

Perception and Attitude of Civic Education Teachers on Civic Competence of Senior Secondary School Students in Osun State Nigeria

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 B. A. Adeyemi

Institute of Education Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife Osun State Nigeria.
Email: adeyemibabs2003@yahoo.com Tel: 08033819274

ABSTRACT

The study examined the perception of Civic Education teachers on Civic competence of senior secondary school students. It also examined teachers' perception towards Civic competence of senior secondary school students. It further determined the difference in teachers' perception and attitude on civic competence of senior secondary school students based on gender. The study adopted survey research design. Teachers of Civic Education in senior secondary schools in Osun State constituted the population for the study. Three hundred (300) teachers constituted the sample size for the study using multi-stage sampling procedure and simple random sampling techniques. An instrument titled: 'Perception and Attitude of Teachers on Civic Competence Questionnaire' (PATCCQ) was used for data collection. Two research questions and two hypotheses emanated from the study. Data collected were analyzed using frequency counts, simple percentages and Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA). The results among others showed that majority of the teachers (67.0%) had positive attitude towards civic competence of their students. Also, there was a significant difference in teachers' perception on civic competence of senior secondary school students based on gender ($F = 8.725, p < 0.05$) and religion ($F = 2.739, p < 0.05$) respectively. The study concluded that teachers have good perception and positive attitude towards civic competence of senior secondary school students in the study area in Osun State.

Keywords: Perception, Attitude, Civic Education, Teachers, Civic Competence, Students.

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Highlights of this paper

- The study examined the perception of Civic Education teachers on Civic competence of senior secondary school students.
- The study concluded that teachers have good perception and positive attitude towards civic competence of senior secondary school students in the study area in Osun State.

1. INTRODUCTION

Civic Education is a social science subject designed to teach virtues of good citizenship. Civic education brings broad understanding and awareness to the students helping them to understand and know their value, duty and right in their society, community or country at large. In its broadest definition, Civic education means all the processes that affect people's beliefs, commitments, capabilities and actions as members or prospective members of communities. According to [Utulu \(2011\)](#) Civic Education becomes very relevant since it essentially seeks to introduce learners to the process of democratic socialization by promoting support for democratic behaviours and values among citizens. Civic Education need not be intentional or deliberate; institutions and communities transmit values and norms without meaning to. It may not be beneficial, that is, sometimes people are civically educated in ways that disempower them or impact harmful values and goals. Civic Education is organized and systematic educational activities that aim at providing young people and adults with the necessary knowledge and skills for participation in political and social life.

Civic competence refers to the qualities of a competent active citizen. Competence is a complex combination of knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and desire which lead to effective, embodied human action in the world ([Hoskins and Crick, 2010](#)). The term 'Active Citizen' combines participatory and representative elements and has been defined as participation in civil society, community and/or political life, characterized by mutual respect and non-violence and in accordance with human rights and democracy ([Hoskins, 2006](#)). This definition qualifies and restricts acceptable participation to that which is based on democratic values and human rights. The quality of performance of active citizenship is also based on the knowledge and skills of the individual who may or may not be able to influence a decision.

Civic competences of citizens are a necessity for the survival of democracy. Legal rights and institutions alone are rarely sufficient for a democracy to flourish ([Honohan, 2002](#)) and that the quality of democratic governance relies on the civic virtues and engagement of their citizens ([Putnam, 2002](#)). Vibrant democracies require active citizens to monitor the process and be willing and able to act to create or resist change ([Crick, 2003](#)).

Assessing civic competence among school-going youth constitutes a method of evaluating learning and socialization outcomes stemming from student experiences at school, home and within civil society. It may also increase understanding of the role played by the education system and wider socialization settings in promoting democracy. Civic competence assessment requires the development of indicators in:

- Citizenship values e.g understanding the importance of volunteering, voting and protesting;
- Social justice values e.g attitudes towards women's rights, minority rights and nationals of other ethnic groups;
- Participatory attitudes e.g interest in participating and ability to influence actions in the community and political life, and
- Cognitions about democratic institutions e.g knowledge and skills such as interpreting campaign messages.

