

TEACHERS' DEMOCRATIC CHARACTERISTICS AS CORRELATE OF SOCIAL STUDIES STUDENTS' DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENTS IN IBADAN, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study investigated teachers' democratic characteristics as correlates of Social Studies students' democratic engagements in Ibadan, Nigeria. The study determined the extent to which Social Studies students involve in democratic engagements in junior secondary schools in Ibadan, Nigeria and examined the relationship between teachers' democratic characteristics and Social Studies students democratic engagements in the study area. This study adopted the survey research design of correlational type. The population of the study comprised all junior secondary two (JSS 2) Social Studies classrooms, students and teachers in Ibadan North Local Government Area, Nigeria. Ibadan North Local Government Area was purposively selected for this study due to proximity and the researcher has knowledge of the environment. Five schools were randomly selected for the study and 50 participants were also selected from each of the school to participate in the study. The total number of participants were 250. Purposive sampling was used to select two Social Studies teachers from each of the selected schools who would be involved in the study. Instruments used were teachers' democratic characteristics ($r=0.78$) and students' democratic engagements ($r=0.76$) scales. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance. The result shows that there is a significant relationship between teachers' democratic characteristics and students' democratic engagements in junior secondary schools in Ibadan, Nigeria ($r=0.166$, $df=198$, $p<0.05$). It is recommended that teacher must acknowledge the role of their democratic characteristics on the level of students' democratic engagements so that they can always make use of teaching method that will allow them display their democratic characteristics.

Keywords: Democratic classroom, Teachers' characteristics, Social Studies, Students' democratic engagements

Introduction

Becoming an engaged democratic citizen begins by practicing democracy in the classroom. Classroom

stands as the first community where students should learn to exercise voice; to make choices and take personal responsibility for their own learning; and to understand, give, and receive fair, equitable and respectful treatment (Kesici, 2008). It is in this kind of learning community environment that they should feel safe to express ideas, explore leadership, and engage in guiding the classroom community. In the everyday life of the classroom, students should experience democracy at every opportunity, and should cultivate an appreciation of the democratic process (Kesici, 2008). Knight (2001) assumed that giving students the opportunity to practice democratic values in the elementary classroom is essential for continuing our democratic culture and for preparing students to be participating citizens.

A democratic climate is essential to growing and nurturing democratic values and practices. "Democracy cannot be mass delivered to classrooms but must emerge in the classroom and develop from classroom to classroom" (Knight, 2001). In order for a classroom to be considered democratic, Kesici (2008) stated that students must feel free to think and be creative and be comfortable to conduct discussions openly. In other words, the environment must be safe enough for students to take risks. A democratic classroom provides a safe and active learning environment where every student's rights are guaranteed (Kesici, 2008). One of the goals of developing a democratic classroom is to reconstruct the culture so that it welcomes diversity and incorporates a sense of belonging. Knight (2001) believes that students can achieve more if the classroom environment is designed in such a way that it encourages a sense of competence and of ownership, and a feeling of belonging. An optimum learning environment can be achieved when the classroom environment provides for: encouragement to risk opinions and challenge authority; relief from unnecessary pain and public humiliation including boredom and loneliness; meaning; a sense of competence; a feeling of belonging; awareness of one's usefulness; excitement; creativity; ownership; and equality. Democratic education should bring these together in a coherent and integrated fashion (Knight, 2001).

Students' learn in ways that are more enduring and applicable to life when they become stakeholders in the process. In a democratic classroom, students feel the sense of ownership that comes with being a stakeholder. Shifting from teacher-centered to student-centered learning requires students to think and participate more and to take control of their learning (Vega & Tayler, 2005). A student-centered, democratic classroom aligns well with the theory of constructivism. One principle of constructivism, knowledge constructed from within, is that learning has to be an active process. Education is the only way through which the principles of democracy can be internalised. Educational institutions have been found to play a pivotal role in raising democratic citizens and forming a democratic culture (Apple & Benne, 2011). Thus, democracy and education have many things in common. They influence, transform, and improve each other in time. This is why it can safely be said that there is a symbiotic relationship between democracy and education (Dahl & Forbes, 2010).

