

Reflective Discourse Instructional Strategy, Gender and Age Effects on University Students' Citizenship Knowledge in Nigeria

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Abstract. Citizenship education as a conscious process of inculcating certain values, habits and attitudes which the society considers desirable and essential for its survival as a unit and for its overall development. The traditional methods such as lecture method, talk-chalk method, note-taking method, and the likes, the school system at all levels has not been able to achieve the national educational objectives as well as the objectives of citizenship education in Nigeria. In order to inculcate desirable socio-political values in the students, especially those at tertiary level, there is need for teaching strategies that would re-orientate and re-focus students' thinking pattern, such that they will see the need to change positively and live as well-informed and responsible citizens. study determined the effects of reflective discourse instructional strategy on undergraduates' citizenship knowledge in southwest, Nigeria. The study also determined the moderating effect of age and gender on students' citizenship knowledge. The study adopted a pretest-posttest, control group, quasi-experimental research design with 2x2x2 factorial matrix. Using total enumeration sampling technique, 511 participants who were 300 level social studies undergraduate students were selected from intact social studies classes in six purposively selected universities in South-west Nigeria. The results of the finding revealed a significant main effect of treatments on

students' knowledge of citizenship education concepts ($F_{(2,498)} = 56.89$, $P > .05$, $\eta^2 = .19$). The finding showed that reflective discourse instructional strategies enhanced students' knowledge more than the modified lectured method. The reflective discourse instructional strategy increased learners' knowledge of citizenship education concepts. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that reflective discourse should be used by teachers to teach concepts in social studies. To do this, teachers should always organize lessons to encourage active listening and reflection of students. Students should also be opened to alternative viewpoints by engaging in dialogue, peer-explanation, group discussion, brainstorming and collaborative activities. Collaboration should also be emphasized in learning rather than individualism.

1. Introduction

Social Studies embraces those studies which are concerned with how people build a better life for themselves and their fellow human beings; how people deal with the problems of living together, how people change and are changed by their environment. Swan and Hofer (2013) posit that since human beings live in the reality of inter-dependence principles, social studies programme is therefore, local in content but global in

context. The National Council for Social Studies (NCSS, USA, 2010) describes social studies as an integrated study of many academic disciplines which promotes civic competence in the learners at all stages of education; ranging from pre-primary to post-graduate levels. Citizenship education is one subject, according to VanSledright (2011) that is specifically designed in content and function to produce healthy, good and active citizens, wherein a good citizen is seen as patriotic, responsible, disciplined and conscientious, morally sound with love for his/her country.

Budano (2012) describes citizenship education as a conscious process of inculcating certain values, habits and attitudes which the society considers desirable and essential for its survival as a unit and for its overall development. Furthermore, Ogunyemi (2009) asserts that one major task of citizenship education is to increase understanding and acceptance of national diversities and to foster the uses of such an understanding to generate desirable social attitudes such as co-operation, discipline, social and moral responsibility. Furthermore, Adeleke and Olubela (2010) reiterate that citizenship education promotes respects for others and recognition of the quality of all human beings, and this would help in combating all forms of discriminations (racist, gender-based, religious, ethnic, etc) by fostering the spirit of tolerance and peace among human beings. Falade (2008) and Magstadt (2009) explain that if citizenship education concepts are taught well in school, learners would be prepared learners for social responsibility. McCowan (2006), Ughamadu (2006) and Mezieobi (2010) in different studies also establish that effective teaching of citizenship education will make the citizens to become more alive to their rights and obligations to fellow human beings and the society, at large. Whereas, in situations where students are ill-informed or disenfranchised from productively participating in socio-political activities, it is certain that such country would be retrogressive or backward among the comity of nations (National Council for Social Studies, 2007). This situation could be said of the present political dispensation in Nigeria. Interaction with students reveals a growing sense of

disenchantment with all levels of government and distrust in government's policies and programmes (Ijalaye, 2009). Onike (2013) explains that majority of students would not want to participate in politics, while those who even participate in electioneering activities are used for electoral fraud and violence. Many of the youths who would not compromise are either harassed or marginalized. Even Orbih (2013) regrets that despite that women in Nigeria were formidable part of the past socio-economic and political development of the country, they have been relegated to the background in politics. Few of them who dare enough to pursue politics are labeled as promiscuous or lazy. Iyamu and Otote (2005) observe that, while many of today's political leaders were elected as youths into various positions in the past, the Nigerian youths are now marginalized and deprived of political appointments and electoral positions. Even upon graduation, there is little or no hope for gainful employment for them, and this contributes largely to youths' restiveness and national insecurity.

