

CHALLENGES TO IMPLEMENTING CIVIC EDUCATION CURRICULUM IN JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS: A STUDY OF OBIO/AKPOR AND EMUOHA LGAs, RIVERS STATE

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Abstract

This study examined the barriers to effective implementation of the Civic Education curriculum in Junior Secondary Schools within Obio-Akpor and Emohua Local Government Areas of Rivers State, Nigeria. Employing a descriptive survey design, the research was guided by three research questions and three hypotheses. The target population consisted of 194 respondents, including 30 principals and 90 Civic Education teachers, selected using cluster random sampling. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection, and the reliability of the instrument was confirmed using Cronbach Alpha with a coefficient of 0.82. Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation for the research questions, while t-tests were used for hypothesis testing. Findings revealed that major challenges to curriculum implementation include a lack of instructional resources and an insufficient number of qualified teachers. Furthermore, no significant difference was observed between the mean responses of teachers and principals regarding how these factors impact Civic Education delivery. Based on the findings, the study recommends increased government funding for schools to enable the development of locally produced instructional materials. Additionally, teachers should be actively involved in curriculum planning to enhance ownership and implementation effectiveness. The study also advocates adherence to the UNESCO-recommended teacher-student ratio of 1:25 to improve instructional quality and outcomes in Civic Education.

Keywords: Civic Education, Curriculum Implementation, Instructional Resources, Teacher Qualification, Junior Secondary Schools

Introduction

The quality of civic education has been a concern for those interested in the well-being of the Nigerian state and its citizenry. The introduction of civic education in the curriculum has been viewed as a means of realizing the country's democratic ideals and national integration. The world over has long had interest in the ways in which her young ones are prepared for citizenship and in how they learn to take part in civic life. Civic education has become an increasingly important means to educate citizens about their rights, duties and responsibilities. The idea of the introduction of civic education in primary and secondary schools in Nigeria was borne immediately after her independence in 1960 to create the needed awareness and to develop love for their country. To achieve

Civic Education, the government later introduced the course ‘Citizenship Education’ in our universities, Colleges of Education and Polytechnics in the year 1992. Nigeria having the largest population in Africa, that had just experienced a civil war in her early age of independence needed to encourage different people, cultures, religions, with different geographical, cultural and political backgrounds to support the unity of the country. This was necessary in order to achieve national integration and respect for one another. Different regimes (governments) in Nigeria have made several efforts to inculcate patriotism and national consciousness in the minds of the people but they achieved little success. Therefore, the Federal Government of Nigeria thought it wise to introduce this course, Civic Education, at the lowest levels of Basic and Secondary Education. This was done through the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC). The aim was to teach Nigeria children national consciousness and love for our country at their tender age. The word ‘Civic’ is a Greek word which simply means citizens of a city or an area. The civic education curriculum plays an important role in designing life-long learning competencies, social attitudes and skills such as tolerance and respect, peaceful conflict management, promotion and respect of human rights, gender equality and social justice. Besides, civic education also contributes to nationalistic thinking, creativity and acquisition of relevant knowledge that is applicable to their daily life and careers. Education has remained a social process in capacity building and maintenance of society for decades. It is a weapon for acquiring skills, relevant knowledge and habits for surviving the changing world (Adepoju & Fabiyi, 2008). At the Basic Education level, the intent of education is specifically to develop in the learner, a strong consciousness for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotion, and to ensure acquisition of appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulation, communication, collaborative and life skills as well as ethical, moral and civic values needed for laying a solid foundation for the life-long learning (Walele & Nwanekezi, 2021).

The education sought for in civics remains an important means of teaching the populace about individual rights and what duties and responsibilities the governed and leaders should do. The reintroduction of civic education as a subject to be taught in primary and secondary schools in Nigeria is expected to further deepen democratic culture and encourage qualitative participation of the average Nigerian in the governance process. Teachers are very crucial to the success of this bold initiative. This arguably, would create a change of attitude among learners and adequately reform the Nigerian child. Further, the philosophy and goals of education in Nigeria is that education is an instrument that fosters national development; hence the formulation of ideas, integration for national development and the interaction of persons and ideas are all aspects of education. To this end, education fosters the worth and development of the individual, for each individuals’ sake and for the general development of the society (FRN, 2016).

With respect to child education the document further explained that every Nigerian child shall have a right to equal educational opportunity, irrespective of any real or imagined disabilities each according to his or her ability

(FRN, 2016). The national goals of education which are derived from the philosophy of education, with respect to the quality of instruction in schools at all levels, emphasized: moral and spiritual principle in inter-personal and human relations; shared responsibility for the common good of society and promotion of the physical, emotional and psychological development of all children and acquisition of competences necessary for selfreliance (FRN, 2016). A comparison of the attainment of the expectation for a virile, peaceful and dynamic youth and contemporary increase in violating the social, political and economic spheres of the Nigerian nation have not only made life unbearable but created a re-think on the effective implementation of the existing national policy on education when assessed through a need curriculum.

