
COVID-19 AND EMERGING CURRICULUM ISSUES IN SOCIO-CIVIC EDUCATION TOWARDS DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

It is a trite law that Nigeria's Education Policy goal entails developing sound citizenship which this paper refers to Effective Citizenship Development (ECD) the task of attaining this is placed in the school-based socio-civic curriculum. Sadly, COVID-19 pandemic outbreak has been an unforeseen global occurrence which have derailed and distracted curriculum implementation towards attaining this goal. This has led to, among other factors, lockdown of educational institutions to mitigate collateral damage and reduce further widespread. Since its emergence there is literature deficit on the collateral damage of the pandemic on effective citizenship development as a major emerging issue, among other issues which in turn requires evolving collateral learning pedagogy, especially in socio-civic curriculum implementation. The purpose of this paper is identifying and discussing emerging issues arising from COVID-19 in socio-civic curriculum (teaching/learning) implementation. To this end, this paper discusses effective citizenship development in relation to socio-civic education as a school subject initiated for effective citizenship and also examines COVID-19 and from which issues such as

collateral learning pedagogy, digital technological innovation and teachers continuing professional development becomes imperative. The paper therefore, recommends among others, prioritizing reform possibility in socio-civic curriculum on its relevance to meet sustain and ensure learners are not left behind during global emergencies.

Keywords: Effective citizenship development, Socio-civic education, COVID 19 pandemic, Collateral learning pedagogy.

Introduction

Prior to Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic widespread, the National Education Policy (NPE) goal is sound citizenship which refers to Effective Citizenship Development (ECD). This is a school curriculum-based concept to mediate intellectual and participatory skills development whereby learners engage in instructional activities leading to knowledge construction and dispositions to effectively participate in political governance, media, and civil society, among others. It entails insight and exercising socio-political and civil rights as well performing related duties such as loyalty, patriotism mediated via socio-civic curriculum implementation. Curriculum is the school-based subject focusing on developing intellectual and participatory skills via content delivery to mediate knowledge construction ensuing in behavioural transformation founded on bared and shared ecologically defined values. This induces issue and activity-based curriculum inputted as subject built Social studies fused with Civic education herewith called Socio-Civic Education.

Socio-Civic Education is integrating civic education with social studies since both discussed citizenship norms of various countries. Social Studies, inter alia, discusses socio cultural interaction as integral to societal norms while civic education is basically a common facet of citizenship issues involving governmental-citizenship knowledge interaction, role, rights and duties in a sovereign state. Civic Education has a common facet with Social Studies in realizing Nigeria's citizenship ethos. However, Social studies is the globally

agreed instructional keeper of citizenship curriculum implementation including the current Nigerian civic education.

In the midst of attaining the national citizenship goal, there was the outbreak of severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome – novel Coronavirus 2 (SARS-nCoV-2), which started in Wuhan, China, in December, 2019. The global virus outbreak led to millions of death including Nigeria where it first arose in February, 2020 with over tens of thousands death. It led to unrivaled crisis obliging governments structure-shifting risk-control directives with lockdown of all sectors across the country to check the virus expanse and reducing its spread and effects. For the education sector, the immediate deficits effects have been evidently resulting in the lockdown saga as institutional (school) based Physical instructional activities were closed all over Nigeria. The countrywide institutions' (school) closures disturbed learning and access to vital school-based services for large student's populace across various educational levels. COVID-19 has disturbed the academic milieu via learners' school access restrictions all over Nigeria. Though much literature has been offered, however, implications of emerging issues on socio-civic studies is yet to be amply explored and, thus the thrust of this paper.

I argue that COVID-19 pandemic emerging issues have two-sided coin effects on socio-civic studies: namely, (i) substantial deficit impacts on socio-civic goal attainment and (ii) creativity and innovation to boost continuity of socio-civic implementation via blending technological pedagogic innovation. Consequently, this paper examined effective citizenship development as an education policy goal for Nigerian young learners attainable via school-based Socio-Civic subject curriculum which is also discussed as well as COVID-19 pandemic outbreaks and the subsequent emerging innovations and creativity the pandemic has evolved.

