



IMPACT OF FAMILY INFLUENCE ON STUDENTS' MORAL EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MINNA METROPOLIS, NIGER STATE, NIGERIA



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Abstract

This study examined the “Impact of Family Influence on Students’ Moral Education in Secondary Schools in Minna Metropolis, Niger State, Nigeria”. Two (2) objectives were set to guide the study which are examine the impact of family influence on value orientation for students in secondary schools in Minna metropolis; and examine the impact of family influence on students’ discipline in secondary schools in Minna metropolis. Two research questions were raised to guide the study. Descriptive Survey Research Design was used for the study. The population of the study was 45,075 students. 381 respondents were used as sample size for the study based on recommendation of Researcher Advisor (2006) table of sample size. A self-designed questionnaire titled “Family Influence and Students’ Moral Education Questionnaire (FIASMEQ)” was used to collect data for the study. The instrument was validated by three research experts and the instrument reliability coefficient stood at 0.81 using Cronbach’s Alpha Method. Descriptive statistics of mean score and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions. Findings revealed that family influence impact on value orientation of students in secondary schools in Minna Metropolis. The study recommended that.

Keywords: Family Influence, Moral Education, Value Orientation, Discipline

Introduction

Nigeria’s pursuit of sustainable development faces persistent challenges, including corruption, youth unemployment, and social fragmentation. At the heart of these issues lies a crisis of moral and ethical values, exacerbated by weakening family structures and inadequate emphasis on character education. Moral education plays a crucial role in shaping the values and ethical behaviors of individuals, which are essential for the sustainable development of any society. The interplay between family influence and moral education has significant implications for value formation. According to Kehinde in Ijiwole& Adeyemi (2020), moral is about how we make the relationship between people with every person around, about what they do good or bad. It is the training given to an individual that make him/her to know the rights and wrong behaviors and for him/her to accept the right behavior as a way of life.

The family is often the primary source of value transmission. Families' units are traditionally the first point of contact for moral development. Eze and Okonkwo (2023) found that parental involvement, communication patterns, and parenting styles significantly impact adolescents' ethical behavior. Parenting approaches, whether authoritarian, permissive, or democratic, shape the transmission of cultural and moral values. Family influence remains a foundational aspect of value formation, as highlighted by Wang et al. (2020). Their study indicates that parental values and behaviors significantly impact children's attitudes toward sustainability. Families that prioritize environmental stewardship tend to raise children who are more engaged in sustainable practices.

Uche (2023) defines moral education as a process of learning which helps people to acquire virtues or moral habits that help them live good and responsible lives as well as become productive and contributing positively to the general wellbeing of their society. Lickona in Usman, Muhammad & Muhammad (2024) emphasized that moral education aims to build positive character qualities. There are three components of moral character, which are moral knowing, moral feeling and moral action. In this concept, Usman et al (2024) asserted that moral behavior only is not sufficient, and must be accompanied by knowing and a feeling of calm whether or not the behavior is a moral behavior. Moral education helps people to develop a strong sense of ethics and values. It also teaches them how to make good choices in life, based on these principles.

Family plays a pivotal role in shaping the moral values and ethical orientation of students. As the first social unit children interact with, families often establish foundational beliefs and attitudes that guide moral development. Research indicates that the value system within a household significantly influences children's behavior, decision-making, and interpersonal relationships. For instance, Olamide and Ejoro (2017) found that students raised in families with strong moral teachings tend to demonstrate higher levels of honesty, empathy, and respect for societal norms. The internalization of these values often translates into positive attitudes toward moral education in schools. Parental modeling is a key factor in this process. Children often emulate the behaviors and attitudes of their parents or guardians, making consistent parental guidance essential in reinforcing moral instruction. Uche and Ugwu (2020) argue that when parents actively engage in conversations about right and wrong, and live out moral principles, students are more likely to integrate such values into their everyday conduct. Furthermore, socio-economic status, parental education, and religious beliefs also play a role in shaping moral orientation (Yakubu & Ibrahim, 2022).

Discipline is a vital component of moral education, and the family remains a central force in cultivating these traits in students. Families provide the initial structure where children learn boundaries, acceptable behavior, and emotional regulation. According to Adeyemi and Alade (2018), consistent parental discipline fosters self-discipline in children, which later reflects in their moral reasoning and conduct within educational settings. Through early experiences with consequences and reward systems at home, children begin to understand accountability and responsibility.

Parental modeling of self-control also plays a significant role. Children are more likely to develop emotional restraint and thoughtful decision-making when they observe these behaviors in their caregivers. In their study, Nwachukwu and Dogo (2020) highlighted that students raised in homes where parents demonstrate patience, tolerance, and calmness are more likely to exhibit these traits in school and social interactions. Moreover, the nature of family discipline—whether authoritative, permissive, or neglectful—can shape a child's ability to regulate impulses and make ethical decisions. Authoritative parenting, characterized by firm but loving guidance, has been associated with higher levels of self-control and moral awareness among adolescents (Odetola & Eze, 2021). In contrast, inconsistent or overly punitive discipline can hinder moral development and lead to behavioral challenges.

