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Ideal-Africanism and Practical Christianity: Engaging Awka Youth in Maintaining the Sanctity of Human Life

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Abstract

The rise in youth-perpetrated homicides in Awka metropolis, Anambra State, Nigeria, threatens social stability, morality, and human life. Many of these young ones identify with either Christianity or African Traditional Religion, which emphasises the inviolability of human life, making this issue particularly concerning. The persistence of these aggressive behaviours despite many therapies suggest that social and spiritual issues are not being addressed. This study proposes that combining Ideal-Africanism with Practical Christianity, two ethical systems that value peace, human life, and community responsibility, can significantly alter the landscape. A qualitative design based on African Communitarianism and Christian Ethical Theory examined youth moral dissonance. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with 180 youths, community leaders, youth mentors, and clergy. Interviews were analysed using themes. Findings reveal that cultism, insufficient parental supervision, peer pressure, cultural disintegration, elders' silence on moral shortcomings, and poor spiritual formation, drove the killings. These factors contribute to the moral breakdown of Awka youth. The study contends that a holistic strategy, including cultural and Christian themes, is crucial. Recommendations include

incorporating Ideal-African principles into church and school programmes, empowering traditional institutions, engaging the media to promote value reorientation, boosting economic empowerment among youth, and fostering intergenerational mentorship. Interventions must also address the glamorisation of violence for instant wealth and ceremonial activities. This blend of religion and culture will provide the youth of Awka metropolis with a new moral compass, guiding them away from violence and towards a more caring and peaceful community.

Keywords: *Ideal-Africanism, Practical Christianity, Awka Youth, Sanctity of Human Life, Maintaining*

Introduction

Christian and African ideals respect human life. As Psalm 139:14 beautifully puts it, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made", highlighting the value of every individual. Africans view life as a divine trust, honoured at birth, protected in community, and revered at death. Every life is precious to both. They also believe life should never be wasted. This idea and the Golden Rule - treat others as you would like to be treated - form a moral compass that preserves human life and fosters compassion, respect, and dignity for all. These imperatives constitute a lived ethic that recognises humanity's duty to defend life and societal peace. Vinning (2003) and Peschke (2004) emphasise togetherness, shared responsibility, and stewardship, promoting a worldview that values all beings, human and non-human. This perspective profoundly impacts ecocentric and communitarian thought systems. The ethical question these arrangements present is compelling: What if humans were carers rather than conquerors? This paradigm fosters a culture of life, care, and coexistence rooted in cultural ethics and theology, thereby awakening the community's moral conscience.

However, the rise in youth-perpetrated killings in Awka metropolis indicates a moral breakdown. Despite their association with Christianity or African Traditional Religion, these young people neglect life, demonstrating a worrying discrepancy between beliefs and actions. According to Nwabufo (2022) and recent information from E. Onuike, I. Nzeadigo, and E. Nduka (personal communication, March 17, 2025), violence is both a crime and a violation of *nsoala*, or sacred taboos, which angers *Ala* (the Earth goddess) and disrupts the cosmic order. Such desecrations cause curses like starvation, infertility, and social breakdown,

requiring ceremonial atonement. The decline of principles like *igwebuike* (solidarity) and *onye aghala nwanne ya* (let no one leave their sibling) reveals a moral and spiritual gap. Ideal Africanism and Practical Christianity offer potent responses to this crisis. These moral theories provide a cohesive, culturally based, and spiritually rich framework for changing teenage behaviour, promoting value for life, and restoring community well-being.

This study examines how Ideal-Africanist and Practical Christian ethics might be used to re-engage young people in Awka metropolis in cultivating respect for life. The study highlights the moral crises associated with youth-led violence to explore ways of blending African communitarian thought with Christian morality. The study will use the following research questions to find answers: (1) How do Awka's youth view life's sanctity? (2) What African values encourage life respect? (3) How can youth practise Christianity to respect human life? The study employs qualitative approaches to collect secondary data from published works and primary data from questionnaires and interviews. The findings will illuminate the relationship between African cultural values, Christian ethics, and young people's views on the sanctity of life. This knowledge should inform spiritual and community-driven initiatives to nurture greater regard for human life among Awka youth.

