

Research Application Summary

A comparative study of secondary school students' performance in civic education and government in senior secondary schools in Ondo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated a point of contact between Government and Civic Education as school subjects in relations to academic performance of the Ondo State Senior Secondary School Students. A descriptive survey design was adopted. A total of 518 senior secondary school two (2) students were randomly selected from Owo Local Government Area of Ondo State. The students' Joint promotion examination scores conducted by the Ondo State Ministry of Education in Government and Civic Education were collected. Since the scores were from Government made exams, the scores were it was not standardized. Mean, standard deviation and Pearson Product Moment Correlation were used to analyse the scores. Findings showed above average performance by the respondents in both subjects. Also there was a significant positive collection between Ondo State Senior Secondary School Students' performance in Government and Civic Education. A synergetic relationship therefore existed between the two subjects. It was therefore recommended that the two subjects should continue to be taught to students in the Senior Secondary School levels as the knowledge will serve as solid foundation for sustainable democratic institutions in Nigeria.

Keywords: Academic performance, Civic Education, Government, Nigeria, Secondary School Students

Résumé

Cette étude a examiné un lien entre le gouvernement et l'éducation civique en tant que matières scolaires et les performances scolaires des élèves de l'école secondaire supérieure de l'État d'Ondo. Une enquête descriptive a été adoptée. Au total, 518 élèves du deuxième cycle du secondaire ont été choisis aléatoirement dans la région du gouvernement local d'Owo, dans l'État d'Ondo. Les cotes des élèves à l'examen de promotion conjoint organisé par le ministère de l'Éducation de l'État d'Ondo dans le domaine de l'éducation civique et gouvernement ont été recueillies. Comme les cotes provenaient d'examens organisés par le gouvernement, elles n'ont pas été normalisées. La moyenne, l'écart-type et la corrélation produit-moment de Pearson ont été utilisés pour analyser les cotes. Les résultats ont montré une performance supérieure à la moyenne des répondants dans les deux matières. Il existait également une corrélation positive significative entre les performances

des élèves de l'école secondaire supérieure de l'État d'Ondo dans les cours de gouvernement et d'éducation civique. Une relation synergique existe donc entre les deux matières. Il a donc été recommandé de continuer à enseigner ces deux matières aux élèves du secondaire, car les connaissances acquises serviront de base solide pour des institutions démocratiques durables au Nigeria.

Mots-clés : Performance scolaire, éducation civique, gouvernement, Nigeria, élèves du secondaire

Introduction

There is no controversy that both Civic Education and Government have found their ways into the Nigeria school systems at the Senior Secondary School level, the former as a general subject and the latter as an elective subject for students in the Art class. The two subjects have come to be accepted as school subjects with the primary aim of improving political participation among citizens and to acquaint them with the system of government being operated in their country. This became imperative as a result of low turn-up in political engagement and lack of political orientation and awareness which has resulted in disorientation in schools, homes, communities, voluntary organizations and the larger society.

According to Olayemi *et al.* (2011), Civic Education was encouraged with the primary aim of nurturing Nigeria citizens for democratic society and development. Invariably, Civic Education connotes educational, learning or professional activities carried out or performed to allow people or citizens to have knowledge of democratic ideas, nurture a reasonable commitment to the values and principles of democracy, energized the students to identify with areas of the political processes and their actions to influence political outcome or results in order to improve the quality of government and governance.

On the other hand Government as a teaching subject in Nigeria Secondary Schools connotes the study or learning of agencies, political institutions, and dynamics of the State (Anyaele, 1994). It lays emphasis on the teaching and learning of elementary concepts and principles in government, institutions, the history of Nigeria governance and politics of the global etc.

