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**CIVIC EDUCATION AND VALUE LEARNING:  
THE CHALLENGE OF QUALITY COMMUNICATION**

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**Abstract**

*People decide on what they think of you first before they decide on your message. This qualitative study explored the richness of value education and value learning processes in Civic Education with the persuasive skills of the teacher through their communication based on students' experiences using Command Secondary School, Lagos, Nigeria as the case study. The descriptive explorative design was carried out with mixed method of research. Four research questions were raised and data collected through an adapted interview guide, critical document review, and a 10-item questionnaire designed by the researchers. The data analysis was through thematic coding, mean score and percentage calculations. Although, the results showed teachers having strong persuasive skills, however, the Nigerian Civic Education curriculum at the senior secondary school level revealed an implicit approach used by the curriculum designer and a 28.6% Value topics explicitly stated indicating not explicitly rich in values education; also the students' value learning processes was strongly based on the peripheral route of elaboration, a key factor leading to temporal attitudinal change among the young learners. Recommendations were made to*

*curriculum planners to adopt the integrative approach in introducing value topics into Civic Education curriculum, school management to improve on number of periods and time allocation for Civics to justify its place as a core subject giving enough time for students to critically think on contents being taught amongst other factors.*

**Keywords:** Civic Education, Value learning; Communication process

### **Introduction**

There is a growing concern in the country on how the younger ones are being prepared for participation in the adult world without sinking into the ongoing social menace of lack of humanity, an obsession for material wealth and power at all cost, intolerance, acts of indiscipline, wide gap between ways of thinking and actual behaviour of young people due to confusion created by inconsistency in adult behaviours around them and lack of upright models to pattern after. Civic Education although, concerns itself with helping the students' to become responsible and disciplined members of the societies through its designed curriculum by the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Centre (NERDC, 2009) but realities in the neighborhood reveal many shortcomings in the living styles of the younger ones makes anyone worrisome, weather Civic Education is achieving the stated civic ideals in national values set for the country. However, individual does not automatically become responsible and disciplined without proper communication and education into citizenship (Levison, 2014).

Enu and Esu (2011) listed the core values Nigeria wants inculcated in young students as shown in Civic Education and the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS) goal, one of the key basis on which the curriculum was reviewed. These core values are as follows: discipline, honesty and accountability, industry, respect for elders, cooperation, self-confidence and moral courage. Tillman and Hsu (2018) listed explicit sixteen value topics for young students' similar to what Scerenko (1997) mentioned as adopted by "The State Board of

Education” in Georgia which are; responsibility, honesty, tolerance, respect, cooperation, peace; caring for the earth, freedom, kindness, fairness, determination, integrity, appreciation, diversity, inclusion and social justice. To inculcate values into the students at their critical age of thinking and reasoning; Civic Education must duly cover values education topics in its curriculum explicitly (Branson, 1998). Developing attitude from values is however, regarded as a slow process demanding time for reflection on learning and experiences in a person’s life; teaching methods that encourage participation of students’ and teacher’s actions also very critical to students’ learning and doings (Sharma & Kaur, 2014; Reyes, 2019). Thus, a teacher that will impart changes in the students’ must be aware and avoid actions which could negatively impact on students’ learning when observed in them.

Values go beyond cognitive domain (knowledge) to realms of personal decision making and commitment to take action (attitude and skills). It involves learning about self and the wisdom of life by developing humanity in children to care for others at large thereby redirecting schooling from being an “endless education” to having impactful purpose (Varghese, 2017; Hill, 2018). According to Kuehn (2020), values education empowers the students for emotional intelligence and compassion to succeed because value learning in school helps to project better role models as examples for students and covering failure of many homes to teach right values in preparation for future roles. Reyes (2019) asserted that values education is *core of a holistic life* making a man *humane* to act responsibly. Value Learning (VL) is a complicated process of acquiring personal values as motivational goals and principles that guide behaviour (Podolskiy, 2012). Value learning is complex because it covers everything in the process from cradle to grave and ideas to actions, misconceptions about values source, nature and processes. This complexity has made some to give weight more to the cognitive dimension of value than the affective domain that it belong with several factors could affect this learning process such as gender, home, school, peer and the community (Podolskiy, 2012; Hill, 2018). There are two known approaches to VL according to Sharma & Kaur (2014) either an explicit strategy, referred to as a traditional

