# APPLICATION OF DEWEY'S NOTION OF EDUCATION AS A PARTICIPATION OF SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNES AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ENUGU STATE

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#### **AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTION**

The sole author designed, analyzed and interpreted and prepared the manuscript.

Original Research Article

#### **ABSTRACT**

The study investigated the application of Dewey's notion of Education as a participation in social consciousness among secondary school students. The study adopted survey research design. Simple random sampling technique was adopted in selecting 168 SSS2 students from four intact classes in four randomly selected secondary schools in Udi Education Zone, Enugu State, Nigeria. A questionnaire instrument, developed by the researcher and validated by experts was used in data collection. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach alpha procedure and the reliability index was found to be 0.89. The study was guided by four research questions and two hypotheses. The hypotheses were tested at .05 significant level. One of the results of the findings showed that students exposure to electronic media, peer influencing, student's poverty level and academic disposition are all aspects of moral decadence they exhibit due to lack of Igbo moral concepts and value systems in them, which influence their social consciousness. There was no significant difference (P < .05) found in the opinions of the male and female respondents regarding the extent of moral decadence among the students due to malformation of the Igbo moral concepts and values that influence their social consciousness, among other issues.

## **Keywords:** [Put four to eight keywords]

# 1. INTRODUCTION

John Dewey was an American theorist who gave his greater attention to philosophy, particularly to pragmatism. His first famous attempt to put his philosophical perception into educational practice was when he founded his renowned laboratory school for children, ages from four through fourteen. Dewey's aim was to make the school a miniature community and an embryonic society. Dewey (1966)

demonstrated that education is a function of individuals' "participation in social consciousness of the race". He believes that man in a self-renewing process, naturally and incidentally finds himself trying to renew and preserve his life and that of the community through initiating the young ones into the social life of the society. He believes that this education as initiation, is a matter of urgent necessity because man comes and goes, hence the reality of birth and death. However, when social life becomes

complex through civilization, education as initiation is ineffective in maintenance and preservation, and transmission of social heritage from the older culture to the succeeding one. So, the gap between the original capacities of the immature, and the standard and customs of the elders increases, and widens. Dewey opined that the option is the introduction of the formal education that will ensure that the child carries his interest into the large society represented in books and other symbols of knowledge contained in the formal educational curriculum. He maintained that without such formal education, it is not possible to transmit all the resources and achievement of a complex society to the succeeding generation. The intimate relationship between culture and education is evident from the fact that one of the major aim of education is to impart the cultural heritage and social heritage (Kumar, Retr. 2017). The Dewey's notion of education as a participation in social consciousness of the race explains why the NPE (2013) objectives insisted on developing in the entire citizenry a strong consciousness for education and ensuring acquisition of ethical, moral and civic values needed in their lifelong learning. Dewey's notion of education as a participation in social consciousness is timely because Abba (2015) rightly observed that moral decadence in our society has reached such a level that calls for concern; and any society that is not normally sound is bound to witness all sorts of social menace. The necessity of this social significance of education explains why Dewey noted education participation in social consciousness of the race. This idea is also expressed in philosophy of Nigerian Education.

Philosophy of Nigerian Education demanded that basic educational objectives should include:

Developing in the entire citizenry a strong conscious-ness for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotion; ensuring the acquisition of the appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, communica-tive "arid" life skills as well as the ethical, moral, security and civic values needed for the laying of a solid foundation for lifelong learning (NPE, 2013, p.15).

These statements of the National Policy on Education (NPE) indicates the need to build social consciousness in the school children. Moreso, by entrenching, ethical, moral and civic values in the objectives of the philosophy of Nigerian education, it clearly reveals that there is notion of derailing/falling standard/moral decadence/social vices, and the likes, that secondary school students exhibit. It appears to suggest that majority of the present day students lack participation