Perception is a personal manifestation of how one views the world which is coloured by many sociocultural elements. No wonder ([Markus and Kitayama, 1991](#)) concluded that people in different cultures have strikingly

different perceptions of self and others. In another dimension, McDonalds (2012) defined perception as an individual's or group's unique way of viewing a phenomenon that involves the processing of stimuli and incorporates memories and experiences in the process of understanding. He went further by identifying three essential attributes of perception to include (a) sensory or cognition of the experience (b) personal experiences that create a lens for interpreting and understanding a phenomenon and (c) comprehension that can lead to a response.

Attitudes on the other hand are defined as mental state in response to a stimulus which involves emotion and dispositions to act in a certain way. Attitudes are usually defined as a disposition or tendency to respond positively or negatively towards a certain thing (idea, object, person, situation). They encompass, or are closely related to, our opinions and beliefs and are based upon our experiences. Since attitudes often relate in some way to interaction with others, they represent an important link between cognitive and social psychology. As far as instruction is concerned, a great deal of learning involves acquiring for changing attitudes. Hovland *et al.* (1953) provided one of the first major theories of attitude change, developed in framework of Hull's learning theory, and oriented towards the effects of persuasive communication. According to Hovland *et al.* theory, changes in opinions can result in attitude change depending upon the presence or absence of rewards. The learning of new attitudes is no different in nature than any other verbal or motor skill, except that opinions relate to a single proposition whereas other skills involve a series of propositions. The acceptance of a new opinion (and hence attitude formation) is dependent upon the incentives that are offered in the communication. The extent to which Civic Education has impacted the lives of the students can be determined by investigating Civic Education teachers' perception and attitude towards the civic competence of their students.

1.1. Statement of Problem

Civic Education, one of the compulsory subjects in both junior and senior secondary schools in Nigeria, is an academic discipline which aim to inculcate in students the right values, positive attitude and behaviors that are considered acceptable to the society. For its aims and objectives as a discipline to be achieved as stipulated in the Nigerian National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014) teachers who are the dispenser of knowledge because of the pedagogical training are expected to be role models and thereby provide basis for imparting and inculcating the right values in learners; hence this study.

1.2. Objectives

The objectives of this study are to:

1. Examine the perception of teachers on civic competence of senior secondary school students in Osun State.
2. Examine the attitude of teachers towards civic competence of senior secondary school students in Osun State.
3. Determine the difference in teachers' perception on civic competence of senior secondary school students based on gender.
4. Determine difference in teachers' perception on civic competence of senior secondary school students based on religion.

1.3. Research Questions

1. What is the perception of teachers on civic competence of senior secondary school students in Osun State?
2. What is the attitude of teachers towards civic competence of senior secondary school students in Osun State?

1.4. Hypotheses

1. *There is no significant difference in teachers' perception on civic competence of senior secondary school students based on gender.*
2. *There is no significant difference in teachers' perception on civic competence of senior secondary school students based on religion.*

2. METHOD

This study employed a survey research design. Survey research design is a research design in which data is collected and analysed for a group of people and items under study considered to be a good representative of the entire group. Survey design was adopted for this study as it allowed information to be gathered from a reasonable sample of respondents that provided data that was subsequently analysed in order to determine the perception and attitude of Civic Education teachers on civic competence of senior secondary school students in Osun State.

The population for the study comprised senior secondary school Civic Education teachers. A total of 300 respondents were selected as the sample for the study through multistage sampling procedure. From the 3 senatorial districts in Osun State, 2 Local Government Areas (LGAs) were selected from each senatorial district using simple random sampling technique. 5 schools were equally selected from the LGAs using simple random sampling technique, making a total of thirty (30) schools. From each school, 10 teachers were selected using random sampling technique, making a total of three hundred (300) teachers. An instrument titled 'Perception and Attitude of Teachers on Civic Competence Questionnaire' (PATCCQ) was used for data collection.