Effective Citizenship Development

The COVID-19 pandemic crisis had severe impact on democratic citizenship participation via diverse crises which evolved as response pattern of democratic neoliberal states' competence to tackle

citizenship participation. Sadly, the global citizenship retreat has caused decline in public input in democratic institutions during COVID-19 pandemic thus leading to the spread of extra-legal actions causing citizen distrust at all levels of decision-making. Consequently, emerging sociopolitical accord amid citizens and state is evolving curriculum knowledge systematization as an imperative and pertinent response to these crises. To this end, the National education policy and curriculum goal stress effective citizenship development (ECD) as a methodical and strategic concept of concern ensuing in its implementation discourse among socio-civic (citizenship) scholars. It is a broad idea covering learners' sociopolitical, cultural and health wellbeing at global, national and local levels via mediating citizenship knowledge, value and skills for citizenship participation in the larger polity. Expectedly, learners construct knowledge and acquire skills to imbibe and practice well-articulated citizenship social and health wellbeing issues to enable prudent decision-making process via participatory school structure (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, 1998; Schugurensky & Meyers, 2003; Sim & Print, 2005; Idowu, 2017; Falanga, 2020; Arshad-Ayaz & Naseem, 2021).

The value impact of effective citizenship development is to resonate and enhance systemic sociopolitical reforms involving dynamic interrelationship between the state and citizens. Indeed, it is an empowerment process towards organizing activities to improve health wellbeing by stimulating community-wide civic health, evolving consistent, cooperative and collaborative curriculum knowledge construction and imbibing value transformation involving feelings, motives, emotions and beliefs, and interpersonal influence as well as trust, norms and networks that can improve the efficiency of society. This entails developing socio-political impact to highlights evolving transformations between governance patterns embraced by authoritarian state like China and democratic states so that learners appreciate social responsibilities and expertise to attract diverse reactions in the management of pandemic. Emerging evidence of effective citizenship shows it equips learners to effectively tackle current and future global crisis via socio-civic education. Learners are equipped and empowered with relevant

knowledge to actualize citizenship ideals, principles; as well attain utilitarian goals of structuring and renewal for ultimate societal wellbeing. Thus, effective citizenship is best attained via developing school-based socio-civic curriculum implementation discussed below (Onyx & Bullen 2000; Putnam 2000; Halpern 2005; Edwards *et al*, 2014).

Socio-Civic Education Curriculum Development

There are diverse views on curriculum including the existentialist which offers the holistic construct of school subject involving society's expectation, aspirations as concern issues in the content. This context depict curriculum as society's reflection of prioritized aspirations transformed into designed learning experiences mainly for knowledge construction, value development and skills via education agency. It is the action blue print embedded as subject with content component converted into classroom instructional activities ensuing in transformative intellectual and participatory (behavioural) skills. This translates into hands-on instructional document guiding learning institutions to attain society's expectations and aspirations via socio-civic curriculum (Olarinoye, 2001; Okebukola, 2004; Idowu, 2017; Ogunyemi, nd).

Socio-civic education is the conventional pedagogic and didactic school subject articulating constitutional expectations and aspirations to develop effective (sound) citizenship as stated in Nigeria's education policy. It is a developmental issue/activity-based school subject creatively aimed to mediate citizenship (socio-political) knowledge ensuing in intellectual and participatory skills development. This is integral part of school statutory duties as a communitarian agent that translate the socio-civic curriculum into organized body of knowledge to develop and become effective citizens in the school and as adult member of the society. Through this, learners are equipped to develop sociopolitical judgments based on personal and national concerns. The content entails insight into critical citizenship values via learning about Nigerian political history, global and national citizenship perceptions and membership obligations in relation to state citizenship evidential participation

in public life among other issues. As a school subject, it connects learners via intellectual and participatory skills acquired to the extant political system. It was initiated to instill collective national (virtues) interests involving, patriotism, loyalty, beliefs, values, and norms, obligations via engagements in community activities nay the public realm. More so, it offers insight into citizenship cultures, principles, institutions and overall participation in governance at various levels (Muyanda Mutebi, 1994; Po, 2004; FGN, 2004; Adler & Sim 2005; Virta, 2005; Jho, 2006; Lewis, 2007; Himmelmänn, 2007; Ogunyemi, 2009, 2010; Idowu, 2017). While striving to attain above national citizenship goals, there was the emergence COVID-19 crisis resulting in general lockdown of virtually all sectors of our national life including educational institutions (school) close down discussed below.

COVID-19 and the Two Sides of the Coin

COVID-19 is the Acute Respiratory Syndrome – novel Coronavirus 2 (SARS-nCoV-2) which started firstly in Wuhan, China, in December 2019 and has spread to countries leading to millions of deaths globally. It is an aerial zoonotic droplet disease with pneumonia, coughing and sneezing as virus signs in infected people. On the 12th March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) publicly avowed COVID-19 a pandemic with the mortality rate far exceeds the other prior Coronavirus (Severe Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus, SARS-COV and the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus, MERS-COV. The epidemic has continued to pose colossal danger to global public health and economies. Similarly in Nigeria, it occurred first in February, 2020 and then led to tens of thousands death rate.

