
POLITICAL EDUCATION AND DIVIDENDS
OF DEMOCRACY: SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS'
PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract

The study examined political education and dividends of democracy from the Social Studies teachers' perspectives. The study objective was to ascertain the relationship between political education and the dividends of democracy. The survey research design was adopted for the study, using a questionnaire titled "Political Education and Democracy Dividends Questionnaire" (PEDDQ) for data gathering. The sample for this study consisted of 120 Social studies teachers. The data gathered were interpreted using correlational statistics at the 0.05 significance level. The result revealed that there was a significant relationship between political education and dividend of democracy ($r= 0.105, p< 0.05$); there was a significant relationship between sources of political education and dividends of democracy ($r= 0.503, p< 0.05$). It was recommended amongst others that; communities and societies should put in place mechanisms for political education of their members to have an increasing awareness that would

enable them fully enjoy democracy dividends in their communities. Also adequate political education should be given to the people to foster democracy dividends.

Keywords: Political Education, Democracy, Dividends of Democracy, Social Studies, Social Studies Teachers' Perspectives.

Introduction

One of the primary problems facing Nigeria's political system today is the dearth of effective representation of the people in issues and matters affecting them. Political participation and involvement is an issue of complicated variables encompassing engagement in the decision-making means and process, implementation of proffered decisions, sharing and experiencing the benefits of taken and implemented decisions and monitoring the entire process. Comparing the present dispensation with the past, principally the immediate post-independent Nigeria, there seems presently a sudden withdrawal or disengagement of the citizenry from political participation (Nwankwo, 2012). Indeed, at present, there is a culture and pattern of everyone to himself or herself, which permeates the society including public servants and leaders thereby hampering the needed development.

Substantiating this viewpoint, Vincent (2011) notes that many or some Nigerians are in most cases uninformed and misinformed about government actions, policies and workings. He further emphasizes that some those who participate or are involved in elections and other political programmes do not clearly understand and comprehend the issues at stake. Falade (2014) equally observed that some Nigerians cast their vote wrongly because they were instructed to do so or disinterested in the electioneering and political process; while some stay away or abstain from the political participation process completely.

Another problem is that of a common feeling of despondency about our electoral system and election on the part of lots of Nigerians. A feeling and perception of alienation pervade the entire political environment of Nigeria. Apathy and helplessness according to Nwankwo (2012) permeate political life in Nigeria. It is this

apathy or indifference on the part of the people that stood in the path of massive citizens' political consciousness, while powerlessness or helplessness is indicated by the fact that majority of Nigerians seems not to be massively involved in political participation other than during elections which on several instances are plagued with challenges. As such, there is the belief that there's little or no control over what elected officials do as representatives of the people in between elections to the extent that many have lost confidence in politics, the electoral system and associated activities. As a result, they spend innumerable efforts in unproductive sectional, ethnic or tribal and religious squabble and disputes (Oladejo & Oni, 2017).

Political education is a process of emancipating the mental and attitudinal behaviour the citizens of a nation through sensitization of the citizen so to have an increasing or rising consciousness that would let them to wholly, actively and productively partake as well contribute to the developmental process of their immediate environment and the nation in general. For Asogwa (2017), political education refers to a continual and long-term process by which people acquire political cognition, attitude and behaviours. It is a process by which political tradition and culture are transmitted in a particular society which enables citizens to acquire the knowledge and skills essential for informed and effective citizenship. Political education in the perspective of Vincent (2011), is the process in which political attitudes, perceptions and behaviours are developed and moulded which though is not restricted to party politics such as voting, and electioneering campaign. In the view of the fact that good citizens are not born but made, civic knowledge and political education is the substratum of political participation and provision of democracy dividend (Nwankwo, 2012).

