



Youth Culture as Correlate of Social Values of Undergraduates in South-East, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated youth culture as correlate of social values of undergraduates in South-East, Nigeria. The study adopted a correlational survey design. The population of the study comprised 18, 200 male and female undergraduates of public and private universities in South-East, Nigeria. Multi-stage sampling techniques were adopted to select a sample of 910 respondents for the study. The study was guided by 2 research questions and 2 null hypotheses. Two instruments: Youth Culture Scale (YCS), and Social Values Questionnaire (SVQ), were used for data collection. The instruments were validated by five experts. Data were analyzed using Regression Coefficient and PROCESS MACRO t-test through SPSS version 25.0. Hypothesis one was tested using Regression ANOVA while hypothesis two was tested using PROCESS MACRO t-test at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that: there was a significant relationship between youth culture and social values of undergraduate students; the moderating influence of gender on the correlation between youth culture and social values of undergraduate students was not significant. Based on the findings, it was recommended that: academic planners and lecturers should help in organizing yearly orientation programmes for the students in order to sensitize and enlighten them on the risks associated with negative youth practices; and the need to always imbibe positive attitudes within and outside the school environment; lecturers should focus more on the students' behaviours and attitudes in and outside the campus; rather than relying only on the course contents. Policy makers, stakeholders and curriculum planners should design and implement programmes that would help students to recognize, appreciate and show regards for social values.

Keywords: Social Values, South-East, Undergraduates, Youth Culture

Introduction

The way youths live their lives (youth culture), seem to be associated with social values of undergraduate students in South-East, Nigeria. Within societies, there exist certain values that are generally acceptable by the people. Among these values or ideals are human dignity, equality of rights, social progress, freedom, and peace (Kofi, in Williams, 2014). These values are universal and applicable to every individual of all ages (Sagive, Roccas, Cieciuch & Schwartz, 2017); and thus, could be referred to as social values.

In an ideal world, social values are standards that most members of a society agree with and that help them realize a better society (Dogan, in Mean & Tojerow, 2018). According to Yazici (2014), social values are moral convictions that represent the shared views and emotions of the people that make up the society. Such moral convictions are: being nice to one another, being honest and supportive (Zach, 2019); equal rights, honesty, freedom, respect, peace, conformity and accomplishment. There are many components of social values as already pointed out above; but this study focuses on the following: peace, conformity, social progress, human dignity and freedom. These components of social values are chosen because they seem to mostly address the prevailing youths' problems. For instance, the present-day societies seem to be in a state of chaos (lack of peace and unity); members of the society especially the youths hardly conform to some of the societal rules and regulations; social progress is seriously dwindling as seen in denial of rights and marginalization. There are observable lack of respect and regard for human dignity; and abuse of freedom among the youths. Social values are fundamental tools for an individual to survive in the society (Mohd & Saima, 2014). This implies that, adherence to social values would likely prevent and address some societal challenges thereby, improving individuals' chances of survival. Operationally, social values could be seen as those cherished goals and standards that are generally or universally acceptable to guide, direct and coordinate human behaviour and livelihood.

Unfortunately, undergraduate students in South-East, Nigeria, show little or no regard for social values. According to Saima (2014), some youths especially undergraduates show little or no regard for social values. They are found to indulge in social vices such as, internet fraud, kidnapping (abduction), rape, and suicide, to mention but a few. Indulgence in these vices may likely affect undergraduates' personal and interpersonal relationships; psychological well-being, and academic engagement/achievement; and also, hamper social and economic stability of the people of the society in general. Undergraduates' involvement in these social vices could be attributed to some factors like: unemployment, poverty, religion, politics, illiteracy, corruption and greed (Uzochukwu, 2023); peer pressure, cultism, uncontrolled sexual urge, indecent dressing and indiscipline (API, 2019); dissatisfaction with academic performance, mental and physical health illness, poor relationship with parents, financial stress, hopelessness, depression, and social isolation (Mark, Arinaitive & Rukundo, 2022); moral decadence or depreciation (Aminu, 2017); low standard of living (low socio-economic status) (Oyeoku & Azikiwe, 2013). In spite of all these researches, the incidents of kidnapping (abduction), internet fraud, rape and suicide among undergraduate students still persist. This creates tensions and worrisome situation in higher institutions of learning, as well as the entire society. Therefore, this study sought to investigate if this disregard for social values is associated or related with youth culture.

