education Board (S.S.E.B). The stratified random sampling technique was used for the study. The schools in the area were first stratified based on LGA and the researcher randomly selected 20% of the schools in each of the LGAs through hat and draw method (balloting). The sample used for this study consist of 1,529 students (663 males and 866 females) out of the initial 1,543 students randomly selected from 47 public secondary schools in Cross River State. A total of 802 students were selected from SS I classes and 741 students from SS II classes. The instrument used for data collection is a questionnaire titled Moral Value Orientation, and Self-efficacy Questionnaire (MVOSEQ). The questionnaire consists of three sections. Section A elicited from the respondent demographic information, such as age and gender. Section B is made up of six items designed to measure moral value orientation. Section C is designed with 24 items, with four sub sections and six items to measure each sub variable of self-efficacy such as social self-efficacy, academic self-efficacy, language self-efficacy and moral self-efficacy.

The scale is a four point Likert type. In order to ascertain its face validity, the topic, purpose of the study, research questions, research hypotheses and instrument were given to 4 professionals with specialty in Educational Psychology and Measurement and Evaluation from Faculty of Education To determine the reliability of the research instrument, a trial testing was done using fifty (50) students from three (3) secondary schools who did not take part in the actual study. Part B of the scale with six items to measure moral value orientation, using Cronbach alpha approach yielded coefficient of .72. Part C of the scale is organized in five sub-scales (social self-efficacy, physical self-efficacy, academic self-efficacy, language self-efficacy, moral self-efficacy and overall self-efficacy). Each sub-scale using Cronbach alpha approach yielded

coefficient ranging from .75 for academic self-efficacy to .84 for moral self-efficacy. The researchers personally visited each of the selected schools and administered copies of the questionnaire to the 1,543 subjects. The data collected were coded for analysis using a developed key, as a guide. It was observed that data collected from 1,529 subjects out of the initial sample of 1,543 selected for the study was used for the data analyses while 14 copies of the instrument which was not properly filled were discarded. One-way Analysis of Variance was used in testing the null hypothesis formulated to guide the study which was tested at .05 level of significance.

III. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

There is no significant influence of moral value orientation on self-efficacy of students. The independent variable in this hypothesis was moral value orientation categorized into three (low, moderate and high), while the dependent variable was self-efficacy with four sub-components, namely, social self-efficacy, academic self-efficacy, language self-efficacy, moral self-efficacy and overall self-efficacy. To test the the hypothesis, the One-way Analysis of Variance was used, and the results of the analyses were as presented in Tables 1 and 2.

TABLE 1

One-way Analysis of Variance of the influence of moral value orientation on self-efficacy

Variables	Source of variance	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F-ratio	p-level
Social self-efficacy	Between Groups	118.173	2	59.087	7.898*	.000
	Within Groups	11416.639	1526	7.481		
	Total	11534.812	1528			
Academic self-efficacy	Between Groups	589.044	2	294.522	36.656*	.000
	Within Groups	12261.144	1526	8.035		
	Total	12850.188	1528			
Language self-efficacy	Between Groups	938.731	2	469.365	37.277*	.000
	Within Groups	19214.249	1526	12.591		
	Total	20152.980	1528			

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Moral self- efficacy	Between Groups	1126.267	2	563.133	62.613*	.000
	Within Groups	13724.640	1526	8.994		
	Total	14850.906	1528			
Overall self- efficacy	Between Groups	7966.890	2	3983.445	46.858*	.000
	Within Groups	129726.654	1526	85.011		
	Total	137693.545	1528			

*Significant at .05 alpha level; $p < .05$.

The presentation of the result in Table 1 show that F-ratios of 7.898, 36.656, 37.277, 62.613 and 46.858 for social self-efficacy, academic self-efficacy, language self-efficacy, moral self-efficacy and overall self- efficacy respectively are each significant at 2 and 1526 degrees of freedom and .05 level of significance. This means that, the null hypothesis that moral value orientation does not significantly influence students' self-efficacy was rejected for all the various dimensions and overall self-efficacy.

The outcome of the results show that there is a significantly influence of moral value orientation on students' self-efficacy. Given the significant F-ratios, a post hoc analysis was conducted using the Fishers' Least Significant Difference (LSD) multiple comparison test to check for the source of the difference. The result is presented in Table 2. An examination of the result in Table 2 show that, the subjects who had low level of moral value orientation had significant lower mean score in social self-efficacy, when compared with those who had moderate level of social value orientation ($MD = -.34$; $p < .05$) and those who had high level of moral value orientation ($MD = -.73$; $p < .05$). Other pair wise comparison between the subjects who had moderate and high levels of moral value orientation, produced a mean difference that was also statistically significant ($MD = -.39$; $p < .05$).

For academic self-efficacy, the subjects who had low level of social value orientation, had significant lower mean when compared with those who had moderate level of moral value orientation ($MD = 1.31$; $p < .05$). However, they had a higher mean score in academic self-efficacy, than those who had high level of social value orientation but the mean difference was not statistically significant ($MD = .11$; $p > .05$).

