

**THE ROLES OF VALUE SYSTEM IN MAKING A WELL-BEHAVED  
ADOLESCENT IN AKWA IBOM STATE: THE ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS**

By

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**ABSTRACT**

*This study examined the roles of value systems in making well-behaved adolescents in Akwa Ibom State. A value system is understood as an organized set of beliefs, principles, and ideals that guide behavior, decision-making, and social interactions, shaping what individuals consider right or wrong. During adolescence, a crucial developmental stage marked by physical, emotional, and social changes, the values acquired from family, school, religion, and society significantly influence character formation and behavior. A well-behaved adolescent is expected to demonstrate qualities such as respect, honesty, obedience, responsibility, and self-discipline, which enable positive adjustment to societal expectations. The study highlighted that value systems promote moral behavior, encourage respect for authority, foster obedience to rules, develop self-discipline, and help prevent deviant behaviors among adolescents. It further noted that despite challenges such as peer pressure, poor parental upbringing, social media influence, and societal moral decline, strong value systems remain essential for guiding adolescents toward responsible citizenship. The study therefore emphasized the need for collaborative efforts among parents, schools, religious institutions, and society to strengthen positive values for the proper development of adolescents. The study concluded that value system plays a very important role in shaping adolescents into well-behaved and responsible members of society in Akwa Ibom State. One of the recommendations made was that Parents should take active responsibility in the moral upbringing of their children by consistently teaching and demonstrating positive values such as honesty, respect, and discipline at home.*

**KEYWORDS: Value System, Well-Behaved Adolescent, Akwa Ibom State.**

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**INTRODUCTION**

A value system is an organized set of beliefs, principles, standards, and ideals that guide human behavior, judgments, and decision-making. It helps individuals distinguish between right and wrong and influences their attitudes, actions, and relationships within society. Values are acquired through family, culture, religion, education, and social interactions and they play a crucial role in shaping character and promoting socially acceptable behavior. According to Schwartz (2020), values serve as guiding principles that influence the evaluation of behavior and events, while Hitlin & Piliavin (2021) emphasized that values contribute to social cohesion by encouraging conformity to accepted norms and expectations. In contemporary society, where adolescents are exposed to diverse influences

through globalization and digital communication, a strong value system remains essential for ethical conduct and personal development (Bardi, 2023).

Adolescence is a critical developmental stage characterized by significant physical, emotional, cognitive, and social changes. It is the transitional period between childhood and adulthood during which young people develop their identity, independence, and capacity for decision-making. Branje, de Moor, Spitzer, & Becht (2021) described adolescence as a period of identity formation in which individuals explore personal values, beliefs, and goals to establish a coherent sense of self. A well-behaved adolescent is one who demonstrates respect, honesty, responsibility, self-discipline, and obedience to societal norms and expectations, qualities that contribute to healthy relationships and successful adjustment to society (Santrock, 2021; Steinberg, 2019).

In Akwa Ibom State, the value system plays a vital role in shaping adolescents into responsible and morally upright individuals. Through the teaching of moral behavior, respect for elders and authority, obedience to rules, self-discipline, and the rejection of deviant behaviors, values help adolescents become productive members of society. Akpan & Udoh (2020) observed that the moral values transmitted within the home significantly influence adolescent behavior, while Bassey & Akpan (2023) noted that respect for authority enhances behavioral adjustment among students. As adolescents face increasing challenges such as peer pressure, social media influence, and societal moral decline, the promotion of positive values becomes necessary for fostering discipline, responsible citizenship, and social stability.

### **Concept of Value System**

A value system refers to an organized set of beliefs, principles, standards, and ideals that guide an individual or society's behavior, judgments, and decision-making processes. It represents what people consider important, desirable, and worthwhile in life. Values influence attitudes, actions, and interactions with others, thereby shaping personal character and social relationships. As noted by Schwartz (2020), values serve as guiding principles that transcend specific situations and influence the selection and evaluation of behavior and events. A value system therefore provides a framework through which individuals distinguish between right and wrong, good and bad, and acceptable and unacceptable conduct.

The concept of a value system is closely linked to culture, family, religion, education, and socialization processes. Individuals acquire values through continuous interaction with their environment and social institutions. As noted by Roccas & Sagiv (2022), value systems develop over time through social experiences and cultural influences, enabling individuals to establish priorities and behavioral patterns. Consequently, a person's value system affects how they relate to others, respond to challenges, and pursue personal and societal goals.

Furthermore, a value system plays a crucial role in promoting social order and ethical behavior. It provides standards that regulate conduct within families, organizations, and communities. As noted by Hitlin & Piliavin (2021), values function as motivational constructs that guide human actions and contribute to social cohesion by encouraging conformity to accepted norms and expectations. In educational settings, value systems help students develop discipline, responsibility, honesty, and respect for authority, thereby enhancing moral development and citizenship.

