

# Relationship between Civic Education Objectives and Learners' Academic Performance in Benue State, Nigeria West Africa

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## Abstract

## Review Article

This study assessed the correlation between Civic Education objectives and learners' academic outcomes in Benue Education Zone C, Benue State. The study was structured around three key research questions; while three hypotheses were investigated. This study adopted a correlational research design. The population comprised 8,864 SS2 learners from 99 government grant-aided secondary schools. The sample was made up of 215 (116 male and 99 female) SS2 learners selected from four co-educational schools using multistage sampling procedure. Civic Education Objective Inventory (CEOI) and Civic Education Performance Test (CEPT) with reliability coefficient values of 0.93 and 0.86 were employed to gather data. The research questions were explored through multiple regression analysis, while the hypotheses were investigated using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at 0.05 alpha level. The result showed that Civic Education objectives significantly correlate with academic outcomes of learners ( $p = 0.006 < 0.05$ ); Civic Education objectives significantly correlate with academic outcomes of male learners ( $p=0.018<0.05$ ) and Civic Education objectives significantly correlate with academic outcomes of female learners ( $p=0.000< 0.05$ ) in senior secondary schools in Benue State. Based on the results, it was therefore proposed among other things that the state Ministry of Education should set up a special committee in conjunction with the Area Education offices to monitor teachers' assessments of learners' academic performance regularly with special attention on gender differences. Schools should provide facilities for learners for better academic performance irrespective of gender.

**Keywords:** Civic Education, Objectives, Academic Performance, Outcomes, Correlation, Relationship.

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## Introduction

Change is inevitable. It ushers in a complete or partial phase of a person or a thing. Change and education are two sides of the same coin. Education, therefore, is an agent of change for the individual as well as the the society. In view of this, the National Policy on Education maintains that education is a means par excellence for achieving individual and collective goals (FRN, 2013). Every child is supposed to become a part of the machinery for building a flawless society. What is needed is right instruction to help facilitate the channel by which the child will become a useful and responsible person (Wahab, 2018). The aim of education is to create a wholistic development of the learners to enable them

understand the need for unity, good manners, integrity and decency in public. The purpose of learning is not to artificially educate the mind to produce specialists such as architects, lawyers, engineers , nurses or doctors but to develop and inculcate civic values in the individual (Kehinde-Awoyele, 2013). Half education is a disaster. Education acquired without giving attention to morals, is to endanger the society. Many nations, including Nigeria, are currently facing the problem of the low level of civic responsibilities. As rightly observed by (Omilusi 2018), our country is contending with a steady deterioration of societal values and moral decay.

Civic disposition, civic knowledge and civic skills

are tenets of Civic Education. Civic Education is viewed as a channel that develops these three elements of democratic citizenship. Civic disposition addresses the aspect of citizens developing the right confidence to take part in civic activities, political processes and taking up roles and responsibilities usually associated with citizenship (Owen, 2015). It involves being open in a democratic system, peaceful co-existence and being responsible in exercising their proper rights and obligations. Civic knowledge requires that citizens should know and understand their political and civic circumstance, know their rights: social, economic, and political and understand their roles, rights and obligations of citizenship. Civic skills involve citizens acquiring the ability to analyse, evaluate, and defend a position using the knowledge for proper participation in both civic and political processes.

The objectives of Civic Education in Nigeria include: learning to use knowledge, skills, values and disposition which equip learners to be fit, active and engaged citizens and good ambassadors of their society. Civic Education attempts to create awareness in the expectation of the government from her citizens. Others include instilling in the learner the attitude of hard work, cooperation, integrity and respect for constituted authority. To facilitate an understanding of how individuals relate with one another in the society, with the public authorities and the community, integrating emerging issues into the curriculum and instilling deep understanding in the learners (NERDC, 2016). Based on the objectives, Civic Education could influence the behaviours of learners positively, offer recipe for their negative behaviours and help boost their academic performance.

Performance is, simply, a measure of output and the primary outcome is reflected in the development of knowledge and skills, values and character and disposition of individuals as a direct outcome of their educational journey. Performance is a measurable behaviour. It is the observable or measurable behaviour in a specific circumstance. Performance, specifically, measures the aspect of behaviour that can be observed at a specific time (Emeri, 2019). For instance the academic performance of a learner in

Civic Education includes observable and measurable behaviour of the learner at any point in time during the academic session. It comprises learners' grades at a particular time obtained from a test conducted by the teacher at the end of a particular term, session or programme. Higher scores indicate better academic performance; while low scores suggest poor academic outcome.

