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Rebuilding The Foundation To Mitigate Moral Decadence in Contemporary Society: An Integration of Ethical Leadership in Parenting (ELIP)

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Abstract: Parents are children's first compass in the journey of life. Moral decadence in contemporary society is alarming even among teenagers, thus demanding a home-based approach to mitigate crimes, and incivility. This explorative study engaged a descriptive design to assess the integration of ethical leadership experienced at home, including parenting climate's influence on morals and students' character development. The multistage sampling technique resulted in 292 sample size drawn from Agbado/Oke-Odo, Zone 2, Education District 1, Alimosho, Lagos State. A 26-item questionnaire was used for data collection with content analysis of Ethical Leadership Theory. The findings showed parents often displayed ethical characteristics while the quality of parenting influence on students' moral development was very good. Similarly, there is a significant relationship between the quality of parenting influence on students' moral development and the decision-making process engaged by secondary school students. However, 6% respondents reported sexual abuse at home. The study conceptualised five ethical leadership tasks in parenting (ELIP) which demand parents to Model, Teach, Create, Practice and Encourage (MTCPE), to mitigate moral decadence in society. The study recommended that sexually abused students should report to the school authority for professional help. Parents are advised to adopt especially positive discipline to sustain good behaviours in children rather than negative discipline of physical beatings and emotional abuse.

Keywords: *Contemporary society, ethical leadership, moral decadence, parenting, values education*

1. Introduction

Moral values are foundational principles to a peaceful and well-bonded society for national development. Parents consciously promoting values education from home will make it easier for the school's task of transforming children into responsible citizens. However, many children are abandoned to themselves either uncared for, lack parental active involvement or are without loving guidance which results in dysfunctional behaviours among young people. Economic pressures on parents for survival including the negative influence of social media seem overwhelming to many parents. Parenting in the modern era shows many parents neglect intentional influence as role models in raising their children. Nigeria is filled with young people who display challenging behaviours such as a lack of accountability, an entitlement attitude, promiscuity, substance abuse, disrespect, and incivility resulting in social unrest and an increase in crime waves (Emmanuel, Daniel & Oluchukwu, 2024; p.124). Without promotion of values through strategic leadership in parenting, the spate of moral decadence due to inconsistent standards and absence of role models at home might result in blurred lines of morality, increasing lawlessness, irresponsible, and dishonest citizens in Nigeria.

Moral Decadence in Contemporary Nigeria and Values Education

There is a moral crisis in contemporary society across many societies (Frýdková, 2013, p. 2308). Similarly, Adedini and Folaranmi (2025) posited that Nigeria needs moral regeneration due to the level of moral decadence. Alvi, Saleemi and Asad (2022) described moral decadence as moral corruption or depravity which occurs with the degradation of morals. Moral decadence refers to deviation from and deterioration of the societal values system. There is a widespread prevalence of social vices among many Nigerian youths due to materialistic trends and a lack of perseverance to actualize goals. The increase in moral vices includes gangster lifestyle, examination malpractices, teenage pregnancy, drug addiction, kidnapping for ransom and ritual killings, cultism, and internet fraud (Omosehin, Haruna, & Odeyemi, 2022a, pp. 46-47). Alvi et al. (2022) stated that moral decadence in a society reduces the quality of human life because morality is the foundation of every human society. Similarly, it negatively affects the academic performance of students hence, hindering the attainment of national educational goals (Nnadi, Uzoekwe, Ofojebe & Chigbu 2022). The rot of morality among Nigerian youths was reported as a social concern (Omosehin, et al. 2022a, & 2023b; Nnadi et al., 2022; Adedini & Folaranmi, 2025). Moreover, a nation's level of moral integrity is a predictor of national growth and development (Adedini & Folaranmi, 2025).