The Igbo and their Value for Human Life

Igbo, one of Nigeria's main ethnic groups, reside in the southeast, particularly in Anambra (where Awka metropolis is located), Imo, Enugu, Abia, and Ebonyi. The Igbo culture remains strong in Awka metropolis. Due to their rich cultural heritage, hard work, and community-centred values, the Igbo have long practised African Traditional Religion (ATR), which is based on respect for ancestors, veneration of deities, and belief in the sanctity of human life. According to ATR, shedding innocent blood disrupts the spiritual balance and leads to cosmic ramifications, including curses and tragedies, affecting both the individual and the community.

The introduction of Christianity In the 19th and 20th centuries, through colonialism and missionary work, brought biblical doctrine and local morality together. As noted by Uchendu (2024), Christianity, particularly Roman Catholicism, Anglicanism, and Pentecostalism, dominates Igboland, with adherents affirming the sanctity of life as fashioned in God's image (Genesis 1:27). Despite theological differences,

Christianity and ATR are closely related in Igbo culture, particularly in their rejection of murder and violence.

According to Chukwudebelu and Ajakor et al. (2024), the Igbo people of south-eastern Nigeria deeply value human life in their cultural, spiritual, and moral worldviews, with the Igbo adage '*Ndubuisi*' (life is paramount) emphasising the importance of protecting life on a community-wide level. In pre-colonial Igbo cosmology, human life was cherished as a supernatural gift from *Chineke* (God), and unjustly taking another's life would incur the wrath of the world and ancestors (Chinweze & Udechukwu, 2025). Murder, violence, and brutality were punished accordingly, with penalties ranging from banishment and public ostracism to ritual purification, depending on the severity—this profound respect for life shaped Igbo society's legal and social standards.

Berryman (2023) asserts that rituals of passage, communal activities, and storytelling instilled a reverence for life in Igbo youth. From an early age, Igbo teenagers were taught that everyone has an *akaraka* (destiny or purpose) and that life should be in harmony with others. This emphasis on the sanctity of life is reflected in proverbs like "*Igbo anaghị egbu mmadu n'efu*" (Igbos do not kill for nothing), which highlights that taking a life brings humiliation to the community and personal suffering. Berryman enunciates that bloodshed was treated with great care and sensitivity, even in matters of justice or war, and that atonement or reconciliation rites were often performed to restore harmony.

Review of Literature on Youth-Involved Homicide in Awka Metropolis

The recurring deaths and abductions of Keke operators around UNIZIK temp-site crossroads undermine security and governance in Awka metropolis, as noted by Obianeri (2021). Some declarators attribute these attacks to cultists allegedly shielded by unscrupulous security agents who profit from unlawful levies. Afunugo and Nganwuchu et al. (2023) reveal that youth-related homicides in the Awka metropolis are driven by cults sponsored by powerful political godfathers who protect and encourage these individuals to evade prosecution.

According to Egwuaba and Egboh (2024), the daily rise in illicit drug use in the Awka metropolis is generating societal unrest and youth-perpetrated homicide. Their survey of 405 individuals from five districts found that cannabis, cocaine, methamphetamine, tramadol, and codeine were the most commonly used drugs, highlighting a correlation between

drug usage and criminal activity. The previous discovery paints a grim picture of how addiction fuels violent crime among local youth.

Abalogu (2024) attributes youth-related homicides in Awka to cultism, an organised and aggressive movement that draws young people into destructive lifestyles. While churches in Awka have implemented moral education, counselling, and community outreach to provide direction and hope to the vulnerable youth, Abalogu argues that these efforts have not entirely overlooked this menace. Nonetheless, despite these efforts, this study posits that youth-orchestrated murders persist in the Awka metropolis.