The unsatisfactory results in examinations are part of the consequence of the various challenges bedeviling the Nigerian education sector (Ojukwu, 2016). Recent studies in some part of Nigeria show a consistent and widespread failure rate in the Senior School Certificate Examination, with results being very poor in almost all subjects. According to Abdu-Raheem (2016), the lack and insufficiency of instructional materials significantly contribute to the inefficiency of the school and the low academic achievement of learners. Poor environmental conditions and lack of essential materials hinder teaching and learning in many Nigerian secondary schools. Elementary materials such as textbooks, chalkboard and essential equipment like computers, projector, television and video are not often available in many schools in Nigeria. Sadly still, where the instructional materials are available, their utilisation is below expectation. Some teachers do not really know how to make effective use of them.

Gender is a variable that could influence learners' learning. It is a phenomenon constructed by the society to attribute different roles, functions and behaviours to the two sexes. Disparity in intellectual performance between genders can be attributed to social gender assumption. Attributing gender differences in academic achievement solely to inherent biological factor is unfounded (Anokye-Poku & Ampadu, 2020).

It has been observed that many studies on gender appear to be contradictory. Some researchers/scholars suggest that there are differences between males and female academic achievement. Some researchers argue that males demonstrate higher performance in educational tasks, whereas an alternative viewpoint suggests the contrary. Gender is a significant factor influencing differences in occupational interests and career

aspirations. These discrepancies as observed by Nnamani and Oyibe (2016) could arise from several factors, including psychological and cultural variations. Achievement test performed by Abdullahi and Bitchi (2015) indicate that initial performance is equal between boys and girls in early grades; however, as they progress, girls show a stronger interest in language arts, whereas boys are more inclined towards pure sciences and social sciences.

This has caused a condition of gender imbalance where the number of boys enrolled in social science subjects is more than the number of girls. Denga (2019) posits that there are no evidence of differences in academic achievement between boys and girls. He, however, observes that girls generally excel in language-related subjects such as English language and music; while the boys often achieve better results in Mathematics and Sciences. Abdullahi and Bitchi (2015) discovered that in English Language females perform better than males. This demonstrates how females outperform males in English Language. Adigun, Onihumwa, Irunokhai, Sada and Adesina (2015) reported that despite the fact that the male learners do better than female learners, the difference is of no significance.

Adeyemi (2020) opines that teachers' effectiveness is a significant factor influencing the academic achievement of senior school learners in Civic Education in Ife central Local Government Area of Osun. Okafor, Owede, Uyanne and Chibundum (2018) discovered that the academic achievement of learners did not differ significantly in Civic Education in Ilorin metropolis. In a study conducted by Anyakoha (2016), it was reported that in spite of the socioeconomic condition of single parents, they still provide and encourage their children/wards to study and that educational status influence male learners of single parenthood academic performance.

Kaiser and Yan-Zhu (2022) reported that in a post hoc analysis of Shanghai's Programme for International Students Assessment (PISA) data, boys outperformed girls in Mathematics by nearly six points, but the difference was insignificant. Small yet notable difference emerged across specific content and process domains. The greatest gap appeared in

the "quantity" scale, followed by "change and relationships." In contrast, boys and girls performed almost equally on the space and shape scale, which was also the area where Shanghai students achieved their strongest results. Among the three process-related subscales, only the "employ" category showed comparable results for both genders, while boys outperformed girls on the "formulate" and "interpret" scales.

From the foregoing, it could be deduced that there is research evidence that there are some relationships between Civic Education objectives and learners' academic performance. However, none of such studies was conducted in Benue Education Zone C, Benue State, Nigeria. In a similar vein, there are controversies on whether there exist significant differences in learners' academic performance. To bridge these research gaps, this study investigated the relationship between Civic Education objectives and male and female learners' academic performance in Benue Education Zone C, Benue State.

## Research Questions

1. How do the objectives of Civic Education relate to learners' academic achievement?
2. How do the objectives of Civic Education relate to male learners' academic achievement?
3. How do the objectives of Civic Education relate to female learners' academic achievement?

## Hypotheses

1. No statistically significant correlation was found between Civic Education objectives and learners' academic achievement.
2. No statistically significant correlation was found between Civic Education objectives and male learners' academic achievement.
3. No statistically significant correlation was found between Civic Education objectives and female learners' academic achievement.

## Research Method

This research used correlational design. The study was performed in Benue Education Zone C,

Benue State. The target population of this study was 8,864 SS2 learners from 99 government grant-aided secondary schools that offer Civic Education as one of the core subjects. The sample for this study comprised 215 (116 male and 99 female) senior secondary school learners selected from four co-educational schools. The study employed multistage sampling procedure.

