

Perception of Respect-Oriented Value Education Content on Verbal Abuse among Colleges of Education Students in Kaduna State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined students' perception of value education as a strategy for reducing verbal abuse in Colleges of Education in Kaduna State, Nigeria. The study was anchored on Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which explains that behavior is learned through observation, imitation, and reinforcement. A descriptive survey design was adopted, with a sample of 312 NCE II students drawn from Federal College of Education Zaria and Kaduna State College of Education Gidan Waya using stratified and simple random sampling techniques. Data were collected using the Value Education and Verbal Abuse Questionnaire (VEVAQ) with a reliability coefficient of 0.69. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research question, while a one-sample t-test tested the hypothesis at 0.05 significance level. Findings showed that students perceive respect-oriented value education as an effective strategy for reducing verbal abuse. The hypothesis test revealed a significant positive perception ($t = 97.77, p < 0.05$). The study concludes that value education promotes respectful communication and reduces abusive language among students. It recommends stronger integration of value education into curricula and regular value-based programmes to promote respect and peaceful coexistence

Keywords: Students, Perception, Value Education, Verbal Abuse, Social Learning Theory

Introduction

Education serves as a fundamental pillar in individual development, with schools playing a central role in shaping students' social and communicative skills. Thus, values education is at the epicenter of the educational process because values permeate educational policies, practices, school culture, curricula, and teaching methods (Balong, Mateo, Alibal, Velasco, & Mariacos, 2024). According to Carr (2023) values profoundly shape how teachers and students view their roles and responsibilities, touching on social, emotional, and intellectual dimensions. Lumpkin (2008) cited in Clare (2024) stated that values education aims to instill a foundational set of values including honesty, respect, compassion, responsibility, and fairness that are pivotal for students' growth as individuals and as members of society'. Values guide students toward becoming well-rounded, ethical individuals capable of thoughtful decision-making, understanding the ripple effects of their actions, and valuing diverse viewpoints (Packham, Taplin, & Francis, 2024). It is crucial for nurturing students' ability to make moral judgments, empowering them to tackle ethical challenges thoughtfully, and contributing positively to their communities and the broader world (Haste, 2018). Value education helps in building moral character and helps students develop self-respect, forming the basis of current study i.e. Respect-oriented value education as a means of addressing verbal abuse. Verbal abuse is a pervasive form of psychological violence that involves the use of words, tone, or language intended to demean, intimidate, humiliate or emotionally harm another person. It occurs at various social setting including workplaces and schools. Verbal abuse in the school environment manifesting as insults, teasing, and bullying poses a significant threat to students' emotional well-being and academic performance (Juliansyah, Yuliyanto, Ardiyanti, Hidayat, Lestari, & Al Adawiyah, 2025). Verbal abuse can have severe psychological effects, such as anxiety, depression, and diminished self-confidence, it can occur not only between students but also between students and teachers. Verbal abuse in schools significantly affects students' emotional stability, self-confidence, and social interactions, leading to anxiety, depression, and reduced academic engagement (Reswita & Buulolo, 2023). Verbal abuse affects students' ability to communicate effectively, further hindering their participation in classroom discussions and social interactions. Sari (2020) stated that the perpetrator of verbal abuse often engages in blaming, labeling, or scapegoating. Verbal violence can also manifest as curses, threats, insults, intimidation, accusations, and coercion. According to Nseabasi, and Akpan (2025) most of the abusive behavior of students in educational system is due to low social confidence.

Statement of the problem

Value education plays a prominent role in shaping the behavior of learners and helping them exercise restraint in their public interactions, particularly in relation to utterances such as verbal abuse. It also fosters responsibility, respect, and the development of better citizens. However, in recent times, it has been observed that students often, at the slightest

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provocation, engage in verbal abuse toward those who offend them. In the past, various approaches have been employed to address verbal abuse among N.C.E. students in Colleges of Education, including teacher interventions, workshops, and counselling services. Despite these efforts, the problem of verbal abuse has persisted unabated. Similarly, previous research approaches have not yielded a lasting solution to the issue. Against this backdrop, this study investigates students' perception of value education as a strategy for reducing verbal abuse in Colleges of Education in Kaduna State, Nigeria

Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study was to assess student's perception on value education as a strategy for reducing verbal abuse in colleges of education in Kaduna state, Nigeria. However, the study specifically seeks to;

1. Examine student's perception on the impact of respect-oriented value education content on the reduction of verbal abuse among students in Colleges of Education in Kaduna State

Research Question

The study answered the following question below:

1. What is the extent of student's perception on the impact of respect-oriented value education content on the reduction of verbal abuse among students in Colleges of Education in Kaduna State?

