Political Interest and Academic Achievement among Students Offering Government in Senior Secondary School

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A B S T R A K

Mahasiswa tidak menyadari kewajibannya untuk berpartisipasi dalam pembangunan masyarakat yang dapat memajukan persatuan dan hidup berdampingan secara damai dalam bangsa dari segi kepentingan politik dan kemasyarakatan. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menganalisis minat politik dan prestasi akademik di kalangan siswa yang menawarkan Pemerintahan di sekolah menengah atas. Lima ratus peserta merupakan sampel penelitian dan hanya 478 yang digunakan setelah administrasi data. Variabel independen dan dependen diukur dengan instrumen tervalidasi dengan nilai 0,85 dan data yang diperoleh dianalisis menggunakan metode Statistik Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). Dua hipotesis penelitian dirumuskan dan diuji pada tingkat signifikansi 0,05. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat hubungan yang signifikan antara kepentingan politik dengan prestasi akademik Mahasiswa di Pemerintahan (r= .777; p<0.05) serta antara kepentingan politik dengan sikap Mahasiswa terhadap Pemerintah (r= .548; p<0.05) . Implikasi dari hal ini menunjukkan bahwa kepentingan politik mempunyai pengaruh yang signifikan terhadap prestasi akademik pada siswa yang menawarkan Pemerintahan di sekolah menengah atas. Mengingat temuan-temuan ini, disarankan agar pemangku kepentingan pendidikan harus mengintensifkan upaya mereka untuk menyelenggarakan lokakarya mengenai implikasi kepentingan politik terhadap prestasi akademik di kalangan siswa yang menerima tawaran Pemerintah di sekolah menengah atas.

A B S T R A C T

Students do not realize their obligation to participate in the development of a society that can promote unity and peaceful coexistence within the nation in terms of political and societal interests. The purpose of this study was to analyze political interest and academic achievement among students offering Government in senior secondary school. Five hundred participants constituted the study's sample out of which only 478 were used after data administration. Both the independent and dependent variables were measured with validated instruments with 0.85 and the data obtained was analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) Statistical method. Two research hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The result showed that there was significant relationship between political interest and Students' academic performance in Government (r= .777; p<0.05) as well as between political interest and Students' attitudes to Government (r= .548; p<0.05). The implication of this showed that political interest had significant influence on academic achievement among students offering Government in senior secondary school. In view of these findings, it was recommended that educational stakeholders should intensify their effort to organize workshops on the implications of political interest on academic achievement among students offering Government in senior secondary school.

1. INTRODUCTION

Political interest and participation is vital to democracy. However, in the past decade, a number of social and political changes have challenged political legitimacy, which makes citizens' interest and participation even more critical and which have changed students attitude toward Government as a subject in senior secondary schools (Bakoko & Pratiwi, 2021; Permatasari & Murdiono, 2022). Previous study postulated that the current financial turmoil reminds us that democracies are vulnerable and dependent on

trust (Abdraheem & Elijah, 2019). Many citizens take to the streets to address their immediate problems and democratic deficits. In this situation, some states have also experienced political tension, ethnic rivalry or separatism, religious and political extremism is increasing among some citizens. Young people continue to find new forms of participation and show a tendency to favor virtual and more occasional involvement (Dibbie, 2015; Muraina & Y, 2018). Government as a subject in senior secondary school is referred to as an academic field of study which deals with the study of agencies, political institution and dynamics of state. As an academic field of study, government is given various names as it suites the institution concerned. Some institution refers to it as government on political science or simply politics. It deals with the study of mechanism of government aimed at equipping citizens to take part in the art of governance of their respective state (Hung, 2023; Malik, 2018). Government became a compulsory subject for students in art who intend to further more in their academic career either at the college of education, polytechnic or university level in social science such as political science, public administration, international relation to mention but few (Hamudy, 2020; Sclafani, 2007).

Schools have a particularly important role to play in socialization of the next generation's political values, especially in countries where the older generation came of age under a different system. Not only do schools provide students with in-class education related to politics, government, civic involvement and tolerance, but they can also provide opportunities for individuals to learn about democracy more directly and to contribute to community decisions through student councils or other groups (Muraina et al., 2012; Naum, 2018). In these settings students have opportunities to experience themselves as empowered participants. In other words, the school can act simultaneously as an educational and a social institution, where both learning and formative processes occur among students.

