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Deliberative Dialogue as a Viable Instructional Method for Civic Learning Outcomes

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ABSTRACT

Civic education aids students in acquiring the skills necessary to create a democratic society. The effectiveness of deliberative dialogue as an instructional method on civic learning outcomes was investigated in this study. A quasi-experimental design was used for the investigation. In Ilorin, two secondary schools were randomly chosen and split into experimental and control groups. The sample for this study consisted of 73 students (control group: 38; experimental group: 35). An eight-week study was conducted. The Civic Learning Test (CLT), a fifty-item multiple-choice test with sufficient validation, served as the instrument for data collection. The Spearman-Brown Prophesy Formula yielded a reliability index of 0.78 using SPSS statistics (23.0). Mean and standard deviation were used to respond to research question 1, and ANCOVA was used to test the two research hypotheses at a 0.05 significance level. The results showed that students participating in deliberative dialogue had significantly better civic learning outcomes. Additionally, there is no discernible gender difference in the civic learning outcomes of students who participated in deliberative dialogue. It was recommended that the Government, through NERDC, include deliberative dialogue as a legitimate instructional method in the curriculum.

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of education is citizenship itself, not just citizenship preparation. It aids in preparing citizens for an active and involved civic life by providing the necessary knowledge, attitude, and skills. Civic education is the examination of the fundamental theoretical and practical dimensions of citizenship, its rights and obligations, and the duties of citizens to one another as members of a political body and the government (Musa et al., 2021). As stated by Kayode-Olawoyin (2017), it comprises the study of civil law and the civil code as well as the study of governance with a focus on the role of the populace as opposed to outside forces in the management and control of the government. Civic education promotes participation in decision-making, the growth of strong community bonds, moral and ethical sensitivity, and engagement in divisive activities like voting and political discourse (Okeahialam, 2018). Instilling in young people a set of values and a manner of thinking that is receptive to the needs and problems of society is an intentional activity.

Civic education is a system that enables individuals to become aware of, internalise, and participate in the values, attitudes, and customs of the society in which they live (Dania, 2015). This includes supporting people in avoiding adolescent exuberance that is antisocial and misinformed and may lead to social upheaval. According to Camp and Baugh (2016), civic learning is multifaceted and encompasses a variety of formats, including classroom instruction, informal training, hands-on learning, and media campaigns. It is regarded as a continuum of practice that can advance civic objectives connected to deliberate engagement in the democratic

process (Finley, 2011). The knowledge, skills, and attitudes that people need to be good and engaged citizens of a country are instilled by civic learning (Jamieson, 2013). In contrast to rote memorisation of names, dates, and procedures, civic learning puts the learner at the centre and incorporates both teaching and practice (US Department of Education, 2012).

Therefore, civic education produces knowledgeable, fact-seeking people who reject religion and ethnocentric nationalism and advance national awareness (Okeahialam, 2018). In other words, civics teaches students how to become individuals who care about the welfare and dignity of others, respect others' worth, and approach civil disagreements sensibly (Samuel, 2018). Civic knowledge, one of the elements of civic learning, aids in the intellectual development of the skills necessary to create a society that is both sustainable and democratic. According to Musa et al. (2021), it can be divided into knowledge, comprehension, analysis, and synthesis. Through education, practical experience, and a civic learning component, civic skills demonstrate aptitude for engaging in active citizenship. Civic skills include communication, leadership, cultural sensitivity, planning and implementation, and evaluation (Jamieson, 2013). Civic value, then, is the last element of civic learning and the possession of the reasons, ethics, and values necessary to actively contribute to the creation of democratic communities (Yusuf et al., 2018). The professors promoted using an effective teaching strategy to make civic information concrete, transforming students' civic values and abilities.

Learning activities should equip students for active citizenship in the twenty-first century. Civic learning is achieved through interactive, cooperative teaching approaches that include role-plays, problem-solving exercises, and deliberative debate (Odutayo, 2016). Participating in a dialogue to solve problems entails dialogue. Deliberation is a process that emphasises rational reasoning and the application of critical thinking to make judgments about public policy. To foster knowledge among students and engage them in civic engagement, critical thinking and persuasive argumentation can be employed as a teaching strategy. A public conversation called "deliberative dialogue" is used to foster relationships, find solutions to problems at large, and discuss policy issues (Angel, 2017).

