CIVIC EDUCATION AND LEADERSHIP POTENTIALS OF SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Leadership, despite being the most widely spoken term in people's discussion, appears as the least understood concept. The poor perception has negatively affected how people choose and judge those "leaders" around them and how they view their roles as members of society. Thus, leading to poor capacity for leading, failure in achieving set goals, corrupt practices, etc. in the society. This case study research explored how Civic Education has helped the students to reflect on leadership and the students' willingness of taking responsibility to influence their society positively. Quantitative method was used with a questionnaire for data collection involving a simple random sampling of 136 respondents. The result indicated the students accepted their social responsibility and acquired adequate leadership values from CE with moderate perception on leadership generally. Teachers are hereby recommended to balance the assessment of leadership styles in relation to the followers' role and the specific situation being dealt with.

Keywords: Civic Education, Potentials, Leadership, Secondary school.

Introduction

There are so many problems hindering progressive development of Nigeria. These social problems include poverty, unemployment, moral decadence, diverse crimes, examination malpractice, robbery, injustice and inequality, youth deficit and many others (Onodugo, 2016). These issues are critical due to the negative impacts produced directly and indirectly on the socio-economic and political life of citizens as individuals and the nation's image. At the root of these challenges was the dearth of quality and skillful leadership as revealed by occupiers of offices lacking the capacity to coordinate group members because of bossy mentality, failure to achieve goals, and display of character bankruptcy in public and private sectors. This has stunted the progress of the nation and further posed threat to raising of younger generation to fully understand what true leadership is and the required character for effectiveness in a leader (George & Ukpong, 2019; Aboekwe, 2019).

The renewed interest in Civic Education (CE) research became necessary especially from the 1990s as influenced by current social problems a nation battles with (Cohen, 2013). Jekayinfa, Mofoluwawo and Oladiran (2011) described CE as a subject covering wide range of issues that enables learners to deal with the world around them more capably and confidently. This made the subject's focus to be on capacity building for students' functionality in their expected roles (Idowu, 2017). Jekayinfa, et al, pointed at the role of CE contents and how learners are expected to act in creating the society they want. However, having a wide range of issues to deal with by the subject makes it more controversial in nature indicating why some people are confused about its relevance and status in schools (Abika, 2014). Apeles (2019) expressed that there is a correlation on the outcome of adopting interrelated approach in CE.

The National Minority AIDS Council (NMAC, 2018) defined leadership generally as the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours used to influence people to achieve a desired mission. Peterson (2021) further explained leadership as "a process of social influence that maximizes the efforts of others in achieving set goals. To

effectively equip students for leadership therefore, learners must be able to understand what leadership is not to avoid the pitfalls of misconception that could lead to the ineffectiveness of a leader. These include: leadership is not about positions or titles, it does not require a single style, it is not about birth and traits; rather anyone can become a leader if adequately trained with the right perspectives and given opportunities to develop competencies through activities exposed to (Peterson, 2021; Trafford, 2021). Lumen (2020) suggested that an understanding of leadership and how each framework works will enable the students to develop their own approach to leadership and become effective at the assignment.

To teach leadership related topics for effectiveness in influencing change in others, the Utah Valley University (UVU, 2017) and Weller (2017) suggested students should be exposed to topics like conflict resolution, problem-solving skills, human rights, non-positional leadership, building trust in group (values), increasing active membership, fighting negativity, leadership effectiveness, productive self-reflection, goal-setting, et cetera. The perspective on leadership concepts and styles for success in leadership also must be non-positional and flexible too. This perspective is promoted by the Situational Leadership Theory (SLT 2 Model) by Blanchard and Hersey stating that there is no perfect leadership style but the ability to adapt the style in a given situation to the level of followers' maturity and issue being focused at. Using a "one-size, fits- all" leadership style will produce fifty percent (50%) of failure in leadership effectiveness (Wolf, 2021).

Cohen (2019) stated that ability to influence others will be accomplished through the leader's display of integrity and social responsibility which is compulsory to success in leadership. These virtues must be knitted with a person's self-image. Furthermore, Lestrange (2017) added the primary values required for effective leadership and behaviours include honesty, integrity, concern for others (selflessness), fairness, justice, courage, concern for common good, truthfulness; sense of direction or vision and commitment. However, the leadership values are not exhaustive but six of them

were considered critical to excellent performance in leadership (Ab Hamid *et al*, 2011).

Purpose of the Study

This research investigated the impact of CE on leadership understanding of the students. The study specifically seeks to:

i.   ascertain the leadership perspective held by male and female students in senior secondary school;
ii.   examine how adequately the students accept their social responsibility; and
iii.   find out the extent to which male and female students acquire values from Civic Education.

Research Questions

i.   What leadership perspective is being held by male and female students in the senior secondary school?
ii.   How adequately do the students' accept their social responsibility at the senior secondary school?
iii.   To what extent did male and female students' acquire values from Civic Education?