approach also known as direct model (stating value topics stated in the curriculum) or implicit strategy, referred to as the innovative approach, indirect model with engaging activities (use of instructional methods by the teacher). A combination of both strategies could also be used but often, the implicit VL approach is underestimated by teachers (Huitt, 2004; Sharma & Kaur, 2014). Furthermore, Huitt (2004) and Reyes (2019) listed five basic methods relating to the implicit approach for delivery of values. These are inculcation, moral development, value analysis; value clarification and action learning. Action Learning puts students' nature as interactive, a process developed by Social Studies educators to emphasize community based and not just classroom based learning providing contextual, problem-solving and decision-making opportunities for students. It is a motivational tool for learning and living values that makes every day experiences serve as the laboratory for learning, showing that values are caught rather than merely taught (Varghese, 2017; Tillman & Hsu, 2018).

Persuasion is defined as the process of convincing someone else to carry out an action or agree with an idea (The Indeed Career Guide.com, 2020). It is a personal, soft skill established on logical reasoning for influencing and prompting others to actions and a necessary skill in every profession because it determines the outcome in every situation. Persuasion is a major part of communication theory that is effective, not about using tricks or manipulation rather it focuses on benefitting the person being influenced, opined Jones (2016) and Santos (2020). Persuasive skills include, choice of language termed as deliberative argument, use of persuasive logic through story-telling, right timing of presenting words; using emotion to create memories for urgent action, and being a good listener with empathy. The key weapon of the persuader is his character (speaker's image, honesty, transparency and likeness by the audience) which Aristotle words stated that "character wins over logic" (Meier, 2013; Jones, 2016; Santos, 2020). These skills were summarized by the Indeed Career Guide (2020) as communication, active listening, critical reasoning, interpersonal skills, negotiation and emotional intelligence. This quality

communication process is wrapped up in the Elaboration Likelihood Model.

Elaboration is simply a process of thinking on messages received so as to arrive at decision making through it. According to Kruglanski and Van Lange (2012), the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) was developed by Richard E. Petty and John Cacioppo in 1981 as a dual process of processing information towards attitudinal change in persons, based on how they respond to given information. This can be through ability to listen and think about message received or using motivation through the speaker's personality to make decision. These two ways are described as high and low ends of the elaboration continuum. The low end is the "peripheral route" (using motivation from other persons) while the high end is the "central route" (thinking critically about the message itself). Considering the message quality, using the central route is a good way to produce lasting change in attitude and predictive behaviours because it is logically thought out by the recipients while the peripheral route of considering the teacher and extraneous factors result into temporal change of attitude (Griffin, et al. 2012). Lord, et al (1995) argued that central and peripheral cues can also work together despite having different variables. Students adopts the peripheral route because it helps to save time, energy and mental effort if decision has to be made within a short time due to the laziness; thus using mental shortcuts by relying on impressions made by others as a heuristic principles (Kruglanski & Van Large 2012). Elaboration Likelihood Model thus appeals to both the cognitive and affective components of students' learning making teachers to be more deliberate in their communication and pedagogy during instructional delivery.

Youths, especially secondary school students, are full of atrocities at their age despite going to school to become good citizens and being exposed to Civic education meant to educate them into being disciplined and responsible members of their society. These secondary school teenagers displayed attitudes such as bullying, gender discrimination, stealing, poor attitude to learning, fighting, drug abuse; cultism, class shirking, breaking of school rules intentionally, to mention but a few. This paper thus is geared towards finding out the richness of value topics contained in Civic Education

including the value learning process often adopted by the students towards practicing values taught in Civic Education.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This paper aimed generally at finding out how value learning is acquired in Civic Education and the communication process adopted for teaching. Specifically, the objectives of this study are to;

- i. examine the richness of values education in Nigerian Civic Education Curriculum (NCEC);
- ii. investigate the value learning route employed by students' in Civic Education;
- iii. find out kind of attitude change determined by value learning processes experienced by students' through Civic education;
- iv. investigate teachers' persuasive skills to promote value learning in Civic Education.