Youth culture is a complex concept that is perceived and interpreted by researchers in different ways. Youth culture could be defined as the shared norms, values, and practices of young people. Youth culture encompasses and connotes everything youths do in the pursuit of their goals (Spacey, 2019). According to Spacey, youth culture is the culture that emerges amongst teenagers and young adults; Spacey noted that, youths participate in the traditional culture that is handed down from the past; but in some cases, this leads to changes in the traditional culture as youths reinterpret things; thereby, forming a subculture of their own known as 'youth culture'. Whitely (2015), refers to youth culture as a counter culture characterized by the tendency toward individual consumption of things like apparel, record players, movies, and various forms of amusement. Youth culture manifest in different areas such as Education, sports, politics, business, religion, fashion, music, entertainment / media, dating/marriage,

networking, drug use and others. This is in line with Preyed and Long (2020), who assert that addiction to substances and other addictive behaviours is one area where youth culture—and culture in general—is developing at a rapid pace. According to Preyed & Long, youths are frequently more inclined to participate in these practices than in more conventional ones because they typically require extraordinary inventiveness and expertise. Youth culture could be positive or negative as the case may be.

Positive youth culture refers to the attitudes, behaviours, beliefs, and values displayed by young people that are considered beneficial and constructive; positive youth culture is characterized by a sense of inclusivity, acceptance, and respect for others, as well as a dedication to making a positive impact on the world around them (Livingstone, in Consalvo & Ess, 2011). This can manifest in various forms, such as activism, volunteerism, artistic expression, mentorship and peer support, skill-building, innovation and entrepreneurship. Young people may benefit from positive youth culture as well as the society; for example, most youths who indulge in positive practices, discourage their friends from using drugs or engaging in sexual activities. Also, some youths who are into digital activism and social media advocacy, use social media platforms and digital tools to raise awareness, share their stories, and advocate for social change on important issues. Furthermore, positive youth culture encourages peer leadership skills, empowerment, and active participation in decision-making processes that favour young people's lives (Santosh, 2023). Santosh noted that, positive youth culture encourages young people to be the best version of themselves and to contribute positively to the society. Negative youth culture refers to attitudes, behaviours, beliefs, and values exhibited by young people that are perceived as undesirable, harmful, or counterproductive to both individuals' well-being and societal norms (Dullas, Yncierto, Labiano, & Mercelo, 2021). Negative youth culture may involve engagement in risky sexual behaviours, involvement in criminal activities, participation in destructive peer groups, or adherence to harmful ideologies. Negative youth culture would likely have detrimental effect on young people's mental health, relationships, social values, academic engagement/performance, and future opportunities. Although there are many aspects of youth culture, this study focuses on drug use/abuse.

Drug use seems to be prevalent amongst the youths especially undergraduates in south-East, Nigeria. Agberotimi (2018), asserts that substance abuse has become a widespread issue in modern society, and what is even more worrisome is the recent rise in the number of young people engaging in this harmful practice. These youths take alcoholic drinks, hard/illicit drugs like marijuana, cocaine, heroin, tramadol, ice (nkpurummiri) and others (Alberta Health Services, 2023). These drugs are capable of rendering one useless in the sense that, one would hardly think of anything positive, nor engage in anything worthwhile both socially and academically. Psychoactive substance use remains one of the main issues facing public health worldwide (UNODC - an office of the United Nations on drugs and crime; and WHO – world health organization, 2020). Several factors have been pointed out to be responsible for youths' indulgence in negative practices. For instance, mental health issues, such as depression and anxiety, can contribute to youths' indulgence in negative practices (Onuoha, 2018); dysfunctional family dynamics, such as parental conflict and neglect, can contribute to youths' engagement in negative practices (Ozumba, 2019). Youths' exposure to social media, porn videos, clubbing, partying and dating may likely make them curious to experiment on risky sexual behaviours and other negative practices. These negative practices are capable of making the youths engage passively in academics; and also indulge in social vices such as internet fraud, kidnapping, rape, and suicide. Indulgence in these vices indicates disregard for social values of peace, conformity, social progress, human dignity, and freedom. From the context of this study, youth culture could be seen as the sum total of youths' lifestyles – their beliefs, pattern of reasoning, feelings, behaviours, dressing, language, interest, music and dating. Youth culture is commonly seen amongst the undergraduate students.