in social consciousness of the society. Really, the fundamental problem with Nigerian society is lack of moral consciousness (Uzoigwe, 2017). Our society has witnessed a tremendous deterioration in its moral. social and educational values, especially among the youths (Chima, 2010). These two assertions suggest that our youths are normally bankrupt. This, according to Abba (2015) may include not paying attention to school or drop-out of school, and worst of all, dedicating the most productive stage of life to temporary fun. Obviously, the objectives of Nigerian education can be achieved through school system and teachers who inculcate in the students moral and ethical values. The school system, or the teacher has to evolve ways of constructive preparation of the children's abilities in order that they are prepared to meet the needs and challenges of tomorrow (Ella, 1993). The school should thus, provide for community living where the new values can take root under the direction of the teacher who himself should be a mature person with positive values and attitudes and be prepared to be a learner at all times (Ella, 1993). The above assertions by Ella (1993) appears to suggest that school and the teacher are responsible for transmission of ethical, moral, civic duties, among others, with ultimate intention of curbing/eliminating the moral decadence inherent in the students' lives as basis for the child's lifelong learning. On this observation, Afuge (2015) said that moral decadence among students is as a result of poor upbringing and suggested that if parents, teachers and even the society support adequate teaching of moral education in Nigerian schools, it will curb the malady of moral decadence.

Evidences on the derailing social vices among the secondary school students abound. For instance, the rise in crime rate in schools in Nigeria in recent years, in spite of consequent punishments on offenders, seems to suggest that Nigerian schools, a meeting point of growing youths, are breeding grounds for ethical and moral decadence (Nwobodo, 2008). According to Nwobodo (2008), five (5) students from Federal Polytechnic, Ado-Ekiti who were arrested for possession of firearms and dangerous weapons were later identified as cultists and armed robbers. In this regard, Njoku (2016) reported that causes of moral decadence include poor upbringing, emphasis on materialism, decline in religious training and moral laxity as major causes of moral decadence. Ukeje (1979) believed that the deviant behaviours in schools are consequent upon the colonial destruction of the traditional norms of morality. Consequently, Nigeria as a nation is eroded of morality (Uzoigwe, Retr., 2017). The notion of these social vices among the students invariably affects their academic performance in schools. Hence, in order to be assured

that the moral formation of students will be in good hands, the teacher educator need only to ensure that pre-service teachers are prepared to be outstanding teachers (Narvaez, 2006). Obviously, teachers are the best bet to reverse the trend of moral decadence among the students. The notion of deviant behaviours among the students suggests that social consciousness or social life of the society are lacking in the life of the present-day students. It is on this note that Dewey demonstrated that education is a function of individual's "participation in social consciousness of the race".

Brandley (Retr., 2017) while theorerising on the differences between men and women noted that the two genders behave differently. It becomes pertinent, therefore, to investigate the extent of variation or otherwise in the opinions of male and female respondents in this work.

#### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

There is notion of persistent raging of social vices among the secondary school students. The situation has led to students' persistent involvement in undesirable behaviours such as cultism, robbery, kidnapping, rioting, raping, among others. Obviously, most of the students lack ethical, moral and civic values among other desirable behaviours in them, which are needed for lifelong learning as demanded in NPE (2013). Ideally, the situation has resulted in students' poor performance in school subjects. Dewey's doctrine or notion of education as an exercise or participation in social consciousness of a race, reveals how timely and relevant his educational doctrines are to our contemporary society, especially in Nigeria where social vices are raging on unabated. The problem of the study posed as a question is, to what extent can the Dewey's notion of Education as a participation in social consciousness be applied among secondary school students?

## 1.2 Purposes of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to determine how Igbo traditional values could be applied as pedagogical tool for teachers' use in teaching moral education among secondary school students in Enugu State. Specifically, the study sought to determine:

- 1. the extent moral decadence observed among the students due to malformation of the Igbo moral concepts and value systems, influence their social consciousness.
- whether the teaching of traditional moral values in schools can influence the moral development of the students and eventually impact on their moral consciousness.

- 3. how teachers can be equipped with the skills to instruct students about the moral values of the Igbo society.
- 4. the extent to which invoking the originality and authenticity of the Igbo traditional values could be used to inculcate in the students, civic, family and societal duties and social consciousness of the Igbos.

