

Re-Engineering Youth's Mindset Towards Value-Driven Decision Making in a Changing World

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Abstract

In today's rapidly evolving global landscape, the need to cultivate a value-driven mindset among youth is more critical than ever. Nigerian youth, who represent the largest demographic group in the country, face mounting challenges such as unemployment, poverty, inequality, consumerism, and peer pressure. These realities, compounded by the pervasive influence of social media and political instability, often undermine ethical, sustainable, and socially responsible decision-making. While existing scholarship has examined youth transitions, entrepreneurial orientations, and aspects of decision-making, a critical gap remains in understanding how holistic societal value systems can be effectively embedded in young people's everyday choices. This paper conceptually explores the re-engineering of youth mindsets towards value-driven decision-making by reviewing relevant literature and applying the Theory of Planned Behaviour as its central framework. The analysis highlights how formal education, informal socialization, political and societal changes, and the influence of technology collectively shape youth values in Nigeria. It argues that interventions such as value-based education, mentorship, community engagement, and supportive socio-political environments are pivotal for strengthening resilience, ethical awareness, and long-term thinking. The paper concludes with actionable recommendations for educators, policymakers, and community leaders on fostering integrative strategies that empower youth to navigate and positively shape a complex and uncertain world ethically.

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Introduction

The world is undergoing rapid changes, particularly in the realms of technology, society, and the economy. The technological revolution has transformed how we communicate, work, and even live. With advancements such as artificial intelligence, the proliferation of smartphones, and the constant evolution of the internet, the world is increasingly interconnected and information-driven (Verhoef et al., 2017). Socially, we are witnessing a shift in values and norms as cultures blend, and globalization continues to take shape. Economically, nations face both challenges and opportunities, with emerging markets like Nigeria striving to balance growth with sustainability (Adeoye & Iwegbu, 2020; Aluko, Odewale, Taiwo, & Adefeso, 2024). Amid these changes, the youth, especially in Nigeria, are at the cusp of this transformation, poised to navigate a complex world that demands not only adaptability but also a strong foundation in decision-making.

One of the most critical skills required by Nigerian youth today, according to Onwu et al. 2024, is value-driven decision-making. Zhuang and Mousapour (2017) describe this as the process by which individuals make choices based on their principles, ethical values, and long-term goals, rather than immediate gratification or external pressures. In a world flooded with distractions and conformity pressures, young people need to anchor their decisions in values that promote not only individual success but also collective well-being (Lorimer, Knight, and Shoveller 2022). This mindset is crucial for fostering personal growth, societal progress, and sustainability.

However, the realities confronting Nigerian youth present significant concerns. Issues such as unemployment, poverty, inequality, and the pervasive influence of social and cultural forces raise questions about how well-equipped young people are to make decisions rooted in enduring values. These conditions suggest that while the concept of value-driven decision-making is vital, its actual practice among Nigerian youth remains uncertain. This highlights the need for a closer investigation into how values can be reinforced and translated into consistent decision-making patterns that support both individual aspirations and national development.

Conceptual Review

Youth

The concept of youth is often understood as a period of transition, typically marked by adolescence and early adulthood, where individuals experience physical, emotional, and social development. Scholars such as Cooper 2018 have long debated the precise definition and boundaries of youth, with various interpretations across cultures and historical periods. In general, youth, as described by Evans and Furlong (2019), is viewed as a stage in life characterised by the exploration of identity, the formation of values, and the shaping of one's future within society. The sociological and psychological perspectives on youth, however, suggest that the

definition extends beyond just biological markers, instead focusing on the roles, responsibilities, and expectations placed on individuals during this phase.

Camfield et al. (2017) posit that early definitions of youth often emphasised the biological or physiological transition from childhood to adulthood. For example, Erik Erikson's developmental theory proposes that adolescence is a critical period for establishing one's identity, where individuals struggle with questions of who they are and their place in society (Maree, 2022). This process of self-discovery and role formation is pivotal in shaping a young person's worldview and guiding them through subsequent stages of life. Similarly, James 2022 frames youth as a period of "socialization," where individuals are shaped by the cultural and social forces around them, including family, education, and peer groups. In this sense, youth is seen not only as a time of personal development but also as a social construct influenced by external pressures.