As pointed out by Kiroglu (2013) while education is key to the existence, adoption, and flourishing of democracy on the individual and social levels, democracy, too, is a sine qua non to quality-raising in education and in educated individuals becoming useful for themselves and all humanity. Education is used by various societies to meet certain needs. As such, in a democratic society, there is the need for schools to be in harmony with democracy, and teach relevant values, attitudes, skills and behaviour (Dogonay, 2010). School is a planned environment supposedly staffed by professionals. It is a place where teaching and learning takes place for the development of intelligence, a centre for intellectual learning, and the overall development of the learners. It is a place where the learner is regarded as a total human being involved in a wide variety of situations (Ajitoni, 2013). By teaching, it is meant the imparting of the three Rs-Reading, Writing, Arithmetic-which represent the various school subjects, and four other Rs-Rights, Responsibilities, Relationships and Recreation which are the requirements and ideals of a modern democratic state (Ajitoni, 2013).

Most of these components take place in the classroom learning environment. Democratic classrooms provide the optimum environment for students to best learn and live these values. The ability of students to make decisions autonomously, to lead, to tolerate different opinions, to collaborate with and respect the rights of others is learnt and inculcated in the

classroom. Students-centred education, democratic classroom management, effective teacher guidance, giving value to different ideas, the ability to awaken a democratic sensitivity and games related with democracy are some examples of democracy in education (Ennis, 2017). Moreover, the teacher's appropriate attitudes, experience, behaviours and a suitable classroom environment will allow students to develop their critical thinking (Tanriverdi, Ulusoy & Turan, 2012).

The classroom, then, should be a place where the principles of a democratic society have to be 'lived' if students are to comprehend and appreciate the full impact of the meaning of those principles. By a democratic classroom, it meant a place where such values as equality, freedom, justice, and participation are found (Kesici, 2008). A democratic classroom should be a reflection of the larger society. That is, the classroom should be where students can live freedom, express their views, and learn to respect all sorts of differences and diversity. Hahn (1998) observed that a participatory climate in the classroom gives individual students the chance to experience democratic life. As the students acquire these experiences, they become conscious of their rights and imbibe the concepts of freedom and justice as democratic values. Yet, in many classrooms, these are not usually possible as a result of the teachers' posture and the teacher-centred teaching methods adopted (Mapiasse, 2007; Ajiboye & Ajitoni, 2008).

A number of researches into democratic classroom environments have been conducted over the years. Some of these studies have investigated a variety of aspects of School classroom environment ranging from factors influencing learning environments (Wraga, 1998; Mapiasse, 2007; Kiroglu, 2013) to the students' perceptions of their classrooms, the relationships between student perceptions of their classrooms and their learning outcomes, and such interactions that could improve student learning outcomes in different subject areas. However, the effects of teachers' characteristics and Social Studies students' democratic engagements have not been a subject of much concern in most of these studies particularly in Nigeria. Moreover, not much attention has been paid to students wanting to engage in democratic processes in the classrooms. Therefore, this study investigated teachers' democratic characteristics as a correlate of Social Studies students' democratic engagements in Ibadan.

Teachers being significant component of formal

educational programs, practice democratic values in classrooms for better exploration of democracy through participation and explanation (Kaya, Taşdan, Kop, & Metin, 2012). Teachers focus on students' centered education to build democratic culture through classroom practices and provide freedom of expression, respect for diversity and opportunities of participation to students. Teachers' democratic characteristics towards democratic practices are considered more important in several researches (Dworkin, Saha, & Hill, 2003; Kaya, 2013; Yalcin, 2014). Teachers provide opportunities to students during democratic practices in classrooms to meet democratic values such as freedom of expression and participation, respect for diversity, equality and tolerance (Samanci, 2010; Tammi, 2013). Students pay more attention to the actions of their teachers and they are more open towards practices in classrooms. Previous studies made use of teacher characteristics as moderator variable but in this current study, this variable will be used as an independent variable to determine to what extent it can influence Social Studies students' democratic engagements.

