

A Critical Examination of Political Science Curriculum Implementation in Colleges of Education in Osun-State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The implementation of the political science curriculum in colleges of education is of utmost importance to ensure quality education and the development of informed and responsible citizens. This study examined the implementation of political science curriculum in colleges of education, Osun State. The paper examined the appropriateness of teaching strategies adopted by political science lecturers, the relevance of instructional materials used, and students' attitudes towards the subject matter. A survey research design was adopted for the study. All political science students in colleges of education constituted the population of the study. A sample size of 500 respondents was involved in the study. Five colleges of education were selected for the study using the purposive sampling technique. Fifty political science students were selected from each of the five colleges of education using a simple random sampling technique. A questionnaire was used for data collection. The collected data was analysed using simple percentage. Findings revealed that political science lecturers in colleges of education employed appropriate teaching strategies. Findings also showed that political science lecturers made use of relevant materials in their teaching profession. The study found that most students showed a positive attitude towards learning political science, as evidenced by their regular attendance in the classes. Thus, the study came to the conclusion that the implementation of political science curriculum in colleges of education in Osun State, Nigeria, is effective.

Keywords: curriculum implementation; political science; teaching strategies; instructional material; students' attitudes.

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INTRODUCTION

Political science is one of the integrated disciplines available to students in Nigerian colleges of education. As a result, political science is a discipline that places emphasis on teaching and learning as well as a critical assessment of political theories, institutions, organisations, and state-level policies. It examines political dynamics, how individuals interact with the state, international laws, global interactions, the concept of power, and how members of a given society relate to one another in terms of power (Kwasau, 2013; Dauda & Garba, 2017). Understanding one's rights and obligations as a citizen, as well as understanding global politics and law, requires knowledge in political science (American Political Science Association, 2020). In other words, it is the systematic and critical analysis of how individuals, social groupings, and organisations appropriate, manage, and exercise political power. It would therefore be an essential tool for achieving sustainable development in a nation like Nigeria. A solid grasp of political science is necessary to comprehend the interactions between states and international organisations, as well as their interdependence, cooperation, peaceful cohabitation, and mutual aid (Minimum Standard for NCE Teachers, 2012).

Political science as a field of study encompasses a variety of topics, including public administration, international relations, comparative politics, political theory, political philosophy, and political institutions (Kadiri, 2017). According to Robert (cited in Kwasau, 2013), persons who wish to instruct government at the secondary level may do so by earning a Bachelor of Science in Education degree in the subject. In addition to their political science studies, students also take courses in geography, history, economics, and education. Through their degree certificate, graduates are equipped for secondary teaching certification. Political science classes given in college and as undergraduates often cover topics like comparative politics, international relations, Nigerian administration and politics, as well as political philosophy. The study of power and the relationships between men within national and international systems is known as political science. In other words, it is a methodical and analytical examination of how people, groups, and organisations in the political system acquire, control, and exercise power (National Colleges of Education Commission, 2012).

Political science serves as a tool for citizenship education by educating the populace about government, its procedures, guiding principles, political theories, and democratic ideals, values, attitudes, and norms that are crucial for the emergence and maintenance of a democratic culture and a stable polity. Understanding the relationships, interdependence, cooperation, peaceful coexistence, and mutual aid among states and international institutions is another benefit of studying political science. The National Colleges of Education Commission (2012) states that the political science curriculum in colleges of education is created to give students the abilities, information, and approach required for effective government instruction in secondary schools. The following are the programme's main goals:

1. To produce proficient government teachers who possess sound knowledge of political science.
2. To produce inspiring teachers of the subject who not only possess the confidence, skills, and techniques necessary for the teaching of the subject but also possess the proper values and attitudes towards political science as a discipline of study.
3. To inculcate within the scope of the students' training the necessary values, skills, and techniques for effective and moral leadership.
4. To produce the necessary training in citizenship and broaden the students' sense and scope of participation in community as well as national affairs.
5. To produce teachers that can inspire and inculcate in the students the values and attitudes of pan-Africanism, African nationalism, and African brotherhood.
6. To produce teachers who can foster the growth of international cooperation, coexistence, and mutual assistance.