Furthermore, the negative influence of the peer pressure has misled many students from the path of honour, ethics and values (Ewumi and Olubela, 2013). Also, Ajibewa (2008) remarks that the current derailed societal value system in the country have heightened students' the incivility level. To Olubela (2010), many parents and guardians now pursue money and fame at the detriment of their children/wards. This in the view of Onike (2013) may not be unconnected with the level of poverty and unemployment in the country. Government's poor commitment to educational practices has also left a gap between the goals of citizenship education and the current realities of the socio-political system in Nigeria. In addition to these problems, the problem associated with the teaching/learning of citizenship education in Nigeria today stems from the ineffective teaching of the subject.

However, Olubela (2012) observes that this gap is revealed in the teacher centered methods, in which students work primarily alone learning is achieved through repetition, and the subject contents are strictly adhered to and guided by old foreign-cultured textbooks. In such methods,

teachers are the all-knowing and all-talkers, while students only sit down look, and at best, copy notes which are dictated by the lesson-centred teacher. With these traditional methods such as lecture method, talk-chalk method, note-taking method, and the likes, the school system at all levels has not been able to achieve the national educational objectives as well as the objectives of citizenship education in Nigeria. Therefore, in order to inculcate desirable socio-political values in the students, especially those at tertiary level, there is need for teaching strategies that would re-orientate and re-focus students' thinking pattern, such that they will see the need to change positively and live as well-informed and responsible citizens.

Meanwhile, the effects of age and gender on academic performance of students in many school subjects have been determined (Hess, 2009). Adesoji (2008) emphasizes that many factors contribute to student's knowledge, attitude and skills. Such factors include; the teaching methods, teacher's attitude, influence of parents, gender, age, cognitive styles of pupils, career interest, amongst others. Evidence from some studies such as Elnathan (2012), Swan and Hofer (2013) show the influence of age on students' knowledge and awareness of civic concepts. This position slightly negates the findings of Oyeleke (2011) who observe that Nigerian students; irrespective of their age (and other factors such ethnic origin and religion) are either civic unconscious or politically insensitive to their civic rights and obligations, electoral matters, democratic processes and constitution issues. It thus became imperative for this study to determine the influence of age on citizenship education.

In the same vein, male students have been observed to be more alert to political activities than female students. This is also the case in the nation's political terrain which shows the gender inequality in political participation of men and women in elective positions (Ogunyemi, 2011). Heafner (2008), Nichol and Sim (2008) and UNESCO (2012) did not observe significant gender difference in learners' knowledge and dispositions to democratic, civic and citizenship issues respectively. This thus calls for empirical

evidence to determine whether there will be any significant difference between male and female students' citizenship knowledge, attitude and practice. The study also found out whether students that are 20 years and above; who have reached voting age are more civic conscious than those students below 20 years. Hence, this study determined the effects of reflective discourse instructional strategy on undergraduates' citizenship knowledge in southwest, Nigeria. The study also determined the moderating effect of age and gender on students' citizenship knowledge.

2. Theoretical Framework: Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory

Albert Bandura was the major motivator behind social learning theory. Social learning theory focuses on the learning that occurs within a social context. It considers that people learn from one another, including such concepts as observational learning, imitation, and modeling. Among others, Albert Bandura is considered the leading proponent of this theory. Bandura's Social learning theory argues that individual learns and acquires knowledge through observation and imitation. Social learning theory as propounded by Bandura (1986) stated that behaviour can be changed through exposure to various forms of experience. This theory assumed that people can be induced to change their behaviour by presenting them with new information about the characteristics of the existing behaviour.

The theorist saw personality as a product of interaction of an individual with his environment and his or her psychological processes. He believed that human behaviour is influenced by what he sees, hears, perceives, feels, conceives, creates and participates in. Bandura (1977) was of the opinion that a person's environment shapes his or her learning and that human behaviour, development and learning are products of interaction with, and experience acquired in the environment. The ability to respond appropriately to the environment is therefore necessary for children to participate in a teaching – learning process.