The instrument consisted of three sections: Section A was on socio-demographic variables of teachers with seven (7) items in which teachers are expected to tick as it applies to them. Section B consisted of ten (10) items on teachers' perception of civic competence of students. It ranges from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree while Section C focused on attitude of teachers on civic competence of students. This equally consisted of six (6) items ranges from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree.

The items were rated using 4-point Likert Scale: SA – Strongly Agree, A – Agree, D – Disagree and SD – Strongly Disagree. The instrument was validated through expert judgments. This was in a bid to ensuring that the items of the instrument were clear and unambiguous in order to deduce the desirable, appropriate and adequate information from the respondents. Field testing of PATCCQ was carried using forty (40) teachers who were not part of the selected ones for the study.

Cronbach's alpha was used to measure the internal consistency of the instrument which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.70. The instrument was administered by the researcher with the help of two trained research assistants after which the questionnaires were retrieved immediately. Data collected were analysed using frequency counts, simple percentages and Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA).

3. RESULTS

Research question one: What is the perception of teachers on civic competence of senior secondary school students in Osun State?

To answer this question, data collected on the perception of teachers on civic competence of students were subjected to descriptive analysis and the result is presented in [Table 1](#).

Table-1. Descriptive analysis of teachers' perception on civic competence of senior secondary school students.

Perception	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Poor	11	3.7
Fair	42	14.0
Good	150	50.0
Very good	97	32.3
Total	300	100.0

Result in Table 1 showed the descriptive analysis of teachers' perception on the civic competence of senior secondary school students in the study area. It can be observed from the table that 11 (3.7%) of the teachers have poor perception, and 42 (14.0%) have fair perception. Majority of the teachers, 150 (50.0%) have good perception while 97 (32.3%) of them have a very good perception on the civic competence of the students.

Research question two: What is the attitude of teachers towards civic competence of senior secondary school students in Osun State?

To answer this question, data collected on the attitude of teachers on civic competence of students were subjected to descriptive analysis and the result is presented in Table 2.

Table-2. Descriptive analysis of teachers' attitude on civic competence of senior secondary school students.

Attitude	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Negative	58	19.3
Neutral	41	13.7
Positive	201	67.0
Total	300	100.0

Result in Table 2 showed the descriptive analysis of teachers' attitude on the civic competence of senior secondary school students in the study area. It can be deduced from the table that 58 (19.3%) of the teachers have negative attitude while the majority of them, 201 (67.0%) have positive attitude on the civic competence of the students.

Hypothesis one: There is no significant difference in teachers' perception on civic competence of senior secondary school students based on gender and religion.

In order to test this hypothesis, data collected on teachers' perception on civic competence of senior secondary school students based on gender and religion were subjected to Multivariate Analysis and the result is presented in Table 3.

Table-3. Multivariate analysis (MANOVA) of the difference in perception of teachers on civic competence of senior secondary school students based on gender and religion.

Tests of between-subjects effects

Source	Dependent variable	Type III sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.	Partial eta squared
Corrected model	Gender	6.089 ^a	3	2.030	8.725	.000	.081
	Religion	4.374 ^b	3	1.458	2.739	.044	.027
Intercept	Gender	239.761	1	239.761	1030.665	.000	.777
	Religion	315.736	1	315.736	593.171	.000	.667
Teachers' perception	Gender	6.089	3	2.030	8.725	.000	.081
	Religion	4.374	3	1.458	2.739	.000	.027
Error	Gender	68.858	296	.233			
	Religion	157.556	296	.532			
Total	Gender	762.000	300				
	Religion	959.000	300				
Corrected total	Gender	74.947	299				
	Religion	161.930	299				

a. R Squared = .081 (Adjusted R Squared = .072).

b. R Squared = .027 (Adjusted R Squared = .017).

Results in Table 3 showed that there is significant difference in teachers' perception on civic competence of senior secondary school students based on gender and religion at $F=8.725$, $p<0.05$ for gender and $F=2.739$, $p<0.05$ for religion. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that no significant difference existed in teachers' perception on civic competence is hereby rejected.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in teachers' attitude on civic competence of senior secondary school students based on gender and religion.