In recent years, however, scholars have critiqued these traditional views, highlighting that the definition of youth has become more fluid and context-dependent. In many developing countries like Nigeria, the transition from adolescence to adulthood is not necessarily marked by age alone but by socio-economic factors, such as employment opportunities, marriage, or political participation. Raymond and Isigwe (2019) posit that youth in Nigeria are often defined by their capacity to contribute to society rather than by age, with young people taking on adult roles and responsibilities earlier due to economic necessity or social expectations.

The concept of youth has evolved significantly in Nigeria over time. Historically, the value of Nigerian youths was heavily linked to agricultural production (Osabohien & Al-Faryan, 2025), where young people were expected to contribute to family sustenance and community well-being. In traditional societies, youth were seen as custodians of cultural heritage, learning from elders and gradually assuming leadership roles in their communities. However, the rapid urbanization and globalization of Nigeria in the 20th and 21st centuries have introduced new challenges for youth, including high unemployment rates, political instability, and the influence of foreign cultures.

Today, Nigerian youths face a complex set of opportunities and challenges. On one hand, technological advancements, greater access to education, and exposure to global ideas have transformed how young people view themselves and their potential roles in society (Szymkowiak, Melović, Dabić, Jeganathan, and Kundi 2021). However, persistent socio-economic issues, such as poverty and inadequate infrastructure, continue to limit their opportunities. As a result, Nigerian youths are often seen as both hopeful agents of change and disillusioned victims of systemic failures. This duality is reflected in the shift in mindset observed among youths, particularly in urban areas, where a growing number of young Nigerians are seeking non-traditional career paths, such as

entrepreneurship, technology, and the arts, as viable means of self-actualization.

The values and mindsets of Nigerian youths are critical in shaping the country's future. As the largest demographic group in Nigeria, this group's attitudes toward education, governance, and social change will have profound implications for national development. Jenkins 2016 also aver that youths today are more vocal and active in political and social matters, using platforms like social media to express their views and advocate for reforms. The #EndSARS movement, for example, highlighted the ability of Nigerian youth to mobilize and demand systemic changes, reflecting a generational shift towards a more assertive and engaged youth populace. In the changing global environment, Nigerian youths must adapt to new economic realities while also retaining their cultural identity and values, ultimately determining the trajectory of the country's progress in the 21st century. The concept of youth is multifaceted, shaped by biological, social, and cultural factors. While traditional definitions focus on age and developmental milestones, contemporary perspectives emphasize the fluidity of youth, influenced by socio-economic conditions and global forces, particularly in contexts like Nigeria, where youth navigate complex challenges and opportunities.

Value-Driven Decision Making

Value-driven decision-making, according to Saakyan and Li 2024 refers to a decision-making approach in which choices are guided by an individual's core principles, ethics, and long-term objectives, rather than by short-term interests, external pressures, or momentary desires. This concept hinges on the alignment between a person's choices and their deeper values, which could include integrity, fairness, responsibility, and the pursuit of meaningful goals. The value-driven approach is not simply about achieving immediate gains; it is more concerned with ensuring that decisions contribute to a broader vision for one's life or organization and are consistent with fundamental ethical beliefs.

At the heart of value-driven decision-making is the principle that choices should reflect what is genuinely important to an individual or group over the long term (Zhuang & Mousapour, 2017). This approach emphasizes ethical alignment, responsibility, and sustainability, even when such decisions require short-term sacrifice or discomfort. For instance, a business leader may choose to pursue strategies that promote environmental sustainability despite higher immediate costs, because the decision resonates with deeper values about long-term societal well-being. In this sense, value-driven decision-making is less concerned with short-lived gains and more focused on actions that contribute to enduring growth, integrity, and collective progress. It represents an intentional effort to ensure that decisions are consistent with a broader vision for life or organizational purpose.

Conversely, decisions anchored in immediate gratification often neglect these long-term implications, prioritizing short-term satisfaction or

personal advantage. Such choices may arise from social pressures, the desire for validation, or the pursuit of quick financial benefits, even when they conflict with fundamental values. For example, an individual might compromise integrity by engaging in unethical practices at work to secure promotions or bonuses. While such decisions appear rewarding in the moment, they carry damaging consequences over time. Immediate gratification, therefore, emphasizes personal rewards and temporary success, whereas value-driven decision-making prioritizes sustainability, ethical consistency, and the broader impact of one's choices on others (Zhuang & Mousapour, 2017).