Unexpectedly COVID-19 as a global pandemic is rapidly spreading, in a way as if the world is a small village to the extent of creating global fear within few weeks due to massive loss of lives. While there is no permanent treatment, except the vaccine doses available, the focus has been to contain the spread through national lockdowns and quarantines. It transformed people live via wearing masks, gloves, and washing hands many times thoroughly, etc

(Kumar et al. 2020; Munster et al. 2020; Zhu et al. 2020; Abdulla, 2020). COVID-19 pandemic has led to unrivaled crisis forcing government approved structure-shifting, risk-control directives including lockdown of all sectors across the country as a way of checking the virus expanse and with reference to Nigeria; I argue that COVID-19 pandemic, though a health crisis, but having diverse side effects on socio economic sectors, in particular the education sector.

For children, adolescents, women and other vulnerable groups, it has deep health and economic implications. Nigeria is going through economic recession creating severe insecurity and welfare impact on citizens and households. Due to lockdowns, social distancing, and quarantines, there is blockage in production and consumption for a prolonged period resulting in markets collapse and subsequent commercial transactions closure and several workers, as vital part of the economic sectors were either retrenched or quarantined and the value chains interrupted (Jaramillo, 2020).

Another side effect is the prolonged institutions (schools) closure, restraint evolving from lockdown with substantial deficits on curriculum goal attainment. Institutions closure was a major response to the crisis by Nigeria's Federal Education Ministry in March and reopened in October, 2020. The evidential deficit was the abrupt Physical (face-to-face) classroom pedagogic practice suspension thus interrupted learning and access to vital school-based services for large student's populace across the various educational levels (UNESCO, 2020). Expectedly, Nigeria's education sector struggled to adjust to new curriculum instruction mode, especially public schools thus resulting disparate access between students in public in contrast to private schools. Government funds restriction and usual planning flaws led to lack of formal learning opportunities being offered long after the closure. Learners in public schools were missing learning whereas some private schools have initiated ICT-learning program.

Other side effect of COVID-19 crisis is boosting innovative creativity within Nigerian education sector by blending physical interactions with various technology based learning. Government evolved action plans to implement distance learning modalities via

diverse formats and platforms such as Internet, radio and television to take-home packages among other strategic practices. Teachers communicated through radio-television to impact their respective subjects and topics into learners listening and watch at home. Consequent upon this development learners are often abreast regarding curriculum contents. But these applied learning tactics intended to resume children's and adolescents' learning has been biased and even further marred extant education lacunas among learners prior to the pandemic. Some homes are unable to subscribe for learning channels evolved on satellite networks (Adelakun, 2020; Sut & Oznacar, 2021).

From the above education disruption by COVID 19 evolved the opportunity to initiate post-COVID education technological and pedagogic innovative creativity. In the socio-civic teaching and learning, certain emerging issues which can impact on effective citizenship development have become imperative and so discussed below.

Emerging Educational Issues

For this paper, emerging educational issues ensuing from COVID-19 is the creative innovation boosting continuity of socio-civic curriculum delivery. Thus, acquiring digital skills is the novelty-based learning that needs to be blended with classroom pedagogy. Like other sectors, I argue that innovation is critical to initiating transformation in curriculum implementation to develop effective learners, improve content pedagogy and equal learning accessibility and prospects. Indeed, education is a dynamic sector requires innovation for socio-civic curriculum boosts by utilizing technology to mediate pedagogic practice leading to intellectual and participatory citizenship skills. Moreover, using digital technology in socio-civic class mediates critical thinking skills, vision and creativity as indices of effective citizenship development. Consequently, thus, the need for constructive technological innovation, collateral learning pedagogy and Continuous professional development (in-service training) as emerging issues to develop effective citizenship via socio-civic studies discussed below (OECD, 2016).

Technological Innovation

Technologies are electronic tools, systems, devices and resources which create, collect and/or treat data and these include social media, multimedia and mobile phones. It is a vital paradigm shift to evolve reform in curriculum implementation progression. The intent is to acquire creativity skill growth by learners as change agents and so an emerging imperative value transformative issue in curriculum implementation in the ongoing COVID-19 crisis in the education sector. It has a reflective impact on classroom operations, interaction, and engagement, among other instructional activities in the education sector. Effective Digital technology is a huge potential tool to acquire skills as critical innovation factor to be integrated into socio-civic implementation as it is imperative to evolve digital literacy fluency to induce novel learning experiences. Socio-civic teachers' relevance in digital pedagogy hangs on digital fluency/literacy skills acquired. Its use creates the desire to change the form of articulating, shaping, diffusing and sustaining socio-civic knowledge (Van Ouytsel, *et al.*, 2014; Srivastava & Dey 2018; Teach with digital technologies, 2019; Erdin, 2020).