In order to test this hypothesis, data collected on teachers' attitude on civic competence of senior secondary school students based on gender and religion were subjected to Multivariate Analysis and the result is presented in Table 4.

Table-4. Multivariate analysis (MANOVA) of the difference in teachers' attitude on civic competence of senior secondary school students based on gender and religion.

Tests of between-subjects effects

Source	Dependent variable	Type III sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.	Partial eta squared
Corrected model	Gender	.071 ^a	2	.035	.140	.869	.001
	Religion	.139 ^b	2	.070	.128	.880	.001
Intercept	Gender	437.842	1	437.842	1736.726	.000	.854
	Religion	520.109	1	520.109	954.769	.000	.763
Teachers' perception	Gender	.071	2	.035	.140	.869	.001
	Religion	.139	2	.070	.128	.880	.001
Error	Gender	74.876	297	.252			
	Religion	161.791	297	.545			
Total	Gender	762.000	300				
	Religion	959.000	300				
Corrected total	Gender	74.947	299				
	Religion	161.930	299				

a. R Squared = .001 (Adjusted R Squared = -.006).

b. R Squared = .001 (Adjusted R Squared = -.006).

Results in Table 3 showed that there is no significant difference in teachers' attitude on civic competence of senior secondary school students based on gender and religion at $F=0.140$, $p>0.05$ for gender and $F=0.128$, $p>0.05$ for religion. Hence, the null hypothesis stating that no significant difference existed in teachers' perception on civic competence is hereby not rejected.

4. DISCUSSION

The study showed that majority of the teachers had good perception and positive attitude of the civic competence of their students. This competence on the part of the students is the demonstration of acquired knowledge wherewith teachers are the major key in the transferring of such knowledge. This study is in line with the findings of Magelinskaite-Legkauskiene *et al.* (2017) who reported that teachers' perspective of social competence of students were significantly correlated with all aspects of teacher-assessed school adjustment measured in their study. This could not have been possible if the teachers sampled in their study were not having a good perception of their students' competence in the subject of study. By implication, teachers need to always adopt effective means of evaluating the lessons to gain an insight into the level of knowledge acquired and level of understanding of the concept by the students.

There was a significant difference in teachers' perception on civic competence of senior secondary school students based on gender and religion. This finding of this study runs alongside the submission of Mullola *et al.* (2012) who reported in their findings that teachers' ratings of the construct under study varied systematically by their gender and age. This result however contradicts the findings of Shah and Udgaonkar (2018) that gender or

age is not seen as a barrier in teaching until the teacher is active and interested in teaching and they felt, experience has a positive influence on teaching.

Also, there was no significant difference in teachers' attitude on civic competence on senior secondary school students based on gender and religion. Contrary to the findings of the research are findings of the studies conducted by Eraslan and Cakıcı (2011) and Erdamar *et al.* (2016) where it was revealed that the attitude towards teaching profession as regard the gender of the teachers differs significantly. However, the finding agrees with the results of the separate studies conducted by KapLan and Ipek (2002); Bulut (2011) and Farrukh and Shakoor (2018) where it was observed that there is no significant difference between the attitudes towards teaching profession of female and male teachers as well as female and male pre-service teachers.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it could be concluded that teachers have good perception and positive attitude towards civic competence of senior secondary school students in the study area in Osun State. This is a positive signal to the stakeholders that Civic Education as a subject is achieving its purpose of inclusion in the school subjects which is to inculcate in the students the knowledge of virtues of good citizenship.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Arising from the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- Since the students display and practice whatever knowledge acquired in school in the community, there is therefore the need to strengthen the relationship between the school and the community in which it is situated.
- Professionals in Social Studies education should be allowed to handle the subject for effective teaching on the part of teacher and better understanding on the part of students since no higher institution in Nigeria is presently running Civic Education as a course of study.

7. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Considering the sample size, 300 secondary school teachers may not be sufficient to make generalization about Osun State.

8. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

1. The study could be replicated in other states in order to confirm or refute its findings and to have a broader scope for generalizations.
2. Other variables such as school location, school type could be incorporated into further studies.

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