From the foregoing, colleges of education train middlemen in teacher education. They offer a three-year programme leading to the award of a Nigerian certificate in education (NCE), and since 1998, no teacher without a Nigerian certificate in education is expected to teach in any school in the country (FGN, 2013). Despite the importance of political science in colleges of education and its existence in secondary schools, it has been observed that students' performance in government over the years in secondary schools has been fluctuating (Oderinde, 2020). However, if pre-service teachers of NCE were not equipped by trained lecturers with appropriate methodology, the goal of the programme might be in jeopardy. Oderinde (2020) also noted that if political science lecturers employ good teaching strategies that will allow students to make contributions in the classroom, this will help students to improve and have a better understanding of the subject matter, which will in turn enable the teachers in training to have adequate knowledge of the subject. However, the challenges faced in teaching and learning to provide students with sufficient competencies are examined by Yusof, Roddin, and Awang (2015); it is discovered that the approaches used by teachers are insufficient for developing generic competencies and that few

factors have influenced teachers in the selection of their preferred teaching approaches. Some of these challenges may be country-specific.

According to a study by Addendoff (2008), political science education programmes receive inadequate funding, which results in subpar instructional materials, subpar research attitudes, subpar academic commitment and devotion from the students, and subpar attention to the practical aspects of teaching and learning the course, like escortions and media programmes. Therefore, pre-service teachers of NCE tend to manifest whichever methods they have been exposed to, which may have an effect on their teaching practice. According to Robert (2007), there are not enough experts with the necessary qualifications, expertise, and experience to deliver political science education that meets criteria in both traditional and modern contexts. Ukeje (2002) noted that the calibre of the education system's product is a reflection of the calibre of the teachers who imparted it. No education system can outperform the calibre of its instructors, according to the national policy of education, FGN (2013).

Moreover, attitude is seen as another fundamental factor that may have an impact on students learning in political science. A person's learned tendency to respond either positively or negatively to an object, situation, concept, or other person is known as their attitude (Sarmah & Puri, 2014). Attitudes can also change and develop over time (Syieda, 2016), and once a positive attitude is formed, it can improve students' learning (Akinsola & Olowojaiye, 2008; Mutai, 2011). Kara (2009) stated that attitudes towards learning, besides opinions and beliefs, have an obvious influence on students' behaviours and consequently on their performance. According to Reid (2003), attitudes are important to us because they cannot be neatly separated from study. Contrary to this, the study by Abidin, Pour-Mohammadi, and Alzwari (2012) revealed that the participants showed negative attitudes towards learning English.

Conversely, a negative attitude hinders effective learning and, as a result, affects the learning outcome henceforth (Joseph, 2013). As such, attitude is an important factor that cannot be overlooked, and depending on the individual student, its impact on political science performance can be either positive or negative. Students who have a positive attitude towards learning are happy about it and will actively participate in it, whereas those who have a negative attitude towards learning may feel anxious about it, become bored easily, and find it difficult to enjoy it. This suggests that a negative attitude leads to a lack of success in learning (Padwick, 2010). Inal, Evin, and Saracaloglu (2003), for example, assert that understanding the attitude of the students is important to help teachers understand their students. In fact, there are many studies on the implementation of curriculum in other disciplines; it seems little attention is paid to the implementation of political science curriculum, and to effectively train future political science educators, the implementation of the political science curriculum in colleges of education needs to be examined.

Statement of the Problem

The implementation of the political science curriculum in colleges of education is of utmost importance to ensure quality education and the development of informed and responsible citizens. The study of political science is also useful for understanding relations among states and international organisations, their interdependence, cooperation, peaceful coexistence, and mutual assistance. However, studies have been carried out on curriculum implementation in other disciplines, but it appears the study on the implementation of political science curriculum in colleges of education in Osun State, Nigeria, has received relatively little attention. This paper therefore investigated the effectiveness of political science curriculum implementation in colleges of education in Osun State by examining the teaching strategies, instructional materials, and students' attitudes towards the learning of the subject.

Research Questions

Based on the problem of the study, the following research questions guided the objectives of the study, they are:

1. How appropriate are the teaching strategies employed by the political science lecturers?
2. How relevant are the instructional materials used for the teaching and learning of political science in colleges of education in Osun state?
3. What are the students' attitudes toward learning of political science in colleges of education in Osun state?

Objectives of the study

The objective of the study was to examine the implementation of political science curriculum in colleges of education, Osun state. The specific objectives of the study were to:

1. examine the teaching strategies employed by the political science lecturers in colleges of education in Osun state; and
2. investigate the instructional materials used for the teaching and learning of political science in colleges of education in Osun state; and
3. examine the students' attitude toward learning of political science in colleges of education in Osun state.

METHODS

The study adopted a survey research design. The population of the study comprised of all political science students in colleges of education in Osun State. A sample of 500 respondents was involved in the study. Five colleges of education were selected for the study in Osun State using the purposive sampling technique. Fifty political science students were selected from each of the five colleges of education using a simple random sampling technique.