In essence, families serve as the first school of discipline and self-control. As noted by Bello and Musa (2024), when families uphold consistent values and enforce fair discipline, they lay the groundwork for students to internalize moral norms and exhibit responsible behavior. However, in homes where moral discipline is weak or absent, students may struggle with ethical decision-making and show a decline in moral reasoning. Thus, a collaborative approach between schools and families is

necessary to sustain value-based education. As emphasized by Okafor and Bello (2023), strengthening family-school partnerships can reinforce moral education and nurture a generation grounded in ethical responsibility.

Moreover, the interplay between moral education and family dynamics is emphasized by Smith and Jones (2022), who assert that cooperative efforts between educational institutions and families can create a robust framework for instilling values necessary for national development. They propose that such collaborations can bridge the gap between formal education and everyday moral lessons taught at home. Oni (2021) also suggested that value formation is most effective when families and educational institutions work collaboratively. Disconnects between school teaching and home practices often create moral confusion among children, especially in rapidly urbanizing areas. Aligning these two spheres can reinforce integrity, patriotism and civic responsibility. Sustainable development requires not only economic growth but also social equity and environmental protection. Values such as integrity, responsibility, and community service are essential for achieving these goals (United Nations, 2015). Minna metropolis, as the state capital of Niger State, hosts the highest concentration of secondary schools and accommodates a diverse population of families, including state and federal civil servants. These schools enroll students from varied cultural, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds. However, there is growing concern over the moral behavior of students, which appears to reflect deep-rooted challenges in family upbringing and value orientation. Increasing incidents of misconduct such as examination malpractice, thuggery, petty theft, sexual harassment, and inter-school or community-related conflicts have raised serious questions about the moral compass guiding students' actions. These behaviors not only disrupt the school environment but also lead to tragic consequences, including physical harm and loss of life among students and community members.

Despite efforts by schools, communities, and government authorities to enforce disciplinary measures, the outcomes remain discouraging. The persistence of indiscipline and lack of self-control among students contributes to rising dropout rates and a growing population of youth who become societal liabilities. This troubling trend suggests that formal disciplinary approaches alone may be insufficient without strong foundational moral education rooted in the family. Hence, this study seeks to examine the influence of family on students' moral development, particularly focusing on how value orientation and discipline instilled at home shape students' behavior and academic engagement. Understanding this relationship is crucial to developing more effective and sustainable strategies for promoting moral education and responsible citizenship among students in Minna metropolis.

Research Objectives

The main objectives of the study were to:

1. examine the impact of family influence on value orientation for students in secondary schools in Minna metropolis; and
2. examine the impact of family influence on students' discipline in secondary schools in Minna metropolis.

Research Questions

The following questions were raised to guide the study:

1. How does family influence impact on value orientation of students in secondary schools in Minna Metropolis?
2. In what ways do family influence impact on students' discipline in secondary schools in Minna metropolis?

Methodology

This study used descriptive survey research design. This design, according to McCombes (2023) aims to accurately and systematically describes a population, situation or phenomenon. Since the study examined the impact of family influence on students' moral education in Minna Metropolis, the researcher finds it appropriate to use descriptive survey design. The population of the study was 45,075

students from secondary schools in Minna Metropolis. 381 respondents were used as sample size for the study based on recommendation of Researcher Advisor (2006) table of sample size. A self-designed questionnaire titled “Family Influence and Students’ Moral Education Questionnaire (FIASMEQ)” was used as instrument for data collection. The instruments had 20 items scored on four-point scales as Strongly agreed (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) with the numerical values of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively.

Three (3) research experts Educational Foundations vet the instrument and their observations were incorporated in the final draft of the instrument. The instrument reliability coefficient stood at 0.81 using Cronbach’s Alpha Method. Descriptive statistics of mean score and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions. However, when the mean score of an item is greater than 2.50 set for the study, the item was regarded as agreed by majority of the respondents. On the other hand, when the mean score of an item is less than 2.50, the item was considered disagree. A total of 381 copies of the questionnaire were distributed but only 367 copies were returned. The analysis of the study was therefore, based on the data gathered from the above-mentioned number of returned copies of questionnaire.

Results

Research Question One: *How does family influence impact on value orientation of students in secondary schools in Minna Metropolis?*

Table 1: Opinions of Respondents on the Impact of Family Influence on Value Orientation for Students in Secondary Schools within Minna Metropolis

S/N	Item Statements	Mean	SD	Decision
1	My parents/guardians consistently teach me the difference between right and wrong	3.37	1.51	Agreed
2	I try to behave morally because of the example set by my family.	3.57	1.46	Agreed
3	Family discussions at home help me to understand what is expected of me morally	3.42	1.43	Agreed
4	My family discourages behaviors such as lying, cheating, and stealing.	3.32	1.43	Agreed
5	I respect elders and authority figures because my parents/guardians emphasize it	3.44	1.41	Agreed
6	Attending religious or moral programs with my family has shaped my values.	3.24	1.51	Agreed
7	I have learned to be honest and responsible from my family.	2.95	1.62	Agreed
8	My family punishes bad behavior and rewards good behavior.	2.85	1.63	Agreed
9	The cultural values my family teaches influence how I make decisions.	2.89	1.60	Agreed
10	I feel confident that my family has helped me develop a good moral character.	3.09	1.59	Agreed
Grand		3.21	1.52	Agreed

Table 1 shows the opinions of respondents on the impact of family influence on value orientation for students in secondary schools in Minna metropolis. It shows that items 1-10 were all accepted. This is because they had response mean greater than the instrument scale means of 2.50. With the grand mean of 3.21 which is greater than the instrument mean of 2.50, this shows that majority of the respondents agreed with all the stated items above as ways family influence impact on value orientation of students in secondary schools in Minna metropolis.

