

Educators' Predisposition to Conceptual Perspectives in Achieving Citizenship Education Goal of Social Studies

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Abstract

This study explored the role of age and the classroom management styles in differentiating educators' predisposition to conceptual perspectives in achieving citizenship education goal of social studies in schools in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria. It was assumed that analysis of these conceptual perspectives can be useful in the selection of content and methods consistent with the desired citizenship education goal of social studies teaching in Nigerian schools. Four conceptual models (citizenship transmission, social science, reflective inquiry and democratic transformation) of citizenship education created within the context of social studies were analyzed. Two null hypotheses were tested while the responding sample consisted of 313 social studies educators. It was concluded that the respondents positively endorsed the four models though in varying degrees with high preference for the citizenship transmission model. Significant differences were observed between educators divided into groups based on age and the classroom management styles. Implications for pedagogy are suggested.

Introduction

The development of social studies in Nigeria was the earliest sign of the influence of American education on the Nigerian education system. The earliest work in social studies in Nigeria as in America showed a great dependency on materials drawn from history, geography, and the social sciences. But the concept and prospects of integrated social studies which gained acceptance in Africa since 1960s were adopted by the African educators under the auspices of the African Social Studies Programme (ASSP) who met in Mombasa, Kenya in 1968. They observed that the traditional social studies – history, geography and civics they inherited from the different colonial masters alienated the African child from his environment and society. It was against such background that Nigeria initiated a comprehensive reform in its education system at all levels in 1969 (Adaralegbe, 1981). The effort culminated in the production of a national policy on education for Nigeria in 1977 with the second and third revised editions in 1981 and 1998 respectively and the fourth edition published in 2004.

The policy is based on the desire that “Nigeria should be a free, just and democratic society... growing into a united, strong and self-reliant nation” (FRN, 2004:6). In order to realize fully the potentials of the contributions of education to the preparation of citizens for effective participation and contribution to the life of the society, Nigeria places emphasis on citizenship education as an integral part of social studies education. While the field of social studies has suffered from inadequate definitions and lack of conceptual framework, a majority of social studies educators today would likely agree that the primary concern of social studies is citizenship education (Whitworth and Berson, 2003; Ross, 2004). “Responsible citizenship is one of the primary purposes of social studies” (Foran, 2004:12) and a review of the trend in the field recently concluded that “citizenship education has long been recognized as the integral part of the social studies” (Lee, 2004:1).

Nigerian educators lack a clear direction for the purpose, method and context of teaching social studies via-a-vis its citizenship education goal (Okon, 2007). Ultimately, within the field of social studies, the view is one of negativity (Kincheloe, 2001). Murro and Wesley (1965) earlier noted that this situation was due to the fact that the aims of social studies have undergone limited research. Shaver and Larkin (1973) observed that most social studies research is carried out without a theoretical basis for teaching the subject. Kincheloe's finding leaves the reader with a powerful impression that even the practitioners themselves are confused in terms of the purpose, direction and the conceptual potential of social studies. The situation has resulted in confusion in the methodological implementation within the classroom and stunted possibilities for students to benefit from a challenging and needed curriculum (Foran, 2004).

As a result of this confusion and uncertainty about how best to achieve citizenship education goal of social studies, educators resort to factual drill and conduct classes that lack real analytical questions (Udoukpong, 1989). Barr and Shermis (1970) believe that social studies educators need a conceptual framework to identify the premise from which they operate.

Conceptual Frameworks for Social Studies Education

Barr, Barth and Shermis' (1977) three traditions – citizenship transmission model, social science model, reflective inquiry model – and

Lee's (2004) democratic transformation model summarized the ways of viewing the instructional goals of social studies as each of them has ideological and philosophical underpinnings.

Citizenship Transmission Model (CTM)

The citizenship transmission model is basically conservative. Its primary interest, as a structural-functionist approach, is how social norms and values are transmitted within the context of the schools. Barr, Barth and Shermis (1977) view social studies as a vehicle to promote socialization thereby prepare students to conform to the existing social structure both in the school and society. Students are socialized to accept unquestionably a set of beliefs, rules, and dispositions fundamental to the function of the larger society (Giroux, 1987). Frequently this transmission process is referred to by educators as the hidden curriculum because it seems to operate beneath the surface of the ostensible curriculum (Lee, 2004).

