

Civic Education Performance of Students with Mild Intellectual Disability: A Quasi-Experimental Research

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Abstract

Students with intellectual disability can benefit from Civic Education, which will help them develop their civic responsibilities such as commitment to the norms and values of their immediate community and participation in influencing political results and improving governance. This study investigated the effectiveness of play-way and discussion methods on the civic education performance of pupils with intellectual disability. The moderating effect of gender was also examined. The study used a 3 x 2 factorial design of quasi-experimental research. Thirty (30) pupils with intellectual disability were randomly assigned to two experimental and one control group out of three intact classes. The findings indicated that pupils in the groups experimental group civic education performance improved significantly based on the treatment provided ($F(1,29) = 0.773$; $p < 0.05$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.29$). The mean score of participants in the discussion method group was the highest at 3.288 while the lowest score was those obtained by participants in the control group at 2.693. The mean score for participants exposed to play-way treatment was 3.230. The result shows that the discussion method is a better teaching strategy of the two treatments. Based on the findings it is recommended that teachers of pupils with intellectual disability should adopt discussion-based approach to teaching civic education.

Keywords: Civic Education, discussion method, gender, intellectual disability, play way.

1. Introduction

A significant characteristic of persons with mild intellectual disabilities is difficulty in showing commitment to the norms and values of their community. As a result, their academic performance is negatively affected. Learners with intellectual disabilities are better able to interact with others when they understand civic education. In addition, they can act appropriately in different of social situations. Therefore, establishing a system of education where all pupils with intellectual disability in Nigeria have access to educational opportunities is integral to the development of Nigeria as a nation and the advancement of citizens, irrespective of their intellectual ability, who possess the knowledge and skills necessary to actively participate in democracy. The Nigerian school curriculum introduced civic education in September 2008, prepared by the Nigeria Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC, 2007). Civic Education curriculums are designed primarily for teenagers in their formative years (Yahya, 2013). Several issues are addressed in the content that is significant to the development of young Nigerian citizens into responsible individuals. Consequently, Civic Education can be defined as a subject that promotes learners' active engagement in society (Muleya, 2015).

The aims of introducing Civic Education into the Nigerian school curriculum to enable students to develop and understand the idea of democracy, develop a meaningful commitment to norms

and values, elevate moral standard among youths in the society, participate in policy making and improving quality of government and governance. According to Oyeleke (2011), values underneath an effective citizenship education form the bedrock of civic education. The subject has been made a core subject at primary and secondary schools in Nigeria, where some aspects of the subject were extracted from the Social Studies curriculum with more infusion of political science content. Basically, civic education aims to equip learners with knowledge and impact skills. It inculcates good values in learners, stimulating their interest in actively participating in their community's decision-making (Mainde et al., 2021). Taking Kennedy's definition (2012) as an example, civic and citizenship education can be "policies, programs, lessons or activities initiated by a government or a school. It is crucial to note that this explanation associates Civic Education with a classroom setting in which the government develops a curriculum in which education on the civic rights of citizens is a crucial component. The broad scope of Civic Education makes the definitions controversial.

Nevertheless, literature remains rife with competing and even contested definitions beyond these comprehensive ones (Tovmasyan & Thoma, 2008; Maine & Chola, 2020). Since different needs exist in different areas of the world, this study refrains from taking a position on which of the existing definitions is more appropriate. Although Citizen Education enables citizens to perform their constitutional duties effectively and efficiently and enables them to know how to vote and get voted for during electoral processes. Civic education imparts a body of knowledge, skills, and values to young citizens, enabling them to become patriotic citizens whose focus is national integration, national unity, and progress (CESAC, 1993). Essentially, the curriculum prepares young people to acquire values, principles, and activities for developing a sustainable society. In addition, schoolchildren need to learn about Nigerian history for a deeper appreciation of the complexities within the country's sociocultural context.

At all levels of schooling, civic education teachers can contribute to student's academic and social development in a unique way (Baker, Grant, and Morlock, 2008; Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Positive student-teacher relationships make students feel comfortable in the classroom and lay the foundation for the necessary social and academic skills. The support teachers provide for their students in the classroom can positively impact their social and academic outcomes, contributing to the long-term success of school and society (Baker et al., 2008; O'Connor, Dearing, and Collins, 2011). In classrooms where teachers form positive relationships with students, classrooms become productive environments where students can engage in academic and social activities. Relationships between teachers and students were positive when closeness, warmth, and positivity were present. This includes relationships with peers and the development of self-esteem and self-concept, control, and responsiveness. Students learn socially appropriate behaviours and academic expectations through this secure relationship (Hamre & Pianta, 2001). Therefore, we aim to determine whether play-way and discussion methods have a significant main effect on the civic education performance of pupils with mild intellectual disabilities.

