# Developing and Validating Political Education Curriculum for Senior Secondary Schools in Nigeria

**By**

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## Abstract

*The Nigerian political system is riddled with myriads of problems, which include political ignorance and poverty, election malpractices and rigging, pre and post-election violence, unresponsive leadership and high level corruption among politicians and public office holders. These challenges have consistently undermined the political progress and stability. Therefore, there is the need for a conscious, deliberate and organized political education in Nigerian senior secondary schools to tackle these series of problems. This explains why this study embarked on the development and validation of a political education curriculum. The study involved a two stage mixed design comprising the curriculum paradigm and survey. The elements of the developed political education curriculum were validated using the criteria of adequacy, suitability and relevance by curriculum experts and political science experts drawn from senior secondary schools, the Faculty of Education and Political Science Department of the University of Ibadan, Ibadan. Their responses were subjected to simple frequency count and percentage scores. The results showed that the developed and validated political education curriculum is adequate, suitable, and relevant in proffering solution to the problems confronting the Nigerian political system. It was recommended that the study should be replicated in other geo-political zones of Nigeria and that the Nigerian Educational Research and Development council should consider integrating political education into existing senior secondary school curricular.*

## Introduction

Nigeria is endowed with great natural resources and rapidly growing human population of over 170 million people. Inspite these great human and natural resources, Nigeria, after 54 years of post-independence from Britain, has not done well in harnessing her diverse resources and use them to bring about development in all spheres of her national life. Nigeria is rated as a third world country or a developing (poor) country, not because she lacks everything necessary to make her a great nation but because she has not woken up to confront the series of problems undermining her greatness. The most important of these problems is the perversion and distortion of the political system, which produces a crop of bad leaders who do not seem to know anything about the responsibilities tied to governance and political leadership in Nigeria. This is why a great number of people are ignorant politically and cannot stand up to their rights to demand for a better system of governance in the country.

The problems confronting the Nigerian political system are numerous. Dominant among them is high rate of political ignorance among the citizens. Political ignorance is not limited to the massive uneducated Nigerians neither

does it exclude the few that are educated. This is because as noted by Usman (2007), some of the most highly illiterate Nigerians are the most highly educated by virtue of their certificates and ranks. Yet, some of them are ignorant over many crucial areas of natural and human existence and over our national life, like our geography, history, economy and politics. This is very true as it is not strange to hear Nigeria citizens pass unconcerned and uninformed statements or judgments on political system in the country. Meanwhile, no democratic government can function successfully in a system where the citizens are politically uninformed and docile. Information is power. This is why Eneh (2010), maintained that a sensitized and informed political leader is likely to take the development of his/her country more seriously and work towards implementing it than one who is not and it takes a politically sensitized people to hold their political leaders accountable to his development promises. But this is not the case in Nigeria where majority of the people are ignorant and cannot stand up to their rights even when they are cheated. Most Nigerians do not have the prerequisite knowledge to demand good governance from their leaders even in the face of poverty and woes befalling them.

Another major problem confronting Nigerian political system is the problem of leadership at all levels of our national life because societal standards have crashed and leadership values have been reduced to acquisition of material things and wellbeing. Thus genuine and selfless leaders are few and scarce and it seems as virtues such as integrity, honesty, and hard-work have become eroded and forgotten in our society. Development is tied to good leadership, and effective leadership cannot be separated from societal development. This is why Ogbeidi (2012:3), maintains that "history has shown that no nation of the world grew and enjoyed steady development in virtually all spheres of its national life without experiencing good and selfless political leadership. This is largely because qualitative growth and development has always been an outcome of good governance". The chance to serve the Nigerian people in any political capacity has suddenly become an opportunity to amass and embezzle the public wealth through corrupt means and practices. Thus the requirement of holding political office has nothing to do with honesty and integrity but intending leaders buy their ways into office. Lukman (2013) noted that for Nigeria to survive as a nation, it has to change its ways of producing and selecting leaders. At the root of our leadership problems are so many issues that require urgent attention. Lukman (2013), submitted that leadership problems in Nigeria call for organized political education based on selfless and patriotic disposition.