Ezegbe, Oyeoku, Mezieobi and Okeke (2012) stated that youth incivility has become the order of the day while civic virtues in all spheres of life have totally declined; the incessant cult activities, kidnapping, and recent menace of Boko Haram, herders/farmers clashes and banditry are attested facts. It is as a result of these enormous problems that the Federal Government in the past introduced civic education as a subject in our education system. Civic education remains an important means of teaching the populace about individual rights and what duties and responsibilities the governed and leaders should do.

The introduction of civic education as a compulsory subject in schools according to Sam Egwu, the former minister of education is part of late President Umaru Yaradua's 7-point reform agenda in year 2007 geared towards the enhancement of the human capital development, which is achievable through participation in learning, child re-orientation and laying a strong foundation for effective citizenship (Adeniran, 2012). Civic Education should therefore bother on ethical issues, rights and privileges of individual citizens, leadership, responsibilities of citizens like voting, taxes, the justice system, prisons, people and culture, international relations and many others.

Jekayinfa and Oladiran (2014) stated that the rationale for the reintroduction of civic education in the Nigerian Basic and Senior Secondary Schools has become very obvious because of the dwindling national consciousness, social harmony and lack spirit of patriotism. They further stated that the lack of civic education and patriotic orientation had led to disorientation in schools and the larger society, due to the prevalence of corruption, indiscipline, disrespect for both elders and the rule of law.

Adeniran (2012) asserts that in reflection to the past events, Nigeria is facing the threat of losing its much-cherished sense of nationhood, cultural identity and indeed the spirit of hospitality.

The overall goal of civic education is to promote civic engagement and support democratic and participatory governance. The idea behind civic education is to promote the demand for good governance and address a wide variety of political and governance issues such as corruption, Civic apathy or conflict reconciliation, as well as social issues, like domestic violence, drug abuse, and HIV/AIDS. Generally, civic education has been viewed by

Ukegbu, Meziobi, Ajileye, & Abdurrahman (2009) as a course of study that is geared towards producing responsible and lawabiding citizens.

The goal of secondary education among others is to develop the learner's mental capacity and character for higher tertiary Education and useful living in the society (FRN, 2016). Junior Secondary Education in Rivers State is faced with numerous challenges in general and Civic Education in particular. These challenges have led to poor implementation of the Civic Education curriculum content. The challenges include the following but not limited to lack of instructional resources, lack of facilities and equipment for teaching and learning, lack of funds, inadequacy of qualified teachers, lack of teachers' in-service training, inadequate staffing, unconducive learning environment, among others (Obomanu, 2011). Despite the fact that civic education produces an array of positive outcomes, the citizenry's current level of civic knowledge is far from secure. The incessant breakdown of law and order has led to the dwindling national consciousness, social disharmony, and prevalence of corruption, indiscipline and disrespect for persons and the law. This situation may be as a result of disorientation from schools, poor parenting and negative influences from the society. Whereas, the civic education curriculum has been loaded with concepts that provide for child civility, respect for law and order and good citizenship, it has not fostered a cohesive national integration. However, the present state of increased violence in the social, political and economic spheres of the Nigerian nation with incidents of calls for separation, teenage pregnancy, drug trafficking, decline in values, rape, cultism in schools where Civic Education is taught, questions the central role of teachers and policy makers to effectively impact or inculcate civic ideals in the child. Different scholars have carried out studies similar to this work in other States of Nigeria but to the knowledge of the researcher, none has been done in the area of implementation of junior secondary school Civic Education Curriculum content. Therefore the study, challenges in the implementation of civic education curriculum in Junior Secondary School in Rivers State. Specifically, the study sought to achieve the following objectives:

1. Examine how lack of instructional resources affects the implementation of civic education curriculum in junior secondary schools in Rivers State.
2. Investigate how inadequacy of qualified teachers affects the implementation of civic education curriculum in junior secondary school in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. How does lack of instructional resources affect the implementation of civic education curriculum in junior secondary school in Rivers State?
2. How does inadequacy of qualified teachers affect the implementation of civic education curriculum in junior secondary school in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses guided the study ($P=0.05$):

1. There is no significant difference between the mean responses of civic education teachers and school principals on how lack of instructional resources affect the implementation of civic education curriculum in junior secondary schools in Rivers State
2. There is no significant difference between the mean responses of civic education teachers and school principals on how inadequacy of qualified teachers affects the implementation of civic education curriculum in junior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research Methods

The study was carried out in secondary schools in Rivers State, particularly, in Obio/Akpor and Emuhua Local Government Areas. The study adopted descriptive survey design with a population of 194 (44 principals and 150 civic education teachers) in 44 junior secondary schools in the two local government areas used for the study with a sample size of 120 (30 principals and 90 civic education teachers) which was derived using the cluster random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire titled “Challenges in the Implementation of Civic Education Curriculum in Junior Secondary Schools (CICECJSS) that was constructed by the researcher and it consists of 18-items which were arranged in two sections A and B. Section A contains the biodata, while section B consists of three subgroups: on how lack of funding, lack of instructional resources and inadequacy of qualified teachers, which was structured on a modified four point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly disagree (SD) and the levels of responses are weighted as 4, 3, 2, 1 respectively.

