



IMPLEMENTATION OF VALUE-BASED EDUCATION FOR YOUTH EMPOWERMENT IN DELTA STATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS: AN EMPIRICAL EXAMINATION OF CHALLENGES AND IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES



Egwu, Joyce Uche, Ph.D

email: rkacademy2012@gmail.com

Department of Educational Foundations

Faculty of Education, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University,

Igbariam campus, Anambra state

Abstract

This study examined the implementation of value-based education for youth empowerment in Delta State secondary schools, with focus on the challenges and improvement strategies. The employed a descriptive survey design, which is suitable for collecting data on the current state of value-based education implementation, the challenges faced, and potential improvement strategies in Delta State secondary schools. As such three research questions guided the study. The population for this study consisted of about 12, 943 educators comprising all secondary school principals (488), vice principals (976) and (11,479) teachers involved in value-based education programmes across the public secondary schools in Delta State. A stratified random sampling technique was used to select 375 respondents to ensure representation from various staff (that is; principals, vice principals and teachers) in different geographical zones within Delta State. Data were collected using a 4-point scale self-structured questionnaire titled: "Implementation of Value-Based Education for Youth Empowerment: Challenges and Improvement Strategies Questionnaire (IVBEYECISQ)". The questionnaire was face and content validated by three experts from the Faculty of Education, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam, Anambra State. A pilot test was conducted on 30 educators in a neighboring State, that is, Edo State, with similar characteristics to Delta State. The reliability of the instrument was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, with an acceptable reliability level set at 0.67, 0.81 and 0.70 for the three clusters respectively; which were later summed up and divided to yield an overall reliability value of 0.73, indicating a high level of internal consistency. Data collected were quantitatively analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, means statistics rated at 2.50 and standard deviation to answer the research questions. Findings of the study indicated among others that the extent of implementation of value-based education programmes for youth empowerment in secondary schools in Delta State was to a low extent, also indicating a moderate level of implementation. Hence, the extent of implementation of value-based themes such as honesty, discipline, responsibility, leadership and civic duties into curricular subjects like Civic Education, Social Studies, and Christian/Moral Education for youth empowerment was to a low extent. The study recommended among others that the Delta State Government in collaboration with the Post Primary Education Board (PPEB) and school management should ensure effective implementation of value-based education programmes for youth empowerment in secondary schools in Delta State to a high extent through effective inclusion and integration of value-based education themes and contents in the curriculum, adequate funding and establishment of VBE programmes in schools through clubs, societies and leadership training programmes.

Keywords: Implementation, Value-Based, Education, Youth empowerment, Challenges, Improvement, Strategies

Introduction

The prevailing incidences in youth involvement in criminal activities and crimes in the Nigerian society is a wakeup call for effective implementation of Value-based education (VBE) programmes in

secondary schools' youth empowerment throughout the federation. Value-based education (VBE) is an educational approach that emphasizes the development of moral values, social responsibility and ethical principles alongside academic knowledge. It can be referred to as the educational processes which aims at inculcating in secondary students sound moral values, ethics, social responsibility and emotional development alongside academic learning (Lovat, Toomey & Clement, 2020). Value-based education (VBE) emphasizes holistic education, focusing on character building and nurturing responsible citizens who can contribute positively to society. It has been defined as a process that integrates core ethical and social values into the curriculum and school culture (Narvaez & Lapsley, 2023). VBE is therefore, widely regarded as essential for addressing contemporary social challenges such as corruption, intolerance, and social unrest, particularly among youth (UNESCO, 2021). In the context of secondary education, VBE sought to empower youth by equipping them not only with cognitive skills but also with the attitudes, behaviours and competencies necessary to contribute meaningfully to society. Youth empowerment through value-based education is critical for national development, as it fosters active citizenship, ethical leadership and social cohesion (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2021).

