
ISSUES CONTRIBUTING TO STUDENTS NEGATIVE OR POSITIVE ATTITUDE
TOWARDS THE STUDY OF CIVIC EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS
IN ENUGU EDUCATION ZONE.

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ABSTRACT

The study of civic education in secondary schools has been a topic of interest, however, there are varying attitudes towards this subject. In Enugu Education Zone, students' attitudes towards civic education have been observed to range from negative to positive. These attitudes are influenced by various contributing factors which need to be addressed in order to improve students' understanding and appreciation of civic education. Such factors include the teaching methods used, the relevance of the subject to students' lives, and the role of teachers in promoting positive attitudes towards civic education. By identifying and addressing these issues, it is possible to create a more positive learning environment for civic education in secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone. A survey research design was used for the study. The study was conducted in Enugu South Local Government Area of Enugu State. The population of the study consists of all the JS1 –JS3 students in the Government Secondary Schools in Enugu South L.G.A which is eight thousand six hundred and seventy five (8685) students. Sample of two hundred and forty (240) junior students was drawn randomly from six (6) selected schools sampled out of the fifteen government secondary schools in the area of the study. The instrument for data collection was structured questionnaire. The instrument was validated by experts. A reliability index of 0.75 was obtained indicating that the instrument was highly reliable. The questionnaire was administered to the respondents by the researchers. The entire completed questionnaires were collected from the respondents after they have been filled at the spot. Data were analyzed using mean score

KEYWORDS: ISSUES, ATTITUDE, NEGATIVE, CIVIC, EDUCATION.

Introduction

In recent years, there has been a significant concern about the attitudes of secondary school students towards the study of civic

education. This is especially prevalent in the Enugu education zone, where both positive and negative attitudes have been observed. To address this issue, it is important to

identify the underlying issues that contribute to these attitudes. This study aims to identify and analyze the factors that affect students' attitudes towards civic education in the Enugu education zone.

One of the key contributing factors to negative attitudes towards civic education is the lack of understanding of the subject matter. Students may find the subject difficult to grasp, leading to frustration and disinterest. Furthermore, the curriculum for civic education may not be engaging enough for students, resulting in a lack of motivation to learn. Additionally, the quality of teaching and the methods used by educators may also play a role in students' attitudes towards the subject.

On the other hand, positive attitudes towards civic education may stem from a sense of civic responsibility among students. Those who feel a sense of duty towards their community and society may be more interested and engaged in learning about civic education. Moreover, students who have positive role models, such as teachers or family members, who demonstrate a strong sense of civic duty, may also develop a positive attitude towards the subject. Furthermore, external factors such as socio-economic status, cultural beliefs, and the political climate may also influence students' attitudes towards civic education. Students from lower socio-economic backgrounds may not see the relevance of civic education in their daily lives, while those from certain cultures may have conflicting beliefs about certain aspects of civic education. Moreover, the current political climate may also have an impact on how students perceive the value of civic education.

Therefore, there are various issues that contribute to students' attitudes towards civic education in the Enugu education zone. By understanding these factors, educators and policymakers can work towards creating a more engaging and effective curriculum for civic education. Moreover, promoting a sense of civic responsibility among students and addressing external factors can also play a role in promoting positive attitudes towards the subject.

Students' Attitude towards the Study of Civic Education

“Attitude is a developmental state of organism valence created by psycho-biological processes, exerting a motivational influence upon the individual's responsive behavior in situations directly and indirectly related to it”. He further contended that attitude possesses intellectual, biological, social and emotional components derived from experience, which exercises a determining influence upon behavior. Numerous experiences that show in individual, certain stimuli are responsible for satisfying state of affairs that predispose him to readily accept such stimulations as beautiful. Biological limitation and visual impairments hinder this appreciation. The school aims at helping learners to perceive the aesthetic structure of objects to sense and love beauty whenever encountered. This creates positive attitude. Children learn such appreciation when they perceive themselves as constituting part of the experience, teachers who are sensitive to beauty in nature and art can influence the development of appreciation of expression in others, through subtle teaching, comments and facial and body movements as they share their aesthetic experiences with the learners. In consonance to his proposition, Johnson (2013) adds sharing something of value,

with students (such as humor and personal experiences) listening to them with empathy, treating them with warmth and acceptance, showing interest in the subject, communicating positive expectations and encouragement and ensuring that students set realistic goals. Positive attitude enhance learning as they create interest in the tasks viewed as beautiful. This attitude could be generalized to the teacher, other subjects, other teachers and the entire school or even the education system. Negative attitude creates dislike and leads to opposite responses.

