

Influence of Lecture Method on Political Awareness Among Civic Education Students in Senior Secondary Schools, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Despite gaining political independence in 1960, Nigeria still faces a plethora of citizenship (political) issues hindering desirable nation building and national development. In all of these, the school cannot be left out, because the school is a potential agent of socialization which helps in influencing the formation of political norms, social values and attitude (political awareness) in citizens. Nigeria's educational curriculum is planned to reflect the national political issues and concerns translated into national goals of education. But has this helped Nigeria as a nation, the answer will be to some extent, but certainly not to a large extent. This has necessitated the introduction of civic education at the senior secondary school level to inculcate national consciousness, civic literacy and civic competence. One of the ways of achieving these laudable objectives is through various teaching methods in civic education of which the lecture method is one of them. This paper therefore, took a look at clarification of concepts such as, civic education, lecture method and political awareness; it focuses on the advantages of lecture method; importance of political awareness in senior secondary schools in Nigeria; it also examined the influence of lecture method on political awareness among civic education students in senior secondary schools in Nigeria. The paper concluded with some recommendations such as: After a lesson on political awareness, students should be taken out to visit political institutions to have firsthand knowledge and information of their methods of operation from the sources; the lecture method should be used to combat misinformation and propaganda that can lead to unhealthy democracy among students; there is the need for the students to enact the political processes in Nigeria to enable them have better understanding, with the teacher leading the process during the lesson; the lecture method should be more interactive and augmented with adequate and appropriate instructional resource materials to facilitate the comprehension of the political institutions and processes leading to the acquisition of political awareness by the students in senior secondary schools in Nigeria.

Keywords: Civic Education, Lecture Method, Political Awareness

INTRODUCTION

Despite gaining political independent in 1960, Nigeria still faces a plethora of citizenship (political) issues hindering desirable nation building and national development. In all these, the school cannot be left out, it is often assumed that the school serves as potential agent of socialization which helps in influencing the formation of political norms, social values and attitude (political awareness) in citizens. The curriculum has always been an avenue, through which political expectations of the society are translated into knowledge, attitude, values and skills from which learners within the school system are developed. Therefore, Nigeria's educational curriculum is planned to reflect the national political issues and concerns translated into national goals of education. But has these helped Nigeria as a nation, the answer will be to some extent, but certainly not to a large extent. This has necessitated the introduction of civic education in senior secondary schools in Nigeria.

Civic education was introduced to the Nigerian educational system at the basic and senior secondary school levels according to Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013), to inculcate national consciousness, civic literacy and civic competence. Civic education which was developed for use at the senior secondary school level of education system in Nigeria was launched in 2009 by the Nigerian Educational Research and Development

Council (NERDC). Civic education as a curriculum instrument is assigned a key role in the successful implementation of the national political goals. The recipients of civic education will in no doubt acquire desirable knowledge, habits, attitudes, values and skills that are needed for true democracy, which in turn accelerate national development. The civic education curriculum is concerned with the development of values, social norms, knowledge, skills and democratic ideals in the citizens for national development (Yahaya, 2013). Ali (2015), explain that civic education is important in the political development process and for the construction of youths attitude towards democracy. Civic education gives young people the perception and orientation of citizenship, its importance and causes them to be less alienated from political events in the society.

The introduction of civic education into the Nigerian senior secondary schools was to achieve the following objectives according to Chidera (2019), developing (teaching) and transforming (changing) the youths of Nigeria into effective and responsible citizens by making them law abiding; making young people learn and respect values, the usual and expected (norms), knowledge, actions and activities that will keep Nigeria achieve her Millennium (New Era) Development Goals; helping students to learn about systems and institutions of government and democratic principle and processes; inculcating knowledge which leads to improvement in the quality of leadership and followership; promoting social and political awareness in students enabling them contribute positively in the society.

The main focus of this paper is the last objective of civic education which is creating of political awareness through civic education using the lecture method of teaching. But before delving in this there is the need for concept clarification.

