



INFLUENCE OF ETHICS, VALUES AND MORALITY ON YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES IN SOUTH SOUTH GEO-POLITICAL REGION, NIGERIA



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Abstract

The study investigated the influence of ethics, values and morality on youth development programmes in South South geo-political region, Nigeria. The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. Three purposes of the study, three research questions and three hypotheses were specifically formulated to guide the study. All the six (6) state chairmen in the South South and the One hundred and twenty three (123) Local Government chairmen of the National Youth Council of Nigeria (NYCN) made up the entire population of the study to one hundred and twenty nine (129). The researcher adopted the census sampling due to the small size of the population. A nine item questionnaire titled, Influence of Ethics Values and Morality on Youth Development Programmes Questionnaire (IEVMTDPQ) was used to elicit data from respondents. The validation of the instrument was done by two experts from the department of measurement and evaluation while Cronbach Alpha statistics was used to test the reliability index of the instrument which yielded 0.78, 0.84 and 0.76 respectively. The mean and Standard deviation were used to analyse data while the z-test statistics was used to test hypotheses. Results from the analysed data revealed that, ethics, values and morality to a very large extent positively influence and enhance youth development programmes in the south south geo-political region of Nigeria. The researcher further recommends that, the government, school administrators and curriculum developers should ensure that ethical education, values education and moral education is included in the curriculum and studied at all levels of education.

Introduction

Youths are an integrated part of any society, both developed and developing economies rely maximally on the youths for their economic advancements. This has propelled countries to take seriously. Certain programmes that will enhance the all-round and comprehensive development of the youths to enable them fit into all sectors of the country's needs. Some of the known but key areas of demand may include sports, technology, spiritual, morals, ethics, values, norms, socialization and others. With specific reference to the scope of this study, this examined the influence of ethics, values and morality on youth development. That is to say, owing to the brazen display of rascality, lack of respect for elders and human lives, loss of love, honesty and honor have grown wings while good character and conduct is long gone. Fraud, ritualism, drug addiction, deceit, lawlessness and all what not are fast becoming the usual and regular practice in our society (Akangbou, and Asemota-Etonye, 2021). This unfortunate and alarming situation bedeviling our youth in the society is inconceivable and inconsolable, therefore raising certain questions like where is the place of morality? Has our value system completely eroded, does ethics and etiquette still exists in our society? These fundamental

questions are key to the identified predicaments and a careful approach to each of them will certainly land us with the answers to the perceived predicaments.

Generally speaking, there are wide expectation that youth development is influenced by the trio of ethics, values and morality, hence Akangbou and Asemota-Etonye described values as those set of deep seated beliefs that influence people actions and decisions, the authors further explained that, values are rules, principles or standards of behavior which accord respect to the individuals. Values exhibition in humans are expressed through show of love, sanctity of human life, respect for constituted authority, honor to whom honor is due, hardworking, being honest, peace loving, delivering justice to all, not being bias, living a responsible life etc. However, values can be referred to the importance, worth or usefulness attached to something or someone, there are also personal values, societal values, economic values and cultural values, all of which are attached special values. There are also intrinsic and extrinsic value, intrinsic values are values attached to oneself worth, while extrinsic values are those values attached to some persons or something as a result of its worth. As thrust by Mintz (2018), values are basic and fundamental beliefs that guide or motivate attitudes or actions, values serves as agents that determines what is important to us and what is not important to us and what is not important to us, who we aspire to become, the kind of people we associate with, how we treat others and ourselves, how we interact with others, values provide the guidelines for our conduct. It is that which is good, desirable and or worthwhile. This indicates that, personal values and personal beliefs about what is right and what is wrong may not be considered moral. On this premise, chances are that, general values and personal values may not be universal, owing to the difference that exists among different societies and personalities.

This bring us to the principle of right and wrong which is morality. It broadly established the distinction between right and wrong. Morality guide our actions, behaviors and conduct towards what is considered good. Good reasoning are infused into the mind of the citizens such that obedience to law and order becomes a part of them to avoid being punished. It is also connected with the efforts of humans to establish these standard moralities in itself seems peculiar in most cases depending on the stand point and perception of the individual, it is however not arguable that, there are generic morality or universal morality. These universal moralities are also recognized by religion all the religion. All the religion about killing of animals in the same vein, majority of all the societies forbid killing of another person. Stealing is also another universal morality both religion, culture and humanity forbid stealing as well as encourage respect for oneself and reciprocity of such respect to other and from other (Iyabas and sunady 2018 vocabulary. Com 2025).

