

## Assessing the level of relatedness of civic education and government as a school subject: A threat to class attendance

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### ABSTRACT

Senior Secondary Students' inability to draw a significant difference between these school subjects, which lead to their ceaseless absence in the class is a critical issue that calls for an investigation. This research examined teachers' and student's assessment of the level of relatedness of Civic education and Government as a school subject in Kwara State. A correlational form of a survey was adopted, civic education and government teachers and students in the senior schools in the three Senatorial districts were the populations. A multi-stage sampling procedure was employed in the selection of 63 Government and Civic education teachers and 606 students. A questionnaire with content validity and a reliability index of 0.87 and 0.76 respectively was used for eliciting the data. The analyses were done using descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings revealed that the two-school subject was very related in all ramifications, with a pass in one leading to a pass in the other. It was recommended that the curriculum planner should collapse the curriculum and contents of the two subjects into one rather than overburden the school timetable.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Qualitative education is that which caters to the sustainable development of the learners. The recipients of such education, just like a tree planted by the rivers of water, are nourished to become efficient, responsible, and patriotic citizens. In line with the point number 4 of the sustainable development goals (otherwise known as global goals) which addresses quality education, Azikiwe [1] argued that the focus and purposes of education are to develop natural talents to extend the standard of the environment; creation of skilled human resources and generation of data essential for the fashionable economy; rousing and allowing individuals to develop capacities to the uppermost level throughout life in order that they will grow intellectually and contribute effectively to society; creating a learning society essential for participation during a world undergoing phenomenal changes; and inculcation of the proper insolence and values for nurturing a democratic and civilized society.

Most nations are characterized by a pervasive air of repugnance in government policies coupled with an absence of sound political culture which reigns over time. The resultant effects of these are constant detritus within the political system which led to political instability, a situation which doesn't give room for significant development. Escalating violence within the social, political, and economic sectors of the society, the incivility of the youths, and the declining rate of civic virtues made life unendurable. Terrorism, cyber-

crimes, cult activities, to mention but a few are the authenticated facts. Hence the need to inculcate the required political education to stir the spirit of political consciousness which will pilot a high sense of loyalty, patriotism, and commitment to the nation's goals [2]-[5].

The study of civic education and Government introduced into Nigerian schools; this is often because these school subjects pertain to the rights and responsibilities of citizens. Students study how people have organized authority and exercised power from earlier civilizations to this. While several sorts of Government constituted a part of the study of the past, the philosophy, structure, and evolution of the Nigerian Government are recurrent topics [6], [7]. Students will repeatedly examine the founding documents like the declaration of independence, the constitution, The Bill of Rights, other Constitutional amendments, and important Supreme Court decisions and explain their relevance to current events. Civic education cares with three different aspects that affect the core a part of Government which is civic knowledge, civic skills, and civic disposition. Common knowledge helps citizens to know the workings of the form of government and their own political and civil rights and responsibilities (e.g. the rights to the independence of manifestation and election and run position, and therefore the reform the obligations to respect the rule of law and the rights and benefits of others) [8]-[10]. Civic skills enable citizens' the power to research, evaluate, take and protect positions on public issues, and to use their knowledge to contribute in civic and political processes (e.g. to watch government performance or mobilize other citizens around particular issues) and Civic dispositions help citizen to develop traits necessary for a democracy (e.g. tolerance, public-spiritedness, civility, critical mindedness and willingness to concentrate. By implication, the aims and goals of the two school subjects are very similar and interwoven, which makes it difficult for many Nigerian students of the Government to differentiate between the two. Thus, lesson attendance becomes a vital issue of concern to teachers teaching the two school subjects.

To this date, a high number of students found it challenging to draw out the differences between the two subjects (Civic Education and Government) introduced for this purpose. Are these subjects related in terms of content in the curriculum, textbooks available to students, aims and objectives as stated in the national policy of education, helping the students to be politically conscious and to become good citizens?