A research instrument was used for data collection known as the Students' Questionnaire on the Effectiveness of Political Science Curriculum Implementation in Colleges of Education in Osun State, tagged 'SQEPSCICEOS'. SQEPSCICEOS was used to collect data on the appropriateness of teaching strategies employed by political science lecturers in colleges of education and the relevancy of instructional resources used for the implementation of political science curriculum in colleges of education in Osun State. SQEPSCICEOS was also used to collect data on students' attitudes towards learning political science in colleges of education in Osun State. Because of the number of colleges of education that were involved in the study and their distance from one another, a period of three (3) weeks was used for data collection.

The data collected from the respondents was coded, scored, and graded appropriately. The collected data was analysed using descriptive statistical tools. Research questions 1, 2, and 3 were analysed using simple percentages (%).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The aim of this research is to ascertain the appropriateness of the teaching strategies employed by political science lecturers, the relevance of instructional materials utilized, and students' attitudes towards the course content. The gathered data will be analyzed employing a simple percentage method. This section presents the analysis of the study.

Table 1. Analysis on the appropriateness of the strategies employed by the political science lecturer

Items on teaching strategies employed by political science lecturers	SA (%)	A (%)	SD (%)	D (%)
The teaching strategies employed by all my lecturers help me to understand the subject	205(41%)	295(59%)	-	-
Not all my lecturers understand the appropriate teaching strategies to teach	-	40(8%)	200(40%)	260(52%)
My lecturers employed different teaching strategies to teach different concepts	202(40.4%)	230(46%)	8(1.6%)	60(12%)
The teaching strategies usually employed by my lecturers is not appropriate with the concept s/he teaches	9(1.8%)	60(12%)	300(60%)	131(26.2)
All my lecturers have adequate knowledge of subject matter	131(26.2)	300(60%)	-	69(13.8%)

Source: Field work, (2022).

From Table 1, the findings of the study revealed that 205 (41%) of the respondents strongly agree that the teaching strategies employed by all their lecturers help them to understand the subject, while 295 (59%) of the respondents agree. 40 (8%) agree, 200 (40%) strongly disagree, and 260 (52%) of the respondents disagree that not all their lecturers understand the appropriate teaching strategies to teach. The findings of the study also revealed that 9 (1.8%) of the respondents strongly agreed that their lecturers employed different teaching strategies to teach different concepts; 60 (12%) of them agreed, 300 (60%) strongly disagreed, and 131 (26.2%) disagreed. The findings of the study also showed that 131 (26.2%) of the respondents strongly agree that all their lecturers have adequate knowledge of subject matter, 300 (60%) agree, none of them strongly agree, and 69 (13.8%) of the respondents disagree.

Table 2. Analysis on the relevancy of the instructional resources used for the teaching and learning of political science

Items on instructional resources used for the teaching and learning of political science	SA (%)	A (%)	SD (%)	D (%)
Instructional materials are very important in the teaching and learning of political science	450(90%)	50(10%)	-	-
My lecturers hardly use instructional materials	40(8%)	100(20%)	230(46%)	130(26%)
The use of instructional materials help me to understand better in my studies	300(60%)	160(32%)	-	40(8%)
The instructional used by my lecturers are very relevant to the concept	300(60%)	200(40%)	-	-

Source: Field work, (2022).

From Table II, the findings revealed that 450 (90%) of the respondents strongly agreed that instructional materials are very important in the teaching and learning of political science, 50 (10%) agreed, and none of them strongly disagreed or disagreed; 40 (8%) of the respondents strongly agreed that their lecturers hardly use instructional materials, 100 (20%) of them agreed, 230 (46%) of them strongly disagreed, and 130 (26%) of them disagreed. The finding also showed that 300 (60%) of the respondents strongly agree that the use of instructional materials helps them understand better in their

studies, while 160 (32%) of them agree, none of them strongly disagree, and 40 (8%) of them disagree; 300 (60%) of the respondents strongly agree, 200 (40%) agree, and none of them neither strongly disagree nor disagree.

Table 3. Analysis on students' attitudes toward learning of political science in colleges of education in Osun state

Items students' attitudes toward learning of political science in colleges of education	Yes (%)	No (%)
I can understand some concepts in political science without the help of my lecturers	280(56%)	220(44%)
I always go to library after the lecture	230(46%)	270(54%)
I read more materials apart from the one given in the class by my lecturer	300(60%)	200(40%)
I attend tutorial to understand some difficulties in the subject	260(52%)	240(48%)
I attend political science class regularly	450(90%)	50(10%)

Source: Field work, (2022).

