CIVIC EDUCATION AND SOCIAL INFLUENCE OF SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ILORIN SOUTH, NIGERIA

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OMOLOSO, Muideen Omotola,
FADEMI, Kafilat Omolola,
POPOOLA, Felicia Funmilayo
Department of Social Sciences Education,
Faculty of Education,
University of Ilorin,
Ilorin, Nigeria.

Abstract

There is no doubt that there is the problem of social character among senior secondary school students in Nigeria and several efforts had been made towards ensuring socially acceptable norms are exhibited among students. Therefore, catching them young is very vital to our educational system through some subjects in the school curriculum. This study investigated the influence of Civic Education on Social Character of senior secondary school students in Ilorin South, Nigeria. It also determined the effect of Civic Education on students' social life. The study also ascertained whether there was difference in the perception of male and female teachers on the influence of Civic Education on Senior Secondary school students. The sample of this study consisted of twenty-two schools from Ilorin- south, Nigeria. Questionnaire was used to collect data on the perception of teachers on the influence of Civic Education on Social Behavior of Senior Secondary schools students. Mean, standard deviation and T-test were used to analyse the data. From the result it was discovered that Civic Education had significant social influence on Senior Secondary school students, the society and Nigeria at large. It was recommended among others, that teachers attend and participate in seminars and activities that relate to Civic education. Government should

play key roles by ensuring that Civic Education is effectively taught in schools.

Key words: education, civic education, social influence

Introduction

Education has been a frame work for all-round development of an individual in a functional way, functionality in the sense that recipients of education become useful to the society and all community of humans at large. Education encompasses all aspects of life; be they social, economic, political, emotional, psychological, to mention but a few. Civic education was introduced into the Nigerian school curriculum on September 2008 with its curriculum prepared by the Nigeria Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC, 2007). The aims of introducing Civic Education into the Nigerian school curriculum are for students to be able to develop and understand the idea of democracy, develop a meaningful commitment to the norms and values, elevate the decreasing standard of morals among our youth in the society and participate in order to influence political results and improve the quality of government and governance.
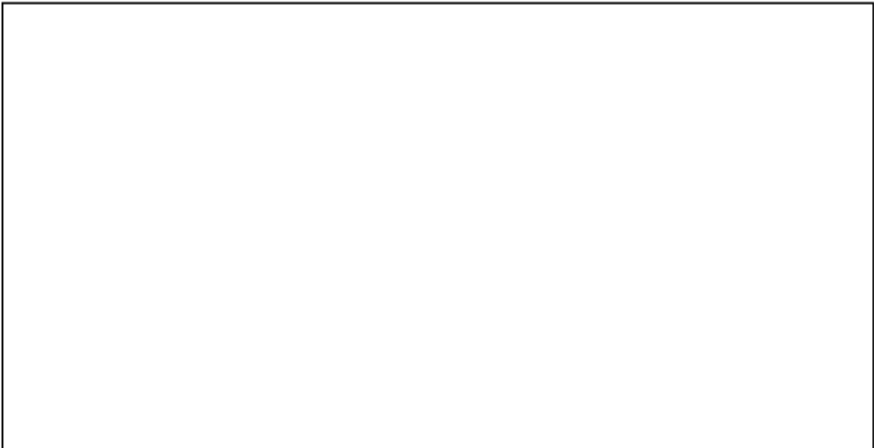
Civic Education is therefore a major innovation towards addressing the lack of effective citizenship education in the school curriculum from primary to senior secondary schools in 2007. The subject has been made a core subject at primary and secondary schools in Nigeria, where, some aspects of the subject were extracted from the Social Studies curriculum with more infusion of political science contents. According to Oyeleke (2011), kind of values underneath an effective citizenship education forms the bedrock of civic education. Metzieobi (2011) defined civic education as a systematic education that would enable a citizen function well in governmental and democratic society. Civic Education, thus, enables citizens to perform their constitutional duties effectively and efficiently and enables them to know how to vote and get voted for during electoral processes.

