

ASSESSMENT OF CIVIC EDUCATION AS INSTRUMENT FOR CHARACTER REFORMATION AMONG STUDENTS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL IN OGUN STATE

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Abstract:

The study assessed civic education as instrument for character reformation among students of secondary schools in Ogun State. This study employed descriptive survey research design where questionnaire was used to acquire necessary data for the research work. Population comprises all secondary schools in Odeda Local Government, Ogun State. Simple random sampling technique was used to select five secondary schools in which thirty (30) students were chosen to make a total of one hundred and fifty (150) as sample for study. Two (2) research questions were raised and answered in this study. Reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha and data collected were analyzed using simple percentage, mean and standard deviation statistical tool. Findings reveal that civic education holds significant potential for shaping students' moral and ethical values, several challenges hinder its effectiveness. Inadequate instructional materials, lack of trained teachers, insufficient curriculum content, and a lack of administrative support are major barriers that need to be addressed to maximize the impact of civic education. Additionally, the low levels of student engagement suggest that more effort is required to make civic education more relevant and appealing to students. Addressing these challenges is crucial for ensuring that civic education can fulfill its role in character reformation, ultimately contributing to the development of responsible and morally upright citizens. It is therefore recommended that curriculum for civic education should be revised to better address contemporary moral and ethical challenges faced by students. This includes integrating more practical and interactive content that resonates with students' daily experiences and societal issues.

Keywords: Civic education, Character, Engagement, Instrument, reformation,

Introduction:

Generally, societies have consistently shown a vested interest in how their young members are groomed to become responsible citizens and participate in civic life. However, contemporary trends have deviated from these traditional norms, raising significant concern. A prominent school of thought argues that there is an urgent need to refocus efforts on reshaping the teaching and learning processes of civic education in our primary and secondary schools. This need is particularly pressing in light of declining levels of national consciousness, social cohesion, patriotic spirit and character development. Looking back into the 1980s, it became alarmingly clear that the lack of patriotic orientation and civic education contributed to widespread disorientation within schools and the broader society. The negative consequences of this deficiency are evident across all levels of our community. Nigeria, through various administrations, has made multiple attempts to address this issue, yet these efforts have often fallen short (Adebayo & Adebayo, 2013).

In Nigeria, the inclusion of civic education in the curriculum is aimed at addressing the moral and ethical challenges faced by the youth, who are increasingly exposed to diverse societal influences that may undermine their character and values (Adeyemi & Adeyinka, 2020). Civic education has long been recognized as a crucial element in the development of responsible and engaged citizens. Historically, it has been defined as the process by which individuals learn about the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, the workings of government, and the principles of democracy. According to Print (2017), civic education is essential for the formation

of a democratic society, as it provides citizens with the knowledge and skills necessary to participate effectively in civic life. In the context of secondary schools, civic education aims to instill in students an understanding of civic values, the rule of law, and the importance of active participation in the democratic process (Galston, 2021).

Character reformation refers to the process by which individuals develop moral and ethical values that guide their behaviour. According to Berkowitz and Bier (2015), character formation is a fundamental aspect of education that aims to develop individuals who are not only knowledgeable but also morally upright and capable of contributing positively to society. This process is influenced by various factors, including family upbringing, cultural values, educational experiences, and social interactions. Schools play a crucial role in character formation by providing students with the knowledge, skills, and opportunities to practice and reinforce positive behaviours (Nucci & Narvaez, 2018). Civic education has been identified as a key instrument in character formation, particularly in fostering values such as respect, responsibility, fairness, and integrity (Lickona, 2011). The connection between civic education and character formation is well-documented in the literature. For instance, Berkowitz and Bier (2015) argue that civic education plays a critical role in developing moral reasoning and ethical decision-making among students, thereby contributing to their overall character development. Research has shown that effective civic education programs incorporate elements of character education, emphasizing the development of virtues alongside civic knowledge and skills (Lapsley & Narvaez, 2016). In this regard, civic education is not merely about imparting knowledge but also about shaping the character and attitudes of students, preparing them to become responsible and ethical citizens. This dual focus on knowledge and character is crucial in addressing the moral and ethical challenges faced by young people in today's society (Nucci & Narvaez, 2018).

Several studies have explored the impact of civic education on character reformation among students. For example, a study by Leming (2013) found that students who participated in civic education programs exhibited higher levels of civic responsibility and moral reasoning compared to their peers who did not receive such education. Similarly, a longitudinal study conducted by Torney-Purta et al. (2021) revealed that students who received civic education were more likely to engage in pro-social behaviours, such as volunteering and community service, and demonstrated a stronger commitment to democratic values. In the Nigerian context, research on the impact of civic education on character reformation is still emerging. However, existing studies suggest a positive relationship between civic education and the development of responsible citizenship among students. For instance, Adeyemi and Adeyinka (2013) found that civic education in Nigerian secondary schools significantly contributed to students' understanding of their rights and responsibilities as citizens, as well as their ability to critically evaluate social and political issues. Similarly, Oloyede (2019) reported that civic education programs in Ogun State have been effective in promoting ethical behavior and reducing instances of indiscipline among students. Despite these positive findings, some studies have highlighted challenges in the implementation of civic education in Nigerian schools. According to Okam (2012), inadequate teacher training, lack of resources, and a curriculum that does not fully address the complexities of contemporary society are significant barriers to the effectiveness of civic education in character reformation. These challenges underscore the need for a more comprehensive and context-specific approach to civic education in Nigeria.

