Value Re-Orientation: A Strategy for Combating Moral Decadence among Students of Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria

Ibrahim Barakat B. (Mrs)
Education Department
Kwara State College Of Education (Technical), Lafiagi, Kwara State Nigeria
Corresponding Author: Ibrahim Barakat B

Abstract: Value re-orientation and reviving the social life of our youth in tertiary institution through counselling and moral education is very important at this time that our nation is in a state of series of insurgencies. The decay in the society has affected the values and moral character of our youths in tertiary institutions. This has manifested in many social vices such as cultism, thuggery, examination malpractices among others. This paper focused on value re-orientation as strategy for combating moral decadence among students of tertiary institutions in Kwara State. Four research questions were raised to guide the conduct of the study. The study is a survey research and a sample of 600 students randomly selected from four state owned tertiary institutions across Kwara State was selected. Data collected through questionnaire was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Findings revealed that the type of moral decadence that is mostly exhibited among tertiary institutions are lack of respect for constituted authorities, examination malpractice, indecent dressing amongst others. These moral decadence are the result of lapses from parents, peer influence and societal influence. The effect of moral decadence and strategies for combating it were identified. The study was concluded by recommending among others that counselling, moral education and parents' constant visitation to their children/wards in their institution be encouraged to help in curbing social vices in our society.

I. INTRODUCTION

Values are basic beliefs and attitude in a society whether of individuals or groups which are considered worthwhile and serve as a guide to choices and behaviours in our daily life. As such every person, irrespective of age, colour, sex or social standing is subject to the dictates of the moral principles. Obasola (2015) stated that morality serves a holistic function as it serves as the bedrock upon which the edifice of a truly righteous and egalitarian society rests. Enu and Esu (2011) defined values as ideals that guide individual's personal conduct, interaction with others and involvement in one's career.

Values are deep seated beliefs that influence people's actions and behaviours. It is therefore important that every individual, group and entire nation must have core values which serve as the driving engines for growth and development (NOA, 2009)

Morals, according to Ilori (1994) is defined as the custom or way of life of a particular group or society. Samuel (2011) defined morality as the principles concerning right and wrong or good or bad behaviour. It can further be seen as the degree to which something is right or wrong, good or bad, according to the designed principles.

Education is a driver of growth and national development. A sound system of education is critical to the transformation of a country's political, sociological and economical status. The role of tertiary institutions in realizing this objective is very crucial. Tertiary institutions in Nigeria comprise the Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education. These tertiary institutions serve as centres of excellence in teaching, research and community service. The process of education involves imparting knowledge of goods and bad, right and wrong into the learners.

Tertiary education is seen as pedagogical instrument designed to enable an individual acquire highest intellectual, moral and aesthetic capabilities (Kayode, Samuel & Issa 2014). The meaningful exposure of an individual to education as a process and as an end in itself frees the mind from corruption. Any society that pays lip service to its education is doom to fail. The third world countries recognized education as the most veritable instrument for transformation and attitudinal change, and as a result invested heavily in the educational system. Singapore was a Third World country but their investment in educating their people have lifted them from that sociological nomenclature to become model for Africa and other world countries. They invested heavily in human development which is vital for economic development (Kayode, Samuel & Issa 2014).

Corruption is a behaviour that deviates from ethics, morality, tradition, laws and civic rules of any individual or groups no matter their status in the society. For Nigeria to achieve conducive and enabling environment in our society, our ethic standards and morality of youths must be revisited since they constitute the larger percentage of tertiary institution attendants.

Youths are important groups of people in every society. The success of any nation or otherwise depends on the quality of her youths because they are future leaders of every nation whose excellent behaviour must have great impact in the future leadership of the nation (Mbachu & Okafor, 2015). Onah (2007) stated that every average person aspires to excel in life, that many youths desire to actualize their dreams of greater height in life, but not all actually do so for some reasons like drug addiction, ignorance, examination malpractices, cultism, thuggery, forgery, sexual abuse and failure to recognize this God given potential In order to overcome corruption, indiscipline and other social vices, the character of Nigerian youths must be modified and remoulded through counselling.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Nigeria society is faced with problem of identification of value. Youths have lost value for duty and hard work is no longer regarded as value. Organized crime becomes the biggest business of the day. Crime is increasing with such rapidity that we are now close to open rebellion and anarchy. This is the situation in which we have found ourselves and the average Nigerian cannot sleep with his two eyes closed for fear of the terrorists, armed robbers, and kidnappers. There is the need for value re-orientation through counselling to urgently nip these problems in the bud for the nation to be able to rise again.

