POLITICAL INTEREST AS A CORRELATE OF STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT IN AND ATTITUDE TO CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION CONCEPTS IN SOCIAL STUDIES IN OSUN STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated political interest as a correlate of students' achievement in and attitude to citizenship education concepts in Social Studies in Osun State, Nigeria. The research design is survey research design of correlation type. The population of the study comprised all junior secondary two (JSS 2) Social Studies students in Osun State, Nigeria. Osun central senatorial district was purposively selected out of the three senatorial districts in Osun State due to the fact that it is the seat of government where capital of Osun State is located. Five local government was randomly selected out of ten local government in Osun central district. Six Junior Secondary Schools Two were randomly selected from each local government which made up of thirty junior secondary schools that participated in this study. Fifty students were randomly selected from each of thirty schools selected for this study and made up of one thousand and five hundred students that participated in the study. Schools with both male and female students were

selected for this study due to the nature of this study. Instrument used were Students' Achievement Test in Citizenship Education Concepts (SATCC) (r=0.72), Students' Attitude to Citizenship Education Concepts Scale (SACCS) (r=0.74), and Students' Political Interest Scale (SPIS (r=0.76). Data were analysed using content analysis. The result showed that there is no significant relationship between political interest and students' attitude to citizenship education concepts in Social Studies in Osun State (r=0.036, p>0.05) and it also revealed that there is no significant relationship between political interest and students' achievement in citizenship education concepts in Social Studies in Osun State (r=0.006, p>0.05). It was therefore recommended that teachers should look into methods of teaching and many other factors that do not relate to political interest to improve both students' achievement and attitude to citizenship education concepts in Social Studies.

Keywords: Political interest, Attitude, Achievement, Citizenship education.

Introduction

Social Studies assumed the practical role in society of applying several concepts, themes and generalisation as it captures connective tissues around different subject matters. Thus, the field of endeavour establishes the eclectic nature of the discipline which cuts across Arts, Social sciences and some sciences. This distillation explains the nexus between the various disciplines and the application to human society as well as the social chemistry that emanates from such interactions. At the centre of the discipline are human beings living within the environment. The discipline is saddled with the responsibility of explaining the question of how relationship with the self, people and the environment and the implications of such relationships. The study also critically assessed why human beings behave the way they do as well as found plausible solutions to some of the crises which might occur. No doubt, human beings are

socio-economic and political animals as they survive based on relationships which occur in social groups.

The discipline of Social Studies helps learners to become functional, participatory and then problem-solving agents within the society. It prepares human being for a holistic lifestyle as its draws contents from various disciples like History, Political science, Economics, Psychology, Civic Education among others (Human Development Report, 2000). These contents educate learners with political ideologies, citizenship, rights, duties, responsibilities, roles, morals, and other principles of life which are in tandem with socio-cultural and political affairs (Agger, Goldstein and Pearl, 2011). The discipline of Social Studies makes provision for content knowledge, civic and social skills as well as necessary information for students to be able to function in the society as responsive and responsible citizens. It also students to face current realities and challenges of life, which could be local, regional or global as well as some other emerging issues which are inevitable on planet earth. However, some of these challenges are cater for through the exposure of students to human, natural and material resources from the immediate environment to proffer plausible solutions them (Agger, Goldstein & Pearl, 2011).

Today, the Nigeria society is back on the path of democracy. By implication, much is expected from the entire citizens, both the ruled and the rulers. The Nigerian citizens are expected to access information, use such information, think critically, make responsible decisions, accord respect to human rights, have citizenship attitude and knowledge, and put such into practice (Torney-Purta, 2002). Based on this assumption, with the understanding that education plays a charitable role in the development of manpower, thus the role of Social Studies cannot be over emphasised. It is the believed by various researchers (Raby, 2005; Somers, 2008) that the discipline of Social Studies helps a lot at this critical time in galvanizing citizenship and civic education. This is the type of education, more importantly, citizenship education, exposes students to history, events, rudiments and traditions of occupying the office of citizens. Thus, how can one vote without the knowledge of

government, constitution, history and the actions that made that history (Pryor, 2013).

Citizenship education can be defined as social learning which inculcate in young ones the requisite knowledge, skills, attitude and values to reproduce new streams of patriotic citizens who can carry ones with the ideals of democracy and modern life Perliger, Canetti-Nisim and Pedahzur, 2006). In a civilised society, the inculcation of required competencies helps to galvanise the continuation of acceptable standard of living without compromising on the love of the country. Thus, education plays a crucial role in building a nation as it helps to transform human beings into intelligent and honest citizen of the country. A rich citizenship education makes independent citizen's lead developed country with solid economic growth, political sensibility, and enactment of his/her social responsibility towards society as well as the nation (Payne, 2017). Also, citizens with the spirit of hospitality, culture, ethical values will form and build the army of manpower needed for society development even through technological growth. No doubt, the objective of any society is to produce non-violent citizenry who are democratic enough to help the society grow at pace that will not conflict with stipulated rules and regulations.

