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## ASSESSMENT OF ECOLOGICAL PREDICTORS OF MORAL DECADENCE IN OYO STATE, NIGERIA

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### **Abstract**

*This study determined the factors responsible for moral decadence hope that such findings will pave the way to remedy that will help in finding solutions to the challenges facing the adolescents in our society. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design of the ex-post-facto type among the characteristics of the adolescents and young children in Oyo State, Nigeria with the ex-post-facto type. The population of the study cut across the age categories of adults from age 30 and above. Stratified random sampling was used to get the samples for the study. The population involved were male and female and of different ethnic groups with 250 Yoruba, 167 Hausa and 83 Igbo. A self-administered method of data collection was used with a reliable and valid instrument. The instrument was divided into six sections. The first category measured the demographic information of the respondents, while sections B to F measured the government, society, school, religious organisations, the parents and the children themselves a contribution to the adolescents and youths moral decadence in the State. The reliability coefficient of the instrument was 0.87. The instrument response format patterned after the Likert format, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The findings showed that the government, society, parents, school and religious organisations have lost the expected roles on morality. Parenting style, unwillingness to take to correction by the children, get-rich-quick syndrome, parents looking for money at the detriment of taking care of the children, possession of the sophisticated phone, exposure to bad films, the use of hard drugs, broken home; age at marriage, not having good role model, unemployment and so on, and many others are the reasons why the society has experience incivility in the towns and cities. The researcher concluded that the problems with children are caused by the government, schools and religious*

*organisations, society, parents and the children themselves. Recommendations were made that urgent attention should be taken to impart good behaviour in to the life of our adolescents, that schools and religious organisations should do the needful by teaching the fear of God that will make them be good children in the society.*

**Keywords:** Assessment, Government, School, Religious Organisation, Society, Parents, Child, Moral Decadence

### **Introduction**

The lifestyle of our young children and youths is of great concern to some parents, society, religious organisations, school management and the various levels of government in the country. Whereas, the lifestyle of the youths and adolescents suppose to bother those who perceive dangers that will befall the future of this country. The future of Nigeria is uncertain when one looks at the issue of moral decadence and rate of killing innocent souls critically and the various groups involved as mentioned above. Because people say charity begins at home and whatever the children are in the society today, it is the product of the different homes and cross-fertilization of ideas from different societies and environment, because of nature-nurture environmental theory.

Presently, society had started witnessing different misbehaviour from the children like disobedience to elderly, laws of the land, law of the nature, serial killings of innocent souls, wearing of indecent dressing, children joining bad groups, drug abuse, gang raping, sexual risk behaviour, refusal to go to churches and mosque to serve God, refusal to go to school, inhumane behaviour acting in one way or the other contrary to societal norm, growing of bear, male children wearing female dresses, wearing of ear-rings by male children, wearing rag trousers (known as crazy jeans), worn-out/rag/torn shirt, ladies wearing short skirts, male children plaiting their hair, arm robbery, male children using female counterparts for money ritual, male children engaged in yahoo and yahoo plus in order to get-rich-quick, abandonment of academic exercise, some sets of children imposed themselves on the other, cultism, killing themselves, lives of people are meaningless to many of them, not interested in struggling for success they are ready to be consumer rather than producer, streets fighting, vandalisation of parked cars before day break and etc.

These misbehaviours are so rampant to the extent that no community is free of these havocs. These attitudes to those who care about the future of the country called Nigeria are a serious concern to them. If this menace is not checked on the time it could lead to a total collapse of our country in the sense that our educational system and religious houses will be phased out completely to insecurity when going and staying in school. The miscreants are seen moving up and down the streets snatching purses, bags and anything viable or useful to them without anybody challenging them and eventually prevent people from going to the house of worship to serve God.