To many social and humanity educators, the role of Civic Education and Government is to complement each other while some see it as an avenue to hijack Social Studies Teachers work from them and give it to Political Science Graduates teaching in Nigeria Secondary Schools. However, both subjects performed the same functions such as stimulating political participation and engagement, provide citizenship, followership and leadership education, encourage political democratic culture, promote national unity and integration and economic development, encourage free flow of information, check or disapproved abuse of political power, and promote mutual understanding, cooperation and tolerance among citizens. Moreover, the teaching and learning of Civic Education and Government will prepare youths and children by inculcating positive political values, and culture and political awareness which will make them responsible and responsive Nigeria citizens in the near future.

The knowledge of Government and Civic Education enables the citizens to know and carry out their duties to the government such as payment of tax and the functions and duties of the

government is to provide security for the safety of lives and properties of all citizens, provision of social amenities and infrastructures that will make the society or environments suitable for citizens to live and to explore their potentials to the fullest.

The themes of Civic Education and Government at the Senior Secondary Schools that aim to encourage the political consciousness and democratic responsibilities among the Nigerian Students and Youths are as follows:

Civic Education	Government
Our Values	Basic Concepts and Principles of Government
Emerging Issues	Types, Characteristics and Organization of Government
Citizenship Education	Constitutions
Representative Democracy	Citizenship
Pillars of Democracy	Political Parties and Party System
Human Rights	Pressure Groups and Public Opinion
Cultism	The Electoral Process
Law and Order	Public Administration
Democracy and National Development	Pre-colonial Administration
Political Apathy	Colonial Administration
Achieving Popular Participation in Parties	Nationalism and Constitutional Development in Nigeria
Drug and Drug Abuse	Nigerian Federalism
Responsible Parenthood	Development of Political Parties in Nigeria
Traffic Regulations	Major Political Crises in Nigeria
Interpersonal Relations	Military Rule in Nigeria
Public Service: Civil Society and Popular Participation	Nigeria and the World (Globalisation)
Democracy	
Human Trafficking	
Constitution	
Constitutional Development in Nigeria	

Source: Nigerian Educational and Research Development Council, 2007, 2012

The current situation in Nigeria makes it look like Government has failed or is still unable to achieve or produce the caliber of citizens needed in society. There is still a high level of corruption, indiscipline, disrespect for the rule of law and human dignity, terrorism, banditry, call for secession, nonchalant attitude to duty and work, which are some of negative or bad trends/ happening in Nigeria today. Previous and current events reveal that Nigeria is about to lose her much-appreciative sense of nationhood, cultural identity and accommodative spirits (Adewale, 2010). To curb all these problems, there is need to sensitize and re-orientate Nigeria Citizens and to achieve this, Civic Education was introduced in Nigerian primary and secondary school curricula (Bello *et al.*, 2017).

Civic Education. Both developing and developed democracies across the world recognize the need for citizenship reforms and are therefore undertaking steps towards actualizing the reform through reviewing and rethinking the need to introduce Civic Education (Idowu, 2017). Westheimer

(2013) asserts that young people need to be taught how to make democracy work and to engage socially, civically and politically. This can be achieved through teaching of Civic Education in schools. Baraka (2008) defined Civic Education in the context of Egyptian Ministry of Education as the education that forms skills and abilities of students, enabling them to take active role in socio-political life, creating civil believing in the values of democratic citizenship.

According to UNDP (2004) in Idowu (2017), the international reports on Civic Education highlights four components of the subject which are: (1) Human rights, (2) Political and Civic Participation, (3) Human development, and (4) Peace.

The Nigeria Government introduced Civic Education to the national curriculum in order to attain the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 and to complement the implementation of the National Empowerment and Development Strategies. (NEEDS). Omoloso *et al.* (2017) asserts that some aspects of Civic Education were extracted from the Social Studies Curriculum with more infusion of Political Science (Government) contents. According to Metzieobi (2011) in Oluwagbohunmi (2013) Civic Education is a systematic education that would enable a citizen perform well in governmental and democratic societies. In other words, Civic Education allows citizens to carry out their constitutional duties efficiently and effectively and equip them with election and electoral processes.