Values are foundational tools to shape the behaviors of individuals on what is right and what is wrong. Values serve as a moral compass to choices, perception, decision-making, and coping skills to life's complexity (Hazra & Mittal, 2018). Values education is character education (Koç & Yayla, 2022, p. 21); hence, Omosehin, Haruna, & Odeyemi (2023b, p.2) argued that character is the societal foundation for building a strong community. Despite the Nigeria's government efforts at promoting values through harmonised National Values Education [NVE] and Civic Education school curricula, yet moral decline and crimes across communities indicates gap in students' academic exposure and social reality (Federal Ministry of Education [FME], 2012; Koç & Yayla, 2022, p. 21; Emmanuel, et al., 2024; p. 126). Although, causes of crimes are multifaceted coming from home, peer influence, urbanization, governance issues; and injustice (FME, 2012; pp.108; Emmanuel, et al., 2024; p.129). The high level of moral decadence in the 21st century was attributed to the falling standard of parenting in (Omosehin et al., 2022a & 2023b, p.3). Parents through parenting tasks occupy a fundamental, strategic position in the values development of children. Parents are expected to bond with children for emotional support engaging the right parenting style while rules are set to guide children's decision-making and actions (Prabhu, Sasikal, & Devi, 2023, Omosehin, et al., 2023). Citing Meng, Alvi et al. (2022, p.2 & 4) affirmed morality as the heart of leadership because the essence of the human soul is in compassion, empathy and kindness it displays. The home environment was responsible for degradation in morals among the young people due to poor parenting (Alvi, et al., 2022; Nnadi et al. 2022).

Ethical Leadership Theory (ELT): Nature and Impacts

Leading by influence is essential to the management of a group (Theriono & Lianto, 2024). Ethical leadership, introduced by Trevino et al. in 2000 evolves with time as different scholars' contributed to the understanding and dimensions of the concept (Bajpal, Dabral, Singh & Purohit, 2024). Ethical leadership (EL) is a combination of behaviour and leadership style with such leaders being principled decision-makers. EL was a response to scandals happening among political and corporate organization leadership (Theriono & Lianto, 2024). Langlois et al., cited in Stavropoulou, Ooms, Rovithis and Straoumpouki (2024; p. 2228) described ethical leadership as a social practice that enables leaders to make expert judgment with the capacity to act acceptably and responsibly. Bajpal et al. (2024, p. 316), and Theriono and Lianto (2024, p.87) cited Brown et al., definition of EL as "the demonstration of normatively appropriate behaviour through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement and decision-making." Ethics is concerned about "character" and "customs" regarding what should be done and what people should be. Therefore, ethics is at the heart of good leadership (Kings et al., 2023).

Ethical leadership focuses on modeling behaviours through influence during interpersonal relationships (Freeman & Stewart, 2006; p.2; King et al., 2023; Theriono & Lianto, 2024). The outcomes of EL influence are: perception of a leader as a credible role-model, communication of ethical standards and upholding accountability through the use of reinforcement and punishment to ensure rules are followed (King et al., 2023; Theriono & Lianto, 2024, p.91). Ethical leadership is necessary to transform a corrupt and discriminatory society into a functional, just, and socially responsible one. Ethical principles include respect, justice, honesty and building community/teamwork with others. Hence, ethical leaders promote trust, unity, the group's image, commitment to actions, and happiness of group members (Ndedi & Nisabwe, 2021; Bajpai et al., 2024, p.315; Stavropoulou et al., 2024; p. 2229). The central goal of ethical leadership is service to others based on compassion but people fail by not following the morals demanded from others (Monahan, 2012, p.63). Hence, the value of ethical leadership in the social environment promotes the components of moral excellence which are fundamental to interpersonal relationships including open communication (Stavropoulou et al., 2024; p. 2228 & 2230; Bajpal et al., 2024, p.316, Theriono & Lianto, 2024). Despite the broad research works on EL, Kings et al. (2023) however, observed that ethical leadership is yet to be fully explored.

2. Parenting: A Multi-dimensional Task

Parents are persons who "provide primary care to a child" (Hassanah, Zamroni, Dardiri, Indartono, & Supardi, 2018) either biological, adoptive or extended family members who nurture and protect a child. Ultimately, parents are the first teachers of children (Hazra & Mittal, 2018; Prabhu, et al., 2023). Parents are primarily responsible for children's value orientation while the school plays a complementary role (Frýdková, 2013, p.2307-2308). Parenting as stated by Kretchmar-Hendricks cited in Omosehin et al. (2023, p. 2) is the process of raising children with adequate provision and care to ensure children's healthy development into adulthood.