Lack of political ideology is a serious problem in Nigerian politics. In the words of Dike (2008), politicians are known to have discounted the importance of ideology in politics. And since some of them are not committed to politics or democracy ideologically, they tend to waffle on issues. Consequently, nobody is held responsible for any failure in the society. For our politicians to behave, the people have to device means to hold them responsible for their actions or in-actions and one such way of doing that is to have a strong politically educated electorate who can vote for candidates or political parties during elections based on issues of competence and ideology rather than on sentiments of ethnicity, religion or

party propaganda. In an educated and politically mature society, the vote is the ultimate weapon of the people. This is not the case in Nigeria. Nigerians must positively change their personal attitudes to be able to change the social structure and influence how they are governed. This is why (Allport 1979:507) notes "For in part, at least, the structure is the product of the attitudes of many single people".

Furthermore, a lot of problems are associated with our elections. Since independence, elections conducted in Nigeria have never been without shortcomings, and it appears it is getting worse as the day goes by. Elections in Nigeria are marred with irregularities; fraud, bribery, thuggery, blackmail, selling of voter's card, and rigging which almost all of the time leads to post-election violence. The involvement of youths in election violence has become a regular menace in Nigeria as youths are frequently seen at the scene of political and electoral violence which often leads to the death of thousands and leaving hundred youths injured. Today in Nigeria, several lives are lost during elections. The experience of 2011 is still fresh in the memory of Nigerians. During the 2011 elections, several National Youths Corps members were killed in 2011 the northern states of this country. They were killed as a result of electoral violence that erupted shortly after the declaration of presidential election results. The nature and extent of youth involvement in electoral violence, and the magnitude of violence associated with elections and rigging in Nigeria have posed threats to the national quest for stable democratic transition, as well as to the attainment of consolidated democracy. Unless something is done to deal with these problems at this stage Nigeria cannot experience true democracy. As noted by Nwankwo (2012), the Nigerian political landscape is characterized by apathy and powerlessness on the part of the citizens and this has hindered massive citizen's revolt (not necessarily violent but attitudinal) over the last two decades. This development is to the advantage of the few, selfish and corrupt political leaders who have plundered the national commonwealth to the disadvantage of Nigerians. Nigerians have grown more skeptical and cynical about politics and Nigerian politicians as a result of the many years of frustration and disappointment they have suffered endlessly.

According to Idasa (1999) and Schoeman (2006), a free and strong democratic society has to rely on the knowledge, the skills and virtues of its citizens and those they elect to serve in public offices on their behalf. In Nigeria, the situation is different because there is high level of political ignorance among the people and the leaders have jettisoned the virtues and values of good and transparent leadership. This failure has led to the emergence of political leaders who lack consistent and concise political ideology, maturity and integrity. Also, this has created politically disoriented citizens who are ignorant of their rights and are less passionate about government and its activities. Many who strive to actively participate in the political process do so in ignorance, and that makes them to be susceptible to ethnic manipulations and propaganda resulting into politics of bitterness and hatred which reign supreme in Nigerian political landscape. Out of ignorance still, many exchange their voter's cards which is meant to be their power to vote for the right candidate only for a meager sum, thinking that the monetary inducement they are given is a gain, without knowing the implications that a politician who bribes his/her way into

office will result into looting the public funds to cover up for the "investment" that has been made during the elections. This results into the destiny of many Nigerians being plunged into poverty, joblessness and insecurity. Many are being used as political thugs during general elections resulting into destruction of lives and properties which is detrimental to any political system. Many youths in defense of a political party or politicians have died prematurely in ignorance.

In building a strong democratic state, principles rather than institutions are vital to the survival and sustenance of any democratic government Evans (1997) and it takes citizens who have been given a concise political education to uphold democratic principles in any political system. This is why Idasa (1999) and Schoeman (2006) agree that a free and strong democratic society has to rely on the political knowledge, the skills and virtues of its citizens and those they elect to serve in public offices on their behalf. To scholars such as Carr (1991) and Tocqueville (1969) "habit of the heart and habits of the mind", the dispositions that inform the democratic ethos, are not inherited. Each new generation has to acquire knowledge, learn the skills, and develop dispositions that underlie constitutional democracy. These dispositions have to be fostered and nurtured by word and study. Every democratic government or society willing to develop itself and climb the ladder of development, progress and stable political system has the responsibility of educating its citizens most especially the young and succeeding generations. This is revealed in the history of developed countries where elections are freely conducted and leaders are held accountable by the electorate.

