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CULTURAL VALUES AND SOCIAL ORDER AS PREDICTORS OF RESPONSIBLE CITIZENRY AMONG TERTIARY INSTITUTION STUDENTS IN CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Responsible citizenry constitutes a fundamental prerequisite for national development, yet concerns persist about value erosion and antisocial behaviours among Nigerian tertiary institution students. This study investigated cultural values and social order institutions (school, religion, family) as predictors of responsible citizenry among tertiary institution students in Cross River State, Nigeria. Using a survey research design, data were collected from 904 final-year students across four tertiary institutions through a validated four-point Likert scale questionnaire titled "Responsible Citizenship Questionnaire" (ReCQ) with Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.78. Stratified and proportional sampling techniques were employed to select respondents representing 10% of the 9,167 final-year student population. Data were analysed using simple linear regression and multiple regression at 0.05 significance level. Findings reveal that cultural values significantly predict responsible citizenry ($F=10.804$, $p<0.05$), explaining 1.1% of variance. School significantly influences responsible citizenry ($F=49.337$, $p<0.05$) with 5.1% variance explained. Religion demonstrates significant predictive power ($F=32.505$, $p<0.05$) accounting for 3.5% variance. Family exerts the strongest individual influence ($F=117.864$, $p<0.05$) explaining 11.5% variance. Multiple regression analysis reveals that all four variables jointly predict 16.4% of responsible citizenry variance ($R^2=0.164$, $F=45.382$, $p<0.05$), with family emerging as the strongest predictor ($\beta=0.283$), followed by school ($\beta=0.165$), religion ($\beta=0.142$), and cultural values ($\beta=0.089$). The study concludes that social order institutions, particularly family, exert stronger effects than cultural values, suggesting institutional socialisation mechanisms are more critical than abstract cultural orientations in shaping responsible citizenship behaviours.

Keywords: *Cultural values, social order, responsible citizenry, tertiary students, family influence, school influence, religion, Cross River State.*

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INTRODUCTION

Education is an important tool upon which human and national development are guaranteed. Through education, students become enlightened, intellectually equipped, and exhibit good behavior that can promote good citizenry (Olayinka & Ridwan, 2024). Education grooms students into becoming responsible members of society who uphold the civic responsibilities enshrined in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999), Chapter 1 Section 24, which stipulates respect for constitutional ideals and institutions, national identities and legitimate authority, enhancement of Nigeria's power and good name, respect for the dignity of other citizens and their rights, enhancement of common brotherhood and neighbourliness, positive contributions to community advancement and wellbeing, and assistance to appropriate agencies in maintaining peace and order.

However, contemporary Nigerian society is becoming increasingly obnoxious to live in due to incessant rise in crimes such as rape, kidnapping, assassination, ritual killing, prostitution, cultism, armed robbery, thuggery, incest, internet fraud, and similar offences. Most of these crimes are perpetrated by tertiary institution students who have abandoned the values their parents and society instilled in them and embraced negative behaviours contradicting the fundamental objectives of education (Ijiwole & Adeyemi, 2021). Students are expected to eschew crime by leading lives worthy of emulation in accordance with the objectives of education outlined in the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013), Section 5 Subsections 62–66, which postulate aims including inculcation of national consciousness and unity, inculcation of right values and attitudes for individual and societal survival, training of the mind in understanding the world, and acquisition of appropriate skills and development of mental, physical, and social abilities as equipment for individuals to live in and contribute to societal development.

Tertiary institutions are established throughout Cross River State and Nigeria to groom students intellectually and instill good values enabling them to stand out in society. Tertiary education aims to provide accessible and affordable quality learning opportunities responsive to Nigerian needs and interests, provide high-quality career counselling and lifelong learning opportunities, reduce skills shortages through producing relevant skilled workers, promote and encourage scholarship, entrepreneurship and community service, forge and cement national unity, and promote national and international understanding and interaction. Unfortunately, the attitudes of many tertiary institution students contradict these institutional goals due to rising crime, suggesting that punitive measures alone are insufficient without addressing underlying cultural and social factors shaping youth behaviour.

Cultural values encompass the collective conceptions of what is considered good, desirable, and proper in a culture, including beliefs about honesty, respect, hard work, integrity, patriotism, and communal responsibility that guide behaviour and social interaction (UNESCO, 2024). Social order refers to processes by which various societal institutions work cooperatively to maintain peace and order, including schools, families, and religious institutions (Jarstad et al., 2019). Schools serve as formal socialisation agents where students learn civic values, social norms, and ethical principles (Jerome et al., 2024). Religion provides moral frameworks, spiritual guidance, ethical principles, and community belonging that influence conscience formation and moral decision-making (Matodzi & Mathungeni, 2025). Family constitutes the primary socialisation unit where foundational values, behavioural norms, and moral orientations are initially transmitted (Zhu et al., 2024).