The objective view of Numonde, (2018) on morality is unambiguous, cogent, short and simple, the author avers that, morality is the possession of certain virtues like being honest, civil, responsible, loyal, charitable, truthful etc. such a person must as well be seeing to have disassociated with vices such as greed, lust, lying, stealing, irresponsible, deceitfulness, untrustworthy etc. Numonde further emphasized that, morality attempt to connect physiological and behavioral component in human beings, by the position of the author, morality infuse good character which consist of knowing the good, desiring the good and doing the good. Consequently Duignan (2025) referred to morality as the belief and practice of a culture, community, religion or a code of system of moral rules, principle or value. Explaining further, the author emphasized that, all societies have moral rules that prescribe or forbid certain classes of action which are accompanied by sanction prescribing punishment of offender to enforce compliance. Continuing, the author thronged that, virtually every societies has well established norms dealing with such concerns of family organization, individuals duties, sexual activities rights, personal welfare, truth telling, and promise keeping which are peculiar to individual societies, while universal norms include, murder or killing, theft or stealing, adultery or infidelity and incest.

The relationship between ethics and morality cannot be over emphasized, this is because, ethics is the philosophical study of moral practices that govern human conduct, ethics examines what is considered to be right and wrong and the response patterns of these individuals, ethics is more thorough and practical in its approach to what is right and what is wrong. Ethics provides a more structured and



objective framework for evaluating moral issues, morality is more of personal while ethics is more philosophical. Ethics therefore are well founded standard of right and wrong that prescribes what humans ought to do, expectedly, those doors include rights and obligations, benefits to society, fairness to all, and so on. Basically, where there are does, there are always don'ts, this don'ts also include refraining from rape, stealing, murder, assaults, slander, fraud, drug addiction etc (Santa Clara University 2010).

Giving the above talks and discussions on values, morality and ethics, the crux flows along the line of embracing and acting in line with what is generally acceptable in terms of behavior and composure, and how it translates in our youths, particularly in the development of our societies. This study will look at youth, development and how society have fared in our contemporary society. Youths generally have been defined by different scholars, organizations etc. in different ways. However, one common thing about all the definitions is the fact that, youths are people within a particular age bracket who are commonly described as young people who are energetic, strong and agile. Youths are also seen as those young people, this means that, those described as youth people are not small children, neither are they adults, this gave impetus to some definitions of youths to mean "young people who are capable of carrying out duties and responsibilities of children and elders." Another interesting definition sees "youths as a stage in human development between childhood and adulthood" noting the above perspective about the youth, the set of people called youth was definite, youth starts when a child no longer need their father and mother and can survive alone without other parents (Heywood 2023. Ilueme&Kpokpo 2015, Ukandu 2015). The necessity of the in-depth knowledge about the youth is to provide a background of the features and characteristics of youth who constitute the most useful tools in the development of any component of the society. The dynamics of our everyday society and the complexities of certain steering realities are compelling needs that necessities ingenuity, people tend to be creative, invent novel things, develop new skills to device new inventions, this in the views of Ilueme and Luke is the multi-dimensional process which involves the sustained elevation of the entire society and the social system towards actualizing the desired good life for all citizens.

Elaborating on the above stance, Ilume and Luke emphasized that, development is more than improving the well-being of the people, it also involves the constant efforts put in place to develop the economic, social and political systems and structures the well enhance, the sustainability of the people's well-being.

Consequently, Ukandu viewed development from the angle of manpower development which could also be seen as youth development, the author added that, manpower is the engine room of growth in every society. Speaking further, Ukandu argued that, manpower development is the not generic, they are sector specific, therefore its development is largely based on demand which is generally reliant on continuous training and re-training of both skilled and unskilled people to fill in the developmental gaps within the system. As an addition to this position, the author recommended orientation, on the job training, committee work group method, vestibule training method and apprenticeship method as training tools. Others include; coaching, job rotation, in house training, in-service training etc. In the same vein, Deekor and Bariledum, (2015) opined that, development is a process through which people become self-reliant and confident, who constantly generate and mobilize energy which is capable of running independent and democratic government.

