

Influence Of Civic Knowledge On Secondary School Students Civic Participation In Ekiti State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between secondary school students' civic knowledge and civic participation in Ekiti State, Nigeria. It also focused on gender in relation with civic knowledge and civic participation of students. The population for the study comprised all secondary school students in Ekiti state, while the sample consisted of 1,250 students. Multistage sampling procedure was used to select the sample. Simple random sampling technique was used to select five Local Governments out of sixteen in Ekiti state, five public secondary schools from each of the Local Government and stratification 50 students (25males and 25females) from each of the five selected secondary schools. The instrument used was a questionnaire designed by the researchers titled Civic Knowledge and Civic Participation Questionnaire (CKCPQ). The validity of the instrument was determined through face and content validity procedures by specialists in Social Studies, Educational Management and Test and Measurement. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained through test-re-test method and the reliability co efficient of 0.75 was obtained. Three research hypotheses generated were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The data collected were analysed using Pearson Correlation statistical tool. The study found a significant relationship between civic knowledge of female students and civic participation while the relationship of civic knowledge and civic participation of male students is insignificant. It was recommended that civic education and should be made a compulsory course for students at all levels of education in Ekiti state.

Key Words: Civic Education, Civic knowledge, Civic participation, National consciousness, societal values

Introduction

Civic Education is a dynamic effort to educate citizens on the norms, values, right attitudes, morals, social and societal values, skills, knowledge, legal rights, good relationship with others, honesty, reliability, patriotism, hard-work, dedication time consciousness and other qualities expected of citizens towards nation growth and development. For Civic mission to be effectively carried out, especially towards production of good and patriotic citizens, the school needs to base its civic mission on citizenship education and civic training .Civic Education according to Shetu (2011) aims at ensuring the participation of well-informed and responsible citizen, skilled in the arts of effective action and also to develop the skills to use knowledge effectively. Civic education should be part and parcel of the school, and it must provide forum for students to carry out their democratic rights and responsibilities regularly.

In his submission, Adeyi (2017) noted that the atmosphere of the country is filled with the scourging effect of corruption, fraud, ethnicity, religious dichotomy, industrial unrest and the like so much that some of these social ills are becoming endemic. Civic Education in the schools is an urgent task considering the violent and militant nature of the current crop of youths (Akinola 2011). Akinola (2011) noted that among the objectives of Civic Education are moral and civic virtues such as concern for the welfare rights and welfare of others, social responsibility, tolerance, respect for elders and believe in the capacity to make a difference. Akinola (2011) stressed further that effective Civic Education programme is needed to build responsible citizens among the youth.

According to Carnegie Corporation of New York & CIRCL E (2003), civic education should assist youth to acquire and learn how to use knowledge, skills and attitudes the will prepare them to become knowledgeable and dependable citizens throughout their lives. Adetoro and Omiyefa (2011) advocated for inculcation of the right kind of values

through effective teaching of Civic or Citizenship Education. Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) noted inculcation of the right type of attitude for the survival of individual and the Nigerian society as one of its educational objectives. Kinloch (2009) noted that civic education has a role in preparation future engaged citizens and Social Studies education can provide applied civic experiences and opportunities for students to engage with their communities. Agu (2009) asserted that it is imperative to teach and learn civic education in both Primary and Secondary schools in the face of dwindling level of national consciousness, social harmony and patriotic zeal in Nigeria.

Again, Oladiti and Wahab (2013) acknowledged that civic education incorporates some of the objectives of Social Studies such as respect for the worth and dignity of each person, civility, integrity, self discipline, tolerance, compassion and patriotism. Olayiwola (2013) encouraged Nigerians to discard ethnic loyalty, religious intolerance, indiscipline, corruption, selfishness, unfaithfulness and give way to right values for rapid national development Adegbite (2014) asserted that the lost of positive values in human environment today have taken a worrisome dimension and if care is not taking, the long term effect on the entire human race will be more injurious than cancer. Carnegie Corporation of New York & CIRCLE (2003) also agreed that citizens should have moral and civic virtues such as concern for the rights and welfare of others, social responsibility, tolerance and respect, and belief in the capacity to make a difference.