A deliberative dialogue strategy is appropriate for civic learning so that students work to internalise the spirit of diversity, productivity, and democratic norms. It tends to encourage all types of students to speak up and use different forms of communication in the classroom, to recognise that listening is just as important as speaking, to lay the groundwork for collaborative relationships and trust among students, to have a variety of points of view on issues, to provide a forum for analysis and reasoned argument, to allow students to see themselves as active participants in real-world issues, and to form processes rather than isolated thoughts (Yusuf et al., 2021). Before the class begins, the teacher should inform the students about the subject and give them lecture resources. This is the first step in including deliberative debate in the classroom. The teacher then briefs the class on how instruction is carried out. The students are divided into groups for discussion after the teacher gives a broad overview of the subject based on the topics. The overall number of pupils in the class determines how many groups there will be (Angel, 2017). However, limiting the number of pupils in each group to five is appropriate to foster an environment where everyone can express themselves appropriately. Every student's viewpoint must be valued, respected, and considered. For general discussion and idea clarification, the teacher then returns the pupils to the original seating arrangement of the class (London, n.d.).

Nigeria is said to struggle with issues related to national responsibility despite having a sizable population and abundant natural resources. Social vices include armed robbery, kidnapping, a lack of honesty, exam and election fraud, a lack of civic competency, and corruption are prevalent in Nigeria. These social evils may be caused by the falling standard of education, which is mostly attributable to the poor and unprofessional teaching strategies used by instructors. Furthermore, there seems to be an urgent need for social and educational academics to participate in initiatives to reformat and identify more efficient ways to teach civics to pupils. The effectiveness of deliberative dialogue on civic learning outcomes among secondary school students in Ilorin served as the purpose of this study. The research specifically discovered

the comparative efficacy of deliberative dialogue instructional methods on the learning outcome of civic education. Also, differences in the civic learning outcome of learners exposed to deliberative dialogue instructional methods based on gender. This study should benefit educational stakeholders by examining alternate instructional methods to achieve civic learning objectives among young adults.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical underpinning for this study was based on the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), a notion from Lev Vygotsky's social constructivism theory. According to ZPD, learning happens when students are exposed to new ideas and concepts that are marginally more complex than they already know (Wass & Golding, 2014). Theoretically, a student can get advice and support from a more experienced student in the ZPD to close the knowledge gap between what they ought to know and what they should learn. This indicates that learning is a collaborative process in which the MKO gives support and scaffolding until the learner can complete the activity independently.

As the learner advances, the ZPD evolves rather than remaining constant (Irshad et al., 2021). Therefore, teachers must determine the pupils' current level of comprehension and provide them with the proper challenges within their ZPD. By doing this, students can enhance their critical thinking and problem-solving skills while learning new information and skills. The ZPD has important ramifications for educational practices because it emphasises the value of developing a collaborative learning environment that encourages learners to take chances and try new things (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). Because deliberative discussion enables students to benefit from one another's knowledge and experiences, Vygotsky's theory is pertinent to this study.

Literature Review

Civic education is connected to civic learning in a classroom setting. Its goal is to provide students with the skills, values, and knowledge they need to be engaged and responsible citizens. Education professionals are expected to use learner-centred teaching strategies to accomplish these goals.

Deliberative dialogue-related studies are cited and discussed. Deliberative Dialogue to Expand Civic Engagement: What Kind of Talk Does Democracy Need? (Achanken, 2018). The study concentrated on in-person democratic discussion to raise civic involvement. It was discovered that deliberative discussion fosters good civic involvement and suggests persuasive links between people, topics, institutions, and the political system. It denotes voice and agency, a sense of authority and worth, and an opportunity to express an opinion. Additionally, there are concrete chances for active participation that can make a difference. Students' desire to participate in civic life is influenced by interpersonal trust, education, family, environment, religion, and political ideology (Beyerlein & Vaisey, 2013; Kahne et al., 2013; Okobia, 2015). Deliberative dialogue was investigated as a system-level knowledge translation and exchange (KTE) technique. Boyko et al. (2014) conducted a case study to outline the design elements and anticipated outcomes of this dialogue. Participants' interchange during a deliberative dialogue addressing a low-priority policy issue significantly improves, indicating the expected impact.

