

PERCEPTION OF TEACHERS AND LEARNERS ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CIVIC EDUCATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CIVIC COMPETENCY AMONG LEARNERS IN IBARAPA REGION OF OYO STATE

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Abstract

The study examined the perceptions of Teachers and learners on the effectiveness of civic education in the development of civic competency among learners in Oyo South Senatorial District of Oyo State. The study adopted the descriptive quantitative method. The variables associated with the study were civic knowledge, civic skills and civic disposition. A total number of four hundred and fifty (450) students and fifteen (15) teachers participated in the study. The sample comprised of three secondary schools. Five teachers from each school were selected randomly. One hundred and fifty (150) students were also selected using simple random sampling technique. A self-constructed structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The questionnaire was face and content validated. The reliability of the instrument was determined using the Cronbach's Alpha reliability method. An Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.83 was obtained. Data collected was analysed using the statistical package for social science (SPSS). Descriptive statistics was employed. The outcome of the analysis revealed that both teachers and students regard civic education as highly effective in the development of learner's civic competency in terms of civic knowledge, civic skills and civic disposition. The findings of the study therefore revealed that civic education is an important component education that cultivates in learners to participate in public life of democracy to use their rights and to discharge their responsibilities with the necessary knowledge and skills. It is therefore recommended that government should make concerted efforts to promote commitment to the teaching of civic education by given incentives such as study leave with pay and prompt payment of salaries; conventional method of teaching whereby teacher is the only reservoir of knowledge should be de-emphasised and promote self regulatory learning among others.

Keywords: Perceptions, Effectiveness, Civic Education, Development, Civic Competency, Civic knowledge, Civic skills, Civic disposition.

Introduction

Civic education (also known as citizenship education or democracy education) in democracy is education in self-government. Democratic self-government means that citizens are actively involved in their governance. The ideals of democracy are most realized when every member of the political community shares in its citizenry. Members of the political community are its governance. Membership implies participation but not participation for participation sake. Citizens' participation in a democratic society must be based on informed, critical reflection, and on the understanding and acceptance of the rights and responsibilities that go with that membership.

Branson & Quigley (2006) stated that by far the most wide spread application of civic education is in formal school education. It is being as part of a regular curriculum in primary schools and secondary schools around the world, and there are extensive pedagogical resources available for the many civil society organisations involved in promoting this aspect of the approach. They further opined that civic education was an important component of education that cultivates citizens to participate in public life of a democracy, to use their rights and to discharge their responsibilities with the necessary knowledge and skills. Societies have long had an interest in the ways in which their youths are prepared for citizenship and in how they learn to take part in civic life. Today that interest might better be described as a growing concern, particularly in democratic societies.

According to Branson (2004), civic education is essential to sustain constitutional democracy. The habits of the mind, as well as "habits of the heart", the dispositions that inform the democratic ethos, are not inherited. As Adeyemi (2012) pointed out, each new generation was a new people that must acquire the knowledge, learn the skills, and develop the dispositions or traits of private and public character that undergird a constitutional democracy. Those dispositions must be fostered and nurtured by the word and study and by the power of example. He further mentioned that democracy was not a "machine that would have go itself", but must be consciously reproduced, one generation after another.

According to Galston (2006), civic education in a democratic society most assuredly needed to be concerned with promoting understanding of the ideals of democracy and a reasoned commitment to the values and principles of democracy. That does not mean, however, that democracy should be presented as Utopia. Democracy is not an Utopian, and citizens need to understand that lest they become cynical, apathetic, or simply withdraw from political life when their unrealistic expectations are not met. To be effective civic education must be realistic; it must address the central truths about political life. It is reasonably clear that good citizens are made, not born. The question is how, by whom, to what end? Galston (2006) stated that, civic education programs have the potential to convey political knowledge to students. However, the extent to which knowledge is gained through these programmes depends upon students' civic learning experience. Civics instruction across the nation varies widely in its structure, content, and quality.

According to Komalasari (2009), civic competence is referred to someone's wish to become an active member of a democracy and it was also known as social conscience. A

person who possesses civic competence is involved in the community and has patriotic feelings about his country. It helps to become a better citizen and competent people are more likely responsible for their actions because they are aware of their rights and obligations. Civic competence could be described as a person's understanding and desire to be an active member of a democracy. Developing civic competence is developing a social conscience. This included becoming involved in the community, appreciating diversity and patriotism, ability to make informed decisions and an understanding of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

According to Saka and Oyetade (2011) Civic Education, otherwise called political education has to do with the inculcation of civic skills and values such as tolerance, knowledge of history and government institutions, honesty, respect, fairness and justice for the purpose of enabling the citizenry to operate in the society responsibly.

According to Carpini and Keeter (2008), Civic Education is concerned with three (3) different elements:

1. Civic knowledge,
2. Civic skills and
3. Civic disposition

Civic knowledge refers to citizens' understanding of the working of the political systems and of their own political civic rights and responsibilities (e.g. the right to freedom of expression and to vote and run for public offices, and the responsibilities to respect the rule of law and the rights and interest of others). Civic skills refer to citizens' ability to analyse, evaluate, take and defend positions on public issues, and to use their knowledge to participate in civic and political processes (e.g. to monitor government performance, or mobilise other citizens around particular issues). Civic dispositions are defined as the citizens' traits necessary for a democracy (e.g. tolerance, public spiritedness, civility, critical mindedness and willingness to listen, negotiate and compromise).