Students do not realize their duty to participate in community development which includes clearing, digging, planting of flowers to beautify the environment and other community service that can promote unity and peaceful coexistence in the nation (Albar & Hoque, 2019; Syariifah et al., 2019). It seems students are being used in negative ways by desperate politicians in the name of democracy, for example, by destroying electioneering processes or ballot snatching and rigging by over-voting among others. Previous studies also observed that Government and Civic Education are subjects which provide knowledge and skills for the youth to enable them to perform their expected roles and participate in the process of democratization (Adediran Y. O. &Ajiboye, 2017; Busari & Muraina, 2015). Previous study reported that only 34% of 1,200 students in Nigeria were aware of their civic rights, the other 66% did not know anything about it (Kayode-Olawoyin, 2017). This is an indication that not a sufficient number of schools provide their students with knowledge of this crucial subject, or perhaps, teachers just do not know what to teach students about the subject, despite the importance of Government and civic education in Nigerian schools.

Promotion of students' political interest, the society needs to work together across venues, programs and sectors to create a climate in which students have not just opportunities to learn, but also the skills and efficacy to do so and cultivate the positive attitude toward the progress and unity of the nation (Bakoko & Pratiwi, 2021; Reis et al., 2020; Van Klinken, 2007). Government focuses on modification of the attitude and engagement of the secondary school students in fulfillment of their democratic rights and their responsibility to be useful for their country. Attitudes, like many other components of behavior are abstractions although they are real enough to the individuals who hold them. Attitude is an ill-defined area which embraces interest, opinions, values, beliefs and personality. Previous study noted that Government as a subject was introduced in schools to develop knowledge and skills which could assist young learners to face social, political, economic and personal challenges in future (Idowu, 2017). Government is major aspect of school syllabus which gives students ability to learn the values associated with being a good citizen and actively involved in democratic engagement of the country.

Government is a social science discipline that aimed in inculcate in to the students their rights, duties and oblivious as citizens and also prepared the students or young people to be active part in the government of their respective country (Eja & Ramegowda, 2020; Nasution et al., 2021). However, it is disheartening that research and data from National Examination Bodies like West African Examination Council (WAEC) have shown a consistent poor performance in the subject. Majority of secondary school students often dread and show negative attitude towards government and the trends of their achievement in the senior secondary school certificate examination is also a source of worry to the stakeholders (Komalasari & Saripudin, 2018; Rachmadtullah et al., 2020; Yudiana, 2020). Poor achievement in government in Nigeria secondary school and youth lackadaisical towards democratic engagement has assumed alarming proportion and caused a lot of concern for many years.

The poor achievement in government and political apathy as indicated by various empirical studies has attracted the concern of all stakeholders including the researchers. Subsequently, many factors may be responsible for this dwelling trend. These factors include political interest, civic values and civic skills. This suggest that if a fore listed factors and others can be taken into consideration, students may excel more in

their academic generally and fully participate in the political activities of their country. The novelty of this study concentrated on political interest and academic achievement among students offering Government in senior secondary school in Oke-Ogun, Nigeria. The study aims to analyze the democratic political interest and academic achievement among students offering Government in senior secondary school in Oke-Ogun, Nigeria.

2. METHOD

The design is descriptive design. It was considered appropriate because the study does not require manipulation of variables (Seixas et al., 2018), but seeks students' response to questionnaire on political interest a predictor of academic achievement among senior secondary schools government students in Oke-Ogun, Nigeria. The population for this was students in all public secondary schools in Oke-Ogun area of Oyo State. There are 172 public secondary schools in Oke-Ogun as at the time of this study. The sample of this study consisted of 500 students in SSSI and II were chosen through multi- stage sampling procedure. The first stage involved the use of simple random sampling techniques to select two public secondary schools from each Local Government Area (LGA). The second stage involved the use of stratified random sampling technique to select 10secondary schools in each LGA. The third stage involved the use of random sampling technique to select 25 Government students. The instrument used for the study was self-designed questionnaires tagged Government Learning Outcome (GLO) and structured questionnaire tagged Attitude to Government (AoG). The instrument was validated and Kuder Richardson was used for GLO with reliability with 0.80 coefficients while Cronbach Alpha was used for AoG to obtain 0.85 coefficients. The questionnaire comprised of two sections. Section A and B. Section "A" will contain the personal profile of the respondents, while Section "B" contained questioning pertaining to respondent's knowledge about the subject matter.

The responses pattern for the items was structured on a modified four point's likert format of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) for AoG while GLO was a multiple choice on a table of specification (or blue print) drawn up for twenty test items. Out of 500 questionnaires distributed only 478 were retrieved and used for data analysis. Two research hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. Data were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistics.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Significant relationship between political interest and Students' academic performance in Government is show in Table 1.