Moreso, external pressures can also influence decision-making, often pushing individuals or organizations to conform to societal expectations, market demands, or peer influences. Such pressures may prompt individuals to make choices that are not in harmony with their own values. Unlike value-driven decisions, which stem from an internal commitment to principles, externally influenced decisions are more reactive, based on external validation or constraints (Siebert, Kunz, and Rolf 2020). In essence, value-driven decision-making is about making choices that reflect a more profound commitment to personal or organizational values, even if those choices require sacrifice or long-term effort. It reflects an intrinsic motivation to align actions with one's ethical framework, aiming not just at immediate satisfaction or external rewards, but at fulfilling a larger, often more meaningful purpose. This approach encourages a more thoughtful and intentional way of navigating life's complexities, and emphasizes responsibility to self and others, rather than succumbing to transient desires or societal pressures.

Theoretical Framework

The Theory of Planned Behaviour

The Theory of Planned Behavior was developed by Icek Ajzen in 1985. It is a social psychological model that explains human behavior based on three core components: attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. These components, according to Sok, Borges, Schmidt, and Ajzen (2021), collectively determine an individual's intention to perform a specific behaviour, which in turn influences their actual actions. The theory was developed to address the limitations of the earlier Theory of Reasoned Action by incorporating perceived behavioral control, which accounts for factors beyond an individual's direct control, such as external constraints or opportunities (Paul, Modi, and Patel 2016). The theory of planned behaviour hypothesizes that individuals' behavior is driven by their intentions, which are influenced by their attitudes, the social pressures they perceive (subjective norms), and their perceived control over the behavior (perceived behavioral control) (Conner, 2020). Attitudes refer to the individual's positive or negative evaluation of performing the behavior. Subjective norms involve the perceived expectations of others, which may either encourage or discourage specific actions. Perceived behavioral control reflects an individual's belief in their

ability to perform the behavior, factoring in both internal and external limitations (Ajzen & Schmidt, 2020).

Scholars have criticized and expanded on the theory over time. For example, some researchers argue that while theory of planned behaviour provides a structured approach to predicting behavior, it may oversimplify the complex dynamics of human decision-making by not adequately accounting for emotions or spontaneous decisions (Michaelidou & Hassan, 2014). Others, like Bagozzi 2024 emphasize that theory may lack nuance in capturing the complexity of health-related behaviors particularly when cultural or community-specific factors play a significant role. Additionally, various studies suggest that while the theory of planned behaviour may be predictive in specific contexts, its application to diverse behaviors and cultural settings requires more adaptation and customization to be genuinely effective.

The theory of planned behaviour provides a valuable framework for addressing value-driven decision-making in a rapidly changing world. Nigeria's youth face myriad challenges—such as unemployment, poverty, and corruption—which often lead to decisions that prioritize short-term rewards over long-term benefits. While focusing on attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, the theory of planned behaviour can help understand how Nigerian youth's view values like integrity, responsibility, and long-term planning in decision-making. For instance, if Nigerian youths perceive intense societal pressure to succeed quickly, this could affect their intentions and reduce their commitment to value-driven decisions, like pursuing education or engaging in sustainable entrepreneurship.

However, the application of the theory of planned behaviour in this context also faces limitations. Nigerian youths, influenced by a complex social, economic, and political landscape, may make decisions driven by immediate survival needs rather than planned intentions. In such a scenario, the perceived behavioral control component might be skewed, as many may feel they lack the agency to change their circumstances. Therefore, while the theory of planned behaviour can provide insights into factors that influence decision-making, it may need to be supplemented by a more contextual understanding of youth realities, especially in settings marked by economic hardship and unstable infrastructure. Umar (2019) argues that, without considering deeper cultural factors, the theory of planned behaviour might not fully capture the nuance needed to drive real change in value-driven decision-making among Nigerian youths.

Education and Other Socializing Factors in Shaping Value-Driven Decision-Making Among Nigerian Youth

In a rapidly evolving society such as Nigeria, the role of education in shaping value-driven decision-making among youth cannot be overemphasized. Bashar and Zayyanu (2023) assert that both formal and informal education systems are critical in moulding the moral and ethical frameworks that guide the choices made by young people. As a dynamic

socio-cultural environment characterizes Nigeria, youth decision-making is often influenced by a variety of factors, including the education they receive. The formal education system in Nigeria, which includes *primary, secondary, and tertiary education*, has long been seen as a vehicle for knowledge dissemination and personal development (Opeke, Iroaganachi, Yemisi, and Soyemi 2020). In many ways, formal education sets the stage for youth to interact with ideas, values, and norms that guide their decision-making. However, its impact on value-driven decision-making is not without challenges. Scholars have noted that the Nigerian formal education system often places a stronger emphasis on academic achievement rather than character development (Ololube, 2017). This academic-driven approach can result in a narrow focus on cognitive skills at the expense of fostering ethical decision-making.