Youth empowerment refers to the process by which young people gain the skills, confidence, and agency to influence their own lives and contribute to their communities positively (Zimmerman, 2022). Youth empowerment involves enabling young people to develop the skills, confidence, and autonomy necessary to make informed decisions and participate actively in their communities (Zimmerman, 2022). Education is thus, a primary vehicle for youth empowerment, as it not only imparts knowledge but also fosters critical thinking, self-efficacy and civic engagement (Lundy & Kilkelly, 2020). Value-based education programmes play a crucial role in this process by embedding principles such as respect, responsibility and leadership into the curriculum, which ultimately, promotes sustainable national development (Adebayo, 2022). In Delta State, Nigeria, secondary schools serve as foundational platforms for the holistic development of adolescents. The implementation of value-based education in these schools is particularly, vital to address issues such as moral decadence, unemployment and social unrest among the youths (Okafor, 2022). Fullan (2022) observed that the implementation of VBE in secondary schools typically involves curriculum integration, teacher training, school culture development, and community involvement (Fullan, 2022). Studies have equally shown that when effectively implemented, VBE can lead to improved student behaviour, academic achievement and social cohesion (Brown & Lee, 2023). However, the success of such programmes largely depends on contextual factors such as leadership commitment, resource availability, and cultural acceptance (Okafor, 2022). In Nigeria, including Delta State, the integration of VBE into secondary education has been recognized as vital for addressing moral decline and youth disempowerment (Adebayo & Akinbode, 2023). However, practical implementation often falls short due to systemic challenges. Despite the recognized importance of VBE, empirical evidence suggests that its implementation faces numerous challenges, including inadequate teacher training, limited resources, and socio-cultural factors that undermine the integration of values into the school curriculum (Adebayo & Akinbode, 2023). Several empirical studies have identified key obstacles affecting VBE implementation in Nigerian secondary schools and they include: inadequate teacher preparation, resource constraints, socio-cultural barriers, and policy and administrative gaps. Many teachers lack the necessary training to effectively deliver value-based curricula, limiting their ability to facilitate moral and civic education (Ogunyemi & Adeyemi, 2021). Schools often face shortages of teaching materials, funds, and infrastructural support needed to sustain VBE programmes (Akinwumi, 2022). Deeply ingrained cultural practices and societal attitudes can conflict with the values promoted in VBE, causing resistance among students, parents, and communities (Eze & Nwafor, 2023). Lack of clear policies, guidelines, and monitoring frameworks hampers consistent and effective implementation (Fullan, 2022; UNESCO, 2021). These challenges reduce the potential impact of VBE on youth empowerment and contribute to continued social issues such as youth unemployment, crime, and civic disengagement (Okafor, 2022). Besides, implementation challenges refer to the obstacles and barriers schools encounter in applying VBE policies and practices effectively (Fullan, 2022).

To overcome these challenges, most scholars suggest several improvement strategies which needs to be deployed, as they include: comprehensive teacher training, stakeholder engagement, policy development and enforcement, and adequate resource mobilization. Explaining further, continuous professional development focused on ethical pedagogy and value education methodologies can enhance teacher effectiveness (Ogunyemi&Adeyemi, 2021). Involving parents, community leaders, and local organizations in the design and delivery of VBE fosters cultural relevance and support (Lundy & Kilkelly, 2020). Clear, actionable policies with mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation ensure accountability and sustainability (Fullan, 2022). Allocating adequate funds, resources and materials and leveraging technology can facilitate the teaching and learning of values (Akinwumi, 2022). Moreover, promoting a school culture that models and rewards ethical behaviour encourages students to internalize and practice values beyond the classroom (Brown & Lee, 2023). The thrust of this study is threefold: first, to assess the extent to which value-based education is implemented in Delta State secondary schools as a tool for youth empowerment; second, to identify the challenges schools face in this endeavour; and third, to propose practical strategies that can improve the effectiveness of VBE in empowering the youth. Addressing these objectives is essential for enhancing educational outcomes and fostering sustainable development in the region. Given the increasing attention on the role of education in national development, understanding how value-based education can be effectively implemented to empower youth in Delta State is timely and critical. This study is therefore, anchored in the Empowerment Theory (Zimmerman, 2022), which emphasizes the process by which individuals gain control over their lives through access to resources, participation in decision-making, and development of competencies. Applying this theory to education highlights the role of value-based curricula as mechanisms that empower youth by fostering self-efficacy and social responsibility. The literature reviewed in this background showcases that value-based education is integral to youth empowerment and sustainable national development. Nonetheless, its implementation in Delta State secondary schools is fraught with challenges that limit its effectiveness. Addressing these challenges through targeted strategies such as teacher training, stakeholder involvement, policy support, and resource allocation is crucial. Some previous empirical studies such as those of Adebayo and Akinbode (2023), Lundy and Kilkelly (2020), Ogunyemi and Adeyemi's (2021), and UNESCO (2021), have been conducted in the areas of values but these studies have their own mix, findings and shortcomings, therefore, warranting this present study. This study sought to provide empirical evidence on these issues within the Delta State context to inform policy and practice. The findings from this study are expected to inform policymakers, educators and stakeholders on practical steps to overcome challenges and enhance the quality and impact of value-based education.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the critical role of value-based education (VBE) in fostering youth empowerment and sustainable development, its effective implementation in secondary schools in Delta State remains questionable. Reports and observations from previous studies indicate that many secondary schools struggle to integrate core values consistently into their curricula and school cultures, resulting in limited impact on students' moral development and civic responsibility (Adebayo & Akinbode, 2023; Okafor, 2022). Challenges such as inadequate teacher training, lack of resources, insufficient policy support, and socio-cultural barriers have been cited as impediments to the successful delivery of value-based education programmes (Fullan, 2022; UNESCO, 2021). This situation seems to be similar with Delta State in which the present study sought to investigate. Moreover, while there is growing discourse on the importance of VBE globally, empirical studies specifically examining the challenges and practical strategies to improve its implementation for youth empowerment within the context of Delta State's secondary education system are scarce. This lack of context-specific research leaves educational policymakers and school administrators with limited evidence-based guidance to address the hurdles effectively and enhance programme outcomes. Therefore, this study sought to empirically examine the extent of VBE implementation in Delta State secondary schools, identify the challenges hindering its success, and explore viable improvement strategies that can empower the youth more effectively