According to Salami (2024), cult-related violence in Awka metropolis, particularly the October 2024 massacre during Nibo's New Yam festival, has severely degraded public safety and institutional control in Anambra State. Despite Awka's notorious reputation as a cult base, the brazenness of the incessant attacks, such as the daylight murder of three brothers from the same family, illustrates the impunity of these groups. Salami illustrates that the Ezinano Community's offer of an N10 million bounty for the killers shows local desperation and the inability of the conventional security systems to achieve justice.

Ikenga (2025) claims that the rise in youth-driven homicides, particularly ritual killings, in Awka metropolis indicates a troubling shift in attitudes among young people who are drawn to unexpected fortune. He linked it to the get-rich-quick mentality that fuels local cultism, armed robbery, and kidnapping. Ikenga stresses that the pattern shows a significant social and moral decline, where despair, peer pressure, and a lack of meaningful opportunities push youths to violence and death. In response to this threat, Anambra State Governor Prof. Charles Soludo introduced the "Homeland Security Law" and "Udogachi and Agunchemba" joint security force as security measures. While existing research has identified various causes and solutions to the rising number of youth-driven homicides in Awka metropolis, this paper advocates for combining Practical Christianity and Ideal-Africanism to address the spiritual dimension of the crisis.

Theoretical Framework

Two theories—the conceptions of Christian ethics and African communist theories—are the foundation for this study's investigation.

1. Christian Ethical Theory

Christian ethical philosophy emerged from centuries of theological and philosophical debate on ethical behaviour as presented in Christ and the Bible. According to Kenney (2005), this theory has its roots in the writings of both early and contemporary theologians, including Martin Luther (1483–1546) and John Calvin (1509–1564), who redirected ethical authority to scripture during the Reformation, grounding moral conduct in divine sovereignty and scriptural mandates; St. Augustine (354–430), who emphasised divine grace and the role of God's law in moral decision-making; and St. Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), who combined Aristotelian virtue ethics with Christian Natural Law, arguing that moral good is consistent with God's rational order. Kenney states that 20th-century philosophers like Reinhold Niebuhr and Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906–1945) emphasised individual discipleship and the tension between justice and love in a fallen society (1892–1971).

Hautala and Roser (2023) note that some theologians who emphasise virtue, community, and biblical narrative in morality, including Stanley Hauerwas and Alasdair MacIntyre, continue to impact the field. Christian Ethical Theory holds that life is sacred and that humans are fashioned in God's image. Jung (2013) states that Genesis 9:4-6, Leviticus 17:11 and Matthew 5:21–22 condemn bloodshed because they recognise the divine dignity of all people. Since all life is made in God's image (*Imago Dei*), murder, abortion, and bloodshed are wrong and profane God's majesty, according to Christian ethics. This study streamlines that Christian Ethical Theory can provide a moral and theological foundation for teaching Awka adolescents to defend life, abstain from violence and murder, and follow God's love and commands.

2. African Communitarianism Theory

African Communitarianism values community, identity, and reciprocity. Eze (2013) elaborates that John Mbiti (1931–2019), who said, "I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am" (p.12), remains a cornerstone in the projection of the theory. Eze avers that the philosophy posits that interactions shape identity and morality. According to Chimakonam (2014), Kwame Gyekye (1939–2019) and Kwasi Wiredu (1931–2022) promoted a moderate African Communitarianism that balanced individual rights and societal responsibilities.

Watadza (2016) contends that African Communitarianism promotes life as a common heritage and obligation rather than a personal asset. This perspective emphasises that everyone's life is community-based. Consequently, spilling blood undermines individual rights, social peace and group identity. Watadza reveals that the African Communitarian worldview values life as a social good rather than a personal asset. It views everyone's life as a community-based experience. Blood represents connection, legacy, and duty in this view. Spilling blood undermines individual rights, social peace, and group identity. This theory complements the present study by emphasising the moral need for Awka youth to defend life. In a culture influenced by Western individualism and consumerism, this strategy enables adolescents to rediscover traditional African moral values that celebrate life, promote peace, and combat intra-communal violence and contempt for human life. African Communitarianism and Christian Ethical Theories reinforce accountability, encouraging adolescents to avoid injuring others and promote life, peace, and social cohesiveness. This view sees youth as moral agents who can make life-changing choices rather than passive victims of a corrupt culture.