2. Literature Review

Play-way method

Play way method is one of the effective strategies for teaching and learning especially in lower primary schools. Maheshwari (2013) is of the view that play consists of responses for pure pleasure. The author further states that the preschool play-way method is an activity engaged in by children for enjoyment to help them develop mentally. Among the first to advocate this teaching method was Plato, a famous Greek philosopher. Others include Fredrick Froebel and Maria Montessori. Through play, children learn a lot because of their natural abilities. Onyekwelu and Obidike (2019) opined that the play way is a teaching strategy that concretises instructions. In addition to providing practical and enduring education, it also helps realise the broader aims of education. Taking care of children's physical, mental, emotional, social, and moral development contributes to the harmonious development of their personalities. Researchers have documented the fact that hands-on activities are among the best ways to teach (Eggen & Kauchak, 2006). The play-way teaching strategy is a hands-on teaching method that young children love all the time (Brewer, 2007).

Akera (2007) asserts that by using the play-way method, children can learn about themselves, others, and the world around them, as well as to enhance their interpersonal skills. Children better understand their surroundings and how they work as they play. Maheswari (2013) views play as an activity engaged in by children for enjoyment, which helps them develop. A child's play is an expression of pure pleasure. According to Canadian Council on Learning and Technology (2014), play is a crucial component of a child's development as it paves the way for learning. By interacting with the content that needs to be learned, pupils can retain the information they have learned more easily (retention).

The impact of play on a child's intellectual, physical, psychological, and spiritual development is significant (Norhashimah & Yahya, 2003). Researchers have recognised play as a vital medium for promoting children's development (Lester & Russell, 2008; Sharma, 2013; Popoola, 2014; Dushi, 2016). There should be an element of spontaneity and active engagement in play. Based on Holt and Kysilka (2006), surroundings and situations can impact how a learner engages in role play. Teachers and parents should plan play activities for young children. Holt and Kysilka (2006) argue that learners can have fun and learn using the play way method; these techniques can help students communicate, comprehend the importance of cooperation, and encourage them to learn. The play way method develops students' speaking skills by allowing them to participate in authentic activities and communicate in real-life situations (Krebt, 2017). The role people play in children's lives is better understood through play. In this regard, play is one of the effective strategies that can motivate and stimulate learning among learners (Abu Bakar, 2010).

Discussion Method

The discussion method of teaching involves sharing facts, emotions, perspectives, and feelings between two or more people. Seweje (2010) study indicates that many teachers use methods that rely less on discussion and chalking (lecture) and place more emphasis on practical activities. In addition, Seweje (2000) noted that teachers should be facilitators who assist students in becoming more involved in their learning and establish meaningful connections

between prior knowledge and new knowledge while facilitating the learning process. Children will demonstrate the benefits of decision-making and practical problem-solving skills in a non-threatening environment (Akinleye, 2010). Students and teachers will engage in a free discussion of the topic of concern in the course as part of the discussion class. Students are asked probing questions by their teachers to elicit their interpretations, opinions, and questions.

Tokarcikova and Kucharcikova (2016) point out that the discussion method represents a shift from a belief that learners lack knowledge and are supposed to be informed by their teachers (teach concept) to a belief that learners possess the capacity to construct knowledge and can learn independently if properly guided (learn concept). The teacher's ability to create a conducive learning environment allows learners to express their viewpoints on the topic, providing the teacher with a unique opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of learners' perspectives (Mainde et al., 2021). The aim is to train learners to speak in public, which is crucial to participating in politics.

The purpose of a discussion is to create a forum for students to discuss issues or topics in small groups. In this process, students interact freely with their teachers. Since students participate actively, it is considered a student-centric method. Teachers play the role of moderators. Information flows from teacher to student and among the students. Yusuf (2012) recommends that teachers should not let individuals dominate discussions. Stephen and Stephen (2005) describe the discussion method as involving sharing, exchanging, and listening to information. In addition, it involves describing, observing, and participating in a situation, which helps open up horizons and promote mutual understanding. The authors explain that one can learn about new points of view by participating in discussions, resulting in a deeper understanding and a renewed desire to keep learning. Bridges (1988) observed that using the discussion method for teaching will help develop knowledge, understanding, and judgment among those taking part. Unlike a conversation, a discussion requires students to be "mutually responsive" to the different points of view.