However, there are prevailing barriers leading to shallow utilization during teaching practice attainment in educational institutions. Such barriers, *inter alia*, involve: funding, operational ambiguity which is a concern educators have in mixing digital technology with classroom instructional practice. Also, backing institutions involved in the transformation process which should require merger of interactions among the system, milieu, policies and other actors and stakeholders. The emergent digital technology issue in the education sector is developed for genuine innovation. Thus, transforming curriculum practices into innovation in learners requires increasing teachers' ICT skills, through teachers' professional development and pedagogical innovation discussed below.

Teachers Continuing Professional Development

The rise of COVID-19 crisis led to education disruption worsening pre-existing education gaps, shrink opportunities for many children,

youths and adults to continue learning. This disorder portends to go beyond this generation and expunge spans of progress. Instead, it has evolved innovative teaching continuity styles entailing distance learning, radio, and television as well take-home tasks. In sustaining this during COVID-19, pedagogies are adapted to reorder learning via teacher in service training for pedagogic agility. This entails developing new practice values, standards and ethics in the teacher education orientation. Indeed, significant boost in teachers' skill to evolve better commitment and improve learning quality is basic. In fact, emphasis on the import of teachers' professional development suggests that constant upgrade will have genuine effect on teachers' quality. Learning is better attained through defined endeavors to construct teachers' capacity to take responsibility for personal professional growth, structuring instructional skill, seeing the need for transformation, accepting well-thought through development and assessing impact base on learning quality improvement (Donaldson, 2011; Misra, & Chauhan, 2018; Kidd, 2020b; Misra, 2021).

In this COVID-19 crisis, it is imperative for socio-civic teachers to engage in professional development activities to update and share constructed knowledge developed values and practice skills acquired to become better teachers and thus tackle learners' effective citizenship needs. thus constant process of giving instruction, training, learning, among other activities should be conducted in either external or work-based settings and carried out by qualified, academic experts with intent to boost developmental learning regarding content and pedagogic knowledge, skills and values; to implement issues/activity/value based socio-civic content for teaching and learning transformations. This empowers the socio-civic teachers to educate more effectively so as to attain balanced consensus amid learners, school and national needs. Irrespective of the standard and quality of pre-service teacher training, it still inadequate to prepare teachers for diverse challenges such as COVID-19 emergence confronted during their careers. The crux of in-service training is to offer opportunities to sustain high teaching and teacher quality (Schlager, Fusco, Barab, Kling & Gray, 2004; Earley & Bubb, 2004; OECD, 2009).

Teachers, engage in professional development programmes due to professional obligations, and intrinsic motivations. However, in spite of the global need for quality teachers, there is deficit of teachers' professional development to promote quality teaching. The frequency of professional development is periodic, the quality differs, its duration is narrow, and funding and follow-up are res extinta. The circumstances of COVID-19 created the need for teachers to engage in service training to overcome collateral damage of COVID-19 requiring collateral learning pedagogy.

Collateral Pedagogic Learning under COVID-19 Pandemic

In the context of COVID-19 crisis, people learn when opportunities to learn arise via collateral learning using socio-civic education. During the crisis veiled prospects emerged to revert learning disorder into innovative discovery. Among such emerging issues bared is the import of collateral learning pedagogy initiated by Dewey in the context of formal learning process ensuing from major social disorder. Collateral learning is a pedagogy arising from the military language of collateral damage which denotes targets not intended to be killed in a military action but such death is taken into concern with intent to cover those mortalities. In the socio-civic education context, collateral learning concept is more aptly akin to hidden curriculum both of which refers to situations whereby schools, society and even learners are met with accidental yet severe concerns, like COVID 19 in our daily activities but difficult to tackle via orthodox practices. Evidently, it is a broader idea in contrast to hidden curriculum as it shows that learning process is self-determined and basically hard to control under COVID 19 situation. This is not new to the formal school pedagogic milieu which see that learners are able to learn content and gain skills based on curricula which teachers view as relevant.