The social learning theory of Bandura emphasize that one of the fundamental means by which new modes of behaviours are acquired and existing patterns are modified, entails modeling and vicarious processes. Bandura (1977) who developed this theory establishes that learners learn by observing the behaviour of others (parents, teachers, friends, and famous people) and imitating and modeling their behaviour. Acquisitions of new skills by observing the behaviours of others are a common part of everyday life. The opinion imitators, they imitate what they have seen others do. Learners acquire large units of behaviour through watching, imitating, modeling and interaction with others. The social learning theory provides framework for reflective discourse strategy. Reflective discourse is a specialized use of dialogue or discussion devoted to searching for a common understanding and assessment of the justification of an interpretation or belief (Mezirow, 1995, 2000).

3. Reflective Discourse and Citizenship Knowledge

Oduolowu (2007) asserts that education has essentially been a social process in capacity building and maintenance of society since the creation of human beings. Therefore, to cope with the changing realities and uncertainties of human life, effective strategy is a weapon with which to equip the people to acquire relevant knowledge, skills and habits for surviving in the modern world. Baxter-Magolda and King (2008) also emphasizes the need to find collective experience and arrive at a best decision. Evidences of this is found daily, in the political and citizenship realities in Nigeria, where many educated and elite populace refrain from politics or show outright lethargy to constitutional and democratic processes. To develop common ground, there is the need to help others and ourselves move from self-serving struggle and move towards empathetic listening and informed reflective discourse.

Mezirow (2000) also shows the evidence of reflective discourse strategy in providing efficiency in teaching and learning processes.

Reflective discourse is the use of specialized dialogue devoted to searching for a common understanding and assessment of the justification of an interpretation or belief. Clark, Nguyen and Sweller (2006) explain that reflective discourse is about making personal understanding about issues or beliefs, by assessing the evidence and arguments of a point of view on issues, and being open to looking at alternative points of view, or alternative beliefs, then reflecting critically on the new information, and making a personal judgment based on a new assessment of the information. In this case, reflective discourse strategy offers solutions to citizenship issues and multi-dimensional socio-political problems in Nigeria through mutual understanding and interaction. The goal of reflective dialogue is to develop mutual understanding and common knowledge among the learners (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010).

Moon (1999) views reflective discourse as being involved in the knowledge generation process. York-Barr (2006) explains that reflective processes or actions contrast from the routine which derives from impulse, tradition, and authority. Gimenez (1999); Russo and Ford (2006) agree that because most teachers, at some level think about what they are doing, reflection must be defined as a more systematic way of looking at one's work. It should be no surprise that the literature yields no single agreed upon definition of reflective discourse. The tendency of a person to participate in and exude reflective behaviours, including writing and participating in reflective discourse, can be linked to many variables including their view of the nature of knowledge and their approach to learning. The manner in which one views the nature of knowledge can influence a learner's ability to be reflective or to exude reflective behaviours. In the context of this study being reflective means to participate in reflective discourse. Whitmire (2004) describes three levels of knowing: absolute knowing, transitional and independent knowing, and contextual knowing. These levels of knowing can be aligned with different types of reflective discourse in which social science would engage. If a learner views knowledge as certain and absolute, they believe there are right and wrong answers and only authorities know

the right answers. These learners will likely not participate in discourse that extends upon being able to describe one's own concrete classroom experience or provide additional details about one's own experience. Stevenson (2010) describes this as pre-reflective discourse.

Learners who view knowledge as transitional or independent believe that knowledge is partially certain and partially uncertain or view all knowledge as uncertain because everyone has their own beliefs. These learners will begin to question previously held assumptions and realize that authorities can be wrong or biased. These learners realize there can be more than one correct answer to a problem. They evaluate or refute without supplying developed justifications. Whitmire (2004) describes this learner as participating in quasi-reflective discourse. To this extent, it is only when learners see knowledge as contextual and believe it should be judged on the basis of evidence in context, is a learner able to participate in reflective thinking and reflective discourse. These learners will participate in discourse designed to provide or ask for justifications, both implicit and explicit, concerning why others believe or act the way they do. This type of discourse can be evaluatory while providing or responding to justifications. It will assess adequacy in problem solving processes with the aim of improvement.