Statement of the Problem

Classroom stands as first community where students should learn to exercise voice; to make choices and take personal responsibility for their own learning; and to understand, give, and receive fair, equitable and respectful treatment. They are to think critically, make responsible decisions, have democratic attitude, (emotional engagements), knowledge (cognitive engagements), values, and practices (behavioural engagements) all of which imply democratic engagements. The rate at which people do not involve in their democratic responsibility is alarming and there is need to encourage the younger generation to be democratic engaged so that they can play their role in the development of their respective community and the nation at large. There is a need to look into students' democratic engagement in schools which can determine their democratic engagement in the larger society. Therefore this study investigated teachers' democratic characteristics as correlate of Social Studies students' democratic engagements in Ibadan, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

- the extent to which Social Studies students' involve in democratic engagements in junior secondary schools in Ibadan, Nigeria and
- the relationship between teachers' democratic characteristics and Social Studies students'

democratic engagements in the study area

Research Questions

Two research questions were asked to guide this study.

- To what extent do social Studies students get involved in democratic engagements in junior secondary schools in Ibadan, Nigeria?
- Is there any significant relationship between teachers' democratic characteristics and social studies students' democratic engagement in junior secondary schools in Ibadan, Nigeria?

Methodology

This study adopted the survey research design of correlational type. The population of the study comprised all junior secondary two (JSS 2) Social Studies classrooms, students and teachers in Ibadan North Local Government Area, Nigeria. Ibadan North Local Government Area was purposively selected for this study due to the fact that it is the seat of government around capital of Oyo State. Five schools were randomly selected for the study and 50 participants were also selected from each of the school to participate in the study. The total number of participants were 250. Purposive sampling was used to select two Social Studies teachers from each of the selected schools who would be involved in the study. The criteria for the selection are the following; the teacher must be a qualified Social Studies teacher ;the school must have been existing for fifteen years and above and schools that are willing to participate in the study.

The two instruments used were Teachers' Democratic Characteristics Scale (TDCS) and Students' Democratic Engagements Scale (SDES). The instrument TDCS, was developed by the researcher to measure Teachers' Democratic Characteristics and consists of two sections. Section A sought for the background information of the teachers such as name of school and local government while section B contains 20 scale statements which are patterned after the Likert 3-point scale of Never (N), Sometimes (S), Frequently (F). The scales (N) and (F) are allotted 3, 2 and 1 points respectively for positively worded statements. This was reversal for negatively worded statements. The instrument, SDES, was developed by the researcher to measure Students' Democratic Engagements and consists of two sections. Section A sought for the background information of the teachers

such as name of school and local government while section B contains 19 scale statements which are patterned after the Likert 4-point scale of Frequently (F), Sometimes (S), Seldom (S) and Never (N). The scales (F), (S), (S), and (N) are allotted 4, 3, 2 and 1 points respectively for positively worded statements. This was reversal for negatively worded statements.

The data collected were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics, involving frequency counts and percentages was used to present the characteristics and responses of the respondents descriptively. Also, inferential statistics, involving Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient to determine the relationships among the independent variables and

Results

Research Question 1: To what extent do Social Studies students get involved in democratic engagements in junior secondary schools in Ibadan, Nigeria?

Table 1: Level of Social Studies Students' Involvement in Democratic Engagements in Junior Secondary Schools