### **Research Questions**

The following questions were answered in this study;

- i. To what extent is Nigerian Civic Education Curriculum rich in value education?
- ii. How is value learning processed by students' in Civic Education?
- iii. What kind of attitudinal change occurred through value learning processes adopted by students' in Civic Education?
- iv. Are Civic Education teachers' strong in persuasive skills to drive value learning processes generally?

### **Methods**

This study used a descriptive explorative design to find out students' experiences on value learning in Civic Education. It was a qualitative research using mixed method approach to glean responses from the respondents with qualitative and quantitative instrument (interview, review of NCEC and questionnaire). The population design was "holistic single-case study" of S.S.S.3 students' in Command Secondary School, Lagos (CSSL). The school was selected

using simple random sampling, with a sample size based on purposive technique, comprising of two students each (male and female); across the eight (8) arms of the SSS3 classes leading to a total of sixteen interview participants. The choice of sample size frame is contextual, being a single case that is relatively homogenous and non-probabilistic to allow for creativity in the processes as well as considering the participants' ability to provide needful information (Ishak & Abu Bakar, 2014).

The research instruments comprised of semi-structured, interview guide with four major topical areas and sub-themes within each. Critical review of NERDC Civic Education Curriculum was done and questionnaire instrument tagged Civic Education Teacher's Persuasive Skills' (CETPS) was self-developed with 10 items and responses rated on a 5 point Likerts scale. Content and face validity guided the framing of the interview topics and the questionnaire. Also, the quality of the official NERDC Nigerian Curriculum for Civic Education used as source material guaranteed the study's validity. The study's reliability or rather dependability includes cautionary and reflective steps taken towards the interview protocols to build in credibility. Using questionnaire for triangulation helped to establish the consistency of participants' responses. Data collection followed review of curriculum. Also, the interview was done online using the WhatsApp texting and voicemail features; and questionnaire sent through email to the students' in a sequential order. Analysis of data was through coding and thematic interpretation of facts later presented in a rich narrative format blending together the interview and questionnaire results using percentage and mean decision scale.

## **Results**

Research Question 1: To what extent is Nigerian Civic Education Curriculum rich in value education?

**Table 1: Themes in Nigerian Civic Education Curriculum (NCEC)**

SSS1	SSS2	SSS3
*Our Values Emerging Issues  Citizenship Representative Democracy Pillars of Democracy Human Rights Cultism* Law and Orderliness	Citizenship Democracy and National Development Dangers of Political Apathy Achieving Popular Participation in Politics Limitation of Human Rights Drugs and Drug Abuse Responsible Parenthood Traffic Regulations Relationships	Characteristics of Human Rights Dangers of Political Apathy Public Service in a Democracy Civil Society Constitutional Democracy and the Rule of Law Human Trafficking

**Source:** *NERDC (2009)*

Table 1 showed that only three (3) themes were explicitly stated on values out of the twenty-three (23) themes listed in the NCEC by NERDC (2009) above for SS1-SS3. This is 13% of the entire curriculum, thus the NCEC failed to explicitly incorporate values education into Civics Education. The three listed themes also only achieved four (4) topics out of sixteen (16) values topics mentioned by Tillman and Hsu (2018) and approved by The State Board of Education, Georgia, Scerenko (1997); indicating 25% of these topics were covered. Considering the values stated in NEEDS by Enu & Esu (2011); only 2 topics (justice & selfless activities under theme “values”, youth empowerment under “Emerging issues theme”) explicitly covered the identified national values out of 7 listed (2/7 = 28.6%) indicating failure in explicit coverage of value topics.

**Research Question 2:** How is value learning processed by students’ in Civic Education?

Majority of the participants interviewed (13/16x100 =81%) agreed that they were motivated to learning values in Civic education through their teachers’ personality or attributes. Thus, the descriptions of students’ experiences indicated often use of peripheral, low route; an engagement in mental shortcuts to value learning generally confirming the heuristic principles (Kruglanski & Van Large, 2012). The interview showed that the teacher’s

consistent advice encourages their learning, including the complimentary statements showered on them during class interaction, good rapport between teacher and the students' without any prejudice and no use of foul language, ability to paint image on their minds through rich story telling that often got their attention and interest too. This story telling was considered by most of the interviewees as one method that made value learning in topics simplified in Civic Education. However, three (3) interviewees that differed indicated use of critical thinking on value issues by paying attention to the information in topics indicating use of the central route of processing and elaboration, for instance, interviewee 12, Ajaga, male stated that he looked forward to Civic Education lessons because "it helps me to see what my responsibilities are in making the society better" while Interviewee 1, Karis, Male, opined that "the teacher has no direct learning on my value learning because I have acquired these values of discipline and integrity from home".