This paper focused on value re-orientation and strategies for combating moral decadence among students of tertiary institutions in Kwara State. The paper would be of immense benefit to tertiary institutions administrators, students, youths, parents and the government of the country.

Research Questions
The study provides answers to four questions:
1.   What are the common types of moral decadence found in Nigerian tertiary institutions
2.   What are the causes of moral decadence in Nigerian tertiary institutions
3.   What are the effects of moral decadence in Nigerian tertiary institutions
4.   What measures can be adopted in combating moral decadence in Nigerian tertiary institutions

III. METHODOLOGY

The study is a descriptive survey research and the population of the study comprised all students of tertiary institutions in Kwara State. A sample of 600 students were selected through random sampling technique from four state owned tertiary institutions in Kwara. These institutions were selected across the three senatorial districts in Kwara State. The tertiary institutions are: Kwara State University Malete, Kwara State Polytechnic Ilorin, Kwara State College of Education Oro and Kwara State College of Education (Technical) Lafiagi.

IV. INSTRUMENTATION

The questionnaire was the only instrument used for obtaining data for this study. The Questionnaire was sub-divided into five sections. Section A focused on demographic variables of respondents. Section B contained items to answer research question one, Section C focused on causes of moral decadence, Section D focused on effects of moral decadence while the last section focused on measures that can be adopted to combat the menace of moral decadence. The questionnaire was a self designed questionnaire structured on a four point Likert type scale of strongly agree (4 points), agree (3 points), disagree (2 points) and strongly disagree (1 point).

V. VALIDATION OF THE INSTRUMENT

The instrument was validated by three experts in the department of Counsellor Education of University of Ilorin. Useful suggestions were made which helped in ensuring the validity of the instrument. The instrument was administered to thirty students whose institutions were not part of the ones used for the research study through test re-test method at interval of four weeks. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to analyze the two scores obtained from the pilot study and a coefficient of 0.71 was obtained making the instrument reliable for this study. The instrument was administered by the researcher and three research assistants. We were able to retrieve the 600 questionnaire from the respondents.

VI. METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

The data obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The score highest possible score obtainable on each item is 4 while the lowest score is 1. Since the rating is 4,3,2,1 thus, the average mean score for each item on the scale is 2.5, that is, (4+3+2+1 = 10), (10/4 = 2.5) therefore the mean score of 2.5 and above in section B indicates that the behaviour stated is among the moral decadence common and exhibited among students in Nigerian tertiary institutions. Also, the mean score of 2.5 and above in section C indicates the acceptance of highlighted facts under causes of moral decadence while the mean score of 2.5 and above in section D indicates the acceptance of highlighted effects of moral decadence in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

Results

The result of the study is shown in tables below:

Research Question 1: What are the common types of moral decadence found in Nigerian tertiary institutions?

Table 1: Mean and Rank Order of Respondents' Score on types of moral decadence

S/N	Types of moral decadence	Mean	Rank
1	Lack of respect for constituted authority	3.67	1st
2	Truancy	3.60	2nd
3	Examination malpractices	3.55	3rd
4	Sexual harassment	3.36	4th
5	Indecent dressing	3.34	5th
6	Reckless display of wealth	3.32	6th
7	Bribing lecturers with money and gifts for mark	3.30	7th
8	Searching for examination questions ('expo')	3.26	8th
9	Illegal payment to secure admission	3.24	9th
10	Thuggery	3.20	10th
11.	Plagiarizing other students' projects	3.10	11th
12.	Stealing	2.98	12th
13.	Bullying	2.96	13th
14.	Arrogance	2.94	14th
15.	Alcoholism	2.92	15th
16	Drug Abuse	2.88	16th
17	Fetitious practice	2.70	17th
18	Forgery	2.60	18th
19.	Rape	2.57	19th
20.	Illegal possession of dangerous weapons	2.55	20th

Table 1 presents the respondents' mean score on moral decadence in tertiary institutions. From the table, it would be observed that lack of respect for constituted authority ranked 1st with a mean score of 3.67, followed by truancy which ranked 2nd and examination malpractices ranked 3rd on the list.