In contemporary society, value systems are increasingly important due to rapid technological, economic, and cultural changes. Globalization and digital communication have exposed individuals to diverse beliefs and lifestyles, creating the need for strong value systems that support ethical decision-making. As noted by Bardi (2023), individuals with well-developed value systems are better equipped to navigate complex social environments and maintain consistency in their behavior despite external pressures. Therefore, the development of positive values remains essential for personal growth, societal stability, and sustainable development.

### **Concept of Adolescent**

An adolescent is a young person undergoing the transitional stage between childhood and adulthood, characterized by significant physical, cognitive, emotional, and social changes. The period of adolescence generally covers the ages of 10–19 years and is marked by puberty, identity formation, increasing independence, and the development of adult roles and responsibilities. Adolescence is the period of time when you physically and emotionally grow from childhood to adulthood (Diamond & Akpan,2022).

According to Branje, de Moor, Spitzer, & Becht (2021), adolescence is fundamentally a period of identity development during which individuals explore personal values, beliefs, goals, and social relationships to establish a coherent sense of self. The adolescent's quest for identity affects their educational decisions, professional goals, interactions with others, and psychological health.

Furthermore, Meeus (2022) noted that adolescence involves continuous intra-individual development in which biological maturation interacts with psychological and social experiences. Adolescents develop increased independence, self-control, and decision-making abilities throughout this time as they adjust to shifting social, familial, and educational demands.

Furthermore, adolescence is marked by substantial cognitive growth and the development of higher-order thinking skills. As noted by Liuzzi, Pine, Fox, & Averbek (2023), adolescents experience important changes in brain function and behavior that enhance their capacity for decision-making, learning, problem-solving, and emotional processing. These developmental shifts help young people become ready for adult duties while navigating more challenging social and intellectual contexts.

### **Concept of Well-behaved Adolescent**

A well-behaved adolescent is a young person who demonstrates positive behaviors that conform to the accepted norms, values, and expectations of society. Such adolescents exhibit respect for parents, teachers, elders, and peers, while maintaining good manners and appropriate conduct in various social settings. They are often characterized by obedience, honesty, and the ability to interact peacefully with others. According to Santrock (2021), adolescents who display socially acceptable behaviors are more likely to develop healthy relationships and adjust successfully to societal demands.

Self-discipline is one of the most important characteristics of a well-behaved adolescent. It involves the ability to regulate emotions, control impulses, and make

responsible decisions even in challenging situations. Self-disciplined adolescents are less likely to engage in risky or antisocial behaviors and are more likely to focus on academic and personal goals. Steinberg (2019) noted that the development of self-regulation during adolescence is essential for positive behavioral outcomes and responsible citizenship.

A well-behaved adolescent is also responsible and accountable for his or her actions. Responsibility is reflected in the ability to complete assigned tasks, fulfill obligations, and accept the consequences of one's behavior. Such adolescents demonstrate commitment to their studies, family duties, and community activities. The World Health Organization (2024) emphasized that responsible behavior among adolescents contributes significantly to their overall development, well-being, and future success.

Furthermore, well-behaved adolescents exhibit respect, empathy, honesty, and cooperation in their interactions with others. They value the rights and feelings of people around them and strive to maintain harmonious relationships. These qualities enable them to become productive members of society and contribute positively to community development. UNICEF (2023) asserts that adolescents who develop positive social and moral values are better equipped to participate meaningfully in society and transition successfully into adulthood.

### **Roles of Value System in Making Well-behaved Adolescent in Akwa Ibom State**

Below are the roles of value system in making a well-behaved adolescent in Akwa Ibom State.

#### **➤ It teaches moral behavior**

Teaching teenager's moral behavior is one of the value system's main functions. Adolescents learn the distinction between good and wrong through values including honesty, kindness, candor, justice, and love. A youngster is more likely to abstain from immoral behaviors like lying, stealing, cheating, and disrespect if they are appropriately exposed to moral ideals at home, at school, and in religious organizations. Teens who receive moral education are better able to develop moral beliefs and act in ways that are socially acceptable. According to Akpan & Udoh (2020), the home environment and the moral values transmitted within it play a significant role in shaping the behavioral pattern of adolescents in Akwa Ibom State. This implies that teenagers are more likely to develop good behavior if they are taught moral principles at a young age.