Senior Secondary Students' inability to draw a significant difference between these school subjects (Civic Education and Government) which lead to their ceaseless absence in the classes is a vital issue on its own which calls for quick attention of educational stakeholders. It is pertinent to note that many Nigerian secondary school students cultivate poor attitudes towards the attendance of these two subjects. Civic education was introduced to set Nigerian citizens for democratic society and development while the Government as a subject introduced to foster political consciousness. According to [2], Civic education can teach citizens acceptable values, dispositions, habits of tolerance, how to premeditated, even when they have political disparities. It can allow citizens to find solutions to many problems such as social development, economic development, or community safety. At the same time, Ogunbiyi [3] stated that Government as a school subject is being taught because it deals with the topics from which students may create their value beside the socio-political events of the past to remedy these situations. The question posed by this study is that if these two subjects shared so much in common, why then are they not taught as one single rather than two separate school subjects?

Empirical studies in these areas were scanty, this is because these two school subjects were taught separately in many countries of the world. The few available were: that conducted in America [2], it was revealed that the curriculum of civic education was infused in the contents of history, social subjects among the few. Another study is that of [8] who studied the off level relationship between Civic Education and Social Studies as school subjects, the findings revealed that a significant positive relationship was found between Kwara state upper basic school students' performance in Social Studies and Civic Education. Thus, a symbiotic relationship existed between the two subjects.

None of the studies above compared the performances of Civic Education and Government, using students to ascertain if there is a point of contact between these two as school subjects in terms of content, textbooks, teaching methods, and instructional materials. Do they all share a familiar link, and if so, what is it? Is the degree of relationship between Civic Education and Government so influential to the extent that a pass in one will lead to an equivalent pass in others in examinations? These are some of the omitted gaps the present study intends filling. The study, therefore, focuses on the essence of taking the subject as a separate discipline.

The study investigates teachers' and senior school students' assessment of the level of relatedness of Civic Education and Government as a school subject in Kwara State. Specifically, the study examined:

- a. Teachers and students assessment of the level of relatedness of Civic Education and Government as a school subject in areas of objectives, curriculum contents, instructional text and materials and teaching strategies.
- b. The general performance of senior school students in Civic Education as a school subject.

- c. The general performance of senior school students in government as a school subject.
- d. Whether teachers and students differ in their assessment of the relationship in the level of relatedness in the Civic Education and Government as a school subject.
- e. Whether relationships exist in the general performance of students in Civic Education and Government as a school subject.

The following research questions guide the study:

- a. What is the teachers and students' assessment of the level of relatedness of Civic Education and Government as a school subject in the areas of objectives, curriculum contents, instructional text and materials and teaching strategies adopted by the teachers?
- b. What is the general performance of students in Civic Education as a school subject?
- c. What is the general performance of students in government as a school subject?

The following Hypotheses were tested in the study

Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant difference in the level of relatedness in Civic Education and Government as a school subject based on status.

Ho<sub>2</sub>: Significant difference does not exist in the general performance of students in Civic Education and Government as a school subject.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

The study adopted a descriptive form of a correlational type. This is in line with researchers [9] who maintained that correlational research is a quantitative method of study in which there are two or more quantitative variables from the same group of participants and trying to determine if there is a relationship (or variation) between the two variables. This research design was considered appropriate as it enabled the researchers to find the level of relatedness that exists between Civic Education and Government as a school subject without manipulating any variable during the study.

The study population consisted of all civic education and government teachers and students in all the senior schools in the three Senatorial districts of Kwara state namely, Kwara North, Kwara South, and Kwara Central Senatorial districts. According to Kwara State Ministry of Education, 2017, there are 16 local government educational authorities in the three senatorial districts. Twenty-nine senior school samples from eight selected Local Government Educational Authorities were the target population. A multi-stage sampling method was employed in the choice of the needed sample for the study.