The tasks of parenting, according to Adewale (2009), are very demanding involving joint efforts of both parents with investment of time, consistency, and prayers, as a call to service which cannot be delegated to other persons. The parents' roles were categorised into four by Salau (2019) namely teaching, coaching, mentoring, and cheerleading. However, Ahmad (2013), Kurt (2023) and Omosehin et al. (2023) noted that modernization, technology and digitization influence make parenting in contemporary society a very complex task. The 21st-century digital world has shifted family dynamics including perspectives on parents' roles, social expectations and considerations for children. Children once considered generational blessings resulting in large family size, are now economically expensive leading urban parents in Nigeria to prefer small family size (Ahmad, 2013). Therefore, parenting impact is not limited to the individual child alone rather it affects society's economic, political and cultural activities (Omosehin et al., 2023, p.3). In addition, parenting is influenced by factors such as age, gender, pattern of engagement and quality time spent with children. Sequel to the above, it can be concluded that parenting is a dynamic, actionable and complex process aimed at a child's proper development (Ahmad, 2013). Home/parent is the foundation, and primary environment for values acquisition and character development (Koç & Yayla, 2022, p. 21). The parenting climate is influenced by the interaction between parents and the child. Similarly, fathers are required to engage (interact), be available (attentive), and responsibly supply resources (Ahmad, 2013; Hassanah et al., 2018; Hazra & Mittal, 2018; Candelanza et al., 2021; Omosehin, et al., 2023). Therefore, Ahmad (2013) concludes that parenting is an important social role.

Concerns with Parenting

Frýdková (2013, p.2308) identified the issue of discrepancy of value orientation from family, school and the media thereby demanding the challenge should be addressed. The discrepancy is attributed to the alteration and disappearance of traditional values. Ahmad (2013, p.660) pointed out that anti-social behaviours in Nigeria are connected with child abuse including neglect that children go through. Starvrinides and Nikiforou (2013), and Hassanah et al. (2023) reported the absence of parents and use of extreme disciplinary measures, leading to a call for attention on how parents engage with children (Ahmad, 2013; Hassanah et al., 2018; Kurt, 2023). Furthermore, Ergin and Karataş (2014) reported found conflicting values were taught by family and school. Equally, scholars stated that many parents struggled to effectively promote moral values (Ahmad, 2013; Hazra & Mittal, 2018). Aggressive behaviour and emotional problems indicate abusive parenting from extreme punishment or inadequate care for a child (Starvrinides & Nikiforou, 2013; Hazra & Mittal, 2018). Furthermore, Diana Blumberg Baumrind on the Pillar Theory associated children's behaviours to parenting styles. Parenting styles influence on pattern of socialization, responsiveness, and moral development (Candelanza, Queenilyn, Buot, & Merin, 2021). Notably, parents are responsible for children's ethical competence (Baumrind, 2012; Hassanah, et al., 2018; Cowan, Cowan, Weinstein & Owens, 2020). Omosehin et al. (2023, p.8) pointed at several issues limiting effective parenting in Nigeria amongst which are inadequate parenting skills, women's pursuit of career/business goal, lack of parental attention, father's absenteeism, lack of parent-child bonding, poor parenting styles, growing number of single parents tagged as baby mama or baby daddy and children's uncontrolled dependency on information technology devices. Meanwhile, Lewis (2022) emphasised that the lack of parents acting as role models to children is a critical cause of character deficiency. Equally, on the way forward, Omosehin et al. (2023) proposed that parents need to become role models, build relationships, be flexible in parenting style, keep gathering useful information, and uphold the God-factor without giving up as they continue in child raising. Therefore, Kayiran and Bağçeci (2018) in Koç and Yayla (2022, p. 21) suggested finding family models that can be engaged for values acquisition to reduce crimes and strained relationships in organizations. The literature showed that previous studies looked into parenting styles and effects on students' academic performance including behaviors. Also, ethical leadership studies have concentrated on private and public organizations to assess the influence on employees' performance outcomes. This study hereby, contributes to the unique application of ethical leadership in the parent-child social context providing a conceptual outlook of expected parents' responsibility to the children.

Research Purpose

This study investigated ethical characteristics experienced by parents through students while proposing a strategy to mitigate moral decadence in Nigeria. The specific objectives sought to:

- Find out the extent of ethical leadership characteristics students witnessed in their parents at home.
- Investigate the quality of influence parenting has on students' moral development.
- Develop a conceptual framework for ethical leadership in parenting to mitigate moral decadence.

Research Questions

- What is the extent of ethical leadership characteristics that students experienced from parents at home?
- What is the quality of parenting influence on students' moral development?
- How is ethical leadership conceptualized in parenting to mitigate moral decadence?