Also, if this menace is not checked, there may not be any manpower to work in our country and expatriates may not be able to come to our country for fear of being molested, robbed of their sweat and perhaps killed. This study is set out to investigate the factors responsible for the present lifestyles of adolescents, young adults and youths' misbehaviour. The factors to be examined are broadly categorized into six headings with a lot of sub-headings underneath viz: government, society, schools, religious organisations, parental and the child factors or roles in the moral decadence in the society nowadays.

The parenting styles adopted by many parents are too bad. The majority of the parents cannot correct their children and may not want others to help them correct their children for them. If someone claimed to be a good parent and the person tries to correct misbehaviour child, if the parent of such child is around one will be discovered that the countenance of such parent will change indicating that, who has you to help me correct my child. This type of parent is too many in the society nowadays. The situation whereby the parent allows the child to do what the child feel like doing without watching or checkmating the child that what the child is doing is not right. This attitude contributed immensely to the problem exhibited by the children nowadays and our community is becoming volatile. On many instances when the children gathered themselves together and when an argument ensues among these children, they will start to fight and be torturing themselves with dangerous weapons as if they do not know each other or as if they are at the war front. It is here in Nigeria that parents will follow the child to school because the teachers corrected their child in school and the parent will go with hired thugs and the thugs will beat up the teachers for correcting the child for misbehaviour. This type of attitude is gaining

much ground nowadays and if this attitude goes unchecked society may become a less-educated community.

Another major character common among the children is a get-rich-quick syndrome. The majority of the children have become wayward, looking for money at all costs. Some of them have joined occult groups, money ritual groups, yahoo and yahoo plus groups to get money quickly. Boys are carrying girls to hotels intending to have fun with them but later on killed their assailants. Some are even eating their excreta with bread to get rich, this is very common among males while the females will rub themselves with excreta in that any male counterparts that sleep with her will die and will be used for money ritual.

Killing, maiming and making sacrifice or ritual is no longer sacred as it used to be it has become everyday affairs. The physical appearance of our children is no longer attractive. Because of the places they have entered, it is not uncommon to see young children growing bears, like Imams, having dreadlock hair on their head like a mad man in the streets, tattoo all over their body like one farmer used to identify their cattle in case of mixed-up, male children wearing and dressed like ladies by wearing earrings, neck chains, and they wore long faces like a bereaved person all in the name of getting rich quick.

Another problem is that parents should give birth to few children that they will be able to cater for. Because many parents are living from hand to mouth and yet they give birth to four, five, six children. At the end of the day, these children are at the mercy of nature to fend for themselves. These types of children can easily be lured into a bad group and the children that are not provided for by the parents, such parents cannot have any say over such a child. And eventually, such a child will become wayward. The parents should try as much as possible to give birth to several children they can cater for. They should remember the popular programme referred to as family planning, parents should plan their families for better living standards and better education.

The school and religious organisations (churches/mosques) have lost their credibility by neglecting their roles. The school and religious organisations are known as agents of correction and places of building good morale and promoting unity among the children. However, both the school and religious organisations have dropped this

laudable function. They are after making money. It is not uncommon to see schools charging high school fees; once the parents can pay such school fees, the children of such parents will be pampered to the last extent. The school will not even look at what such children are doing. The only thing the school is doing nowadays now is to see that the students are okay at the time when students are at their disposal. Moral teaching is no longer part of the school curriculum and if it is there no school where they are teaching it. Religious organisations like churches and mosques are no longer preaching good behaviour. The duo is after what they are going to get from the congregation. Knowing fully that if the truth is said the worshippers will no longer come to their church or mosque again and income of the pastors, Alfa, shepherd and the imam will be reduced. Because the Pastors and Imams are no longer preparing the congregants for the life eternal, but rather, they are raising congregation for selfish interest.

The Nigeria system of the political regime of government favours children decadence. Because in the civilian era masses can misbehave and go scot-free without being punished. When the children of a high ranked person in a ruling political party misbehave nothing will happen. It is an individual without god fatherism that need to caution himself or herself not to fall victim. Otherwise, such a person will be tortured without anybody to come to our aids. Because the political party in power are the lawmaker, law enforcement and law interpreter. The law can be interpreted to favour such individuals and leave the lawbreaker to go free and the complainants are detained and be punished in addition. The researcher is of opinion that the political regime or civil rule in Nigeria does more damage to our children who are the leaders of the future than good because the law was not allowed to take its course.