The data collection tools comprised Civic Education Objective Inventory (CEOI) and Civic Education Performance Test (CEPT). Civic Education Objective Inventory (CEOI) has two parts. Part A is for demographic information while Part B of the Civic Education Objective Inventory (CEOI) was used to find out the extent of attainment of the objectives of Civic Education or determine how Civic Education has helped the learners in life. The Civic Education Objective Inventory is a 24-item instrument with very high extent, high extent, low extent and very low extent continuum.

Civic Education Performance Test (CEPT) was developed by the researcher for this study. This is a 26-item multiple choice objective questions adopted from 2021 National Examination Council (NECO) Paper III. Each item has five (5) options. One correct option carries 2 marks. It is based on the concepts of citizenship, national development, human right, democracy, conflict resolution, youth empowerment, HIV/AIDS and cultism. The instruments were subjected to expert review by a panel of three specialists, two experts from the Arts and Social

Sciences Education Department, Benue State University, Makurdi, and one expert from the Department of Psychology.

A trial test was carried out on 35 subjects from two senior secondary schools that offer Civic Education, which were not part of the sampled schools for the main study. The responses obtained from SAMDS and CEOI were analysed using Cronbach Alpha to ensure the congruence of the instruments. The reliability coefficient of CEOI was found to be 0.93; while the reliability index of CEPT was 0.86.

The researcher and the team of assistants administered the instruments to the participants. Two Civic Education teachers with Bachelor Degree and 2-3 years of experience served as research assistants. Two weeks were used for the administration of the instruments. Two days were spent in each school for the administration of the instruments. Multiple regression analysis was employed to address the research questions, while Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of regression was used to investigate the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

## Results of the Study

The outcome of the study are presented, analysed and interpreted as follows:

**Research Question 1:** How do the objectives of Civic Education relate to learners' academic achievement?

**Table 1:** Regression Analysis of how the Objectives of Civic Education Relate to Learners' Academic Achievement

| Model | R                 | Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|-------------------|--------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1     | .187 <sup>a</sup> | .035   | .030              | .51593                     |

Table 1 shows how the objectives of Civic Education relate to academic achievement of learners is 0.187 with a coefficient of determination of 0.035. This implies that only 3.5 % of academic achievement of learners in senior secondary schools can be attributed

to Civic Education objectives. Thus, the correlation between Civic Education objectives and learners' academic achievement is 0.19.

**Research Question 2:** How do the objectives of Civic Education relate to male learners' academic

achievement?

**Table 2:** Regression Analysis of how the Objectives of Civic Education Relate to Male Learners' Academic Achievement

| Model | R                 | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1     | .650 <sup>a</sup> | .423     | .420              | .56633                     |

Table 2 reveals how the objectives of Civic Education relate to academic achievement of male learners is 0.650 with a coefficient of determination of 0.423. This implies that 42.3 % of academic achievement of male learners in senior secondary schools can be attributed to Civic Education objectives. Thus, the correlation between Civic

Education objectives and academic achievement of male learners is 0.65.

**Research Question 3:** How do the objectives of Civic Education relate to female learners' academic achievement?

**Table 3:** Regression Analysis of how the Objectives of Civic Education Relate to Female Learners' Academic Achievement

| Model | R                 | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1     | .669 <sup>a</sup> | .448     | .448              | .50827                     |

Table 3 shows how the objectives of Civic Education relate to academic achievement of female learners is 0.669 with a coefficient of determination of 0.448. This implies that 44.8% of academic achievement of female learners in senior secondary schools can be accounted for by Civic Education objectives. Thus,

the correlation between Civic Education objectives and female learners' academic achievement is 0.67.

**Hypothesis 1:** No statistically significant correlation was found between Civic Education objectives and learners' academic achievement.

**Table 4:** ANOVA of Regression of Civic Education Objectives and Learners' Academic Achievement

| Model         | Sum of Squares | Df  | Mean Square | F     | Sig.              |
|---------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|-------------------|
| 1. Regression | 2.043          | 1   | 2.043       | 7.677 | .006 <sup>b</sup> |
| Residual      | 56.698         | 213 | .266        |       |                   |
| Total         | 58.741         | 214 |             |       |                   |

Table 4 reveals that  $F(1,214) = 7.677$ ;  $p = 0.006 < 0.05$ . Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that Civic Education objectives significantly correlate with learners' academic achievement.

**Hypothesis 2:** No statistically significant correlation was found between Civic Education objectives and male learners' academic achievement.