#### **➤ It promotes respect for elders and authority**

Teaching teenagers to respect parents, elders, teachers, religious leaders, and established authority is another crucial function of value systems. In Akwa Ibom State and throughout African civilization, respect is a highly esteemed cultural norm. Respect-oriented adolescents learn how to appropriately greet elders, communicate courteously, follow directions, and refrain from acting rudely. Adolescents who respect authority are also more disciplined and socially responsible. Bassey & Akpan (2023) observed that discipline practices and school climate influence students' behavioral adjustment, especially when respect for school

authority is emphasized. Consequently, teenagers who have a strong set of values are better able to engage with others in a polite, submissive, and humble manner.

### **It encourages obedience to rules and regulations**

Adolescents who have a strong value system are better able to comprehend the significance of following rules and regulations at home and at school. Teens who are taught obedience are more likely to obey commands, go to school on a regular basis, dress appropriately, abstain from forbidden activities, and live up to social and familial standards. Obedience lessens indiscipline and disobedience. According to Asikhia & Mohammed (2020), parental values significantly influence adolescent discipline and academic adjustment, showing that adolescents who are raised in homes where obedience is emphasized are more likely to conform to acceptable behavior. Obedience is frequently seen in Akwa Ibom State as an indication of a good upbringing and home instruction.

#### **➤ It develops self-discipline**

The value system greatly influences the development of self-discipline in adolescents. The capacity to regulate one's feelings, desires, speech, and behavior in order to act morally is known as self-discipline. Adolescents are frequently exposed to dangerous behaviors, including substance misuse, truancy, unhealthy friendships, and sexual immorality. Adolescents who have a strong value system are better able to withstand these temptations because they learn patience, moderation, self-control, and tenacity. Kretzschmar, Neumann, & Plichta (2022) found that self-control is strongly associated with positive adolescent adjustment and lower involvement in behavioral problems. This implies that teenagers in Akwa Ibom State are more likely to act appropriately and refrain from misbehavior when they are led by principles that promote self-control.

#### **➤ It prevents deviant behavior**

Deviant behaviors including theft, violence, cultism, drug misuse, exam malpractice, truancy, and sexual misbehavior can all be avoided with a solid moral system. Adolescents are less likely to engage in such behaviors if they are taught from an early age that they are immoral and socially unacceptable. Adolescents who uphold values like honesty, responsibility, integrity, and fear of God are better able to resist negative behavior even in stressful situations. Chukwu & Chukwudi (2020) noted that peer pressure is one of the major causes of deviant behavior among adolescents, but adolescents with strong moral values are better able to resist such pressure. Thus, the value system acts as a protective force against delinquency and antisocial behavior.

### **Other Roles of Value System**

According to Schwartz (2021), a value system provides a framework for making choices and judgments in everyday life. Individuals often rely on their values to determine what is right or wrong, acceptable or unacceptable. Through this role, values help people make consistent decisions that align with their personal and societal expectations.

➤ **Shapes Individual Character and Personality**

Bardi (2021) stated that values influence the development of character traits and personal identity. Individuals who embrace positive values such as integrity, diligence, and compassion are more likely to exhibit behaviors that reflect these virtues, thereby enhancing their moral development and social relationships.

➤ **Enhances Goal Setting and Motivation**

As noted by Sagiv & Roccas (2023), values serve as motivational forces that direct individuals toward meaningful goals and aspirations. People are often inspired to pursue objectives that align with their deeply held values, leading to greater commitment, satisfaction, and achievement.

➤ **Facilitates Cultural Preservation**

As emphasized by Inglehart & Welzel (2022), value systems play a crucial role in preserving cultural traditions, beliefs, and practices across generations. Through socialization processes within families, schools, and communities, societal values are transmitted to younger generations, ensuring cultural continuity and identity.

➤ **Promotes Ethical Behavior**

As illustrated by Maio (2021), value systems encourage ethical conduct by providing moral standards that guide behavior. Values such as honesty, fairness, responsibility, and respect help individuals distinguish between ethical and unethical actions, thereby promoting integrity in personal and professional settings.

**Factors that undermines Value System in Adolescents**

The following are factors that undermine value system in adolescents:

➤ **Poor Parental Upbringing**

Parental upbringing plays a significant role in the development of adolescents' values. When parents fail to provide proper guidance, supervision, discipline, and moral instruction, adolescents may struggle to distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behaviors. Lack of parental involvement can expose young people to negative influences, resulting in poor value formation. According to Santrock (2021), effective parenting promotes positive moral development and responsible behavior among adolescents.

➤ **Peer Pressure**

Peer influence is a major factor that can undermine the value system of adolescents. During adolescence, young people often seek acceptance from their peers and may imitate behaviors that conflict with societal norms and values. Negative peer pressure can encourage substance abuse, dishonesty, truancy, and other forms of misconduct. Steinberg (2019) noted that peers significantly influence adolescents' attitudes, decisions, and behavioral patterns.