#### 1.3 Research Questions

The following research questions were posed to guide the study. Four research questions were posed as follows:

- 1. To what extent does moral decadence observed among the students due to malformation of the Igbo moral concepts and value systems influence their social consciousness?
- 2. How does teaching of traditional moral values in schools influence moral development of students and eventually impact on their moral consciousness?
- 3. To what extent can teachers be equipped with the skills to teach students about the moral values of the Igbo society?
- 4. To what extent can invoking the originality and authenticity of the Igbo traditional values be used to inculcate in the students, civic, family and societal duties and social consciousness of the Igbos?

#### 1.4 Hypotheses

Two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The hypotheses were tested at .05 significant level. They are as follows:

- HO1: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female students on the extent of moral decadence observed among the students due to malformation of the Igbo moral concepts and value systems that influence their social consciousness.
- HO<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female students on the extent to which invoking the originality and authenticity of the Igbo traditional values could be used to inculcate in the students, family and societal duties and social consciousness of the Igbos.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODS

The design of the study was survey because the subjects were reached in their natural environment. The population of the study consisted of 3627

2015/2016 SSS2 students in 55 secondary schools in Udi Education Zone of Enugu State (PPSMB, Enugu, 2017). The sample for the study was 168 SSS2 students obtained from four intact classes in four randomly selected schools from the 55 secondary schools in the zone. Out of the 168 subjects used for the study, 78 are males while 90 are females.

Instrument used for the study was questionnaire composed of four-point rating scale consisting of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The SA, A, D and SD were scored 4, 3, 2 and 1 points respectively. The instrument was face validated by experts in Educational measurement and Evaluation department of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Also, experts in philosophy of Education unit of the same University of Nigeria ensured relevance of its content, clarity of statement and logical organisation. The instrument was Pilot tested using 53 subjects that did not form part of the main study. Cronbach alpha was used to establish the reliability of the instrument which yielded 0.89.

The data collected with the instrument were analysed using mean  $(\mathfrak{R})$  to answer the research questions while t-test statistic was used to test the hypotheses at P<.05. The criterion of agreement of positive value is a mean  $(\mathfrak{R})$  of 2.5 and above and that of disagreement

for negative value, a mean  $(\Box)$  of below 2.5. Items with mean 3.50 and above were considered as being highly rated.

#### 3. RESULTS

The results were measured in accordance with the research questions and hypotheses.

Research Question One was answered using Table 1.

Table 1 shows that the respondents agreed that items 1-5 are all influencing moral decadence of students due to students' lack of Igbo moral concepts and value systems which thereby affects their social consciousness.

Research Question Two was answered using Table 2.

Table 2 shows from the respondents' responses, how teaching of traditional moral values in schools influence moral development of the students and impact on their moral consciousness. The table also revealed that all the items: 1 to 5 are accepted as influencing moral development of the students and eventually impact on their moral consciousness. The respondents agreed to a very great extent on item 3.

Table 1. Item mean  $(\mathfrak{R})$  scores for cluster A on extent of moral decadence of students due to lack of Igbo moral concepts and value systems that influence their social consciousness

Item no.	Item	Item	Remarks
		mean	
		(□)	
1.	Students exposure to electronic media in the form of movies,	3.45	Agree
	video/computer games and cell phones.		
2.	Peer influence and unstable home environments.	3.5	Agree to VGE
3.	Student who is fatherless or motherless or both.	3.31	Agree
4.	Students poverty level.	2.56	Agree
5.	Students poor academic disposition.	3.34	Agree

Table 2. Item mean  $(\mathfrak{R})$  scores for cluster B on how teaching of traditional moral values to students impact on their moral consciousness

Item	Item	Item	Remarks
no.		mean	
		$(\mathfrak{R})$	
1.	A well formulated philosophy of education for teacher education.	3.44	Agree
2.	Integrated and enhanced moral concepts and value systems of the Igbo society.	3.12	Agree
3.	Understanding and internalizing the basic principles of each value.	3.46	Agree to VGE
4.	The school system through dedicated and experienced teachers who teach through the methodology of education.	2.81	Agree
5.	Integration of moral concepts and value systems in literature lessons.	3.01	Agree