Undergraduate education is defined as education conducted after secondary education and prior to postgraduate education (Ellett, 2019). According to Sethna (2023), an undergraduate is a college student pursuing a bachelor's degree or a comparable degree; these students often experience happy and challenging situations within and outside their academic environment. Some of these challenging situational experiences ranges from; sexual harassment, stealing, addiction, poor environmental

conditions and overcrowded classrooms, indefinite strike, inhumane lecturers, lack of basic amenities/learning materials, poor feeding, to exam malpractice (Saminu, 2016). In universities, one would observe or come across undergraduates with different beliefs, attitudes, values, interests, manners, and overall lifestyles. Tobi (2016), and NL official (2016), pointed out different types of students one would meet in Nigerian Universities such as: the party goers, the fashionistas, the bookworms, the library goers, the student's right activists, the mobile kiosks, the talkative, the fellowship brothers/sisters, the dubbers, the borrowers, the drug addicts, the big planners, the kleptomaniacs, the phone lovers, the anxiety dwellers. In this study, undergraduate students could be seen as those students who are still in the university or higher institutions of learning, struggling to obtain a bachelor's degree or its equivalent. These students may be between the ages of 17 to 30, as the case may be. The correlation between youth culture and social values could be moderated by gender.

Gender (male or female) is a description of the sex of an individual that is, the masculine and feminine nature of humans. It refers to the behavioural, cultural, or psychological traits typically associated with an individual's sexual identity. Gender according to Santrock (2005), prescribes sets of role behaviours expected of male and female individuals in their thinking, actions and feelings. Yang (2010), defined gender as social attributes and opportunities related with being male or female and the relationship between men and women, boys and girls, as well as those between men and women that are socially constructed and are learned through the process of socialization. Olubunmi (2001), concluded that, gender differences are intolerable hence, would be right to treat boys and girls in schools differently due to their natural disposition. From the context of this study, gender could be seen as a moderating variable that is likely to influence the relationships between the independent and the dependent variables. This influence could be attributed to the physiological, psychological, cultural and social state/condition, and experiences of the male and female undergraduates. In view of the above, it is credible to assume that the way youths live their lives is associated with social values of undergraduate students in South-East, Nigeria. Also, gender influences the correlations between the variables of this study. Could these assumptions be true? It is against this background that the researchers sought to carry out this study.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of the study was to investigate youth culture as correlate of social values of undergraduates in South-East, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to ascertain the relationship between:

1. Youth culture and social values of undergraduates.
2. Youth culture and social values of undergraduates as moderated by gender.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between youth culture and social values of undergraduates?
2. What is the moderating influence of gender on the relationship between Youth culture and social values of undergraduates?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance guided the investigation:

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between youth culture and social values of undergraduates?

Ho₂: The moderating influence of gender on the relationship between youth culture and social values of undergraduates is not significant.

Research Method

This study adopted a correlational survey design. This type of research design investigates relationships between variables without the researcher controlling or manipulating any of the variables; a correlation

reflects the strength and /or direction of the relationship between two or more variables (Bhandari, 2022). The direction of a correlation can be either positive or negative. It is positive when both variables change in the same direction; but negative when the variables change in opposite direction. While zero correlation implies that there is no relationship between the variables. This research design is considered appropriate since this study sought to ascertain if there are relationships between the variables under investigation. The study was carried out in South-East, Nigeria. This geo-political zone is made up of 5 states (Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo). There are 11 public and 15 private universities in South-East Nigeria. South-East Nigeria is considered appropriate for the study because there are many undergraduates of both public and private universities that would make up the population of the study; from which the sample was drawn. The population of this study comprised 18,200 male and female 300 level undergraduate students admitted in 2020/2021 academic session into the public and private universities in South-East, Nigeria (Eburu, Edet & Okpa, 2020). The sample size of the study is 910 undergraduates (500 males & 410 females) from 4 public and 2 private universities randomly drawn from Abia, Anambra and Imo state Universities. Multi-stage sampling procedure was used to draw the sample. Two instruments were used by the researcher for data collection. The first instrument titled Youth Culture Scale (YCS) was used to collect data from undergraduates based on their life-styles. The second instrument titled Social Values Questionnaire (SVQ) was used to collect data concerning undergraduates' perceptions towards Social Values. The researchers developed the items of the instruments through the information derived from the review of literature. The instruments were subjected to face validation by five experts. The instruments were structured on a four-point rating scale with different response options – Always (4 points), Sometimes (3 points), Rarely (2 points), Never (1 point) for YCS; Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1) for SVQ. In order to determine the internal consistency of the items, the instruments were trial tested and the data obtained were analyzed using Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficients. The reliability indices for the two instruments are; .71 for YCS, and .76 for SVQ respectively. Direct delivery method was used to administer the instruments to the students with the help of three research assistants. Data were analyzed using Regression Coefficient and PROCESS MACRO t-test through SPSS version 25.0. Hypothesis one was tested using Regression ANOVA while hypothesis two was tested using PROCESS MACRO t-test at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question one: What is the relationship between youth culture and social values?