Hypotheses

Ho1: There is significant correlation between the students' leadership perspective and the extent of social responsibility acceptance.

Methods

Research design adopted was a descriptive case study to allow for use of systematic procedures in data gathering of the CE programme in Nigeria The study employed only quantitative method in its approach. The area or study's population was within Education District 1, Lagos State involving the entire senior students in SS3 class in Surulere Community Senior School, Alagbado, Lagos. The study's sample size was 132 while 4 extra was added to make room for rate of return (136) from a total population of two hundred students (Female: 110, Male: 90= 200) in SS3. Stratified random

technique was applied to choose the study's sample size covering 55% (73+2=75) females and 45% (59+2 =61) male students.

The students' questionnaire tagged "Civic Education and Students' Leadership Potentials (CESLP)" had twenty-four (24) items with responses on a 4-Point Likert scale. The instrument validity includes: (i) Content validity having appropriate content coverage on leadership construct. (ii) Statistical test of validity representing the experts' assessment of the instrument derived through the factor analysis from the adapted items (iii) Criterion Validity: describing the relationship of the instrument in comparison with existing similar external instrument such as (a) "Conceptualizing Leadership Questionnaire" (The Sage, 2021) and (b) "Measuring leadership values based on Value-Based Total Performance Excellence model (VBTEM)" (Ab Hamid, et al, 2011). The reliability coefficient using the Cronbach's alpha (α) yielded 0.856 exceeding the general $\geq$ 0.70 accepted lower limit (Ab Hamid *et al*, 2011). The statistical tools used are the frequency tables, mean, standard deviation and percentage while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypothesis.

Results

Research Question 1: What leadership perspective is being held by male and female students in the Senior Secondary School?

Table 1: Leadership perspective held by male and female students in the Senior Secondary Schools

S N	Items	Male		Female		Mean Diff.	Remarks
	Leadership Concept	**Mean**	**S.D**	**Mean**	**S.D**		
1	Group members share in the process of leading the group	2.80	1.03	2.93	0.91	Agreed	Not Differ
2	Effective is linked to relationship with group members	2.79	1.03	2.77	1.02		Not Differ
3	Real leader is the person who influences others to take actions	3.03	1.06	2.99	1.01		Not Differ
4	Leadership is about the common purpose of the group	3.08	0.99	3.03	0.84		Not Differ
	Average	*2.93*	*1.03*	*2.93*	*0.94*		Not Differ
	Situational Leadership						
5	I am able to take on leadership role when needed even though I am not group leader	3.07	1.03	3.11	0.89		Not Differ
6	I am able to view/see a challenge from different perspectives	3.16	0.84	2.95	0.90		Not Differ
7	I enjoy playing different roles in different situations	2.74	0.98	2.67	1.00		Not Differ
8	I am good at making adjustment to different situations	2.79	1.18	2.88	0.97		Not Differ
	Average	*2.94*	*1.01*	*2.90*	*0.94*		Not Differ
	Democratic Leadership						
9	A good leader guides the followers without pressure	3.25	0.92	3.31	0.91		Not Differ
10	Help others take responsibility for completion of their work	3.05	0.96	3.05	1.04		Not Differ
11	Every group member should be part of the decision making process	3.15	1.01	3.40	0.82		Not Differ
12	Everyone is competent to lead but needs opportunity to do the job	3.08	1.00	3.07	1.03		Not Differ
	Average	*3.13*	*0.97*	*3.21*	*0.95*		Not Differ
	Grand Average (3 sections)	**3.00**	**1.00**	**3.01**	**0.94**		

Source: Field Survey, 2022

The analysis in Table 1 showed that male and female students hold similar perception of leadership with the average mean being 2.93 for both groups. Similarly, both groups conceived of situational leadership alike (2.94 & 2.90 mean scores respectively). The students' outlook on democratic leadership is slightly high (3.13 & 3.21 respectively). Generally, both the male and female students have good leadership perspective in senior secondary school. Also, the leadership perspective held by both the male (Mean= 3.00; S.D= 1.00) and female (Mean = 3.01; S.D= 0.94) students do not differed in the senior secondary school.

Research Question Two: How adequately do the students accept their social responsibility at the senior secondary school level? The question above is answered with items 13-16.