Ogun State, like many other regions in Nigeria, has made efforts to integrate civic education into the secondary school curriculum. The state's Ministry of Education has recognized the importance of civic education in fostering a sense of national identity and social responsibility among students (Ogun State Ministry of Education, 2010). However, the effectiveness of these efforts in achieving character reformation remains a topic of debate. Studies specific to Ogun State have highlighted both successes and areas for improvement. For example, Adebayo and Oyetade (2011) found that civic education programs in Ogun State have

been successful in increasing students' awareness of their civic duties and promoting positive behavioural changes. However, the study also noted that the impact of these programs on long-term character reformation was limited, suggesting that more needs to be done to reinforce the values taught in civic education classes.

Challenges specific to Ogun State include the inconsistency in the delivery of civic education, with some schools providing more comprehensive programmes than others (Olajide, 2013). Additionally, the lack of continuous professional development for teachers has been cited as a major impediment to the effective teaching of civic education, as many teachers lack the necessary skills and knowledge to deliver the curriculum effectively (Akinbode, 2014). While there is a substantial body of literature on the role of civic education in character formation, several gaps remain, particularly in the context of Nigerian secondary schools. First, most studies focus on the cognitive aspects of civic education, such as knowledge acquisition and critical thinking, with less emphasis on the affective and behavioural components that contribute to character reformation (Torney-Purta et al., 2021). Second, there is a need for more empirical research on the long-term impact of civic education on students' character and behaviour, especially in diverse cultural settings like Nigeria (Adeyemi & Adeyinka, 2017).

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the research is to assess civic education as an instrument for character reformation among students of secondary school in Ogun state. Specific objectives are to

- i. examine the relationship between civic education and character reformation among secondary school students in Ogun state.
- ii. identify the challenges faced in the implementation of civic education as a tool for character reformation in Ogun state.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

- i. What are the relationship between civic education and character reformation among secondary school students in Ogun state?
- ii. What are challenges faced in the implementation of civic education as a tool for character reformation in Ogun state?

Methodology

This study employed descriptive survey research design where questionnaire was used to acquire necessary data for the research work. Population comprises all secondary schools in Odeda Local Government, Ogun State. Simple random sampling technique was used to select five secondary schools in which thirty (30) students were chosen to make a total of one hundred and fifty (150) as sample for study. Two (2) research questions were raised and answered in this study. Reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha and data collected were analyzed using simple percentage, mean and standard deviation statistical tools.

Presentation of Data Analysis and Results

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between civic education and character reformation among secondary school students in Ogun state?

Table 1

S/N	ITEMS	AGREED		DISAGREED		Mean ($\bar{x}$)	S.D
		Freq (N)	Percent (%)	Freq (N)	Percent (%)		
1.	Civic education has positively influenced my sense of responsibility and ethical behavior.	118	78.7	32	21.3	3.09	0.897
2.	The lessons learned in civic education have made me more respectful towards others.	130	86.6	20	13.4	3.31	0.732
3.	Civic education has helped me understand the importance of honesty and integrity in daily life.	125	83.3	25	16.7	3.18	0.786
4.	Participating in civic education classes has encouraged me to be a more active and responsible citizen	127	84.7	23	15.3	3.13	0.748
5.	I believe that civic education plays a crucial role in shaping students' moral values and character	126	84.0	24	16.0	3.27	0.843
Weighted Mean ($\bar{x}$) = 3.196 and SD = 0.801							

The results presented in Table 1 reveal a strong positive relationship between the two variables. The majority of the respondents agreed with the statements that civic education has positively influenced their sense of responsibility and ethical behaviour (78.7%), made them more respectful towards others (86.6%), and helped them understand the importance of honesty and integrity in daily life (83.3%). Furthermore, 84.7% of the students agreed that civic education has encouraged them to be more active and responsible citizens, and 84% acknowledged that it plays a crucial role in shaping students' moral values and character. The mean scores for the items ranged from 3.09 to 3.31, with a weighted mean of 3.196 and a standard deviation of 0.801, indicating overall positive perceptions of the impact of civic education on character reformation. These findings suggest that civic education is effectively contributing to character development among secondary school students in Ogun State. The high levels of agreement across all items indicate that students perceive civic education as a valuable tool in fostering key character traits such as responsibility, respect, honesty, and active citizenship. The relatively low standard deviations further support the consistency of these perceptions among the respondents, suggesting that the benefits of civic education are widely recognized and experienced by the student population.

Research Question 2: What are challenges faced in the implementation of civic education as a tool for character reformation in Ogun state?