Lack of job or unemployment is another plaque against the moral decadence in our community. The parents are jobless and the children that are supposed to be assisting the parents immediately after the mandatory one year National Youth Service Corp programme become a liability on the parents. This compounded the problems and woes of the parents and this open the door for poverty. The female children become part-time commercial sex workers and the male children became robbers' kidnappers, ritualists, yahoo and yahoo plus syndicates. The unemployment further compounded the problem being

faced in this country because an idle hand is the devil workshop. The children cannot be controlled by the parents leading to various indecent behaviours among children and youths in this country because they are to live on one thing or the other. The issue of unemployment must as a matter of urgency be addressed to prevent more disasters than what we are seeing today.

Another major problem that is responsible for the disobedience and decadence on the part of the children attitude to life is love for material things - materialism. The possession of sophisticated phone make them be exposed to the activities of terrorists, diverse films that cannot promote good behaviour, majority of our children are exposed to pornography films, war films, horror films and uncensored films that are not meant for their ages. This particular factor is contributing majorly to our children's misbehaviour. Furthermore, the exposure of young children to hard drugs is another factor promoting bad behaviour among them. The children right from age seven, eight and nine upward have started using hard drugs. This is very bad because as soon as they used drugs there is nothing they cannot do again. They can go to any extent because life will become meaningless to them. This is very common among the children of the well to do in the society and the politicians. The issue of gang rapping, arson, kidnapping arm robbery and molestation among such children is very rampant. Because they are not aware of themselves anymore, they must have lost their senses of reasoning. As at this time, the mad person on the street is better than them.

The problem of bad leadership is another factor constituting to children misbehaviour. The leader that are lawless and the adults that cannot serve as good role models to the young ones are too many in our society and these types of people are too bad for our children to be seen in the community. This call for caution among our people, the elderly ones should serve as a good role model and not bad model. Some of the leaders to remain in political power and to keep on siphoning public money are using fellow human beings for rituals. These people are not hiding all these bad behaviours from the young ones and the young ones are also learning these bad behaviours from the elderly ones.

The problem of a broken home is another factor leading to children misbehaviour. The children that supposed to be taken care of

by both parents (the mother and father) are either left with the father or mother or at times to one of the relatives. The relative that has his/her lapses and perhaps the children that such person cannot cater for, now the person has to combine another person's child to his/her children leading to escalation of lack of proper care.

Another major problem is an unwillingness to take to correction. Children nowadays are too wise in their perception and they are unwilling to take to correction, if one corrects a child, the next thing such child will tell you are that what he/she has done is not wrong at all, that such individual should mind his/her business.

### **The Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study is to affirm the efficacy or potency of the predictive values of government, society, school, religious organisation, parents and children factors on children decadence behaviour among adolescents and youths in Oyo State, Nigeria. The specific purposes are to:

- (i) determine the relationship among government, society, school, religious organisation, parents and children factors on children decadence behaviour among adolescents and youths in Oyo State, Nigeria.
- (ii) highlight the relative contribution of each of these variables to children decadence behaviour among adolescents and youths in Oyo State, Nigeria; and
- (iii) document the composite contribution of each of these variables to children decadence behaviour among adolescents and youths in Oyo State, Nigeria.

### **Methodology**

**Research Design:** The study adopted a correlational research design. The researcher was interested in knowing whether there would be relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable without necessarily manipulating the independent variables. Here, the dependent variable, which is children decadence behaviour, was been paired with the independent variables (government, society, school, religious organisation, parents and children) to find out both their joint and relative predictive values.