In the first stage, the stratified sampling technique was used in the division of Kwara State schools into three senatorial districts that is Kwara North, South and Central. Secondly, simple random sampling techniques were adopted in the selection of 8 local government areas from the three senatorial districts. Thirdly, stratified sampling was used to classified school on the bases of ownership, sex (mixed or single-sex) and mode of operation (boarding or day school) to select 29 senior schools.

Furthermore, a stratified sampling procedure was also adopted in the selection of those teachers teaching Civic Education and those teaching Government as a school subjects from the sampled schools. Lastly, proportionate sampling technique was used in the sampling of 63 Government and Civic Education teachers out of the population of 83, and 606 Government and Civic Education students of Senior School three out of a population of 1, 269. This is in line with the "Research Advisors" [10] table for sample selection which shows that the most appropriate sample for a population of 1000- 1200 is 606 at 95% of confidence and 2.5% margin of error.

Two research instruments were used in the collection of the needed data for the study. They are a-10 item three-point-Likert scale researcher designed questionnaire and a proforma of two years of school-based promotional examination results of the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 academic session. The questionnaire items were validated by experts within the Department of Social Sciences Education, the University of Ilorin to form sure the validity of its content. This is often in line with researcher [11] who maintained that the only procedure for validating research instruments is to present it to a panel of experts. A test- retest reliability method was administered with a sample of four secondary schools with 13 Civic Education and Government teachers and 129 student population within the Ilorin metropolis. A three-week interval period was given. The scores of the first were correlated with the scores of the second using Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient, and a reliability index of 0.87 was obtained.

The questionnaire contained two sections. Bio-data of the respondent constituted the first part while the second part enclosed ten items with three point's response (Totally related (3), Somehow related (2), and Not related (1)). The questionnaires have been administered to the respondents by the researcher in the company of skilled research assistants. Frequency, Mean score, Standard deviation, and t-test and chi-square at 0.05 alpha level using IBM SPSS 21<sup>st</sup> version were the statistical tools adopted for the analysis of the data collected.

## 2.1. Theoretical framework

Sociologist George Homans developed social exchange theory in the year 1958. Social Exchange Theory is a dominant theoretical view in the field of social psychology as far back as the early writings of [12]-[14]. Homans in George [12] defined social exchange because the exchange of activity, touchable or unquantifiable and more or less rewarding or expensive, between a minimum of two people. After Homans established the idea, two other theorists; Peter Blau continued to write down about it. Emerson in Robbins, Welser, Grigoryeva and Gleave [14] focused on economic and utilitarian perspectives, while [15] focused on reinforcement principals who believe individuals base their next social advance prior knowledge. This theory posits that human relationships are formed by the utilization of subjective analysis and therefore the comparison of alternatives. Although different views of social exchange have emerged, such as [15], [16] theorists agree that social exchange involves a series of interactions that generate obligations. Levine, Kim, Ferrara, and Levine, [17] examined how actors in an exchange link weigh the benefits of the exchange relation. Similarly, the study has students who offer both subjects (Civic Education and Government) to weigh the benefits of this, if one is more qualitative than the others in terms of the reward. As a rational being, maximizing satisfaction cum minimizing of costs is considered an intelligent decision.

The theory tells that humans base their behaviours on rational calculations intended to maximise individual profit; most of the people value taking, loyalty, support, affection and companionship then might find it gratifying to be in reference to an individual who boosts our social station. This is often categorized as a reward; on the opposite hand, prices arise whenever there's a negative value for a private. As an example, a relationship that costs us time, money and energy or all the adjustments we make to coordinate with another person; and lastly that internet outcome is adequate to reward deduct costs.