Argungu (2010) highlights the objectives of Civic Education as follows:

1. To create in Nigerians the understanding of the Nigerian Constitution and the usefulness of democracy in Nigeria;
2. To establish a handful and workable political literacy among Nigerians;
3. To educate citizens on responsibilities of the government and their rights;
4. To make citizens to be fully aware of their rights and duties;
5. To assist in the production of responsible, well-informed and self-reliant Nigerians; and
6. To inculcate the right values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigeria society.

Government. Government curriculum was designed to impart in students the love for Nigeria and appreciation of the role of students as citizens through the inculcation of values of national consciousness, oneness of the nation and integration (Idioniboye-Obu and Gilbert, 2004). According to Ogujawa and Alphonsus (2015) teaching and learning of government contents enhances the inculcation of civic attitudes needed for free democratic, just and egalitarian State. And this also imbibe in them respect for the worth and dignity of their fellow citizens and smooth human relationship which includes voting, justice, obedience, legality, fair play, tolerance, love for fellow Nigerians, humility, respect for law and order, fundamental human rights, rule of law, which are necessary for Nigeria's stability and advancement of the country. The subject also helps students to know the dynamics of the Nigerian Political System, which will enable them to fully participate in the decision making process as a growing up youth and in later adult life.

Government as a subject deals with the practice and theory of politics and the explanation of political/government system and political attitudes and characteristics. It is not true that the curriculum of Government in Senior Secondary School gave birth to the foundation or grand work of which Political Science in Nigeria Universities is based.

According to the Federal Ministry of Education (2007) Government curriculum connotes the overall governance/ and institution contents which students are exposed to from Senior Secondary School 1-3 with the help of the school teachers as facilitators. It stands for the overall institutional governance, current political issues, national and international development processes. Okoli and Okoli (2003) affirm that the learning of Government is very important for molding and development of good, responsive and responsible citizens that will have the knowledge of their rights and their duties and obligations to the government in order to maintain political stability in Nigeria. Government will help to raise generations of people that can have independent thinking skills, respects the view and thought of others, show interest and value dignity of labour, and live as good and worthy ambassadors of Nigeria. The study of Government helps students to develop leadership skills that will assist them in Nation Building.

The Objectives of Government as a teaching subject as highlighted by the FME (2007) are as follows:

1. To enable citizens to have the knowledge of the concepts, principles, institutions and process of government;
2. To recognize one's role as an informed citizens and needed contribution towards the achievement of national development;
3. To enable students to be active members in the democratic process of the nation and their local environment;
4. Appreciate the role of Nigeria as a member of the international community;
5. To enable students to appreciate the challenges and dynamics of past and present governments in Nigeria and the world; and
6. To enable students to recognized the role of ICT in e-government and in fostering the process of governments in the world.

A look at the objective of both Government and Civic Education reveals that both subjects have similar objectives which aim to inculcate the right democratic values in students. Babatuyi (2021) noted that the goals and objectives of Civic Education in Nigeria has its foundation on the National Philosophy of education and the national development plan and educational goals. It is not out of place to conclude that both Government and Civic Education have a vital role to play in the achievement of the National Development Plan which are:

- A free and democratic society
- A just and egalitarian society
- A united, strong and self-reliance nation
- A great and dynamic economy
- A land of rights and equal opportunity for all citizens (FRN, 2004).

Civic Education and Government: Meeting point. Teachers of both Civic Education and Government expect the two subjects to meet in the process of doing the following to learners:

- a. Equip individuals in a society with the basic rules and institutional features of democratic political system and knowledge about working of government, constitution, processes of public affairs, democratic rights and practices and the role of citizens (Hahn, 2010).
- b. Establish an environment that encourage individuals as well as collective responsible and informed participation in social and political process at the National, Regions, Local and