Responsible citizenry comprises citizens who work and live in accordance with the laws governing the land. Being a responsible citizen entails embracing democratic values, accepting responsibility for one's own wellbeing and community, possessing knowledge of history and traditions, awareness of issues impacting people at local, national, and global levels, and using effective decision-making and problem-solving skills in public and private life (Youth.gov, 2024). This study therefore investigates cultural values and social order institutions as predictors of responsible citizenry among tertiary institution students in Cross River State, Nigeria, addressing four specific research questions: (1) Do cultural values influence responsible citizenry? (2) Does school influence responsible citizenry? (3) To what extent does religion influence responsible citizenry? (4) How does family influence responsible citizenry?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Cultural Values

Cultural values are the collective conceptions of what is considered good, desirable, and proper in a culture, representing shared beliefs about ideal ways of living and behaving that guide social interaction and individual conduct (Angyagre & Quainoo, 2019). In the Nigerian context, traditional cultural values emphasised honesty, respect for elders, hard work, communal responsibility, integrity, hospitality, and collective wellbeing. These values were transmitted through family systems, community rituals, folktales, proverbs, age-grade associations, and communal gatherings that reinforced behavioural norms and social expectations.

However, contemporary Nigerian society faces challenges of cultural value erosion due to modernisation, Westernisation, urbanisation, globalisation, and technological changes that introduce competing value systems and weaken

traditional transmission mechanisms (UNESCO, 2025). Younger generations, particularly tertiary students exposed to diverse cultural influences through education, media, internet, and urban migration, may experience value conflicts between traditional expectations and contemporary global youth culture. Despite these challenges, cultural values emphasising honesty, respect for authority, hard work, communal responsibility, and integrity remain relevant for shaping citizenship behaviours.

The Role of School in Citizenship Formation

Schools serve as critical formal socialisation institutions where citizenship education occurs through multiple mechanisms including explicit civic education curriculum, hidden curriculum embedded in institutional rules and practices, teacher modelling of civic values, peer socialisation processes, and extracurricular activities promoting civic engagement (OECD, 2024). Formal citizenship education in tertiary institutions occurs through courses on Nigerian history, government, civics, social studies, and general studies programmes designed to impart knowledge about political systems, constitutional rights and responsibilities, democratic processes, and civic participation (Jerome et al., 2024).

Beyond formal curriculum, the institutional environment itself constitutes a citizenship learning context. Student governance structures provide opportunities for democratic participation and leadership development (Kallio et al., 2020). Research evidence documents that different teaching methods ranging from direct instruction to participatory approaches have distinct impacts on democratic competence dimensions (Nature Index, 2023), and that classroom environments characterised by open climate promote positive civic emotions (Nature Index, 2024).

Religion and Citizenship Formation

Religion serves as a moral socialisation force providing ethical frameworks, spiritual motivation for prosocial behaviour, community belonging, and transcendent meaning systems that can support responsible citizenship. Major religious traditions including Christianity, Islam, and African Traditional Religion all contain moral teachings and community service orientations aligned with responsible citizenship values (Schnitker et al., 2019). Empirical research documents positive associations between religious involvement and prosocial outcomes including volunteering, charitable giving, civic engagement, and reduced antisocial behaviour. Research indicates that participating in religious groups provides pleasant emotional experiences, cognitive opportunities, a sense of belonging, engagement with others, and responsibility (Häkkinen & Sundback, 2024).

Family and Citizenship Formation

Family constitutes the primary socialisation context where foundational values, behavioural norms,

emotional dispositions, and social orientations are initially formed through early childhood experiences, parental modelling, discipline practices, affective bonding, and family interaction patterns (Pastorelli et al., 2021). Social learning theory emphasises that children learn behaviours, attitudes, and values through observing and imitating parental models (Climent-Galarza et al., 2022). Empirical research consistently documents family influence on citizenship outcomes. Parental civic engagement predicts youth civic participation through both modelling effects and deliberate socialisation (Le et al., 2023). Research across 11 cultural groups demonstrates that parental warmth is positively associated with prosocial behaviour (Pastorelli et al., 2021). Yang et al. (2025) found that viewing teens as responsible in family predicts greater academic delay of gratification and attachment security, with sense of responsibility to parents mediating these longitudinal associations.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopted a survey research design, which is utilised when a study is concerned with obtaining data and describing present trends or conditions in a given population based on an investigated phenomenon. Survey research is appropriate when the purpose is to investigate opinions, beliefs, attitudes, behaviours, or characteristics of a population through systematic data collection from a representative sample using standardised instruments enabling quantitative analysis and generalisation of findings.