Research Question Three was answered using Table 3

Table 3 shows that the respondents agreed that items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7 are extent teachers can be equipped with the skills for effective instruction of moral values of the Igbo society to the students. In other words, the study found that teachers can be equipped with the skills for effective instruction of moral values of the Igbo society to the students through a well formulated philosophy of education, teachers' understand and internalizing the basic principles of each value, provision of suitable environment and facilities to schools for effective teaching of moral values, teaching of folklores in literature, teaching of mother tongue and in-service training, workshops and seminars to enhance teachers' methodology of instruction of moral values. The respondents disagreed that regular promotions, payment of salaries and allowances can constitute equipment to teachers with the skills to teach students about the moral values of the Igbo society. However, the respondents disagreed on item 6 which has mean (R) score of 2.41

which is below the criterion mean  $(\Re)$  of 2.50 and above.

Research question for was answered using Table 4.

Table 4 shows that out of 7 items, 2 items (items 3 and 7) are not agreeable to the respondents as items of originality and authenticity of the Igbo traditional values that can be used to inculcate in the students. civil, family and societal duties and socio consciousness of the Igbos. However, the respondents agreed that the remaining items (1, 2, 4, 5 and 6) could be used to a great extent to inculcate in the students, civil, family and societal duties and socio consciousness of the Igbos. That means community as a basis of originality of value system, extended familyhood as a basis of family value system, human life, possession of traditional material wealth as a basis of socio-consciousness of Igbo traditional value and traditional religion, constitute an extent originality and authenticity of the Igbo traditional values could be used to inculcate in the students, civil, family and societal duties and socio consciousness of the Igbos.

Table 3. Item mean  $(\mathfrak{R})$  scores for cluster C on equipping teachers with the skills to teach students about the moral values of the Igbo society

Item	Item	Item	Remarks
no.		mean (R)	
1.	A well formulated philosophy of education with clearly articulated desirable	3.41	Agree
	moral values for teacher education.		
2.	Teacher's understanding and internalizing the basic principles of each value.	3.05	Agree
	Providing school system with suitable environment and facilities to facilitate		
3.	teaching moral values of the Igbo society.	3.18	Agree
	Through the teaching of folklores in literature lessons.		
4.	Through the teaching of mother tongue.	3.24	Agree
5.	Through regular promotions, payments of salary and allowances.	3.14	Agree
6.	Through in-service training, workshops and seminars or skills and	2.41	Disagree
7.	methodology of teaching moral values.	2.97	Agreed

Table 4. Item mean  $(\mathfrak{R})$  scores for cluster D on extent originality and authenticity of the Igbo traditional values could be used to inculcate in the students, civil, family and societal duties and socio consciousness of the Igbos

Item	Item	Item	Remarks
no.		mean (R)	
1.	Community as a basis of originality of value system.	3.52	Agree
2.	Extended familyhood as a basis of family values system.	3.11	Agree
3.	Self-sacrifice as an alternative to self-interest.	2.04	Disagree
4.	Human life as a base for value system in traditional Igbo society.	3.15	Agree
5.	Possession of traditional material wealth as a basis of social consciousness of Igbo traditional value.	3.31	Agree
6.	Traditional religion as a determinant of value in traditional Igbo society.	3.2	Agree
7.	Originality and authenticity of Igbo traditional values are associated with extravagance.	1.84	Disagreed

Hypotheses 1 and 2 were answered using Tables 5 and 6.

Hypothesis one was answered using Table 5.

Table 5 shows that t-cal.value (1.29) is less than t-crit.value 91.96. That means the hypothesis of no significant difference is not rejected P<.05. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the opinions of the male and female respondents regarding the extent of moral decadence among the students due to malformation of the Igbo moral concepts and values that influence their socio consciousness.

Hypothesis Two was answered using Table 6.

Table 6 shows that t-cal.val. (1.03) is less than t-crit.val (1.96). That means the hypothesis of no significant difference was not rejected (P<.05). Therefore, there is no significant difference in the opinion of the male and female students on the extent to which the application of originality and authenticity of the Igbo traditional values in inculcating civil, family and societal duties and socio consciousness of the Igbos to the students.