The instrument was face validated by three experts, one from Measurement and Evaluation Unit, one from Curriculum and Instruction unit and another one from Educational Technology unit, all from the Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, Rivers State University, Nkpolu-Port Harcourt. The suggestions given were used in producing the final copy of the instrument. Cronbach alpha was used in calculating the reliability to determine the internal consistency which gave an alpha value of 0.82 which was considered high after 10 copies of the questionnaire was administered on principals and teachers in Ikwerre Local Government Area. The instrument was thereafter administered and collected by the researcher and two research assistants. The data obtained were analyzed using mean and standard deviation for answering the research questions and the hypotheses tested using t-test. Hence, $4+3+2+1=10/4=2.5$. Therefore, items whose mean were less than 2.5 were seen as Disagreed (D) responses while those whose mean were 2.5 and above were seen as Agreed (A) responses. The decision rule on the null hypotheses was to reject the hypothesis with calculated Z-value greater than the critical Z-value but otherwise accept.

Results

Research Question 1: How does lack of instructional resources affect the implementation of civic education curriculum in junior secondary school in Rivers State?

Table 1: Summary of mean and standard deviation on how lack of instructional resources affects the implementation of civic education curriculum in junior secondary school in Rivers State

S/ N	Items	Principals=30			Teachers=90		
		Mean	S.D	Rmk	Mean	S.D.	Rmk
1	Inadequate instructional materials could change the teachers' teaching method	3.61	0.52	Agree	3.49	0.54	Agree
2	Deficiency in instructional resources leads to teachers' low performance in instructional delivery	3.51	0.46	Agree	3.32	0.69	Agree
3	The achievement of civic education curriculum goals and objectives are difficult to achieve in the absence of instructional materials	2.94	1.02	Agree	3.21	0.59	Agree
4	Lack of instructional materials reduces learning standard	3.06	0.72	Agree	3.09	0.70	Agree
5	Lack of instructional materials reduces the flexibility of learning in civic education	3.20	0.77	Agree	3.15	0.68	Agree
6	Lack of instructional materials reduces the level of students' comprehension of civic education curriculum content	3.10	0.69	Agree	3.17	0.72	Agree
7	Inadequacy of quality instructional resources lowers the interest of the learner in the curriculum content	3.11	0.72	Agree	3.22	0.63	Agree
Grand Mean & S.D		3.22	0.70		3.24	0.65	

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 1 indicates that both principals and teachers agreed affirmatively that inadequate instructional materials could change the teachers' teaching method, deficiency in instructional resources leads to teachers' low

performance in instructional delivery, the achievement of civic education curriculum goals and objectives are difficult to achieve in the absence of instructional materials, lack of instructional materials reduces learning standard, lack of instructional materials reduces the flexibility of learning in civic education among the other items. The grand mean and standard deviation (3.22 and 0.70, and 3.24 and 0.65) are indications that lack of instructional materials could adversely affect implementation of civic education curriculum in junior secondary schools in Rivers States.

Research Question 2: How does inadequacy of qualified teachers affect the implementation of civic education curriculum in junior secondary school in Rivers State?

Table 2: Summary of mean and standard deviation on how inadequacy of qualified teachers affects the implementation of civic education curriculum in junior secondary school in Rivers State

S/ N	Items	Principals=30			Teachers=90		
		Mean	S.D	Rmk	Mean	S.D.	Rmk
1	Unqualified teachers lack the skills to appropriately deliver civic education curriculum	2.98	1.02	Agree	3.09	1.04	Agree
2	Inadequacy of skilled teachers affects the level of students' comprehension of civic education concepts	3.01	0.86	Agree	3.02	0.91	Agree
3	Teachers' lack of knowledge of curriculum content reduces students' academic achievement	2.92	1.01	Agree	2.97	0.99	Agree
4	Unavailability of qualified teachers in civic education makes curriculum implementation difficult	3.06	0.72	Agree	3.02	0.91	Agree
5	Certain subjects introduced in the civic education curriculum cannot be taught by teachers who are not trained in it	2.74	1.07	Agree	2.83	1.08	Agree
6	Unqualified teachers often theorize curriculum contents without relation to students' immediate environment	3.00	0.99	Agree	2.92	1.02	Agree

