

TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF CIVIC EDUCATION AS A MEASURE FOR CURBING CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Attention has been given to corruption by the international community and how to control it. This study examined teachers' perception of civic education as a measure of curbing corruption in Kwara-central, Nigeria. One research question was raised and two hypotheses was generated. Ninety-six civic education teachers in Kwara-central served as the respondents for this study. A researcher-designed questionnaire was used for data gathering. The validated questionnaire was tested for reliability, and a co-efficient of 0.74 was obtained. Weighted Mean was used to answer the research question while Analysis of Variance was used in determining the significant differences. The result showed that the perception of civic education teachers to civic education as a measure of curbing corruption was positive. Thus, the study recommended that government should ensure that civic education as course/degree programme is introduced at higher institutions and other educational levels.

Key Words: Corruption, Civic Education, Teachers Perception, Curbing

Introduction

Attention has been given to corruption by the international community and how to control it. All over the world, corruption is increasingly condemned and viewed an immoral practice. A system of corruption is created when people who are wealthy and connected to public services receive favourable treatment (United State Institute for Peace, 2010). Institutions and governments both agree that corruption has very high costs for society. In some cases, corruption does not only keep states in cycles of violence by funding armed groups and criminal networks, but also prevent the development of effective institutions of governance. One of the objectives of the Buhari led administration is to tackle corruption to the barest minimum. Not too long ago, Nigeria was ranked the most corrupt country in the world during the new millennium and the subsequent year, and she continues to be a mainstay on the most corrupt countries chart by Transparency International (Uzochukwu, 2017).

Due to the complexity of the word 'corruption', cannot be given a precise or concise definition. In the words of Oyinlola (2011), corruption is the abuse or misuse of power or position of trust for personal or group benefit. Additionally, corruption is a multifaceted phenomenon with various causes and effects, as it comes in multiple forms and contexts (Andrig & Fjelstad, 2011). Corruption is difficult to conceptualise because it can take on new forms. Agbu (2003) asserted that corruption could be said to have taken place when public/ private office is used to derive personal benefit even if no bribery occurs, through patronage and nepotism, the theft of assets, or the diversion of resources. Therefore, corruption denotes any and or all forms of behaviours that deviate from an established norm with regards to public trust. Theft of public trust whether the individual affected is elected, selected, nominated or appointed and it does not matter whether the person concerned holds office or not since anybody can be corrupt (Usman, 2013).

Corruption in Nigeria is an epidemic with a cultural phenomenon. It is said to be systematic in nature because it affects the whole life of our society. It is worrisome because once an individual is appointed, elected or nominated, the Nigerian society is bedeviled with corrupt practices such that expectations from the people will be so high in terms of what the office will offer (Oyinlola, 2011). Therefore, the people he/she represents are prepared to encourage him/her to steal. Hence, corruption in Nigeria is not restricted to tribe or cultural affiliations is pervasive throughout all institutions in the country. It is found in the award of contracts, promotion of staff, dispensation of justice, misuse of public offices, positions and privileges, embezzlement of public funds. Indeed, corruption is writ large in Nigeria's judicial system; police; public services; land administration; tax administration; custom administration; public procurement; natural resources; legislation; as well as civil society (NERDC, 2015).

Though, various governments have attempted to fight the vice, but, instead of stemming the tide of this destructive act, it continues to grow in leaps and bounds. In the 70s ten out of the then twelve military governors were found guilty and dismissed from office for gross abuse of office. Also, the Muritala Muhammed regime (1975/1976) convicted members of judiciary, police, civil service, parastatals and even principal officers and staff of university which culminated to the purge of over ten thousand officers (David, 2006). The second republic was also characterised by a large scale and high-level fraud, diversion, embezzlement and misappropriation of public funds, inflation of state contracts, nepotism, stuffing of pay-roll with ghost workers and unbelievable electoral malpractices which undoubtedly led to the crash-landing of the administration. The succeeding regimes of (1985-1999) was also marked by an unprecedented level of corruption and embezzlement as reflected in the Pious Okigbo report which noted that about \$12 billion accrued to the nation was siphoned out

by those in power and could not be accounted for (David, 2006).