through education. Although previous studies have explored value-based education and youth empowerment broadly, there is a significant gap in empirical research focusing on the specific challenges and improvement strategies within Delta State's secondary schools. Most existing studies seem to be theoretical or generalized at the national level, lacking the contextualized data needed to inform tailored interventions in this area of study. This study aims to fill this gap by providing localized, evidence-based insights that can support effective policy formulation and practical implementation of value-based education for youth empowerment in Delta State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the implementation of value-based education for youth empowerment in Delta State secondary schools, with focus on the challenges and improvement strategies.

1. To examine the current level of implementation of value-based education programmes aimed at youth empowerment in secondary schools across Delta State.
2. To identify the major challenges hindering the effective implementation of value-based education programmes necessary for youth empowerment in Delta State secondary schools.
3. To propose practical strategies for improving the effective implementation of value-based education to enhance youth empowerment in Delta State secondary schools.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What is the extent of implementation of value-based education programmes for youth empowerment in secondary schools in Delta State?
2. What are the major challenges hindering the effective implementation of value-based education programmes necessary for youth empowerment in Delta State secondary schools?
3. What improvement strategies can be adopted for improving the effective implementation of value-based education to enhance youth empowerment in Delta State secondary schools?

Methods

This study employed a descriptive survey design, which is suitable for collecting data on the current state of value-based education implementation, the challenges faced, and potential improvement strategies in Delta State secondary schools. The survey design allows for gathering information from a large population to describe the characteristics, opinions, and behaviours relevant to the study objectives (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The population for this study consisted of all secondary school principals (488), vice principals (976) and (11,479) teachers involved in value-based education programmes across the public secondary schools in Delta State. According to the Delta State Post Primary Education Board (2024), there are approximately 488 secondary schools in the State, with an estimated staff population of about 12,943 educators directly involved in instructional delivery. A stratified random sampling technique was used to select 375 respondents to ensure representation from various staff (that is; principals, vice principals and teachers) in different geographical zones within Delta State. The sample size was determined using Cochran's formula for sample size calculation for large populations (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970), which for this study is approximately 375 respondents (including principals, vice principals and teachers). Data was collected using a self-structured questionnaire titled: "Implementation of Value-Based Education for Youth Empowerment: Challenges and Improvement Strategies Questionnaire (IVBEYECISQ)" and developed by the researcher based on the study objectives and literature review. The questionnaire had four sections which includes: section A having the demographic information or respondents to assess the respondents' role or position, years of experience and school location; section B had information relating to the extent of implementation of value-based education; while, section C had information concerning the challenges faced in implementing VBE; and section D: suggested improvement strategies. The questionnaire items were measured using a 4-point scale of: Very High Extent (VHE) – 4 points, High Extent (HE) – 3 points,