Hypotheses

HO_1: The quality of parenting influence on moral development has no significant correlation on decision - making process engaged by students.

HO_2: The ethical leadership characteristics exhibited by parents have no significant relationship with the prevailing nature of child abuse that students experienced at home.

3. Methodology

The study employed an explorative, descriptive design to determine the extent of ethical characteristics parents displayed to develop moral values in children. The observed outcome guided the ELiP conceptual model to address moral decadence. A mixed-method data collection approach was engaged using a 26-item questionnaire with content analysis. The instrument had content validity while the reliability range was determined through the test-retest method resulting in a 0.72 Cronbach Alpha internal consistency.

The study area was Alimosho Local Government Area (LGA), a suburb, the north-end part of Lagos State. The target population was Zone 2 of Education District 1, in Agbado/Oke-Odo Local Council Development Area (LCDA). Alimosho LGA is commercially active accommodating both middle and low-income dwellers. However, congestion, crimes and noise pollution are concerns in the area (Guardian Nigeria News, 2018; Akaninyene & Ogunbanwo, 2023). There are eight senior secondary schools within Agbado/Oke-Odo from which 292 sample size was randomly selected in a multi-stage sampling technique. Descriptive statistics were used for data analysis while data were presented through tables, figures and text narration. The "means" was based on a 0.8 interval range for a 5-point Likert scale (Benhima, 2023).

4. Results and Findings

Table 1: Demographic Data of Respondents

Participants Class	Gender	Age Group	Cultural Background	Parents Education Level	Parents' Number of Children	Family Members Lived with
S.S.1 =158 (54.1%)	Male = 140 (47.95%)	13-15 = 210 (71.9%)	Yoruba = 204 (69.9%)	Illiterates = **12 (4.1%)**	1-2 = 55 (18.8%)	Both Parents = 239 (81.9%)
S.S.2 = 134 (45.9%)	Female = 152 (52.05%)	16-19 = 82 (28.1%)	Igbo = 70 (23.97%)	Primary Sch. Cert. =66 (22.6%)	3-4 = 177 (60.6%)	Single Parent = 45 (15.4%)
			Hausa/Fulani = 6 (2.1%)	Secondary Sch. Cert. =0 (0%)	5-6 = 56 (19.2%)	Step-Parent = 8 (2.7%)
			Niger-Delta = 12 (4.1%)	NCE/ National Diploma 62 (21.2%)	7.8= 4 (1.4%)	
				University degree = 152 (52.1%)		
Total: 292	**292 (100%)**	**292 (100%)**	**292 (100%)**	**292 (100%)**	**292 (100%)**	**292 (100%)**

Table 1 revealed that the study's sample of 292 had more mid-teenage (13-15 years) respondents at 71.9% (210). There were more Yoruba participants at 69.9% (204) reflecting ethnic concentration in the area of study. Also, very few respondents at 4.1% were from an illiterate home. The study showed that large families of 7-8 children are very few (1.4%). Furthermore, family composition showed 81.9% (239) of students lived with both parents.

Research Question 1: What is the extent of ethical leadership characteristics that students experienced from parents at home?

Table 2: Extent of ethical leadership characteristics students experienced in Parenting