TABLE 2

Fisher’s Least Significance Difference (LSD) multi-comparison test analysis of the influence of moral value orientation on self-efficacy

Dependent Variable	(I) Moral value orientation	(J) Moral value orientation	Mean Differences	p-level
Social self-efficacy	Low	Moderate	-.34*	.042
		High	-.73*	.000
	Moderate	Low	.34*	.042
		High	-.39*	.021
	High	Low	.73*	.000
		Moderate	.39*	.021
Academic self-efficacy	Low	Moderate	1.31*	.000
		High	.11	.569
	Moderate	Low	-1.301*	.000
		High	-1.20*	.000
	High	Low	-.11	.569
		Moderate	1.20*	.000
Language self-efficacy	Low	Moderate	.74*	.001
		High	-1.16*	.000
	Moderate	Low	-.74*	.001
		High	-1.90*	.000
	High	Low	1.16*	.000
		Moderate	1.90*	.000
Moral efficacy	Low	Moderate	.47*	.012
		High	-1.58*	.000
	Moderate	Low	-.47*	.012
		High	-2.04*	.000
	High	Low	1.58*	.000
		Moderate	2.04*	.000
Overall self-efficacy	Low	Moderate	2.17*	.000
		High	-3.36*	.000
	Moderate	Low	-2.17*	.000
		High	-5.53*	.000

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	High	Low	3.36*	.000
		Moderate	5.53*	.000

*The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Other pair wise comparison shows that the subjects who had moderate level of social value orientation had a significantly lower mean score in academic self-efficacy when compared with those who had high level of moral value orientation (MD=-1.20; $p<.05$).

Furthermore, for language self-efficacy, the results revealed that the subjects who had low level of moral value orientation had significantly higher mean score than those who have moderate level of moral value orientation (MD=.74; $p<.05$) but they had a significant lower mean when compared with those that had high level of moral value orientation (MD=-1.16; $p<.05$). Other pair wise comparison shows that the subjects who had moderate level of moral value orientation had a lower mean score in language self-efficacy when compared with those who had high level of moral value orientation but the mean difference was not statistically significant (MD=-1.90; $p<.05$).

Concerning moral self-efficacy, the result showed that the subjects who possessed low level of moral values had a significantly higher mean when they were compared with those who had moderate levels of moral values orientation (MD=.47; $p<.05$). But they had a significantly lower mean score when compared with those who had higher levels of moral values in their orientation (MD=-1.58; $p<.05$). Other pair wise comparison shows that the subjects who had moderate level of moral value orientation had a significant lower mean score when compared with those who have high level of moral value orientation (MD=-2.04; $p<.05$).

Finally and for overall self-efficacy, the result show that the subjects who had low level of moral value orientation had significant higher mean when compared with those who have moderate level of moral value orientation (MD=2.17; $p<.05$) but they had a significant lower mean when compared with those that had high level of moral value orientation (MD=-3.36; $p<.05$). Other pair wise comparison showed that the subjects who had moderate level of moral value orientation had a significant lower mean score when compared with those who had high level of moral value orientation (MD=-5.53; $p<.05$).

IV. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS:

The result of the study revealed that moral value orientation significantly influences all the dimensions of self-efficacy. The significant influence of moral value orientation on self-efficacy could be that moral values upheld by an individual, directs their actions regarding the way they interact and accommodate one another. It could also be that a morally oriented individual is conscious of the rights and wrongs of the society, and so strives hard to live in a manner that will not jeopardize the interest of others. This disposition helps to develop their ability to live in harmony, and socialize positively, since moral behaviours are learned. The findings of Gian and Patrizia (2007) supports the present study when they revealed self-transcendence values which are moral values, have a direct effect on the management of interpersonal relationships. Gibbs (2003) supports the present findings by revealing a significant influence of moral value orientation on social interaction.

The significant influence of moral value orientation on self-efficacy could be due to its influence on students' value preferences. This may be that students who are morally oriented understand the implication of not having to succeed academically, and how failure leads to involvement in activities that are not morally acceptable. This could be the driving force for academic success and consequently high academic self-efficacy. Carprana (1996) contradicts the present finding in his study that revealed that moral value orientation hinders academic activities. Stewart *et al.*, (2004) contradicts the present study by reporting that cultural value orientation reduces academic self-efficacy.

The significant influence of value orientation in the present study could stem from the facts that as parents give their children moral orientation from the home, they help them learn words and construct sentences that could go a long way into shaping their language pattern, and develop abilities that will promote language self-efficacy. For instance, parents teach their children to say good morning, thank you, I am sorry etc. these builds up into language development. And a child who has a well-developed language will, definitely be efficacious about it. The present study results could be because when students are morally oriented, their lives are shaped by the values they learn, They develop consciousness about moral values learnt. The findings of this study slightly corresponds with the findings of Melisa (2014) who revealed that the development of moral reasoning leads to higher moral self-efficacy

Conclusion and Recommendation

The main thrust of this study was to find out the influence of moral value orientation on self-efficacy among SS I and II secondary school students in Cross River State. The study was to find out if moral value orientation has any

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influence on self-efficacy with reference to social self-efficacy, academic self-efficacy, language self-efficacy and moral self-efficacy. To achieve the aim of the study, one hypothesis was formulated to guide the study.

Hypothesis: Moral value orientation does not significantly influence self-efficacy of students. The results revealed that moral value orientation significantly influenced social self-efficacy, academic self-efficacy, language self-efficacy, moral self-efficacy and overall self-efficacy. It was therefore concluded that moral value orientation significantly influence social self-efficacy, academic self-efficacy, language self-efficacy and moral self-efficacy.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, it was recommended that Parents, teachers, school administrators and curriculum planners should as a matter of fact introduce moral education in the school curriculum, educate students on respect for elders and the dangers of protecting friends who commit crimes. It was also recommended that children should be given a reorientation on the dangers of examination malpractice, bearing in mind the consequences it might bring to the students and the education sector of a nation.

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