Clarification of Concepts

Civic Education

Civic education is one of the innovative curriculum elements in the Nigerian educational system. It's inclusion at the senior secondary education levels in Nigeria and it's subsequent elevation to the status of core or compulsory subject is a clear indication of it's importance (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). Civic education was introduced into Nigerian secondary school system by Nigerian government to teach different communities or states, some kind of knowledge, facts, skills, abilities, events, values and attitudes necessary for an active and useful life in building a balance nation. Ajao (2013) define civic education as the kind of education through which individuals and citizens acquire useful and positive habits, attitudes and beliefs that will help them live as useful and functional members of the society. Ajibola and Audu (2014), state that civic education is one of the subjects taught in schools to inculcate sound, moral values in the youths. Civic education is the acquisition of knowledge, skills and disposition that are needed for effective citizenship in a democratic society (Sette 2015). According to Abdul-Raheem and Odutoye (2018), civic education is designed to help people learn how to become active, informed and responsible citizens.

Balogun and Yusuf (2019) opined that civic education is conceived as a body of knowledge imparted through selfless efforts of efficient and effective teachers and received by conscious learners to showcase the right type of values and attitude for the growth and building of the society. Tinubu (2021), perceived civic education as a public socially oriented system of continuous education and upbringing, aimed at building civic competence , democratic culture and satisfying the needs for socialization in society and the rule of law. From the definition so far, civic education can be seen as the school subject that helps in the development of social skills and attitude which is balanced with appropriate content such as human right, citizenship, electoral process, voters education and sensitization, enlightenment on critical political and engaging issues, active participation in politics, useful positive habits which creates political awareness among students and help them live as useful and functional members of the society. It is also worthy of reference that, the senior secondary school civic education curriculum is seriously oriented towards the development of political awareness.

The main objective of the Nigerian government introducing civic education in the senior secondary schools is to use the subject as a tool to develop students' knowledge and skills regarding voting, governmental roles, citizens rights, duties, values, community services, ecological activism and social networking for future

citizenship engagement (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). The ultimate goal is for students to have a solid understanding of civic knowledge through civic education so that they can participate fully politically as engaged citizens in this present democratic dispensation. One of the ways of achieving these laudable objectives is through the lecture method.

Lecture Method

The manner and style by which the teacher presents his materials to the learner and engages them in the task of learning is referred to as teaching methodology. Teaching methods concern the strategies teachers use to meet teaching objectives, including instructional organization and techniques, subject matter and the use of teaching tools and materials Ameh and Dantani (2012), observed that teaching methodology is very vital in any teaching-learning situation and the method adopted by the teacher may promote or hinder learning. There exist a number of teaching methods, but for this purpose, the lecture method which is one of them will be the main focus. The lecture method is normally used in the context of tertiary education or trainings, but here, it will be taken to cover any situation in which a teacher or instructor talks to a class of pupils, students or trainees.

The lecture method is a form of expository teaching method which includes verbal communication in which a teacher or an expert presents information without a close interaction taking place between the teacher or expert and the learner or trainee. Abdullahi (2009), posit that it is often referred to as the ‘talk-and-chalk’ method. It is the most commonly used traditional method of teaching, yet, regarded as ineffective and inefficient in the teaching-learning process. This method is derived from the commonly held notion that in the teacher-student relation, the teacher as an embodiment of knowledge, dishes out what he knows to his students, that means, the teacher transmits his knowledge to his students and they are expected to see and hear him clearly and take down notes if necessary. This makes the method unusual among educationists and yet very popular. It is a situation in which a teacher talks to a class of students in the secondary school while they listen and sometimes take down notes. Despite the availability of other teaching methods, the lecture method still holds a central position in many levels of education and may very well continue to do so for a considerable time to come because of its convenience and cost effectiveness. Hence, according to Sola and Ojo (2017), it is primarily used to introduce students to a new subject, it also a viable method of summarizing main points. This is in agreement with Chilwant (2012), who also opined that the teacher must introduce the topic, summarize the main points of the learning activities and stimulate further learning. All these activities must use the lecture method.