**Table 5:** ANOVA of Regression of Civic Education Objectives and Male Learners' Academic Achievement

| Model         | Sum of Squares | Df  | Mean Square | F    | Sig.              |
|---------------|----------------|-----|-------------|------|-------------------|
| 1. Regression | .089           | 1   | .089        | .700 | .018 <sup>b</sup> |
| Residual      | 36.563         | 114 | .321        |      |                   |
| Total         | 36.652         | 115 |             |      |                   |

Table 5 reveals that  $F(1,115) = 0.700$ ;  $p = 0.018 < 0.05$ . Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that Civic Education objectives significantly correlate with male learners' academic achievement.

**Hypothesis 3:** No statistically significant correlation was found between Civic Education objectives and female learners' academic achievement.

**Table 6:** ANOVA of Regression of Civic Education Objectives and Female Learners' Academic Achievement.

| Model         | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F    | Sig.              |
|---------------|----------------|----|-------------|------|-------------------|
| 1. Regression | .119           | 1  | .119        | .461 | .000 <sup>c</sup> |
| Residual      | 25.059         | 97 | .258        |      |                   |
| Total         | 25.178         | 98 |             |      |                   |

Table 6 reveals that  $F(1,98) = 0.461$ ;  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ . Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that Civic Education objectives significantly correlate with female learners' academic achievement.

## Findings

The finding revealed that Civic Education objectives significantly correlate with academic achievement of learners in Senior Secondary Schools in Benue State. This means that the accomplishment of Civic Education objectives is a factor in academic achievement of learners in senior secondary schools. The study found linear and positive correlation between accomplishment of Civic Education objectives and academic achievement of learners in senior secondary schools. The finding agrees with that of Adeyemi (2020) that teachers' effectiveness correlates with the academic achievement of senior secondary school learners' academic achievement in Civic knowledge in Ife Central Local Government Area of Osun.

The finding, however, is not in consonance with that of Okafor, Owede, Uyanne and Chibundum (2018)

that there were no significant differences in the academic outcome of learners in Civic Education in Ilorin metropolis based on parental level of education and learners' department. It seems obvious from the finding of the present study that the outcome of determination and hard work of students in academic pursuit with reference to Civic Education had significant correlation with its objectives. Academic achievement in Civic Education determines learners' status and affords them the opportunity to refine skills, nurture talents, boost grades and ready themselves for subsequent academic challenges and placements. The process involves demonstrating the successful attainment of learning outcomes as defined by the Civic education curriculum.

The result also revealed that Civic Education objectives significantly correlate with academic achievement of male learners. This implies that the realisation of Civic Education objectives is a factor in academic achievement of male learners in senior secondary schools. The study found linear and positive correlation between realisation of Civic Education objectives and academic achievement of

male learners in senior secondary schools. The finding agrees with that of Anyakoha (2016) that parents support and assist their children and that educational status influence male learners of single parenthood academic achievement.

A significant correlation was found between the achievement level of learners, their Civic Education teachers and secondary schools in Civic Education classes and the successful realization of the subject's objectives. The present study found significant relationship between male learners' ability to study. It also discovered their capability to remember facts, communicate knowledge verbally or written and the realisation of Civic Education objectives. This is responsible for the significant correlation between Civic Education objectives and academic achievement of male learners in senior secondary schools in Benue State.

The result of the study also revealed that Civic Education objectives significantly correlate with academic achievement of female learners in senior secondary schools in Benue State. This implies that the accomplishment of Civic Education objectives is a factor in academic achievement of female learners in senior secondary schools. The study found linear and positive correlation between accomplishment of Civic Education objectives and academic achievement of female learners in senior secondary schools. This finding agrees with that of Anyakoha (2016) that notwithstanding their socioeconomic circumstances; single parents provide substantial academic support and guidance to their children. The educational status of single parent influences female learners of single parenthood academic achievement.

The academic achievement of female learners in Civic Education class is influenced by teacher-learner relationship, motivation, interest, personality, study habit, self-esteem and intellectual capability. However, female learners are found in the present study to be capable of surmounting these obstacles, as there was linear and positive correlation between accomplishment of Civic Education objectives and academic achievement of female learners in senior secondary schools. Multiple factors are thought to influence female learners' learning abilities and academic achievement. Contributing elements

encompass parental socioeconomic status, the extent of child supervision by parents, residential location, available library facilities and school location. Conversely, the present study found significant relationship between Civic Education objectives and academic achievement of female learners in senior secondary schools in Benue State.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

A conclusion was arrived at that Civic Education objectives significantly correlate with academic achievement of learners. It was also found that Civic Education objectives significantly correlate with academic achievement of male and female learners. Based on the findings, it was therefore, recommended among other that:

1. It is imperative that Benue State Ministry of Education set up a special committee in conjunction with the area education offices to monitor teachers' assessments of learners' academic performance regularly with special attention on gender differences.
2. Schools should provide facilities for learners for better academic performance irrespective of gender.

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