Low Extent (VLE) – 2 points, and Very Low Extent (VLE)– 1 point, used to answer only research question 1. While, 4-point scale of: Strongly Agree – 4 points, Agree – 3 points, Disagree – 2 points, and Strongly Disagree – 1 point, were used to answer research questions 2 and 3. The questionnaire was face and content validated by three experts from the Faculty of Education, Chukwuemeka Odimegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam, Anambra State. Two of the experts majored in Educational Management; and the other was a Measurement and Evaluation expert. Their feedbacks were used to refine and correct the instrument before its final distribution among the respondents. A pilot test was conducted on 30 educators in a neighboring State, that is, Edo State, with similar characteristics to Delta State. The reliability of the instrument was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, with an acceptable reliability level set at 0.67, 0.81 and 0.70 for the three clusters respectively; which were later summed up and divided to yield an overall reliability value of 0.73, indicating a high level of internal consistency (Gliem & Gliem, 2003). Approval was obtained from relevant educational authorities in Delta State including the principals before data collection. The researcher administered the questionnaire in person and with the assistance of three research assistants who had representatives from the different public secondary schools sampled in the study for distribution of the questionnaire to the respondents. A direct contact and hand delivery process was adopted in administering the questionnaire to the respondents who filled them immediately on the spot. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, assured of confidentiality, and their consent were obtained before filling the questionnaire. It took both the researcher and research assistants a period of two weeks to distribute and collect the questionnaire for data analysis. Data collected were quantitatively analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, means and standard deviations to answer the research questions. Mean scores were interpreted to determine the extent of implementation, key challenges and preferred improvement strategies. However, any item with a mean score of 2.50 and above was considered as agree or high extent, while any item below 2.50 was considered as disagree or low extent. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 was also used for data analysis.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the extent of implementation of value-based education programmes for youth empowerment in secondary schools in Delta State?

Table 1: Mean Scores and SD of Respondents concerning the Extent of Implementation of Value-Based Education Programmes for Youth Empowerment in Secondary Schools in Delta State

N = 375 Respondents (that is; principals, vice principals and teachers)

S/N	Please show your agreement concerning the extent of implementation of value-based education programmes for youth empowerment in your school.	VH E	H E	LE	VL E	X	SD	Decision
1.	value-based themes such as honesty, discipline, responsibility, leadership and civic duties into curricular subjects like Civic Education, Social Studies, and Christian/Moral Education for youth empowerment	49	47	187	92	2.14	0.93	Low Extent
2.	value-based education through peace and conflict resolution clubs for youth empowerment in order to develop students' emotional intelligence, leadership in handling conflicts, and boosting teamwork	45	56	173	101	2.12	0.94	Low Extent
3.	co-curricular activities through clubs such as debate, press, drama, and peer educators to promote value-based learning for youth empowerment	39	80	159	97	2.16	0.93	Low Extent



4.	value-based integrity and anti-corruption education programmes (in partnership with ICPC or NGOs) for youth empowerment to promote integrity, honesty, transparency and accountability in school and community life	48	59	100	168	1.97	1.06	Low Extent
5.	value-based leadership including mentorship programmes for youth empowerment in order to foster confidence, ethical leadership, goal setting, and civic engagement	62	85	126	102	2.29	1.04	Low Extent
6.	value-based gender and social equity awareness programmes fostering youth empowerment that promotes respect for gender equality, tolerance, equity in decision-making and inclusiveness participation in the society	40	58	120	157	1.95	1.00	Low Extent
7.	environmental ethics and sustainability education, instilling environmental responsibility and values of stewardship, cultivating responsibility and practical knowledge for community and environmental leadership	72	36	169	98	2.22	1.04	Low Extent
8.	religious and interfaith dialogue clubs teaching tolerance, love, respect for other religions and peaceful coexistence	46	88	130	111	2.18	0.99	Low Extent
9.	cultural and traditional value reinforcement programmes preserving positive traditional values like respect for elders, truthfulness, communal living required for youth empowerment	38	52	113	172	1.88	0.99	Low Extent
10.	school-based community service projects enabling youths to develop empathy, community leadership, and responsibility for enhancing a sense of responsibility and service to others	54	89	124	108	2.24	1.02	Low Extent
11.	digital citizenship and ethical media use programmes teaching responsible use of technology, combating cyberbullying, promoting digital ethics; which empowers youths to be responsible digital citizens and ethical communicators	69	52	133	121	2.18	1.08	Low Extent
Overall Mean Score & SD =						2.12	1.01	Low Extent