S/N	Statement	A (5)	O (4)	S (3)	R (2)	N (1)	Total %	Av. Mean	Remarks
1	My parents are always honest when speaking	222 76.0%	42 14.4%	28 9.6%	0 0%	0 0%	1362 93.2%	4.66	Always
2	I see my parents act in kindness to other people	239 81.8%	35 12.0%	5 11.7%	13 4.5%	- 0%	1376 94.3%	4.71	Always
3	My parents do apologize to me when they make mistakes	80 27.4%	64 21.9%	105 36.0%	31 10.6%	12 4.1%	1045 71.6%	3.58	Often
4	We discuss justice in my family	117 40.1%	47 16.1%	64 21.9%	35 12.0%	29 9.9%	1064 72.9%	3.64	Often
5	I learn about compassion from my parents	206 70.5%	51 17.5%	18 6.2%	17 5.8%	- 0%	1322 90.6%	4.53	Always
6	My parents tell me about the consequences of my actions	210 71.9%	42 14.4%	40 13.7%	- 0%	- 0%	1338 91.6%	4.58	Always
7	I interact safely with my parents	211 72.3%	29 9.9%	22 7.5%	18 6.2%	12 4.1%	1280 87.7%	4.38	Always
8	I am comfortable expressing my feelings to my parents	181 62.0%	35 12.0%	64 21.9%	- 0%	12 4.1%	1249 85.6%	4,28	Always
9	My parents permit me to try new things	158 54.1%	64 21.9%	58 19.9%	12 4.1%	- 0%	1244 85.2%	4.26	Always
10	I get rewards for my good behavior	140 47.9%	88 30.1%	35 12%	24 8.2%	5 1.7%	1210 82.9%	4.14	Often
11	I am told the reasons behind the rules set by my parents	134 45.9%	82 28.0%	64 21.9%	6 2.1%	6 2.1%	1208 82.7%	4.13	Often
12	My parents make me think about my actions for improvement	175 59.9%	76 26.0%	23 7.9%	18 6.2%	0 0%	1284 88.0%	4.40	Always
13	I joined my parent to do community service (volunteering)	35 12.0%	54 18.5%	68 23.3%	47 16.1%	88 30.1%	777 53.2%	2.66	Sometimes
14	My parents discuss societal problems at home with me	88 30.1%	82 28.1%	58 19.9%	35 12.1%	29 9.9%	1041 71.3%	3.57	Often
15	I am encouraged to consider other people's opinions on issues	117 40.1%	76 26.0%	64 21.9%	12 4.1%	23 7.9%	1107 75.8%	3.79	Often
	Total: 292X15= 4380	**2313 52.8%**	**867 19.8%**	**716 16.4%**	**268 6.1%**	**216 4.9%**	**81.8%**	**4.09 Std. Dev.= 0.55**	**Often**

Key to the Options: Always (A), Often (O), Sometimes (S), Rarely (R) and Never (N)

Table 2 showed parents' display of ethical characteristics with 52.8% and 19.8% stating always and often respectively. However, 4.9% indicated their parents never showed ethical characteristics. The result's central

mean is 4.09 representing 81.8%. Respondents' opinions moderately spread away from the mean. Hence, Table 2 findings showed parents often displayed ethical characteristics through parenting.

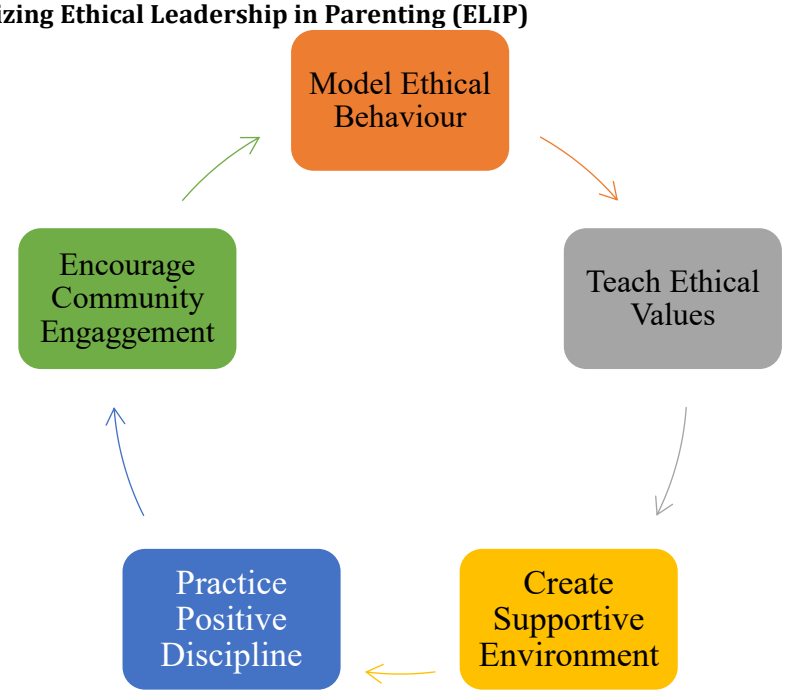
Research Question 2: What is the quality of parenting influence on students' moral development?

Table 3: Quality of parental influence on students' moral development.