Social Science Model (SSM)

In analyzing social studies as social science, Barr, Barth and Shermis (1977) discussed the approach in terms of purpose, method and content. The purpose is to acquire knowledge that is self-justifying and self-validating. Regarding the method, the attempt is to have students emulate the social scientists, not only by grasping the structure of the discipline, but also in learning the mode of inquiry characterizing certain disciplines. Bruner (1960) perceived the structure of a discipline as the best means of resolving social problems and that “grasping the structure of a subject is understanding it in a way that permits many other things to be related to it meaningfully” (p.7).

Reflective Inquiry Model (RIM)

As expressed by Barr, Barth and Shermis (1977) the purpose of reflective inquiry is citizenship defined primarily as decision-making in a socio-political context. The assumption is that “democracy imposes a unique burden, we cannot escape the requirement of decision-making” (p.64). In this approach therefore, students are encouraged to explore their values and either to define problem within the context of their experiences or to relate social problems to the day-to-day texture of their lives (Barth and Shermis, 1979). Teaching students to be reflective thinkers is to cultivate conceptual abilities, skills, habits and dispositions that embody the ideal of rationality. Decision-making skills and all the knowledge and attitudes that go into the making of intelligent decisions are at the heart of democratic citizenship (Engle and Ochoa, 1988).

Democratic Transformation Model (DTM)

Social studies as democratic transformation suggests a classroom climate that engages students in the “process of critical thinking, ethical decision-making and social participation” (Stanley and Nelson, 1986:532) in order to improve the quality of their lives and communities (Goodman, 1992). Social studies as democratic transformation has to do with developing the skills of the students and teachers for solving current problems. Action-based learning is a form of constructivism (Dewey, 1990). This approach allows students to construct their knowledge from experience versus supplied information that they apply. Another purpose of social studies as democratic transformation is changing society through identification of its problems and purposeful action to improve it (Sapon-Shevin, 1999). Working with youth and listening to their concerns for the present and for the future is a crucial component of intergenerational collaboration for democratic transformation (Hutchinson, 2000). Citizenship education should go beyond the glorification of cultural values.

Purpose of the Study and Significance

The study investigated the role of age and classroom management styles in differentiating educators' predisposition to achieving the citizenship education goal of social studies within the conceptual frameworks of citizenship transmission, social science, reflective inquiry (Barr, Barth and Shermis, 1977) and the democratic transformation model (Lee, 2004).

It was assumed that the analysis of these conceptual perspectives can be useful in the selection of content and methods consistent with the desired citizenship education goal of teaching social studies in Nigerian schools. It is the belief of this study that teacher education has a crucial role to play in equipping new teachers with the awareness and tools necessary for them to become effective citizenship educators. Without evaluation of teachers' instructional strategies against the curriculum goals, there exists little basis for improving the curriculum. Teachers and curriculum planners would have great reluctance to change the status quo without adequate proof of need. Identifying variables that may explain differences in conceptual perspectives would aid researchers who may wish to study further factors that inform educators' theory preference.

Methodology

Subjects

The participants in this study consisted of 313 social studies educators made up of 5 teacher educators in the Faculty of Education, University of Uyo, 12 teacher educators in the College of Education, Afaha Nsit and 296 junior secondary school teachers all in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria. Stratified random sampling was used to select the junior secondary school teachers from the existing 241 secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State while cluster sampling was used in respect of teacher educators. All the participants completed the questionnaire on educators' factors and the social studies preference scale.

The educators' classroom management styles questionnaire comprised 13 Likert-type items. The possible responses to the questionnaire items ranged from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree). However, the rating scores were reversed for negative items. The neutral score was 3, thus, the composite score for each educator ranged between 65 (maximum) and 13 (minimum). A favourable direction for the classroom style was therefore placed between 40 and 65 while the unfavourable disposition was between 13 and 39. Twenty-eight percent (89) of the educators practised autocratic classroom management style while 72% (224) educators favoured democratic style of classroom management.