Analysis of data in Table 1 revealed that none of the items was rated above the acceptable mean score of 2.50 by the respondents (that is; principals, vice principals and teachers) to show that they agreed with any of the statements. All the items from 1 -11 were rated below the acceptable mean score of 2.50 by the respondents to show that they disagreed with all the statements. The grand mean of 2.12 and standard deviation (SD) of 1.01 indicates closeness in the responses of the respondents showcasing that the extent of implementation of value-based education programmes for youth empowerment in secondary schools in Delta State was to a low extent.

Research Question 2: What are the major challenges hindering the effective implementation of value-based education programmes necessary for youth empowerment in Delta State secondary schools?

Table 2: Mean Scores and SD of Respondents concerning the Major Challenges Hindering the Effective Implementation of Value-Based Education Programmes Necessary for Youth Empowerment in Delta State Secondary Schools

N = 375 Respondents (that is; principals, vice principals and teachers)

S/N	Please show your agreement concerning the major challenges hindering the effective implementation of value-based education programmes necessary for youth empowerment in your school. These includes:	SA	A	D	SD	X	SD	Decision
12.	poor teaching methodologies likewise inadequate training for teachers on value-based education	112	134	70	59	2.80	1.04	Agree
13.	inefficiencies in instructional strategies with absence of practical exposure through projects, field trips, official visits, etc to enhance effective implementation of VBE programmes	141	114	64	56	2.91	1.07	Agree
14.	shortage of sufficient teaching materials or instructional resources which limits effective VBE implementation	121	145	61	48	2.90	0.99	Agree
15.	limited funding restricting the implementation of value-based education programmes	138	125	55	57	2.92	1.06	Agree
16.	inadequate support from educational authorities regarding implementation of VBE	120	108	83	64	2.76	1.08	Agree
17.	overcrowded classrooms making it difficult to focus on effective implementation of value education	147	131	31	66	2.96	1.08	Agree
18.	limited government policy support to encourage effective implementation of VBE programmes in schools	126	94	73	82	2.70	1.15	Agree
19.	weak involvement or poor collaboration between school and other stakeholders such as parents, religious institutions, civil society groups and community leaders in programme implementation	109	162	48	56	2.86	1.00	Agree
20.	poor constant supervision of VBE programmes available in school to identify their impacts likewise areas of improvement	117	124	81	53	2.81	1.03	Agree
21.	most VBE programmes have not fully been infused into the school curriculum likewise only a few programmes are mounted making implementation difficult	123	167	28	57	2.95	1.00	Agree
Overall Mean Score & SD =						2.86	1.05	Agree

Analysis of data in Table 2 revealed that all the items from 12 -21 were rated above the acceptable mean score of 2.50 by the respondents (that is; principals, vice principals and teachers) to show that they agreed with any of the statements. None of the items were rated below the acceptable mean score of 2.50 by the respondents to show that they disagreed with all the statements. The grand mean of 2.86 and standard deviation (SD) of 1.05 indicates closeness in the responses of the respondents showcasing the major challenges hindering effective implementation of value-based education programmes necessary for youth empowerment in Delta State secondary schools.

Research Question 3: What improvement strategies can be adopted for improving the effective implementation of value-based education to enhance youth empowerment in Delta State secondary schools?

Table 3: Mean Scores and SD of Respondents concerning the Improvement Strategies that can be Adopted for Improving the Effective Implementation of Value-Based Education Programmes to Enhance Youth Empowerment in Delta State Secondary Schools

N = 375 Respondents (that is; principals, vice principals and teachers)