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7	Unqualified teachers do not improvise instructional resources for effective learning	3.03	0.87	Agree	2.99	0.78	Agree
Grand Mean & S.D		2.96	0.93		2.98	0.96	

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 2 showed that the respondents agreed to the following statements that unqualified teachers lack the skills to appropriately deliver civic education curriculum with mean being above average level. Also, inadequacy of skilled teachers affect the level of students' comprehension of civic education concepts with mean (3.01 & 3.02), teachers' lack of knowledge of curriculum content reduces students' academic achievement (2.92 and 2.97) etc. The grand mean of 2.96 and 2.98 are indicated that inadequacy of qualified teachers affect the implementation of civic education curriculum in junior secondary school in Rivers State

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of civic education teachers and school principals on how lack of instructional resources affect the implementation of civic education curriculum in junior secondary schools in Rivers State

Table 3: z-test analysis on how lack of instructional resources affect the implementation of civic education curriculum in junior secondary schools in Rivers State

<u>Respondents</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>Df</u>	<u>α-value</u>	<u>t-cal</u>	<u>t-crit</u>	<u>Remark</u>
Principals	30	3.22	0.70	118	0.05	0.14	1.96	Accepted
Teachers	90	3.24	0.65					

Source: Field survey (2021)

Table 3 shows that with the degree of freedom 118 at 0.05 level of significance, the t-calculated value of 0.14 is less than the t-critical value 1.96. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted. This indicate that there is no there is no significant difference between the mean responses of civic education teachers and school principals on how lack of instructional resources affect the implementation of civic education curriculum in junior secondary schools in Rivers State

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of civic education teachers and school principals on how inadequacy of qualified teachers affect the implementation of civic education curriculum in junior secondary schools in Rivers State

Table 4: z-test analysis on how inadequacy of qualified teachers affect the implementation of civic education curriculum in junior secondary schools in Rivers State

Respondents	N	Mean	SD	Df	α -value	t-cal	t-crit	Remark
Principals	30	2.96	0.93	118	0.05	1.96		Accepted
Teachers	90	2.98	0.96					

Source: Field survey (2021)

Table 4 shows that with the degree of freedom 118 at 0.05 level of significance, the z-calculated value of 0.10 is less than the z-critical value 1.96. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted. This indicates that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of civic education teachers and school principals on how inadequacy of qualified teachers affect the implementation of civic education curriculum in junior secondary schools in Rivers State

Discussion of the Findings

Table 1 results revealed that both categories of respondents agreed that lack of instructional resources affects the implementation of civic education curriculum in junior secondary school in Rivers State. Teachers and principals indicated inadequate instructional materials could change the teachers' teaching method, deficiency in instructional resources leads to teachers' low performance in instructional delivery among others. This was confirmed by the hypothesis result on table 5 that there is no significant difference on how lack of instructional resources affects the implementation of junior secondary school civic education curriculum in Rivers State. The finding of this study agrees with Richard and Okoro (2016) who reported there was no significant difference between teachers' opinion on teaching methods and non-availability of instructional aides that challenge the implementation of the civic education curriculum. This implies that when there is deficiency in instructional resources curriculum implementation suffers.

From the results on table 2, it be said that majority of the respondents were of the opinion that unqualified teachers lack the skills to appropriately deliver civic education curriculum, inadequacy of skilled teachers affects the level of students' comprehension of civic education concepts, teachers' lack of knowledge of curriculum content reduces students' academic achievement, unavailability of qualified teachers in civic education makes curriculum implementation difficult among others. The hypothesis result showed that principals and civic education teachers were in agreement that inadequacy of qualified teachers affects the implementation of civic education curriculum in junior secondary school in Rivers State The findings is in line with Idowu (2015) who reported that curriculum implementation becomes much more easy when experts are involved in the implementation process.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the conclusion could be drawn that it is obvious that lack of funding, lack of instructional resources and inadequacy of qualified teachers affect the implementation of curriculum in junior secondary school. Consequently, the noble goals of implementing civic education curriculum have been seriously constrained by the absence of these factors.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Funding should be made available to school for them to design their own instructional materials for adequate curriculum implementation of civic education in secondary schools.
2. The importance of teacher involvement in decision-making and curriculum planning cannot be over emphasized. Therefore, government should involve teachers in curriculum planning and development to give them sense of recognition.
3. The government and educationists should adhere to UNESCO's recommendation of 1:25 Teacher and Students ratio in the implementation of civic education in junior secondary schools in Nigeria for effectiveness.
4. There is need for concerted efforts by stakeholders in education to providing instructional facilities for the implementation of civic education.
5. Teachers should increase their knowledge of curriculum content by exposure to more studies for enhanced curriculum implementation.

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