It is therefore sacrosanct to state that citizenship education is of paramount importance to inculcate in citizens required political culture imbued with societal values, knowledge, disposition and skills which are supportive of the occupation of the office of the society (Kocoska, 2009). The concept of citizenship education plays a crucial role in the building and development of a nation with democratic principles. This indirectly helps to connect the gown (educated structure, manpower resources) with the town (the socio-economic and political institutional arrangements). These attributes are learnt culturally and socially and the various agents of socialisation are saddled with the responsibilities of playing their role dutifully especially the school which is saddled with roles of re-sharpening the minds, hands and heads of fresh intakes into the society (Parker, 2010). No doubt, schools with democratic characteristics and curriculum which can help galvanise the letters of democracy do exists schools however, several African education

arrangement is predominantly tailored alongside authoritarian, hierarchical and bureaucratic lines (O'Byrne, 2003). This is evident in the fact that some schools are den of violence and it related activities.

The world, an interconnected global arrangement, is still facing the pandemic which broke out in 2019 in Wuhan China. Also, the world has been a den of several socio-economic, cultural, environmental and political issues and challenges which manifest in climate change, environmental degradation, violence, discrimination, separation, political crises, dehumanization among others (Marri, 2005; Osler & Starkey, 2005). Based on these infelicities, there is a need to prepare young ones with the capacity to meet the new challenges as loaded, skilled, empowered and informed citizens. Knight (2001) asserts that it is a collective effort that can be deployed to tackle the hydra-headed challenges through the ability of the citizens to empathize, think, and ventilate new ideas that can ameliorate these challenges. A number of studies into citizenship education have been carried out over the years. Some of these studies have investigated various aspects of school classroom environment ranging from factors influencing citizenship education in learning environment (Agger, Goldstein, & Pearl, 2011) to the students' perceptions of their classroom, the relationships between student perceptions of their classrooms and their learning outcomes, and such interactions that could improve student learning outcomes in different subject areas. However, political interest as a determinant of students' learning outcomes in citizenship education concepts have not been a subject of much concern in most of these studies particularly in Nigeria. However, not much attention has been paid to political interest that can improve students' citizenship learning outcomes.

The impact of political interest in citizenship activities is of paramount importance. It is discovered to a be strong predictor of political behaviour (Pryor, 2013). There is also significant correlation between citizen's interest in politics and the capacity to listen to news and other happenings in the society (Pryor, 2013). By implication, the variable, political interest is likely to open up divide in the society with grievous consequences on political education,

participation and principles of democracy as people have the capacity to control what interest them or not. It is a fact that the democratic system gives one some basic rights but will not come automatically if an individual fail to fulfill some basic responsibility. Thus, to fulfill the responsibilities one must be aware of the system. For any democracy to work successfully, where people or citizens vote their leaders or representatives, must keep a keen interest in political and democratic affairs to be in a position to choose the correct leader to represent their aspirations. It is discovered that a well-educated (politically) nation has a higher chance of selecting the right representative or leader to represent and rule (Abramson, 2013). Participating in politics, in and outside the school system is sacrosanct to living a democratic setup.

Purpose of the Study

This study aimed at finding out the influence of political interest on achievement and attitude to citizenship education. The specific objectives of this study are to:

    i.   determine if political interest variable can determine students' attitude to citizenship education concepts in Social Studies in Osun State, Nigeria.

   ii.   determine if political interest variable can determine students' achievement in citizenship education concepts in Social Studies in Osun State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following questions were asked to guide this study:

    i.   Is there any significant relationship between political interest and students' attitude to citizenship education concepts in Social Studies in Osun State, Nigeria?

   ii.   Is there any significant relationship between political interest and students' achievement in citizenship education concepts in Social Studies in Osun State, Nigeria?

Methods

The research design is survey research design of correlation type. The population for the study comprised Junior Secondary School Social Studies students in Osun State. Osun central senatorial district was purposively selected out of the three senatorial districts in Osun State due to the fact that it is the seat of government where capital of Osun State is located. Five local governments were randomly selected out of ten local governments in Osun State. Six junior secondary school two schools were randomly selected from each local government which made up of thirty junior secondary schools that participated in the study. Fifty junior secondary school students were randomly selected from each of those selected schools, which made up of One Thousand and five Hundred Students. Schools with both male and female students selected for this study due to nature of this study. There were three instruments used in this study which were Students' Achievement Test in Citizenship Education Concepts (SATCC), Students' Attitude to Citizenship Education Concepts Scale (SACCS), and Students' Political Interest Scale (SPIS).