S/ N	Please show your agreement concerning the improvement strategies that can be adopted for improving the effective implementation of value-based education programmes to enhance youth empowerment in your school. These includes:	SA	A	D	SD	X	SD	Decision
22.	Providing continuous professional development including training for teachers on VBE for effective implementation	109	167	57	42	2.91	0.94	Agree
23.	Strengthening school-community relationships and increasing collaborations with stakeholders such as parents, financial institutions, civil society groups and the community to actively involve all in effective implementation of value-based education for youth empowerment	144	123	73	35	3.00	0.98	Agree
24.	Allocating more financial resources (adequate funding) likewise teaching materials for effective implementation of VBE programmes	134	109	81	51	2.87	1.05	Agree
25.	Developing clear policies including strategic guidelines for consistent VBE implementation	101	107	80	87	2.59	1.12	Agree
26.	Incorporating use of digital tools, contents and multimedia technologies such as short films, audio-visual stories, e-books, and interactive apps that teach morals and ethical values, critical thinking, and social responsibility to enhance the teaching of VBE for youth empowerment	102	131	92	50	2.76	1.00	Agree
27.	Encouraging leadership at all levels to model and promote value-based behaviours necessary for youth empowerment	132	110	71	62	2.83	1.08	Agree
28.	Constantly engaging resource persons to handle VBE programmes in schools including practical aspects	174	109	48	44	3.10	1.03	Agree
29.	Incorporating effective instructional strategies including methodologies using experiential learning techniques through clubs, field trips and excursions, official visit, etc to enhance effective implementation of VBE for youth empowerment	159	139	30	47	3.09	1.00	Agree
30.	Creation of varieties of VBE in school likewise encourage students to showcase active participation in peace and ethics clubs, leadership forums, value-themed school events and peer mediation committees necessary for their empowerment	103	142	74	56	2.78	1.01	Agree
31.	Establishing effective supervisory system using students feedback surveys, teacher self-assessments, and peer reviews to monitor and evaluate VBE programme effectiveness	147	140	38	50	3.02	1.01	Agree
Overall Mean Score & SD =						2.90	1.03	Agree

Analysis of data in Table 3 revealed that all the items from 22 –31 were rated above the acceptable mean score of 2.50 by the respondents (that is; principals, vice principals and teachers) to show that they agreed with any of the statements. None of the items were rated below the acceptable mean score of 2.50 by the respondents to show that they disagreed with all the statements. The grand mean of 2.90 and standard deviation (SD) of 1.03 indicates closeness in the responses of the respondents showcasing the improvement strategies that could be adopted for improving effective implementation of value-based education to enhance youth empowerment in Delta State secondary schools.

Discussion of Findings

The finding of this study revealed that the extent of implementation of value-based education programmes for youth empowerment in secondary schools in Delta State was to a low extent, also indicating a moderate level of implementation of value-based education. Hence, the extent of implementation of value-based themes such as honesty, discipline, responsibility, leadership and civic duties into curricular subjects like Civic Education, Social Studies, and Christian/Moral Education for youth empowerment was to a low extent. Value-based education initiated through peace and conflict resolution clubs for youth empowerment in order to develop students' emotional intelligence, leadership in handling conflicts, and boosting teamwork was implemented to a low extent. Furthermore, the extent of implementation of co-curricular activities through clubs such as debate, press, drama, and peer educators to promote value-based learning for youth empowerment was to a low extent. Value-based integrity and anti-corruption education programmes (in partnership with ICPC or NGOs) for youth empowerment to promote integrity, honesty, transparency and accountability in school and community life, was implemented to a low extent. Also, value-based leadership including mentorship programmes for youth empowerment in order to foster confidence, ethical leadership, goal setting, and civic engagement; including, value-based gender and social equity awareness programmes fostering youth empowerment that promotes respect for gender equality, tolerance, equity in decision-making and inclusiveness participation in the society; both were implemented to a low extent. The extent of implementation of environmental ethics and sustainability education, instilling environmental responsibility and values of stewardship, cultivating responsibility and practical knowledge for community and environmental leadership, was equally to a low extent. Again, religious and interfaith dialogue clubs teaching tolerance, love, respect for other religions and peaceful coexistence, was implemented to a low extent. Cultural and traditional value reinforcement programmes preserving positive traditional values like respect for elders, truthfulness, communal living required for youth empowerment, was implemented to a low extent. School-based community service projects enabling youths to develop empathy, community leadership, and responsibility for enhancing a sense of responsibility and service to others, was also implemented to a low extent. Additionally, the extent of implementation of digital citizenship and ethical media use programmes teaching responsible use of technology, combating cyberbullying, promoting digital ethics; which empowers youths to be responsible digital citizens and ethical communicators, was to a low extent. The low extent of implementation of value-based education programmes for youth empowerment in secondary schools in Delta State aligns with previous research by Adebayo and Akinbode (2023) which found out that although schools integrate value education into their curricula, systemic weaknesses reduce its impact. It was discovered through this finding that there were major challenges hindering effective implementation of value-based education programmes necessary for youth empowerment in Delta State secondary schools. These challenges included poor teaching methodologies likewise inadequate training for teachers on value-based education, inefficiencies in instructional strategies with absence of practical exposure through projects, field trips, official visits, etc to enhance effective implementation of VBE programmes, shortage of sufficient teaching materials and instructional resources which limits effective VBE implementation, limited funding restricting the implementation of value-based education programmes, inadequate support from educational authorities regarding implementation of VBE, overcrowded classrooms making it difficult to focus on effective implementation of value education, limited government policy support to encourage effective implementation of VBE programmes in