For better and sustainable Nigeria, it is not enough to teach autonomous values and ideologies in the classroom, practical aspects of what the children have learnt theoretically should not be neglected. Oyesiku (2010) saw civic education as a subject that prepares the youths to be able to carry out their civic responsibilities satisfactorily. However, scholars like Ezegbe, Oyesiku, Mezieobi and Okeke (2012) posited that civic education is a type of education that aids democratic process. Fan, Usman and Yaro (2015) believed that for civic education to be successfully taught in schools, interactive sections, cooperative, collaborative and participatory learning activities both inside and outside the classrooms are very essential. They stressed the practical activities could go

a long way to stimulate the students civic interests, improve their knowledge and skills and their sense of efficiency and effectiveness.

Furthermore, Azbanwan (2010) posited that civic knowledge refers to ability of the citizens to understand the political system and their civic rights and responsibilities. Isac, Maslowski and Werf (2011) highlighted that one fundamental thing to bring to light is the centrality to the definition of civic knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours. Good citizens need to be knowledgeable about politics, history, government, current events, and also be accomplished communicators, thinkers, deliberators and actors, be concerned about the common good in addition to their own self interest, and to believe that it is possible and worth trying to make a difference through public action. Ganiyu (2011) and Wahab (2011) advocated for the teaching of civic education in schools because it gives room for democratic progression.

In addition, Okandeji and Ajura (2004) noted that civic responsibilities are those duties which individuals owe to the nation and must perform to ensure peace, stability and orderliness of the country and its survival as a heritage for the future generation. Akintoye and Akintoye (2012) identified obedience to the rules of law, patriotism and loyalty, positive contribution to security of the community and national development, honesty, tolerance,, discipline, cooperation, protection of public property as some of the civic roles, duties or responsibilities of the citizens. Adeyi (2017) asserted that failure of citizens to carry out their responsibilities or abide by the rules and regulation should attract legal punishment as the state could suffer for non conformity of citizens one way or the other. The researcher saw civic responsibility as duties of citizens to their countries.

Civic responsibility also involve participation of citizens in their communities through membership in or contributions to organizations working to address an array of cultural, social, political, and religious interests and beliefs, act politically by having the skills, knowledge, and commitment needed to accomplish public purposes, such as group problem solving, public speaking, protesting, voting, contacting public officials, mobilizing others, contributing time or money to causes or campaigns, participating in

community groups, and other appropriate actions. (Carnegie Corporation of New York & CIRCLE, 2003) The necessary and sufficient conditions to assist the young ones grow into active citizens and maintain a democratic society are having positive civic beliefs and values paired with civic involvement behaviours like volunteering, voting, and participation in school activities and community organizations (Furstenberg, 2005).

However, Apple & Beane (2007); Cammarota & Fine (2008); Delgado & Staples (2008) and Hess (2009) asserted that students should be given regular opportunities to be involved in civic activities such as inter class/ inter school debates and quizzes, interviews, discussion of various schools activities like classroom/ school elections of officers, inter house and inter school sports and implementation of school rules and regulations. Dramas, role plays, demonstrations, simulation, cooperative/ collaborative works should be encouraged. Community, Local Governments, States, National and International contemporary issues like politics, security, sports, education, and health should be in practice to give room for practical application of students' knowledge and also widen their scopes on civic and opinionated commitment. Homana, Barber, & Torney-Purta (2006) corroborated the researchers that civic education promotes civic attitudes and values, critical thinking, political literacy and active participation of citizens in programmes and activities that could benefit the society.

According to Ajibola and Habiba (2014) civic participation is concerned with three essential components which are civic knowledge, civic skills and civic attitudes/ civic participation. Presence of civic skill will definitely enhance civic knowledge and high level of civic knowledge could promote democratic attitudes and civic participation (McIntosh, Hart & Youniss 2007). Zukin, Keeter, Andolina, Jenkins, & Delli Carpini, (2006) corroborated the idea that attitudes matter because they constitute the motivational preconditions for civic engagement. Alexis (2010) acknowledged that the components of civic participation are real, topical, current and relevant. Alexis (2010) stressed further that they have direct impact on human life, highly related to morals and making responsible citizen which is the characteristic of every hopeful society. Civic education, enhance self esteem (Parncer, Pratt, Hunsberger and Alisat 2007). It

promote critical civic consciousness and enlargement of identity (Watts and Flanagan, 2007 & Kirshner, 2007).

