
ASSESSMENT OF UNDERGRADUATE YOUTHS
PERCEPTION TOWARDS DEMOCRATIC VALUES IN JOS
NORTH: IMPLICATION FOR SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION

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Abstract

The study was carried out to assess the undergraduate youths' perception towards democratic values in Jos North Local Government Area: Implication for Social Studies education. The design of the study was a survey research design while the population comprised 12,293 undergraduates' students of the university of Jos. The sample size for the study was Two hundred and forty (240) undergraduate students. An instrument titled Undergraduate Youths Perception Towards Democratic Values Questionnaire" (UYPTDVQ) was used for data collection. Two experts validated the instrument and Kuder-Richardson 20 method was employed and a $r = 0.78$ was obtained. The data collected were analysed with mean and chi-square of goodness of fit. Based on the data collected and analyzed, the following findings emerged; that undergraduate youths have strong and positive perception towards democratic values and the perception of undergraduate youths to the virtues of respect and tolerance

in the political process in Jos North, Plateau State is positive. It was also revealed that there is a significant difference between perception of youths to the virtues of honesty and patriotism in the democratic process in Jos North. The study recommended that values such as transparency, due process, your vote must count, one-man-one vote among others are currently gaining access into Nigeria core values. These values need to as a matter of urgency be introduced into Social Studies curriculum.

Keywords: *Democratic Values, Perception, Social Studies, Undergraduate Youths*

Introduction

A major functionality principle which is expected to influence greatly classroom pedagogy in Social Studies is on the view that this subject area represents an interdisciplinary approach to the study of human beings in groups of interrelationship within both their social and physical environments. This functionality principle emphasis and underscores the vital role of Social Studies as an instrument for preparing and mobilizing young learners in school for the purpose of enabling them cultivate an awareness and understanding that would transform them into citizens with skills, competences, moral values and reasoned judgments to effectively live, interact and interrelate and contribute positively to economic, social, political and cultural development of their societies (Okam 2011). To this end, the goal of Social Studies to develop a positive social perception and values among the citizenry underscore the role of Social Studies Educators to develop an intelligent, responsible and self-directing citizens who are expected to take the lead in building a democratic and indissoluble Nigeria of our desire.

None the less, the opinion of the National Council for the Social Studies NCSS (2002) that, values should constitute an indispensable part of education and that every teacher owns it as a duty to face the issues of values in the classroom. Schools are given the mandate to serve as an agent for inculcating in the young widely held societal norms, standards of behaviour, and ideological preferences, this

submission is pivotal to the re-invention of democratic values among students. A youth with desirable democratic values must be concerned with promoting understanding of the ideals of democracy. Youths of any society are potential force to reckon with in that society, Nigeria not exempted. The youth constitute a large chunk of the decision making groups in a civilized democratic society. Youths should not be exempted from the democratic process but be made the driving force behind democracy and their participation must not be limited to elections only, but a continuing engagement with the process of democratic governance.

There is no doubt that Nigerian youths have contributed immensely to the growth and development of this country, Nigeria in the past. Their struggle and move have always been a sacrificial one which outcomes is not only their selfish interest alone but for the generality of the people (Aghayere, 2007). Youths have been involved in the evolution of democracy and advocacy/ entrenchment of good governance and creation of civil society groups in Nigeria. But the many years of military rule in Nigeria have been marred by uncivil political behaviours that ranged from political apathy to electoral fraud. The attendant effect has been lacked of popular participation, and disengagement of many Nigerians, particularly youths, from political processes. These developments negate the role of citizens in a democracy, this support Gatson (2001) arguments that "in a representative system, citizens need to develop the capacity to evaluate the talents, character, and performance of public officials. In this situation, a democratic state demands from her citizens" and this suggest weak civil support for democratic values and institutions.