Many political theorists have written to support the critical role of political education in developing the cognitive and affective (moral) qualities of citizens. Citizens cannot just be responsible until they are trained, tutored and informed to respect, nurture and support the ideals of democracy through exposure to political education. In the Republic, Plato contended that only those who know what good is are fit to rule, and he prescribed a long and rigorous period of intellectual training which he thought would yield "knowledge of the whole." In his famous analogy, Plato asserted that this knowledge will lose the bonds that keep most men confined in a "cave underground and allow them to ascend to the real world outside" (Branson, 2007).

Aristotle, in Politics VII, writes that the system of education which is appropriate to a city depends on the way in which rulers and the ruled are distinguished from one another. Therefore, in our city the young must learn to obey a free government of which they will eventually be members; and in doing so they will also be learning to govern when their turn comes. In thus learning generally "the virtue of the good citizen, they will also be learning the virtue of the good man," for the virtues as he argued before (in Book III, Chapter 9), are fundamentally the same (Branson, 2007).

Among many institutions capable of giving political education, (governmental and non-governmental agencies) the schools however, bear a special and historic responsibility for the development of citizenship competency and responsibility. Branson, (2003) states that even though many institutions help to develop political consciousness, schools bear a special and historic responsibility, schools fulfill that responsibility through both formal and informal

education beginning in the earliest years and continuing through the entire educational process. Schools have always been an instrument of socialisation and change in any nation. Furthermore, Giroux (1995) stated that citizenship and democracy need to be problematized and reconstructed for each generation. Schools must assist in the unending work of preparing citizens for self-governance in an evolving social environment. Through the schools, learners can be taught the values and skills necessary to administer, protect and perpetuate a free democratic society. (Schoeman, 2006)

Therefore, in order to combat the stated problems confronting the Nigerian political system, there is a need for a conscious development of a robust political education curriculum to be used in senior secondary schools for the training of young Nigerians about the nation's political systems, processes and peculiarities.

**Political education**

The term political education means different things to different people. To some, political education refers to the process of political socialisation, others see the idea to mean citizenship education or democratic citizenship while others refers to it as civic education. Though it may not be contradictory to refer to it in the above named ways, yet the idea of political education cannot be limited to any of those. The concept of political education is apt and more encompassing; it is a specialized form of education targeted towards bringing about a better polity into existence. (Ozmon and Craver, 1976, Nwankwo, 2012). Political education concerns itself explicitly with explaining core political matters to the citizens using the school as an apparatus to bring about a sane political system. Political education is an intentional education aimed at motivating and mobilising peoples in democratic societies to engage in political activities, to critique and analyse social and political issues independently and to develop skills and values necessary for community and nation building. This is lacking in Nigeria and is largely responsible for the many problems in the political system in the country.

**Developing a curriculum**

According to Stenhouse (1975), developing a curriculum starts with needs assessment, process which involves identifying the need to act which entails the psychological and social needs of the individual alongside the needs of the social environment. In the words of Sheenan (1986), this assessment involves taking a history and identifying actual and potential problems which should result in collection of data, interpretation, making inferences, setting priorities and stating the problem as a basis for planning. This accounts for the reason why this study aims at developing and validating a relevant and suitable political education curriculum for secondary schools in Ibadan. A "Need Assessment Survey using 200 senior secondary school students in 20 selected schools in Ibadan and 50 educational practitioners selected from schools, State Ministry of Education, Local Inspectorate of Education and the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan participated in the study.

**Conceptual model**

Curriculum model is a framework on which a particular curriculum can be based to facilitate its development, implementation, evaluation and innovation. Every model has their focus and basic assumptions as propounded

by their exponents. According to Page and Thomas (1977), a model is a means of transferring a relationship or process from its actual setting to one in which it can be more conveniently studied. Fawcett (1984), suggests that the term conceptual model, and synonymous terms such as conceptual framework and conceptual system, refer to global ideas about the individual groups, situations, and events of interest to a discipline. Models can assist the curriculum developers to conceptualize the development process by pinpointing certain principles and procedures. According to Lunenburg (2011), one way of developing a curriculum plan is through modeling. Models are essentially patterns that serve as guidelines to action. There are different types of existing curriculum models. There are the product models and the process models of curriculum development.