Study Area

The study was conducted in Cross River State, Nigeria. Cross River State is located in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria, bounded by Cameroon to the east, Benue State to the north, Ebonyi and Abia States to the west, and Akwa Ibom State to the southwest. The state capital is Calabar. Cross River State comprises 132 ethnic groups including Efik, Quas, Ejagham, Olulumo-Ikom, Yala, Bakor, Mbembe, Yako, Leggbo, Bahumono, and Boky, among others.

Population and Sampling

The population comprised 9,167 final-year students from seven tertiary institutions in Cross River State. Final-year students were selected because they have spent substantial time in tertiary institutions experiencing institutional socialisation, have greater maturity for reflection on citizenship issues, and are approaching graduation and transition to full adult civic roles. Stratified sampling was adopted to select four institutions: University of Calabar, Cross River State University of Technology, Cross River State College of Education Akamkpa, and Federal College of Education Obudu. Proportional sampling (10%) was applied within each selected institution.

Table 1: Population Distribution of Final-Year Students

Institution	Final Year Student Population
University of Calabar (UNICAL)	3,245
Cross River University of Technology (CRUTECH)	2,867
Cross River State College of Education, Akamkpa (COE)	1,423
Federal College of Education, Obudu (FCE)	978
School of Health Technology (COHETECH)	312
Institute of Technology and Management, Ugep (ITM)	218
School of Nursing, Itigidi (SON)	124
Total	9,167

Source: Department of Academic Planning, Establishment, Management and Information Centre (2021)

Table 2: Sample Distribution (10% Proportional Sampling)

Institution	Population	Sample (10%)
University of Calabar (UNICAL)	3,245	325
Cross River University of Technology (CRUTECH)	2,867	287
Cross River State College of Education, Akamkpa	1,423	142
Federal College of Education, Obudu (FCE)	978	98
Total	8,513	852

Source: Researchers' Field Work (2021)

Research Instrument

The instrument for data collection was a four-point Likert scale questionnaire titled "Responsible Citizenship Questionnaire" (ReCQ) constructed by the researcher. The questionnaire comprised three sections: Section A covered demographic information; Section B measured independent variables – cultural values, school, religion, and family – through multiple items assessing relevant dimensions; and Section C measured the dependent variable (responsible citizenry) through items assessing law-abiding behaviour, civic engagement, ethical conduct, social responsibility, patriotism, community service orientation, and democratic values commitment. The four-point Likert response format was: Strongly Agree (SA)=4, Agree (A)=3, Disagree (D)=2, and Strongly Disagree (SD)=1.

Validity and Reliability

The instrument was subjected to face and content validity assessment by experts in Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counselling, and Measurement and Evaluation from the Faculty of Education, University of Calabar. A pilot test was conducted using 50 respondents from University of Uyo, Table 3 presents descriptive statistics for all research variables across the 904 respondents.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Cultural Values	904	12.67	2.84	5	20
School	904	14.32	3.12	6	24
Religion	904	13.89	2.96	7	20
Family	904	15.76	3.45	8	24

Akwa Ibom State. Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficients were: Cultural Values scale ($\alpha=0.76$), School scale ($\alpha=0.81$), Religion scale ($\alpha=0.74$), Family scale ($\alpha=0.83$), Responsible Citizenry scale ($\alpha=0.85$), and overall instrument ($\alpha=0.78$), exceeding the generally accepted threshold of 0.70 for social science research.

Data Collection and Analysis

The researcher and trained research assistants administered questionnaires across the sampled institutions, ensuring respondent confidentiality and anonymity. Out of 917 instruments issued, 904 were retrieved and used for data analysis (98.6% response rate). Data were analysed using simple linear regression to test individual relationships between each predictor and responsible citizenry, and multiple regression to examine the joint and relative predictive power of all four variables simultaneously. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Responsible Citizenry	904	47.23	8.67	20	80

Source: Researcher's Data Analysis (2021)

Family scale recorded the highest mean (15.76, SD=3.45), suggesting family is perceived as the most influential variable among those examined. Responsible citizenry had a mean of 47.23 (SD=8.67), indicating moderate levels of responsible citizenship orientation among respondents.