**Research Question 3:** What kind of attitudinal change is determined by value leaning processes adopted by students' in Civic Education?

81% of the interviewees (13 participants) stated that they were motivated using the peripheral, low route to value learning in Civic Education and that there were few challenges to their learning connected with distractions in the environment, poor timing and inadequate periods allotted to Civic Education affirming issues of time requirement raised by Reyes, (2019) and Sharma & Kaur, (2014). The participants voices such as: Interviewee 06, Kelvin, Male, said that "Civic Education Curriculum did not cover values clearly as found in the Junior school syllabus". Taiwo, female, Interviewee 15, mentioned that "the time allocation to Civic Education as a core subject is not justifiable compared with English and Maths" interestingly, Interviewee 08, Favour, Male, opined clearly that "even though the values taught in Civic Education are true, the real life experiences in the society is contradictory to them". The outcome of using peripheral route therefore, produces temporal change of attitude which explains partly reasons for the misbehaviours among these teenagers, according to Griffins, et al (2012).

**Research Question 4:** Are Civic Education teachers' strong in persuasive skills to drive value learning processes generally?

**Table: 2- Mean Rating of Teacher's Persuasive Skills**

Teacher's Persuasive Skills	SA	A	D	SD	NS	Mean
1. Act with flexibility while responding to different students' behaviours	4	12	2	-	-	3.5
2. Speaks confidently while teaching	10	5	1	-	-	3.6
3. Appeals to your emotions with story telling	10	4	-	1	1	3.31
4. Simplify lessons to its basics for easier understanding	4	12	-	-	-	3.25
5. Stay calm when handling students' disruptive behaviours	6	9	1	-	-	3.31
6. Instills sense of emergency for action on lessons taught	3	10	2	1	-	2.94
7. Build rapport with students' by language pattern used	8	5	3	-	-	3.31
8. Provide step by step guiding principles for student's actions	3	5	10	-	1	2.19
9. Point out topic relevance to your personal living	1	4	6	3	-	2.44
10. Cite reference evidences to claims made in the class such as textbooks, videos, pictures, et c.	-	5	10	-	-	2.44
<b>=3.303</b>						

The data analysis indicated a 78% score rating for teacher's persuasive skills rated by the students, indicating a triangulated correlation of the interview response whereby many students indicated a beneficiary relationship with their teacher. In this context, the teachers' have high or strong persuasive skills communicated to the students'. However, teachers need to improve on providing step by step guiding principles for students to take meaningful actions on value issues (Santos, 2020; Varghese, 2017; Podolskiy, 2012 and Meier, 2013).

### Discussions

However, from the participants interviewed, there was a clear assertion that Civic teachers do mention different values during instructional delivery, an affirmation of indirect, implicit coverage

of values through the pedagogy used supported by Sharma & Kaur (2014) but students failed to agree on specific values treated thus giving room to variations proving the complexity challenge to teaching values stated by Hill (2018). Based on the above facts therefore, values education topics were not explicitly rich enough in the Nigerian Civic Education Curriculum at the senior secondary school levels.

Also, the value learning approach gleaned from the interview result above indicated the low, peripheral route, the adoption of mental shortcuts among students interviewed and lack of critical thinking (Kruglanski & Van Large, 2012). The result of adopting the peripheral route to value learning by the students' leads temporal attitudinal change which could be lost in course of time. There is a clear indication that the Civic Education teachers have strong persuasive skills as described by Santos (2020) with few areas that needed more emphasis to help push the students' into taking actions on their own.

### **Recommendations**

Curriculum planners need to enrich Civic Education with more values education topics explicitly to balance up with the implicit values by the teacher's pedagogy as shown from this study's result. Civic educators should strengthen their persuasive skills by taking time to provide students' with detail guiding principles for value actions connecting relevance of lessons to real life issues for good understanding. To enhance use of central route and critical thinking approach to value learning by the students', adequate number of periods should be allocated to Civic Education lessons while logical presentation of facts is promoted by the teachers, too.

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