So, for the youths to play their expected and functional role as democratic citizens there must be serious participation in the entire democratic process. The decision of the youths to participate or not to participate depends on their awareness, adherence and internationalization of these democratic values and this has serious consequences on democracy and the general polity. Avaro (2001) defines democratic values "as the fundamental beliefs and constitutional principles which guide the democratic government put in place in a particular society". They are ethos that regulates

the extent, level and involvement of participants in a democracy. Some of these values of Nigerian democracies are freedom, equality(one-man-one vote), justice, toleration of diversity, unity (national integration), national loyalty(as against sectional loyalty), rule of law, separation of powers, checks and balances, transparency, patriotism, dignity of human person, representative government, self-reliance, due process, electoral credibility(citizens vote must count), common good (acting in the best interest), popular consent, supremacy of the people, toleration of opposition and legitimacy (Nnamdi, 2009). They are in turn determined by the factors of or the interplay of political culture, civic or citizenship education and the political experiences of the society in question. To achieve this objective, the aspect of education that would be responsible for the training known as Social Studies was introduced into the school curriculum to inculcate critical thinking, problem solving and social perception and democratic values.

The onus is on Social Studies educators to build in the Nigerian youth, the mental and intellectual power to recognize societal problems; ask good questions and develop robust investigations into them; consider the consequences and possible solutions; separate evidence-based claims from popular opinions or perceptions; and act upon what they learn, different from popular perception. The youths need strong and unwavering tools for, and values of, clear and critical thinking in order to traverse successfully the world of values and democratic process in leadership. It is against this background that the researcher intends to investigate the youth's perception and democratic values in Jos North Local Government Area.

The indifference of in the perception of Nigerian youth towards democratic values has proven to be a major obstacle that has mar democratic consolidation in Nigeria, that has got many concern citizens worried. Thus, it is the obstacle to youth positive participation in our democracy. This has contributed to both the elites and youths surprisingly showing weak commitment to basic symbols and values of democracy. Hence, there is serious manifestation of greed, inordinate ambition to win power, thuggery, dishonesty, personalization of political/public offices, insincerity, disrespects for

others, intolerance, etc. in our national polity. All these undemocratic behaviours manifest in the forms of electoral rigging; kidnapping/killing of political opponents; writing or sponsoring the publications of damaging articles in our media; tearing, removal or defacing of posters belonging to political opponents/parties; youths enlisting into various cut groups to be used as party kingpins/political thugs; general apathy/indifference of many youths to elections and democratic process; youths mortgaging their conscience after being induced with meager amount of money or materials like face-caps, T-shirts, umbrellas (Omorogbe & Orobor, 2007), to support the wrong candidates/ parties knowing fully well they have no political will and the reputation to deliver on electoral promises and thereafter put their future in jeopardy and perpetual wants. The end result is bad leadership/governance, high number of electoral cases in court, lack of basic infrastructure, unemployment, and underemployment.

So, for any democracy to be sustained, it is essential that its citizenry, mostly youths, possess the requisite perception, demonstrate the above-mentioned values, and display the behaviours that accord democracy (NOA, 2016). But in Nigeria, the reverse has been the case among many youths. To participate and do so well in democratic activities, the youths must possess a good grasp of democratic values which will aid, guide and direct their conducts in the discharge of their civic responsibilities. That is, democracy is nurtured and sustained only when democratic values are rooted in the minds and actions of citizens. With the above scenario, what can we say about the present attitude of Nigerian youths toward democratic values?

Purpose of the Study

The aim of the study is to assess to perception of undergraduate youths towards democratic values in Jos North Local Government Area: Implication for Social Studies. The specific objectives are;

- i. To find out the undergraduate youths perception towards democratic values in Jos North, Plateau State
- ii. To find out the perceive virtues of respect and tolerance among undergraduate youths during political activities in Jos North.