Frequency count was employed in the distribution of subjects into age groups. Fifty-four percent (170) of the sample fell between 26-35 years of age, 34% (107) came within the 36-45 age bracket while 12% (36) fell between the 46-55 years of age. Respondents' perspectives toward a conceptualization model were gleaned from their agreement or disagreement with 15 representative statements describing each of the four models, (CTM, SSM, RIM, and DTM) in terms of method, purpose and content of teaching social studies with the overriding goal of citizenship education.

The Likert-type rating scale of one (1) to five (5) with one being strongly agree and five strong disagree was employed in the study. The neutral score was three (3) thus the composite scores for each model ranged between 15 (minimum) and 75 (maximum). A positive direction toward a particular model was, therefore, found between 15 and 44, and a negative direction between 45 and 75.

Hypotheses

The study tested the following null hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference in the conceptual perspectives on the citizenship education goal of social studies among educators divided into groups based on age.
2. There is no significant difference in the conceptual perspectives on the citizenship education goal of social studies among educators divided into groups based on classroom management styles.

Instrumentation

The research instruments consisted of a questionnaire-Classroom Management Styles Questionnaire (CMSQ) and Conceptual Perspectives Scale (CPS).

Classroom Management Styles Questionnaire

The questionnaire contained 13 items of a 5-point Likert scale on the classroom management styles. Content validity was established by a panel of experts consisting of university faculty members, school administrators and former secondary school teachers. Pilot-testing for suitability and reliability was conducted with educators in schools not included in the sample. The split-half reliability coefficient for the educators' factor (classroom management style) was 0.83.

Conceptual Perspectives Scale

The conceptual perspectives Scale used in this investigation is an adaptation of Barth-Shermis scale documented by DuBey and Barth (1980). It is composed of 45 Likert-type items on which possible responses ranged from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). However, Barth-Shermis scale was concerned with three conceptual dimensions of achieving the citizenship educational goal of social studies – citizenship transmission, social sciences, and reflective inquiry (DuBey and Barth, 1980). The fourth dimension is the democratic transformation model (Lee, 2004).

Each of the four models was represented by a discreet set of 15 items randomly intermingled. Content validity was established by a panel of experts consisting of university faculty members in Department of social studies education, political science professors and school administrators. Pilot-testing for suitability and reliability was conducted with social studies educators in schools not included in the sample. The split-half reliability coefficient for citizenship transmission was 0.86; social science, 0.82; reflective inquiry, 0.78 and democratic transformation, 0.75 respectively.

Procedure and Data Analysis

Copies of the “Classroom Management Styles Questionnaire” and the “Conceptual Perspectives Scale” were personally delivered to the two groups of participants – social studies educators in the secondary schools and the social studies teacher-educators in tertiary institutions involved in the study. The instruments were collected from the participants with the aid of research assistants on school-to-school basis. Responses were obtained from all the 313 participants in the sample. The responses participants gave on the classroom management styles questionnaire along with their composite scores in each of the models which constituted the Conceptual Perspectives Scale provided the data source of the study. The multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to test the overall significance of each hypothesis while the univariate analysis of variance (UANOVA) test was used to explain on which of the models the differences occurred.

Results

Age of Educators

Data reporting factor of age in determining differences in the conceptual perspective regarding citizenship education goal of social studies are presented in Table I. No difference among the age groups was found when the four conceptual models were considered together. Post-hoc test of two group comparison revealed that significant differences occurred in all the three comparative groups on social science, reflective inquiry and on the democratic transformation model as shown in Table 2.

Classroom Management Styles

Data on classroom management styles in determining the differences in educators conceptual perspective regarding citizenship education goal of social studies are reported in Table 3. The data show that there was no significant difference among the responding educators regarding their perspectives toward the four conceptual models. But the computation in Table 4 shows that significant differences occurred on social science, reflective inquiry and on the democratic transformations model.