Table 1: Regression analysis of the correlation between youth culture and social values

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.321 ^a	.103	.102	6.09729
a. Predictors: (Constant), Youth Culture				

Table 1 shows that the magnitude of the relationship between youth culture and social values is ($R = .321$) with an associated coefficient of determination for ($R^2 = .103$). This means that there is a low positive relationship between youth culture and social values; implying that an increase in the youth culture of students, will lead to an increase in their disregard for social values. Besides, the coefficient of determination of .103 indicates that a 10.3% variation in the social values of the students is explained by youth culture. This means that 89.7% variation in the social values of the students is explained by other factors, not youth culture.

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between youth culture and social values.

Table 2: Analysis of variance of the correlation between youth culture and social values

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3223.479	1	3223.479	86.706	.000 ^b
	Residual	27994.261	753	37.177		
	Total	31217.740	754			

a. Dependent Variable: Social Values

b. Predictors: (Constant), Youth Culture

Table 2 revealed that there is a significant positive correlation between youth culture and social values, $F(1, 753) = 86.706, p = .000$. Thus, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between youth culture and social values is rejected since the associated probability of .000 is less than the .05 level of significance.

Research Question Two: What is the moderating influence of gender on the relationship between youth culture and social values?

Table 3: Process Macro analysis for the moderating influence of gender on the relationship between youth culture and social values.

Model	Gender	R	R Square	R	t	P
1	Male	.314 ^a	.099	.116	1.867	.062
	Female	.310 ^a	.096			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Youth Culture

Table 3 shows that the correlation coefficient between male students' youth culture and social values is ($R = .314$) with a coefficient of determination of ($R^2 = .099$). On the other hand, the correlation coefficient between female students' youth culture and their social values is ($R = .310$) with a coefficient of determination of ($R^2 = .096$). Thus, the correlation coefficient for moderating influence of gender on the correlation between youth culture and social values is ($R = .116$).

Hypothesis two Ho₂: The moderating influence of gender on the correlation between youth culture and social values is not significant.

Table 3 reveals that there is no significant moderating influence of gender on the correlation between youth culture and social values, $t = 1.867, p = .062$. This implies that gender does not influence the relationship between youth culture and social values. Thus, the null hypothesis is not rejected ($p > .05$).

Discussion

The findings of the study show that, there is a significant positive correlation between youth culture and social values. This implies that, undergraduates' disregard for social values of peace, conformity, social progress, human dignity and freedom is associated with youth culture (drug use/abuse). This is in line with the findings of Egbe (2013), that drug use/abuse is a social problem basically associated with young people; drug abuse leads to health-related issues and the development of aggressive behaviour and depressive mood. These findings are clear indications that negative youth practices would definitely lead to social problems.

The moderating influence of gender on the correlation between youth culture and social values was not significant. This implies that the relationship between youth culture and social values of undergraduates does not depend on the gender (male or female). The rate at which male and female undergraduates show disregard for social values does not differ significantly. This is not in agreement with the findings of Washington (2018), which showed that, gender significantly and positively related to conformity. As such, males reported higher levels of conformity than female participants. Also, the findings of Egbe (2013), showed that drug is mostly abused by male undergraduates than the female. This disagreement could be linked to the differences in the number of social values examined by both studies.

Conclusion

Since youth culture is associated with social values of undergraduates in South-East, Nigeria, it is reasonable to conclude that, undergraduates who show little or no regard for social values, are the ones who indulge in negative youth practices. Whereas, undergraduates who show regard for social values, are the ones who indulge in positive youth practices.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion, academic planners and lecturers should help in organizing yearly orientation programmes for the students in order to sensitize and enlighten them on the risks associated with negative youth practices; and the need to always imbibe positive attitudes within and outside the school environment. Lecturers should be on the watch out for the kind of attitudes students put up or display in and outside the campus; instead of relying only on the course content.

Policy makers, stakeholders and curriculum planners should design and implement programmes that would help the students to recognize, appreciate and show regard for social values.

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