Synoptic Analysis of Socioeconomic and Psychological Causes of Youth Violence Surge in Awka Metropolis

The literature review indicates that unemployment, poverty, educational deficiencies, peer pressure, drug abuse, cultism, the quick money-making syndrome, the quest for undue territorial control, elders' and parents' silence, and patronage from influential political magnates are all linked to youth violence in Awka metropolis. These are the key factors affecting adolescent delinquency and homicide in Awka. This statement matches the testimony of I. Anya, O. Eze, C. Nwoye, and U. Anene (personal communication, March 17, 2025).

Youth-perpetrated homicides in Awka metropolis are founded on the aforementioned socioeconomic problems that are interrelated. A psychological analysis of this is expressed thus: Poverty and hunger begin with unemployment, which robs young people of their dignity and hope. Many low-income individuals cannot afford education and consequently drop out in despair, leaving them unprepared for meaningful employment. This gap drives them to peer groups, where pressure is the sole language. Peer pressure leads to intense drug usage, which often leads to cultism, a fake brotherhood that gives identity and authority.

Cultism leads to ritual killings, crime, and manipulation, promising overnight riches. Instant prosperity naturally breeds a desire for territorial control as these young people battle to rule neighbourhoods and markets like warlords. Political godfathers quietly but firmly patronise these youths to frighten rivals, secure votes, and impose silence. The silence of elders and parents implies involvement and tacit approval of this wickedness.

Afunugo and Nganwuchu et al. (2023) reveal that many of the political overlords who patronise these young, bloodthirsty hoodlums were once cultists, adding a disturbing layer of hypocrisy to their actions. They promote a toxic culture that normalises crime for political benefit instead of leading with integrity. The upshot is a system of corruption and lawlessness in which the government, constrained by these figures, is unable to dismantle criminal networks, leaving the residents of Awka metropolis vulnerable.

The lack of state-sponsored youth empowerment initiatives and misappropriation of public funds by government officials compound the problem, depriving communities of youth centres, libraries, mentorship centres, and sports facilities that would deter crime. The interviews with T. Onwuasor, K. Uzor, and O. Ezu (personal communication, March 18, 2025) offer valuable insights into the complex factors that drive some individuals towards criminal networks. The lack of job opportunities and limited access to resources can lead to desperation and frustration, making alternative, often illicit, means of achieving financial stability and social status more appealing. Normalising get-rich-quick mentalities in popular culture and media can contribute to a value shift, thereby prioritising instant gratification over hard work. The rise in street-level violence is due to institutional negligence and structural inequalities, not just cultural or moral failure. According to T. Onwuasor, K. Uzor, and O. Ezu, the Ifite, Okpuno, Umuzuocho, Amikwo, Amaenyi, and Eke Awka axis are hotspots for cult-related violence, high youth unemployment, and limited social assistance. Thus, until specific interventions that combine economic empowerment, high-quality education, and grassroots spiritual and creative intelligence mentorship are implemented, any attempt to stop youth-perpetrated homicides in Awka metropolis will be superficial and unsustainable.

Practical Christianity and Awka Youths' Bloodshed Crises

Foltz (2011) defines practical Christianity as the application of Christian beliefs to daily life. It goes beyond intellectual agreement with doctrinal premises to emphasise Christ-like deeds. Love one's neighbour, forgive others, and empathise with the less fortunate. It urges Christians to live the gospel in their words and deeds consciously. Practical Christianity affects individuals and communities. Spiritual growth and personal transformation occur when people become more Christ-like. It cultivates accountability and solidarity among neighbours, where Christians help each other and demonstrate Christ's love. Religion becomes a visible and significant force for good in society.