Table 2

S/N	ITEMS	AGREED		DISAGREED		Mean ($\bar{x}$)	S.D
		Freq (N)	Percent (%)	Freq (N)	Percent (%)		
1.	Inadequate instructional materials hinder the effective teaching of civic education in secondary schools.	104	69.3	46	30.7	3.09	0.882
2.	Lack of trained and qualified teachers is a significant barrier to the successful implementation of civic education programs	107	71.4	43	28.6	3.01	0.894
3.	The current civic education curriculum does not sufficiently address the moral and ethical challenges faced by students	120	80.0	30	20.0	3.07	0.887
4.	There is a lack of administrative support and resources for the effective implementation of civic education in schools	114	76.0	36	24.0	3.12	0.955
5.	Students show low levels of interest and engagement in civic education classes, which hampers character reformation efforts	107	71.3	43	28.7	3.14	0.956
Weighted Mean ($\bar{x}$) = 3.086 and SD = 0.915							

The analysis of the data presented in Table 2 reveals that the majority of respondents agree that there are significant challenges in the implementation of civic education as a tool for character reformation in Ogun State. Specifically, 69.3% of the respondents agreed that inadequate instructional materials hinder the effective teaching of civic education, with a mean score of 3.09 and a standard deviation (SD) of 0.882. Similarly, 71.4% of respondents identified the lack of trained and qualified teachers as a significant barrier, yielding a mean of 3.01 and an SD of 0.894. The most agreed-upon challenge was the inadequacy of the current civic education curriculum in addressing the moral and ethical challenges faced by students, with 80.0% agreement, a mean of 3.07, and an SD of 0.887. Moreover, a considerable percentage of respondents (76.0%) agreed that there is a lack of administrative support and resources for effective implementation, with a mean of 3.12 and an SD of 0.955. Additionally, 71.3% of respondents indicated that low student interest and engagement in civic education classes is a challenge, with a mean score of 3.14 and an SD of 0.956. The weighted mean of 3.086 and an overall SD of 0.915 suggest that these challenges are broadly recognized among the respondents and are perceived as substantial barriers to the effective use of civic education for character reformation.

Discussion of findings

From table 1 above, research question 1 has a weighted mean of 3.196 which is above the benchmark of 2.50. This shows the relationship between civic education and character reformation among secondary school students in Ogun state. Therefore, this finding agrees with the findings of Lickona (2011) who argues that civic education is integral to the formation of

responsible and ethical citizens, as it provides students with the knowledge and values necessary to navigate societal challenges. Berkowitz and Bier (2015) also highlight the importance of civic education in fostering virtues such as honesty, respect, and responsibility, which are essential for character reformation. Additionally, Ajiboye and Adeyemi (2011) found that students who participated in well-structured civic education programs exhibited higher levels of moral reasoning and ethical behavior compared to those who did not, further reinforcing the positive relationship between civic education and character development. These studies, in conjunction with the findings from Ogun State, underscore the significance of civic education as a vital component of character formation in educational settings.

From table 2 above, research question 2 has a weighted mean of 3.086 which is above the benchmark of 2.50. Summarily, the challenges faced in the implementation of civic education as a tool for character reformation in Ogun state. The above finding is in congruence with the findings of Ojo and Osakwe (2016) noted that the lack of adequate instructional materials and trained teachers were significant impediments to the effective teaching of civic education in Nigerian schools. Furthermore, Ajiboye and Adeyemi (2011) found that the curriculum for civic education often fails to address the specific moral and ethical needs of students, thereby limiting its effectiveness in character development. The need for administrative support and resources, as well as student engagement, are also recurring themes in studies that explore the barriers to successful civic education implementation (Berkowitz & Bier, 2015). These studies reinforce the notion that without addressing these critical challenges, the potential of civic education as a tool for character reformation may remain unrealized.

Conclusions

Based on the findings, civic education holds significant potential for shaping students' moral and ethical values, several challenges hinder its effectiveness. Inadequate instructional materials, lack of trained teachers, insufficient curriculum content, and a lack of administrative support are major barriers that need to be addressed to maximize the impact of civic education. Additionally, the low levels of student engagement suggest that more effort is required to make civic education more relevant and appealing to students. Addressing these challenges is crucial for ensuring that civic education can fulfill its role in character reformation, ultimately contributing to the development of responsible and morally upright citizens. Effective implementation, backed by comprehensive support and resources, will be key to realizing the full potential of civic education in Ogun State's secondary schools.

Recommendations

In line with the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- i. The curriculum for civic education should be revised to better address contemporary moral and ethical challenges faced by students. This includes integrating more practical and interactive content that resonates with students' daily experiences and societal issues.
- ii. Teachers should receive comprehensive training and professional development in civic education to enhance their ability to deliver engaging and effective lessons. This training should include updated pedagogical techniques and strategies for fostering student participation.
- iii. Schools should be provided with adequate and up-to-date instructional materials and resources for teaching civic education. This includes textbooks, multimedia resources, and other educational tools that support a more dynamic and engaging learning environment.
- iv. Educational administrators should prioritize civic education by allocating necessary resources and support. This includes creating policies that emphasize the importance of civic education and ensuring that schools receive the support needed for successful implementation.
- v. Strategies should be implemented to boost student interest and engagement in civic

education classes. This can include incorporating student-led projects, community service activities, and real-world applications of civic principles to make the subject more relevant and appealing.

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