4. Statement of the Problem

The continuous use of teacher-centered strategies portends retardation in teaching-learning processes; as learning outcomes are largely reduced to mere passing of examination; leaving out the essential knowledge which are required for enhancing responsible citizenry and active political participation of students. Previous researches have contributed to making learning more impactful, yet the socio-political challenges highlighted in the study are still on the increase in Nigeria. Perhaps, many of these strategies have been limited to primary and secondary school levels, with little attention to university students. Furthermore, the alarming increase in youths' derailment in the country may not be unconnected with the fact that

classroom teaching largely concentrate on the lower cognitive skills of knowledge, comprehension and application, thus, this study went further into higher skills of analysis, synthesis and evaluation, thereby providing the students the opportunity to rationalize objectively, critically and reflectively. Research evidence have also shown that the use of appreciative inquiry strategy could enhance students' propensity to vote, re-orientation and learners' competence and participatory skills of democratic citizenship. This strategy also has the potentials of increasing students' capacities to analyze public issues and to cooperate with others in group activities. This study, therefore, determined the effect of reflective discourse strategy on undergraduate students' citizenship knowledge in southwest, Nigeria. The study also determined the moderating effect of age and gender on students' learning outcomes in citizenship education concepts.

5. Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

Ho 1. There is no significant main effect of appreciative inquiry instructional strategy on undergraduate students' citizenship knowledge in southwestern, Nigeria

Ho2. There is no significant main effect of gender on undergraduate students' citizenship knowledge in southwestern, Nigeria

Ho3. There is no significant main effect of age on undergraduate students' citizenship knowledge in southwestern, Nigeria

Ho4. There is no significant interaction effect of treatment, gender and age on undergraduate students' citizenship knowledge in southwestern, Nigeria

6. Methodology

The study adopted a pretest-posttest, control group, quasi-experimental research design with 2x2x2 factorial matrix. Using total enumeration sampling technique, 511 participants who were 300 level social studies undergraduate students were selected from intact social studies classes in six purposively selected universities in South-

west Nigeria. The intact classes were randomly assigned to experimental and control groups. Experimental group was exposed to reflective discourse instructional strategy while the control group was treated with modified lecture method. The treatment lasted 12 weeks. Instrument used

for data collection was Citizenship Education Concepts Knowledge Test ($r = 0.87$), and instructional guides for each of the strategies. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Data were analyzed using Analysis of Covariance and Scheffé post hoc test.

7. Results

Ho 1. There is no significant main effect of reflective discourse instructional strategy on undergraduate students' citizenship knowledge in southwestern, Nigeria

Main effect of Treatments on students' citizenship knowledge

Table 1: Summary of Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) on students' citizenship knowledge

Source	Sum of square	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.	Eta square
Corrected model(Explained)						
Pretest Knowledge	1093.462	12	91.122	12.662	.000	.234
Treatment group	6.300E-02	1	6.300E-02	.009	.925	.000
Gender	818.785	2	409.393	56.890*	.000	.186
Age	.422	1	.422	.059	.809	.000
Treatment x Gender x Age	32.292	1	32.292	4.487	.035	.003
Error(Residual)	.473	2	.235	.033	.968	.000
Corrected total	3583.728	498	7.196			
	4677.190	510				

*significant at 0.05

Table 1 showed that there was significant main effect of treatment on social studies students' knowledge of citizenship education concepts ($F(2,498) = 56.89$, $P > .05$, $\mu^2 = .19$). This implies that the post-test scores of students in citizenship education concepts differ significantly across the experimental and control groups. Therefore, Ho1 is rejected.

The estimated marginal means in Table 2 showed the magnitude of students' mean knowledge scores in the experimental and the control groups.

Table 2: Estimated Marginal Means of post-test citizenship knowledge scores on the Treatment, Age and Gender across the groups