Speaking separately, the views of Barango-Tariah, Davies and Oruwari (2018) about development states that, development has to do with the enhancement of the intellectual moral, administrative physical abilities and skills of the citizens of a country. The common understanding of the concepts above revealed that, development is not sectional but holistic. It is an all-around process of advancement that yields positive results.

Giving the assertions above about development, development is seeing as a conscious investment on the citizens to enhance their capabilities which will in turn translate to the development of the society. This investment is selectively done because it is targeted at achieving specific objectives in the society, this reveals why the youths are targeted in development approaches, it is because, youth in any part of the world are the population that drives the development process of any country. Hence,

Ozara-Akuma (2016) sees youths' development as the gate way to inter-generational equity, civic engagement and democracy building around the world. Consequently, Wiki educator sees youth as young people who are capable of carrying out duties and responsibilities of elders and children. Youth could also be seen as that phase in human development that is between childhood and adulthood. From the understanding of youths above, the simple understanding about youths goes beyond the regular citizens they are known to be, they are those categories of human beings that cannot be classified as children as well as adults, youths are the most active set of people in country, the reason most of the programmes aimed at developing a country are centered on the youths. This position is also supported by the fact that, apart from being hyper active, youths have good and strong communication skills, they can easily and effectively collaborate within themselves and can adapt with minimal stress, they are creative and ingenious, idealistic and empathic.

Youth developments is seriously desired in our society because it is the surest way to national development and economic security, the reason individuals, corporate bodies, NGOs local governments, states, countries, regional bodies across the globe have elected to embrace youth development programmes. Some of the youth developments programmes as sponsored by the above-mentioned bodies, agencies and organizations includes,

1. National youths Service corps (NYSC)
2. N-Power
3. Ministry of Youths and Sports Development.
4. Skills Acquisitions
5. Youth Employments Schemes
6. Education Supports Schemes
7. You win, and many more

These youths' developments are specifically organized to enhance both mental and physical abilities of the youths towards transforming our society and for the greater good of humanity. In the light of the above, youths are expected to be dedicated, focused and discipline, failure of wish will result in the opposite with dire consequences.

In its strict sense, discipline is the ability of humans to do the right thing, applying the right attitude at the right time and in the right place, it involves the exhibition of self-control, restraints, from certain unproductive attitudes, comportment and conformity with expected standards of behavior (kalagbor2023). On the other hand, the opposite of discipline is indiscipline, doing the wrong things at the wrong time and in the wrong places, lack of comportment, lawlessness, lack of commitment and what have you, leading to conflicts, symbolized by cold wars, violent conflicts, symbolized by open civil disturbances, war etc. peaceful or nonviolent conflicts, a conflict that was not allowed to escalate. (Barango-Tariah, and Okonne, 2015). The grave implications of an indiscipline system are outright lack of development or slow paced development, therefore indiscipline of any kind should be discouraged.

Statement of the problem

A typical African society was always known for being a value oriented society where mortality was held in high esteem, and ethics was honoured with maximal etiquette. Respect for elders was a norm while obedience to law and constituted authorities was like a culture in the land. This engendered communality which was a sure and credible panacea for growth and development.

There came a period when there was a gradual but steady decline in the value system, the much desired morality has been overtaken by immorality, where insults, dishonour and lack of respect became apparent. Ethics has been relegated to the background with a high level installation of indiscipline in the system. These immoralities have grossly affected the development index in the land, things seem to be going backwards as against the expected and desired forward going, varying concerns have been raised from all quarters as to try unfortunate menace and possibly proffering solution to it.

In the foregoing, the study is poised to investigate whether or not ethics, values and morality has any influence on youth development programmes in the South South region of Nigeria.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to investigate the influence of ethics, values and moralities on youth development programmes. In specific terms, the study sought to:

1. Investigate the influence of ethics on youth development programmes.
2. Examine the influence of values on youth development programmes.
3. Evaluate the influence of morality on youth development programmes.

Research questions

The following research questions have been formulated to guide the study.

1. What is the influence of ethics on youth development programmes?
2. What is the influence of values on youth development programmes?
3. How has morality influenced youth development programmes?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were specifically formulated to guide the study.

1. There is no significant influence of ethics on youth development programmes
2. There is no significant influence of values on youth development programmes
3. There is no significant influence of morality on youth development programmes.

