

---

## **Adequacy Of Civic Education Curriculum in Reducing Corrupt Practices Among Senior Secondary School Students in Bayelsa State, Nigeria.**

---

**Owede V.C., Abdulsalami A.A., Okafor I.P. & Arunah M.I.**

---

### **Abstract**

*This paper examined the adequacy of the civic education curriculum in reducing corrupt practices among secondary school students in Bayelsa State, Nigeria, and teachers' opinions on how anti-corruption strategies should be addressed in the senior secondary school civic education curriculum. It examined curriculum in Nigeria and teachers' opinions on issues to be included in the senior secondary school civic education curriculum in Nigeria. A descriptive survey research type was adopted for this study. The study's target population consisted of all social studies and civic education teachers in secondary schools in the Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. A purposive sampling technique was used to sample 89 social studies and civic education teachers. Three research questions were raised and answered in the study. The instrument for data collection was the 11-item researcher's questionnaire titled "Adequacy of Civic Education Curriculum in Reducing Corrupt Practices." The questionnaire was properly validated and trial-tested on twenty (20) teachers outside the research locale through a test-retest method after an interval of two weeks. The two sets of scores were correlated using Pearson's product moment correlation, and a reliability coefficient of 0.74 was obtained. The data collected were analysed using percentages, and findings revealed that the present senior secondary civic education curriculum is grossly inadequate to reduce incidences of corrupt practices among secondary school students. Thus, it was recommended, among others, that anti-corruption strategies, themes, or topics be added to the curriculum. The essence is for it to be taught in all the senior secondary school classes.*

**Keywords:** adequacy, civic education, curriculum, corrupt practices.

## Introduction

In simple terms, all learning experiences and activities that learners are exposed to during the period of schooling at any level can be referred to as curriculum. From the various models that commend themselves in the development and planning of curriculum, a well-articulated curriculum usually contains objectives, contents to be taught, an organisation of the contents, as well as clearly spelled out the procedure for evaluation. Therefore, the Civic Education Curriculum as it is being implemented today has in its arrangement major themes, specific contents (topics) to be taught, activities for both teachers and learners, teaching and learning materials, as well as evaluation guides. While the curriculum provides the minimum contents to be taught in schools, the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC, 2009) advised that teachers are at liberty to enrich the contents with relevant materials and information from their immediate environment, but such enrichment should be adapted to students' needs and aspirations.

The Senior Secondary School Civic Education curriculum has twenty-three thematic areas of concern where students would be exposed to relevant learning experiences during their three-year duration at that level of education system. Based on the Senior Secondary School Civic Education Curriculum, for example, students in Senior Secondary School 1 (SSS 1) are expected to be exposed to learning experiences in eight thematic areas covering: “Our Values, Emerging

Issues, Citizenship, Representative Democracy, Pillars of Democracy, Human Rights, Cultism, and Law and Order.” It is emphasised that the curriculum is designed and structured in such a way that these thematic concepts have in themselves sub-units, sub-themes, or topics to be taught at various times, and the teacher is also at liberty to further break them down into the three terms that make up an academic session.

It appears to be the thinking of the Federal Government that the best way to

tackle headlong the rapid erosion of societal (national) values is for the younger population to be exposed to learning experiences such as the values of justice, honesty, tolerance, selflessness, etc., using the instrumentality of the school system. In fact, Falade (2008) is of the opinion that one of the best ways to address the rapid slide in our once cherished values of patriotism, for example, is to consciously use civic education (whether formal or informal) to imbue in the citizens the kind of value consciousness that would galvanise public spiritedness and active participation in the democratic process.

Indeed, a critical analysis of the SSS 1 Civic Education Curriculum that learners would be exposed to shows a very close thematic relationship with the ones that they (learners) have already been taught at the Junior Secondary School level. For instance, just as learners were taught concepts such as citizenship, representative democracy, and human rights during their years in Junior Secondary School, they are expected to once again be abreast of the same concepts in SSS 1.

Similarly, the Senior Secondary School 11 (SSS-11) Civic Education Curriculum has nine thematic areas ranging from citizenship, democracy, and national development to the dangers of political apathy, achieving popular participation in politics, the limitations of human rights, drugs and drug abuse, responsible parenthood, traffic regulations, and relationships (interpersonal and communal). Among the three classes at the Senior Secondary School level, it is SSS II that has more content areas to cover. This may probably be due to the fact that it is the mid- and penultimate class in Senior Secondary Education and that learners need to be fully equipped with relevant intellectual skills for effective citizenship. Hence, the duplication of most of the concepts which learners have previously been taught. In fact, in terms of teaching and learning, topics such as the dangers of political apathy and achieving popular participation in politics need serious attention.