S/N	Statement My parents' actions:	Poor 1	Fair 2	Good 3	Very Good 4	Excellent 5	Total %	Av. Mean	Remarks
16	Gives me self-confidence	6 2.1%	6 2.1%	64 21.9%	58 19.9%	158 54.1%	1232 84.4%	4.21	Excellent
17	Reduces negative behaviours from me	7 2.4%	12 4.1%	35 12.0%	57 19.5%	181 62.0%	1269 86.9%	4.40	Excellent
18	Makes me think deeper about issues I confront daily	5 1.7%	8 2.7%	42 14.4%	129 44.2%	108 37.0%	1203 82.4%	4.12	Very Good
19	Makes me have compassion towards other people	0 0%	3 1.0%	79 27.1%	101 34.6%	109 37.3%	1192 81.6%	4.10	Very Good
20	Inspire me to be accountable for my actions	0 0%	17 5.8%	59 20.2%	87 29.8%	129 44.2%	1204 82.5%	4.12	Very Good
21	Develop moral principles in me to make decisions	0 0%	5 1.7%	36 12.3%	105 36.0%	146 50.0%	1268 86.9%	4.34	Excellent
22	Influence my views about life	0 0%	6 2.1%	88 30.1%	64 21.9%	134 45.9%	1202 82.3%	4.11	Very Good
	Total: 292x7 = 2,044	**18 0.9%**	**57 2.8%**	**403 19.7%**	**601 29.4%**	**965 47.2%**	**83.9%**	**4.2 Std.Dev.= 0.12**	**Very Good**

Keys to the Responses: Poor, Fair, Good, Very Good and Excellent
Research Question 3: How is ethical leadership conceptualised in parenting to mitigate moral decadence?

Figure 1: Conceptualizing Ethical Leadership in Parenting (ELIP)



Source: Author (2025), Ethical Leadership in Parenting (ELIP).

Ethical leadership is conceptualized as a five-step cyclical process to mitigate moral decadence. ELIP shows parents as models influencing students' morals through intentional, participatory actions taken to mould

children. ELIP will benefit children from 0 to 18 years. Thus, relevant to train children in preschools (0-4years), elementary (Basic 1-6), Junior high school (Basic 7-9) and senior high school (S.S 1-3). ELIP builds children to be leaders with life skills of critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and a supportive social responsibility mindset.

Table 3 reveals quality of parental influence on students' moral development was rated 83.9% while 47.2% students reported excellent influence, 0.9% stated poor parental influence on moral development. The aggregate central mean showed 4.20 while the responses were closely cluttered around central mean at 0.12 standard deviation. Table 3 findings therefore, indicated **a very good** quality of parental influence on students' moral development

Hypotheses

HO_1: The quality of parenting influence on moral development has no significant correlation with the decision-making process engaged by students.

Table 4: Relationship between the quality of Parenting Influence and the decision-making process of students

Variables	Mean	Std	N	R	Sig
Parenting Influence	18.52	2.26	292	0.68	.003
Quality of the decision-making process	28.31	3.73	292		

The result in Table 4 shows the relationship between parenting influence on students' moral development and the quality of the decision-making process engaged by students. Table 4 shows an 18.52 mean score for parenting influence with a 2.26 standard deviation and a 28.31 mean score for the decision-making process with a 3.73 standard deviation. Furthermore, the result shows a positive and statistically significant relationship between parenting influence and students' decision-making process ($r = 0.68$, $P < 0.05$). This implies that there is a significant relationship between the quality of parenting influence on students' moral development and the decision-making process engaged by secondary school students.

HO_2: The ethical leadership characteristics exhibited by parents have no significant relationship with the prevailing nature of child abuse that students experience at home.

Table 5: Relationship between ethical leadership characteristics exhibited by parents and the nature of Child abuse

Variables	Mean	Std	N	R	Sig
Child Abuse	17.32	3.38	292	0.54	.012
Parent Ethical Leadership	22.01	2.96	292		

Table 5 shows the relationship between ethical leadership characteristics exhibited by parents and the nature of child abuse students experienced at home. The table showed a 17.32 mean score for child abuse experienced with a 3.38 standard deviation and a 22.01 mean score for ethical leadership characteristics exhibited by parents with a 2.96 standard deviation. In addition, the table shows a negative and statistically non-significant relationship between the nature of child abuse students experienced and ethical leadership characteristics exhibited by parents ($r = 0.54$, $P < 0.05$). This implied that there is no significant relationship between the nature of child abuse students experienced and the ethical leadership characteristics exhibited by parents.

