

**EFFECT OF PARTICIPATORY LEARNING STRATEGIES ON PRE.SERVICE
TEACHERS MORAL KNOWLEDGE: IMPLICATION FOR CLASSROOM PRATICE**

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Abstract

Various vices are prevalent in Nigeria today; there is no gainsaying that there is decadence and low level of morality in Nigeria. The traditional values of the country have been eroded by many modern factors and by materialism. The introduction of Social Studies education into the Nigerian school curricular creates a challenge of how to teach it. A majority of the teacher still employs the old traditional chalk and talk method. This study explored the use of participatory learning strategies in teaching moral concepts in social studies. Four hundred and sixty eight (468) pre-service teachers were randomly selected from four purposively selected colleges in south western Nigeria. The adopted research design for the study was a pre test, post test and control group quasi experimental design. The instrument used was a moral knowledge test which was validated through field trail and subject item analysis. Three null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Inferential statistics included analysis of co-variances to test the hypotheses and to determine the main and interaction effects of the variables in the study. Findings revealed that there is a significant main effect of treatment on pre service teachers, knowledge ($F(2,465)=58.236, P<.05$). Participant in the experimental group had higher knowledge mean score ($\bar{x}=10.63$) and control ($\bar{x}=8.76$). it was recommended that in order to reduce moral decadence in the society participatory moral education programme must be recommended for use in social studies as a tool for advancing morals and inculcating ethical benefits to the individual and society at large.

Keywords: (*Moral Decadence, Participatory Strategies, Students Knowledge, Social Studies,*

1.0 Introduction

Moral problems are prevalent in every part of the world as noted by Majmudar (2010). He established a school and developed a programme to bring out the innate goodness of the child by developing the universal values of truth, love, peace, right conduct and non- violence through self-development programme. He declared that the aim of education is character building and that academic achievement without simultaneously promoting human values is not only useless but dangerous. Robinson (2004) believes that human beings possess immense potential for creativity and innovation. Every child possesses the potential to become the builder of an ideal society. What is required is a proper mode of education to mould the child in a way to become a useful and complete.

Morality which constitutes a system of moral principles followed by a particular group of people concerns the issues of right and wrong, or good or bad behaviour, as it affects the people and the society at large. The understanding of the purpose of moral education is to allow the child as early as possible to recognize these influences and give him/her a foundation on which he/she can make judgments as he/she encounters each moral variety within the various societal spheres. Moral

decadence in Nigeria has generated many problems in all sectors of our society resulting in the slow pace of development in the country. This calls for urgent intervention by our educational sector in order to inject discipline into the life style of the Nigerian youth in general. In the 2014 result on corruption ranking, Nigeria is ranked 136 out 174 surveyed countries. This implies that Nigeria is the 38th most corrupt nation in 2014. The result was published by Transparency international on Wednesday, 3rd December, 2014.

Social studies lay emphasis on free and democratic society, a united, strong and self-reliant nation, a great and dynamic economy and a land of bright and full opportunities for citizens as stated in the National Policy on Education (Falade, 2007). These are all attributes of a morally sound society. The development of skills required for all these calls for adequate training of teachers which should include the introduction of appropriate approaches of teaching the subject. Evidently, research has consistently shown that the dominant traditional pedagogical practices which are confined to transmitting information, reading and memorizing and characterized by the dominance of cognitive goals and teacher adopting the fountain of knowledge approach, have failed to cope with problem of development.. The deficiencies of the teaching and learning situation in our schools have called for an alternative and more effective approach that will provide an environment for growth-approaches that will create among other things, person-oriented and conflict resolution. In place of the traditional lecture methods, active learning has been advocated, in which students must do more than just listening. They must read, write, discuss, or be engaged in solving problems. Much more than these, active learning involves students engaging in such higher-order thinking tasks as analysis, synthesis and evaluation. In a way, students are actively involved in doing things and thinking about what they are doing.