#### 4. DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

Research question one relates to the extent moral decadence of students resulting from their lack of Igbo moral concepts and value systems, influence their social consciousness. In the results, items 1, 2, 3 and 5 were rated positively as influencing to a great extent, while item 4 was found to be influencing their social consciousness moderately. Students display of moral decadence was noted to emanate from all the above five items, that is, their exposure to electronic

media, peer influence, poor academic disposition, poverty level of students and students who is fatherless or motherless or both. This finding is in consonance with earlier report of Uzoigwe (Retr. 2017) that the fundamental problem with Nigerian society is lack of moral consciousness. This report is indicative that students lack Igbo moral concepts and value systems in them. This attitude negatively affects their socio consciousness and consequently, their academic progress. The ratings of the items positively were confirmed by the acceptance of the hypothesis of no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female respondents.

Research question two reveals that all the items (1 to 5) were rated positively as how teaching of traditional moral values to students impact on their moral education. Among these five items, item 3 (understanding and integrating the basic principles of each value was rated positively highest. This reveals that for the teaching of traditional moral values to the students to impact on their moral consciousness requires a well formulated philosophy of education for teacher education, integrated and enhanced moral concepts and value systems of the Igbo society, understanding and internalizing the basic principles of each value, integration of moral concepts and value systems in literature lessons, and integration of school system through dedicated and experienced teachers. This finding appears to contradict Uzodinma's (2013) view that many of the youths openly reject some of the traditional moral principles and question dogmatic beliefs held sacred for centuries because they do not have authentic or proper knowledge of what they are. Hence, their academic achievements in schools will improve when moral consciousness is impacted in them.

Table 5. Analysis of t-test statistic of mean  $(\mathfrak{R})$  responses of male and female students on the extent of moral decadence among the students due to malformation of the Igbo moral concepts and values that influence their social consciousness

Respondents	N	Mean (R)	S.D	df	t-Cal. Val.	t-Crit. Val.	Decision
Male	78	3.42	0.21				
Female	90	3.38	0.19	166	1.29	1.96	Accept H <sub>o</sub>

Table 6. Analysis of t-test statistic of mean (R) responses of male and female students on the extent to which application of originality and authenticity of the Igbo traditional values inculcates civil, family and societal duties and socio consciousness of the Igbos to the students

Respondents	N	Mean (R)	S.D	df	t-Cal. Val.	t-Crit. Val.	Decision
Male	78	3.37	0.34				
Female	90	3.42	0.26	166	1.03	1.96	Accept H <sub>o</sub>

Results of research question three shows that the extent teachers can be equipped with the skills for effective instruction of moral values of the Igbo society to the students is that teachers should be equipped with basic principles of each value, well philosophy of education, formulated suitable environment, teaching of folklores and mother tongue, regular promotions and payment of teachers' salaries and allowances among others. The respondents disagreed on item 6 because the item (6) was rated 2.41 which is below the mean, 2.5 criterion and hence was rejected as a skill suitable for equipping teachers for teaching moral values of the Igbo society to the students.

The results of research question four shows positively that the items 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 of originality and authenticity, could be used to a great extent to inculcate in the students, civil, societal duties, family and socio consciousness of the Igbos. The respondents disagree that items 3 and 7 can inculcate in the students socio consciousness of the Igbos, civil among others. These items 3 and 7 had mean rating score of 2.04 and 1.84 respectively and both are below the 2.5 criterion and hence were rejected. This finding agrees with Uzodinma (2013) who found that the mean value of items on the application of Igbo traditional values as moral education codes, presented an acceptance consistency of the proposition that the Igbo traditional moral codes can be used effectively by educators if they are trained, for moral education instructions in the secondary schools.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The study has demonstrated the Dewey's idea of education as a participation in social consciousness of the race. It has provided practical and progressive framework that can enable any society or nation to allow the young ones to engage meaningfully in their civic place in the preservation and development of their culture and sustenance of their cultural heritage. Dewey's notion of education as a participation in social consciousness is inevitable if Nigeria must overcome the moral decadence, lack of traditional values and value systems and lack of social consciousness in them. This is because the study has found that the moral decadence of students due to lack of Igbo moral concepts and value systems that influence their social consciousness emanated from students exposure to electronic media, influencing and unstable home environment, student who is fatherless and motherless or both, poverty level of the students and students' poor academic depression. Moreso, the study revealed that the teaching of traditional moral values to students impact on their moral consciousness. The study indicated a great need to equip teachers with the skills to teach students about moral values of the Igbo society. More, there is need to use originality and authenticity of the Igbo traditional values to inculcate in the students, civil, family and societal duties and socioconsciousness of the Igbos.

