

**Promoting Civic Competence Among Pupils: The Need For Constant Training On
Improvisation Of Instructional Materials For The Teaching Of Civic Education**

by

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Abstract

Civic Education as a core subject in Nigerian primary schools promotes the acquisition of civic competence in children who are the future leaders of our society. Civic competence in this context includes civic knowledge, civic skills and civic attitudes. Civic knowledge involves understanding of political and civic rights, social and economic rights as well as children's understanding of their roles, rights and responsibilities. While civic attitudes are the traits necessary for a democracy, such traits are tolerance, public spiritedness, civility, critical mindedness and willingness to listen, negotiate and compromise. Civic attitudes encompass intrapersonal values, virtues, and behaviours. While, civic skills of communication, problem solving, critical and creative reflection, decision making, responsibility, respect for others' values which include awareness of diversity and the attitudes and values of solidarity, human rights, equality and democracy. The study discussed the importance of instructional materials in the teaching of civic education, as it brings the reality of the child in the society into the classroom, hence, enhancing the development of civic competence in the pupils. It is also discovered among others that, insufficient fund hinders some civic education teachers from using instructional materials for the teaching of civic education, hence, the reason for the improvisation of instructional materials, that is making a substitute of instructional materials from local resources. Meanwhile, it was also observed that the use of improvised instructional materials deterred by lack of necessary skills for the teaching and learning of civic education teachers. Therefore, the study showed the need for constant training of Civic Education teachers on improvisation of instructional materials for the teaching of Civic Education in order to promote civic knowledge, civic skills and civic disposition in primary school pupils so that they grow to become effective and functional citizens of the society. It was recommended

that government through the Ministry of Education should constantly organise compulsory training on improvisation of instructional materials for the teaching of Civic Education and related subject.

Keyword: Instructional Materials, Improvisation, Training, Civic Competence, Civic Education.

Introduction

The development of civic competence by primary school pupils is very important to the development of our democratic society. Hence, enhancing civic competence in younger generation like primary school pupils will foster the acquisition of civic knowledge, civic skills and desirable civic attitudes that the children need in their younger age and adulthood in order to be functional and effective in the society, thereby contributing their positive quota to the progress and development of the society. Understanding the significance of the development and fosterage of civic competence in children makes it imperative for Civic Education teachers to be well guided in its teaching and learning process, knowing fully that pupils can acquire the necessary civic competence through the learning of Civic Education contents. The teaching and learning of Civic Education require the use of instructional materials/resources. For adequate comprehension of concepts of Civic Education by learners, there is need for Civic Education teachers to make use of Instructional materials or resources to complement and buttress the abstract concept. Instructional materials/resources bring the reality in the learners' environment to the classroom. Instructional materials take away some of the monotony in the class and arouse learners' interest. The use of instructional materials helps the learners comprehend the content, arouse curiosity and interest in the learners. Despite the significance of instructional materials and resources to the teaching and learning of civic education for the promotion of civic competence in learners, it has been observed that many Civic Education teachers are still teaching the subject without instructional materials or with inadequate or improper use of instructional materials (Olufu & Adeyeye, 2021). (National Maths and Science Initiative, 2024) observed that teachers including Civic Education teachers lack necessary skills needed for the improvisation of instructional materials for the teaching of Civic Education in primary schools. Therefore, the study critically analyse the important and the need for constant training of Primary School Civic Education teachers on improvisation of instructional materials in order to promote civic competence among primary school pupils. The work discussed:

- i. The concept of civic competence and the need for its promotion among primary school pupils.

- ii. The significance of Instructional Materials in the teaching of Civic Education for the promotion of Civic Competence among primary school pupils.
- iii. The need for Improvisation of Instructional Materials in the teaching of Civic Education for the promotion of civic competence among primary schools.
- iv. The significance of constant training of Civic Education Teachers on improvisation of instructional materials in the teaching of Civic Education at primary schools

Civic Competence and the Need for Its Promotion among Primary School Pupils

Civic competence is knowledge, attitude and skill which build students' abilities and make them to be participative and responsible citizens in societal and national levels (Hoskins et al., 2012). Civic competence is the possession of required skills, knowledge or ability to engage in active participation in societal life, school and local community activities. Civic competence is combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values which enable a person to perform real world tasks such as active citizenship (Hoskins et al., 2012). Civic competence in this context is taken to mean students' understanding of civic knowledge, development of civic skills and acquisition of civic disposition (Adediran, 2015b). Civic competence also includes participation in less obvious political actions, such as community service. (Adediran, 2015a).