Table 1. Significant Relationship between Political Interest and Students' Academic Performance in Government

Variable	Mean	SD	DF	N	R	P	Remark
Political Interest	35.67	8.52					
Academic Performance	63.16	11.23	476	478	0.777	0.000	Significant

The Table 1 above showed that there was significant relationship between political interest and Students' academic performance in Government (r= 0.777; p<0.05). The implication of this showed that political interest had significant influence on Students' academic performance in Government. The significant relationship between political interest and Students' attitudes to Government is show in Table 2.

Table 2. Significant Relationship Between Political Interest and Students' Attitudes to Government

Variable	Mean	SD	DF	N	R	P	Remark
Political Interest	31.26	6.01					
Attitudes to Government	45.27	10.31	476	478	0.548	0.001	Significant

The Table 2 above showed that there was significant relationship between political interest and Students' attitudes to Government (r= 0.548; p<0.05). The implication of this showed that political interest had significant influence on Students' attitudes to Government.

Discussion

The first hypothesis revealed that there was significant relationship between political interest and Students' academic performance in Government. The implication of this showed that political interest had significant influence on Students' academic performance in Government. This is in line with previous study who opined that young people do not seem to be interested in public and political life and this is a matter of concern (Kerr et al., 2014). Since student or young people civic value, have been found to be a strong predictor of citizen engagement in politics. The process of political socialization of adolescents includes more than the acquisition of knowledge about society, citizenship and the political system. Similarly, for decades, researchers in the fields of education, psychology, and political science have expressed the importance of civic values in democratic states. Other study emphasize the need for civic values with a fundamental question, "At this moment in history, how ought we to be preparing our youth for active citizenship? Traditionally, civic values focused on students and individual in acquiring knowledge of government processes in an effort to encourage democratic participation (Muraina & Y, 2018). In the early 20th century, the other study identified civic value as an opportunity to familiarize students and individuals with government processes while involving the entire educational program that will give the youths the requisite training to participate efficiently in life, not only as adults, but as children (Mahan, 2022).

Second research hypothesis showed that there was significant relationship between political interest and Students' attitudes to Government. The implication of this showed that political interest had significant influence on Students' attitudes to Government. This is consistent of previous research of who found that Schools have a particularly important role to play in socialization of the next generation's political values, especially in countries where the older generation came of age under a different system (Kerr et al., 2014). Not only do schools provide students with in-class education related to politics, government, civic involvement and tolerance, but they can also provide opportunities for individuals to learn about democracy more directly and to contribute to community decisions through student councils or other groups (Beilstein et al., 2021; Danvers, 2021). In these settings, students have opportunities to experience themselves as empowered participants.

In other words, the school can act simultaneously as an educational and a social institution, where both learning and formative processes occur among students. However, previous study found that political knowledge among youth is lacking, with many basic misconceptions about government processes and facts (Davies & Chong, 2016; Sclafani, 2007). The survey did link higher levels of community activity with improved political knowledge scores. Previous study suggested compelling youth to engage in community and electoral activity will help to propel and sustain a healthy democracy (Carayannis et al., 2021). Other authors have broadened our collective understanding of civic engagement. For example, study that profiled the active citizen as one who intentionally practices democratic deliberation (Busari & Muraina, 2015). In his work, the engaged citizen seeks out information to understand issues, causes, and processes to solve community, state, national, and global problems.

Political interest has a significant influence on the academic achievement of students who take government subjects in high school. This could mean that factors such as interest, understanding, or involvement in politics may influence students' academic performance. The implications of this research can be used as a basis for revising or developing educational curricula at the high school level. Increasing students' understanding and interest in politics may be integrated into learning materials to increase their engagement and academic achievement. This research may have limitations in terms of generalization of the results due to its focus on one particular subject (Government) and at one level of education (high school level). The results may not be directly applicable to different contexts, such as other subjects or levels of education. Educational stakeholders should intensify their effort to organize workshops on the implications of political interest on academic achievement among students offering Government in senior secondary school.

4. CONCLUSION

It was concluded in the study that the level of senior secondary school students' political interest and civic engagement was poor. It was also concluded that attitude of senior secondary school students towards politics was negative and this lead to negative attitude to government as a subject which later resulted to their poor achievement. And finally, it was concluded in the study that political interest contributed significantly to democratic engagement of secondary school students and good academic achievement in government.

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