Discussion

The study's findings showed parents often displayed ethical characteristics. This finding supported Hazra and Mittal (2018) on the use of values (foundational tools) by parents (moral compass) to shape students' behaviours in dealing with life's complexity. In essence, the students acquired moral values from home as described by Koç and Yayla (2022, p. 21). In contrast, the finding does not reflect Ergin and Karataş (2014) view which found conflicting values taught by family and school. Hence, moral decline is beyond home as the result supported multifaceted ideas pointed by FME (2012; pp.108) and Emmanuel et al. (2024; p.129).

Similarly, the study found that parents have a very good influence on students' moral development. The outcome aligned with Prabhu et al. (2023) that the home through parenting is fundamental in promoting values as parents' bonding and setting rules will create support for children. Similarly, the finding tallied with associating a child's behaviors with to influence of parenting styles through the pattern of socialization, responsiveness, and moral development. Hence, parents are responsible for a child's ethical competence (Baumrind, 2012; Hassanah, et al., 2018; Cowan, et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the findings showed all forms of abuse are encountered by students at home with beating, harsh words and sexual abuse happening. The confirmation of varying degrees of abuse aligned with concerns on extreme disciplinary measures raised by Stavrinides and Nikiforou, (2013) and Hassanah, et al. (2023). Parents who abused children in contrast do not meet up to Hassanah et al (2018) quality description of parents in terms of protection. Thus supporting Ahmad (2013), and Hazra and Mittal (2018), that some parents still struggle to promote moral values in children. Similarly, the finding admitted to aggressive behaviours in children as an indicator of abusive parenting due to extreme punishment or inadequate care (Stavrinides & Nikiforou, 2013; Hazra & Mittal, 2018).

In line with Ahmad (2013), Hassanah et al. (2018) and Kurt (2023), attention should be focused on how parents engage with children. Similarly, Kayiran and Bağçeci (2018) cited in Koç & Yayla (2022, p. 21) advocated for families to have learning models to acquire morals. Scholars suggested parents model expected values to the children (Lewis, 2022, Omosehin et al., 2023) which is related to ethical leadership demands that leaders act as role models while engaging in effective communication and upholding standards through the use of reinforcement or punishment (Freeman & Stewart, 2006; p.2; King et al., 2023; Theriono & Lianto, 2024). In ELIP, parents' ethical roles are to: **model, teach, create, practice and encourage (MTCPE)** students to follow their footsteps**.** The cyclical process is learning by observing parents' actions through encouragement. Parents modeling ethical behaviour is the foundation for children to cultivate values.

Therefore, the proposed ELIP model to engage with children for moral values requires parental tasks to include: **Model:** demonstrate ethical behaviours by treating others with kindness (respect) and apologize/admit to mistakes made for children to emulate. **Teach:** through discussion of moral issues with real-world situations as a practical way to understand values. **Create:** provide a supportive, safe and welcoming home environment where each child can express his/her thoughts/feelings. The home should encourage flexibility and discovery for learning. **Positive discipline:** Reinforce good behaviors by communicating reasons behind set rules with consequences of breaking such rules. Clarification promotes obedience while errors committed should be reflected on to improve behaviour. **Community engagement:** encouraging children to volunteer or serve in the community. Social issues and solutions should be discussed for the inclusion of diverse perspectives.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

The study found that parents often display ethical leadership characteristics at home with the quality of parenting influencing students' moral development. Although, physical abuse (beating) is common at home with few reported sexual abuse, the findings revealed that the prevailing nature of child abuse at home has no significant relationship with ethical leadership characteristics exhibited by parents. The study contributes to the ELIP model to enhance parents' role-modeling responsibility. Therefore, these findings differ from other researches that state that moral decadence was caused by parenting because parents in the Agbado/Oke-Odo community often display ethical characteristics which influence students' moral development.

Regarding beating the children, the study recommends that parents be enlightened (through school counseling and workshops) on other forms of reinforcement and punishment such as withdrawal of benefits, having deep conversation to understand reasons for actions, extra activities or chores for disobedience, et c. Similarly, parents need to be intentional in making time out to emotionally bond with their children to reduce the feelings of neglect through involvement in children's school activities, family vacation, and daily conversation on how the day is being spent. Schools should provide accessible and trustworthy counseling services to support students who have suffered abuse especially incest for timely reporting and professional assistance for justice.

Further Research

Further studies should be carried out on other causes of moral decadence in the community. Also, an experimental study is encouraged to assess the impact of the ELIP model on students' civic engagement and moral behaviours.

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