Research Question 2: What are the causes of moral decadence in Nigerian tertiary institutions?

Table 2: Causes of moral decadence in Nigerian tertiary institution

S/N	Causes of moral decadence	Mean	Rank
1.	Parental neglect of responsibility	3.70	1st
2.	Peer influence	3.66	2nd
3.	Desire to get certificate without working hard	3.60	3rd
4.	Societal influence	3.55	4th
5.	Encouragement of moral decadence by some members of academic environment	3.50	5th
6.	Excessive Freedom	3.40	6th

Table 2 reveals that all items highlighted by the researcher met the required average mean score of 2.5. This indicates that all the items stated are some of the causes of moral decadence in Nigerian tertiary institutions. However, parental neglect of responsibility ranked highest of all the causes with a mean score of 3.70 followed by peer influence with a mean score of 3.66 while desire to get certificate without working hard ranked 3rd with a mean score of 3.60.

Research Question 3: What are the effects of moral decadence in Nigerian tertiary institutions?

Table 3: Effects of moral decadence

S/N	Effects of moral decadence	Mean	Rank
1.	Cultism	3.44	1st
2.	Drug addiction	3.40	2nd
3.	Loss of good moral values	3.35	3rd
4.	Bad future leaders	3.30	4th
5.	Unwanted pregnancy	2.98	5th
6.	Societal Unrest	2.88	6th
7.	Riots on campuses	2.80	7th

The table above shows that all the items ranked above the midpoint indicating that the items represents effects of moral decadence in our tertiary institutions. Nevertheless, cultism ranked highest with a mean score of 3.44 followed by drug addiction with a mean score of 3.40 while loss of good moral values ranked 3rd with a mean score of 3.35

Research Question 4: What measures can be adopted in combating moral decadence in Nigerian tertiary institutions?

Table 4: Combating moral decadence in Nigerian tertiary institutions

S/N	Measures for combating moral decadence	Mean	Rank
1.	Counselling	3.44	1st
2.	Emphasis on moral education	3.30	2nd
3.	Promoting moral values through laws, policies and regulations	2.98	3rd
4.	Strict penalty for offenders	2.88	4th
5.	Constant visitation by the students' parents	2.86	5th
6.	Emphasis on skill demonstration rather than certificates only	2.75	6th

Table 4 shows that all the items are the measures that can be adopted by the parents, government and the administrators in combating the menace of moral decadence in our tertiary institutions in Nigeria. It is worth noting that counselling ranked highest with a mean score of 3.44 followed by emphasis on moral education with a mean score of 3.30 while promoting moral values through laws, policies and regulations ranked 3rd with a mean score of 2.98

VII. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS
This study focused on value re-orientation among students of tertiary institutions in Kwara State. From the findings all the respondents agreed that the moral decadence mentioned in table 1 exist and exhibited in our tertiary institutions. This is in line with the assertion of Abogunrin 1994 that kidnapping, militancy, stealing among other atrocities are rampant among youth in Nigeria.

The findings of research question two showed that causes of moral decadence in Nigerian tertiary institutions are parental neglect of responsibility, peer influence, societal influence, desire to get certificate without working hard and excessive freedom. This is in line with the work of Solomon (2014) that lack of parental care, school environment role of lecturers and societal influence causes anti-social behaviours in our campuses. Also Olagunju (2012) noted that obsession with materialism, compulsion for a short cut to affluence and approbation of ill gotten wealth by the general public were among the reasons for moral decadence among youths in Nigeria. Also, Abogunrin (2003) and Oladunjoye (2004) were of the view that one of the parameter of good life in Nigeria is ostentatious living and affluence, stressing that the quest for wealth is on the increase.

Research question three showed that cultism, loss of good moral values, drug addiction, social unrest and unwanted pregnancy are effects of moral decadence among youth in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The finding corroborates that of Asiyai (2015) that lack of good moral values, production of poor graduates and poor academic standards are effect of corruption and moral decadence in Nigerian universities.