**Sample and Sampling Technique:** The population of this study comprised of the aged 35 years and above who are already parents. A simple random sampling method was used to select 500 participants. The respondents were made up of 203 Males and 297 Females. Their ages ranged from 35 years to 88 years. 45% of these participants are first degree holders while those who possess less than first degree are 34.5% and the rest 20.5% participants have more than first degree certificates. 55.7% of the participants in this study aged between 35 years and 45 years of age, 23.5% of them aged between 46 years and 56 years while 17.5% were between 57 and 67 years of age and the rest 3.3% were above 67 years of age.

**Instrument:** An assessment scale titled "Moral Decadence Inventory" was used in this study and it was divided into seven subunits: government factor, society factor, school factor, religious organisation factor, parent's factor and children factor. Information relating to this study was collected through the use of a questionnaire developed to measure the variables. It was developed by the researchers, the instrument was a 51-items scale measured along with a 4-point Likert scale with options between 1= "strongly agree" to 4= "strongly disagree". The internal consistency of the instrument is 0.84. Out of 51 items 7 items were used to measure government factor, 8 items each were used to measure the roles of society and school factors while 6 items were used to measure religious organisation factor, 10 items were used to measure parents factor and the rest 12 items were used to measure children factor.

**Data Collection Procedure:** The selected places like both federal and state secretariats were visited: Churches, mosques, schools and community town halls were visited to collect data with three research assistants. The instruments were given to the participants after the instructions were read to them and the purpose of the research was made clear to them. The instrument was administered on respondents in five major cities in Oyo State, they are Ibadan, Oyo, Ogbomosho, Saki and Iseyin.

**Data Analysis:** Data obtained from the study were statistically treated to determine the relationship between the independent and

dependent variables, the joint and relative contributions of the independent variables on the dependent variable were also computed. The two basic statistical methods used were Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Multiple Regression Analysis at  $\alpha = 0.05$ .

### Results

Research Question One: Would there be significant relationships among the independent variables (government, school, religious organisations, society, parents and children) and adolescents and youths behaviour decadence in Oyo state, Nigeria?

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics and Zero Order Correlations among the variables**

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Government factor	1.000						
School factor	.408**	1.000					
Society factor	.341**	.442**	1.000				
Parental factor	.504**	.520**	.740**	1.000			
Religious organisation	.108**	-.081*	-.086*	-.094*	1.000		
Children factor	.110**	0.876**	.215**	.319**	.333	1.000	
Moral Decadence	.536**	.352**	.323**	.481**	.384**	.253**	1.000
Mean	20.740	32.740	30.620	24.210	28.160	26.430	28.500
Standard Deviation	2.020	2.320	4.780	6.360	2.940	2.080	2.890

The results from table1 showed that there were significant relationships among government, society, school, religious organisation, parents and children on adolescents and youths moral decadence. Parental factor had significant correlation with adolescents and youth behavioural decadence ( $r = 0.481$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), with children factor ( $r = 0.253$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and with religious organisations ( $r = 0.384$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) with school factor ( $r = 0.352$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and with government factor ( $r = 0.536$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and society factor ( $r = 0.323$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) of the respondents respectively.

**Research Question Two:** To what extent would the joint contribution of the independent variables predict adolescents and youths decadence behaviour in Oyo state, Nigeria?

**Table 2: Summary of Regression Analysis of the Combined Prediction of Adolescents & Youths Decadence Behaviour**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R		Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.877	0.770	0.765		5.8604
Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	279.804	6	55.961	162.941	.000 <sup>b</sup>
1 Residual	83.800	493	0.343		
Total	363.604	499			

Table 2 showed the prediction of the six independent variables to the dependent variable. That is, adolescents and youths decadence in Oyo state, correlated positively with the six predictor variables. The table also shows a coefficient of multiple correlations (R) of 0.877 and a multiple adjusted R square of 0.770. This means that 77.0% of the variance in the adolescents and youths decadence among people in Oyo State is accounted for by all the six predictor variables when taken together. The joint contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variables was significant ( $F = 162.961$ ;  $df = 6/244$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) and other variables not included in this model may have accounted for the remaining variance.