Dividend of democracy is commonly used to include every effort or determination towards the advancement and development of social interest. Democracy dividend implies the benefit/gains and positive deeds or gestures which the new democratic environment has ushered to a nation and society. This largely signifies an environment of improved conditions of living, security,

respect and regard for human right and peace. Okeshola and Igba (2012) asserted that the dividends of democracy are the advantages and the benefits of democracy. According to them, these benefits comprise rule of law, improved standard of living of the people, legitimacy/acceptability of the state, improved atmosphere of security, stability and peace, etc. In other words, democracy dividend is prerequisite for a nation's development. According to Iorun and Aondoakaa (2016) dividend of democracy refers to the benefit and positive signs which the new environment or atmosphere of democracy has ushered into the society and nation. Therefore, dividends of democracy are aimed at improving the lives of the people in the society and not in the leaders pursuing their interest. The objective of any government is directed at providing quality and a better life for the citizenry. The provision or delivery of infrastructures, employment opportunities, quality education, improved peace and security, enhanced agricultural sector and transportation system, etc, hence leading to better and quality life is seen or considered to be providing dividend of democracy (Oni, 2014).

To find solutions to these challenges, it is necessary to go beyond the usage of mere political propaganda/publicity through occasional jingles and adverts, media broadcast, convoy/motorcade shows, lessons and verbal arguments. Political propaganda nevertheless, imperative in any polity and society, should not be a substitute for real and genuine political education, which along with verbal arguments and lessons, also must be model and action-based. Political education cannot be attained by an abrupt jump. In contrast, it is a slow, systematic, deliberate and continual process of adjustment, orientation (enlightenment) and re-orientation (re-enlightenment) in principles and goals.

Several studies have focused on the effect of political education on dividends of democracy (Okeshola & Igba, 2012; Emmanuel, 2012; Oni, 2014; Oladejo & Oni, 2017). This suggests that the task and mission of development and nation-building rest primarily on those who are saddled and encumbered with the responsibility of piloting the activities and affairs of a nation and society. Leaders are to ensure the betterment of the masses,

providing and sustaining the needed infrastructures, sustaining peace, harmony, stability, guaranteeing equality in the distribution of resources, just treatment, fairness and justice for the downtrodden (Oladejo & Oni, 2017). Consequently, the focus of this study is specifically to ascertain the relationship between political education and dividends of democracy from the Social Studies teachers' perspectives.

Arguably, Nigeria still requires more commitments towards political education, that is the reason coordinated efforts and attempts by the citizens towards growth and development is generally unattainable as the people are disconnected from what the government is doing. Political awareness, that comes from political education, is contemplated as a necessity or inevitable to life in any society where people are in a state of intellectual immobility or stagnation and do not seem to be interested in political participation and/or political decision making (Asogwa, 2017).

Lack of political education is greatly connected with the predominance of electorates. Accordingly, the uninformed and unenlightened electorate (voters) tends to ignore or overlook issues such as unemployment (lack of jobs), infrastructure (development), insecurity, corruption and nepotism, and people living conditions. Their voting decisions are rather based on trivial considerations like party loyalty, social ties, ethnic and religious affiliations among others; rather than the delivery of democracy dividends. Politicians thus exploit the lack of knowledge and awareness of the voters to perpetuate and consolidate on the existing political tradition and culture to their personal gain.

Man is mutually the means and purpose for societal growth and development (Falade, 2014). Hence, the more those in the society are aware and educated of their abilities, skills and potentials, the more contribution and productivity is manifested in the field of development. This explains the motivation to examine political education and dividends of democracy, hence, this study.

Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between political education and dividends of democracy.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between sources of political education and dividends of democracy.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. It elicited the opinion of Social Studies teachers on the relationship between political education and dividends of democracy. The study population consisted of Social Studies teachers in government secondary schools in Delta State. The sample for this study consisted of one hundred and twenty (120) Social studies teachers using a simple random sampling technique. The survey instrument employed in the study was the questionnaire titled “Political Education and Democracy Dividends Questionnaire” (PEDDQ). The questionnaire contained two sections, section ‘A’, and ‘B’ Section ‘A’ contained personal data of the respondents. While section B contained 20 items which were structured using a rating scale of 1-4, Strongly Agreed (SA) 3, Agreed (A) 3, Disagreed (D) 1, and Strongly Disagreed (SD) 2. instrument of the study was face-validated by two specialists in Measurement and Evaluation, who corrected and modified the items for appropriateness, relevance and confirmed their applicability and suitability for data collection purposes. The reliability of the study instrument was also established using the test-re-test method. A reliability coefficient value of 0.80 using Pearson moment correlation coefficient was obtained. This was an indication that the instrument was reliable for the study. The direct delivery and retrieval technique was applied through the services of research assistants in collecting the data in far off schools to ensure a high rate of return. All the data generated were analysed using correlational statistics at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant relationship between political education and dividends of democracy.