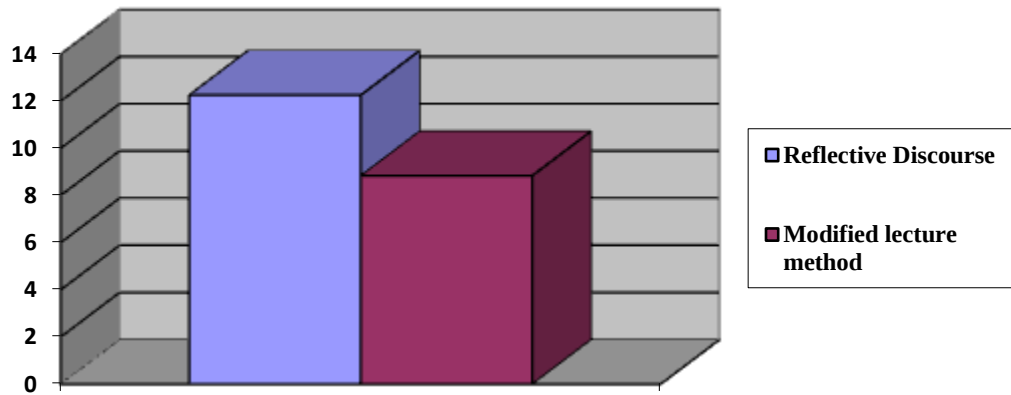
Treatment Groups	Gender	Age	Mean	Sta.Error
Reflective Discourse Strategy	Male	Below 20 years	11.95	.453
		20 years & above	13.31	.456
	Female	Below 20 years	11.19	.360
		20 years & above	12.54	.439
Modified Lecture Method	Male	Below 20 years	7.46	.446
		20 years & above	8.14	.457
	Female	Below 20 years	8.09	.422
		20 years & above	10.24	.443

Table 2 revealed that students in the reflective discourse strategy group had higher adjusted post-test means knowledge scores ($X = 12.25$) than the students in the modified lecture method who had the least adjusted mean knowledge scores ($X = 8.48$). The grand mean being 12.57. Moreover, the source of the significant difference obtained in Table 3 was traced using scheffe post-hoc test.

Table 3. Scheffe's Post Hoc tests analysis of post-test citizenship knowledge scores by treatments

Treatment	Mean score	Reflective Discourse	Modified lecture method
Reflective Discourse	12.25		*
Modified lecture method	8.83	*	

The result from post-hoc analysis in Table 3 revealed that students in the experimental group I (reflective discourse) performed significantly better than students in the control group.



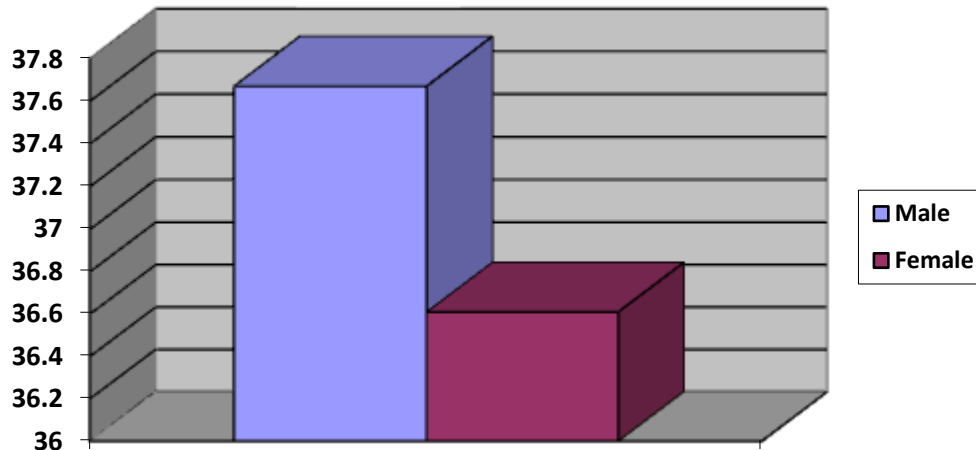
Ho2. There is no significant main effect of gender on undergraduate students' citizenship knowledge in southwestern, Nigeria

From Table 4, there was no significant effect of gender ($F_{(1,498)} = 1.986$, $P > .05$, $\eta^2 = .004$). The effect size of 0.4% was negligible; hence, Ho2 was not rejected.

Table 4: Estimated Marginal Means of post-test citizenship practice by Gender
Grand Mean = 37.14

Gender	Mean	Sta. Error	95% confidence interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Male	37.67	1.41	35.29	40.05
Female	36.61	1.21	33.86	39.37

Male students had higher citizenship practice means score = 37.67 while female students had lower mean score 36.61, but the difference was not significant.