At the heart of formal education in Nigeria is the curriculum, which is typically designed to reflect national goals and objectives. The Nigerian curriculum includes moral instruction, civic education, and religious studies, all of which aim to instil values such as respect, integrity, responsibility, and fairness (Bunmi & Taiwo, 2017). However, research suggests that while these subjects are integral to the curriculum, the execution and impact of value-based education are often diluted due to a variety of factors such as overcrowded classrooms, lack of qualified teachers, and limited resources (Ngwacho, 2024). As a result, the values conveyed through formal education may not be fully absorbed by students, leading to a situation where moral and ethical considerations do not always guide their decision-making.

One critical factor that influences the effectiveness of formal education in shaping value-driven decision-making is the pedagogical approach employed by educators. For instance, when teaching moral education or civic responsibility, a didactic, lecture-based teaching method may fail to engage students in active reflection on ethical dilemmas. On the other hand, more interactive, participatory methods—such as debates, role-playing, and case studies—have been shown to promote greater internalization of values (Addo, Efut, Akpo, and Egor 2023). Despite the importance of such methods, they remain underutilized in many Nigerian classrooms due to systemic challenges like large class sizes and an over-reliance on rote memorization.

Informal education, encompassing family, peer groups, religious institutions, and community-based socialization, also plays a significant role in shaping the decision-making processes of Nigerian youth. The family, according to Ohazulike 2023 is a critical unit in the early stages of value formation. Nigerian parents often instil values such as respect for elders, communal responsibility, and the importance of hard work. These values form the foundation upon which youth make decisions in various spheres of life, including education, career, relationships, and social engagements. However, informal education can also be a double-edged sword. For example, while many Nigerian families emphasize communal values and ethical conduct, some parents may encourage decisions that

prioritize material success over moral integrity, especially in environments where corruption is widespread.

Peer groups are another important influence on decision-making. Adolescence is a period marked by a heightened desire for peer acceptance, and as such, youth may turn to their peers for guidance in navigating moral and social dilemmas. Bench-Capon and Modgil 2017 posit that peer pressure can either reinforce or undermine value-based decisions, depending on the norms prevalent within the group. In Nigerian youth culture, where conformity to peer norms often takes precedence, the impact of peer influence on decision-making is evident. Peer groups can either encourage positive behaviors such as academic success, respect for authority, and social responsibility, or they can promote detrimental behaviors such as cheating, substance abuse, and even criminal activity.

Religious institutions also play a pivotal role in shaping value-driven decision-making. Nigeria is a religiously diverse nation, with both Islam and Christianity having a significant impact on the moral and ethical development of young people. Religious teachings often emphasize values such as honesty, kindness, and forgiveness (Ismail, 2016), which can guide youth in making decisions that reflect these virtues. However, the impact of religious education on value-driven decision-making is often complicated by societal realities, such as the prevalence of religious extremism or hypocrisy among some religious leaders, which can create confusion for young people trying to align their decisions with spiritual values. Despite the challenges in both formal and informal education systems, efforts have been made to address the gaps in value-based education. Government socio/military initiatives such as the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) and various civic education programs have sought to provide Nigerian youth with platforms to engage in value-based decision-making, emphasizing national unity, social responsibility, and ethical behavior. These programs have highlighted the importance of cultivating a national identity rooted in shared values (Akinyetun, 2020) and have encouraged young people to participate in community development projects and volunteer work. The role of education in shaping value-driven decision-making among Nigerian youth is multifaceted and complex. Both formal and informal education systems play crucial roles in providing the framework and context within which youth develop their ethical and moral values.

The Influence of Social Media and Technology on Youth Values and Decision Making.

The pervasive influence of social media and technology has significantly reshaped the value systems and decision-making behaviors of Nigerian youth. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), and TikTok have become integral to daily life, offering avenues for self-expression, social interaction, and access to information. However, this digital engagement has introduced complexities in the way young Nigerians form values and make decisions. Social media, according to Guajardo 2020 serves as a mirror reflecting and amplifying the values

prevalent in society. For Nigerian youth, platforms like Instagram, X, and TikTok often showcase lifestyles characterised by affluence, luxury, and instant success. This portrayal can lead to the internalization of materialistic values, where success is equated with wealth and status (Bainotti, 2021). Such representations may overshadow traditional values emphasizing education, hard work, and communal well-being. The allure of rapid success stories can skew perceptions, making the pursuit of quick wealth appear more attainable and desirable than long-term personal development.