Civic skill is an essential component of civic participation in a democratic society. It is the ability of the citizen to analyse, evaluate, defend public issues and make use of their knowledge to participate in civic and political processes (Azbanwan , 2010). Awoniyi and Francis (2014) posited that civic dispositions are essential traits such as humility, civility, tolerance, patriotism, public spiritedness, tolerance, willingness to listen, compromise, negotiation and critical mindedness. Owen (2015) also noted that civic dispositions are cultivation of character or habits that are conducive to the healthy execution and common good of democratic system by citizens. However, all the above listed qualities are essential ingredients of socio-economic and political development of a nation.

Statement of the Problem

It has been observed that civic activities such as participation in public activities like vote during elections protect public property, respect the National symbols, maintenance of order in public places: Banks, hospitals, involve in environmental sanitation. Selflessness in community services: construction of community roads clearing of roadsides and respect of constituted authority are not well embraced among secondary school students in Ekiti State. Laziness, vandalism, rudeness, disorderliness, disrespect for elders and constituted authority, drug abuse, rape, stealing, examination malpractices, immoral dressing and absenteeism are order of the day. Nevertheless, the deteriorating level of civic responsibilities and civic skills among the youth have done a lot of devastation to political, educational, social and economic development of the country. Adeyi (2017) noted that Nigerian society is undoubtedly saddled with inhabiting increase in crime wave and lawlessness which make the image of the country to be at stake. This study therefore investigated the relationship between civic knowledge and civic participation among students generally and according to gender in Ekiti state secondary schools.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to find the relationship between civic knowledge and civic participation among secondary school students in Ekiti state. The study also aimed at investigating the influence of gender on civic knowledge and civic participation of students.

Research Hypotheses:

1. There is no significant relationship between civic knowledge and civic participation of secondary school students in Ekiti state.
2. There is no significant relationship between civic knowledge and civic participation of male students in secondary schools in Ekiti state.
3. There is no significant relationship between civic knowledge and civic participation of female students in secondary schools in Ekiti state.

Methodology

A descriptive research design of the survey type was adopted for the study. The population for the study comprised all secondary school students in Ekiti state, Nigeria, while the sample consisted of 1,250 students. Multistage sampling procedure was used to select the sample. Simple random sampling technique was used to select five Local Governments out of sixteen (16) in Ekiti state. Simple random sampling technique was also adopted for selection of five public secondary schools from each of the Local Government and simple random sampling was also adopted to select 50 students from each of the five selected secondary schools in Ekiti state. The study adopted descriptive method because small sample was used to describe current situation as it exist without any manipulation. The study was a survey design because it investigated the behaviour and opinions of Secondary School Students in relation to Civic Knowledge and Civic Participation in Ekiti state. The instrument used was a questionnaire designed by the researchers titled Civic Knowledge and Civic Participation Questionnaire (CKCPQ). The validity of the instrument was determined through face and content validity

procedures by specialists in Social Studies, Educational Management and Test and Measurement. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained through test-re-test method and the reliability coefficient of 0.75 was obtained. Three research hypotheses generated were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The data collected were analysed using Pearson Correlation statistical tool.

Results and Discussion

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant relationship between civic knowledge and civic participation of secondary school students in Ekiti State.

Table 1: Pearson Correlation of Civic Knowledge and Civic Participation of Secondary School Students in Ekiti State

<i>Variables</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>p</i>
Civic Knowledge	1250	8.11	0.47		
				0.527*	0.000
Civic Participation	1250	46.92	6.30		

* $p < 0.05$

Table 1 shows that there is significant relationship between civic knowledge and civic participation of secondary school students in Ekiti State ($r=0.527$, $p < 0.05$). The null hypothesis is rejected. The relationship between civic knowledge and civic participation is moderate and statistically significant in a positive direction.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant relationship between civic knowledge and civic participation of male students in Ekiti State

Table 2: Pearson Correlation of Civic Knowledge and Civic Participation among Male Students in Ekiti State

<i>Variables</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Civic Knowledge	615	8.21	0.39		
				0.039	0.709
Civic Participation	635	47.41	1.30		

p>0.05

Table 2 shows that there is no significant relationship between civic knowledge and civic participation of male students in Ekiti State ($r=0.039$, $p>0.05$). The null hypothesis is not rejected. The relationship between civic knowledge and civic participation of male students in Ekiti State is very low and statistically insignificant at 0.05 level.