To buttress these ideas, Mkp (2014) sees students' attitude as a "learned internal state which influences choices of personal actions towards some category of persons, objects or events". He further opined that attitude is a desire or tendency to approach or avoid something, persons or situations. It has intensity and direction. Attitude affects instructional communication through the various components of the process. Charley (2009) defined attitude as "a person's position or disposition with regards to an individual or thing". It can be viewed as a predisposition to perceive things, events, persons and action. Our attitude towards a thing or event determines our relationship with the situation, he contended. Here, attitude has been conceptualized to be the manner and state of mind, behavior or conduct regarding matters and indicating opinions and purpose. Again, Nwanama (2014) opined that attitude of students underlies behavior in such a fundamental way that if we wish to understand behavior, it is necessary to first understand the nature of attitude. Attitudes are formed as a result of experience and can hardly be represented as a single construct. Hence, they are said to have cognitive, affective and behavioral

dimension. Nwanama (2014) had earlier demonstrated the multi-dimensional rather than uni-dimensional nature of this construct when he related sex, age, educational and other background factors to it. Finally, students' attitude which is an expression of likeness or dislikeness plays a significant role in learning all subjects, particularly economics. Since economics involves a little of mathematics in learning it, students' attitude is a major factor because their thinking or behavior towards it will determine the levels of their diligence and achievement. In essence, without positive attitude, it is almost impossible to perform well in economics.

Students' Involvement in Ethno-Economic Activities

Students' involvement refers to being involved in activities that are connected to learning. The liberating factor in this definition is the freedom of the classroom. The learning does not have to be restricted to a classroom setting, but can encompass all areas. According to Nwaoja (2013) in his "A Development Theory for Higher Education" opined: "Quite simply, student involvement refers to the amount of physical and psychological Energy that the student devotes to the academic experience". Freud (2008) believed that people invest psychological energy in objects and persons outside of themselves. In other words, people can cater for their friends, families, schoolwork and jobs. According to Freud's definition, involvement here refers to people placing lots of energy into outside activities. This energy translates into learning. By catering, or investing emotional energy on their schoolwork, they become more involved in the schoolwork and thus are more psychologically invested. Involvement refers to investment of physical and

psychological energy in various objects. It speaks how much physical and mental energy you put into an activity. Regardless of its object, involvement occurs along a continuum; that is, different students manifest different degree of involvement in a given object.

For the purpose of this study, students' involvement in ethno – economic activities such as drawing scale of preference to rank their demands, saving money in the bank, attending quizzes, debates and economic conferences, bargaining for the prices of goods and services in the market will help sharpen and ginger positive attitude towards economic. As Austin (2014) put it, “the amount of student learning and personal development associated with any educational programme is directly proportional to the quality and quantity of student involvement in that programme.” The more and better the student involvement is the more and better the student learning will be. The effectiveness of any educational policy or practice is directly related to the capacity of that policy or practice to increase student involvement. To ginger positive attitude towards economics, student involvement in ethno – economic activities should be encouraged.

It turned out that virtually every significant effect could be rationalized in terms of the involvement concept, that is, every positive factor was likely to increase student involvement in school experience, whereas every negative factor was likely to reduce involvement (Eche 2010).

Students' Interest and their Attitude towards the Study of Civic Education

According to Ito (2014), the mental state called interest has received much attention in recent literature. Psychologists

have disputed as to the exact meaning to be assigned to the term and the precise nature of mental state. Interest has been variously defined as a kind of consciousness accompanying and stimulating attention, a feeling pleasant or painful directing attention – the pleasurable or painful aspect of a process of attention and as identical with attention itself. Thus it may be said; “I attend to what interests me”, and again that to be interested and to attend to are identical. To Eze and Joe (2011) in their description of normative interest sees interest in the sphere of action that has a legalistic connotation. According to them, in the sense of the usage of the term, they refer to action to which one has right, actions that are appropriate and worthwhile for the person concerned. In the school system, they contend that the teacher in the normative sense of the use interests ought to pursue the concerns of his student. His actions and teacher – pupil relationship in the course of doing his job as a teacher should be intent in guidelines; and he is indeed following the curriculum? What are the expected achievements of the programme and is he equipped to achieve those set goals? Consideration of interests in this sense refers to those aspects of school activities that are beneficial to the children to which, by rules and regulations of the school system, the school pupils have a right to benefit from.

Again, Onah (2013) also described the psychological usage of the term “interest” as what a child in school for instance is interested in, what he pays attention to, and what he is inclined to participate in, take notice of or even contribute to. They further added that there is a reference to interest in a more dispositional sense, dispositions that are somewhat permanent as in the case of hobbies like reading, gardening, walking,

and singing. There are activities we could be interested in and disposed to in a somewhat permanent way. Furthermore, Maco (2014) defined interest as “a preference for one activity over another.” This definition emphasizes two points: first, interest involves the selection and ranking of activities along a like – dislike dimension. One student, for instance, may prefer listening to records to working arithmetic problems. Second, interest involves activities or behaviors engaged in by individuals. Interest is expressed by actions verbs, such as reading a book, playing a phonograph or planting flowers. Regardless of the method used to measuring interests, the components of indicating preferences for activities along a like dislike dimension will be present.