The concept of "get-rich-quick" has gained traction among Nigerian youth (Ezeonyi, Ogugua, and Ikeagwuani 2023), partly due to the content consumed on social media. Platforms often highlight individuals who attain wealth swiftly, sometimes through dubious means, which can normalize such aspirations. This phenomenon has been linked to an increase in activities like internet fraud and ritual killings, as some youths seek to emulate these success stories without considering the ethical implications. The prevalence of such narratives on social media distorts moral compasses, leading to decisions that prioritize immediate gains over long-term consequences. Moreover, the digital realm offers a platform for the exploration and affirmation of identity. Nigerian youth utilize social media to express individuality, challenge societal norms, and engage in activism. Movements like #EndSARS have demonstrated the power of online platforms in mobilizing youth for social and political causes (Shola, 2021). Through these platforms, young Nigerians can voice concerns, advocate for change, and connect with like-minded individuals, fostering a sense of community and purpose.

However, the digital space is not without its challenges. The constant exposure to curated content can lead to unrealistic comparisons and a distorted sense of reality. This phenomenon, often referred to as "social media envy," can result in feelings of inadequacy and anxiety among youth who perceive their lives as less glamorous than those portrayed online (Awobamise, 2018). Such emotional responses can influence decision-making, leading to choices aimed at achieving the perceived ideal lifestyle rather than decisions grounded in personal values and circumstances. Furthermore, the anonymity afforded by online platforms can embolden individuals to engage in behaviors they might avoid in face-to-face interactions. This detachment can lead to actions that are impulsive or lack consideration of long-term effects. The instant gratification culture prevalent on social media can diminish the capacity for delayed gratification, a crucial component in rational decision-making processes.

In the educational sphere, the influence of social media is double-edged. Digital platforms, according to Adeshina 2024 provide access to a wealth of information and learning resources, facilitating academic growth. The distractions inherent in social media can detract from academic focus. Studies by Marker, Gnambs, and Appel (2018) and Malak, Shuhaiber, Al-amer, Abuadas, and Aburoomi (2022) have indicated that excessive use

of social media correlates with decreased academic performance, as time spent online often replaces time allocated for study and intellectual engagement. The pervasive nature of social media also affects interpersonal relationships. While it enables connectivity, it can also foster superficial interactions that lack depth and emotional connection. The emphasis on online personas can lead to a neglect of real-world relationships, as individuals may prioritize virtual validation over genuine human connections. The impact of social media and technology on Nigerian youth is multifaceted (Agbawe, 2018), influencing their values and decision-making in profound ways. While these platforms offer opportunities for self-expression, learning, and activism, they also present challenges that can distort values and decision-making processes. It is imperative for stakeholders, including educators, parents, and policymakers, to engage with youth in navigating the digital landscape, promoting critical thinking, ethical considerations, and the development of a value system that balances digital influences with traditional cultural principles.

The Impact of Political and Societal Changes on Youth Values and Decision Making

The impact of political and societal changes on youth values and decision-making is a subject of significant interest, especially in countries undergoing rapid political and social transformations, such as Nigeria. The values and decision-making approaches of Nigerian youth are not static; they evolve in response to shifting political landscapes, societal reforms, and changes in governance. In the Nigerian context, political instability, societal reforms, and governance changes have contributed both positively and negatively to shaping the value systems of youth.

Political instability in Nigeria has long been a feature of the country's history, marked by military coups, civil unrest, and volatile democratic transitions. Political instability profoundly affects youth values by generating an environment where trust in political institutions is often low. According to Amzat and Abdullahi 2016, the lack of political stability has led to a deepening sense of disillusionment among the youth. This disillusionment often manifests in a withdrawal from active political participation, with many young people adopting a "survivalist" mentality, where individual success is prioritized over collective societal progress. This shift in value systems is a direct consequence of the failure of political systems to meet the expectations of youth. As a result, the Nigerian youth, in some cases, view political engagement as futile, reinforcing a culture of disengagement (Onyewuchi, Jawan, and Ahmad 2024).