Nigeria's democratic experience needs to be sustained, and as such, the glaring political apathy and passive political culture usually exhibited by Nigerians will not help in the drive towards sustainable democratic practice and national development (Abonu, 2005; Ismail, 2011).

Thus, teaching secondary school students the dangers of political apathy and drug abuse (for example) becomes critical in promoting democratic ethos and addressing the myriad of social issues to which this present and young generation are most vulnerable (Ushe, 2012; Okeahialam, 2013).

Again, the truth must also be told that much of the social-related problems and vices that the young population of today has been associated with can be traced to the issue of parental irresponsibility. In other words, if there was a good parental upbringing, children may subsequently grow up to be responsible children and citizens, not only to their parents but also to the entire Nigerian society. In effect, that is the hallmark of responsible parenthood, and civic education then becomes a veritable instrument to build in this young generation the ideals and fundamentals of how to be responsible parents when they eventually become adult citizens.

In a related vein, the SSS III Civic Education Curriculum covers six content areas, which include characteristics of human rights, dangers of political apathy, public service in a democracy, civil society and popular participation, constitutional democracy and the rule of law, and human trafficking. Aside from human trafficking, civil society and the rule of law seem to appear for the first time in the SSS Civic Education Curriculum. At some point, all of the other themes were taught in SSS 1 and SSS 11 classes.

The inclusion of human rights at this level, for example, is intended to strengthen the foundation already laid at the Junior Secondary level. This is because there have been several reported and unreported cases of human rights violations by individual citizens, especially by government agencies and corporate private organisations, since the return of democracy in 1999.

The point to be made is that students need to have deeper knowledge and understanding of their fundamental human rights, as well as the corresponding limitations of those rights. It is only then that the nation's democratic practice can be placed on a fast pedestal of steady progress and development, thereby striking a balanced chord with the primary concern of civic education in Nigeria. The essence, among others, is to inculcate effective value reorientation and promote effective citizenship using the instrumentality of the school.

A close examination of the outlined Senior Secondary School Civic education curriculum indicates that some of the themes appear in all three segments (primary, junior, and senior secondary schools). Like the Junior Secondary School Social Studies curriculum, the duplication of these themes was not only to allow for an in-depth treatment but also to give wider coverage in terms of instructional activities. It also appears that the way the curriculum is designed conforms to the spiral model of curriculum design. That is to say that the overriding goal of the Senior Secondary School Civic Education Curriculum is the provision of knowledge to the students to be informed citizens who will be able to translate the knowledge, skills, and attitude acquired into desirable social-civic behaviour (Jekayinfa, 2005).

On the issue of corrupt practices common among Secondary School students, the contents of civic education appear not to be adequately loaded with relevant learning experiences (contents) capable of giving impetus to the fight against those corrupt practices. Some of these corrupt practices include, but are not limited to, examination malpractice, sexual harassment, stealing, cheating, and tardy behavior, to name a few. Though some studies on the adequacy of the curriculum contents of different school subjects at Junior And Senior Secondary Schools have been carried out by various scholars in the past, like those of Yusuf, Agbonna, and Onifade (2010) and Moses (2017), none have so far focused on civic education and corrupt practices among students. Similarly, Ayakeme,

Owede, Omoregbe, and Arunah (2017) found that examination malpractice, impersonation, stealing, and absenteeism are prevalent among undergraduates. Against this background, the paper sought to determine whether the senior secondary school civic education curriculum is effective in reducing corrupt practices among senior secondary school students in Nigeria.

## **Results**

### **Research Question One**

To what extent does the Senior Secondary School Civic Education curriculum adequately capture ways of reducing corrupt practices among students in Nigeria?

Findings show the extent to which the Senior Secondary School Civic Education curriculum captures ways of reducing corrupt practices among students in Nigeria. Ninety-three topics, which represent 89.27 percent, are taught in the senior secondary school civic education curriculum. Specifically, only five topics (5.38%) on “Our National Values” of Integrity, Contentment, Self-Reliance, Discipline, Courage, Cooperation, Honesty, Right Attitude to Work, and Justice are taught only from Junior Secondary I to Senior Secondary School I.

### **Research Question Two**

What are the teachers' opinions on how anti-corruption strategies should be taught in the senior secondary school civic education curriculum?

The results show teachers' opinions on how anti-corruption should be taught in the senior secondary school civic education curriculum. 78.65 percent of the respondents believed that anti-corruption strategies should be taught in every school term, while 93.26 percent of the respondents were of the opinion that anti-corruption strategies should be taught across all three classes in the Senior Secondary Schools. Also, 83 (93.26 percent) social studies and civic education teachers believed that anti-corruption

strategies should be taught across all three classes at the senior secondary school level.