Argungu (2010) enumerated the objectives of citizenship education thus:

a. To create in Nigerians an awareness of the provision of the Nigerian constitution and the need for democracy in Nigeria.

b. To create adequate and functional political literacy among Nigerians

c.   To sensitize Nigerians to the functions of their rights and government

d.   To make them to be fully aware of their rights and duties

e.   To assist in the production of responsible, well informed and self-reliant Nigerian citizens

f.   To inculcate the right values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society

Patrick (1999) highlighted the duties as well as responsibilities of a responsible citizen; as paying taxes, serving in the countries such as in one's village and localities. The knowledge and understanding of civic education enables the citizens to know that it is their right to pay taxes to their elected government and it is the duty of the government to provide their basic needs of life.However, the themes of Civic Education at the Senior Secondary Schools that will facilitate and awaken the political consciousness and democratic responsibility in the Nigerian students are given below for Senior Secondary School 1-3

Nigeria, most civic education teachers seem not to grasp the values, skills and the global dimensions associated with the attainment of socio-political ethics. This is consistent with the past study by

Keene, Baamphatlha & Moffat (2013) that stated that Social Studies teachers are more likely to do away with some components if they lack an understanding of the values, skills and global dimensions that underpin citizenship skills and ethics. In this realm, civic education plays a synonymous role with social studies in citizenship education.

The social-behavioral development of students is important in its own right because it contributes to well-being, and also because it can influence current and future academic achievement as well as their conduct in the society, and shape developmental pathways of student. Civic teachers have the unique opportunity to support students' academic and social development at all levels of schooling (Baker, Grant, and Morlock, (2008); Bronfenbrenner, 1979),positive teacher-student relationships enable students to feel safe and secure in their learning environments and provide scaffolding for important social and academic skills. Teachers who support students in the learning environment can positively impact their social and academic outcome, which is important for the long-term trajectory of school and society (Baker et al., 2008; O'Connor, Dearing, and Collins, (2011).

When teachers form positive bonds with students, classrooms become supportive spaces in which students can engage in academically and socially productive ways. Positive teacher-student relationships are classified as having the presence of closeness, warmth, and positivity. This includes relationships with peers, and developing self-esteem and self-concept, control and responsiveness. Through this secure relationship, students learn about socially appropriative behaviors as well as academic expectations and how to achieve these expectations (Hamre & Pianta, 2001)

There is substantial research on the importance of teacher-student relationships in the early elementary years. However, little is known about the effects of civic teacher-student relationships on senior secondary school students. Studies show that early teacher-student relationships affect early academic and social outcomes as well as future academic outcomes (Hamre & Pianta 2001), but few researchers have looked at the effects of civic teacher-student relationships in later years of schooling. Researchers who have investigated teacher-student relationships for older students have found that positive teacher-student relationships are associated with positive academic

and social outcomes for high school students (Alexander, Entwisle, & Horset, 1997).

A possible reason for the association between academic improvement and positive social influence of teacher on student is students' motivation and desire to learn (Wentzel, 1998). Motivation may play a key role in the relationship between teacher and student relationships with the student academic outcomes. Motivational theorists suggest that students' perception of their relationship with their teacher is essential in motivating students to perform well. Students' motivation to learn is impacted positively by having a caring and supportive relationship with a teacher (Wentzel, 1998). Students who perceive their relationship with their teacher as positive, warm and close are motivated to be more engaged in school and to improve their academic achievement (Hughes, Cavell, & Jackson, 1999).

Teachers are important sources of social capital for students. Social capital in a classroom setting is defined as caring teacher-student relationships where students feel that they are both cared for and expected to succeed (Muller, 2001). Social capital from positive teacher-student relationships can manifest itself in many different ways. Teacher-student relationships can have a significant effect on the peer acceptance of students. Teachers' interactions with students can affect classmates' perceptions of individual students, in turn, affecting which students individual choose to interact with and accept as their leader or close confident (Hughes et al., 1999). Conflicting interactions between teachers and students may convey a lack of acceptance, causing other students to also reject the student. Peer rejection significantly impacts self-esteem of students leading to several negative social outcomes lack of self-discipline and control (Hughes et al., 1999).