Civic Education syllabus covers a cross section of political, economic, social and cultural issues that are key to Nigeria's democratic system of governance. Some of the themes and topics covered in the civic education syllabus include: Governance, Human Rights, Rights of the Child, family and global issues. It is taught in schools as an optional subject. The themes and topics covered in civic education curriculum are based on the set goals of the National Policy on education (Educating our Future, 1996). Civic education will enable school leavers to gain the civic knowledge and acquire skills that will enable them understand and practice their civic values, rights and obligations as responsible Nigerian citizens (Curriculum Development Centre, 2010).

Statement of the problem

Literature has revealed the high rate of social vices which occur as a result of poor disposition towards our national values. This suggests low level of citizens' knowledge in Civic Education. Past researches have observed teachers' and learners' perception of the value of Civic Education as responsible factors.

Although, government has made frantic efforts to include civic education in the curriculum of senior secondary school students in order to restore our values, sensitize citizens of their right and duties, while past researchers proffered solutions to the problems, yet, little or no impact has been achieved. Hence, the need for further study like this one.

This study therefore, intends to determine the effectiveness of civic competence the development of civic competence of the learners in Ibarapa region of Oyo State. Effectiveness in the study is a measure of the extent to which civic education helps or assists learners in developing civic knowledge, civic skills and civic disposition.

Research Questions

The researcher sought answers to the following research questions;

1. To what extent is civic education effective in the development of civic competency of learners in terms of;
 - (a) Civic knowledge
 - (b) Civic skills
 - (c) Civic disposition

Research Methodology

The study employed the descriptive quantitative method. Fine schools are randomly selected from each of the three local government areas making a total number of fifteen (15) schools. The researcher ensures that the schools are geographically far from one another to ensure the validity of the instruments. A self-constructed questionnaire was used for data collection. The questionnaire was face and content validated. A pilot study was carried out in one of the schools in Ibarapa region using thirty five respondents (5 teachers and 30 students). The reliability of the instrument was determined using the Cronbach's Alpha reliability method. An Alpha reliability co-efficient of 0.829 was obtained. Data collected was analysed using the statistical package for social science (SPSS). The descriptive statistics was also employed.

Results

The results of the analysis are discussed as follows:

Research Question

To what extent is civic education effective in the development of civic competency of learners in terms of:

- a. Civic knowledge
- b. Civic skills
- c. Civic disposition

Civic knowledge

Table 1 shows the perceptions of teachers and pupils on the effectiveness of Civic Education on learners' civic knowledge. The table revealed that teachers perceived civic knowledge as very highly effective in learners understanding of how government is run on the political system, understanding and knowing their rights, to be responsible citizens as

well as help them understand the functions associated with governing the country with means of 4.8333, 4.8667, 4.6333 and 4.5667 respectively.

Table 1: Civic knowledge

Item	Teachers		Pupils	
	Mean	STD	STD	Mean
Learning civic education helps the learner/me to understand how the government is run or the political system	4.8333	.37905	4.6944	.59886
Civic education helps the learner/me to understand and know their right (freedom of expression and right to vote)	4.8667	.34575	4.8056	.47387
Civic education helps the learner/me to understand a responsible citizen (respecting the law, the rights and interest of others)	4.6333	.49013	4.5944	.66599
Civic education principles (rights, freedom of expression,) is practiced by the learner/me in school	3.3333	1.12444	4.1722	.95619
Learning Civic education helps the learner/me to understand the structure of governing the country	4.5667	.56832	4.2722	.88331
Learning Civic education helps the learner/me to understand the process of governing the country	4.5000	.73108	4.2389	.94759
Average	4.4524	.41282	4.4437	.451120

Interpretation of Mean scores: 4.51-5.00 = Very Highly Effective, 3.51-4.50 – Highly Effective, 2.51-3.50 – Effective, 1.51-2.50 = fairly effective 1.00-1.50= Not effective

The low standard deviation for all the four items showed that the teachers were homogenous in their responses. The teachers also perceived civic knowledge as highly effective in helping learners understand the structure of governing the country with a mean of 4.5000. The standard deviations of 0.81720 and 0.73108 respectively showed homogeneity of responses. The overall mean of 4.4524 indicated that teachers perceived civic knowledge as highly effective in the development of civic knowledge by learners.

In the perception of the pupils, civic knowledge is very highly effective in their understanding of how government is run on the political system, in understanding and knowing their rights, as well as help them become responsible citizens with means of 4.6944, 4.8056, and 4.5944 respectively. The low standard deviations for the three items showed that the pupils were homogenous in their responses. The overall mean of 4.4437 pupils were homogenous in their responses. The overall mean of 4.4437 showed that civic knowledge is

highly effective in their development of civic knowledge and they were homogenous in their responses with a standard deviation of 0.45112.