### **Research Question Three**

What are the issues of concern that should be included in the Senior Secondary School Civic Education curriculum to reduce corrupt practices among students in Nigeria as viewed by teachers?

Results show the issues of concern that should be included in the Senior Secondary School Civic Education curriculum to reduce corrupt practices among students in Nigeria, as viewed by teachers. The result shows that 59 (66.29 percent) Social Studies and Civic Education teachers are of the view that corruption (its causes and consequences, as well as possible strategies for reducing corruption) should be included in the curriculum. Secondly, 62 (69.66 percent) Social Studies and Civic Education teachers in the sampled schools believed that the causes and consequences of examination malpractices should be taught in the Secondary School Civic Education classes. Also, 61 (68.54 percent) Social Studies and Civic Education teachers in the schools sampled for the study are of the view that students should be taught (as part of Civic Education) the causes and consequences of sexual harassment prevalent among senior secondary school students.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The results derived from question one(1) show the thematic arrangement of the issues that form the content of the civic education curriculum at the senior secondary school level. The result shows that though the present civic education curriculum is grossly inadequate in addressing corrupt practices common among secondary school students, the teaching of national values will in the long run imbue in the students a sense of commitment and patriotism to the Nigerian nation. This is in line with the opinion of Danladi (2010) that values are feelings and beliefs that members of society strongly share and uphold in an interdependent

manner, which is essential for improving a lot of society. This finding also implies that if senior secondary school students imbibe the virtues and values taught them beginning in junior secondary school, they are more likely to be responsible and effective citizens with high moral standards.

Secondly, findings from this study also show that the teaching and learning of anti-corruption strategies should not only be taught in every school term but should be included in the civic education curriculum. The finding also revealed that the teaching and learning of anti-corruption strategies should be taught across all the classes at the senior secondary school level. Of course, doing this will be in sync with the position of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013), which stated in its National Policy on Education that one of the objectives of senior secondary education is to “raise morally upright and well-adjusted individuals who can think independently and rationally, respect the views and feelings of others, and appreciate the dignity of labour.” This suggests that teachers would have ample time to instill in the learners a sustainable culture and lifestyle that abhors any form of corruption as they approach their academics with all the seriousness it deserves.

Thirdly, the finding indicated that some selected themes or topics need to be included in the senior secondary school civic education curriculum. In fact, this is consistent with the opinion of Jekayinfa, Mofoluwawo, and Oladiran (2011) that issues treated in civic education appear not only to be sensitive because they have the propensity to affect society at the individual, with friends, or in family relationships, but they are also controversial in nature since people tend to disagree and hold strong opinions about them. Also, Alexander (2012) argued that civic education helps learners become well-behaved citizens. This means that a well-behaved student will not have time to engage in corrupt practices like examination malpractice or stealing, and as such, including such themes as corruption and national development, causes and consequences of examination malpractice, and tardy behaviours is a pragmatic way of



resolving social problems affecting the student population within the classroom setting.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

Findings from the study revealed that the present civic education curriculum is grossly inadequate in addressing corrupt practices common among secondary school students. This is in addition to the absence of clearly spelled-out anti-corruption strategies, themes, or topics in the secondary school civic education curriculum. Hence, the following recommendations are put forward:

1. Any revision to the civic education curriculum should be carried out in a way that will practically address corrupt practices usually perpetuated by secondary school students.
2. There should be well-structured capacity-building programmes where social studies and civic education teachers will be equipped with the needed technical know-how for effectively implanting the anti-corruption strategies that would be included in the civic education curriculum.
3. Anti-corruption strategies, themes, or topics should be taught in all senior secondary school classes.

### **References**

- Abonu, D. N. (2005). *The impact of social studies education on the political awareness of secondary school students for citizenship development in Nigeria (unpublished PhD dissertation)* Department of Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Nigeria.
- Alexander, A. O. (2012). *Standard civic education for senior secondary schools and colleges*. Owerri: Standard Publishers.
- Ayakeme, D. L.; Owede, V. C.; Omoregbe, I. I.; and Arunah, M. I. (2017). Corrupt practices among undergraduates as perceived by social studies pre-service teachers in two universities in south-south Nigeria. *Niger Delta Journal of Education*, 9(1&2), 166–175.

