

**ADEQUACY OF CIVIC EDUCATION CURRICULUM
IN REDUCING CORRUPTION AMONG SECONDARY
SCHOOL STUDENTS IN YENAGOA LGA, BAYELSA
STATE, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

This paper examined the adequacy of civic education curriculum in reducing corrupt practices among secondary school students in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. The study population comprises 1,287 teachers in the public secondary schools in Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. A simple random sampling technique was used to sample 89 Social Studies and Civic Education teachers. Three research questions were raised and an-

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swered in the study. The data collection instrument was an 11-item researchers' designed questionnaire titled "Adequacy of Civic Education Curriculum in Reducing Corrupt Practices Questionnaire". The questionnaire was validated correctly and trial-tested on 20 teachers outside the research locale through a test re-test method after an interval of two weeks. The reliability test, which made use of Pearson Product Moment Correlation, yielded an r-value of 0.74. The data collected were analysed using percentages and findings. The current Senior Secondary Civic Education curriculum is grossly inadequate to reduce corrupt practices among secondary school students. Thus, it was recommended that anti-corruption strategies/themes or topics 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, content to be taught, an organisation of the content, and spelt out evaluation procedures. Therefore, as it is being implemented today, the Civic Education Curriculum has its arrangement of significant themes, specific contents (topics) to be taught, activities for both teachers and learners, teaching and learning materials, and evaluation guides. While the curriculum provides minimum ranges 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. However, such enrichment should be adapted to students' needs and aspiration.

The Senior Secondary School Civic Education curriculum has 23 thematic areas of concern. Students would be exposed to relevant learning experiences during their three-year duration at the education system level. Based on the Senior Secondary School Civic Education Curriculum, for example, students in Senior Secondary I (SS I) 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 should be emphasised that the curriculum is designed and structured so that these thematic concepts have in themselves sub-units or sub-themes or topics to be taught at various times, which the teacher is also at liberty to further break down into the three terms that make up an academic session.

For instance, 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. Falade (2008) believes that one of the best ways to addressing 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.

Again, emerging issues such as HIV/AIDS and youth empowerment are also considered essential elements for the young (students) population to be well abreast. This is so because young people constitute a more significant percentage of the nation’s total population. As such, it becomes imperative for them to be guided appropriately in issues of social concern and relevance because they are the most vulnerable in becoming victims of the scourge of HIV/AIDS. Also, they (student population) need not only to be empowered but to be equipped with the necessary coping strategies alongside requisite communicative, manipulative, intellectual and artistic skills needed for the practical work environment, especially in an economy that has few job opportunities for the young (NERDC, 2009).

Indeed, a critical analysis of the SS I Civic Education Curriculum contents that learners would be exposed to shows a very close thematic relationship with those 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 also expected to be abreast with the same concepts in SS I.

Similarly, the Senior Secondary II (SS-II) Civic Education Curriculum has nine thematic areas: Citizenship, Democracy and National Development, Dangers of Political Apathy, Achieving Popular Participation in Politics, Limitations of Human Rights, Drugs and Drug Abuse, Responsible Parenthood, Traffic Regulations and Relationships (Interpersonal and Communal). Among the three classes in the senior secondary school, SS II has more content areas to cover. This may probably be because it is the mid and penultimate class in senior secondary education. Learners need to be fully equipped with relevant intellectual skills for effective citizenship. Hence, the duplication of most of the concepts that learners have previously been taught.

Topics such as Dangers of Political Apathy and Achieving Popular Participation in Politics need serious attention in teaching and learning. Nigeria's democratic experience needs to be sustained. As such, the glaring political apathy and passive political culture usually exhibited by Nigerians will not help drive sustainable democratic practice and national development (Abonu, 2005; Ismail, 2011). Thus, teaching secondary school students the dangers of political apathy and drug abuse (for instance) becomes crucial in promoting the democratic ethos and addressing the myriad of social issues that 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 which the young population of today have been associated with can be traced to the issue of parental irresponsibility. In other words, if there was an excellent 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. Civic Education then becomes a veritable instrument to build in this young generation the ideals and fundamentals of being responsible parents when they eventually become adult citizens.

In a related vein, the SS III Civic Education Curriculum covers six content areas: 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 Senior Secondary Civic Education Curriculum. All the rest of the themes were at one point or the other in SS I and SS II been taught.

The inclusion of Human Rights at this level, for instance, is to further consolidate on the foundation already laid at the junior secondary level. This is because several reported and unreported cases of human rights violation of 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 more profound knowledge and understanding of their fundamental human rights and 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 on the primary concern of Civic Education in Nigeria, which is to, among others, inculcate effective value re-orientation 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 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 broader 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).

By and large, the contents of Civic Education as it is presently taught appear not to be adequately loaded with relevant learning experiences (contents) capable of giving impetus to the fight against corruption (especially those corrupt practices usually perpetrated by students within and outside of the school) by the federal government via the school system. For example, some of the corrupt practice standards with secondary school students include examining malpractice, sexual harassment, stealing, cheating, and delinquent behaviour, mentioning but few. Though various scholars have carried out some studies which border on adequacy of curriculum contents of different school subjects at the junior and senior secondary schools in the past like those of Yusuf, Agbonna and Onifade (2010) and Moses (2017), none has 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 the adequacy of the Senior Secondary School Civic Education curriculum in reducing corrupt practices among Senior Secondary School students in Nigeria.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The study's principal purpose was to examine the Civic Education curriculum's adequacy in reducing Nigeria's corrupt practices. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine the extent to which the Senior Secondary School Civic Education curriculum adequately portrays ways of reducing corrupt practices among students in Nigeria.
2. Examine teachers' opinions on how anti-corruption strategies should be addressed in Nigeria's Senior Secondary School Civic Education curriculum.
3. Determine teachers' opinions on issues to be included in the Senior Secondary School Civic Education curriculum in Nigeria.