Corruption has been in existence in Nigeria since inception. Various administration has promulgated, passed and enacted laws/decrees to help combat the phenomenon because they believe that the solution to the problem rest with criminal legislations. It is important to note that the phenomenon became institutionalized under General Ibrahim Babangida regime. In light of this, Ogundiya (2009) explained that during the Babangida regime, corruption was raised to a level of state policy and allegation of corrupt practices were handled with utmost levity thereby making sure the efforts of the past administrations were all in vain. In 1999, the Obasanjo led civilian administration tried to rid Nigeria of corruption signed into law by establishing the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) and Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC). Despite the promulgation of different legislations to put an end to the monster, the phenomenon rages like a phoenix.

In Nigeria today, some of the most rampant manifestations of corruption include, inflation of contracts, falsification of accounts and official records in the public service, forgery of documents including educational qualifications to attain a position of office particularly among politicians, ghost workers syndrome, examination malpractices, bribery, extortion and pervasive of justice, tax evasion, foreign exchange swaddling hoarding and smuggling, illegal acquisition of public assets, and frightening degree of electoral fraud and budget paddling among others (David, 2006). It is important to note that corruption engenders the break down in law and orders and political stability which leads to loss of confidence in government with a corollary of many vices has been witnessed in the country today like kidnapping, armed robbery, fraud, terrorism, militancy to mention a few (Inegbedion, 2004).

Inegbedion (2004) concluded that the phenomenon of corruption is more of a social problem that legal attempts to stem it are doubted. However, that it is doubted if any meaningful progress can be made in tackling the

problem legally without addressing the more important social aspect of the problem because laws passed can only be a reflection of the social values of the society. Akanbi (2001) Additionally, no anti-corruption programme can succeed and no society can promote equity, fairness and good governance unless the society demonstrates a strong will to tackle corruption to a standstill. Fight against corruption cannot succeed without removing the socio-political impediments (Inegbedion, 2004). The lack of competent, responsible leaders with integrity, vision, high moral values has been the bane of the country. As such, the fight against corruption has been lost even before the battle begins.

The retrogression and dilemmas into which the country is engulfed seriously demand the need for value re-orientation through a commitment to the ideals rooted in Civic Education (Ezegbe, Oyeoku, Mezeiobi & Okeke, 2012). Civic virtues in all spheres of life in Nigeria has declined. As a result of the enormous problems including corruption facing Nigeria, the Federal Government re-introduced Civic Education as a curricular subject in the secondary educational system. The philosophical and psychological foundation for the introduction of Civic Education reflects the national goals and objectives is contained in the National Policy on Pducation (2004). In this document, education is to be used as an instrument per excellence in bringing about socio-economic transformation of the Nigerian society. Civic Education has been identified as one of the school subjects through which these goals could be realized.

Civic Education is saddled with the responsibility of preparing students to become rational, active and responsible citizens in facing challenges arising from their society (Cheng, 2009). Respectively, Dagunduro (2012) defined civic education as a concept that deals with the themes, concerns and procedures through which people (children, young, and old) obtain knowledge, abilities and behaviours necessary for individual and nation development. Ajibola and Audu (2014) clearly state that civic education is one of the subjects taught in both primary and secondary schools which inculcates sound moral values in the

youths. Therefore, civic education is designed with the tools to help individuals learn how to become active, informed and responsible citizens. The nature of civic education connotes the characteristic of the subject and its major components; however, the broadest possible description of civic education would be that it is aimed to make good citizens equipped with appropriate knowledge, skills and traits of good characters (Galston, 2001). Furthermore, Ajao (2013) asserts that civic education is a form of education through which people acquire useful and positive habits, attitude, and beliefs which make them live as good members of society. However, Ujunwa (2013) views Civic Education as a subject in the school charged with inculcating youths with skills they need for the actualisation of national objectives contained in the national policy on education.

In an educational system, the performance of a teacher is one of the factors in determining school effectiveness and learning outcomes because teachers' interaction with learners is the pathway on which educational quality turns (Volunteer Service Overseas, 2002). There is a shift from the old instructional practice, and the current practice demands new knowledge, new skills and increasing commitment to lifelong learning (Craft, 2000). Teachers have a significant role to play if civic education would serve as a measure of curbing corruption because they are the ones that would implement the content in the curriculum. Ant attempt to change how teachers do things must of importance involve change in the perception of teachers. Teachers perception as a matter of necessity has been regarded as critical to the reform in civic virtues (Cooney & Shealy, 1997).

Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC, 2009) expressed that the guiding concept of the civic education curriculum is to inculcate in the students their duties and obligations to society. However, the socio-economic structure of Nigeria is threatened as a result of low national identity amongst the youths, as they are the future of the country (Okam, 2001). The problem of negative citizenship as a result of corruption which has hindered the country from moving towards operative continued socio-

economic and political development. Also, Ujunwa (2013) advanced that Nigeria has experienced different forms and degrees of instability and incivility such as religious riots, social unrest, regional acts of militancy, and notorious acts of corruption and scams. The government now deem it necessary to introduce civic education into secondary school curricular to solve the incivility amongst youth and restore civic virtue into our daily activities. Hence, it was of interest to ascertain teachers' perception of civic education as a measure of curbing corruption in Nigeria. Specifically, to ascertain teachers' perception of civic education as a measure of curbing corruption in Nigeria on the basis of educational qualification and years of experience.

Research Question

What are teachers' perception of civic education as a measure of curbing corruption?

Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant difference in teachers' perception of civic education as a measure of curbing corruption based on educational qualification

Ho2: There is no significant difference in teachers' perception of civic education as a measure of curbing corruption based on years of experience.

Methodology

The population of the study was all Senior Secondary School teachers in Kwara Central, Nigeria. The target population consisted of Senior Secondary civic education teachers in Kwara Central, Nigeria. There are 320 secondary schools in Kwara state out of which 95 are situated in Kwara Central. There were 402 civic education teachers in Kwara State and 212 of these teachers are in Kwara-central. Stratified sampling technique was used to assign schools to the Local Government in which they were situated. There are four local governments in Kwara-central out of which ten (12) schools were randomly selected from each local government to make 48 schools. Two (2) civic education teachers from each school were

randomly selected making a total of 96 respondents for this study. A researcher-designed questionnaire to elicit the needed data for this study; with a content validity which was ascertained by civic education experts scrutinised the items and made possible modifications and suggestions were used. Test-retest reliability method was used with a sample of 45 respondents within two weeks' interval. The scores of the first test were correlated with the second test, using Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient and a reliability index of 0.74 was obtained. The questionnaire comprised of two sections. Section A raised gathered information on the demographic characteristics of respondents. Section B elicited information on teachers' perception. Mean rating was used to answer the research questions raised while Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the hypotheses formulated at 0.05 significance level. The data were run with a Statistical Package Sciences (SPSS 24.0) windows version.

Results

Research Question 1: Do teachers perceive civic education as a measure of curbing corruption?

Responses to the 10 items in section B of the questionnaire were collated, weighted mean was used to analyze and the output was presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Teachers' Perception of Civic Education as a Measure to Curb Corruption

S/N	ITEMS	FREQUENCY	MEAN	DECISION
1.	The overall philosophy of civic education would reduce incivility among youths if implemented properly	96	3.33	Agree
2.	The contents in the curriculum would improve civic virtue among youths	96	3.15	Agree
3.	The sequential arrangement of concepts in the scheme of work would enable students internalise the objective of civic education	96	3.09	Agree
4.	The period assigned to teaching civic education is sufficient in achieving the stated objectives	96	3.06	Agree
5.	Clarification of the objectives in the lesson plan helps students to understand their civic duties	96	3.00	Agree
6.	Methodologies adopted for teaching civic education would encourage students to be enthusiastic about civic education	96	3.30	Agree
7.	Appropriateness of Instructional Materials would help achieve the objectives of civic education	96	3.27	Agree
8.	Textbooks available are sufficient for teaching civic education.	96	3.24	Agree
9.	Putting civic education contents into practice would make students imbibe civic values and cultures	96	3.22	Agree
10.	Good Exemplariness of teachers taking civic education would make students imitate civic values and cultures	96	3.19	Agree
Weighted Mean		31.85		Positive

Evidence from Table 1 reveals that 96 respondents participated in the study. All the 10 items in section B of the questionnaire received positive responses from the respondents. The weighted mean score stood at 25 and the mean score for the responses on teachers' perception of civic education as a measure to curb corruption is 31.85 which gives a positive

indication. This implies that teachers' perception of civic education as a measure to curb corruption was positive.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in teachers' perception of civic

education as a measure of curbing corruption based on educational qualification

Table 2: ANOVA Summary of the Difference in Teachers' Perceptions on Civic Education as a Measure of Curbing Corruption Based on Teachers' Qualifications