- iii. To determine the perception of the youth towards honesty and patriotism as democratic values among undergraduate youths while discharging their civic duties in Jos North

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide the study:

1. What is the undergraduate youths perception towards democratic values in Jos North, Plateau State?
2. What is the undergraduate youths perception of respect and tolerance as a democratic values in the political process in Jos North, Plateau State?
3. What is the perception of youths towards honesty and patriotism in the democratic process in Jos North LGA?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to be tested at 0.05 level of significance

1. There is no significant difference between undergraduate youths perception and democratic values in Jos North, Plateau State
2. There is no significant difference between undergraduate youths on virtues of respect and tolerance in the political process in Jos North, Plateau State
3. There is no significant difference between perception of youths on virtues of honesty and patriotism in the democratic process in Jos North LGA

Methodology

The descriptive survey research design will be used for the study. According to Ngu (2009) survey research design is defined as a systematic collection of data from population or sampled population, through interview or questionnaires techniques. The population of this study consists of all undergraduate students in university of Jos. The university has 12 faculties (Agriculture, Arts, Education, Engineering, Environmental Science, Law, Management Sciences, Medical Sciences, Natural Science, Pharmaceutical Science, Social

Science and Veterinary Medicine) with a student population of 12,293 (Male=8819, Female=2181) source from the university academic planning and management unit. The researcher purposively selected six faculties (Arts, Education, Environmental Sciences, Law, Natural Sciences and Social Sciences). A convenience sample of 120 respondents was obtained and questionnaire administered to them.

The instrument to be used for data collection was a researcher made questionnaire, titled, “Perception of Undergraduate Youths Towards Democratic Values Questionnaire” (PUYTDVQ). The instrument was validated by experts in Educational Psychology and Social Studies. To determine the reliability of the instrument, a trial testing of the instrument was carried out using a sample of 40 Plateau State Polytechnique students in Jos South Local Government Area of Plateau State. The internal consistency estimate obtained was $r=0.86$. The relevant data collected were and analyzed using the mean for all the research questions while the hypotheses formulated was tested using chi-square. The chi-square formula is given; Formula for Chi-Square

$$X^2 = \sum \frac{(f_o - f_e)^2}{F_e}$$

Results

Research Question One: What is the undergraduate youths perception towards democratic values in Jos North, Plateau State?

Table 1: Undergraduate Youths Perception towards Democratic Values

S/N	Items	SA4	A3	D2	SD1	Mean
1	Not showing interest towards public affairs	668	156	16	7	3.62
2	Discussing politics occasionally with family and friends to enhance attitude towards democratic values	400	354	28	1	3.36
3	Community participation and membership to promote democratic values	424	336	26	2	3.82
	Cluster Mean					3.35

The analysis in table 1 shows that the undergraduate youths' perception towards democratic values in Jos North, Plateau State as all the items had a mean score greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and a cluster mean of 3.35. therefore, not showing interest towards public affairs has a mean score of 3.62, Discussing politics occasionally with family and friends to enhance attitude towards democratic values has a mean of 3.36 and community participation and membership to promote democratic values has a mean score of 3.82.

Research Question Two: What is the undergraduate youths perception of respect and tolerance as a democratic values in the political process in Jos North, Plateau State?

Table 2: Perception of Undergraduate Youths on Virtues of Respect and Tolerance in the Political Process

S/N	Items	SA4	A3	D2	SD1	Mean
1	Youths in Jos North shows respect to the political elites in the state	40	468	142	2	2.75
2	The youths tolerate the views of political opponents in Jos North	80	273	236	5	2.38
3	It is a common practice in Jos north for the youths to respect and tolerate the existing political difference in the state	88	252	232	12	2.44
Cluster Mean						2.52

The analysis on table 2 shows the attitude of undergraduate youths to the virtues of respect and tolerance in the political process in Jos North, Plateau State Youths in Jos North shows respect to the political elites in the state with a response mean score of 2.75, followed by it is a common practice in Jos north for the youths to respect and tolerate the existing political difference in the state with a mean response of 2.44, the youths tolerate the views of political opponents in Jos North with a response mean score of 2.38 and. With a criterion mean of 2.5 and a cluster mean of 3.52, it implies that the attitude of undergraduate youths to the virtues of respect and tolerance in the political process in Jos North, Plateau State is positive.