With the acquisition of civic competence, citizens especially children act responsibly in society and interact with other individuals according to their values like transparency, openness, social responsibility, and human dignity. Acquisition of civic competence makes citizens to be very active in society, it also empowers them to make positive impacts through their remarkable contributions to the society. Through the acquisition of civic competence, citizens will surely contribute to the societal goal, that is, to co-create civil society, develop private and collective attitudes, as well as to co-create political and economical systems reflecting their imagination of society and of living together.

Civic competence is of three-dimension, civic knowledge, civic skills and civic attitude/disposition. Civic knowledge refers to citizens' understanding of the workings of the political system and of their own political and civic rights and responsibilities such as the rights to freedom of expression and to vote and run for public office, and the responsibilities to respect the rule of law and the rights and interests of others. Civic knowledge includes all understandings a child acquires about government structure, functions and participation in the political process with acts, such as voting. It also means citizens' understanding of their

political and civic right, social and economic rights as well as citizens' understanding of their roles, rights and responsibilities.

Civic skills on the other hands involve students' ability to explain, analyse, interact, evaluate and defend a position in civic life. Hoskins et al. (2008) states that civic skills include skills of communication, problem solving, critical and creative reflection, decision making, responsibility, respect for others' values which include awareness of diversity and the attitudes and values of solidarity, human rights, equality and democracy. Meanwhile, civic attitudes are the traits necessary for a democracy, such traits are tolerance, public spiritedness, civility, critical mindedness and willingness to listen, negotiate and compromise. Civic attitudes encompass intrapersonal values, virtues, and behaviours and these include: appreciation of differences, tolerance and respect, rejection of violence, concern with the rights and welfare of others, commitment to balancing personal liberties with social responsibility to others, readiness to compromise personal interest to achieve shared ends, desire for community involvement. Adediran (2020) states that civic attitudes include number of personal characteristics such as civic consciousness (respect and civil discourse), an individual responsibility, self-discipline, civic-mindedness (openness scepticism, recognition of ambiguity), compromise (principle of conflict, compassion, generosity) and loyalty to the nation and its principles.

Meanwhile it should be noted that civic competence may not be developed unaided or without active stimulation, civic competence develops through learning. Hence, through the teaching of Civic Education in primary schools, children acquire their civic competences. Though, a certain aspect of civic education can be picked up through ordinary experience in the home or neighbourhood, it can never in itself be sufficient to equip children as citizens for the sort of active roles required of them in today's complex and diverse society (Adediran, 2017). Developing civic competence in children for their active roles and positive contributions to the society is the reason behind the introduction of Civic Education in Nigeria Primary and Secondary Education. Due to its importance, Civic Education is made a compulsory subject from Primary one to Senior Secondary School three, which is the last class a child will get to before tertiary institution; and every student must write it in his final examination at secondary schools.

Development of Civic Competence in children is very important towards nation building. Children of today are the leaders of tomorrow; therefore, children need to develop civic

competence which can be through the learning of Civic Education which will expose them to the understanding of their rights and responsibilities as citizens, promotes critical thinking, problem-solving, and responsible action (O'Connor, 2023). The success of a democracy relies heavily on its citizens having the necessary knowledge and skills to participate in the political process at all levels. With the acquisition of civic competence children will be able to take informed decisions, which include the election of their representatives and understanding of the laws that govern them at any level. Without an informed citizenry, a democracy cannot endure (O'Connor, 2023).

Acquisition of civic competence will enhance children to deliver their civic responsibilities, such as obedience of traffic lights, keeping the environment clean, being orderly in public places, handling public properties like public taps, toilets, waste bins, and vehicles with care and not damaging them and to participate actively to the progress and development of the communities. Acquisition of civic competence fosters greater sense of national identity, which is an essential component of a thriving democracy (O'Connor, 2023). Acquisition of civic competence through Civic Education will enable children to understand the implications of their decisions and take the necessary steps to make their voices heard in support of societal values and against the vices in the society. Through the acquisition of civic competence, individuals are encouraged to use their time and resources to help those less fortunate than themselves. Therefore, it is very important to start the development of civic competence into citizens from cradle.