Variables	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Remark
Between Groups	661.248	4	165.312			
Within Groups	4709.295	91	51.751	3.194	0.17	NS
Total	5370.543	95				

*Insignificant at $p < 0.05$

The results of the ANOVA analysis as depicted in Table 2 indicated that there was no significant difference in teachers' perceptions on Civic Education as a measure of curbing corruption based on teachers' qualifications, $F_{(4, 93)} = 3.194, p = 0.17$. On this basis, the hypothesis was not rejected.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in teachers' perception of civic education as a measure of curbing corruption based on years of experience.

Table 3: ANOVA Summary of the Difference in Teachers' Perceptions on Civic Education as a Measure of Curbing Corruption Based on Teachers' Experience

Variables	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Remark
Between Groups	472.645	2	236.323			
Within Groups	4817.431	93	51.800	4.562	0.14	NS
Total	5290.076	95				

*Insignificant at $p < 0.05$

The results of the ANOVA analysis as depicted in Table 3 indicated that there was no significant difference on teachers' perceptions on Civic Education as a measure of curbing corruption based on teachers' experience, $F_{(2, 95)} = 4.562, p = 0.14$. On this basis, the hypothesis was not rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The study reveals that teachers' perceptions of Civic Education as a measure of curbing corruption in Kwara-central, Nigeria was positive. This finding concurs with Marquette (2007) who reported that civic education does have a significant, positive impact on certain democratic behaviours and attitudes, especially curbing-corruption. Additionally, civic education can and will only be successful if it emphasised citizenship rather than corruption. This can be asserted that individuals who have

been exposed to civic education learn to conclude that giving and taking of bribes contributes negatively to the development of the country. Also, to understand why people are corrupt, how corruption itself happens, public role in its prevention and the institutions available to help them when they are about giving up corrupt individuals. It must be noted that civic education is expected to develop expectations for good citizenship and better governance, while citizens should be enabled to think and act in the context of their world and lay foundation for improved and sustainable development.

Also, the study upheld the hypothesis that states there was no significant difference in teachers' perceptions of Civic Education as a measure of curbing corruption based on teachers' qualification in Kwara-central, Nigeria. Teachers are in agreement that civic education can serve as a measure of reducing corruption irrespective of their educational qualifications. It is hoped that if civic education can instil anti-corruption values in individuals, it will eventually translate into anti-corruption ethic in all sectors of the economy because every individual would have undertaken anti-corruption education.

Furthermore, the study upheld the hypothesis that states there was no significant difference in teachers' perceptions of Civic Education as a measure of curbing corruption based on teachers' experience in Kwara-central, Nigeria. Civic education teachers; all viewed civic education as a tool for curbing corruption regardless of their years of experience. The teachers believed that civic education can be both formal and informal, preventive and reactionary. It can be preventive when civic responsibilities and values have been instilled into children at a very early age. Also, civic education can serve as reactionary because it will try to re-orientate individuals and encourage them to uphold their civic responsibilities.

Conclusion

The issues and dimension of corruption is different in every country. The fight against corruption is the collective responsibility of all citizens. This can be achieved with

commitment, good diagnosis and structure, citizens and parliament working together. However, the fight against corruption has been left to the government and educational institutions alone. The fight against corruption cannot be won in the classroom alone without the support of the family, community and the society at large. Time will tell if civic education is fulfilling the reason for its re-introduction into the secondary school curriculum.

Recommendations

This study recommends the following:

- i. The government should ensure that civic education as a course/degree programme is introduced at higher institutions and other educational levels.
- ii. Educational authorities should ensure that teachers who are morally upright, perform and understand their civic responsibility are saddled with the responsibility of teaching the subject.
- iii. Clubs and societies that promote civic virtue should be established and promoted in schools.
- iv. Training programmes and workshops should be organised for teachers to improve their knowledge of civic responsibility. This would help improve their experience and skills of civic duty, thereby achieving the objective of civic education.
- v. Civic education teachers should endeavour to make the class practical where students can relate whatever is being taught to real-life scenario. This can be achieved by adopting an effective instructional strategy.
- vi. Students should also practise whatever they are being taught outside of the school.

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