- Danladi, E. N. (2010). Community values are the basic tools for economic security in Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Social Studies*, XIII (1&2), 86–97.
- Falade, D. A. (2008). Civic education as a tool for nation-building in Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Social Studies*, XI(1), 15–27.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013). *National policy on education (6th edition)*. Lagos: NERDC Printing Press.
- Ismail, O. A. (2011). Civic education is a veritable tool for promoting effective citizenship in Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Social Studies*, XIV (2), 68–76.
- Jekayinfa, A. A. (2005). *Views of Nigerian teachers on the adequacy of social studies curriculum content at the college level*. Retrieved from <http://www.unilorin.edu.ng/publications>.
- Jekayinfa, A. A., Mofoluwawo, E. O., & Oladiran, M. A. (2011). Implementation of civic education curriculum in Nigeria: challenges for social studies teachers. *Nigerian Journal of Social Studies*, XIV(1), 147–155.
- Moses, J. B. (2017). Chemistry teachers' perception of the adequacy of the Nigerian senior secondary school chemistry curriculum content. *Niger Delta Journal of Education*, 9(1&2), 200–207.
- Nigerian Education Research and Development Council (NERDC, 2009). *Senior secondary school religion and national values curriculum*. Abuja: NERDC Press.
- Okeahiaham, U. P. (2013). *An analysis of the effectiveness of secondary school civic education in achieving national objectives in Nigeria (unpublished PhD dissertation)* Department of Educational Leadership, Research, and Foundations, University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, USA.
- Ushe, M. U. (2012). Religious fanaticism and civic education in Nigeria: A paradigm for national development. *Journal of Research in Education and Society*, 3(1), 142-156.
- Yusuf, A., Agbonna, S. A., & Onifade, O. B. (2010). Adequacy of the social studies curriculum for national security in Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Social Studies*, XIII(1&2), 245-260.

**Table 1**

**The extent to which Senior Secondary School Civic Education curriculum adequately capture ways of Reducing Corrupt Practices among students in Nigeria**

S/N	Content of Civic Education for Senior Secondary Schools	Number of Topics	
		Frequency	%
1.	Our Values	5	5.38
2.	Emerging Issues	4	4.30
3.	Representative Democracy	4	4.30
4.	Pillars of Democracy	4	4.30
5.	Human Rights	3	3.23
6.	Cultism	3	3.23
7.	Law and Order	4	4.30
8.	Citizenship	8	8.60
9.	Democracy and National Development	3	3.23
10.	Dangers of Political Apathy	6	6.45
11.	Achieving Popular Participation in Politics	3	3.23
12.	Limitation of Human Rights	3	3.23
13.	Drugs and Drug Abuse	4	4.30
14.	Responsible Parenthood	3	3.23
15.	Traffic Regulations	4	4.30
16.	Relationships	4	4.30
17.	Characteristics of Human rights	3	3.23
18.	Public Service in a Democracy	4	4.30
19.	Civil Society and Popular Participation	4	4.30
20.	Constitutional Democracy and the Rule of Law	4	4.30
21.	Human Trafficking	3	3.23
	<b>Total</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>89.27</b>

See page 8

**Table 2**  
**Teachers' opinions on how anti-corruption should be taught in the Senior Secondary School Civic Education curriculum**

S/N	How anti-corruption should be taught	YES	%	NO	%
1.	Should be taught in every school term	70	78.65	19	21.35
2.	Should be included in the Civic Education curriculum	67	75.28	21	23.60
3.	Should be taught across all the three classes in the senior secondary schools	83	93.26	6	6.74
4.	Should be taught only at SSS III class	9	10.11	80	89.89
5.	Should be taught only at SSS II class	11	12.36	78	87.64
6.	Should be taught only at SSS I class	20	22.47	69	77.53

See page 9

**Table 3**  
**Issues of concern that should be included in the Senior Secondary School Civic Education curriculum to reduce corrupt practices among students in Nigeria**

S/N	Items	YES	%	NO	%
1.	Corruption and National Development	59	66.29	30	33.71
2.	Causes and Consequences of Examination Malpractice	62	69.66	27	30.34
3.	Stealing	48	53.93	41	40.07
4.	Tardy Behaviours	51	57.30	38	42.70
5.	Causes and Consequences Sexual Harassment	61	68.54	28	31.66

See page 9

## **DECLARATION**

With all sincerity and honesty, we, Victory Collins **OWEDE PhD**, Ayodele Alliyu **ABDULSALAMPh.D.**, Ifeoma Priscilla-Lillian **OKAFOR Ph.D.**, and Modinat Idowu **ARUNAH**, hereby declare that this paper titled “**Adequacy of Civic Education Curriculum in Reducing Corrupt Practices among Senior Secondary School Students in Bayelsa State, Nigeria**” has not been sent nor is it under consideration for publication in any other outlet other than the ASUU Journal of Social Sciences.