Gender

Gender influence on the learning outcomes of pupils according to Nzewi (2010) has continued to threaten achievement of science pupils to the use of inappropriate teaching strategies employed by majority of male science teachers. Gender discrepancies in achievement (Offor, 2007), are largely in favour of males at all levels of education and especially in science particularly the over presentation of masculine images in science textbooks. Despite the disagreement, Offor (2007) and Nzewi (2010) note that gender has bias as far as intellectual ability is concerned and that males and females can achieve higher. Research studies continue to show persistent disparity in achievement and retention of male and female pupils in basic science and technology.

Furthermore, gender inequality has been observed in classrooms due to instructional design used during teaching and learning processes. For instance, Ezendu and Obi (2013) note in their study in various locations and at different times that male pupils significantly outperformed females. In contrast, other studies have reported that female students outperform their male counterparts (Dayioglu & Turut, 2007). Teachers sometimes adopt stereotypical practices or routines that separate boys and girls unconsciously. Ghazvini and Khajehpour (2011) argue further that gender differences even exist in academic environments at the level of cognitive

functioning. Girls are more capable of adapting to different learning environments. In a study conducted in Kenya, Wangu (2014) observed that boys passed more often than girls in secondary schools.

3. Methodology

3.1 Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. Treatment (play-way and discussion method) does not significantly affect participants' civic education performance skills.
2. Gender status does not significantly affect participants' civic education performance

3.2 Participants

This study focused on thirty pupils with intellectual disability. Using a convenient sampling method, we selected three schools for children with intellectual disability in Ibadan metropolis, Oyo state. In each of the three (3) schools, the total number of pupils with mild intellectual disability was enumerated. Treatment groups were randomly assigned, tagged as P, D and C, according to the treatment participants in each school received. Participants in schools P and D were exposed to play-way and discussion methods of learning civic education. At the same time, a placebo was used for participants in School C, serving as the control group.

3.3 Material and methods

The study was based on a quasi-experimental research design of the pre-test control group using a 3 x 2 x3 factorial matrix. Three (3) levels of treatment (Play-way, Discussion and Control) were considered, while gender (male and female) and parents' socio-economic status (high, and low) were the moderating variables considered at three (3) levels. The design is represented thus:

Experimental Group 1: (E1) $O_1 X_1 O_4$

Experimental Group 2: (E2) $O_2 X_1 O_5$

Control Group 3: (E3) $O_3 O_6$

Where:

O_1 , O_2 , and O_3 are the pre-test scores for the experimental and control groups, respectively.

O_4 , O_5 and O_6 are the post-test scores for the experimental and control groups, respectively.

X_1 and X_2 are the teaching modes of play-way and discussion used in the experimental group.

3.4. Research instruments

The Slosson Intelligence Test (SIT) was developed and validated by Slosson in 1961 to assess general intelligence (Jacob & Pillay, 2021). Since SIT originated in the USA, it was adapted and validated for African communities. It is a content and structure-based test. While the validity of the scale was not compromised, we adjusted some words and items to fit the participants' culture. Slosson constructed the scale and determined its validity using the 1960 revision of the Stanford Binet (SB) Intelligence Test. Each age group's validity coefficients were determined

independently. The values ranged from 0.90 to 0.98. Based on the correlations between SB and SIT, Slosson concluded that the two tests correlate. The content validity was 0.86 based on a test-retest which suggest that SIT is highly valid and useful (Jacob & Pillay, 2021; Adediran, 2011).

3.5 Civic Education Scale

The researcher developed a Civic Education Scale to collect data on learners with mild intellectual disability reading skills. References were taken from pupils' Civic Education syllabuses and textbooks. The test questions were based on the human rights of citizens, the culture of peace, and tolerance for members of our community and leaders. It also evaluated the development of intersectoral social partnerships and the management of citizen self-government associations. The objective of the test was to measure pupils' ability to recall information taught during the eight weeks of the intervention using either the play-way or discussion as a treatment for each group. Participants were awarded two marks each for any correct response, while zero (0) was awarded for an incorrect response.

3.6 Play-way instructional package

The teachers and selected pupils dramatised the expected behaviour relevant to the class instruction. The play-way treatment consisted of thirty sessions of 45 minutes each for the treatment group. Participants were encouraged to identify behaviours related to the subject matter under discussion. Placebo treatment was administered to the control group.