It must be admitted that there are situations in which it appears to be inevitable that the lecture must be used because obviously, teaching include communication of information. The teacher must present new information or explain certain events or things. He must find it necessary at times to arouse students’ interests especially where resources and time are limited, therefore, the lecture method becomes absolutely unavoidable (Aibangbe, 2017). The strength of the lecture method is, it is useful when introducing new subject matter or presenting overview summaries to students as earlier stated and the teacher can cover large lots of contents in a short space of time (Nyamida, 2020). It is important to note that anything that has advantages also has disadvantages, but in thus paper emphasis is more on the advantages of lecture method which are as follows:

1. It explains materials that students are having difficulty learning on their own.
2. It can be very cost effective in terms of staff/students ratio.
3. It summarizes or synthesizes information after discussion or inquiry.
4. It is popular with many teaching staff.
5. It provides alternative points of view or clarifies issues in preparation for discussion.
6. It is useful when large number of students need to receive the same information at the same time with explanation and briefings.
7. It introduces a topic before students read about it on their own or give instruction on how to perform a task.
8. It presents information and motivates students’ interest in a subject.
9. It is used to give the maximum amount of information in a limited time.
10. It is the cultural norm in the teaching profession in many countries.

Despite argument against the lecture method, it is still the dominant method of teaching in all levels of education. That is why it is needed in creating political awareness among civic education senior secondary schools in Nigeria.

Political Awareness

The degree of awareness politically of individuals in any community affects the development of that community. Goren (2012) sees political awareness as intellectual or cognitive engagement with public affairs as an involvement that is indicated by factual information about government that has gotten into peoples' mind. Ekpenyong (2013) defined political awareness as knowledge about political events, campaigns, parties, elections and salient issues of political sophistication. To Kuotsu (2016), political awareness means access to political information, political participation, media exposure, interest in politics and education with political information being the best indicator of all. Political awareness indicates the propensity to participate politically, because without political awareness, effective civic participation is unlikely to occur in the first place. (Abdo-Katsipis, 2017).

Political awareness can be seen as creating political consciousness and civic roles of individuals in the society. Political awareness is a necessity for an individual to further understand the actions and the decisions of the government. It is important for students to develop political awareness as they will inevitably be involved in politics, whether as voters, as representatives or even as officials (Harzog, 2018). From the above definitions therefore, political awareness can be seen as those learning experiences in school which are means of directing students on how to acquire political information, political opinions, political socialization, political literacy, political culture, socialization, knowledge of political concepts and facts, political interests and civic competence on identifying and performing their political rights, duties and responsibilities.

The importance of political awareness for electoral participation of secondary school students in Nigeria need hardly be overemphasized because of the following:

- Political awareness is considered as necessary to the life of Nigerians in this current political dispensation where people live in a state of political stagnation, in that, they no longer show interest in political affairs of the country. The Nigerian youths have diverted their attention to irrelevant issues in the society, hence, creating political awareness among secondary school students through civic education is a step in the right direction (Barwani, 2006).
- Political awareness has been shown to play a significant role in explaining variation in political participation. The higher the political awareness, the higher would be the level of participation in electoral activities. Certain level of political awareness is indispensable for students' political activities. The students need to keep themselves informed about political issues, functions of political institutions and more importantly their political rights and their roles as political participants.
- It is necessary for students to have some awareness not only of the political institutions and processes, but also about the issues in politics, because people, who are unfamiliar with the politics and related issues in their environment, would be less interested to participate.
- Students' interest in politics is important because, it is interest that motivates them to follow political events and acquire information (Kuotsu, 2016). Students who are interested in politics will try to acquire political information that will ultimately lead to a higher level political participation. Political awareness of students is mostly influenced by the information they get from different sources. The school is one of such sources through civic education.
- Creating political awareness in students makes them to be aware of their rights and the proper usage of such rights. Understanding politics or specifically, the topics in their political environment for analysis and debate is a definite way to navigate students' moral and ideological compass. The aim is for them to be aware of their fundamental rights and freedom as they are the most significant elements of the state.
- In order to respond to the needs of young people and to guarantee that their basic human rights are recognized and enforced, young people active and meaningful participation in their societies' democratic practices and processes is of crucial importance. However, the level of political awareness

and participation among students in secondary schools in Nigeria has not been fully studied and as a result, some are still not knowledgeable of their political functions as members of the Nigerian society.