Methodology

The best and most suitable design adopted for this study was the descriptive survey design. The population of the study consists of the six (6) state chairmen of National Youth Council of Nigeria (NYCN) in the South South geo- political zone and all the 123 local government chairmen. The states and the number of local government include, Rivers, 23 LGAs, Bayelsa, 8 LGAs, Edo, 18 LGAs, Delta, 25 LGAs, Akwa-Ibom, 31 LGAs and Cross River State, 18, LGAs. The total population of this is 123 local government chairmen and 6 state chairmen of the National Youth Council of Nigeria, making a total of 129 as the population of this study with 98 male and 31 female. Due to the small size of the population, the census sampling was adopted for the study, where the entire population was used as the sample for the study. A 15 item questionnaire titled Influence of Ethics, Values and Morality on Youth Development Programmes Questionnaire (IEVMYDPQ) was designed to collect data from the respondents as well as one on one interview. The validation of the instrument for data collection was done by two experts form measurement and evaluation who made valid recommendation that were adhered to strictly. The Cronbach alpha statistic was used to ascertain the internal consistency of the instrument and the reliability index were 0.78, 0.76, 0.82. 129 copies of the instrument were administered to the respondents and 111 copies were retrieved for the data analysis.

The statistics used for the analysis were Mean ($\bar{x}$) and Standard Deviation while the Z- Test statistic was used to test hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance while the decision rule or the criterion mean was determined at 2.50, this means, mean scores below 2.50 were rejected while those above 2.50 were accepted. On the test of hypotheses, the t-critical value of ± 1.96 was used as the decision rule where the value of $\pm$ critical = ± 1.96 was higher than $\pm$ calculated, the hypothesis was accepted, where $\pm$ critical was lower than $\pm$ calculated, the hypothesis was rejected.

Results

Research question 1.

What is the influence of ethics on youth development programmes?

Table 1. Mean and standard deviation of responses of South South youth leaders on the influence of ethics on youth development programmes

Items on your development programme					Male	Female	Total	Remarks				
S/N	Items											
X	SD	X	SD	X	SD							
3,	Imbibing ethical values enhances development					2.77	1.05	2.86	2.52	2.81	1.74	Agreed
1,	Doing the right thing enhances development					3.01	2.22	3.80	1.00	3.41	1.06	Agreed

2, Wrong approaches impede development	2.90	2.01	2.66	3.09	2.73	3.00
Agreed	3.27	1.78	3.10	2.72	2.98	3.03

Source: Researcher's field survey, 2025.

Table 1. above showed the mean scores of 327, 3.10, and standard deviation of 1.78, 2.72 respectively for both male and female youth leaders. However, the mean scores were greater than the criterion mean of 2.50, hence the research question was accepted. This means that, to a large extent, ethics has a great influence on youth development programmes in the South South geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

Research question 2

What is the influence of values on youth development programmes?

Table 2. Mean and standard deviation of responses of South South youth leaders on the influence of values on youth development programmes.

SN	Items	Male		Female		Total		Remarks
		X	SD	X	SD	X	SD	
1,	Respect for constituted authorities enhances development	3.17	2.50	2.94	3.58	3.21	2.74	Agreed
2,	Living a responsible life enhances development	2.81	3.25	3.30	2.02	3.68	2.66	Agreed
3,	Hard-work enhances development	3.90	2.71	2.89	3.40	3.58	3.08	Agreed
Aggregate Mean		3.29	2.82	3.04	2.00	3.49	2.82	

Source: Researcher's field survey, 2025.

Table 2 above showed the mean scores of 329, 3.04, and standard deviation of 2.82, 2.00 respectively for both male and female youth leaders. However, the mean scores were greater than the criterion mean of 2.50, hence the research question was accepted. This means that, to a large extent, values has a great influence on youth development programmes in the South South geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

Research question 3

What is the influence of morality on youth development programmes?

Table 3. Mean and standard deviation of responses of South South youth leaders on the influence of morality on youth development programmes

SN	Items	Male		Female		Total		Remarks
		X	SD	X	SD	X	SD	
1,	Obedience to law and order enhances development	3.48	1.70	3.24	2.28	3.33	1.84	Agreed
2,	Prescribing sanctions for offenders enhances development	2.64	2.15	2.50	1.08	2.58	2.11	Agreed
3,	Enforcing compliance enhances development	2.73	2.71	2.58	1.40	2.65	2.06	Agreed
Aggregate Mean		2.95	2.22	2.77	1.58	2.85	2.00	

Source: Researcher's field survey, 2025.