Research Question Two: *In what ways do family influences impact on students' discipline in secondary schools in Minna metropolis?*

Table 2: Opinions of Respondents on the Impact of Family Influence on Students' Discipline in Secondary Schools within Minna Metropolis

S/N	Item Statements	Mean	SD	Decision
1	My parents/guardians set clear rules that guide my behavior at home.	3.07	1.51	Agreed
2	I try to control my actions because my family has taught me the importance of self-discipline.	3.05	1.46	Agreed
3	I have learned to manage my anger and emotions because of my family's guidance.	3.18	1.43	Agreed
4	My parents/guardians are consistent in correcting my wrong behavior.	2.84	1.43	Agreed
5	At home, I am encouraged to think before I act or speak.	2.69	1.41	Agreed
6	My family rewards good behavior, which motivates me to stay disciplined.	3.06	1.51	Agreed
7	I am expected to follow daily routines (e.g., chores, study time) at home.	2.88	1.62	Agreed
8	When I make mistakes, my family helps me learn from them rather than just punishing me.	2.88	1.63	Agreed
9	My parents/guardians behave in a disciplined way, which influences how I behave.	3.08	1.60	Agreed
10	Because of my upbringing, I am able to resist peer pressure and avoid trouble	3.03	1.59	Agreed
Grand		2.98	1.57	Agreed

Table 2 shows the opinions of respondents on the impact of family influence on students' discipline in secondary schools in Minna metropolis. It shows that items 1-10 were all accepted. This is because they had response mean greater than the instrument scale means of 2.50. With the grand mean of 3.21 which is greater than the instrument mean of 2.50, this shows that majority of the respondents agreed with all the stated items above as ways family influence impact on students' discipline in secondary schools in Minna metropolis.

Discussions of Findings

The finding of research question one revealed that family influence impact on value orientation of students in secondary schools in Minna Metropolis. In line with this finding, Kalu and Ajake(2022) study on moral values orientation and students' interpersonal relationship in Cross Rive State and found that there was a strong link between moral values orientation and personal relationships. Olamide and Ejiro (2017) reported that students raised in families with strong moral teachings tend to demonstrate higher levels of honesty, empathy, and respect for societal norms. The internalization of these values often translates into positive attitudes toward moral education in schools. The study also agreed with the finding of Eze and Okonkwo (2023) who found that parental involvement, communication patterns, and parenting styles significantly, impact adolescents' ethical behavior. In addition, Uche and Ugwu (2020) reported that when parents actively engage in conversations about right and wrong, and live out moral principles, students are more likely to integrate such values into their everyday

The finding of research question one revealed that family influences impact on students' discipline in secondary schools in Minna metropolis. In line with this finding, Adeleke and Adewunmi (2023) examined peer pressure, home and school factors predisposing secondary school students' discipline in Bwari Area Council, Abuja and found that home factors significantly predict students' indiscipline while peer pressure has a negative but significant influence on students' discipline. The

finding further agreed with the finding of Adeyemi and Alade (2018) who found that consistent parental discipline fosters self-discipline in children, which later reflects in their moral reasoning and conduct within educational settings. Also, Nwachukwu and Dogo (2020) reported that students raised in homes where parents demonstrate patience, tolerance, and calmness are more likely to exhibit these traits in school and social interactions. Although the studies are similar dealing with family influence and morality, the ongoing study focuses on Minna Metropolis, providing local insights. It also directly linked family influence to both moral education and student behavior, giving a holistic view and also exploring value orientation and discipline together under the lens of moral education, which the other studies only touch on partially.

Conclusion

Based on the finding of the study, it was concluded that family influence impact on value orientation of students in secondary schools in Minna Metropolis. The study underscores the critical role of families as moral educators and calls for stronger collaboration between homes and schools. Reinforcing ethical behavior through both formal education and parental modeling is essential for national development. The research concludes that sustainable character formation among youth begins at home and should be nurtured through intentional family practices and values-based parenting. Recommendations were made for value re-orientation programs that engage both families and schools in building morally responsible future citizens.

Recommendations

In line with the research findings and conclusions, the following recommendations were made:

1. Educational planners should design curricula that encourage collaboration between teachers and parents in promoting shared moral values.
2. Government and NGOs should support family life education programs that emphasize moral upbringing as a pillar for national growth.
3. Further research should be conducted on other urban and rural settings to build a comprehensive national framework for value formation.

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