Influence of Lecture Method on Political Awareness among Civic Education Student in Senior Secondary Schools in Nigeria

Civic education is expected to introduce students to the process of democratic socialization and promote support for a democratic culture among them. In civic education where ideas, concepts, principles and theories need to be imparted to students, the use of the lecture method is very tempting since the teacher has new information and explanations of certain events or things the students need to have (Ololobou, 2010). The teacher must help the students gain better understanding of the subject, topic or event. He would need to arouse their interest and involve them creatively in developing the lesson. All these can be done effectively through the lecture method.

The lecture method can help to summarize the ideas, concepts such as citizenship, democracy, values, responsibilities, apathy, human rights, etc. Not only that, it will help to link previous topics covered in previous lessons with present topics at the beginning of the lesson using the chalk board; asking main points of the present topics from student before starting the lesson; limiting content of each lesson to avoid cognitive overload; using examples and demonstrations to frequently illustrate concepts; encourage students to ask questions and disagree over issues; providing summaries of what have been learned from time to time, to mention a few.

Similarly, for the purpose of conceptualizing information in civic education in order to create awareness politically among secondary school students, the lecture method can be considered to be a very efficient method of consolidating and communicating dispersed information timely and inexpensively, because, it can accommodate both large and small number of students (Nyamida, 2020).

In using the lecture method, emphasis is on mastering the subject matter and the sequence of instruction which are built from top to down with the most inclusive concepts, principles and prepositions presented first, where material are learned from concrete to abstract, simple to complex. As a result, simple concepts in civic education such as democracy, election, constitution, voters' apathy, citizenship etc are taught first through lecture method before students are taught how to acquire them in creating political awareness in them. It is also important to note that, these students in senior secondary schools who are about to finish their secondary education are already maturing into adulthood, they can now vote and be voted for. Hence, for them to participate in the political scene of the Nigerian society, they need to master the subject matter of political awareness and this they can achieve effectively and efficiently through lecture method in civic education. This also explains why civic education was introduced into senior secondary schools in Nigeria by the Nigerian Government.

Haven seen the influence of the lecture method in acquiring political awareness among civic education students in senior secondary schools in Nigeria, it is important to note that if lecture method is effectively with adequate instructional materials, field trips, it will go a long way in creating a better understanding of political happenings in the environment through civic education among senior secondary school students in Nigeria. Which is what is desperately needed in this present democratic dispensation.

CONCLUSION

It can be seen that though the lecture method has been heavily criticized over the years in the teaching learning process, it is a very effective and valuable tool in creating political awareness through civic education among senior secondary school students in Nigeria, if it is designed to be interactive and engaging. Therefore, it can contribute to a more informed and engaged citizenry in Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the discussion so far, the followings are recommended:

- Lecture method should be combined with interactive methods such as discussion, debate, inquiry methods to mention a few by the teachers of civic education. When these methods are incorporated into the lessons, the students' engagement and promotion of political awareness can be achieved adequately.
- The teacher must be well prepared before the lesson and most words and ideas which are familiar to the students should be taught with adequate and appropriate instructional materials. The teacher should present the lesson systematically by adopting a suitable order and must not present the lesson in a rush.
- After a lesson on political awareness, students should be taken out to visit political institutions to have firsthand knowledge and information and ask questions on their method of operation from the sources.
- There is the need for the students to enact the political concepts and political processes in Nigeria both the positive and negative sides during the lesson with the teacher leading the students during the lesson.
- The lecture method used during the lesson should be such that stimulates the critical thinking of the students about political issues, encouraging them to ask question make assumptions and develop their own informed opinion.
- The lecture method should be used to combat misinformation and propaganda that can lead to unhealthy democratic values among students

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