schools, weak involvement or poor collaboration between school and other stakeholders such as parents, religious institutions, civil society groups and community leaders in programme implementation, poor constant supervision of VBE programmes available in school to identify their impacts likewise areas of improvement, and most VBE programmes have not fully been infused into the school curriculum likewise only a few programmes are mounted making implementation difficult.

The study's identification of inadequate teacher preparation as one of the major challenges corroborates with the findings of Ogunyemi and Adeyemi's (2021) study, which confirmed that insufficient professional development impedes teachers' ability to effectively deliver VBE. This gap underscores the necessity for continuous and targeted training programmes to equip educators with the pedagogical skills and moral competencies required. The reported shortage of teaching materials, funding and instructional resources aligns with Akinwumi's (2022) study which found out that limited infrastructural and financial support critically undermines educational quality in Nigerian secondary schools. The insufficiency of resources reduces opportunities for interactive and engaging value education, thereby, limiting student empowerment. The present study finding also relates to the findings of Eze and Nwafor (2023) study which echoed that entrenched cultural norms and community attitudes sometimes clashed with the values promoted in schools, leading to resistance or apathy towards VBE programmes. The finding highlighted the importance of engaging community stakeholders to create culturally relevant and accepted curricula. This finding about inadequate leadership support and policy gaps reflect Fullan's (2022) assertion that successful educational change requires committed leadership and clear guidelines. The finding of Brown and Lee (2023) study further confirmed that ethical leadership models are vital in fostering school cultures conducive to value inculcation, which also corroborates with the preset study finding.

The finding of this study further discovered certain improvement strategies that could be adopted for improving effective implementation of value-based education to enhance youth empowerment in Delta State secondary schools. They included: providing continuous professional development including training for teachers on VBE for effective implementation; strengthening school-community relationships and increasing collaborations with stakeholders such as parents, financial institutions, civil society groups and the community to actively involve all in effective implementation of value-based education for youth empowerment; allocating more financial resources (adequate funding) likewise teaching materials for effective implementation of VBE programmes; developing clear policies including strategic guidelines for consistent VBE implementation; incorporating use of digital tools, contents and multimedia technologies such as short films, audio-visual stories, e-books, and interactive apps that teach morals and ethical values, critical thinking, and social responsibility to enhance the teaching of VBE for youth empowerment; encouraging leadership at all levels to model and promote value-based behaviours necessary for youth empowerment; constantly engaging resource persons to handle VBE programmes in schools including practical aspects; incorporating effective instructional strategies including methodologies using experiential learning techniques through clubs, field trips and excursions, official visit, etc, to enhance effective implementation of VBE for youth empowerment; creation of varieties of VBE in school likewise encourage students to showcase active participation in peace and ethics clubs, leadership forums, value-themed school events and peer mediation committees necessary for their empowerment; and establishing effective supervisory system using students feedback surveys, teacher self-assessments, and peer reviews to monitor and evaluate VBE programme effectiveness. The strong support for professional development, stakeholder collaboration, resource mobilization, and leadership modeling aligns with global recommendations by UNESCO (2021) and empirical research by Lundy and Kilkelly (2020), both of whom stressed that these strategies are critical to overcoming barriers and enhancing the effectiveness of value-based education programmes. Also, the support for using digital technologies to enhance value education reflects emerging trends confirmed by Brown and Lee (2023) study, which discovered that digital tools can provide innovative platforms for moral and civic education, making it more accessible and engaging for youth.