*Most people act in a way that enhances outcome they surely value and decreases outcome they negatively value, and if the gains from the swap exceed the costs, actors engage in recurring exchanges over time [18].*

SET suggests that all individuals' decisions to interact in an interaction process support the utilization of biased analysis and therefore the comparison of options. Individuals participate in an exchange process once they have judged the rewards and therefore the costs and can enter relationships during which they will maximize benefits and minimize costs. Actors will engage in exchange if the resulting rewards are useful to them, and therefore the perceived costs don't exceed the perceived benefits [19]-[22]. Also, Thibaut and Kelley in Stuart [23] stated that interactions are likely to continue as long as both parties feel that they're benefiting more from the exchange than they're abandoning. Thus, social exchanges involve uncertainty, particularly within the early stages of the connection [14] encapsulated the system of social exchange theory keen on three suggestions.

- a. Success proposal – when a person is rewarded for his or her actions, he or she tends to repeat the action.
- b. Stimulus proposition – the more often a specific spur has ensued in remuneration in the past, the likelihood it is that a person will react.
- c. Deprivation – the more often in the recent past a person has taken a particular reward, the less valuable any further part of that reward becomes.

In line with the above Horman's summarization of the social exchange theory, since most students find it difficult to draw a line between the two subjects (Civic Education and Government), some of the recipients of this education (individually) may weigh the points (reward) attached to success in them and determine which one is impeccable, using the success proposition.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research questions of the study were answered in an attempt to sharpen the focus of the study. This was actualized through the use of descriptive statistics, the results of which are as presented:

**3.1. Research question one:** What is the teachers and students' assessment of the level of relatedness of Civic Education and Government as a school subject in the areas of objectives, curriculum contents, instructional text and materials and teaching strategies adopted by the teachers?

Table 1 reveals a mean scores of 1.58, 1.55, 1.97 and 1.51 > 1.50 weighted mean, this implies that Civic Education and Government as school subjects are related in the area of objectives. Table 2 reveals a mean scores range of 1.60 to 2.15 > 1.56 weighted mean, this implies that Civic Education and Government as school subjects are related in the area of curriculum contents. Table 3 reveals a mean scores  $\geq 1.61$  weighted mean, with an exception of 1.38, 1.45 and 1.59 < 1.60, by implication the experiences of the students, students workbooks and documentaries are not related to instructional texts and materials. Table 4 reveals a mean

scores  $\geq 1.60$  weighted mean, with an exception of 1.48 and  $1.41 < 1.60$ , by implication the Role-play and differentiation are not related teaching strategies. It can, therefore, be concluded that both the teachers and students assessed both civic education and government as related in all ramifications.

Table 1. Means score of relatedness of objectives

S/N	Contents	N	Means	Std.D.
1	Civic knowledge	669	1.58	0.69
	• Understanding the political system, institutions and processes			
	• The rights and responsibilities of citizens			
	• Human rights and responsibilities			
2	Civic skills	669	1.55	0.86
	• Critical-thinking			
	• Problem-solving and decision-making			
	• Social or interpersonal skills			
3	Civic dispositions	669	1.97	0.24
	• Belief in the dignity and equality of every human being			
	• Determination to act justly			
	• Respect for freedom			
4	Civic actions	669	1.51	0.62
	• Willingness to work with and for others			
	• Value diversity			
	• Take personal and civic responsibility			

Weighted average 1.50

Table 2. Means score of teachers and students responses on curriculum contents

	Contents	N	Mean	Std.D
1	Democracy, government and state	669	1.61	0.61
2	Citizenship	669	2.15	0.98
3	Rights and responsibilities	669	1.97	0.24
4	Roles of government in the economy	669	1.82	0.91
5	Economic growth	669	1.73	0.80
6	Conflict	669	1.60	0.50
7	Ways of resolving conflicts in the society	669	1.60	0.50
8	Civil society and non-governmental	669	1.80	0.95
9	Institutions that facilitate government	669	1.66	0.50
10	Political and constitutional developments in West Africa and international relations	669	1.82	0.93
11	Constitutions	669	1.95	0.20
12	Political parties and party system	669	1.61	0.48
13	Pressure groups, public opinion and mass media	669	1.66	0.88
14	Electoral system, process and electoral management body	669	1.73	0.51
15	Nationalism	669	1.66	0.67
16	Pre-colonial political system in Nigeria	669	1.91	0.59
17	Colonial administration	669	1.60	0.80
18	Military rule in Nigeria	669	1.87	0.53
19	Emerging issues in the society	669	1.73	0.65
20	Governmental system and process	669	1.61	0.86

