



Relationship between Political Education Concepts in Civic Education on Students' Knowledge and Attitude to Political Participation in Edo State

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Abstract. The study looked into how well-versed pupils were in civic education concepts and how they felt about participating in politics in Edo State. Due to Nigeria's ongoing election irregularities and several other electoral transgressions, which give the appearance that civic education has not had a significant influence, the study became imperative. Six research questions were posed, four of which were hypothesized, to help direct the investigation. For this investigation, a descriptive survey design was used. Using the multi-stage sampling technique, 840 students were selected among 74,440 public Junior Secondary School I-III students in the Edo South Senatorial district. Two instruments were used for the study, an achievement test titled, 'Knowledge of Political Education Test' and a Likert scale designed to collect information from the respondents on, 'Students' Attitude to Political Participation'. For research questions 1 and 2, data was gathered and analyzed using the mean and standard deviation. For hypotheses 1 through 4, Pearson's "r" was used to determine significance at the 0.05 level. The study's conclusions showed that pupils have a strong understanding of political education ideas and a favorable outlook on getting involved in politics. It also showed that there is a strong correlation between students' attitudes toward voting, voter registration exercise, the rule of law, and "h" electoral process and political education. The study recommends amongst others that Civic Education curriculum contents be enhanced to accommodate more of political education concepts.

Keywords: Political Education, Civic Education, Students' Knowledge, Political Participation

1. Introduction

In the management of human affairs, especially as societies emerged from savagery to family groupings and communal living, and to the epoch of organization into states or statehood, politics has become an inalienable aspect of human life. Politics is indeed a vital aspect of man's existence. "Politics and democracy (for nations practicing it) must be learnt if we desire a good and peaceful nation" (Fischer 1986, p.25). Fisher (1986) described political education "as a process, the process of preparing especially the young ones for the socio-political world in which they grow into" (p.26). Political education, according to Onuigbo, Eme and Asadu (2018) "is a desideratum for enhanced political skills, knowledge and participation in democracy. It helps to mobilize the cognitive capacity and efficacy of individuals to process complex political activities" (p.2). Political activities are complex and myriad. They are highly crucial to the survival of democracy, the society, and the well-being of citizens. Political education is further viewed "as a means of socializing the citizens of a country to cultivate the virtues, knowledge and skills necessary for political participation" (Osakwe and Itejere 1993, p.13). It educates the masses on how to carry out their roles as citizens (Ekuri, Betiang & Andong 2018), To Ejere (1998), "political education tends to promote a sense of political awareness, civil obligation and increase the likelihood of exposure to political information which provides added stimuli to political participation" (p.110).

The effort of political education in Nigeria has not transcended to the same level of political participation. "It is low to the extent that it results in a poor political culture, lack of interest in political affairs and political instability" (Ejere 1998, p.111). Peil (1976) noted in

Ejere (1998) that “political participation in democratic governance cannot be over-emphasized as it enables the governed to make necessary input into the governmental process while at the same time, making the political leadership responsible to his followers in the conduct of governmental affairs” (p.114). To Ikelegbe (2005) “political participation is the actual involvement of the citizenry to influence, directly or indirectly the ways, directions and methods of governance, or more specifically the output or outcomes of the political process” (p.98). Political participation can also be taken to mean “the process by which members of a country’s electorate, take part in making the basic decisions as to what are the common goals of the community and as to the best means of achieving them” (Ekuri, Betiang & Andong 2018, p.45). Despite that political education is put in place in Nigeria through the school system; there is general apathy to participation among many citizens. Even among those who participate, their participation leave room for doubt and questions.

There have been incidence of incessant military rules/ interruption in democratic politics, ethnic and religious conflicts, electoral violence, electoral misconducts (rigging, vote buying and voters’ intimidation), political intolerance, participation based on ethnic/religious cleavage, bad leadership, bad followership, corruption among political leaders, and lack of civility (militarization of society). People have voiced their displeasure and grievances, claiming that government representatives and officials do not adequately represent the people. There are instances where people register to vote but then refuse to show up and cast a ballot when the time arrives.

The Nigerian government, both past and present, has not been able to address this issue with well-thought-out and coordinated policy measures. In a multiethnic and multipolitical society like Nigeria, ethno-political conflicts are unavoidable, hence greater effort is required to ensure the society’s continuity and harmony. Since the curriculum shapes children before they become corrupt, using it would be a better idea. In light of the nation’s current political and social issues, it is necessary and urgent to update the curriculum of civic education at the junior secondary level. According to Okwenu and Anyacho (as cited in Aimiyeagbon 2018), “Civic education is the education individuals in the state receive for the positive development of ideas, beliefs, habits and attitudes cherished by the society to enable them live as useful and effective members of the society” (p.23). Civic education is therefore directed mostly at the youths and young adults who are regarded as future leaders. It is relevant to all citizens of a given society

regardless of their legal and residential status and it is a continued life-long process. In the end, it creates knowledgeable, ethically and socially responsible citizens by providing them with the information, comprehension, and abilities they need to participate actively and effectively in society. It has a principal role to play in instilling the expected societal values in the learners so that the society will have the kind of citizens it deserves.