- grassroots levels (Galston, 2004).
- c. Inculcate a specific set of civic values and principles essential to the nurturing of a democratic culture, such as tolerance, trust in the democratic process, and respect for rule of law (Bello *et al.* (2017).
 - d. Enable the citizens to understand, respect and promote democratic values.
 - e. Effective teaching of Civic Education and government assists learners greatly in the appreciation of the contributions of individuals and groups to ever changing political cultural heritage.
 - f. Learning of Government and Civic Education inspire children to love their country and appreciate their national heritages. For example, the emphasis on the need to expose the students to Nationalism and Nationalist Movement which can improve their desire to appreciate their country more.
 - g. A good Civic Education and Government programme is aimed at helping learners to acquire analytical ideas and problem-solving skills such as ability to observe, listening, speaking, reading, writing, analyse critically and make a reasonable judgments through constructive critics of government decisions or policies.
 - h. Prepare students on ethics of good and responsible citizenship. Invariably, learners are more likely to commit themselves to active citizenship, most especially if they are effectively taught some concepts that are related and fall within the context of National Problems and National development.
 - i. This discipline also prepares the learners for social responsibilities for them to perpetuate and enhance their society through the knowledge of the heritage of the society they are part of, its main political economic life and social values (Galston, 2004).

There is wide argument and submission by social science and humanity scholars and educationist that there is little or no significant difference between Government and Civic Education at the Senior Secondary levels, as both share contents, methodology, aims and teachers who serve as the implementers of the curriculum. Still if all these are similar, what about the performance of students offering this two subjects? Consequent on this, students' performance in the two subjects should influence each other; therefore, if a student score A1 or B2 in Civic Education, such students should be able to obtain A1 in Government. This is the main motivation of this paper. Researchers such as Bello *et al.* (2017) carried out research in Kwara State on Social Studies and Civic Education on: is there any point of contact? The study revealed a positive significant relationship in respondents' academic outcome in both Civic Education and Social Studies. Also Dania (2015) studied Civic Education as a collaborative dimension of Social Studies Education in the attainment of political ethics in Nigeria. The result of the study shows that there is no significant difference in the opinion of Social Studies teachers on Civic Education as a collaborative dimension of Social Studies Education in the attainment of political ethics. This means that Civic Education plays a significant role in promoting political consciousness among Citizens. The Study of Solomon and Alhassan (2017) on the Adequacy of the value components in UBE Civic Education Upper Basic Curriculum for National Security Challenges carried out in Kogi State, Nigeria revealed that majority of the respondents affirmed that value components in UBE Civic Education curriculum are not adequate to curtail the current National Security challenges. Sofadekan (2017) in the study; Civic Education: A veritable tool for Nation Building suggest that civic education curriculum for sustainable nation building should be learner-centered, civic education as a strategic option for achieving sustainable democratic stability should be enthusiastically funded and that national unity, national progress, harmonious co-existence of ethnic groups making-up Nigeria geo-political, economic and political experience is realizable through civic Education teaching. Finally, Omoloso *et al.* (2017) studied Civic Education and

Social Influence of Senior Secondary School Students in Ilorin South, Nigeria. The study found that Civic Education helped to shape the attitudes and behaviour of students.

From the above reviewed studies, it is clear that students academic performance on Civic Education and Government in Senior Secondary School in Ondo State has not been compared, in order to ascertain whether there is any collaboration between the two school subjects.

Purpose of the Study. This study investigates whether collaboration exist in the performance of Senior Secondary School Students in both subjects. Mainly, the study investigated:

- a. The overall performance of Ondo State Senior Secondary Students in Civic Education
- b. The total performance of Ondo State Senior Secondary Students in Government
- c. Whether there is a relevant collaboration between the exams score of Ondo State Senior Secondary Students in Civic Education and Government.

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the general performance of Ondo State senior secondary school students in Civic Education?
2. What is the general performance of Ondo State senior secondary school students in Government?