3.7 Discussion method instructional package

The researcher designed the teaching module a period of thirty session over 10 weeks based on topics that were identified. Before beginning the lesson, the teacher asks students some thought-provoking questions about civic education. The teacher makes each student contribute to the learning process by asking them to answer questions. As students respond, the teacher guides them while correcting them if necessary.

3.8 Procedure

Two research assistants were recruited to provide the intervention. Their role was to serve as facilitators. In order to provide the intervention to participants, they were trained for five hours over three days. Following training regarding the implementation of the intervention, the research assistants helped collect data from participants for the pretest score. It consisted of ten (24) sessions of forty-five minutes each over the course of eight (8) weeks. In essence, three sessions were held per week. Placebo treatment was given to the control group (Conventional Method). After eight weeks of providing intervention, the same instrument was used to evaluate the treatment and control groups as a posttest.

3.9 Data analysis

Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was used to test the null hypothesis at a 0.05 level of significance. Furthermore, Bonferroni Post-Hoc was used to estimate the marginal means.

Ethical consideration

The purpose of the study was explained to the parents of the participants in their native language by trained research assistants. The consent form was printed in English and given to each

participant in compliance with ethical guidelines. The consent form was then filled out and signed by each parents indicating permission for their ward to participate in the study once sufficient comprehension was achieved. The profiles and responses of participants were kept confidential. Recording the sessions was one of the major limitations of the study.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant main effect of treatment on Students' performance in Civic Education

Table 1: ANCOVA Result for Students' Performance in Civic Education

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Posttest

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	11.691 ^a	11	1.063	5.067	.001	.756
Intercept	3.459	1	3.459	16.491	.001	.478
Pretest	4.024	1	4.024	19.186	.000	.516
Treatment	1.545	2	.773	3.683	.046	.290
Gender	.323	1	.323	1.541	.230	.079
Error	3.776	18	.210			
Total	310.000	30				
Corrected Total	15.467	29				

a. R Squared = .756 (Adjusted R Squared = .607)

Table 1 indicates a significant main effect of treatment on students' performance in Civic Education ($F_{(1,29)} = 0.773$; $p < 0.05$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.29$). The effect size is 29%. This shows that 29% of the total variation in students' performance in this model is due to the significant effect of the treatment. Thus hypothesis 1 is rejected. To explore the degree in the mean score of the experimental and control group, the estimated marginal mean was examined as shown in table 2 below

Table 2: Estimated Marginal Means of Post-civic education performance based on treatment

Dependent Variable: Posttest

Treatment	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Play way	3.230 ^{a, b}	.183	2.845	3.615
Discussion	3.288 ^a	.152	2.967	3.608
Control	2.693 ^a	.168	2.340	3.045

a. Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: Pretest = 2.1000.

b. Based on modified population marginal mean.

Table 2 shows the estimated means for Civic Education performance of pupils taught using play way, discussion, and conventional method of teaching. Mean for participants in the discussion group was the highest at 3.288, followed by play way which was 3.230 while the mean for the control was the lowest at 2.693. This difference was significant as observed in Table 4.1. However, the Std. error for play way method was the highest at 0.183, followed by control at 0.168 while discussion had the lowest of 0.152.

Univariate Tests

Dependent Variable: Posttest

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Contrast	1.697	2	.848	4.045	.035	.310
Error	3.776	18	.210			

The F tests the effect of Treatment. This test is based on the linearly independent pairwise comparisons among the estimated marginal means.

Table 4.3 shows the treatment pairwise comparisons. The sum of squares for the contrast and error were 1.687 and 3.776 respectively while the mean square was 0.848 and 0.210 for contrast and error respectively. ($F_{(2,18)} = 4.045$; $p < 0.05$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.310$). The result revealed a significant mean effect of treatment on Civic Education performance of participants.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant main effect of Gender on Students' performance in Civic Education.

Result displayed on table 1 shows that there is no significant main effect of Gender on students' performance in Civic Education ($F_{(1,29)} = 0.323$; $p > 0.05$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.749$). thus hypothesis 2 is not rejected.