Lloyd-Jones (1975) adds that practical Christianity witnesses the gospel's transformational potential. Living one's Faith can lead people to Christ by demonstrating God's truth and grace. It promotes justice, peace, and hope while confronting societal norms contradicting biblical values. Orthodoxy (2007) and Onwuatuegwu (2020) argue that Practical Christianity faces criticism for appearing disconnected from real life, as many Christians confine the Faith to rituals and fail to follow its morals. However, faulty practitioners should not judge the Faith. True Christianity involves action and belief. This study demonstrates that Practical Christianity can endure, as one failure does not discredit the sincerity of others or the Faith itself.

Practical Christianity, therefore, challenges Awka youths to examine their beliefs, especially in light of heedless bloodshed. Indiscriminate wasting of human life violates their Faith in Christ, who preached love, peace, and the sanctity of human life. According to O. Okafor and B. Obinwanne (personal communication, November 12, 2024), many of these young people are identified as Christians. This incongruity generates embarrassment and introspection. True Christianity requires a moral lifestyle change. Thus, the objective is to resist social pressures, respect human life, testify to their religion, and represent change and hope for the Awka community.

Ideal-Africanism and the Awka Youths Rampant Killing

Dr Matthew Ike Obijekwu's 2024a and 2024b diaries indicate that Ideal Africanism advocates for ethical reform in pursuit of African freedom and sustainable development. Ideal-Africanism claims that only an ideal African, who opposes evil and corruption, can lead Africa to success.

Obijekwu lists political tyranny, economic exploitation, cultural decay, technological backwardness, colonisation, slavery, violent crimes like murder, and institutional bias among Africa's problems. Obijekwu (2024b) forecasts a new era of morality and honesty in African leadership through ideal-Africanism: Ideal Africans Worldwide (IAW) promotes ideal-Africanism to make Africa a morally advanced and competitive continent. It strives to raise honest, moral Africans. IAW pursues this revolutionary vision, highlighting the role of moral leadership in closing the development disparities on the continent.

According to Obijekwu (2024a), Ideal-Africanism relies on the *Ideal Academic Journal*, which invites researchers to critique and enhance its intellectual framework. The magazine publishes peer-reviewed articles on African identity, nationhood, colonisation, enslavement, and racism. African Idealism is a concept that advocates for a comprehensive vision of African progress, grounded in moral leadership and integrity, through scholarship and practical solutions.

Ideal Africanism advocates a sincere, honest, peaceful, integrated Africa. Critics argue that it romanticises pre-colonial Africa, omitting conflicts, rigid societies, and women's exclusion. Onwurah (2025) constructively criticises that Ideal-Africanism, though a dignified aspiration, requires honest and genuine efforts for its accomplishment. Without this, it risks becoming a flash in the pan, an empty drum that makes the most significant noise. A dream lost like a flame may perish on arrival. He also argues that most African states have corrupt underpinnings, which can persistently hinder the contents of Ideal-Africanism.

Nevertheless, this investigation maintains that ideal Africanism is sound, ethical, and rational. The study upholds that every achievable vision begins as a concept and is realised through pragmatism. Ideal Africanism is possible with sincere effort. Many Africans adhere to ideal Africanist beliefs, indicating their widespread viability. Regardless of all odds, Igbo-born Nigerian Peter Obi and Burkina Faso President Captain Ibrahim Traoré embody these views.

Ideal Africanism should challenge Awka's youth, especially considering their mindless violence. Hence, C. Nzekwe and A. Nwanya (personal communication, November 12, 2024) declare that Ideal-Africanism promotes human dignity, life, and community well-being, which opposes violence.