Weighted average 1.56

Table 3. Means score of teachers and students responses on instructional text and materials

S/N	Instructional texts and materials	N	Mean	Std.D
1	The experiences of the students themselves and of their families, friends, and neighbors	669	1.38	0.55
2	Community resources, such as historical sites, museums, shops, farms, and factories;	669	1.67	0.54
3	Biographies, myths and legends, literature, diaries, newspaper articles, yearbooks and letters	669	1.92	0.95
4	Photographs, charts, maps, radio interviews, posters, films, and television programmes	669	1.95	0.20
5	Textbooks	669	1.61	0.48
6	Teachers guides	669	1.78	0.92
7	Students workbooks	669	1.45	0.65
8	Documentaries (audio and visual)	669	1.59	0.70
9	Electronic Instructional material (websites and the internet)	669	1.91	0.59

Weighted average: 1.61

Table 4. Mean score on teaching strategies

Teaching strategies		N	Mean	Std.D.
1	Role play	669	1.41	0.55
2	Inquiry-based instruction.	669	1.70	0.53
3	Dramatization	669	1.92	0.95
4	Simulation method	669	1.95	0.20
5	Cooperative learning	669	1.68	0.54
6	Visualization. Bring all academic concepts to life with visual and practical learning experiences, helping your students to understand how their schooling applies in the real-world	669	1.72	0.89
7	Differentiation	669	1.48	0.65
8	Technology in the classroom.	669	1.60	0.70
9	Behaviour management	669	1.86	0.59
10	Professional development	669	1.66	0.50

Weighted average: 1.60

### 3.2. Research question two: What is the general performance of students in Civic Education?

Table 5 shows that students performed very well in two consecutive years. While the failure rate remained stagnant.

Table 5. General performance of students in civic education in Kwara State

Variable	Year	Passed	Failed
Civic education	2016-2017	521 (86.0%)	85(14.0%)
	2017-2018	512 (84.48%)	94(15.5%)

### 3.3. Research question three: What is the general performance of students in government?

Table 6 reveals the general performance of the students in government as a school subject. It showed that students performed very well in two consecutive years.

Table 6. General performance of students in government in Kwara State

Variable	Year	Passed	Failed
Government	2016-2017	533 (88%)	73 (12%)
	2017-2018	544(90%)	62(10%)

### 3.4. Hypotheses testing

#### 3.4.1. H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant difference in the level of relatedness in the Civic Education and Government as a school subject based on status

Table 7 shows a calculated t-value of .732 and a p-value of .466 testing at an alpha level of 0.05. There was no significant difference in the observation for teachers (M=20.33, SD=3.296) and students, M=19.80, SD=3.296;  $t(126)=.732$ ,  $p=.466$ , (two-tailed). Since the p-value is greater than the alpha level ( $p>0.05$ ), the null hypothesis was retained. Consequently, there is no significant difference in the assessment of teachers and students on the level of relatedness between Civic Education and Government in all ramifications.

Table 7. T-test analysis of the difference in the assessment of teachers and students on the level of relatedness of civic education and government as a school subject

Status	N	Mean	Std. D	df	t- cal	P (2-tailed)
Teachers	63	20.33	3.296	149	.732	.466
Students	606	19.80	3.500			

#### 3.4.2. H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant relationship in the level of relatedness in the general performance of Kwara State students in Civic Education and Government

Table 8 reveals an r-value of 0.282 and a P-value of 0.002. Testing at an alpha level of 0.05 where the p-value is less than the alpha level ( $P<0.05$ ), therefore, the null hypothesis which states that, there is no significant relationship in the level of relatedness in the general performance of students in Civic Education

and Government as a school subject is rejected. Consequently, there is a significant relationship between the performance of students in Civic Education and Government.