**Research Question Three:** What is the relative contribution of each of the independent variables on adolescents and youths decadence behaviour in Oyo state, Nigeria?

**Table 3: Relative contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable (Test of significance of the Regression coefficients)**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-2.109	.825		2.557	.011
School factor	.774	.051	.763	15.235	.000
Society factor	.057	.036	.259	7.571	.000
Children factor	.008	.034	.019	5.226	.000
Government factor	.016	.033	.116	10.487	.000
Parents factor	.741	.029	1.636	25.801	.000
Religious Organisations	.763	.031	.278	11.523	.000

Dependent Variable: Adolescents & Youths Behaviour Decadence

Table 3 reveals the relative contribution of the six independent variables to the dependent variable, expressed as beta weights. The positive value of the effects of the six independent variables is actually determined by positive reinforcement of these six variables, while negative reinforcement of these variables will bring us back the sanity and good moral values expected in the society. Using the standardized regression coefficient to determine the relative contributions of the independent variables to the explanation of the dependent variable parental factor made the most significant relative contribution to the prediction of adolescents and youths moral decadence ( $\beta = 1.636$ ,  $t = 25.801$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ); followed by school factor ( $\beta = 0.763$ ,  $t = 15.235$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), followed by religious organisation ( $\beta = 0.278$ ,  $t = 11.523$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), followed by society factor ( $\beta = 0.259$ ,  $t = 7.571$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), followed by government factor ( $\beta = 0.116$ ,  $t = 10.487$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and finally followed by children ( $\beta = 0.019$ ,  $t = 5.226$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) in that order among the adolescents and youths in Oyo State.

#### Discussion of Findings

Findings from research question one show a relationship that exists among government, society, school, religious organisations, the parents and the children and moral decadence among adolescents and youths

in Oyo state. The study revealed that there is a significant relationship between government, society, school, religious organisations, the parents and the children and moral decadence among adolescents and youths in Oyo state. All the factors under this study had a significant positive relationship with moral decadence; this implies that all these variables influenced moral decadence among adolescents and youth.

This is in line with the study of Ugwu (2010), they noted that an effective and peaceful environment to be maintained, all hands must be on deck that issues of security, peaceful coexistence and for adolescents and youth to engage in a prosocial behaviour it is not the work of government alone every other person must be involved. These researchers opined that every blame can be put on the part of the government that the perpetrators of bad behaviours are in our midst and that we should be able to identify them. Saheed (2013) noted that there is a relationship between the government factor and moral decadence, the researcher then concluded that if the government plays the role expected of it, there should be a reduction in the number of miscreants. Odeh (2015) noted that when young children and youths are denied of parental care the result is what we are witnessing in our society. The researcher called on the parents and the religious organisations should played their roles because charity begins at home. That the perpetrators of disobedience, kidnapping, street fighting, hoodlums, and so on, are from one house or the other in the society. Saheed (2013) also noted that these young children and youths are not properly guided to make sense out of their society. Therefore, they develop a lack of emotional intelligence which has negative implications on their moral values.

Findings from research question two show the joint contribution of government, society, school, religious organisations, the parents and the children and moral decadence among adolescents and youths in Oyo state. The result revealed that there was a joint contribution of the independent variables (government, society, school, religious organisations, the parents and the children and moral decadence among adolescents and youths in Oyo state) to the dependent variable (moral decadence) of adolescents and youths in Oyo state. This implies that there was a joint contribution of the independent variables (government, society, school, religious organisations, the parents and the children and moral decadence

among adolescents and youths in Oyo State) to the dependent variable (moral decadence) of adolescents and youths in Oyo State. This is in line with the study of Muraiwo and Ugwumba (2014) which noted that the prosocial behaviour of adolescents and youths is weak. Thus, this can be attributed to the negligence and negative attitude of the government, society, school, religious organisations and the parents to welfare and proper orientation to the children. Idensi (2010) in a study addressed the reasons for the moral decadence in society. Lack of interest in taking orders from significant others due to negligence of parental care led to adolescents and youths' moral decadence level in the society. Gert, ( 2012) & Chima (2010) found that lack of parental care, schools and religious organisation at the formative age of adolescents and youth consistently reflected in their behaviours in the society now. Most especially, the parents were accused of abandonment of the children in the course of looking for money and now the children are misbehaving and the money can no longer revise the gap created then. Bratton (2015) in his study concluded that there was a negative relationship between age and moral decadence which remains persistent over time.