Table 1: Correlation for the Relationship between Political Education and Dividends of Democracy.

		Political Education	Dividend of Democracy
Political Education	Pearson Correlation	1	.105*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.012
	N	120	120
Dividend of Democracy	Pearson Correlation	.105*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.012	
	N	120	120

In Table 1, the result shows that there is a significant relationship between political education and dividends of democracy. The correlation matrix table shows a positive correlation. The correlation matrix indicates a significance value of 0.105 at the level of significance $P < 0.05$ (2-tailed), thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. This, therefore, implies political education enhances dividends of democracy.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant relationship between sources of political education and dividends of democracy.

Table 2: Correlation for the Relationship between Sources of Political Education and Dividends of Democracy.

		Sources of Political Education	Dividend of Democracy
Sources of Political Education	Pearson Correlation	1	.503**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	120	120
Dividend of Democracy	Pearson Correlation	.503**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	120	120

In Table 2, the result shows that there is a significant relationship between sources of political education and dividends of democracy, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected. The correlation matrix table shows a correlation coefficient of $r= 0.503$ between sources of political education and dividends of democracy. Although the correlation is moderate, it follows that sources of political education are effective and a tool for dividends of democracy. This implies that there is a positive correlation between sources of political education and dividends of democracy. Thus, sources of political education stimulate dividends of democracy

Discussion

The result of hypothesis one revealed that there is a significant relationship between political education and dividends of democracy. The finding of this study indicates that political education has significant effect on dividends of democracy. This implies that the study discovered that political education has a positive relationship with political participation leading to dividends of democracy. This finding buttresses the early studies of Galston (2001), Nwankwo (2012), Oni (2014) and Oladejo and Oni (2017) who observed that political education nurtures politically active citizens that serve as facilitators for the delivery of democracy dividend and the development of the society. These studies affirm that political education plays a very significant role in the growth and development of any society. A role that shapes the political landscape of the nation and the delivery of dividend of democracy is the extent of participation and the consequent level of development guaranteed through this means or measures are all factors of and subject to the nature and quality of political education available and received by the people. The opinion of the researcher is that political education should be promoted to enhance dividends of democracy.

The result of hypothesis two shows a significant relationship between sources of political education and dividends of democracy. Sources of political education have a significant relationship with dividends of democracy. In agreement to this, the levels of political education affect political participation of the citizenry; thereby

enabling them to clamour and fight for the delivery of democracy dividends in their consistencies. The finding of this study conforms with that of Yusuf (2005), Shaw (2008), Shoji, Aoyagi, Kasahara and Sawada (2010) and Woodford and Preston (2011) who in their studies found that there was a significant relationship between sources of political education and dividends of democracy. This is why it is germane for a political and electoral system to have a means of orientating or enlightening its members, the sensitization will enable the voters to have increased political awareness and enlightenment that would empower them to fully, vigorously and productively contribute and partake in the political process and bring about democracy dividend. The researcher believes that political education sources should be enhanced to promote dividends of democracy.

Conclusion

The study findings established a statistically significant relationship existed between political education and dividends of democracy. The study also established that a significant relationship existed between the sources of political education and dividend of democracy. Based on the findings of this study, it has been established that political education plays a very vital role in the delivery of democracy dividend to any nation or society. This is for the fact that people's opinion of their government, the level or the degree of their active participation and involvement, as well as the resulting level of delivery of democracy dividend, is made possible through political education and sources of political education received by the people.

Suggestions

Based on the findings and the conclusions drawn in this study, it is hereby suggested that:

1. Communities and societies should put in place mechanisms for political education of their members to have an increasing awareness that would enable them to fully enjoy democracy dividends in their communities.

2. Several and the interactive types of political education and information should be made available to prepare the people for political activities and democracy dividend.
3. Adequate political education through the mass media, social media, and town crier should be given to the people by the government, communities, religious organisations to foster democracy dividend.

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