The findings of this study is in agreement with the assertion of Branson & Quigley (2006) who argued that civic education was an important component of education that cultivates citizens to participate in the public life of a democracy, to use their rights and to discharge their responsibilities with the necessary knowledge and skills.

Civic skills

Table 2 below shows the perceptions of teachers and pupils on the effectiveness of Civic Education on learners' civic skills. The table revealed that teachers perceived civic education as very highly effective in learners knowing how to participate in an election with the mean of 4.5333. The standard deviation of .57135 showed that the teachers were homogenous in their responses. The teachers also perceived civic education as highly effective in helping learners develop the skill of respecting one's rights, expressing their freedom of speech, exchanging opinion and the skill to dialogue matters in a meaningful way with means of 4.4333, 4.2333, 4.2000 and 4.0000 respectively. The standard deviations for the items showed homogeneity of responses.

Table 2: Civic Skills

Item	Teachers		Pupils	
	Mean	STD	Mean	STD
Civic education helps the learner/me to know how to communicate with councilors and members of parliament	3.5000	1.04221	3.0611	1.41880
Civic education helps the learner/me to know how to participate in an election	4.5333	.57135	4.3944	.87483
Civic education helps the learner/me to dialogue in a meaningful way.	4.0000	.91972	3.8667	1.04854
Civic education enables the learner/me to participate effectively and actively				
a. In class	3.8667	1.07425	4.2333	1.08880
b. In the school	3.8667	1.00801	4.2611	.93572
c. In the community	3.9667	1.03345	4.1722	1.00741
Civic education helps the learner/me to develop the skill in respecting one's rights	4.4333	.89763	4.5833	.77586
Civic education helps the learner/me to develop the skill of expressing their freedom of speech	4.2333	.97143	4.4778	.88725
Average	4.0667	.63635	4.1426	.55924

The overall mean of 4.0667 indicated that teachers perceived civic education as highly effective in the development of civic skills by learners.

In the perception of the students, civic education is very highly effective in their developing skills to respect one's rights with a mean of 4.5833. The standard deviation of 0.77586 showed that the students were homogenous in their responses. The students perceived other items as highly effective in helping them develop civic skills. The overall mean of 4.1426 showed that civic education is very effective in their development of civic skills and they were homogenous in their responses.

The finding of this study is in agreement with the affirmation of Galston (2004) who stated that, if citizens are to influence the course of political life and the public policies adopted, they needed to expand their repertoire of participatory skills; voting certainly is an important means of exerting influence.

Civic disposition

Table 3 below shows the perceptions of teachers and learners on the effectiveness of civic education on learners' civic disposition. The table revealed that teachers perceived civic education as very highly effective in learners understanding if the country is run in a democratic or dictatorial way with a mean of 4.7333. The standard deviation of 0.44978 showed that the teachers were homogenous in their responses.

Table 3: Civic Disposition

Item	Teachers		Pupils	
	Mean	STD	Mean	STD
Civic education helps the learner/me to become independent member of the society who will take responsibility to every action	4.0000	1.17444	4.41444	1.08891
Civic education helps the learner/me to be responsible politically	3.8667	1.04166	4.0111	1.01352
Civic education helps the learner/me to respect others feelings and human dignity (respecting others and being a good listener)	4.2667	.82768	4.3111	1.00440
Civic education helps the learner/me to understand if the country is run in a democratic or dictatorial way.	4.7333	.44978	4.5556	.853660
Civic education helps the learner/me to develop the ability to participate thoughtfully in civic affairs	4.3000	.87691	4.2278	.99063
Civic education helps the learner/me to develop the ability to participate meaningfully in civic affairs	4.3667	.96431	4.1222	1.00087
Average	4.2556	.66915	4.2287	.59117

The teachers also perceived civic education as highly effective in the development of learners' civic disposition. The overall mean of 4.2556 showed that the teachers perceived

civic education as highly effective in the learner's development of civic disposition and they were homogenous in their responses.

In the perception of the students, civic education is very highly effective in their understanding of whether the country is run in a democratic or dictatorial way with a mean of 4.556. The standard deviation of 0.58366 showed that the students were homogenous in their responses. Other items were found to be highly effective in helping them develop civic disposition. The overall mean of 4.2287 showed that civic education is very effective in their development of civic disposition by learners. The finding of this study is in agreement with the assertion of Butts (2007) who argued that the overall goal of civic education is to promote civic engagement and support democratic and participatory governance.

Conclusion

From the above it is evident that civic education plays a significant role in the political development of the learners. Civic education is an important component of education that cultivates in citizens to participate in public life of a democracy, to use their rights and to discharge their responsibilities with the necessary knowledge and skills. The study revealed civic elements in the learner (civic knowledge, civic skills and civic disposition). Based on this, it was recommended that the policy makers, the government and other stakeholders should emphasize the learning of civic education in schools, make civic education a general subject and not an optional subject as well as establish school councils in schools which would enhance academic freedom in learners and participation in school governance.

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