**Process model of curriculum development**

The curriculum development model upon which this study is based is the process model of Stenhouse, (1975). According to Stenhouse (1975), a curriculum is an attempt to communicate the essential principles and feature of an educational proposal in such a form that it is open to critical scrutiny and capable of effective translation into practice. One of the fundamental assumptions of the process model emphasis is on learning acquired from experience of work and life. This is referred to as experiential learning. It comprises open-ended student activities with developing tendencies and capacities. It emphasizes the quality of the learning as it takes place rather than on predetermined outcomes. The essence of this model is developing in the student the capacity to look at experience in alternative ways even beyond what is presented the classroom. It is concerned with working out possible relationships between matters being studied, making generalizations and the development of concepts by the student. Arising from the foregoing therefore, the present study which is an attempt at developing and validating political education curriculum, was conceived and carried out in Ibadan, the political headquarters of the South West Zone in Nigeria.

**Statement of the problem**

This study examined the problems confronting the Nigerian political system to include political ignorance resulting into selling of voter's cards for meager sum, snatching of ballot boxes and election malpractices at all levels. Furthermore, the history of election in Nigeria is a history of violence, so much that the nature and magnitude of the violence associated with elections in Nigeria are posing threats to the national quest for stable democratic transition, as well as to the attainment of consolidated democracy. Lack of political ideology by politicians, unresponsive and bad political leadership at all levels has hindered Nigerian's march to political stability. High rate of corruption and looting of Nigerian resources by politicians has impoverished many Nigerians and the Nigerian economy due largely to ignorance and political education. Therefore, this study aimed at tackling the challenges confronting the Nigerian political system by developing and validating a political education curriculum relevant to the needs of Nigerian child and the Nigerian political system for students in the senior secondary schools in Ibadan.

**Research questions**

1. Will the developed curriculum on political education meet the criteria

of adequacy, suitability and relevance?

2. Are the Objectives, instructional materials, and assessment techniques of the developed curriculum adequate, suitable and relevant to political education?

## Methodology

### Research design

The study involved a two stage design involving curriculum paradigm and survey.

### Population

Educational experts drawn from senior secondary schools, Local Inspectorate of Education, Oyo State Ministry of Education, Lecturers in Political Science Department and The Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan, Ibadan participated in validating the developed political education curriculum.

### Development of political education curriculum

The political education curriculum was developed these researchers using inputs obtained from literature in the area of curriculum and instructional programme design. The curriculum included the goals, the objectives, and content, teaching activities, instructional materials and process of evaluation.

### The procedure of validation

The criteria of adequacy, suitability, and relevance were the main issue considered in the process of validating the curriculum on political education. The draft of the curriculum was presented to experts in the field of curriculum, political science, classroom teachers and administrators for validation and they were requested to indicate whether it met the criteria of adequacy, relevance and suitability.

### Data analysis

Responses from the validators were subjected to simple frequency count and percentage scores.

## Results

Analysis of Validators Responses

Table 1: **Responses on the Adequacy of the Curriculum**

| **ELEMENTS** | **ADEQUATE** | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **YES (F) (%)** | **NO (F) (%)** | **TOTAL** |
| OBJECTIVES | 21 (91.4) | 2 (8.6) | 23 (100.0) |
| CONTENTS | 18 (78.3) | 5 (21.7) | 23 (100.0) |
| TEACHING ACTIVITIES | 21 (91.4) | 2 (8.6) | 23 (100.0) |
| INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS | 18 (78.3) | 5 (21.7) | 23 (100.0) |
| EVALUATION | 22 (95.7) | 1 (4.3) | 23 (100.0) |

Table 1 reveals that 21 or (91.4 %) of the validators considered the objectives of political education as adequate while 2 or (8.6 %) thinks otherwise. 18 or (78.3 %) of the validators satisfied the contents as adequate while 5 or (21.7

%) did not satisfy it as adequate. Still, 21 or (91.4 %) of the validators validated the teaching activities as adequate while 2 0r (8.6 %) did not. 18 or (78.3 %) validated the instructional materials as adequate while 5 or (21.7 %) did not validate it as adequate. Lastly, evaluation method of the political education curriculum was considered adequate by 22 or (95.7 %) while 1 or (4.3%) did not.