4. Discussion of Findings

Data shows that pupils taught with play-way method achieved higher than those taught with conventional method. According to these researchers, play-way and demonstration method of instruction allows for better civic education performance among pupils with intellectual disability. The result aligns with the findings of Sharma (2013) and Onwuke (2010) that play-way as a method of teaching significantly enhances civic education performance of study participants. Iroegbu (2011); Kieff and Casbergue (2000) and Morrison (2006) documented similar results. The improvement in pupils' posttest scores can be attributed to viewing the play-way as pupil-centred which gave rise to meaningful and effective learning. This finding is also in harmony with Beck and Mckeown (2001), who found that vocabulary acquisition and comprehension may increase by using discussions to augment read-aloud.

Participants taught using the play-way performance improved significantly when compared to the other two groups based on the posttest. These results are in line with previous study (Udого, 2017). It is important to note that discussions promote comprehension because students can reflect on the activity that the instructor during classroom interaction and in turn lead to participants asking questions. As noted by Gall (1994) that for classroom questions to positively

impact students' learning and achievement, classroom instruction should include posing questions during lessons. Discussions emphasize the teacher's guidance by using purposeful questions to direct students' attention to fundamental ideas and assist them with concepts they find challenging to comprehend.

The findings confer with Mpho (2016) study that teachers should ensure access and equal quality education for everyone by using learner-centred approaches to enable all learners to participate in their learning as feasible. To accomplish the objectives of a lesson, the teacher must clarify information. Additionally, Magasu et al. (2020) stated that the most effective method of teaching Civic Education is to combine classroom instruction with real-world experience and action to achieve the necessary foundational and professional skills. However, the long process of concluding a Civic Education lesson discourages most teachers from using this method. Civic Education lessons are typically delivered through easy lecture methods or other classroom-oriented practices.

Moreover, activities of the play-way method were carried out by the pupils themselves and guided by the teacher, the active participation of the pupils which was in line with David Kolb's theory of experiential education. Children can be kept busy with play-ways, as Osayin (2002) observed. In fact, this experiment proved that it can even be used to improve learning, making it an effective for enhance civic education performance. The significant effect of play-way on learning can be attributed to the submission of Canadian Association for Young Children (2014) that play nourishes every aspect of children's development and paves the way for learning. As children play-it helps them to keep what they have learnt (retention)-never forget easily as there is interaction with what is to be learnt. Learning is not abstract like magic and therefore, it is made real through achievement and retention of what is achieved

The result is not consistent with the findings of previous scholars like Wangu (2014) who reported that male students performed better than their female peers, and Dayioglu & Turut (2007) and Khwaileh & Zaza (2010) who found significant gender differences in academic performance between male and female students. In contrast, this study supports the findings of some previous studies, such as goni et al. (2015) who claim that gender differences are not significant for academic performance. Jacob, Lazarus, Pillay and Adewale (2022) reported based on an experimental study conducted that the effect of gender on performance skills was not significant. Though Ghazvini and Khajehpour (2011) claim that gender difference exists even at the level of cognitive functioning in the academic environment, with girls being more able to adapt to a different learning environment. This is not consistent with previous submission.

5. Conclusion

This study concludes that the play-way and discussion method of teaching effectively enhanced the civic education performance of pupils with intellectual disability when compared to participants in the control group. The discussion method of teaching had the most significant effect on participants' performance compared to the other two groups. Learning was better sustained because learners were actively involved in the lessons. It created an opportunity for the learners to interact while learning. Discussion method is a learner-centred instructional strategy that enhances active participation for learners in the reading class. Moreover, gender

did not have a significant main effect on the civic education performance of pupils with intellectual disability.

Based on the findings, teachers of pupils with intellectual disability should be encouraged to adopt the teaching strategy of integrating play-way and discussion method with civic education lessons because the methods ensure the active participation of pupils with intellectual disability in learning their civic responsibility. In that way, learning is made more of learners centred. The gender of pupils with intellectual disability should not be considered by teachers since it has no significant effect on their civic education performance. Curriculum planner, caregivers, and teachers of pupils with intellectual disability need to be trained on how to teach civic education in an effective way to pupils with intellectual disability using play-way and discussion method as teaching method.

One of the limitations of the study was the small sample size. Increasing the number of participants in future research would make it more generalizable. Due to the nature of the study, several factors were unpredictable in a school setting. These factors include pupil absences, pupil behaviour (which may cause distractions and require the teacher to leave the classroom), and scheduled vacations.

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Conflict of interest

The authors confirm no conflict of interest for the data presented in this paper.

Data Access Statements

Due to the nature of this research, participants of this study did not agree for their data to be shared publicly, so supporting data is not available.

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