Research Hypothesis

The hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the perception of students on the impact of respect-oriented value education content on the reduction of verbal abuse among students in Colleges of Education in Kaduna State.

Theoretical framework

The theory explaining this study is hinged on Bandura (1977) Social Learning Theory. The study posits that human behavior is acquired through observation, imitation, modelling, and reinforcement within a social environment. According to Bandura (1977) individuals learn acceptable and unacceptable behaviors by observing the actions of significant others, such as teachers, parents, peers, and community members, and by experiencing the consequences associated with those behaviors. The theory emphasizes four key processes of learning: Attention – Individuals pay attention to behaviors exhibited by role models; Retention – Observed behaviors are stored in memory; Reproduction – Individuals imitate or reproduce the observed behaviors; Motivation – Individuals are motivated to adopt behaviors that are rewarded and avoid behaviors that are punished.

Application to the Study

In the context of Colleges of Education in Kaduna State, Social Learning Theory explains how exposure to value education content can influence students' perceptions and behaviors regarding verbal abuse. Students who are taught values of respect and civility and who observe these values being practiced by lecturers and peers are likely to develop positive attitudes toward respectful communication and reject verbally abusive behavior. Therefore, the theory provides a strong framework for understanding how value education can contribute to reducing verbal abuse among students.

Conceptual issues

Values education: Refers to educators' systematic effort to instill moral, social, and ethical values in students to nurture their character and promote responsible citizenship (Berkowitz, 2011 cited in Clare, 2024)

Verbal abuse: Verbal abuse, is a form of psychological aggression that involves the use of words to humiliate, insult, or intimidate individuals. Unlike physical violence, verbal abuse does not leave visible scars, but its long-term psychological impact can be just as damaging. (Juliansyah, 2025) Verbal violence refers to abuse carried out through words, such as slander, yelling, cursing, insulting, mocking, screaming, defaming, using harsh language, and humiliating someone publicly (Erniwati & Fitriani, 2020). Mahal and Rahman (2021), state that verbal violence typically involves verbal behaviors where the perpetrator employs a communication pattern that includes insults or derogatory remarks. Abusive behaviour is the use of harshly or coarsely insulting language with the intent of hurting the feelings of another person (Ngozi and Patricia, 2018).

Review of related Empirical Studies

Nseabasi and Akpan (2025) conducted a study on school values and verbal abusive tendencies among secondary school students in Akwa Ibom South Senatorial District, Nigeria. The study adopted a correlational research design, and data were collected using a self-structured questionnaire. Data were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC).

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The findings revealed a very high positive and significant relationship between self-discipline, humility, and abusive tendencies among students. The study is related to the present study in terms of values, verbal abusive tendencies, and the use of a structured questionnaire. However, it differs in research design and statistical tools, as the present study adopts a descriptive survey design and one-sample t-test analysis. Simon, Uwaoma, and Iwuala (2024) investigated the influence of parental verbal abuse, domiciliation, gender, and age on emotional intelligence among secondary school students in Owerri, Nigeria. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design and used multiple regression analysis. Findings showed that parental verbal abuse, domiciliation, gender, and age were not significant predictors of emotional intelligence. The study is related to the present study in terms of verbal abuse but differs in research focus, design, and statistical tools used. Jonji and Manuel (2025) examined the impact of teaching Values Education on students' classroom behavior using a qualitative research design. Data were collected through interviews with Values Education teachers and analyzed thematically. Findings revealed that Values Education positively influences students' classroom behavior, although disruptive behaviors such as bullying and inattentiveness still occur. The study is similar to the present study in its focus on value education but differs in data collection method and research instrument. Lau, Aipipidely, and Ratu (2021) investigated verbal violence by teachers on students in a high school in Kupang City using a qualitative approach and purposive sampling of three participants. Data were analyzed through thematic procedures. Findings showed that students experienced intimidation, shame, and psychological distress, leading to absenteeism. The study is related to the present study in terms of verbal abuse but differs in sampling technique, sample size, and study population.

Research Methodology

This section presents the methodology used in carrying out the research. The study adopted descriptive survey design: The research design permits the gathering of information through the use of questionnaires from a population based on appropriate sampling techniques. Barton and Baumann (2004) opined that survey research provides a way in which to gather information on a large subset group of individuals and inferences to much larger groups. The population of the study consisted of NCE II students of Federal College of Education Zaria (FCE), and the Kaduna State College of education Gidan Waya Kafanchan (KSCOE) as shown in table 1 below.