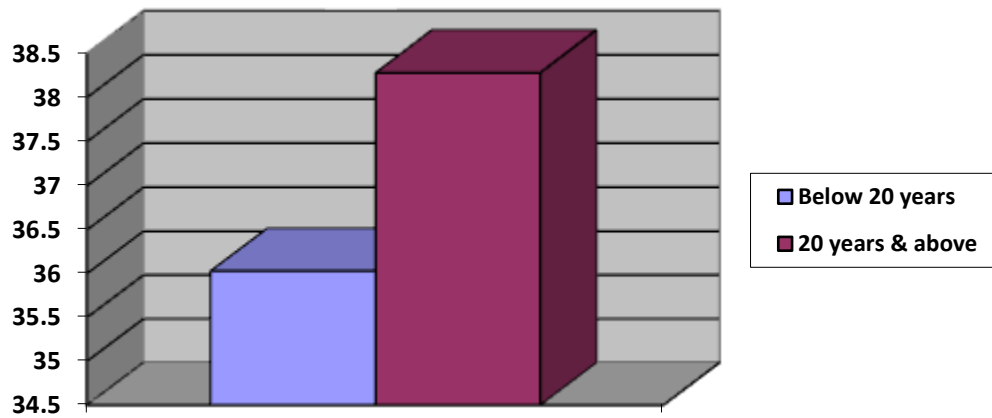
Ho3. There is no significant main effect of age on undergraduate students' citizenship knowledge in southwestern, Nigeria

From Table 5, there was no significant effect of age ($F_{(1,498)} = 1.564$, $P > .05$, $\eta^2 = .003$). The effect size of 0.3% was negligible; hence, H_{03c} was not rejected.

Table 5: Estimated Marginal Means of post-test citizenship practice by Age
Grand Mean = 37.15

Age	Mean	Sta. Error	95% confidence interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Below 20 years	36.03	1.25	33.52	38.49
20 years & above	38.28	1.36	35.62	40.93

Students who were 20 years and above had higher citizenship practice means score = 36.03 while students who were below 20 years had lower mean score 36.03, but the difference was not significant.



8. Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

8.1 Summary

The results of the finding revealed a significant main effect of treatments on students' knowledge of citizenship education concepts. The finding showed that reflective discourse instructional strategies enhanced students' knowledge more than the modified lectured method. The reflective discourse instructional strategy increased learners' knowledge of citizenship education concepts. The strategy also enhanced students' use of specialized dialogue to searching for a wider (Moon, 2004) and common understanding of concepts (Mezirow, 1995, 2000). On attitude, reflective discourse strategy also impacted on the students to develop their critical skills, by considering a wide range of political, social, ethical and moral problems, and explore opinions and ideas other than their own. Meanwhile, appreciative inquiry strategy

also had significant main effect on students' attitude to citizenship education concepts. During class, students were able to develop self-confidence which helped them to successfully deal with significant life changes and challenges (VanSledright, 2011). Furthermore, Reflective discourse strategy impacted on students' citizenship practice. To Moon (2006), appreciative inquiry instructional strategy provides educators with opportunities to acquire skills and techniques for the efficient transmission of content to students (technical) and to develop ways to better interact with learners, encourage participation, set up warm and inviting atmospheres for learning, and meet the needs of learners.

8.2 Conclusion

Reflective discourse instructional strategies enhanced students' citizenship knowledge, attitude and practice more than the lecture method. The lecture method inhibits students'

freedom and initiative to explore, seek and inquire. Lecture method also fosters competition rather than cooperation, individuality rather than collaboration. As a result, culture of apathy, lethargy, greed, ethnic suspicion, discrimination, insecurity, exploitation is promoted in students; and the results are what we currently battle with in the country whereas teachers' adoption of reflective discourse strategies would enhance learners' competence, mass of information, positive orientation to socio-political issues, culture of tolerance and collaboration, students' propensity to vote, leadership and participatory skills of democratic citizenship. These strategies increase students' capacities to analyze public issues and to cooperate with others in group activities. Using these strategies for teaching and learning in Nigeria would reduce the current frightening crime rates; and thus promote orientation for sustainable ethnic cooperation and religious tolerance, fair and peaceful electioneering and good governance.

8.3 Recommendations

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

- (i) Reflective discourse should be used by teachers to teach concepts in social studies.
- (ii) To do this, teachers should always organize lessons to encourage active listening and reflection of students.
- (iii) Students should also be opened to alternative viewpoints by engaging in dialogue, peer-explanation, group discussion, brainstorming and collaborative activities. Collaboration should also be emphasized in learning rather than individualism.
- (iv) Training of teachers on the application of reflective discourse strategy should be organized on regular basis.
- (v) The training should also be followed up by effective monitoring and supervision.
- (vi) Lecture method where teachers see themselves as the supreme custodian

of knowledge, and students as passive on-lookers and note writers, should be discouraged.

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