Instructional Materials and the Promotion of Civic Competence among Primary School pupils

Children acquire civic values, attitudes, knowledge and skills majorly in schools through the learning of Civic Education. The acquisition of these civic virtues through the teaching of Civic Education helps young learners to be active, functional and effective in the society, not only in their childhood days, but till their adulthood and aged days. The Civic Education learning is a long process that starts early in life. Therefore, for children to have a last long learning about civic virtues for the promotion of development in our society, there is always need for the use of instructional materials for the teaching of Civic Education. Pupils need to learn Civic Education in such ways that they will see the reality of their society in the classroom by using related instructional materials to teach pupils. Civic Education which include societal values, history, rights and obligation of citizens, democracy, functions and levels of government in our

society will enhance the retention of civic knowledge, help to acquire the desirable civic attitudes and aids the development of civic skills.

Instructional materials are all the resources within the reach of the teacher and the learner, which are employed to facilitate teaching and learning. It therefore follows that such resources may be human and non-human provided they facilitate the acquisition and evaluation of knowledge, skills, attitudes, moral and value (Edinyang & Vera, 2017). Instructional materials are indispensable factors in a teaching – learning process, especially in the teaching and learning of Civic Education concepts. This is because ordinary words or verbalization has been found to be inadequate for the effective teaching of civic education. Instructional materials serve as channels through which message, information, ideas and knowledge are disseminated. They can therefore be manipulated, seen, hear, felt or talked about. They facilitate learning experiences and class activities (Edinyang & Vera, 2017).

Instructional materials for the teaching of Civic Education help the learners conceive, perceive, internalize, interpret and transfer the experiences gained in Civic Education to similar or different learning situations. Instructional materials assist the Civic Education teacher to communicate more effectively to the learners and assist the learners to learn more meaningfully and permanently (Fageyinbo, 2005). Instructional material motivates and arouses the interest of the pupils towards the learning of concepts in Civic education. It also helps to emphasize areas that need reinforcement. More so, instructional materials help to concretize learning outcomes. Civic Education teachers are expected to use instructional materials and equipment effectively for the development of civic competence among the pupils in primary schools.

Examples of instructional materials for the teaching of Civic Education concepts include, Printed materials (textbooks, novels, biographies, reference books, magazines, catalogues, periodicals, pamphlets, newspapers and brochures); Visual aids, such as wall charts (paper or cardboard which contain information which may be in form of diagram, pictures, table, graphs etc), posters (a large printed picture that convey messages), chalk or marker board, graphs, flashcards (pieces of paper or cardboard with words or pictures on them used for teaching or reinforcing certain concepts and ideas), globes/maps (use to explain issues such as locations, weather and international affairs), diagrams (graphic representation of a situation), flip charts (a pad of large paper sheets on a stand for presenting information), pictures/photographs/painting and the human body (uses of body movements, facial

expressions and gestures by the teacher in order to help learners understand what the teacher is saying); audio aids (tape recorders/audiotape/CDs, radio); audio-visual aids (video cassettes, VCDs, DVDs, film projector, e.t.c.); for teaching and learning Social Studies. Community resources such as natural resources (hills, mountains, lake, river, water fall, e.t.c.), man-made resources (parks, abattoir, industries, palace, railway station, post-office, e.t.c) and resource persons (Kings, chiefs, elders, parents, artisans, doctors, market women, e.t.c.); Models, modified real things; and realia (the use of real or actual things or articles)

The Need for Improvisation of Instructional Materials for the Enhancement of Civic Competence among Primary School Pupils

Improvisation is the act of producing and using local resources in the absence of real ones in teaching and learning situations. Improvisation is also the act of using alternative best materials and resources to facilitate instructions whenever there is lack or shortage of specific first-hand teaching aids. It is a means of making local provision of teaching aids/instructional materials to impart adequate and relevant knowledge, skills, facts and values to the learner for the achievement of better understanding and retention during teaching/learning instruction (Lukman, 2021).