Hypothesis 3

There is no significant relationship between civic knowledge and civic participation of female students in Ekiti State

Table 3: Pearson Correlation of Civic Knowledge and Civic Participation among Female Students in Ekiti State

<i>Variables</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Civic Knowledge	635	9.66	0.34		
				0.692*	0.000
Civic Participation	635	46.92	6.30		

***p<0.05**

Table 3 reveals that there is significant relationship between civic knowledge and civic participation of female students in Ekiti State ($r=0.692$, $p<0.05$). The null hypothesis is rejected. The relationship between civic knowledge and civic participation of female students in Ekiti State is moderately high and statistically significant in a positive direction at 0.05 level of significance.

Discussion

The study found that there is a significant relationship between civic knowledge and civic participation of secondary school students in Ekiti State. It was noted that knowledge of civic education by students generally contributed to their civic participation. The finding is in line with Abiodun and Alonge (2015) who discovered that there is significant relationship between Civic Education and Civic Consciousness among Student in Kwara state. Abiodun and Alonge (2015) also found a significant relationship between students' perception and Civic consciousness in secondary schools in Kwara state. The study is related with Adeoluwa and Adeyi (2017) that discovered a significant relationship between civic and political knowledge from school and civic participation of students in Ado-Ekiti Local Government Area of Ekiti State.

The study discovered that there is no significant relationship between civic knowledge and civic participation of male students in Ekiti State. This is an indication that civic knowledge among male students has no significant contribution to their civic participation in Ekiti state. Low civic participation of male students may have resulted from another variables such as moral degradation, gender role stereotype, lack of proper upbringing, patriarchal tendencies, over pampering of male children by parents which have led many male students to unpatriotic behaviours such as stealing, vandalism, killing, maiming, rapping, kidnapping, drug abuse and examination malpractices. The study is related to Adeoluwa and Adeyi (2017) who discovered a positive multiple correlation between the school and family as predictors of secondary school students commitment to civic participation. Adeoluwa and Adeyi (2017) also found that family has the least predictive strength on secondary school students' commitment to civic participation. The study is contrary to Osalusi and Adanikin (2017) that found a significant relationship between civic learning and socio-political challenges among students in Ado-Ekiti.

The study also found that there is significant relationship between civic knowledge and civic participation of female students while it found a significant difference between

civic knowledge and civic participation of male students in Ekiti State. The study showed that female students' civic knowledge is related to their civic participation and civic knowledge of male students and civic participation are not significantly correlated. The study is in accordance with Adeyi (2017) who found a significant difference between male and female students' commitment to civic participation in Southwest, Nigeria.

Conclusion

It was concluded in the study that civic education contributed significantly to civic participation of secondary school students generally in Ekiti state. It was also noted in the study that civic participation of female students correlated positively with their civic knowledge while the civic knowledge of male students has no significant correlation with their civic participation in secondary schools in Ekiti state.

Recommendations:

Based on the findings, the following recommendations have been made:

1. Students, especially male should endeavour to make use of the knowledge gained in the subject in their practical and social lives.
2. Teachers should improve their teaching through cooperative and collaborative learning activities indoor and outdoor the classrooms to encourage students to develop necessary skills which could stimulate civic interest and improve their knowledge of civic participation.
3. Teachers should be hardworking, committed to their duties and teach the subjects with enthusiasm to attract the attention and interest of students to enhance their civic participation in the society.
4. Teachers should ensure that students participate actively in academic activities and other extra-curricular activities such as sports, quiz competition, debates, and practical Agriculture. This could promote sense of responsibility that could lead to positive civic participation.

5. Parents should be alive to their responsibilities, complement the efforts of the teachers by teaching their children and wards the needs for civic participation and discourage them from indolence or engaging in social vices.
6. Government should make Civic Education a compulsory course for all students at all levels of education in Ekiti state to acquire the essential exposure and enlightenment for desirable civic participation in Ekiti state.
7. Government and Non- governmental organizations should organize orientation and workshops for students on regular bases to create awareness on the importance of civic participation to the society.

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