Guiding Awka Youths on the Sanctity of Life through the Fundamentals of African Communitarianism and Christian Ethical Theories

The youths of Awka metropolis must be reminded of the importance of brotherhood, life, and blood amid social challenges. The shared values, including human dignity and collective duty, of African Communitarianism can teach youngsters the importance of community health. These core values promote accountability and connection by making safeguarding life and preventing violence a shared duty. This foundation protects life and social harmony. Christian ethics emphasise this need by basing morality on Christ's teachings, notably love of neighbour. Love includes forgiveness, compassion, and life defence. God created people in His image; therefore, the concept of *imago Dei* values everyone. Teaching youth that shedding innocent blood or nurturing hatred breaks divine law and shatters society's moral and spiritual foundation is vital.

Christian Ethics and African Communitarianism promote brotherhood through communication, peacemaking, and aid, and breaching the peace and promoting violence has significant implications. These ideals require empathy, teamwork, and unity in a world that often prioritises individualism and conflict. The youth can implement these ideals through community forums, mentorship, and cooperative initiatives, which foster respect and a sense of belonging. African Communitarianism can teach Awka metropolis youngsters about the curses and consequences of killing and murder, which are central to Igbo cosmology: Murdering or pouring blood is a great abomination (*nsoala*) in Igbo culture, especially in Awka city, with social and spiritual consequences. These actions anger the soil, land, or earth deity (*Ala*) and disrupt living-ancestor relations. These homicidal offences also bring premature death, infertility, and bad luck to the criminals and their families. Offenders must perform animal sacrifices and reparations to be accepted by society. Following African Communitarianism, these actions highlight life and communal order in Igbo cosmology to restore social balance and end the curse.

Murder has profound moral and spiritual ramifications in Christianity. Starting with Genesis 9:6, "Whoever sheds the blood of man; by man shall his blood be shed", the Bible condemns murder and values human life as God created it. The Ten Commandments repeat in Exodus 20:13: "You shall not murder". For killing Abel, God told Cain,

"Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground" (Genesis 4:10–12); bloodshed defiles the land (Numbers 35:33–34) and separates humanity from God. According to 1 John 3:15, "No murderer has eternal life residing in him". The curse encompasses spiritual death. Notwithstanding, Paul, who murdered and persecuted Christians, gained mercy, showing how repentance can restore Christianity.

The Christian Ethical Theory's emphasis on the severity of murder and Christ's forgiveness can be passed on to the youngsters of Awka metropolis. Christian and African Communitarianism Theories educate youth in virtuous living. These ideals can help Awka Metropolis youth become stewards of life and harmony, supporting peace and unity. This method promotes personal progress and social harmony.

Methodology

This study uses a descriptive and interpretive design, combining quantitative and qualitative research methods, to examine the role of Christianity and African Traditional Religion in addressing youth killings in Igbo society, particularly in the Awka hub. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 180 young people, church leaders, traditional authorities, and youth mentors who helped shape community moral and spiritual ideals. Youth events, church gatherings, and cultural festivals were observed to capture behavioural and symbolic expressions of beliefs. Focus groups were used to facilitate collective perspectives and reasoning; in-depth interviews were used to extract personal insights, and structured questionnaires were used to collect demographic and attitudinal data for light statistical interpretation. Recurrent values, beliefs, and cultural narratives related to life, blood sanctity, and moral instruction were identified through thematic analysis of interview and conversation data. The NVivo program was used to organise and analyse questionnaire responses, improving analysis and transparency in large qualitative datasets. This analysis enabled the blending of qualitative depth and quantitative overview in interpreting religious approaches to juvenile behaviour in the region.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Data Analysis (Survey Results)

The questionnaire data was analysed across three research areas:

Research Question 1: How do Awka youth perceive the sanctity of life?

<i>Item Statement</i>	<i>%SA</i>	<i>%A</i>	<i>%D</i>	<i>%SD</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>Human life is sacred and should be protected at all times.</i>	56.8	42.0	2.3	1.1	Strong affirmation of the sanctity of life.
<i>The increasing disregard for human life among youths is alarming.</i>	88.9	11.1	0.0	0.0	High concern over moral decay.
<i>I believe taking someone's life is never justifiable.</i>	66.7	25.0	5.6	2.8	Strong moral stance against killing.
<i>Youth in Awka generally respect the value of human life.</i>	10.5	5.3	31.6	57.9	The majority disagreed with the perception of a decline in life value.