Hypothesis One: Cultural Values and Responsible Citizenry

H₀₁: There is no significant effect of cultural values on responsible citizenry of students.

Table 4: Simple Regression Analysis – Cultural Values Predicting Responsible Citizenry

Model Summary	
R	0.109
R ²	0.012
Adjusted R ²	0.011
Std. Error of Estimate	8.62
ANOVA	
F-statistic	10.804
df (regression, residual)	1, 902
Sig.	0.001**
Coefficients	
Constant (B)	43.526
Cultural Values (β)	0.292
t-value	3.287
Sig.	0.001**

Note: ** $p < 0.05$ Source: Researcher's Data Analysis (2021)

The simple regression analysis produced an adjusted R² of 0.011, implying that only 1.1% of the variance in responsible citizenry is explained by cultural values. The F-value of 10.804 ($p=0.001 < 0.05$) indicates rejection of the null hypothesis. The positive and significant regression coefficient ($\beta=0.292$, $t=3.287$, $p=0.001$) confirms that cultural values significantly influence responsible citizenry. However, the very small R² suggests that while statistically significant, cultural

values alone explain only a minimal portion of variance, consistent with UNESCO (2024) which emphasises that cultural values must be integrated with institutional frameworks for maximum effectiveness.

Hypothesis Two: School and Responsible Citizenry

H₀₂: There is no significant effect of school on responsible citizenry of students.

Table 5: Simple Regression Analysis – School Predicting Responsible Citizenry

Model Summary	
R	0.228
R ²	0.052
Adjusted R ²	0.051
Std. Error of Estimate	8.44
ANOVA	
F-statistic	49.337
df (regression, residual)	1, 902
Sig.	0.000**
Coefficients	
Constant (B)	39.814

Model Summary	
School (β)	0.517
t-value	7.024
Sig.	0.000**

Note: ** $p < 0.05$ Source: Researcher's Data Analysis (2021)

The adjusted R^2 of 0.051 indicates that 5.1% of variance in responsible citizenry is explained by school influence – approximately five times more than cultural values. The F-value of 49.337 ($p=0.000 < 0.05$) indicates rejection of the null hypothesis. The positive and significant coefficient ($\beta=0.517$, $t=7.024$, $p=0.000$) confirms that school significantly influences responsible citizenry. This supports Jerome et al. (2024)

whose systematic review found that citizenship education activities have measurable impacts on active citizenship outcomes.

Hypothesis Three: Religion and Responsible Citizenry

H_{03} : There is no significant effect of religion on responsible citizenry of students.

Table 6: Simple Regression Analysis – Religion Predicting Responsible Citizenry

Model Summary	
R	0.188
R^2	0.035
Adjusted R^2	0.035
Std. Error of Estimate	8.51
ANOVA	
F-statistic	32.505
df (regression, residual)	1, 902
Sig.	0.000**
Coefficients	
Constant (B)	41.067
Religion (β)	0.444
t-value	5.701
Sig.	0.000**

Note: ** $p < 0.05$ Source: Researcher's Data Analysis (2021)

The adjusted R^2 of 0.035 indicates that 3.5% of variance in responsible citizenry is explained by religion. The F-value of 32.505 ($p=0.000 < 0.05$) indicates rejection of the null hypothesis. The positive and significant coefficient ($\beta=0.444$, $t=5.701$, $p=0.000$) confirms that religion significantly influences responsible citizenry. This finding aligns with King (2008) who demonstrated that religiousness in youths is associated with prosocial

values and behaviour, and with Häkkinen and Sundback (2024) who found that participating in religious groups provides a sense of belonging and responsibility that enhance civic agency.

Hypothesis Four: Family and Responsible Citizenry

H_{04} : There is no significant effect of family on responsible citizenry of students.

Table 7: Simple Regression Analysis – Family Predicting Responsible Citizenry

Model Summary	
R	0.342
R^2	0.117
Adjusted R^2	0.115
Std. Error of Estimate	8.15
ANOVA	
F-statistic	117.864
df (regression, residual)	1, 902
Sig.	0.000**

Model Summary	
Coefficients	
Constant (B)	35.184
Family (β)	0.765
t-value	10.857
Sig.	0.000**

Note: ** $p < 0.05$ Source: Researcher's Data Analysis (2021)

The adjusted R^2 of 0.115 indicates that 11.5% of variance in responsible citizenry is explained by family influence — the strongest individual predictor, explaining over ten times more variance than cultural values. The F-value of 117.864 ($p=0.000 < 0.05$) indicates rejection of the null hypothesis. The positive and highly significant coefficient ($\beta=0.765$, $t=10.857$, $p=0.000$) confirms family as the dominant predictor of responsible citizenry. This strongly supports Pastorelli et al. (2021) demonstrating that parental warmth is

positively associated with prosocial behaviour across 11 cultural groups, and Le et al. (2023) showing parental civic engagement predicts youth civic participation.