Among the strategies which promote active learning is the participatory learning strategy. It is a group learning process. It is an integrated activity approach to learning that combines social

investigation, educational work and action. It is based on real- life experiences; incorporate dialogues between and among teachers and students; and critically analyse the structural, organisational and systematic causes of problems. In such a programme the learners are involved in problem-solving, commonly in small group where they work together with peers. They choose their own pace and make decisions about how learning is structured, including where and when it takes place. The goal of participatory learning are not only to increase knowledge and skills but also to provide the basis of problem- solving activities after teaching sessions have ended. Its ultimate goal is fundamental structural transformation and the improvement of the lives of those involved. Since education has become the primary tool for the overall development of society, teacher education has to occupy a position of preeminence in the planning and organization of the modern society. All these point to the fact that there is need for moral education in Nigeria, as in other nations of the world, as machinery for building an egalitarian, democratic and progressive society (Falade, 2004). Moral problems have been attributed to teachers' lack of necessary skills to identify, prevent and solve moral problems. . Miller and Pedro (2006) observe that teachers are responsible, for creating and maintaining a respectful classroom environment for children. They consider teachers to be children's models. As such, teachers should explore and use self – reflection and be open to new people and culture (Sanuille, 2003). He further stresses that the significance of pre-service teacher education should be reflected in educators' professional practice. Teacher education programmes must develop alternative ways to enable student- teachers understand their future role and anticipate the moral ethical significance of their practice. In this regard the teaching of morals is highly important.

1.2 Objectives:

This study determined the impact of a moral education package developed and implemented through the participatory approach on pre-service teachers' knowledge on moral issues in colleges

of education. It also examined the moderating effect of gender and religion on students' moral knowledge.

1.3 Hypotheses;

Ho₁: There is no significant main effect of treatment on subjects' knowledge to moral education concepts.

Ho₂: There is no significant main effect of gender on subjects' knowledge to moral education concepts.

Ho₃: There is no significant main effect of religion on subjects' knowledge to moral education concepts.

2.0 Design

This study adopted the pre-test, post-test, control group, quasi-experimental design to determine the effect of a participatory moral education package on pre-service teachers' knowledge in colleges of education in south western Nigeria. The design employed the use of 2 x 2 x 2 factorial matrix. One independent variable is involved in the study; this is the mode of instruction to be manipulated at two levels as follows. Participatory approach (PA). Conventional teaching method (CTM) Moderating Variables: These are (i) Gender at two levels – male and female (ii) Religion at two levels- Christianity and Islam. Dependent Variable There are two dependent variables in the study, knowledge and Attitude to moral issues. The target population of this study comprises pre-service teachers in colleges of education in southwestern Nigeria which comprises of six states. Four states were randomly selected for the studies which are Ondo, Oyo, Osun and Lagos states four colleges were purposively selected for the study, one college from each of the randomly selected states. Four hundred and sixty eight (468) pre-service teachers were regular throughout the study. Therefore these were the participants that were finally used for the study. The concepts are: Fairness and Justice; Right conduct and respect; Love and care; and Honesty and trustworthiness.

2.1 Instruments:

The following instruments were used in the study:; Student Moral Education Knowledge Test; which is used in measuring their knowledge to moral concepts and issues. Conventional Learning Method Guide; this is used for the teaching of the control group The Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guide; serve as a guide for the experimental group to take decision and develop a moral education package. The two instrument FGD and CLMG were exposed to content validation. The instrument was trial tested on purposively selected students from college of moral education in Lagos states that did not take part in the main study. The data collected was used to compute the Cronbach coefficient to determine the internal consistency and reliability of each item and the entire instrument, and the alpha value of 0.85 was obtained.

2.2 Research Procedure:

The study covered a period of 10 weeks. The researcher selected and trained six graduates as research assistants. The research assistants were trained on the nature and purpose of the participatory approach. They were informed about the areas where their assistance would be needed during the study such as, administration of pre-test and post-test, organization and arrangement of workshop materials; Participating teachers were recruited based on their teaching subject, willingness and readiness to participate in the study. In all the colleges of education used, Social Studies teachers were recruited for the study. The researcher trained the teachers in their respective schools. Two categories of participating teachers were involved

.3.0 RESULTS

Ho1 There is no significant main effect of treatment on pre-service teachers' knowledge to moral education issues.