Table 2: **Responses on the Suitability of the Curriculum**

| **ELEMENTS** | **SUITABLE** | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **YES (F) (%)** | **NO (F) (%)** | **TOTAL** |
| OBJECTIVES | 20 (87.0) | 3 (13.0) | 23 (100.0) |
| CONTENTS | 20 (87.0) | 3 (13.0) | 23 (100.0) |
| TEACHING ACTIVITIES | 20 (87.0) | 3 (13.0) | 23 (100.0) |
| INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS | 20 (87.0) | 3 (13.0) | 23 (100.0) |
| EVALUATION | 21(91.4) | 2 (8.6) | 23 (100.0) |

Table 2 shows that 20 or (87.0 %) of the validators considered the objectives of political education as suitable while 3 or (13.0 %) did not. 20 or (87.0 %) validated the contents as suitable while 3 or (13.0 %) did not. The teaching activities were considered suitable by 20 or (87.0 %) while 3 or (13.0 %) feels otherwise. Still, 20 or (87.0 %) validated the instructional materials as suitable while it was considered not suitable by 3 or (13.0 %). Lastly, 21 or (91.4 %) of the validators validated the evaluation as suitable while 2 or (8.6%) did not.

Table 3: **Responses on the Relevance of Curriculum**

| **ELEMENTS** | **SUITABLE** | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **YES (F) (%)** | **NO (F) (%)** | **TOTAL** |
| OBJECTIVES | 20 (87.0) | 3 (13.0) | 23 (100.0) |
| CONTENTS | 20 (87.0) | 3 (13.0) | 23 (100.0) |
| TEACHING ACTIVITIES | 20 (87.0) | 3 (13.0) | 23 (100.0) |
| INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS | 20 (87.0) | 3 (13.0) | 23 (100.0) |
| EVALUATION | 21(91.4) | 2 (8.6) | 23 (100.0) |

Table 3 shows that 20 or (87.0 %) of the validators considered the objectives of political education as suitable while 3 or (13.0 %) did not. 20 or (87.0 %) validated the contents as suitable while 3 or (13.0 %) did not. The teaching activities were considered suitable by 20 or (87.0 %) while 3 or (13.0 %) feels otherwise. Still, 20 or (87.0 %) validated the instructional materials as suitable while it was considered not suitable by 3 or (13.0 %) Lastly, 21 or (91.4 %) of the validators validated the evaluation as suitable while 2 or (8.6%) did not.

**Discussions of findings**

This study raised two research questions. The discussion of findings followed the order in which the research questions were stated.

**Will the developed political education curriculum meet the criteria of adequacy, suitability and relevance?**

The result of the validation on the developed curriculum reveals that political education curriculum satisfactorily meets the criteria of adequacy, suitability and relevance. This implies that the goals of the developed political education curriculum are relevant to the learners in building values and skills necessary to constructively participate in the nations' political process and preserve a free democratic society. This is in agreement with Schoeman (2006), who posited that through the schools, learners can be taught the values and skills necessary to administer, protect and perpetuate a free democratic society.

**Are the objectives, instructional materials, and assessment techniques of the developed curriculum adequate, suitable and relevant to political education?**

The result of the validation of the developed curriculum shows that the objectives, instructional materials and assessment techniques of the developed political education curriculum sufficiently meet the criteria of adequacy, suitability and relevance. This implies that the stated objectives of the curriculum are described in measurable and achievable outcomes; the instructional materials are such that are appropriate to facilitate learning of political concepts and the assessment techniques would ensure the realization and total workability of stated objectives.

**Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. That this study should be replicated in other geo-political zones of Nigeria.
2. That the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) which is the highest curriculum body in Nigeria should consider the integration of political education as a subject into the existing senior secondary school curricular. Since politics cuts across the entire sphere of human lives and no one is insulated from political issues in any political system.
3. That adequate time of instruction should be given to the teaching of political education in the schools, at least 3 hours per week.

**Conclusion**

The present study has established the need for political education curriculum in senior secondary schools in Nigeria. It has shown that due largely to ignorance the Nigerian political system has suffered a lot of damage. Therefore, the study embarked on the development and validation of political education curriculum for senior secondary schools using schools in Ibadan metropolis. It adopted a two stage design involving curriculum paradigm and survey method. The developed curriculum was validated using the criterion of adequacy, suitability and relevance. Based on the findings of this study, appropriate recommendations that would further the course of political education in Nigeria were suggested. It is the belief

of the researchers that the government through National Educational Research and Development Council would take appropriate steps to facilitate the inclusion of political education into existing senior secondary school curricular.

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