When a student completes an assignment that does not meet the expected criteria give him or her opportunity or more to tackle the task again, with guidelines on how to achieve the desired result. Evaluate students' work as soon as possible after a task completion, and be sure that feedback is clear and constructive. Research has it that the teachers who are more successful in engaging students develop activities with students' basic psychological and intellectual needs in mind, will motivate them to study economics eagerly (Odoh 2012).

Theoretical Framework

Following theories were advanced to support the research topic:

- The Stimulus- Response Theory of Pavlov, Thorndike and Skinner.

The stimulus – response theory split into classical and operant conditioning theories of Ivan Pavlov, Edward Lee Thorndike and

Burrhus Skinner, which has it that all responses are subject to stimulus within the environment, supports the age, gender and students' attitude towards economics. Generally, students have a strong aversion for mathematics and mathematics related courses such as economics, so to be able to develop their interest for economics one has to pair what they (students) like by praising every effort they make in solving any economics problem in the class. Edward Lee Thorndike (1874-1949) was one of the earliest American educational psychologist and the first that systematically carried out experiments to study how non- reflexive behaviors can be modified from experience. In his operant conditioning of stimulus-response theory, he considered the strengthening of the connection between stimuli and responses as being responsible for the formation of habits. He performed some experiments to demonstrate how this happens and used an apparatus called puzzle or problem box where he placed hungry animals such as rats, cats and tested them to create a stronger stimulus – response connection from them. The educational implication of Thorndike operant conditioning theory as it relates to study is that the teacher is to ensure that once an appropriate response is made, it is important to reward it. Continuously rewarding the correct response ensures the establishment and strengthening of the stimulus response connection or bond.

Research Question

This research question guided the study

What are the factors that influence students to develop positive or negative attitude towards the study of civic education?

Method

A survey research design was used for the study. The study was conducted in Enugu South Local Government Area of Enugu State. The population of the study consists of all the JS1 –JS3 students in the Government Secondary Schools in Enugu South L.G.A which is eight thousand six hundred and seventy five (8685) students.

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For the sake of taking decision, any mean that is equal to or above 2.5 is considered agreed while any mean below 2.5 is disagreed.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Research Question

What are the factors that influence students to develop positive or negative attitude towards the study of civic education?

Table; Mean responses on the factors that influence students to develop positive or negative attitude towards the study of civic education.

SN	ITEMS	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	N	$\sum FX$	X	Remarks
1	Maturation	150	90	-	-	240	870	3.6	A
2	Physical factor	140	100	-	-	240	860	3.6	A
3	Home influence	200	40	-	-	240	920	3.8	A
4	Teacher influence	120	120	-	-	240	840	3.5	A
5	Social environment	180	60	-	-	240	900	3.8	A

From the computed mean in table, it shows that items 1-5 have the mean score of 3.6, 3.6, 3.8, 3.5 and 3.8 respectively which shows that the respondents agreed on the listed factors that influence students to develop positive or negative attitude towards the study of civic education.

Findings in the analysis showed that maturation, physical factors, home influence, teacher influence and social environment are some of the factors that influence students to develop positive or negative attitude towards the study of civic education.

Summary

The researcher summarized that;

1. Students tend to have negative attitudes towards the study of civic education
2. Home influence, teachers, the government and the curriculum are some of the factors influencing students' attitude towards the study of civic education
3. The school has a big role to play in ensuring that students develop a positive and friendly attitude towards learning and understanding of civic education.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it was observed that the factors that influence the attitude of subjects towards the study of civic education are interest, shortage of teachers and instructions, parental socio-economic status, gender and shortage of guidance and counselors in secondary schools.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made by the researchers:

1. Government should ensure adequate provision of instructional materials for the schools, while adequate utilization and maintenance of these materials should be ensured. This will improve the learning outcome of students in schools.
2. The idea of anybody can teach or be a teacher should be removed, therefore, government, at both state and federal levels, should employ competent and qualified teachers with education background to fill the vacancies in the

public secondary schools, thereby, putting the right peg in the right hole. This will remove the idea of assigning people from another field to take up the teaching job.

3. Teachers should continue to have positive attitude towards teaching and towards their students. They should also try to study the situation and the students to employ the best method to adopt while teaching the students in different occasions.
4. The students should also have positive attitude towards the subject and the teacher to enhance their learning outcome in schools.

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