Table 1: Summary of ANCOVA of post-test knowledge scores of pre-service teachers by treatment, Gender and Religion.

<i>Source</i>	<i>Sum of Squares</i>	<i>DF</i>	<i>Mean square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
<i>Covaria</i>	5.188	1	5.188	.737	.391
<i>Pre-test Knowledge</i>	5.188	1	5.188	.737	.391
<i>Main Effects</i>	531.890	3	177.297	25.179	.000
<i>Treatment Groups</i>	410.055	1	410.055	58.236	.000*
<i>Gender</i>	.088	1	.088	.013	.911
<i>Religion</i>	121.746	1	121.746	17.290	.000*
<i>2-ways Interactions</i>	20.066	3	6.689	.950	.416
<i>Treatment group x Gender</i>	9.364	1	9.364	1.330	.249
<i>Treatment group x Religion</i>	.676	1	.676	.096	.757
<i>Religion x Gender</i>	9.875	1	9.875	1.402	.237
<i>3-ways Interactions</i>	6.196	1	6.196	.880	.349
<i>Treatment group x Gender x Religion</i>	6.196	1	6.196	.880	.349
<i>Explained</i>	563.340	8	70.417	10.001	.000
<i>Residual</i>	3231.966	459	7.041		
<i>Total</i>	3795.306	467	78.127		

* significant at $P < 0.05$

Table 1 reveals that the treatment had significant main effect on the variation in students' knowledge of moral concepts ($F(2,465) = 58.236$; $P < .05$). This implies that the Post-test knowledge score of pre-service teachers in experimental and control groups differ significantly. Therefore the null hypothesis is rejected Multiple classification analysis was used to determine the influence of the independent variable (mode of instruction) as shown in Table 2. The multiple classification analysis (MCA) in Table 2 showed the magnitude of the Post-test mean knowledge scores of subjects exposed to different treatment conditions.

Table 2 shows that the experimental group had the higher adjusted post-test mean score of 10.63 while the control group had adjusted post-test mean of 8.75. This indicates that the treatment had significant effect on the moral knowledge of the experimental group unlike the control group.

Ho2 There is no significant main effect of gender on subjects' knowledge of moral concepts.

Table 1 shows there is no significant effect of gender on the post-test knowledge score of subjects ($F(2,465) = .013$; $P > .05$). The null hypothesis is not rejected. Reference was made to MCA in Table 2 in order to explain whether male or female students had higher knowledge mean score. To this end table 2 shows that female students had higher adjusted post-test mean score of 9.73 than male students that had 9.67.

Ho3 There is no significant main effect of religion on subjects knowledge of moral concepts.

Table 1 shows that there is a significant effect of religion on the post test knowledge scores of subject; ($F(2,465) = 17,290$; $P < .05$). The null hypothesis is rejected. However Reference was made to MCA in table 2 in order to explain whether Christian or Muslim students had higher knowledge mean score. To this end table 2 shows that students from Christian background had higher adjusted post-test mean score of 9.95 than students from Islamic background that had 8.67.

Table 2: Multiple Classification Analysis (MCA) of Post-test Knowledge Scores of Pre-service Teachers by Treatment, Gender and Religion on Knowledge

Grand Mean = 9.69

Variable Category	+	N	Unadjusted variation	Adjusted for independent covariate Variation	Eta	Adjusted for independent + covariates deviation	Beta

Treatment						
Groups	1.	234	.94	10.63		.94
Experimental		234	-.94	8.75	.33	-.94
2. Control						
		160	-.03	9.73		.04
Gender		308	.01	9.67	.01	-.02
1. Male						
2. Female						
Religion			.25	9.95		.26
1. Christianity		374	-1.01	8.67	.18	-1.02
2. Islam		94				
Multiple squared						.142
Multiple R						.376