Findings:

- There is a strong theoretical appreciation for human life among youths.
- However, practical observance of this value in society is perceived as weak.
- 89% agree that disregard for life is alarming.
- 89.5% believe youths generally do not respect life.

Research Question 2: What African values can be leveraged to promote respect for life?

<i>Item Statement</i>	<i>%SA</i>	<i>%A</i>	<i>%D</i>	<i>%SD</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>Respect for elders and communal living.</i>	66.7	33.3	0.0	0.0	Strong agreement on foundational values.
<i>Traditional beliefs discourage acts like killing.</i>	55.6	33.3	5.6	5.6	Cultural ethics are seen as effective.
<i>African taboos help maintain peace.</i>	44.4	33.3	13.9	8.3	Moderate agreement — some erosion.
<i>Reviving cultural values among youths.</i>	38.9	38.9	16.7	5.6	Mixed opinions on the relevance of cultural revival.

Findings:

- Most youths still see traditional African values as strong deterrents to violence.
- Respect for elders and communal responsibility are mainly upheld.
- Cultural revival is seen as a promising but underutilised approach.

Research Question 3: In what ways can youth practice Christianity in a way that encourages esteem for the sanctity of human life?

<i>Item Statement</i>	<i>%SA</i>	<i>%A</i>	<i>%D</i>	<i>%SD</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>Christian teachings emphasise peace/ life.</i>	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	Total agreement — Faith is seen as a moral compass.
<i>Church programs help youth understand.</i>	55.6	33.3	2.8	8.3	The church is considered important, but it needs improvement.
<i>Practical Christianity prevents violence.</i>	88.9	11.1	0.0	0.0	Strong Faith in Christian preventive influence.
<i>Youth groups should teach against abortion.</i>	66.7	25.0	5.6	2.8	Strong agreement on Christian moral activism.

Findings:

- Youths strongly believe that Christian teachings promote reverence for the sanctity of human life.
- Church engagement is valuable but needs to be more youth-focused.
- Moral education through Christianity is welcomed as a deterrent to violence.

SECTION B: Qualitative Data Analysis (Interviews)

Thematic analysis was applied to extract dominant themes from interview responses:

Research Question 1: Youth Perception of the Sanctity of Life Themes Identified:

- **"Life is sacred, God-given"** – many defined sanctity in religious or emotional terms.
- **Peer influence and cultism** – primary reasons for disregard of life.
- **Fear, sadness** – emotional responses to youth violence and killings.
- **Loss of empathy** – violence is increasingly normalised.

Interpretation:

Theoretically, youths uphold life as sacred but observed social behaviours influenced by cults, unemployment, and peer pressure contradict this.

Research Question 2: African Values and Respect for Life

Key Themes:

- **Respect for elders** and **communal living** are core values that promote the preservation of life.
- **Fear of taboos and ancestral punishment** were cited as deterrents to violence.
- **Erosion of values** due to modernity, lack of family/community discipline.
- **Revival strategies:** storytelling, community festivals, school teachings.

Interpretation:

Despite the erosion, traditional values are still respected and seen as effective — especially if revived in modern contexts.

Research Question 3: Christianity and Youth Life Ethics

Major Themes:

- **Practical Christianity:** Living the gospel: forgiveness, mercy, respect for life.
- **Youth fellowships:** Play a role but are not active enough.
- **Positive influence:** Through sermons, counseling, and retreats.
- **Suggestions:** More youth-targeted events and integration of Faith with daily living are needed.

Interpretation:

Christianity is a powerful moral influence on young people. However, it must go beyond Sunday teachings to everyday mentoring and life engagement.