Table 3 above showed the mean scores of 2.95, 2.77, and standard deviation of 2.22, 1.58 respectively for both male and female youth leaders. However, the mean scores were greater than the criterion mean of 2.50, hence the research question was accepted. This means that, to a large extent, morality has a great influence on youth development programmes in the South South geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

Test of Hypotheses:

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance to guide the study:

Hypotheses 1: There is no significant influence of ethics on youth development programmes.

Table 4: z-test analysis of the opinions of male and female youth leaders on the influence of ethics on youth development programmes

Respondents NX SD DF P z-cal z-crit Decision

Male 98 3,271.78

127 0.052.01 1.96 Rejected

Female 31 3.10 2.72 .

Source; Researchers field work, (2025).

The data on table 4 shows the z-test analysis of the opinions of male and female youth leaders on the influence of ethics on youth development programmes. At 0.05 level of significance and degree of freedom (DF) of 127, with z-calculated at 2.01 while z-critical remains at 1.96. Since the z-calculated value obtained was higher than the z-critical value, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that, there is significant influence of ethics on youth development programmes in the south south geo-political region of Nigeria.

Hypotheses 2: There is no significant influence of values on youth development programmes.

Table 5: z-test analysis of the opinions of male and female youth leaders on the influence of values on youth development programmes

Respondents N X SD DF P z-cal z-crit Decision

Male 98 3,292.62 127 0.05 1.98 1.96 Rejected

Female 31 3.04 2.00 .

Source; Researchers field work, (2025).

The data on table 5 shows the z-test analysis of the opinions of male and female youth leaders on the influence of values on youth development programmes. At 0.05 level of significance and degree of freedom (DF) of 127, with z-calculated at 1.98 while z-critical remains at 1.96. Since the z-calculated value obtained was higher than the z-critical value, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that, there is significant influence of values on youth development programmes in the south south geo-political region of Nigeria.

Hypotheses 2: There is no significant influence of morality on youth development programmes.

Table 5: z-test analysis of the opinions of male and female youth leaders on the influence of morality on youth development programmes

Respondents N X SD DF P z-cal z-crit Decision

Male 98 2.952.22 127 0.05 2.00 1.96 Rejected

Female 31 2.771.58 .

Source; Researchers field work, (2025).

The data on table 5 shows the z-test analysis of the opinions of male and female youth leaders on the influence of morality on youth development programmes. At 0.05 level of significance and degree of freedom (DF) of 127, with z-calculated at 2.00 while z-critical remains at 1.96. Since the z-calculated value obtained was higher than the z-critical value, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that, there is significant influence of morality on youth development programmes in the south south geo-political region of Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

Findings from table 1. above revealed that, imbibing ethical values and doing the right thing enhances youth development programmes while wrong approaches impede youth development

programmes. At 0.05 level of significance and degree of freedom (DF) of 127, with z-calculated at 2.01 while z-critical remains at 1.96. Since the z-calculated value obtained was higher than the z-critical value, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that, there is significant influence of ethics on youth development programmes in the south south geo-political region of Nigeria.

Findings from table 2. above revealed that, respect for constituted authorities, living a responsible life as well as hard work enhances youth development programmes. At 0.05 level of significance and degree of freedom (DF) of 127, with z-calculated at 1.98 while z-critical remains at 1.96. Since the z-calculated value obtained was higher than the z-critical value, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that, there is significant influence of values on youth development programmes in the south south geo-political region of Nigeria.

Findings from table 3. above revealed that, obedience to law and order, rescribing adequate sanctions and enforcing compliance enhances youth development programmes. At 0.05 level of significance and degree of freedom (DF) of 127, with z-calculated at 2.00 while z-critical remains at 1.96. Since the z-calculated value obtained was higher than the z-critical value, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that, there is significant influence of morality on youth development programmes in the south south geo-political region of Nigeria.

Conclusion

Based on the findings from the study above, the study concludes that, ethics, values and morality to a very large extent positively influence and enhance youth development programmes in the south south geo-political region of Nigeria.

Recommendations

Consequent upon the findings of the study, the researcher recommends as follows;

1. The government, school administrators and curriculum developers should ensure that ethical education is included in the curriculum and studied at all levels of education.
2. The government, school administrators and curriculum developers should ensure that values education is included in the curriculum and studied at all levels of education.
3. The government, school administrators and curriculum developers should ensure that moral education is included in the curriculum and studied at all levels of education.

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