Research Question Three: What is the perception of youths towards honesty and patriotism in the democratic process in Jos North LGA?

Table 3: Perception of Youths on Virtues of Honesty and Patriotism in the Democratic Process

S/N	Items	SA4	A3	D2	SD1	Mean
1	Youths like participating in the activity of a local youth organization	56	321	224	1	2.54
2	Youths votes honestly and wisely during elections	52	132	340	5	2.23
3	Youths shows active participation in community issues	24	198	34	145	1.69
4	Youths shows lack of interest in electoral frauds	208	480	26	9	3.05
	Cluster Mean					2.37

The analysis on table 3 shows the extent to which attitude of youths to the virtues of honesty and patriotism in the democratic process in Jos North LGA of Plateau State as youths like participating in the activity of a local youth organization with a response mean score of 2.54, youths votes honestly and wisely during elections with a mean response of 2.23, youths shows active participation in community issues with a response mean score of 1.69 and youths shows lack of interest in electoral frauds has a response mean score 3.05. With a criterion mean of 2.5 and a cluster mean of 2.37. It implies that the attitude of youths to the virtues of honesty and patriotism in the democratic process in Jos North LGA is negative.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference between undergraduate youths perception and democratic values in Jos North, Plateau State

Table 4: χ^2 of significant difference Between Undergraduate Youths Perception and Democratic Values

Categories	Youths Perception	Democratic Values	N	Df	X ² cal	X ² crit	Remark
Youths Perception	99 (95.3)	67 (40.7)	166				
Democratic Values	37 (70.7)	34 (30.3)	71	3	8.64	7.82	Rejected
Total	136	101	237				

Table 4 shows that the calculated Chi-square value is 8.64 and the table value is 7.82 at 0.05 significant level and at 3 degree of freedom. Following the Chi-square decision rule, the calculated Chi-square value is higher than the table value. Hence, the null hypothesis which states there is no significant difference between undergraduate youths' perception and democratic values in Jos North, Plateau State is rejected. This means there is a significant difference between undergraduate youths perception and democratic values in Jos North, Plateau State

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference between undergraduate youths on virtues of respect and tolerance in the political process in Jos North, Plateau State

Table 5: $\chi \div 2$ Significant Difference Between Undergraduate Youths Virtues of Respect and Tolerance in The Political Process

Categories	youths undergraduate	virtues of respect and tolerance	N	Df	X ² cal	X ² crit	Remark
undergraduate youths	76 (58.5)	35 (52.5)	111				
virtues of respect and tolerance	49 (66.5)	77 (59.5)	126	3	1.41	7.82	Retained
Total	125	112	237				

Table 5 shows that the calculated Chi-square value is 1.41 and the table value is 7.82 at 0.05 significant level and at 3 degree of freedom. Following the Chi-square decision rule, the calculated Chi-square value is less than the table value. The null hypotheses which state there is no significant difference between undergraduate youths on virtues of respect and tolerance in the political process in Jos North, Plateau State was retained.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant difference between perception of youths on virtues of honesty and patriotism in the democratic process in Jos North LGA.

Table 6: X² Statistical Test of Significant Difference Between Perception of Youths on Virtues of Honesty and Patriotism in The Democratic Process

Categories	Perception of youths	Honesty and patriotism	N	Df	X ² cal	X ² crit	Remark
Perception of youths	43(56.2)	69 (62.8)	112				
Honesty and patriotism	76 (55.8)	49 (62.2)	125	3	9.19	7.82	Rejected
Total	119	118	237				

Table 6 shows that the calculated chi-square value is 9.19 and the table value is 7.82 at 0.05 significant level and at 3 degree of freedom. Following the chi-square decision rule, the calculated chi-square value is less than the table value. The null hypothesis which stated there is no significant difference between perception of youths to the virtues of honesty and patriotism in the democratic process in Jos North is rejected implying that there is a significant difference between perception of youths on virtues of honesty and patriotism in the democratic process Jos North.