SECTION C: Summary of Findings

<i>Focus Area</i>	<i>Key Insights</i>
<i>Perception of Life</i>	Youths respect life in theory but feel that it is not reflected in their community due to violence and cultism.
<i>African Values</i>	It remains relevant and robust but is declining among young people. Revival through cultural education is needed.
<i>Christianity</i>	The most effective moral compass is for churches to become more practical and engaging with young people.

The research backs up Igbo communalism, which emphasises reverence for elders and the sanctity of life, and African philosophical ideas like Ubuntu, which means "I am because we are". This study is consistent with the Christian ideals of non-violence and *Imago Dei*, which holds that humanity is made in the image of God. Social realism is shown in the fact that opposing forces, such as tradition versus modernisation and religious values versus peer culture, surround young people.

Conclusion

Christian morals and African traditions must be combined to protect life and maintain sanctity in society. This study indicated that Awka youngsters believe in the sanctity of life but fail to practise it due to cultism, ritual killings, and moral decline. Quantitative data shows that 89.5% of respondents think many young people in Awka no longer value life, despite over 98% agreeing that life is precious and disregarding it is worrisome. These tensions reveal a crisis of values stemming from external forces. Most respondents believed that African communal values, respect for elders, taboos, and collective responsibility discouraged violence. Christian teachings on forgiveness, peace, and the blood of Christ were also revolutionary. Research indicates that conventional groups, such as churches, must become more relevant to youth to achieve these goals. Interacting with Awka young people through Christian and African values helps them embrace life and avoid harm. However, this discussion here is not all-inclusive. Understanding how cultural customs, Christian beliefs, social media, globalisation, and socioeconomic strains affect young ones requires more research. Concerningly, survey and interview replies increased money-making rituals, often including homicide. These actions violate religious and cultural blood sanctity and social peace.

Future studies could compare Awka and other effective youth engagement methods in diverse cultural and religious contexts. Researching sociology, psychology, and theology may help preserve life and morality. Educational, communal, and faith-based interventions must awaken the African-Christian conscience that views life as holy and untouchable.

Recommendations

This study proffers the following recommendations apposite to its findings:

1. Churches should provide youth with helpful life skills programmes and doctrinal instruction. Through seminars, theatre, and mentoring, youth fellowships should prioritise pro-life ethics, anti-cultism, and peace-building.
2. African Traditional Religious leaders in Awka metropolis must assume a proactive role in curbing the rising trend of youth-led violence and the wanton destruction of human life by initiating both private and public sensitisation campaigns. These campaigns should be rooted in indigenous cosmological beliefs that emphasise the sanctity of life and the ancestral consequences of bloodshed.
3. Elders in Awka must take a firm stand against the increasing violence among youths by openly condemning acts of homicide and other life-threatening behaviours. Drawing from the Igbo proverb "*namwa mu akalia mu bu aru*" (children cannot intimidate or suppress their parents from chastisement), elders should assert their moral authority, emphasising their role in correcting the youth. Public forums, traditional council meetings, and church gatherings could serve as platforms for elders to denounce these acts and call for accountability.
4. To cultivate a profound respect for human life at a young age, moral education that combines Christian values with African ethics, particularly the Igbo extreme value for life captured in the concepts of "*Ndubuisi*" (life is ultimate) and "*Ndukaaku*" (life is more valuable than wealth), ought to be taught, advanced, and implemented in both public and private institutions.
5. The joint corroboration of government organisations, religious institutions, and community organisations must coordinate campaigns against cult activities and ritual executions. It is important to emphasise survivor accounts, testimonies, and legal repercussions.

6. Media organisations and influencers should use music, social media, movies, and radio to spread pro-life themes. Content produced by young people that promotes moral behaviour can change public opinion and lessen interest in crimes involving blood.
7. Poverty and unemployment fuel moral deterioration. Governments and non-governmental organisations should empower young people through mentorship, start-up grants, and vocational training to lessen dependence on destructive money-seeking tactics.

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