➤ **Social Media and Internet Influence**

The rapid growth of social media and internet usage has exposed adolescents to diverse information and lifestyles. While some online content can be educational, exposure to inappropriate materials such as violence, pornography, cyberbullying, and materialistic lifestyles can negatively affect adolescents' moral values and behavior. The World Health Organization (2024) emphasizes that excessive and unsupervised media exposure can adversely affect adolescent social and moral development.

➤ **Broken Homes and Family Instability**

Family instability, including divorce, separation, domestic violence, and parental neglect, can weaken the value system of adolescents. Such circumstances may create emotional stress, insecurity, and behavioral problems that hinder moral development. Adolescents from unstable homes may lack the support and guidance necessary for developing positive values. UNICEF (2023) reported that supportive family environments are essential for fostering healthy adolescent development and positive social behavior.

➤ **Corruption and Moral Decadence in Society**

The prevalence of corruption, dishonesty, examination malpractice, and other unethical practices in society can negatively influence adolescents' value systems. When young people observe individuals gaining success through immoral means, they may perceive such behaviors as acceptable. This weakens their commitment to values such as honesty, integrity, and hard work.

**The Mitigating Strategies to the Factors that undermine Value System in Adolescent**

The development of a strong value system in adolescents is often threatened by several factors such as peer pressure, media influence, poor parenting, poverty, and weak moral instruction. In Akwa Ibom State and similar contexts, addressing these challenges requires coordinated efforts from families, schools, religious institutions, and the wider society. Effective mitigating strategies are therefore essential for promoting well-behaved adolescents who can contribute positively to societal development.

Strengthening parental guidance and effective home training is one important tactic. Adolescents are more likely to develop stable value systems when parents provide consistent supervision, emotional support, and moral instruction. The family remains the primary socialization agent, where individuals initially acquire their values. As noted by Schwartz (2020), personal values are shaped through early social experiences, particularly within the family environment, where children learn behavioral standards that guide their future decisions. Weak parenting, on the other hand, often exposes adolescents to negative influences.

Implementing moral and value-based education in schools is another crucial tactic. Through disciplinary procedures and organized instruction, educational institutions play a vital role in promoting moral behavior. While incorporating moral lessons into their lessons, teachers are supposed to set an example of exemplary behavior. Malti, Galarneau, and Peplak (2021) assert that structured learning environments that promote empathy, responsibility, and

prosaically behavior strongly influence moral development in adolescence. Schools therefore serve as corrective spaces where negative value influences can be reshaped.

In order to safeguard teenagers' value systems, media exposure must be monitored and controlled. Young individuals who use social media more frequently are exposed to content that could encourage aggression, materialism, and immoral behavior. Such exposure can warp their perception of appropriate social norms if it is not controlled. UNESCO (2021) emphasizes that digital environments significantly influence youth behavior and recommends media literacy education to help adolescents critically evaluate online content and resist harmful influences.

Another important mitigation tactic is positive peer group impact. Peer pressure is a strong social force because teenagers often emulate the attitudes and behaviors of their peers. Positive values are reinforced by encouraging teenagers to participate in constructive peer groups, including school clubs, youth organizations, and mentorship programs. As noted by Oberle and Molyneux (2022), adolescents who engage in prosaically peer interactions are more likely to develop emotional stability, responsibility, and academic commitment.

Lastly, developing teenagers' value systems requires community involvement and positive role modeling. Public figures, educators, and community leaders are expected to set an example by acting honorably and responsibly. According to Malti (2021), adolescents learn values not only through instruction but also through observation of adult behavior in society. Therefore, communities must actively promote programs that encourage civic responsibility, leadership development, and moral upbringing.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the value system plays a very important role in shaping adolescents into well-behaved and responsible members of society in Akwa Ibom State. It helps to instill moral values such as honesty, respect, obedience, self-discipline, and responsibility, which guide their behavior and interactions with others. When these values are properly taught and practiced within the family, school, religious institutions, and the wider society, adolescents are more likely to make good decisions and avoid negative influences such as peer pressure and social vices. Therefore, the continuous promotion and strengthening of positive values are essential for raising disciplined adolescents who can contribute meaningfully to the development and stability of society.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Parents should take active responsibility in the moral upbringing of their children by consistently teaching and demonstrating positive values such as honesty, respect, and discipline at home.
2. Schools should strengthen moral and civic education in the curriculum and ensure that teachers serve as good role models in behavior and character formation.
3. Religious and community leaders should intensify value-based teachings and mentorship programs that guide adolescents toward ethical and responsible living.

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