It appears that Social Studies, Civics, and the school curriculum are ineffective because Nigeria is still beset by election irregularities and widespread electoral malfeasance. For this reason, learning the concepts of political education in civic education is crucial to addressing all of these anti-social vices that have tarnished democratic traditions and deterred many Nigerians from getting involved in politics. Therefore, the question is: How can effective involvement be influenced by acquiring and internalizing sufficient knowledge of political education?

1.1 Research Questions

The following research questions were posed to direct this investigation:

- What is the pattern of achievement of the junior secondary schools’ students on political education concepts?
- What is the mean score of the attitude of junior secondary schools’ students towards political participation?

1.2 Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated from research questions 3 - 6 to also guide the study:

- There is no significant relationship between the knowledge of political education and attitude of students towards the voters’ registration exercise.
- There is no significant relationship between the knowledge of political education concepts in Civic Education and attitude of students towards voting exercise in Edo State.
- There is no significant relationship between the knowledge of political education concepts in Civic Education and attitude of students towards the rule of law in Edo State.
- There is no significant relationship between the knowledge of political education concepts in Civic Education and attitude of

students towards the electoral process in Edo State.

2. Methodology

To carry out the study, six research questions were raised out of which four were hypothesized. In this study, a survey research design was adopted. All JS I–III pupils enrolled in public junior secondary schools within the State's Edo South Senatorial District comprise the study's population. There are 138 public junior secondary schools spread across the seven (7) local government districts that make up the senatorial district. There are 74,440 students in the senatorial district overall.

The study's sample size was 840 students. The multi-stage approach was used to obtain this. First, a simple random sampling procedure was used to select four (4) of the seven (7) local government areas that are now located in the Senatorial District. Second, a basic random selection technique was used to select seven (7) junior secondary schools from each of the four (4) sampled local government areas, for a total of 28 junior secondary schools selected from the Senatorial district. Finally, in each of the 28 junior secondary schools that were sampled, sex was stratified using the stratified sampling technique. Following that, five (5) male and five (5) female students in JS I–III were chosen using a simple random sampling technique from each of the 28 junior secondary schools that were sampled. This resulted in a total of 420 male and 420 female students that were employed for the study.

3. Results

Research Question One: What is the pattern of achievement of the Junior Secondary School Students on political education concepts?

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Political Education Knowledge

Level	Frequency	Percentage
High	686	81.66
Moderate	140	16.67
Low	14	1.67
Total	840	100

Key: 0-8 = Low; 9-17 = Moderate; 18-25 = High

Table 1 displays knowledge of political education at high, moderate, and low levels, correspondingly, at 81.66%, 16.67%, and 1.67%. This implies that political education is something that junior secondary school students in Edo State have knowledge of.

Research Question Two: What is the attitude of students of the Junior Secondary Schools in Edo State towards Political participation?

When these were combined, the total number of students used for the study was 840.

For the study, two instruments were employed to gather data. To answer research question 1, an achievement test was developed and titled, “Knowledge of Political Education Test (KPET)”. The purpose of administering it to the students was to evaluate their understanding of civic education concepts related to political education. To answer research question 2 and test hypotheses 1-4, a Likert type of scale instrument was developed and titled, “Political Education Concepts in Civic Education on Students’ Attitude to Political Participation”. There were two (2) sections in the questionnaire: sections A and B. The respondents’ personal information is contained in Section “A,” and the structured attitude scale questionnaire items in Section “B” are designed to evaluate the hypotheses put forth and developed for the study as well as provide answers to the research questions. The questionnaire consists of thirty (30) items. Two descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation, were directly used to address research questions 1 and 2. In order to determine whether there is a relationship between students’ knowledge and attitudes regarding political engagement in Edo State and the political education concepts taught in Civic Education, Hypotheses 1 through 4 were examined using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistics. Every hypothesis was examined at a significance level of 0.05, with a p-value of less than 0.05 indicating significance and a p-value greater than 0.05 indicating non-significance.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Attitude of Students towards Political Participation