Influence of Civic Education on senior Secondary Schools

Civic education is an ongoing and lifelong learning process. It could be disseminated formally as in the school system or informally at the family or community levels. In the school system, elements of civic education are incorporated and taught as separate curriculum of subjects at the different levels. Generally, Civic Education curriculum, according to Yahya (2013), addresses young Nigerians in the formative educational years. The contents address issues that are important to developing young Nigerian people into responsible citizens. In other

words, the curriculum enables our young people imbibe the values, norms, knowledge, actions and activities for sustaining development. It must also be emphasized that school children at whatever levels should be exposed to histories in the country to further strengthen their sense of appreciation of the dynamics of existence within the Nigerian landscape.

At the informal levels, which offer wider platforms for moral and civic responsibility, the process is multifaceted, less organized but quite effective in the gradual building of the society. In civic education, students are made to understand the personal and governmental concepts and happenings in their communities and use the knowledge to better their future. Civic education would make students appreciate the factors that make for national unity and global understanding and why socially acceptable attitude is demanded from the citizen. The role civic education plays in the mind of young citizens is meant to transmit a body of knowledge, skill and values that aim at developing effective broad-minded patriotic citizens that will have as objectives national integration, promotion of national unity and progress (CESAC, 1993).

Acquiring knowledge and skills have become essential for an informed, efficient and responsible citizen. Today, more than ever before, young people need to understand how democracy works and how they can help to keep it and improve it. During the last 10-15 years, civic education has become one of the central objectives in many schools, especially in the context of promoting interdisciplinary and practice-oriented projects, as well as promoting uprightness in behaviour and character in the society making civic education not merely a school subject but a way of school life. The foregoing assertion, therefore, clearly suggests that acquisition of the knowledge of civic education is a vital tool for sustainable development and socio-civic attitude and behaviour in the society.

Ajala (2003) suggested that the influence civic education will have on learners of civic education ranging from impact on norms, values and attitudes that could bring about environment for human living. It was further highlighted by the findings that the form of democratic government being practised in the country and the multi-ethnic nature of the society are parts of the reasons for inclusion of civic

education to foster love and respect as well as multi ethnic integration in the country.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study is to examine the extent to which civic education influences social behaviour and responsibility among senior secondary school students. Specifically, the study assessed:

a. The perception of teachers on the influence of civic education in senior Secondary Schools;

b. Determine whether civic education in senior secondary school has social influence on senior secondary school students.

c. Ascertain whether there is difference in the perception of male and female teachers on the social Influence of civic education in senior secondary schools.

Research Questions

The following questions were raised to guide the study:

a. What is the perception of teachers on the influence of civic education in senior secondary schools?

b. Does civic education in secondary schools have social influence on the students?

c. Is there any significant difference in the perception of male and female teachers on the social influence of civic education in senior secondary schools?

Method

This research employed the descriptive design of the survey type. The choice of the descriptive survey was in line with the view of Sambo (2008) who maintained that the descriptive survey is concerned with the gathering of information on peoples' opinion. The population for this study comprised Ilorin south secondary school civic education teachers. There were 20 government-grant-aided secondary schools in Ilorin South Local Government, all sampled for the study. Teachers were randomly selected from each school for data collection. The

respondents consist of both male and female teachers. The total respondents were 200 teachers.

A self-developed questionnaire tagged "The Influence of civic Education on students' social behavior" (TICESSB) was used to elicit responses from the respondents. There were 14 items on the instrument and they were put on four-point Likert Scale of; Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree(D), Strongly Disagree(SD). The instrument demonstrated high internal consistencies with Cranach's alpha ranging from 0.80 to 0.92. Copies of the instrument were personally administered on the respondents by the researcher. Respondents were guided on the procedure for completing the items of the instrument. Enough time was given to the respondents to complete the scales. The copies of the questionnaire administered were collected after completion and analysed using mean, standard deviation and t-test at0.05 level of significance.

Results
The data collected were presented below

Research Question 1
What is the perception of teachers on the influence of civic education in the senior secondary schools?
Table 1: Perception of teachers on the influence of civic Education in the senior secondary school

since they are the role models to the students. However, it was observed that the influence of civic education on female students is not somewhat different from that of their male counterparts (mean value of 3.25 and S.D of 0.94 which is higher than all other values point to this fact). Although the participants did not unanimously agree that government plays key roles in keeping civic education resources in schools(M.V= 2.43 and S.D= 1.14), they were of the belief that government's full support for teachers and the society will make civic education effective in Nigeria secondary school.