4.0 DISCUSSION

4.1 Treatment and Students' Knowledge of Moral Concepts

One of the main concerns of this study was to investigate the effect of the participatory moral education programme on students' knowledge of moral concepts. The findings of this study revealed that the non formal moral education programme had effects on students' knowledge of moral concepts. This indicates that students exposed to participatory moral education programme

performed significantly better than others in the conventional method group. Students' performance in moral concepts improved under the participatory approach than others in the conventional method group (i.e. the control group). This was because students exposed to the participatory education programme were involved in designing as well as validating the moral education programme. This enabled them to learn moral concepts through the participatory approach. The students learnt the moral concepts selected for this study through informal activities like participation in focus group discussion, the development of the moral education programme, formation of moral club, club meetings, election of officers, debate, talk, rally and video show. The higher moral knowledge scores of pre-service teachers obtained in experimental group over the control might be attributed to active students' engagement in teaching-learning process. The teachers serve as facilitators, teachers and students became coinvestigators of moral problems and issues. Students take increasing responsibility to solve identified problem. These findings provide more evidence to earlier studies of Mansaray and Ajiboye (2000) ; Oyetade (2003); and Falade (2007), they also noted the impact of participatory education programme on youth exposed to the participatory intervention programme compared with the control group

4.2 Gender and Students' Knowledge of Moral Concepts

This study also investigated the effect of gender on students' knowledge of moral Concepts. The ancova in Table 1 reveals there is no significant effect of gender on students' knowledge of moral concepts. It was observed that female students performed better than their male counterparts in moral concepts (though not significant). This could be attributed to the fact that the treatment provided equal learning opportunities for both sexes. However, the result of this study negates previous finding of Ogundari, (1990), Ajiboye (1996) and Ajiboye (2002) which reported the effect of gender on learning outcome. Ajiboye (2002) asserts that male students had better understanding of political education concepts than the female students because boys seemed to be generally more

knowledgeable and shows more interest in political issues. They are more involved in political related activities. This may be due to the sex stereotypes of female subordination and male superiority in socio-economic and political matters (Bamidele, 2005).. The implication of this is that participatory moral education programme has the potential of improving the knowledge and attitude of male and female students on moral matters

4.3 Religion and Students' Knowledge of Moral Concepts

This study investigated the effect of religion on students' knowledge of moral concepts. The findings from this study reveal that there is statistical main effect of religion on students' knowledge of moral concepts. Student from Christian religious background performed better than those from Islamic background. This may be due to the fact that students from Christian religious background participated actively in group activities more than students from Islamic background. Wang et al (2005) reports that the greater the level of learners participation in the intervention activities, the higher the effect on their knowledge, attitude and practices. Group participation is linked with enhanced learning. Students learn better when they are doing what they enjoy. More learning occurs when students work together in an environment of peer support and encouragement. Informal education programme enhance the active participation of all members. This fosters the desired understanding and attitude in their behaviour.

5.0 Conclusion

The focus of this study is to develop moral education programme for colleges of education students in Southwest Nigeria. The study also determines the effect of the informal moral education programme on students' knowledge to moral issues. It could be deduced from the findings of this study that students were able to develop a moral education programme that could be used to learn moral concepts. The study also reveals that moral education programme is more effective than the conventional teaching methods in teaching moral concept and should be adopted by their teachers in

the training of social studies;. This implies that students' knowledge on moral concepts as well as their attitude to morally related issues could be improved through the informal moral education programme

5.1 Recommendations

On the basis of the findings of this study the following recommendations were made:

The colleges of education social studies curriculum should be revisited with the view of integrating an informal moral education package for teaching and learning of moral education concepts. Colleges of education students in Nigeria should be stimulated to develop and validate informal moral education package that could be used to learn moral concepts in the social studies curriculum. The Nigerian government should introduce moral clubs as a permanent structure of the college system. Such clubs should be college based and owned by the students.

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