S/N	Statement	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Remark
1.	It is good to be interested in political activities.	840	2.97	.875	Positive
2.	It is good to take part in voter's registration.	840	2.97	.868	Positive
3.	I often show interest in legislative activities.	840	2.91	.869	Positive
4.	I like voting in elections because it is my right.	840	2.83	.998	Positive
5.	I like voting in elections because I believe that my vote can change government	840	2.95	.958	Positive
6.	I dislike accepting money from politicians for vote.	840	3.04	.963	Positive
7.	As a Nigerian I like giving equal opportunity to everybody when it comes to electoral participation.	840	2.81	.999	Positive
8.	I like to take part in political discussions.	840	2.95	.958	Positive
9.	I am always interested in new political development.	840	2.96	.961	Positive
10.	I can go to court and challenge any political leader that is not accountable to us.	840	3.02	.965	Positive
	Cluster	840	29.11	9.41	Positive

The decision was made using the mean of 2.50%. Any mean rating of the item by the respondents that was less than 2.50 was interpreted as negative, while any mean that was equal to or higher than 2.50 was recognized as positive.

The 10 items pertaining to junior secondary school students' attitudes toward political participation are displayed in Table 2. It demonstrates that the means of all the components are greater than 2.50. The table value mean of 2.50 is less than the cluster mean of 2.91. This suggested that junior secondary school students have a favorable outlook on being involved in politics.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between the knowledge of political education and attitude of students towards voters' registration exercise?

Table 3: Pearson 'r' of Political Education and Attitude of Students towards Voters' Registration

	N	'r'	Sig. (2-tailed)
Knowledge of Political Education: Attitude towards Voters' Registration	840	.097	.005

$\alpha = 0.05$

Table 3 presents a computed r-value of .097 and a p-value of .005. Tested at an alpha level of .05. The p-value is less than the alpha level. Hence, the null hypothesis-which maintains that there isn't any significant association between students' knowledge of political education and their views toward voter registration-is rejected. As a result, there is a strong correlation between students' attitudes on voter registration drives and political education.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between the knowledge of political education concepts in Civic Education and attitude of students towards voting exercise.

Table 4: Pearson 'r' of Political Education and Attitude of Students towards Voting Exercise

	N	'r'	Sig. (2-tailed)
Knowledge of Political Education: Attitude towards Voting	840	.133	.000

$\alpha = 0.05$

Table 4 shows a p-value of .000 and a computed "r" of .133. Tested at an alpha level of .05. The p-value is smaller than the alpha level. That being said, the null hypothesis-which maintains that there is no meaningful connection between students' opinions regarding voting and their comprehension of civic education concepts related to political education-

is therefore rejected. As a result, there is a strong correlation between students' attitudes on voting and political education.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant relationship between the knowledge of political education concepts in Civic Education and attitude of students towards the rule of law.

Table 5: Pearson 'r' of Political Education and Attitude of Students towards the Rule of Law

	N	'r'	Sig. (2-tailed)
Knowledge of Political Education: Attitude towards Rule of Law	840	.097	.005

$\alpha = 0.05$

Table 5 shows a computed "r" of.097 and a p-value of.005. When testing at an alpha level of.05, the p-value is smaller than the alpha level. Thus, it may be concluded that the null hypothesis-which maintains that there is no meaningful connection between students' opinions of the rule of law and their comprehension of political education concepts in civic education-is rejected. As a result, there is a strong correlation between students' attitudes about the rule of law and their political education.

Hypothesis Four: There is no significant relationship between the knowledge of political education concepts in Civic Education and attitude of students towards the electoral process.

Table 6: Pearson 'r' of political education and Attitude of Students towards the Electoral Process

	N	'r'	Sig. (2-tailed)
Knowledge of Political Education: Attitude towards Electoral Process	840	.109	.002

$\alpha = 0.05$

A computed r-value of.109 and a p-value of.002 are displayed in Table 6. The p-value is less than the alpha level when testing at a 0.05 alpha threshold. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which claims that there is no meaningful connection between students' attitudes toward the electoral process and their understanding of political education concepts from civic education, is rejected. As a result, there is a strong correlation between students' attitudes on the electoral process and their political education.