S/N	ITEMS	Mean	S.D	DECISION	
1.	I am freely expressing my views in class	3.46	.67		VLE
2.	My teacher gives me the chance to experience the freedom to choose	3.37	.64	VLE	
3.	When giving out tasks, my teacher organises elections in which I usually involve	3.24	.78	LE	
4.	I do participate in any decision making in my class	2.91	.93	LE	
5.	I treat other with love and respect in class	3.38	.68		VLE
6.	I empathize with others in all circumstances	3.29	.70	VLE	
7.	I follow rules and regulations in my school	3.19	.70	LE	
8.	I do give respect to other people opinion in order to reach logical conclusion in decision making	3.31	.63	VLE	
9.	I treat others fairly	3.20	.76	LE	
10.	I tolerates all sorts of difference in the classroom	2.98	.79		LE
11.	I do work with other students to achieve common goals	3.18	.68	LE	
12.	I involve in anything relating with political affair in my class	3.08	.76		LE
13.	My teacher treats me fairly in allowing me have my say	3.07	.73	LE	
14.	I do work with school administrators to ensure orderliness	3.02	.80		LE
15.	I involve in anything relating with political affair in my school	2.90	.91		LE
16.	I do cast my vote if there is need to choose anyone for leadership position in my class	3.45	.60	VLE	
17.	I do cast my vote if there is need to choose anyone for leadership position in my school	3.25	.73	LE	
18.	I do take responsibility that will affect other positively	2.57	.89	LE	
19.	I do contribute my opinion on any matter if need arises	2.92	.85	LE	
	Total	3.15	.74		LE

Key: VLE – Very Large Extent (4.00-3.26), LE – Large Extent (3.25-2.51), SE – Some Extent (2.50-1.76), LoE – Low Extent (1.75-1.00)

Table 1 reveals the result of the level of involvement of social studies students in democratic engagements in junior secondary schools in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria, Osun State. It can be seen that the students to a very large extent were allowed by their teachers to freely express themselves in the classroom. It can equally be observed from the table the students to a very large extent responded that their teachers gave

them the chance to experience their freedom to choose. The teachers to a large extent organised election when giving out tasks to the students. It can also be seen that the students to a very large extent responded that their teachers treated them with love and respect and at the same time empathized with them in all circumstances.

Research Question 2: Is there any significant relationship between teachers' democratic characteristics and students' democratic engagements among junior secondary schools in Ibadan, Nigeria?

Table 2: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on relationship between teachers' democratic characteristics and students' democratic engagements among junior secondary schools in Ibadan, Nigeria

Variable	N	X	S.D.	DF	r	Sig.	Remark
Teachers' democratic characteristics	250	60.75	15.92	198	0.166*	0.037	Significant
Students' democratic engagements	250	46.34	10.22				

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 2 above presents the result of the relationship between teachers' democratic characteristics and students' democratic engagements. The result shows that there is a significant relationship between teachers' democratic characteristics and students' democratic engagements in junior secondary schools in Ibadan, Nigeria ($r=0.166$, $df=198$, $p<0.05$). This implied that the democratic characteristics of teachers in junior secondary schools in Ibadan is significantly related to their students' democratic engagements. This means that the kind of characteristics the teachers possess will determine the level of their students' democratic engagements in the classroom.

Discussion

The study reveals that the students to a large extent were treated fairly, allowed to have a say and were allowed to participate in decision making. The study revealed that to a large extent students do involve in election and as well play their civic responsibility in both entre school and class which are part of their democratic engagement. Based on this analysis, with average weighted mean of 3.15, it can be concluded that the social studies students to a large extent were involved in democratic engagements in junior secondary schools in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. This findings corroborated the findings of Vega & Tayler, 2005 and Apple & Benne, 2011 that found out that democratic characteristic of teachers can enable every students to display democratic engagements characteristics. The result also shows that there is a significant relationship between teachers' democratic characteristics and students' democratic engagements in junior. This implies that the level of democratic traits being possess by teachers determine students level of democratic engagements. Hence, this confirms the view of Ajiboye and Ajitoni (2008) and Mapiasse (2007) that there is relationship between teacher democratic teaching methods and students democratic engagements.

Recommendations

Based on the finding of this study, the researcher makes the following recommendations:

- ♦ Students need to be given opportunity to express themselves in classroom so that their democratic engagement characteristics can be nurtured in them by the teachers.
- ♦ Teachers need to frequently display their democratic characteristics traits in them so that students can be encouraged to display their democratic engagements traits as well
- ♦ Teacher should involve students in decision making in order to nurture them more democratic engagement.
- ♦ Teacher must acknowledge the role of their democratic characteristics on the level of students' democratic engagements so that they can always make use of teaching method that will allow them display their democratic characteristics.

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