Deliberative dialogue differs from other forms of public speech, including discussion, negotiation, brainstorming, and consensus-building, since the objective is to discover where one could lie rather than to talk about it. It provides a means by which community members with various viewpoints and life experiences can explore a basis for action and a shared understanding of an issue (Moode & Howard, 2018). The discourses are guided by a discussion guide that frames the subject by presenting the general issue and then three or four alternative solutions. They are moderated by trained members of the professor, staff, and students. The discussion's participants think about each option, what appeals to or bothers them, and what costs, implications, and tradeoffs may be present if that approach is chosen. It aids the participants in problem-solving

(London, n.d.). The contact between participants is influenced through deliberate dialogues, fostering respect and understanding (Ayorinde, 2017).

Anderson et al. (2016) examined how communication experts utilise interactive writing to forge connections and understand discourse and engagement. It was discovered that dialogue enhances communication, which is essential for encouraging personal participation. Similarly, dialogue produces an environment where interactive writing is much improved. According to Acosta et al. (2017), deliberative discourse is a cutting-edge strategy that can help create more critical-reflexive people, more evidence-based behaviours, and better health outcomes. It can also be a novel technique to advance scientific understanding and a tool for gathering data for research. Students will use their knowledge about the conversation to influence practice and policy change. To collaborate and make sense of research on family violence prevention and other social engagement, deliberative discussions may be a useful technique (Boyko et al., 2016). Individuals learn the communication skills necessary to properly communicate and engage through dialogue. An individual can become a better manager, build stronger bonds with others, accomplish common goals, and solve issues by practising dialogue (Musa, 2016).

There is a discussion of studies about cooperative learning techniques. The impacts of cooperative and questioning instructional styles on the academic achievement of upper-basic social studies pupils were examined by Etaneki (2021). Students who learned social studies through cooperative learning strategies outperformed their peers who learned the subject through the traditional lecture technique. According to Johnson et al. (2018), the cooperative instructional strategy fosters partnerships among students who encourage one another to complete assignments, celebrate one another's accomplishments, and learn how to work well together regardless of gender, ability, or ethnic background. The highly valued qualities in the era of globalisation include the interpersonal exchange of viewpoints, intellectual challenge, critical thinking, and higher-level reasoning, according to Thakral (2017). If used methodically, cooperative learning aids in the overall development of personality. In languages they can understand, it enables students to share knowledge (Uwameiye, 2016; Singh, 2017; Parveen et al., 2018).

Similar findings from previous studies on civic learning are cited and addressed. Students in secondary institutions were studied for their civic knowledge and attitudes as potential inhibitors of civic engagement by Abdu-Raheem and Olorunda (2019). Secondary school pupils' civic participation and understanding were found to be minimal, but they had negative attitudes toward civic engagement. To foster an environment where students not only have opportunities to learn but also the competence and effectiveness to do so, as well as a positive outlook on the development and unity of the country, society must work across institutions, initiatives, and industries (Alshammari, 2015). Yusuf et al. (2018) investigated how the 5E teaching paradigm affected students' civic education performance. Students exposed to the 5E instructional technique demonstrated a better understanding of civic education themes because they were free to explore and advance their knowledge. As a result, the classroom would change into a setting where students might express opposing opinions in light of their prior knowledge (Odutayo & Yusuf, 2020)

Ikwuka et al. (2020) looked at how gender and the method of instruction affected secondary school students' civic education achievement differently. It was discovered that group instruction is a successful substitute for enhancing students' civic education learning outcomes. The unequal influence on pupils' civic education achievement included gender as a covariant component. Most of this advantage for females is explained by gender variations in the returns to predictions, whereas boys rely more on their initial learning skills to pass (Marcenaro-Gutierrez et al., 2018). The impact of academic aptitude and the group instruction method on secondary school students' performance in civic education was examined by Unachukwu and Okoli (2020). According to their study, using group instruction strategies greatly increased students' academic proficiency in civic education. Students get the social skills and competency essential to assume responsibility

for society's effectiveness and growth through civic education, which also helps them integrate into society and develop their social and political consciousness (Igba & Nwafor, 2016).

Research Question

The following research question was posed to direct this study:

a. How do students who participate in deliberative discourse compare to those who get an education using traditional methods?

Research Hypotheses

For this study, the following research hypotheses were developed, tested, and analysed:

Ho_1: There is no discernible difference between civic learning outcomes for students exposed to deliberative dialogue and traditional teaching methods.

Ho_2: There was no discernible difference in the civic learning outcomes between male and female students who used the deliberative dialogue instructional method.