4. Discussion of Findings

The study of the first research question's results showed that the respondents gave high, moderate, and low scores of 81.66%, 16.67%, and 1.67%, respectively. From this, it can be inferred that junior secondary school students in Edo State possess a strong understanding of the political education ideas covered in civic education. Additionally, study question two's findings showed that students had a favourable attitude toward taking part in politics. With this result one still wonders why there is electoral apathy in the state; low turnout for voters' registration, and even after registration many do not come out on the day of election to exercise their franchise. These are glaring in the elections conducted since the onsets

of this new political dispensation that started in 1999 in the State; whether in the gubernatorial, House of Assembly or local government elections. For instance, in the last gubernatorial election in the state, the total votes cast were less than 500,000 votes (including voided votes) whereas the total registered voters in the state for the election was approximately 2.1 million. The fact that large proportion of electorate in Nigeria is illiterate, that notwithstanding. What could be responsible for this, are lack of trust in the system and the umpire body (INEC) handling the exercise; or the conduct, attitude and insincerity of the politicians (leaders) that have emerged through the process in the past. This is in agreement with Adejumobi (2007), when he opined that, "the precepts, structure and process of election are mostly characterized by reckless manipulations, politics of brinkmanship and subversion. Thus, the role and essence of elections in a democracy in terms of expressing popular will, engendering political changes and the legitimization of political regimes are highly circumscribed".

Another reason for this electoral apathy is the certificate mentality of the society. People study just to acquire certificates and not to transfer the knowledge to formation of values, skills, attitudes or habits that would further culture their life for a

functional role as well as make them a political animal in the society. This is in agreement with Falade (2007) when he posited that, "political education and democratic culture among Nigerians is poor due to schooling stressing more on education for jobs" (p.20). He concluded that "education for democratic culture needs to move beyond functionalist and vocation-oriented perspective on schooling (education for jobs) to one where the traditional model of schooling becomes a transformational pedagogy" (p.21). The bottom line of all these is that, the content of political education in the curriculum to transform men to becoming a political animal in the society is grossly inadequate. The content that will make them think beyond influence of the uneducated, uncultured and those that served as negative role model to them are acutely lacking.

Hypotheses 1, 2, 3 and 4 summarily looked at political education concepts taught in Civic Education viz-a-viz it relationship on the attitude of Secondary School Students to the rule of law, the electoral process, voter's registration and voting on election day. All these results showed a positive relationship between knowledge of political education concepts acquired and the variables under study. The 'r' for rule of law is .097 with a p-value of .005, electoral process is .109 with a p-value of .002, voter's registration is .097 with a p-value of .005 and voting exercise is .133 with a p-value of .000. All indicated a positive relationship since the p-values were all less than the alpha value of .05.

The implication these results portend for Nigerian democracy judging from the present reality is that they do not support that the subjects are disobedience to rule of law; or that they have apathy to the electoral process, voter's registration and voting during elections. Moreover, majority of the subjects under study have not reached voting age. But those who pass through the same curriculum and are of voting age presently or were in the past are a source of worry. Do the concepts they learnt influence their participation in democracy in regards to the variables under study. If it does, why is there great indifference and general apathy to the electoral process, voter's registration and voting exercise and observed disregard to the rule of law. The actors in the field (politicians) need to be investigated. Do they discharge their roles well? In terms of protection of lives and properties, provision of social amenities, etc. Are they honest in terms of meeting campaign promises? Are they of good conduct and serve as good role models for followers? Are they law abiding that followers could emulate?

When these are missing in any society what students learnt as political concepts in schools can hardly make

any influence when they become adults in taking critical decisions regarding the variables under study. This is in agreement with Aimiyeagbon (2018) when he suggested that, "government assistance should be sought for in the area of providing the enabling environment to allow values taught in Civics classrooms to be imbibed by making learners' environment outside the classrooms similar to what is simulated in the classrooms" (p. 166).

5. Conclusion

Based on the study's findings, the researchers draw the conclusion that junior secondary school students in Edo State have knowledge of political education, have a positive attitude toward participating in politics, and that by adding more political education concepts to the civics curriculum, this knowledge can be improved for better performance and participation. The research also finds that, particularly when the concepts are strengthened, political education in civic education can have a major impact on students' attitudes on voting, voter registration drives, the rule of law, and the electoral process.

6. Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the researchers recommend that more political education concepts be added to Civic Education curriculum in order for students to acquire more knowledge and also to make them participate well and good. The researchers are recommending for additional political education concepts in Civic Education curriculum so as to further influence students' attitude towards voter's registration exercise, voting, rule of law and electoral process.

Arising from the foregoing, the following themes or topics are hereby recommended for addition to the existing Civic Education curriculum contents on political education: Supremacy of the Law, Equality before the Law, Separation of Power, Features of the Rule of Law, Human Rights and the Law, Meaning and Feature of democracy, Institutions of Democracy and their Functions. Others are Elections and Voter's Responsibilities, Basic Qualification for Election and Voting, Procedure for Voting, Electoral Malpractice, Causes of Electoral Malpractice, Consequences of Electoral Malpractice, Concepts of Constitutional Development, Characteristics of the Nigerian Constitution and Functions of the Nigerian Constitution.

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