#### 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made in consonance with the findings:

- Teachers should embark on application of the Dewey's notion of education while teaching. By so doing, they are achieving the objective of the National Policy on Education as well as influencing students' social consciousness positively.
- 2. The recommendation of the teaching moral values, ethical, civic duties, among others in the NPE is not enough. It should be extended to authors of English and Literature textbooks, curriculum designers, among others.
- Stakeholders in education such as Ministry of Education, Examination Bodies, etc., should enact policies for effective and compulsory inculcation of civic, family, societal duties and social consciousness of the Igbos into the students' programme of studies.

#### **COMPETING INTERESTS**

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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# **QUESTIONNAIRE**

#### **Section A:**

Indicate by ticking on extent of moral decadence of students due to lack of Igbo moral concepts and value systems that influence their social consciousness.

Item no.	Item	Strongly agreed (SA)	Agreed (A)	Disagree (D)	Strongly disagree (SD)
1.	Students exposure to electronic media in the				
	form of movies, video/computer games and				
	cell phones.				
2.	Peer influence and unstable home				
	environments.				
3.	Student who is fatherless or motherless or				
	both.				
4.	Students poverty level.				
5.	Students poor academic disposition.				

#### **Section B:**

Indicate by ticking on how teaching of traditional moral values to students impact on their moral consciousness.

Item	Item	Strongly	Agreed	Disagree	Strongly
no.		agreed (SA)	<b>(A)</b>	<b>(D)</b>	Disagree (SD)
1.	A well formulated philosophy of education for				_
	teacher education.				
2.	Integrated and enhanced moral concepts and				
	value systems of the Igbo society.				
3.	Understanding and internalizing the basic				
	principles of each value.				
4.	The school system through dedicated and				
	experienced teachers who teach through the				
	methodology of education.				
5.	Integration of moral concepts and value				
	systems in literature lessons.				

# **Section C:**

Indicate by ticking on equipping teachers with the skills to teach students about the moral values of the Igbo society.

Item no.	Item	Strongly agreed (SA)	Agreed (A)	Disagree (D)	Strongly disagree (SD)
1.	A well formulated philosophy of education with clearly articulated desirable moral values for teacher education.				
2.	Teacher's understanding and internalizing the basic principles of each value.				
3.	Providing school system with suitable environment and facilities to facilitate teaching moral values of the Igbo society.				
4.	Through the teaching of folklores in literature				

Item no.	Item	Strongly agreed (SA)	Agreed (A)	Disagree (D)	Strongly disagree (SD)
	lessons.				
5.	Through the teaching of mother tongue.				
6.	Through regular promotions, payments of salary and allowances.				
7.	Through in-service training, workshops and seminars or skills and methodology of teaching moral values.				

## **Section D:**

Indicate by ticking on extent originality and authenticity of the Igbo traditional values could be used to inculcate in the students, civil, family and societal duties and socio consciousness of the Igbos.

Item no.	Item	Strongly agreed (SA)	Agreed (A)	Disagree (D)	Strongly disagree (SD)
1.	Community as a basis of originality of value				
	system.				
2.	Extended familyhood as a basis of family values				
	system.				
3.	Self-sacrifice as an alternative to self-interest.				
4.	Human life as a base for value system in				
	traditional Igbo society.				
5.	Possession of traditional material wealth as a				
	basis of social consciousness of Igbo traditional				
	value.				
6.	Traditional religion as a determinant of value in				
	traditional Igbo society.				
7.	•				
7.	Originality and authenticity of Igbo traditional values are associated with extravagance.				

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