Collateral learning denotes obscurity within educational processes which stresses already ensuing evidential learning events, while apparently secondary learning goals are being given (Fachdidaktik, 2015). But 'hidden curriculum' infers the less

obvious being ultimately offered institutionally. In socio-civic education, collateral learning shows other likely lesser effects are normal despite being hard to explain. Even, Dewey posits that, the main pedagogic error is to consider that learners engage in just the actual content of study at a time; as collateral learning entails constant attitudes formation of likes and hates, which seems often more vital than the actual content learnt.

However, Dewey initiated collateral learning mainly to focus on crisis periods as COVID-19 advent within educational processes which are hard to see during the normal schooling settings. In the COVID-19 pandemic context, it is an ensuing practical yet indecisive learning process which promotes socio-civic content adaptation, resilience and contextualization; address elements like prioritizing learning goals and content that enable a better insight on corona virus and response to the crisis from socio-civic content. It incorporates aspects of health care system, critical and reflective thinking about information on sociopolitical trends and fostering empathy, tolerance and non-discriminatory behaviour. Also, experts, irrespective of the fields, are needed to keep the system running based on commitment and willingness. In this learning pedagogy, socio-civic teachers' duties is seen as annotators and exigency managers to change unknown to known fast by aiding society to survive the current temporary unknown state. The pandemic has kept active unknown knowledge vague, instead of holding it via knowledge created as collateral learning goal. Thus socio-civic improves the prospect of value development to abate ambiguity (Dewey, 1938; Himmelmann, 2007; Autorengruppe Fachdidaktik, 2015; Besand, 2019a).

Indeed, socio-civic education is situated to expose, deal and permeate knowledge ambiguity about the pandemic just as in democracy in which democratic actions are conducts under ambiguity. Undoubtedly, democratic institutionalization is hidden in ambiguity and so it is right to say that democratic governance is constructed on and practically consists of ambiguity. In Nigerian democracy the future of 2023 elections is unclear as democracy entails balance of interests, revisable decisions, power-sharing and safeguarding minorities and this is true even if they express strange

opinions and cultivate peculiar habits. So, ambiguity is visible in a democracy and ability to deal with it is the crucial issue in effective citizenship in a democracy using socio-civic education to develop requisite skills and values (Besand, 2020).

Socio-civic education is aimed at equipping, preparing and empowering young learners on expected roles as citizens in a democracy; construct views leading to decision making judgments. This makes socio-civic education a developmental process of mediating perceptive creativity and innovation, generating novel, diverse, debates and disparate views, admitting value and showing doubt about other ideas. By this, socio-civic education becomes a tool for securitization; develop critical thinking paving way for ability to judge as paths to self-determination and criticism. Insight into the ability to expose and deal with ambiguity is inbuilt virtue of effective citizenship and so raising this skill is a vital socio-civic task during COVID-19 pandemic (Besand, 2020). The pandemic forms a vastly constructive learning which is typically ambiguous to identify and thus hidden under obvious technical learning opportunities which cannot be managed or salvaged by hand washing rudiments or sewing face mask or effective vaccine development.

Conclusion

COVID-19 emergence has shown that nations, individually and/or collectively will be met with diverse multiple threats which are either natural and/or man initiated disasters impose a national and/or global state of emergency on the various sectors of human life including the education sector. Thus, imperative to plan and prepare to face such emergencies of different types, especially education where conventional instructional patterns are disrupted as is the case of COVID-19 which led to closing down all educational levels. Policy makers need to consider resilient patterns to facilitate the continuation of pedagogic practice under such circumstances. Issues have emerged to learn from in this trying time and whatever those issues arising during COVID-19 pandemic are within us to solve via the ensuing suggestions stated below.

Recommendations

Nigeria should consider the best way practice to handle uncertainties in the education sector by offering safety measures during crisis of this nature. It is a time to show case socio-civic curriculum unique resilience and prospect to ultimately transform for equitable and inclusive system to foster mutual commitment towards sustainable curriculum implementation. To this end, there is need to integrate collateral pedagogic learning into socio-civic classroom practice as integral part of the hidden curriculum. This provides more insight on surmounting ambiguity as vital citizenship value and skills and important task of socio-civic content. The COVID-19 crisis needs highly resilient and effective socio-civic learning prospects that cater for sudden and mostly uncertain contexts hidden behind the apparent hands-on learning community. Also, there is need to promote and support family and education agencies' collaborative partnerships in which educators work with families to engage in homeschooling to offer offline and online instructional resources. Such partnership enhances socio-civic instructions received to mitigate the impacts of trauma associated with the worry of not being in school.

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