Table 1: Distribution of Student Population

Name of College	Population of NCE II
FCEZ	1482
KSCOE	254
TOTAL	1739

Source: HOD office of the respective Institutions (2023)

In sampling out the participants of the study, the following sampling techniques were adopted: Stratified, proportionate and simple random sampling. In determining the sample size of the study, the research advisor (2006) was used. According to the table, a population of 1739 attracts a sample size of 322. Against this backdrop, the sample size of the study was 322.

Table 2: Sample by Institution

Institutions	Population	Sample Size
FCEZ	1482	275
KSCOE	254	47
TOTAL	1739	322

Source. HOD office of the respective Institutions (2023)

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The Instrumentation used for data collection used in the study was questionnaire titled Value Education and Verbal Abuse Questionnaire (VEVAQ). The instrument is made up of 10 item, the instrument was divided into two sections, section A focused on the bio-data variables of the respondents while section B was on the main test items. The instrument was validated by experts in the Social Studies, test and measurement experts and well as language experts. In order to estimate the reliability power index of the instrument, a pilot study was conducted using 30 students of the social studies Department in College of Education Nasarawa State, who are not part of the study but share similar characteristics with the participants of this study. After subjecting the 30 test items into statistical rigor, a reliability index of .69 was arrived at using Cronbach Alpha reliability statistics. According to Speigial and Martin (1991) a reliability index power that is close to 1 is considered reliable, however the one that is close to zero is less reliable. Thus, based on the reliability index or the study, the instrument is considered adequate for the main study. For statistical analysis, the study employed the use of mean and standard deviation to answer the research question and one sample t test was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

Presentation of Results

The chapter presents the data analysis as well as presentation of results to the study titled Student's perception on value education as a strategy for reducing verbal abuse in Colleges of Education in Kaduna state, Nigeria. The statistical package of version 26 was used to analyze the data obtained from 312 correctly filled out of the 366 that were administered to the participants of the study. The first section presented the frequency distribution of the respondents by gender, institutions and level of study. The second section answers the research questions using the frequency of items in each of the four tables. Their cumulative mean were computed and compared with a decision mean of 2.50. The null hypotheses were tested using one sample t test. All the null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

Presentation of bio data variables

Table 3

Frequency Table

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	191	61.2
Female	121	38.8
Total	312	100.0

A total of 191 representing 61 % of the students are males and the rest 121 representing 38.8% are females

Table 4: level of study

	Level			Cumulative Percent
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	
Level II	312	100.0	100.0	100.0

All the 312 students that took part in the study are of Level II students

Table 5

Institution	Frequency	Percent
FCOEZ	268	85.9
KSCOE	44	14.1
Total	312	100.0

A total of 268 representing 85.9% are from Federal College of Education Zaria (FCOEZ) and the rest 44 representing 14.1 are from KSCOE

Answering Research Question

Question: What is the extent of student's perception on the impact of respect-oriented value education content on the reduction of verbal abuse among students in Colleges of Education in Kaduna State?

Table 6: Test item

S/N	ITEMS:	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	STD
1.	Respect-oriented value education content has increased students' awareness of the harmful effects of verbal abuse.	120	110	40	42	2.99	1.147
2.	Lessons on respect for others have helped students communicate more politely with their peers.	102	108	49	53	2.83	0.557

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3.	Respect-oriented value education encourages students to avoid using insulting or offensive language.	114	107	39	52	2.91	1.144
4.	Exposure to respect-related values has improved mutual understanding among students.	92	102	60	58	2.73	1.162
5.	The teaching of respect for human dignity discourages the use of abusive words among students.	103	113	40	56	2.84	0.946
6.	Respect-oriented value education promotes tolerance of differing opinions without resorting to verbal attacks.	99	119	60	34	2.91	0.844
7.	Students who regularly learn respect-oriented values are less likely to engage in name-calling and ridicule.	89	90	69	64	2.65	1.004
8.	Respect-oriented value education has contributed to a more peaceful and friendly learning environment.	90	118	49	55	2.78	1.521
9.	The integration of respect-oriented values into classroom activities helps reduce conflicts that lead to verbal abuse.	92	99	70	51	2.74	1.222
10.	Respect-oriented value education motivates students to resolve disagreements through respectful dialogue rather than abusive language.	89	80	80	63	2.63	0.871
Cumulative mean						2.80	