Research Questions: The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. To what extent does the Senior Secondary School Civic Education curriculum adequately capture ways of reducing corrupt practices among students in Nigeria?
2. What are the teachers' opinions on how anti-corruption strategies should be addressed in the Senior Secondary School Civic Education curriculum?
3. What are the issues of concern that should be included in the Senior Secondary School Civic Education curriculum in reducing corrupt practices among students in Nigeria?

METHODOLOGY

In collecting data for the study, a descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. This study comprises 1,287 teachers in public Secondary Schools in Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State at the end of the 2018/2019 academic session (EMIS, 2019). Meanwhile, a simple random sampling technique was used to sample 55 male and 34 female Social Studies and Civic Education Secondary School teachers in Yenagoa, thereby bringing the total sample to 89. The instruments for data collection were an 11-item researchers' designed questionnaire titled "Adequacy of Civic Education Curriculum in Reducing Corrupt Practices Questionnaire" and the Civic Education curriculum for Senior Secondary Schools. The questionnaire contained one section which sought to collect data on teachers' views on issues to be included in the Civic Education Curriculum arranged based on the "Yes or No" response format. The questionnaire was validated correctly and trial-tested with 20 teachers who are Social Studies and Civic Education teachers in Secondary Schools but outside the research locale. The test re-test method was used. The two sets of scores were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation, and a reliability coefficient of 0.74 was obtained. The data collected was analysed using Percentages.

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?

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
	Total	93	89.27

Table 1 shows 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%, 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 the Senior Secondary 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?

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 SS III class	9	10.11	80	89.89
5.	Should be taught only at SS II class	11	12.36	78	87.64
6.	Should be taught only at SS I class	20	22.47	69	77.53

Results in Table 2 show teachers' opinions on how anti-corruption should be taught in the Senior Secondary School Civic Education curriculum. From the results obtained, 78.65% of the respondents believed that anti-corruption strategies should be taught every school term. In comparison, 93.26% of the respondents believe that anti-corruption strategies should be taught across all three senior secondary schools. Additionally, 20(22.47%) Social Studies and Civic Education teachers believed that anti-corruption strategies should be taught only in Senior Secondary III.

RESEARCH QUESTION THREE

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

Table 3

Issues of concern that should be included in the Senior Secondary School Civic Education curriculum in reducing 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

Results in Table 3 show the issues of concern that should be included in the senior secondary school Civic Education curriculum in reducing corrupt practices among students in Nigeria as viewed by teachers. The result shows that 59(66.29%) Social Studies and Civic Education teachers were of the view that corruption (its causes, consequences, and possible strategies for reducing corruption) should be included in the Civic Education curriculum. Secondly, 62(69.66%) Social Studies and Civic Education teachers in the sampled schools believed that the causes and consequences of examination malpractices be taught in the secondary school Civic Education classes. Also, 61(68.54%) Social Studies and Civic Education teachers in the schools sampled for the study believed 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 presented in Table 1 show the thematic arrangement of the issues that form the Civic Education curriculum content at the Senior Secondary School level. The result shows that though the current Civic Education curriculum is grossly inadequate in addressing corrupt practices standard among secondary school students, the teaching of national values will, in the long run, imbue in the students' sense of commitment and patriotism to the Nigerian nation. This is in line with Danladi (2010) opinion that values are feelings and beliefs that members of society strongly share and uphold in an interdependent manner, which is essential for improving much society. This finding also implies that if senior secondary school students imbibe the virtues and values taught them beginning from the junior secondary schools, they are more likely to be responsible and effective citizens with high moral standards.

Secondly, this study also shows that the teaching and learning of anti-corruption strategies should be taught in every school term but should be included in the Civic Education curriculum. The finding also indicated that 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) when it stated in 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." What this suggests is that ample time would be available for teachers to develop in the learners a sustainable culture and lifestyle that abhors any form of corruption as they approach their academics with all the seriousness it deserved.

Thirdly, the finding indicated that some selected themes or topics need to be included in the Senior Secondary School Civic Education curriculum. This is consistent with the opinion of Jekayinfa, Mofoluwawo and Oladiran (2011) that issues treated in Civic Education appear not only to be sensi-

tive because they have the propensity to affect the society individually, friends or family relationships but they are also controversial 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 such as examination malpractice or stealing and as such, including such themes as corruption and national development, causes and consequences of examination malpractice, delinquent behaviours is a pragmatic way of resolving social problems affecting the student population within the classroom setting.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study showed that the current Civic Education curriculum is grossly inadequate in addressing corrupt practices standard among secondary school students. This is in addition to the absence of clearly spelt out anti-corruption strategies, themes or topics in the Secondary School Civic Education curriculum. Hence, the following recommendations are put forward:

- a. Any revision on the Civic Education curriculum should be carried out to address corrupt practices usually perpetrated by secondary school students practically.
- b. 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 implementing the anti-corruption strategies included in the Civic Education curriculum.
- c. Anti-corruption strategies/themes or topics should be taught in all the Senior Secondary School classes.

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