Discussions

The finding shows that the undergraduate youths' perception towards democratic values in Jos North, Plateau State as all the

items had a mean score greater than the criterion mean of 2.5 and a cluster mean of 3.35. therefore, not showing interest towards public affairs has a mean score of 3.62, discussing politics occasionally with family and friends to enhance attitude towards democratic values has a mean of 3.36 and community participation and membership to promote democratic values has a mean score of 3.82. This indicates a strong and positive attitude towards democratic values. So more than a half of our youth is interested in political issues and these findings are supported by the study of Godabe (2013) who report that young people do take interest in politics.

Finding on undergraduate youths to the virtues of respect and tolerance in the political process concludes that youths hold in high esteem the virtues of respect and tolerance why discharging their civic duties. Most of the respondents accept the need and are tolerance of our diversity in terms of ethnicity, religion, cultural differences and party ideology why carrying out their civic duties. This view point tends to negate what prevails in our society. Especially when one calls to mind the rate at which ethnic clashes, religious clashes/intolerance occur in Jos North, party clashes during campaigns and electioneering in the country. The majority of respondents (96.9%) also express their acceptance that respecting the rights and interests of others during civic activities like public discussions, debates and making decisions is part of tolerance imbibed by youths. The analysis also reveals that undergraduate youths accept the need and are tolerance of opposition and electoral defeat.

This finding and others below are very peculiar to undergraduates and negate the position of Okam (2011) when he expressed that much of the deviance in political behaviour can be traced to the youths and are correctly attributed to the lack of a democratic attitude of mind... that both elite and youth have surprisingly shown weak commitment to basic symbols and values of democracy.

Moreover, the undergraduate youths responses to the variables on the virtues of honesty and patriotism in the democratic process. The finding concludes that, youths hold in high regard the virtues of honesty and patriotism why discharging their civic duties. In it,

patriotism was a strong virtue cherish by the youths as what can encourage the proper exercise of their civic duties. It was overwhelmingly agreed by the youths that without a patriotic spirit it is very difficult to sacrifice their precious time to civic activities. The youths also overwhelmingly agreed that honesty as a virtue, that is being truthful and sincere should be cherished and cultivated by youths. They condemned the habit of using deceptions and falsehood by youths to gain access into elective/political offices and regard it as capable of derailing the democratization process. However, in practice it is contrary as high levels of corruption undermine democratic values in our society and shaping a wrong perception and undermining the youths confidence in the electoral process (Godabe, 2013). By implication, diverting of rare resources from disadvantaged people, it damages the rule of law, social justice and lowers the confidence of the youths in upholding the principles of democratic values.

Conclusion

That undergraduate youths awareness, understanding, internalization and adherence to democratic values during civic practices is selective of institution types (whether public or private) but not selective of programmes (whether full-time or part-time). Therefore, the researcher inferred that the learning experiences offered to learners as democratic values through Social Studies teachings is yet to impart positively on the undergraduates in the discharge of their civic duties.

Recommendations

All agencies, bodies or organizations such as INEC, NOA, etc, civil society groups and Non-Governmental Organizations should as a matter of national importance be seriously involved to help create the awareness, understanding and internalization of democratic values in Nigerian youths and political parties through workshops, seminars and public rallies. Since many has missed the opportunity of been imparted with democratic values through Social Studies teachings to reduce the acts of incivility constituted by uneducated youths.

Social Studies curriculum should also be introduced to all non-formal education programmes such as Adult Education programme, where other categories of youths that do not attend the formal education can be targeted and inculcated with democratic values through such curriculum.

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