The study tested the hypothesis that:

There is no significant relationship between Ondo State Senior Secondary School Students performance in Civic Education and Government

Method

Study design. All senior secondary school two (SSS2) students in Owo Local Government Area of Ondo State were the target population. Five hundred and eighteen (518) Senior Secondary School Two (2) students were randomly selected for the study across the local government. A proforma was used to collect the samples Joint Promotion Examination Scores in both Civic Education and Government from the State Ministry of Education, Owo Local Governemnt Office. The collected data were analyzed with both descriptive and inferential statistics at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

Results

Research Question One: What is the general performance of Ondo State senior secondary school students in Civic Education?

Table 1 shows respondents minimum, maximum and mean performance of 48, 90 and 64.72, respectively, with a standard deviation of 11.72. It implies that the Ondo State Senior Secondary School Students performed above average in Civic Education.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Ondo State Senior Secondary School Students in Civic Education

Subject	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Civic Education	518	48	90	64.72	11.72

Research Question Two: what is the general performance of Ondo State senior secondary school students in Government?

Table 2 shows respondents minimum, maximum and mean performance of 21, 90 and 57.01, respectively, with a standard deviation of 8.68. It implies that the Ondo State Senior Secondary School Students equally performed above average in Government.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of Ondo State senior secondary school students in Government

Subject	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Government	518	21	90	57.01	8.68

Table 3 shows r-value of .298 which is significant at 0.05 alpha level. This implies that there is a positive significant relationship in respondents' performance in Civic Education and Government. The hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between Ondo State Senior Secondary School Students performance in Civic Education and Government cannot be accepted. Therefore a significant relationship exist between the Ondo State Senior Secondary School Students performance in Civic Education and Government.

Table 3. Pearson product moment correlation of respondents' performance in civic education and Government

Variable	N	r-value	p-value
Students' performance	518	.298	.000

Discussion

It was found out that Ondo State Senior Secondary School Students had the mean performance of 64.72 and 57.01 in Civic Education and Government, respectively. This connotes above average performance in the two subjects by the respondents. The similarity in performance, as found out in this study, may be connected with the fact that the same teachers teach the two subject in most secondary schools in Ondo State. This result is in agreement with the findings of Bello *et al.* (2017) which revealed that there is above average performance in Civic Education and Social Studies among Upper Basic Students in Kwara State. Also the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) study revealed that in terms of civic content of the students' with an average score, there is no significant difference from the international mean when compared. Also the finding negates that of International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) conducted on the 9th graders in the United States which revealed that students overall performance in Civic Education were significantly above the international average when compared with the mean score of the other subject.

The present study also revealed a positive moderate significant relationship between the Ondo State Senior Secondary School Students performance in Civic Education and Government. This may have been so because they share contents, methodology aims and even teachers, which means both subject is suitable for the achievement of set political goals and visions for Nigeria.

Conclusion

From the results of this study, we conclude that a symbolic relationship exists between Civic Education and Government as school subjects. This could be attributed to the fact that both Civic Education and Government shared related or the same contents. Another factor that contributes to the relationship was probably the methodology, since both subjects shared themes on teaching method, lesson notes, instructional materials can be used by the teacher to teach Fundamental Human Rights in both Civic Education and Government which will not present the topic differently for the students offering the two subjects in a particular class. The aims and objectives of the two subjects if not the same, are similar and both are tailored towards the actualization of National Educational Goals in Nigeria which are; the inculcation of national consciousness and national unity; the inculcation of the right type values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society; the training of the mind in the understanding of the World around; and the acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competence as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society. Lastly both Civic Education and Government share teachers, that is in some schools teachers who teach Civic Education will also be incharge of the teaching of Government; more often than not, the teachers are graduates of political science or social studies because Teachers Education in Nigeria has not began to train teachers on civic education that can be saddled with the teaching of the subject in Nigeria secondary schools. As such the two subjects are being taught by experts in either the field of political science or social studies. Arguments presented above and the results of this study show that the relationship between the two subject can not be undermined. On this basis, it is recommended that the two subjects should continue to be taught to students in the Senior Secondary School levels as the knowledge will serve as solid foundation for sustainable democratic institutions in Nigeria and the realization of National development goals and educational goals in Nigeria.

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