The instrument, SATCC, was self-designed by the researchers to measure students' achievement in citizenship education concepts in Social Studies and consists of two sections. Section A sought for the background information of the students such as name, school, sex and local government. Section A consisted of twenty multiple choice items focusing on citizenship concepts in Social Studies. All these concepts were selected for this study because they are related to Citizenship Education. The content validity of the instrument was determined by giving it to experts in the field of Teacher Education and Social Studies. The reliability of the instrument was trial testing in two public schools that were not part of the study. The researchers with the assistance of the JSS Social Studies teachers in those schools administered the instrument on fifty JSS II Social Studies students. Meanwhile, Kuder-Richard 21 Formular was used to estimate its reliability which gave a coefficient of 0.72. The correct response earned one mark while an incorrect response earned zero mark since they were multiple-choice objective type.

No correction was made for guessing because sufficient time was given to allow for the students to work on the questions.

The SACCS was a self-designed thirty (20) item scale aimed to measure the attitudes of selected students to citizenship education concepts in Social Studies. The scale consists of two sections: section A and B. Section A elicits responses on personal details like name, school, sex and local government while section B contains 30 scale statements which are patterned after the Likert 4-point scale of strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD). The scales (SA), (A), (D), and (SD) are allotted 4, 3, 2 and 1 points respectively for positively worded statements. This was reversal for negatively worded statements. The SPIS was a self-designed twenty (20) item scale aimed to measure the Political Interest of selected Social Studies students. The scale consists of two sections: section A and B. Section A elicits responses on personal details like name, school, sex and local government while section B contains 25 scale statements which are patterned after the Likert 4-point scale of strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD). The scales (SA), (A), (D), and (SD) are allotted 4, 3, 2 and 1 points respectively for positively worded statements. This was reversal for negatively worded statements. Data Collected were coded and analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient and each of the research questions was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: Is there any significant relationship between political interest and students' attitude to citizenship education concepts in Social Studies in Osun State, Nigeria?

Table 1: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on relationship between Political Interest and Students' Attitude to Citizenship Education Concepts in Social Studies in Osun State, Nigeria

Variables	N	X	SD	r	Sig.	Remark
Students' Attitude to Citizenship Education Concepts	1500	59.62	17.17	0.036*	0.172	Not Signifi-cant
Political Interest	1500	52.61	18.91			

Significant at p<0.05

Table 1 presents the result of the relationship between political interest and students' attitude to citizenship education concepts in Social Studies. The result shows that there is no significant relationship between political interest and students' attitude to citizenship education concepts in Social Studies in Osun State (r=0.036, p>0.05). This implied that the political interest of the students cannot bring about students' positive attitude towards citizenship education concepts in Social Studies.

Research Question 2: Is there any significant relationship between political interest and students' achievement in citizenship education concepts in Social Studies in Osun State, Nigeria?

Table 2: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on relationship between Political Interest and Students' Achievement in Citizenship Education Concepts in Social Studies in Osun State, Nigeria

Variables	N	X	SD	r	Sig.	Remark
Students' Achieve-ment in Citizenship Education	1500	49.89	17.80	0.006*	0.828	Not Signifi-cant
Political Interest	1500	52.61	21.80			

Significant at p<0.05

Table 2 presents the result of the relationship between political interest and students' achievement in citizenship education concepts in Social Studies. The result shows that there is no significant relationship between political interest and students' achievement in citizenship education concepts in Social Studies in Osun State (r=0.006, p>0.05). This implied that the political interest of the students cannot improve students' achievement in citizenship education concepts in Social Studies in Osun State.

Discussions

The finding of the study revealed that there is no significant relationship between students' attitude to citizenship and political interest. This result aligns with (Kiroglu (2013) as well as Apple and Benne, (2011) that found out that political interest cannot determine students' attitude. This implies that students' political interest has nothing to do with positive attitude to citizenship education concepts in Social Studies. If there is need to improve students' attitude towards citizenship education concepts in Social Studies, political interest is not a variable to be put into consideration.

The finding of the study revealed that there is a no significant relationship between students' achievement in citizenship education concepts in Social Studies and political interest. This implies that students' political interest has no direct link with their level of mastery, understanding and achievement in citizenship education concepts. It could be so as students may find it difficult to apply their level of political consciousness to the ability to recognize and attempt questions in the classroom settings. This result aligns with Weiss (2012); Yigit and Colak (2010) that found out that the students' achievement in cannot be determined by political interest.

Conclusion

The findings of this study brought to the limelight that political interest has nothing to do to improve students' achievement and as well to bring about positive attitude toward citizenship education concepts in Social Studies. This means that if there would be need to look into ways to improve students' achievement and attitude to

citizenship education, there is no need to consider political interest of the students.

Recommendation

It is therefore recommended that teachers should look into methods of teaching and many other factors that do not relate to political interest to improve both students' achievement and attitude to citizenship education concepts in Social Studies.

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