Moreover, political instability breeds a sense of uncertainty and insecurity, which significantly impacts decision-making processes. Nigerian youth, facing an unstable political environment, are more likely to make short-term decisions that prioritize immediate gains over long-term societal well-being (Amaka, 2024). For example, the desire for economic stability amidst political instability has led many young people

to seek employment opportunities outside of the formal sector, where entrepreneurial activities or even illegal practices become more appealing. This mindset, while allowing youth to navigate political and societal chaos, often comes at the cost of long-term sustainability, contributing to the perpetuation of poverty and social unrest.

In contrast, societal reforms and shifts in governance, particularly in the post-1999 democratic era, have also played a significant role in shaping the values and decision-making of Nigerian youth. Democratic governance, despite its challenges such as corruption and poor governance, has provided opportunities for youth to engage in politics and policy-making in ways that were previously impossible under military rule. Ojo and Afolaranmi (2024) argue that the democratisation process has influenced youth values by providing platforms for youth involvement in political discourse. More broadly, democratization of politics has fostered a sense of hope and empowerment, wherein youth are increasingly invested in social causes and governance reforms. For instance, movements such as the #EndSARS protests, led predominantly by youth, highlight how democratic reforms, coupled with the rise of digital activism, have empowered young Nigerians to challenge and demand political accountability.

However, this shift in political engagement has also raised complex challenges for decision-making processes. The expansion of political participation has not always translated into substantive changes in governance. While youth may be more politically aware and engaged, their decision-making is often shaped by a broader sense of disillusionment with the political system's persistent failure to deliver on promises. This disillusionment manifests in multiple ways: for some, it fuels frustration and cynicism that weaken trust in institutions and discourage sustained political participation; for others, it creates a deep tension between hope for reform and scepticism about meaningful change. Consequently, youth values become divided, while one segment remains committed to activism and the pursuit of political accountability, another turns to alternative pathways such as social entrepreneurship, migration, or community-based initiatives as avenues for self-empowerment. Viewed holistically, disillusionment does not simply produce withdrawal but rather reshapes the orientation of Nigerian youth, compelling them to redefine how they pursue stability, meaning, and impact within a system they often perceive as unresponsive. As Foa, Klassen, Wenger, Rand, and Slade 2020 note, this fractured approach to decision-making reflects the growing tension between hope for reform and cynicism about the system's capacity to fulfil promises.

Furthermore, changes in governance, particularly the shift towards neoliberal economic policies, have had a significant impact on the decision-making of Nigerian youth. The introduction of policies that emphasize privatization, deregulation, and market-driven economic reforms has altered the socio-economic landscape of the country. In a neoliberal context, where the state's role in welfare provision is

minimized, youth are often left to rely on their own resourcefulness and entrepreneurial capabilities. This environment has fostered a value system that prizes individualism and self-reliance over collective action. As Nweke 2014 suggests, the youth's approach to decision-making under these conditions is shaped by an increased reliance on self-empowerment through entrepreneurship, education, and personal networking. Political instability has bred cynicism and disengagement, while democratic reforms and shifts in governance have provided new avenues for political participation and social activism. However, these changes have not always led to consistent positive outcomes. The evolving value systems of Nigerian youth reflect the tension between hope for political change and frustration with systemic failures. Consequently, Nigerian youth make decisions that are influenced by both their personal survival strategies and their desire for long-term societal improvements, creating a complex dynamic that continues to evolve as Nigeria's political and societal landscape changes.

Conclusion

This paper emphasizes the need to re-engineer youth mindsets towards value-driven decision-making, especially in a rapidly evolving world. The study highlights the importance of embedding ethical, sustainable, and socially responsible choices within youth's cognitive frameworks to navigate technological, environmental, and cultural shifts. The research shows that while interventions like experiential learning, mentorship, and community-based initiatives can significantly improve value-awareness, the role of supportive environments is crucial in reinforcing long-term changes. The findings provide vital insights into how youth can be empowered to adopt ethical reasoning and resilience, offering pathways for educators and policymakers to address these pressing challenges.

Recommendations

Based on the discussions above, the paper recommends the following. First, educational systems should integrate more value-based curricula, focusing not just on cognitive skills but on ethical decision-making. Second, youth development programs should emphasize mentorship and community engagement to reinforce positive value systems. Third, policymakers should foster environments where critical thinking, long-term planning, and ethical reasoning are actively promoted. Finally, considering the influence of social media, it is recommended that digital literacy programs be implemented to equip youth with tools to critically engage with content, ensuring that values rather than external pressures inform their decisions.

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