From the table above, the findings of the study revealed that 280 (56%) do understand some concepts in political science without the help of their lecturers, while 220 (44%) find it difficult to understand without their lecturers' efforts; 230 (46%) of the respondents always go to the library after the lecture, while 270 (54%) of them were not used to that. The findings of the study also showed that 300 (60%) of the respondents read more materials apart from the ones given in the class by my lecturer, while 200 (40%) did not; 260 (52%) of the respondents attended tutorials to understand some difficulties in the subject; and 240 (48%) did not see any reason to attend the tutorial. Finally, the findings of the study revealed that 450 (90%) of the respondents attended political science class regularly, while 50 (10%) failed to cultivate the habit of attending lectures regularly.

Discussion of Findings

Research question 1 examined the teaching strategies employed by the political science lecturers in colleges of education in Osun State. From the evidence of the results presented in Table I, the findings of the study revealed that the majority of political science lecturers employed teaching strategies that helped them understand the subject. The data analysed in Table I also showed that the teaching strategies usually employed by a larger percentage of lecturers were appropriate to the concepts they taught. The study's findings run counter to those of Yusof, Roddin, and Awang's (2015) investigation, which found that teachers' methods are insufficient and inappropriate.

Research question two investigated the instructional materials used for the teaching and learning of political science in colleges of education in Osun State. The finding of the result on question two, as shown in Table II, showed that instructional materials are very important in the teaching and learning of political science. The study revealed that 300 (60%) of the respondents strongly agree that the use of instructional materials helps them understand better in their studies, while 160 (32%) of them agree, none of them strongly disagree, and 40 (8%) of them disagree; 300 (60%) of the respondents strongly agree, 200 (40%) agree, and none of them neither strongly disagree nor disagree. The results of the findings were in line with the findings of Johnson (1998), who found a significant relationship between instructional materials and students' academic achievement in English Language and Mathematics examinations. He concluded that the low performance of students might also be due to inadequate utilisation of the available instructional materials. According to the study, which is also in line with Ajayi

and Ogunyemi's (1990) findings, students will learn at their own paces in addition to having access to the reference materials that teachers have mentioned when facilities are provided to meet the system's needs.

Research question 3 examined the students' attitude toward learning political science in colleges of education in Osun State. From the results of the findings in Table III, the study showed that 280 (56%) do understand some concepts in political science without the help of my lecturers, while 220 (44%) find it difficult to understand without the effort of their lecturers; 230 (46%) of the respondents always go to the library after the lecture, while 270 (54%) of them were not used to that. The findings of the study revealed that 450 (90%) of the respondents attended political science class regularly, while 50 (10%) failed to cultivate the habit of attending lectures regularly. Thus, the study demonstrated that most political scientists have a favourable attitude towards learning the subject. The study's findings are consistent with those of Kara (2009), who found that attitudes towards learning, in addition to opinions and beliefs, clearly affect students' behaviours and, in turn, their performance. However, the results are at odds with the findings of Abidin, Pour-Mohammadi, and Alzwari's (2012) study, which indicates that the participants had unfavourable attitudes regarding learning English.

CONCLUSION

It could be drawn from the findings of the study that the majority of political science lecturers in colleges of education in Osun State adopted appropriate teaching strategies for every concept in the subject. The findings of the study also revealed that the majority of political science lecturers understood the importance of instructional material in the implementation of the political science curriculum and therefore made use of relevant materials to supplement their teaching and learning in the classroom. The study found that most students showed a positive attitude towards learning political science, as evidenced by their regular attendance in the classes. Thus, the study came to the conclusion that the implementation of political science curriculum in colleges of education in Osun State, Nigeria, is effective.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion drawn from the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Political science lecturers should not relent in their efforts by applying appropriate teaching strategies.
2. There should be the provision of adequate learning facilities in all the colleges of education in Osun State.
3. Political science lecturers are encouraged to vary the teaching strategies employed so as to accommodate both fast and slow learners.
4. Students are encouraged to seek additional resources, such as library materials, to further enhance their understanding of political science concepts.
5. It is recommended for political science students to cultivate a good reading habit.
6. Students should endeavour to attend political science class regularly.

Limitation of the Study

Operationally, the study was limited to the teaching strategies and instructional materials used by political science lecturers, as well as the students' attitude towards learning. Geographically, the study was limited to five colleges of education in Osun State, Nigeria. The study was also limited to political science students.

Suggestions for further Study

Based on the limitations of the study, a future study could focus on the adequacy of instructional materials and the availability of political science lecturers in colleges of education in Osun State. A similar

study could be carried out in other regions of the country. Comparative analysis could be carried out on the implementation of political science curriculum in Osun State and colleges of education in other states.

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