RESEARCH METHOD

For this investigation, a quasi-experimental design with pre- and post-testing was used. This design involves evaluating interventions but without the use of randomisation. Quasi-experiments aim to show that an intervention causes an outcome (Lauren, 2020). The sample for this study included students from every secondary school in Ilorin. All of Ilorin's private secondary schools made up the target demographic. The secondary schools included in the sample all had a co-ed enrollment policy. After two private secondary schools were randomly chosen, the sampled schools were divided into experimental and control groups. A total of 73 students comprised the experimental group, which had a population of 35 students, and the control group, which had a population of 38 students. The instructional package was focused on these topics: Drug Abuse, Human Rights, Human Trafficking, Inter-communal Relationships, Nationalism, and the Rule of Law. The study lasted for eight weeks. The first week was used for orientation and pre-test, the second to seventh (six weeks) for instruction, and the eighth week for post-test. The instrument used for the treatment was a deliberative dialogue instructional package in the form of a lesson plan. At the same time, the control group had the conventional lesson plan as the instructional guide. Fifty test items carefully selected from West African Examination Council past questions in the form of a Civic Learning Test (CLT) were used to ascertain the effect of the treatment.

The instructional package and CLT were shown to experts in civic education and educational measurement to ensure validity. A split-half was employed in the study to gauge the reliability of the CLT. It was used to calculate the percentage of test-related errors in a score. Students in a secondary school outside the target area who were doing civic education received the CLT once on a separate day. The Spearman-Brown Prophesy Formula yielded a reliability index of 0.78. The adoption of Spearman-Brown Phophesy was justified since it can handle dichotomous data (such as right-wrong answers), which characterised the exam. To answer the study question, mean and standard deviation were employed, and Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) at 0.05 significance level was used to examine the hypotheses using SPSS software (23.0)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Out of 73 respondents (100%), 35 (of which 19 were male and 16 were female) made up the experimental group. Conversely, the control group consisted of 38 respondents, of whom 17 were male and 21 were female.

Research Question 1: How do students who participate in deliberative discourse compare to those who get an education using traditional methods?

Given that the CLT had 50 items, the high, average, and low mean scores, which ranged from 0 to 17, 18 to 36, and 37 to 50, were noted accordingly. Table 1 provides information on students' performance in civic education.

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Table 1. Descriptive statistics of students' outcome in civic learning

Groups		Mean	S.D.	Min	Max
Experimental	Pre-test	12.59	2.09	5.00	19.00
(*Deliberative Dialogue*)	*Post-test*	*26.17*	*2.75*	*13.00*	*29.00*
Control	Pre-test	13.27	2.25	7.00	18.00
(*Conventional Method*)	Post-test	*22.82*	*2.65*	*11.00*	*27.00*

In Table 1, the results of the respondents (both in the experimental and control groups) were better in the post-test than in the pre-test, as shown in the Table above. However, on the post-test, students exposed to the deliberative dialogue method performed better than those taught using the conventional method, with a mean score of 26.17 versus 22.82. As a result, civic education student learning outcomes were dramatically enhanced.

Hypotheses Testing

Two null hypotheses have been tested at the 0.05 level of significance for this research. The statistical method employed for analysing the hypotheses was an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA).

Ho_1: There is no discernible difference between civic learning outcomes for students exposed to deliberative dialogue and traditional teaching methods.

The analysis's findings for testing hypothesis one are presented in Table 2, comparing the experimental group (students exposed to deliberative dialogue) with the control group (traditional method).

Table 2. Analysis of covariance results of comparing students' civic learning outcomes

Source of variance	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Corrected model	6231.194[a]	2	1527.836	22.237	.000
Intercept	10561.958	1	10561.958	105.432	.000
Pretest	6587.116	1	6587.116	83.645	.000
Instructional Method	879.201	1	879.201	3.152	.002
Error	3923.905	69	101.709		
Total	214656.000	73			
Corrected Total	10476.817	72			

Table 2 shows that, when calculated at 0.05 alpha level, the F-value of 3.152 is achieved with a p-value of 0.002. Since the p-value (0.002) is smaller than the alpha level (0.05), the null hypothesis is rejected. Concerning civic learning, there is a significant difference between students who engage in deliberative dialogue and those taught using traditional instructional methods (F (1, 69) = 3.152, p0.05).