Due to the inadequate instructional facilities in many schools in Nigeria, there is need to bring new innovative ways of providing available materials for effective teaching and learning therein. Therefore, improvisation of instructional materials for teaching and learning of Civic Education in schools is one of the tasks both teachers and learners consider necessary and important in the 21st century. The need for improvisation of instructional materials becomes essential especially in our schools where there is inadequate capital to procure all the needed equipment and instructional materials and where the population outweighs the resources available because of the insufficient funding in education (Olufu & Adeyeye, 2021).

Olufu and Adeyeye (2021) define improvisation as the act of construction of instructional materials from locally available materials that can adequately replace or function in place of the original material which otherwise may be very expensive or in short supply or unavailable. According to Ogbe and Omenka (2017), improvisation is an art of sourcing for and providing substitute materials for the original ones using what is locally available in the absence of standard materials usually aimed at meeting the specific instructional objectives. Ahmad et al. (2019) see improvisation as the art of using materials or equipment obtained from local

environment or produced by the teacher and with the assistance of the learners. Stressing on the need to improvise and make use of the materials, Shodeinde (2015) opined that the quality of teaching is a crucial factor in promoting effectiveness in schools. Effective teaching in turn requires teachers who are academically sound and care about the wellbeing of the learners. Thus, in every instructional setting, a teacher may be confronted by students with varied learning problems and topics that require many hours of preparation but with limited amount of instructional materials to facilitate teaching and learning. Therefore, there is obvious reason for both teachers and students to improvise instructional materials needed for effective teaching and learning to take place.

Locally produced instructional materials according to Adu and Adu (2014) and Kamoru and Umeono (2016), can be categorized into three types namely: Improvisation by substitution, improvisation by modification and improvisation by construction.

i. Improvisation by Substitution/Miscellaneous Materials: A resourceful teacher devotes his/her time to produce materials best suited for learning purposes. Miscellaneous are locally available materials that are used just as they were collected without any alteration in shape or size. According to Adu and Adu (2014), improvisation by miscellaneous/substitutes are available local materials that can be used just as they are collected without any modification in size or shape. In the absence of standard materials, available local resources can be modified to serve the same purpose. For instance, empty carton can easily be altered to serve the purpose of first aid box. In the process of adjusting local recourses to serve a particular purpose, some alteration will be made against its normal shape and size.

ii. Improvisation by Modification/Duplicated Materials: With the aid of projection equipment, the teacher is able to produce cheaply with limited time, materials that serve as desirable supplement to textual materials. These materials include drawings, charts, pictures and graphs among others. It also involves the conversion of a burette to a pinchcock (clip) and a millimetre into a voltammeter etc.

iii. Improvisation by Construction/Collected Materials: These are collected and compiled by the teacher to be used in the teaching learning activity, they include; pictures from Newspapers, magazines, and students work of good quality. It also involves the designing and construction of materials using low cost materials.

According to Ahmed (2017), the improvisation of teaching materials is to make teaching and learning more practical and subsequently reduce abstract learning. Another reason is the cost

effectiveness; as often times foreign instructional materials may be too expensive to procure and consider the meagre financial resources in schools, there is need for improvisation. Beyond cost effectiveness, availability of improvised materials is a factor too. Because they could be obtained from the local environment, the materials are easy to obtain compared to foreign instructional materials. They are generally very safe to use during demonstrations and experiments; as they might not be capable of inflicting injuries, which means it could be hazard free. In addition, they serve as a motivation to learners inasmuch as they participate in the activities during the production of the materials and also arouse learners' interest. Moreover, the use of these materials minimizes concerns about breakage, repair and loss since they are readily available in the environment.

When teachers and learners use improvised instructional materials, it could lead to the discovery of new knowledge, and students' talents may be discovered. Using improvised instructional materials assist teachers economically and make students to have more interest in the subject matter and then make the class to be more interactive. Beyond this, it makes students make use of their intellectual ability in the process of teaching and learning. Again, improvised instructional materials bring home to the classroom, and clarify unfamiliar principles and concepts. More so, when teachers improvise instructional materials for teaching, teachers develop their potentials (Ramel-Galima, Rivera & Almanza, 2013).