Research Question 2

Does civic education in secondary schools have social influence on the students?

Table 2:Influence of peace education on secondary school students

teachers on the influence of civic education in senior secondary Schools?

Table 4:t-test analysis of the difference in the perception of male and female teacher on civic education.

The results presented on the table above shows that there was no significant difference between the perception of male teachers and female teachers on the influence of civic education in senior secondary schools.

The t-test result of 0.812 (with p-value of <0.05) which is less than

From the findings, it was discovered that civic education is the cardinal pillar for improving human relation in schools and family settings and it should also be taught through subjects like Social Studies, Government, History and Religious Studies. The assertion made by UME (2002) that religious studies would guide the candidate in the acquisition of the knowledge and understanding of the tenet in the subject as contained in the Quran and Bible and the ability to apply this tenet to the life in society supports this fact.

The identification of Religious Studies as being parts of the subject with which civic education could be taught is seen as right gesture by the participants. However, the view of CESAC (1993) that social studies will help to transmit a body of knowledge, skill and values that aim at developing effective broadminded patriotic citizen that will bring about integration and promote national unity and progress was also in line with the findings made.

It was pointed out in this study that teachers should be engaged in seminars or any activity on civic education as part of in-service training. Since teachers are the role models for the students, one then expects that this should take place as it is generally believed that what one does not have, one cannot definitely give out.

The findings also revealed that the teaching of civic education in classroom will help in shaping the attitude and behavior of students. The NERDC report(2007) puts it that 9-year basic education curriculum covered current and emerging issues like value reorientation, self-

control and self-discipline, including human rights education, family and HIV/AIDS. Therefore, it cannot be argued that civic education in school will produce students of positive attitude and good character.

The results further show that civic education is unequivocal for the cultivation of socially progressive future and will also help in improving the social well-being of the teachers and students. From the findings, it was gathered that the introduction of civic education in our school curriculum will help in eradicating socially unacceptable character and improve morals and value in the country. This goes in line with the submission made by Ajala (2003) that civic education will impact in learners all norms, values and attitudes that could bring about environment for human living. It was further highlighted by these findings that the form of democratic government being practised in the country and the multi-ethnic nature of the society are parts of the reasons for inclusion of civic education to foster love and respect as well as multi-ethnic integration in the country.

However, it was clarified by the participants that students' background in school does have connection with their attitude in and outside the school. Also the position of Kadiri(2003), that in Nigeria, most of the communal disputes are caused by no factor other than lack of morals and values among citizens, greed, selfishness and chauvinism supports these findings. The findings also elucidate that the perception of male teachers on the influence of civic education in senior secondary schools is not different from that of female teachers. It was their joint perception that full participation of stakeholders in education sector will help to make civic education effective which as they perceived will produce socially responsible citizens in the nation. Little wonder then surfaces, when they agree that if civic education is properly taught in schools will help to shape the attitude of the students as well as their behavior. This agrees with the findings of (Hick, 1998) that identified objectives of civic education as acquisition of skill and knowledge about the issues, and the development of their attitudes.

Conclusion

This study found out that civic education has a lot of implications for the students of Ilorin south senior secondary schools. It was observed

that civic education is central to having good human relations in not only the school and the family setting but also the society at large. At the same time, the participants called for the attention of government to make necessary arrangements for the teachers by engaging them in seminars or other activities where civic education will be taught. Going by the essential nature of civic education in the secondary school schools, the perceptions of males and females regarding its influence on secondary schools were the same. However, they jointly agreed that the involvement of all stakeholders in education sector will make the teaching of civic education effective in school and the country at large.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

i.   Teachers should attend and participate in seminars and activities that relate to civic education.

ii.   Civic education should continue to be taught as a separate subject in Nigerian secondary school and should be fully integrated into the secondary school curriculum.

iii. People in the society should be involved in the teaching of the subject. This can be achieved by promoting civic education in any form of adult education programmes already in place.

iv.   Adequate Political awareness should be in place to protect young citizens less than 18 years to be used during political campaign so as to foster socially-responsible behaviour among them and in the society.

v.   Students or group of students found disrupting the school rules and regulations within the school community or outside the school should be severely punished to serve as deterrent to others.

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