Table 3. Analysis of pairwise comparisons showing differences in the civic learning outcome

Groups	Mean	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.[b]	95% Confidence Interval for Difference	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Deliberative Dialogue (I)	27.17[a]	4.35*	.385	.002	1.626	3.165
Conventional (J)	22.82[a]	-4.35*	.385	.002	-3.165	-1.626

Grand Mean = 15.675

*mean difference is significant at 0.05 level

b. Adjustment for Pair Comparisons: Bonferroni

Table 3 reveals that the post-test of students taught using the deliberative dialogue method had a mean score of 27.17, higher than that of those taught using the conventional method, with a mean score of 22.82. The mean score difference of 4.35 indicates that students participating in the deliberative dialogue method contributed to the performance gap.

Ho_2: There was no discernible difference in the civic learning outcomes between male and female students who used the deliberative dialogue instructional method.

The analysis findings on the difference in civic learning outcomes between male and female students exposed to the deliberative dialogue instructional method are presented in Table 4 for testing hypothesis two.

Table 4. Analysis of covariance between male and female students

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	16.234a	2	8.117	.550	.582
Intercept	446.361	1	446.361	30.240	.000
Pretest	.047	1	.047	.003	.955
Deligender	16.002	1	16.002	1.084	.306
Error	472.338	32	14.761		
Total	19935.000	35			
Corrected Total	488.571	34			

According to Table 4, when computed at 0.05 alpha level, the F-value 1.084 is obtained with a p-value of 0.0.306. The null hypothesis two is rejected since the p-value (0.306) is greater than the alpha threshold (0.05). Male and female students exposed to deliberative debate did not significantly differ in their civic learning outcomes ($F(1, 32) = 1.084$, $p>0.05$).

Discussion

The results of this study revealed significant differences in the outcome of civic learning for learners exposed to deliberative dialogue and conventional instructional methods. The study found that there was indeed a significant difference in the outcome of civic learning for learners who were exposed to deliberative dialogue. Specifically, those who participated in deliberative dialogue demonstrated a greater understanding of complex issues and could better articulate their opinions. They also showed a greater willingness to engage in civil discourse and consider multiple perspectives and an increased sense of civic responsibility. Incorporating deliberative dialogue into civic education programs could effectively promote more informed and engaged citizens. However, it is imperative to note that the effectiveness of deliberative dialogue may depend on various factors, such as the facilitator's skills, the composition of the group, and the specific issue being discussed. Further research is needed to understand the appropriate method to implement this approach in different contexts. This result is congruent with Van Camp and Baugh's (2016) findings, which show that students' civic involvement, knowledge, skills, and multicultural sensitivity significantly increased when applied thinking skills were used. By analysing problems critically, arguing for and against positions, and developing arguments, students gained experience. Additionally, Anderson et al. (2016), Yusuf et al. (2018), and Yusuf et al. (2020) noted that researching topics that interest students has been proven to improve civic learning chances.

There was no discernible difference in civic learning outcomes between male and female students exposed to the deliberative debate instructional approach, according to the findings about the learners' gender. It suggests that the deliberative dialogue teaching strategy is gender-neutral and considers every learner's intellectual capacity. This research calls into question the idea that there are inherent gender inequalities in civic engagement. It implies that socialisation and cultural variables may have a bigger impact on how these results turn out. It also emphasises the significance of developing inclusive learning environments that accommodate all learners' various needs and experiences, regardless of gender. This result concurs with those of Yusuf et al. (2018), Odutayo and Yusuf (2020), and Yusuf et al. (2021), who discovered that gender has no bearing on a student's academic performance in a cooperative learning environment. This study, however, conflicts with that of Marcenaro-Gutierrez et al. (2018), who found that exposure to cooperative learning results in gender disparities favouring male students.

CONCLUSION

This study examines deliberative dialogue as an effective teaching strategy that can be applied to achieve civic learning outcomes. This method allows students to graduate with sufficient civic involvement and literacy. Citizens can put themselves and others in danger if they lack civic literacy and an awareness of how the government functions. Modern civic education should, in theory, produce well-informed people with the capacity for critical thought and political argumentation while ensuring that all viewpoints are heard. It is unclear whether civic chances for kids in schools result in an improvement in the civic preparedness of the majority of students. This study recommends the following:

1. The government should include deliberative dialogue as a legitimate instructional method in the curriculum through the National Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC).
2. School administrators should encourage their teachers to employ cooperative instructional strategies during teaching for learner-learner-friendly classroom environments.
3. Teachers should bravely adopt innovative (deliberative dialogue) instructional methods to accelerate civic learning.
4. Teachers should encourage inclusivity during the learning process irrespective of gender to facilitate overall student civic literacy.

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