Decision Mean =2.50

The data presented in the table 6 above were analyzed to answer the research question: "What is the extent of students' perception on the impact of respect-oriented value education content on the reduction of verbal abuse among students in Colleges of Education in Kaduna State?" All the ten questionnaire items recorded mean scores above the benchmark mean of 2.50, indicating that students generally perceived respect-oriented value education content as having a positive impact on reducing verbal abuse. Specifically, Item 1, which states that respect-oriented value education content has increased students' awareness of the harmful effects of verbal abuse, recorded the highest mean score of 2.99 (SD = 1.147), suggesting strong agreement among respondents. Similarly, Item 3 (respect-oriented value education encourages students to avoid using insulting or offensive language) and Item 6 (respect-oriented value education promotes tolerance of differing opinions without resorting to verbal attacks) both recorded mean scores of 2.91, indicating that students recognized the role of respect-based values in fostering positive interpersonal relationships and discouraging abusive communication. Based responses implies that respect-oriented value education contributes significantly to the development of courteous communication among students.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis: There is no significant difference in the perception of students on the impact of respect-oriented value education content on the reduction of verbal abuse among students in Colleges of Education in Kaduna State.

Table 7: One sample t test statistics in the student's perception on value education as a strategy for reducing verbal abuse in colleges of education in Kaduna state, Nigeria.

One-Sample Statistics

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean difference	Df	T computed	T critical	P
Student's perception on the impact of respect-oriented value education content on the reduction of verbal abuse among students in Colleges of Education in Kaduna State	312	31.88	5.75	31.78	311	97.77	1.96	0.000

$P = 0.000 < 0.05$, $t_{computed} = 97.77 > 1.96$ at $df 311$

The result presented in the table 7 above shows the outcome of a one-sample t-test conducted to determine whether students' perception of the impact of respect-oriented value education content on the reduction of verbal abuse among students in Colleges of Education in Kaduna State is significantly positive. Respondents (N = 312) obtained a mean score of 31.88 with a standard deviation of 5.75, suggesting a relatively high and consistent perception among students regarding the effectiveness of respect-oriented value education content in reducing verbal abuse. The computed t-value of 97.77 is

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substantially greater than the critical t-value of 1.96 at 311 degrees of freedom. Furthermore, the probability value ($p = 0.000$) is less than the 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated p-value is less than 0.05 and the computed t-value exceeds the critical value, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that there is a statistically significant positive perception among students regarding the impact of respect-oriented value education content on the reduction of verbal abuse in Colleges of Education in Kaduna State.

Summary of Finding

The followings are the summary of the major finding of the study:

1. The study found that students perceived respect-oriented value education content as an effective strategy for reducing verbal abuse among students in Colleges of Education in Kaduna State. They believe that lessons emphasizing respect, courtesy, tolerance, and positive interpersonal relationships contribute substantially to minimizing the occurrence of verbal abuse within the college environment.

Discussion of Finding

The results of the findings of the study was discussed in line with relevant literatures end review of related empirical studies: The study found that students perceive respect-oriented value education as an effective strategy for reducing verbal abuse in Colleges of Education in Kaduna State. They believe that lessons on respect, courtesy, tolerance, empathy, and positive relationships help minimize verbal abuse and promote harmonious interaction. This finding aligns with Jonji and Manuel (2025), who reported that Values Education improves students' behavior and reduces disruptive conduct through moral and participatory learning approaches. It also agrees with Nseabasi and Akpan (2025), who found a significant relationship between school values such as self-discipline and reduced abusive tendencies among students, indicating that strong value orientation discourages verbal abuse. Similarly, Lau, Aipipidely and Ratu (2021) highlighted the harmful effects of verbal abuse, including intimidation, shame, and withdrawal, supporting the need for preventive value-based education. However, Simon, Uwaoma and Iwuala (2024) found no significant predictive effect of verbal abuse-related variables on emotional intelligence, differing from the present study, which emphasizes value education as a preventive strategy. The finding suggests that respect-oriented value education is a practical approach for reducing verbal abuse in Colleges of Education

Conclusions

The study concluded that students are of the perception that there is a positive perception among students regarding the impact of respect-oriented value education content on the reduction of verbal abuse among students in Colleges of Education in Kaduna State. Also, students perceived that respect-oriented value education as an effective strategy for minimizing verbal abuse and promoting respectful interpersonal interactions.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are put forward:

1. Colleges of Education should strengthen the integration of respect-oriented value education content into the curriculum and classroom activities to promote values such as respect, tolerance, empathy, and positive interpersonal relationships, thereby reducing the incidence of verbal abuse among students.
2. College administrators and lecturers should regularly organize value-based seminars, workshops, and counselling programs that emphasize respectful communication, conflict resolution, and responsible behavior to foster a culture of mutual respect and peaceful coexistence among students.

Contribution to Knowledge

The study established that:

1. Students perceived respect-oriented value education content as an effective strategy for reducing verbal abuse. They also believe that lessons emphasizing respect, courtesy, tolerance, and positive interpersonal relationships contribute substantially to minimizing the occurrence of verbal abuse within the college environment.

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