Conclusion

This study has shown that the implementation of value-based education (VBE) in Delta State secondary schools is less effective but hindered by several significant challenges. Key obstacles such as inadequate teacher training, insufficient teaching resources due to limited funding, and lack of strong leadership support with effective policy were identified as barriers to fully realizing the potential of VBE in empowering youth. Despite these challenges, there is clear consensus among educators that improving teacher development, increasing stakeholders' collaboration, and enhancing resource allocation are essential strategies to strengthen VBE implementation. Addressing these issues is critical for fostering moral development, civic responsibility, and sustainable national development through the educational system in Delta State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were proffered:

1. Delta State Government in collaboration with the Post Primary Education Board (PPEB) and school management should ensure effective implementation of value-based education programmes for youth empowerment in secondary schools in Delta State to a high extent through effective inclusion and integration of value-based education themes and contents in the curriculum, adequate funding and establishment of VBE programmes in schools through clubs, societies and leadership training programmes.
2. Government agencies such as PPEB, Delta State Ministry of Education, school authorities and private sector must work together to curb the challenges hindering effective implementation of value-based education programmes for youth empowerment in secondary schools in Delta State by prioritizing on regular, comprehensive professional development training and teacher capacity building programmes focused on value-based education pedagogy necessary to equip teachers with the skills, competencies and knowledge necessary for effective delivery, constant supervision of instructions, improvements of instructional strategies and teaching methodologies with presence of practical exposure through projects, field trips and official visits, the provision of adequate teaching materials, learning aids, and technological tools specifically designed to support value-based education initiatives, among others.
3. Secondary school principals should foster active collaboration among teachers, parents, community leaders, and policymakers to ensure culturally relevant value-based education. Additionally, the development and enforcement of clear policies and guidelines for VBE implementation will promote consistency and accountability necessary for effective implementation of value-based education programmes for youth empowerment in secondary schools in Delta State.

References

- Adebayo, T. & Akinbode, O. (2023). Challenges of value-based education implementation in Nigerian secondary schools. *Journal of Educational Development*, 15 (1), 34–50.
- Adebayo, T. (2022). The role of ethical governance in sustainable national development: A Nigerian perspective. *Journal of African Educational Leadership*, 14(2), 45–59.
- Akinwumi, F. (2022). Resource constraints and educational quality in Nigerian secondary schools. *Nigerian Journal of Education and Society*, 10(3), 56–71.
- Brown, L. & Lee, M. (2023). Building trust through ethical supervision in schools. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 37(1), 102–115.
- Creswell, J. W. & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Eze, J. & Nwafor, C. (2023). Corruption and school leadership in Nigeria: Challenges and prospects. *Nigerian Journal of Educational Research*, 18(1), 78–93.
- Fullan, M. (2022). *The new meaning of educational change* (6th ed.). Teachers College Press.



- Gliem, J. A. & Gliem, R. R. (2003). Calculating, interpreting, and reporting Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for Likert-type scales. *Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference in Adult, Continuing, and Community Education*, 82–88.
- Krejcie, R. V. & Morgan, D. W. (1970). Determining sample size for research activities. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 30(3), 607–610.
- Lovat, T., Toomey, R. & Clement, N. (2020). *International research handbook on values education and student wellbeing*. Springer.
- Lundy, L. & Kilkelly, U. (2020). Engaging stakeholders in value-based education: A global perspective. *Journal of Education Policy*, 35(4), 467–485.
- Narvaez, D. & Lapsley, D. K. (2023). Moral education: Integrating values into the curriculum. *Educational Psychologist*, 58 (2), 79 - 93.
- Ogunyemi, A. & Adeyemi, K. (2021). Teacher preparedness and challenges in value-based education delivery. *International Journal of Teacher Education*, 9(1), 25–40.
- Okafor, C. (2022). Moral decadence and youth challenges in Delta State: The role of education. *Delta State Journal of Social Sciences*, 9 (2), 112–128.
- UNESCO (2021). *Empowering youth through quality education: A global perspective*. UNESCO Publishing.
- Zimmerman, M. A. (2022). Empowerment theory. In R. J. R. Levesque (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of adolescence* (3rd ed., pp. 1293–1301). Springer.