Discussion of Results

Educators in all the age groups identified for the study were predisposed toward the citizenship transmission model. There was also a corresponding general decline in positive approach to radical pedagogy of reflective inquiry and democratic transformation. The findings of this study is supported by the work of Sears and Parsons (1992) which opined that “most teachers view social studies as a vehicle to promote socialization and to prepare students to conform to the existing social structure both in the school and society” (p.48). In Nigeria, among other things, the government prescribes the curricula activities that include “the inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the society” (FRN, 2004:8). The achievement of such a goal statement cannot be left to chance when already there is an assumption that “society is beset by much uncertainty, disorganization and lack of consensus on dominant social values” (Hunt and Metcalf, 1968:94). All these considerations might have informed the educators’ preference for the citizenship transmission model. The oldest age group of educators (46-55) had virtually the least positive approach toward the democratic transformation model.

This finding is underpinned by those of Ryff and Baltes (1976) and Neugarten and Datan (1973) whose research findings on relationship between age and conservatism support that school teachers from 45 to 60 years of age are ardent complainants. And that there is a tendency toward increased rigidity and dogmatism, toward greater prudence and resistance to innovations. Hence, the resistance to an instructional innovation such as the democratic transformation should not come as a surprise for as rightly observed by Prick (1986) that in most professions, including teaching, as retirement approaches, practitioners becomes detached progressively from professional commitment. In Nigeria, teachers retire from service at the age of 55 years. Educators within the age group of 36-45 showed relatively most favourable perspective towards the democratic transformation model than those in the age bracket of 26-35 and 46-55 years respectively. This finding could be explained to the fact that educators at that stage (36-45 years) are identified with accrued confidence, the comfort of having one's personal style of teaching in the classroom, greater flexibility in daily classroom management and the relativization of setbacks (Field, 1979). It can be associated with pleasure and humour. In other words, career experiences at this stage (36-45 years) can engender more educators' indirectness, more praise and acceptance of students' ideas and more students' participation. All these are in consonance with the tenets of democratic transformation model.

Educators from the two groups of classroom management styles were quite different in their predisposition to the social studies conceptual perspectives. The autocratic and the democratic classroom managers were favourably predisposed to citizenship transmission model but the two groups differed significantly in respect of social science, reflective inquiry and democratic transformation models respectively. Doyle (1986) observed that classroom management activities should be designed to support the basic instructional activities for which schools are established in the first place. Most contemporary social studies educators view their educational role as "passing on or transmitting to their students the knowledge, skills and attitudes that are shaped and determined by the status quo" (Leming, 1989:305). The acceptance of such educational function of the school might have informed the educators in this study being more favourably predisposed to the citizenship transmission model.

Democratic classroom managers were relatively better predisposed toward democratic transformation model while the autocratic classroom managers opted for the reflective inquiry. It could be assumed that the democratic classroom managers believe that it is better for educators to be in the centre of the classroom instead of in front of the classroom thus serving as facilitators of students' learning. Hepburn (1982) tends to support this assumption as he remarked that, "teachers ways of managing the class group sets the climate of self-direction, free exchange of views, egalitarian treatment of peers and at the same time maintains order and direction in the groups" (p.26). This practice is in tandem with the tenets of democratic transformation model. The autocratic classroom managers were better predisposed to the reflective inquiry instead of the democratic transformation model. This finding could be accounted for as the influence of Nigeria's national policy on education. The policy expects schools and by extension the educators to inculcate the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society. Schools are also to raise a generation of people who can think for themselves. This in effect calls for the application of the reflective inquiry. Autocratic classroom management educators might have seen reflective inquiry as a step in the direction of looking at social values but in the context of decision-making and value analysis and clarification only. The more positive endorsement the educators gave the citizenship transmission model might be the result of the social and political constraints in the communities in which they work as well as their concern for the developmental level of the students.

Conclusions and Implications

The research examined the perceived roles of age and the classroom management styles of educators in the achievement of citizenship education goal of social studies within the conceptual perspectives of citizenship transmission, social sciences, reflective inquiry and the democratic transformation models. Significant differences were noted between educators divided into groups based on age and classroom management styles. The educators positively endorsed the four conceptual models though in varying degrees. The educators were eclectic in their perspectives toward the citizenship education goal of social studies. This tends to suggest that the models were not mutually exclusive. The results provide a relatively complete profile of individuals' theoretical approach suggesting important modes of instruction and educators' individual differences as well. Once an educator becomes aware of his/her conceptual perspective of teaching social studies, he/she can take advantage of the expectation of the social studies goal being citizenship education to apply the best preferred approach. By investigating whether a sample of educators fit one description or another curriculum planners can work toward developing materials and introducing methods that can accommodate or modify a specific conceptual viewpoint.

