

CULTURALLY-RELEVANT PARTICIPATORY LEARNING METHOD AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' ATTITUDE TO AND KNOWLEDGE OF CORE SOCIETAL VALUES IN SOUTHWESTERN NIGERIA

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Abstract:

The study observed that Core Societal Values (CSVs) are taught to pre-service Early Childhood Education (ECE) teachers in Nigerian colleges of education through a course titled Social and Moral Development. The ultimate goal of teaching the course being that the ECE teachers would be able to acquire desirable societal attributes and ultimately impart same to young children during their formative years. However, it was observed and established in literature that many ECE pre-service teachers had attitudinal and knowledge deficit in CSVs accounting for the display of socially unacceptable behaviours among them. Efforts made by previous researchers to address the problem largely focused on factors influencing CSVs acquisition among the pre-service teachers with less attention to culturally-informed intervention studies that could significantly improve their attitude and knowledge of the CSVs. This study, therefore, was carried out to determine the effect of a Culturally-relevant participatory learning method (CrPLM) on ECE pre-service teachers' attitude to and knowledge of CSVs.

The study was anchored on Ajzen's Planned Behaviour and Vygotsky's Socio-cultural theories. The embedded experimental research design of the mixed methods research approach suggested by Creswell (2012) was used. Two out of the four federal colleges of education in Southwestern Nigeria offering ECE programme were purposively selected. Two intact classes of 72 ECE pre-service teachers in year one were selected from the two colleges. The colleges were randomly assigned to CrPLM (38) and Conventional Method (CM-34) groups. Instruments used were Attitude to CSVs Scale ($r = 0.90$), Knowledge Test on CSVs ($r = 0.76$), instructional guides, field notes and audio-visual materials. Treatment lasted six weeks. Focus group discussion was conducted with knowledgeable elders in the community and the pre-service teachers involved in the CrPLM. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics and Analysis of covariance at 0.05 level of significance, while qualitative data were thematically analysed.

The CrPLM, which involves the use of Yoruba folklores, indigenous language and participation of knowledgeable elders, improved the pre-service teachers' attitude in and knowledge of the CSVs as it encouraged active participation, social skills, enthusiasm, confidence and deep thinking among them. The knowledgeable elders involved in the study felt excited, nostalgic and esteemed about the intervention. Quantitative results revealed significant

main effects of the intervention on the ECE pre-service teachers' attitude ($F_{(1;64)} = 6.80$; partial $\eta^2 = 0.10$) and knowledge ($F_{(1;64)} = 16.30$; partial $\eta^2 = 0.20$) of the CSVs. The ECE pre-service teachers exposed to CrPLM had higher post-attitude mean score (67.87) and post-knowledge mean score (46.03) than those exposed to CM (attitude = 56.57; Knowledge = 27.94).

The study demonstrated that curriculum contents which are culture-related can only be better taught through a methodology informed by the culture of the immediate society. Again, the study bring to the fore the importance of synergy between teacher training institutions and the community through the engagement of knowledgeable elders in the training of ECE teachers. CrPLM was recommended for lecturers teaching Social and Moral Development in Nigerian colleges of education.