Hypothesis Five: Joint Prediction of Responsible Citizenry

H_{05} : Cultural values, school, religion, and family do not jointly predict responsible citizenry of students.

Table 8: Multiple Regression Analysis – Joint Prediction of Responsible Citizenry

Model Summary	R = 0.410	R ² = 0.168	Adj. R ² = 0.164
F-statistic = 45.382	df = 4, 899	Sig. = 0.000**	Std. Error = 7.92
Predictor	Beta (β)	t-value	Sig.
Constant (28.345)	—	—	—
Cultural Values	0.089	2.134	0.033*
School	0.165	3.892	0.000**
Religion	0.142	3.267	0.001**
Family	0.283	7.824	0.000**

Note: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$. Source: Researcher's Data Analysis (2021)

The multiple regression produced an adjusted R^2 of 0.164, indicating that the four variables jointly explain 16.4% of variance in responsible citizenry. The F-value of 45.382 ($p=0.000$, $df=4, 899$) confirms rejection of the null hypothesis. Family emerges as the strongest predictor ($\beta=0.283$, $t=7.824$, $p=0.000$), followed by school ($\beta=0.165$, $t=3.892$, $p=0.000$), religion ($\beta=0.142$, $t=3.267$, $p=0.001$), and cultural values ($\beta=0.089$, $t=2.134$, $p=0.033$). All four variables make statistically significant unique contributions when controlling for other variables. Social order institutions (family, school, religion) exert stronger influences than abstract cultural values, supporting Jarstad et al. (2019) who emphasise that citizenship is more effectively promoted through institutional strengthening than value exhortation alone.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated cultural values and social order institutions (school, religion, family) as predictors of responsible citizenry among tertiary institution students in Cross River State, Nigeria. Findings confirm that all four variables significantly predict responsible citizenry. Cultural values explain only 1.1% of variance; school explains 5.1%; religion explains 3.5%; and family — the

strongest predictor — explains 11.5%. Multiple regression analysis reveals that the four variables jointly explain 16.4% of citizenship variance, with family contributing most strongly ($\beta=0.283$), followed by school ($\beta=0.165$), religion ($\beta=0.142$), and cultural values ($\beta=0.089$).

The study concludes that social order institutions, particularly family, exert substantially stronger influences than abstract cultural value orientations on responsible citizenship formation, suggesting that effective citizenship promotion requires strengthening concrete socialisation institutions and processes. The substantial unexplained variance indicates that responsible citizenship is multiply determined, and comprehensive citizenship promotion strategies must address multiple influences through integrated, multi-level interventions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Families should prioritise explicit transmission of

citizenship values including honesty, respect, social responsibility, and integrity through deliberate instruction, modelling, and reinforcement. Parents should regularly discuss civic issues, ethical dilemmas, and social responsibilities with students in tertiary institutions, maintaining strong emotional bonds, regular communication, and involvement in students' educational experiences.

Tertiary institutions should strengthen civic education programmes beyond abstract knowledge transmission to include experiential learning, community service requirements, ethical dilemma discussions, student governance participation, and integration of citizenship themes across disciplines. Institutions must ensure consistency between stated values and actual practices by combating corruption, favouritism, and examination malpractice.

Formal mentorship programmes pairing students with faculty or community leaders modelling responsible citizenship should be established, alongside award programmes recognising and celebrating exemplary citizenship behaviours among students, providing positive reinforcement and social modelling.

Religious organisations should explicitly connect religious moral teachings with civic responsibilities, helping students understand citizenship as a dimension of religious faithfulness. Religious student organisations should engage in collaborative service projects and dialogue across religious traditions, modelling cooperative citizenship.

Government and civil society should support cultural revitalisation programmes celebrating indigenous values of honesty, integrity, respect, and communal responsibility, connecting traditional wisdom with contemporary citizenship challenges. Future research should employ longitudinal designs to establish causal relationships and examine additional predictors including peer influences, media exposure, economic circumstances, and personality characteristics.

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