Findings from research question three shows the relative contribution of each government, society, school, religious organisations, the parents and the children and moral decadence among adolescents and youths in Oyo state. It reveals that there is a significant relative positive contribution of government, society, school, religious organisations, the parents and the children to the dependent variable, expressed as beta weights. There is a relative coefficient of government, society, school, religious organisations, the parents and the children and moral decadence among adolescents and youths in Oyo state. Using the standardized regression coefficient to determine the relative contributions of the independent variables, the parental factor is the most potent contributor to the moral decadence of adolescents and youths in Oyo State. It implies that there is a significant relative contribution of government, society, school, religious organisations and children to the dependent variable (moral decadence) of youth and adolescents in Oyo State. In terms of the magnitude of contribution, a parental factor made the most significant contribution to moral decadence among youths and adolescents in Oyo

State, followed by school, religious organisation, society, government and finally followed by child factor.

This is in line with the study of Nwagwu and Fehintola (1999) that found that youths and adolescents' inability to behave normally had a negative impact on peaceful co-existence in society. Afuge (2015) showed that adjustment did function as a pure mediator on moral decadence as the dependent variable. Fehintola and Audu (2012) studied the reasons for the moral decadence level among youths and adolescents from teachers and students perspectives; the study showed these reasons, including a large number of distractions around the student like the spread of mobile phones, means fun, low motivation of students towards moral values and the weakness of the attention of parents to follow up the level of their children. Fehintola (2010) study showed that school factor strongly correlates with moral behaviour and youth and adolescent adjustment. Ugwu(2010) showed that there is a range of factors affecting prosocial behaviour such as: children factor, society factor and school factors. Odeh (2013) found that pressure from peers significantly influenced students' attitude toward moral behaviour. Saheed (2013) and Idensi (2010) emphasised that parental influence has much more impact on adolescents' behaviour than any other factor. They also further observed that adolescent interaction with their peers was direct and much more powerful than the influence of parents, society, religious society and other authority figures.

### **Conclusion**

This research work has established the fact that all the independent variables (government, society, school, religious organisations, the parents and the children) had a significant relationship with the adolescents and youth moral decadence in the State

### **Recommendations**

This study provided a significant base to motivate adolescents, youths and the entire populace in such a way that positive and moral behaviours are promoted. It was recommended that future research should intensify investigation into various factors of adolescents and youths moral decadence in society, specifically exploring how these factors relate and interact with one another and their potential

moderator effects on moral decadence. Based on the results of this study, the following additional recommendations are made:

1. All schools, religious organisations and society should wake up to their responsibilities by keeping eagle eyes on the adolescents and youths to make sure they are well behaved.
2. The government at the various levels should set up guidance and counselling offices facilitated by professionals to counsel adolescents and youths on the kind of behaviour that are expected of them in society. This will help take care of the adolescents and youths with emotional needs that they wish to share in confidence.
3. Religious bodies, notable individuals in the society, parents and Schools management also should invite specialists often to talk to adolescents and youths on dangers of moral decadence and pending looms in the state if adequate measures are not put in place.
4. Parents should monitor the company that the adolescents and youths keep to ensure they do not involve themselves with gangs that may lure them into perdition.
5. That government, society, school, religious organisations and the parents should set a good example to this incoming generation and future leader.
6. Hard work should be encouraged and society should stop celebrating millionaires and billionaires whose source of their wealth is not known.

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