It is therefore recommended that the conceptual perspectives be used for evaluating citizenship education programme to ensure that selection of content and methods are based on theoretical rationale.

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Table 1: Analysis of variance of educators' predisposition to social studies conceptual models by age (N=313)

| Source of Variance | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Significant of F |
|--------------------|------------------|------------|----------------|----------|------------------|
| Age | | | | | |
| Main Effects | 901.969 | 2 | 450.984 | 1.617n.s | 0.200 |
| Explained | 901.969 | 310 | 450.984 | 1.617n.s | 0.200 |
| Residual | 86461.891 | 312 | 3787.909 | | |
| Total | 87363.859 | | 280.012 | | |

n.s = not significant

Table 2: Post-Hoc test of two group comparison of educators' predisposition to social studies conceptual models by age (N=313)

| Age Group | N | Citizenship Transmission | | | Social Science | | | Reflective Inquiry | | | Democratic Transformation | | |
|----------------------|-----|--------------------------|------|---------------------|----------------|------|---------------------|--------------------|------|--------|---------------------------|-------|-------|
| | | Mean | SD | t | Mean | SD | t | Mean | SD | t | Mean | SD | t |
| 26-35 Vs 36-45 | 170 | 65.92 | 3.52 | 0.35 ^{n.s} | 52.35 | 4.97 | 5.36* | 34.19 | 9.29 | 11.23* | 30.15 | 11.52 | 2.17* |
| | 107 | 66.07 | 3.39 | | 56.17 | 6.86 | | 3.01 | 5.53 | | 33.67 | 15.35 | |
| 26-35 Vs 46-55 | 170 | 65.92 | 3.52 | 0.87 ^{n.s} | 52.35 | 4.97 | 0.05 ^{n.s} | 34.19 | 9.29 | 2.43* | 30.15 | 11.52 | 2.65* |
| | 36 | 65.36 | 3.51 | | 52.39 | 3.91 | | 38.03 | 3.76 | | 24.75 | 8.75 | |
| 36-45 vs 46-55 | 107 | 66.07 | 3.39 | 1.08 ^{n.s} | 56.17 | 6.86 | 3.13* | 23.01 | 5.53 | 15.13* | 33.67 | 15.35 | 3.31* |
| | 36 | 65.36 | 3.51 | | 52.39 | 3.91 | | 38.03 | 3.76 | | 24.75 | 8.75 | |

n.s = not significant

*significant at p <0.05

Table 3: Analysis of variance of educators' predisposition to social studies conceptual models by classroom management styles (N=313)

| Source of Variance | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Significant of F |
|-----------------------------|------------------|------------|----------------|----------------------|------------------|
| Classroom Management Styles | | | | | |
| Main Effects | 388.162 | 1 | 388.162 | 1.388 ^{n.s} | 0.240 |
| Explained | 388.162 | 1 | 388.162 | 1.388 ^{n.s} | 0.240 |
| Residual | 86975.698 | 311 | 279.665 | | |
| Total | 87363.859 | 312 | 280.012 | | |

n.s = not significant

Table 4: t-test analysis of educators' predisposition to social studies conceptual models by classroom management styles (N=313)

| Classroom Management Styles | N | Citizenship Transmission | | | Social Science | | | Reflective Inquiry | | | Democratic Transformation | | |
|-----------------------------|-----|--------------------------|------|---------|----------------|------|-------|--------------------|------|--------|---------------------------|-------|-------|
| | | Mean | SD | t | Mean | SD | t | Mean | SD | t | Mean | SD | t |
| Autocratic | 89 | 65.58 | 3.76 | 1.05n.s | 52.57 | 5.68 | 2.08* | 39.24 | 5.01 | 11.76* | 21.96 | 4.21 | 8.35* |
| Democratic | 224 | 66.04 | 3.35 | | 54.08 | 5.89 | | 27.45 | 8.89 | | 34.22 | 13.60 | |

n.s = not significant

*significant at p < 0.05