The Need for Constant Training for Civic Education Teachers on Improvisation of Instructional Materials

Balogun (2012) noted that funding and availability of local materials also constitute serious problem towards the improvisation of instructional materials. Balogun observed that sometimes teachers and students tend not to improvise because of lack of fund. Most school authority rather than supporting teachers and students to obtain local materials, allow teachers and students to use their personal money to get the materials. And when they (teachers and students) do not have the money or feel unwilling to use their personal money, improvisation cannot be carried out. Sani and Sabo (2019) categorized the factors that affect the improvisation of instructional materials into technical and human factors.

Technical Factor: this factor has to do with the issue of degree of accuracy and precision in which the improvised material or equipment could be. The challenge of accuracy and precision usually arise especially when imitative method of improvisation is to be adopted. In this case, the teacher who improvises tries to ensure that the materials or equipment to be improvised

must look exactly like the original one which is not available for use. Technical factor according to Ahmad et al. (2019) relates to the challenge of accuracy and precision that can be achieved with the improvised materials and equipment. They added that the problem of technicality is even more pronounced and crucial in the improvisation of instructional materials.

Human Factor: this relates to the teacher skills needed in developing the resources/material while providing the appropriate learning experiences to the learners. Maduabum (2013) cited in Ogbe and Omenka (2017) posited that the lack of adequate professional training is a major problem militating against the effective improvisation of local resources. Human factor according to Ahmad et al. (2019) is associated with the teachers' professional commitments, creative ability, technical skill, ingenuity and competence. The problem of commitment is very serious because improvisation requires creative imagination. If a teacher is not committed to improvising his/her instruction, he/she will not creatively think of substitute for equipment and materials and how to organize them.

National Mathematics + Science Initiative (2024) opines that constant professional development on improvisation of instructional materials will play a vital role in alleviating the challenges of implementing high-quality instructional materials. Through constant professional development, Civic education teachers can enhance their technical skills. Through constant training, Civic Education teachers can acquire the necessary skills to use new traditional or digital materials. Constant training will improve the attitude of Civic Education teachers towards change. It has been observed that many teachers are conservative, they find it difficult to change strategy of teaching, may be because of fear of error. Continuous learning through constant training can promote a positive reaction to change and facilitate easier adoption of new instructional materials. Constant training on improvisation of instructional materials will also build confidence of Civic education teachers to construct and use instructional materials especially the improvised ones. It will also boost their effectiveness in the classroom.

Constant training on instructional materials will provide Civic Education teachers with the necessary skills to effectively utilize instructional materials, whether by giving them a better understanding of the materials, aligning them with curriculum standards or seamlessly integrating them into lessons. Constant training on instructional material will help Civic Education teachers to navigate technological changes. It will help teachers to become comfortable with technology-based instructional materials. Training Civic Education teachers

on improvisation of instructional materials will also enhance the skills of time management in teachers. Civic Education teachers will learn time management strategies to review, adapt and implement high-quality instructional materials efficiently. Through constant training of Civic Education teachers on improvised instructional materials, they will see the need to enhance their advocacy skills. This will help them to advocate for funds for more improvisation of instructional materials.

Conclusion

The development of civic competence as one of the goals of Civic Education as a core subject in Nigerian primary schools cannot be achieved without the use of instructional materials, but owing to the challenge of getting and using instructional materials, which need to be tackled for the achievement of Civic Education aims necessitated improvisation of instructional materials for the teaching and learning of Civic Education concepts in order to develop and promote civic competence in learners. It has been gathered that an effective improvisation of instructional materials for the promotion of civic competence, Civic Education teachers need constant training as many teachers lack both technical physical skills.

Recommendations

The study recommended that:

1. Government through the Ministry of Education should constantly organise compulsory training of teachers on improvisation of instructional materials for the teaching of Civic Education and other related subjects. This will help learners to acquire the necessary civic knowledge, skills and positive attitude towards improvisation and the use of instructional materials in classes.
2. Government and all school owners should also make available all the teaching aids needed for effective teaching and learning process.
3. The government through school administrators should also provide funds for the purchase of instructional materials or the improvisation of same, knowing fully well the significance of instructional materials to comprehensive learning of the contents of all subjects, especially Civic Education which helps to develop and foster civic competence in pupils who are the future of any society.

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