Table 2: Adequacy of Students' acceptance of social responsibility at the Senior Secondary school level

	Items	TU	SU	A	PA	Total	$\bar{x}$	SD	Remarks
13	I based my decisions on what is fair to all	15 11.0%	10 7.4%	57 41.9%	54 39.7%	136 100%	3.10	0.95	Acceptable
14	I feel concerned with my neighbour's challenges	29 21.3%	11 8.1%	68 50.0%	28 20.6%	136 100%	2.70	1.03	Acceptable
15	I am responsible for the result of my actions.	18 13.2%	6 4.4%	54 39.7%	58 42.6%	136 100%	3.12	1.00	Acceptable
16	I think about how my decision will affect those around me.	18 13.2%	6 4.4%	60 44.1%	52 38.2%	136 100%	3.07	0.98	Acceptable
	Grand Average						**3.00**	**0.99**	Acceptable

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Keys: **TU**= Totally Unacceptable (≤ 1), **SU**= Slightly Unacceptable (≤ 2), **A**= Acceptable (≤ 3), **PA**= Perfectly Acceptable (≤ 4). Analysis of items 13 to 16 in Table 2 shows the adequacy of students' acceptance of their social responsibility at the senior secondary school level. The Mean of the four items is 3.00. This implies that the students accept their social responsibility at the senior secondary schools level.

Research Question Three: To what extent did male and female students acquire values from Civic Education? The question above is answered with items 17-24 in the Section B of the students' questionnaire.

Table 3: Extent of Male and Female Students' Acquisition of Values from Civic Education

S/N	Items	Male		Remarks	Female		
		Mean	S.D		Mean	S.D	Remarks
17	I make decisions without fear of any person	2.85	1.17	Often	2.96	1.03	Often
18	I bears responsibility of any action I take personally	3.23	0.74	Often	3.19	0.80	Often
19	I align my decisions with my group's goals	2.90	1.06	Often	2.96	0.95	Often
20	It is leader who determines the strong vision for the group	2.92	1.13	Often	2.77	1.10	Often
21	I provide encouragement consistently to guide others into success	3.25	0.98	Often	3.19	1.01	Often
22	I am able to give hope to energize my group members	3.39	0.74	Often	3.08	1.01	Often
23	I am able to manage the group by planning for the activities	3.21	0.88	Often	3.15	0.83	Often
24	I tolerate differences in human beings for the group's benefits	3.00	1.14	Often	2.98	1.03	Often
	Average	**3.09**	**0.98**	Often	**3.04**	**0.97**	Often

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Keys: **VO** = Very Often (≤ 4), **O** = Often (≤ 3), **R** = Rarely (≤ 2), **N** = Never (≤ 1). The analysis of items 17 to 24 in Table3 shows the mean of male students (**Mean= 3.09**) and of female students (**Mean= 3.04**) are approximately **3.00** each. This corresponds to the weight of "Often". Thus, both male and female students often acquire values from CE.

Ho1: There is no significant correlation between students' perception of leadership and the students' acceptance of social responsibility at the senior secondary school level.

Table 4: Correlation between Students' Perception of Leadership and Students' Acceptance of Social Responsibility

		Students Perception of Leadership	Students Acceptance of Social Responsibility
Students Perception of Leadership	Pearson Correlation	1	.991**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	136	136
Students Acceptance of Social Responsibility	Pearson Correlation	.991**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	136	136

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4 shows that the calculated "r" value of 0.991 is significant since the returned p-value of 0.000 is less than the criterion level of significance of 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis which stated that "There is no significant correlation between students' perception of leadership and the students' acceptance of social responsibility at the senior secondary school level" was rejected. This implies that there is significant correlation between students' perception of leadership and the students' acceptance of social responsibility at the senior secondary school level.

Discussions

The findings showed that both male and female students' have good leadership perspective including use of situational leadership and democratic styles. This outcome supported Trafford (2021), Wolf (2021) and Peterson (2021) who opined that leadership is a social process of influence. However, the good understanding outcome indicates a contradiction to Aboekwe (2019) who stated that the younger generation lacks understanding of leadership. The result aligned with Jekayinfa, et al (2011) and Idowu (2017) who agreed that the wide CE content helps to build students' understanding of issues and capacity to function confidently in attending to challenges in their society.

The adequate acceptability of social responsibility displayed students' possession of integrity to their expected roles and care about others in the society, thus proving the students' have the

capacity to succeed in leadership as explained in Cohen's (2019) opinion.

Also, both male and female students showed moderate acquisition of desirable values from CE as they were often exposed to. This supports Ab Hamid *et al* (2011) and Lestrange (2017) indicating that CE promotes the teaching of leadership values required for leadership success and effectiveness.

Finally, the hypothesis findings which showed a significant correlation between the leadership perspective and acceptance of social responsibility supported the opinion of Apeles (2019) and UVU (2021) that there is a correlation between leadership effectiveness and the topics taught to the students. In other words, there is interrelatedness of CE topics and leadership dimension. This proved Abika (2014) submission that CE is relevant to solving societal issues.

Conclusion

From the above results, this study found that CE positively impact on students' perception and reflection of leadership which enabled them to desire taking up social responsibility within their immediate society and also equipping the students' with desirable leadership values for efficiency in future roles.

Recommendation

Teachers of CE are hereby reminded to intensify emphasis on flexible approach to leadership while recognizing the critical roles of followers in determining the effectiveness of leadership in any society.

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