Table 8. Correlation between groups of civic education and government in Kwara State

Variables	N	Mean(X)	SD	R	Sig. (2tailed)	Remark
Civic	606	13.46	24.051	.282**	.002	Significant
Government		6.13	9.111			

$\alpha=0.05$   $P<0.05$ ;  $H_{01}$  rejected.

The teachers and students assessed that both Civic Education and Government as a school subject are related in all ramifications, be it; as a school subject, its curriculum contents, teaching strategies adopted during the teaching of the both subject, text materials available to both the teachers and students, teachers teaching the subject, and instructional materials adopted by the teachers in the teaching of the two subjects. Thus, looking at the aims and objectives as stated in the National Policy of Education [24], [25] on the two subjects is the same, which stated thus; helping the student to be politically conscious and to be a good citizen. This accounted for why students offering the two subjects prefer to attend one at the expense of the other. One could imagine the student's general performance in the two school subjects, whether because there was higher class attendance over the other, there may be a difference or not.

In a quest to ascertain the general performance of students in the two school subjects, the study revealed that students performed very well in the two subjects for two consecutive years (2016-2017, 2017-2018). This shows a pass in Government automatically brings about a pass in Civic Education and vice versa, therefore, this may be one of the reasons students adduced for attending one at the expense of the other lessons.

Apparently, the teaching of the subjects has the same effect on the students, as revealed from this research. The study shows that most of the contents of Civic Education curriculum were found in Government and vice versa, e.g. civil right, the rule of law, political apathy, democracy and many more. It was also revealed that a teacher could take both subjects and apply the same teaching techniques since some of the topics are interwoven. In most instances, a subject teacher doubled for the two subjects. By implication, a senior school level one Civic Education teacher is at the same time senior school level two Government teacher.

From the null hypotheses tested, findings revealed that a stable relationship exists in the level of relatedness of the two school subjects. The study found a significant relationship in the performance of students in Government and Civic Education, rejecting the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship general performance of students of Government and Civic education. This is because both civic education and Government inculcate morals and promote civic competency, which led to promotion and making of good governance and effective participation in government. Thus, these and other factors accounted for poor attitudes of student's attendance to the lesson. This finding contrasts that of Bello *et al.* [8] where the type of relationship that existed is symbiotic in nature.

While the current finding agrees with the summation of basic principle of [12]-[14] that, since most students find it difficult to draw a line between the two subjects (Civic Education and Government), some of the recipients of this education (individually) may weigh the points (reward) attached to success in them and determine which one is impeccable, using the success proposition. Moreover, based on that determines their level of attendance.

Corroborating this is Dania [18] assertion that "most people behave during a way that increases outcomes they positively value and reduces outcomes they negatively value and if the advantages from the exchange exceed the prices, actors engage in recurring exchanges over time." The inability of the students (90.5% of the sample) to pick a specific difference between these two school subjects led to their behaviour of attending any one of the two school subjects and preferred reading other notebooks or result to playing during the period allotted for the other related subject. As rational beings, they based their behaviours on rational calculations designed to maximize their satisfaction. This continued to the extent that they examined which subject out of these two gives more points in explanation of subtopics than the other.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study it might be concluded after a radical examination of the overall performance of scholars in Civic Education and Government which were above average, that a big relationship exists between civic education and Government as school subjects. Also, there is no significant

difference within the assessment of teachers and students on the extent of relatedness between Civic Education and Government as a faculty subject. Since the two subjects are much related, the curriculum planner should collapse the curriculum contents of the two subjects into one rather than overburden the school timetable.

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