Research question four shows that the measures that can be used to combat moral decadence by the school administrators, parent and the government are emphasis on moral education, promoting moral values through laws and policies, strict penalty for offenders and emphasizing practical demonstration of skills rather than certificate only. The National Policy on Education (NPE), (2004) specified value system acceptable in the country and should therefore be inculcated in the learners through the quality of educational instructions. These include moral/spiritual values, dignity of human person, self-reliance and communal responsibility, amongst others. It particularly tasks tertiary institutions to develop and inculcate proper values in the students. Also Solomon (2014) expressed that our tertiary educational institutions graduates are awarded certificates on the basis of character and learning.

VIII.   CONCLUSION

Value system has been seriously eroded and infected with gross immorality thereby rendering most of our students unworthy to be looked forward to as future leaders of this country. The rate of increase in anti-social behaviours in our educational institutions is alarming. The negative trend in the social vices among students of higher institutions in Nigeria might be responsible for the general decline in the quality of the graduates being turned out by these institutions. In this regard, there is the urgent need for value re-orientation and re-focusing on our moral values with the view to actualizing our potentials and harnessing our resources for a better nation.

IX. RECOMMENDATIONS

To effectively combat moral decadence among tertiary institution students in Kwara State and the nation at large, the following suggestions are recommended:

1. Counselling is an integral part of balanced education, tertiary institutions in the country should establish a counselling centre and employ qualified counsellors who will be able to assist the students in modifying their behaviour.
2. Parents should be visiting their children in the school unannounced to be able to checkmate any unacceptable behaviour discovered.
3. Moral education should be inculcated in the curriculum of all tertiary institutions of the federation.
4. Promulgating laws that will be in line with the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, (1999) that advocated for dignity of labour, discipline, integrity, religious tolerance and self- reliance.
5. Justice delayed is justice denied, offenders of any crime must be quickly and adequately punished in line with the law of Federal Republic of Nigeria to serve as deterrent to others.
6. Government should place skill demonstration above certificate to encourage hard work so that job would not be secured without adequate demonstration of skills.

REFERENCES

[1]. Abogunrin, S. O. (1994). Religion, crime and national survival. Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies. 31 (1-2).
[2]. Abogunrin, S. O. (2003). Religion and ethics in Nigeria. Ibadan: Daystar Press
[3]. Asiyai, R. I., (2015). School administrators strategies for combating corruption in universities in Nigeria. Journal of Education and learning. 4 (1).
[4]. Enu, D. B. & Esu, A. E. (2011). Re-engineering values education in Nigeria chools as catalyst for National Development. International Education Studies 4 (1), 147-153.
[5]. Esu, A. E. (2009). Education for Humanistic values. Education for value Lagos: CIBN Press limited.
[6]. Ilori, J. A. (1994). Moral Philosophy in African Context. Zaria: Ahmadu Bello University Press.
[7]. Kayode, A., Samuel, A. and Isa, M. (2014). Leadership crisis in Nigeria: The urgent need for moral education and value re-orientation. Public   Administration Research. 3 (1)
[8]. Mbachu, O. O. & Okafor, T. A. (2015). Crisis and problems in education in Nigeria. Ibadan: Spectrum books
[9]. National Orientation Agency (2009). A survey of Nigeria Core Values. Ibadan: Safari Books Limited.
[10]. National Policy on Education, (2004). Federal Republic of Nigeria, Lagos: NERDC Press.
[11]. Obasola, K. E. (2015). A critical analysis of the role of moral values as a catalyst For social and political development among people in Nigeria. Asia Pacific journal of muldisciplinary research, 3 (1) 1-8.
[12]. Oladunjoye, K. (2004). Relativism and ethics. Ibadan: Daystar Press
[13]. Olagunju, O. K. (2012). Critical issues for social development in Nigeria. Journal of research and development. 1 (2) 47-53.
[14]. Onah, F. E. (2012). The teacher as a leader and nation builder. Journal of Arts and Social Sciences 2 (3).
[15]. Samuel, A. (2011). Moral education as a tool for global change: Issues and challenges. Journal of Association of Nigerian Educators 6 (1), 183 – 188
[16]. Solomon, J. A. (2014). The challenges of value re-orientation in Nigeria's tertiary education system. Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences 5 (14), 221-227