Relative Efficacy of Moral Dilemma Model Of Value-Clarification On Nigerian Secondary School Students' Knowledge And Attitude To Hiv/Aids - A Clue For The Social Studies Teacher

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Abstract

The value-clarification strategy has been employed in teaching population education and other concepts in the Nigerian school curriculum and found efficacious. There was a doubt whether secondary school students will learn better and develop desirable attitude, if a Social Studies teacher employs it in teaching the learning content of HIV/AIDS. This experiment found out that the moral dilemma model, one of the strategies of Value-clarification may be efficacious in assisting improved knowledge acquisition and development of desirable attitude about HIV/AIDS than the expository method, if a Social Studies teacher employs it in teaching its learning content among secondary school students.

Introduction

The teaching of value and belief is an important aspect of any Social Studies programme (Ogundare & Ogunsanya, 2004). Values, in the word of Cecilia (2000), are the elements that guide a person’s life choices in a definite direction; and are standards of judgment in human behaviour which are intricately related to what the individual has come to accept as guiding principles of living. Values are also considered to develop mainly from experiences that individuals have from the influence of people and from conditions around them. They constitute a bridge between the “knowledge world” and the “action world” in social education and influence values held by individuals and groups (Ehman, Mehlinger & Patrick, 1974).

To Akinpelu (1991), “all human actions (and inactions) are determined by values”. Hence it can be inferred that human’s interaction with the environment (the major focus of Social Studies Education) is value-laden. This may be because the question of “values” comes to play whenever people take decisions, make choices or express preferences. Iheoma (2000) explains that values represent a people’s views about a desirable society; and that the aims of education are the values selected for emphasis by its educators and educational policy makers. Home remarks that values, which are beliefs and ideas, are essential for the maintenance, strengthening and improvement of society.
Lawton and Duffor (1976), explain that what is selected from the culture of the society for class instruction should be based on what is particularly valued by the society, and that its transmission should not be left to chances but entrusted to special instructions and specially trained teachers. The desire of the Nigerian Society to achieve its national goals using education as a tool, invariably calls for the service of a Social Studies teacher who will assist the youth to clarify their values. One major value upon which all other sectors of the society depend is the “value for life”. It is a known fact that only the living citizen can work, participate and contribute to the development of the nation. This will however be affected in the face of unbridled spread of HIV/AIDS. There is therefore the challenge on the part of the Social Studies teacher to employ the value-clarification method in his teaching.

The value-clarification method as defined by Kirshenbaum (1977) is a form of questioning, as of activities or “strategies and approach toward subject content, all of which are designed to help individuals learn a particular valuing process and to apply the process to value laden areas and moral dilemmas in their lives”. The method provides the prerequisite skill for making informed and rational decisions on value-laden issues. It addresses certain behavioural tendencies in the apathetic, listless, very inconsistent and very uncertain children who are usually unable to make up their minds. It also addresses the problems of over conforming learners, who do what they think adults do and role-play, by trying to find their own identities and pretend to be other people. It thus helps in the re-examination of values and promotes the cultivation of rational ones (Ogunyemi, 2000).

Methods used in value-clarification teaching approach therefore include large and small group discussion; individual and group work; sensitivity and listening techniques; moral dilemmas; rank order and forced choices; songs and cart work; games and simulation; personal journals and interviews; and self analysis worksheet (Simon,1999). Simon (1999) has formulated a sevenfold process describing the guidelines of the value-clarification approach. They are (1) choosing from alternatives (2) choosing freely (3) prizing one’s choice (4) affirming one’s choice (5) acting upon one’s choice (6) acting repeatedly overtime; and (7) willing to affirm the choice in public.

The inference that could be drawn from here, in reference to HIV/AIDS education in Social Studies, is that the youth(1) has an alternative of choice of living a life without AIDS or otherwise (2) may choose freely from alternative behaviours that avoid the risk of HIV/AIDS – The A, B, C and D of HIV/AIDS (3) weigh the importance of the choice (4) take a stand on choices of mode of prevention (5) insist on choice of prevention in the face of pressure (6) refuse to be persuaded when pressure is severe (7) sustain and be consistent in the avoidance of AIDS-risk related behaviour and situations. However the researcher has opted for the moral dilemma model of value-clarification. This may be because the task of HIV/AIDS education among sexually active youth is enormous; and the only way to address it is to create a dilemma for the youth against the value that they hold of risky and sexual behaviours that they engage in, as a result of emotional and peer pressures.

Thus, the question of relevance of moral dilemma model of value-clarification may be better answered in reference to Kohlberg (1963) theory of moral development. According to Kohlberg, everyone ought to act in terms of the universal value of human life; and that it is logical and desirable for all persons to respect human life. To Kohlberg, mature morality arrives when young people learn to make “right decision” using ethical principles based on logical comprehensiveness, consistency and universality. Kohlberg used an anecdote of a sick woman and a chemist who refused to give out a prescribed drug because the husband of the woman could not pay the cost of the drug that was ten times the original price, to illustrate a moral
dilemma situation. The dilemmas were that the man broke into the chemist shop and stole the drug to save the life of his ailing wife. Then the question of whether to allow the woman to die, when the social norm of “not stealing” is respected or that the man violates the social norm in order to save the life of the woman arises (Oladele, 1998).

Kohlberg opines further that the youth’s moral judgment falls into post-conventional level of moral thinking where the individual focuses on justice as the major source of value. According to him, youths at the post-conventional level, examine values critically so as to conform with the norms agreed upon by whole society; and that it is when rights and rules are critically examined, that the youths know what is in order, and thus, avoid taking steps that may lead to self-condemnation (Oladele, 1998).

In a discussion of moral education, Grinder (1978) explains that moral education is a matter of role clarification, which are meant to forestall moral anxiety and strengthen resistance to temptation by emphasizing inductive disciplinary encounter. According to Grinder, young people direct their attention to the consequences of their behaviour; they are encouraged to assess how their moral choices affect the rights and intention of others, and that they are provided with sufficient autonomy to process information into an objective, comprehensive system of values. This may therefore explain why value-clarification is a useful short-term approximation to the discussion of moral dilemmas: apparently because it helps young people to become more purposive, creative, productive, analytical and respected. Thus, it is specifically useful in assisting young people to explore own judgment about matters of conflicting value interests, by which they are lead to clarify interpersonal role relationships.

In its practical sense, the standard of judgment or value should not be compromised at any level of human endeavour; and that is why the Social Studies teacher has a very significant role to play, using the moral dilemma model of value-clarification, especially with the emergence of new concerns such as population issues and HIV/AIDS epidemic (Ogunyemi, 2000). It is hoped that the strategy will assist by way of disabusing the mind of the youth against false precepts they hold such as seeing HIV/AIDS as an American Invention to Discourage Sexual intercourse or as the white-man’s disease.

Ogunyemi (2000) provides a guideline for the application of the Moral Dilemma Model in teaching matters of population and sexuality education. He identifies five steps involved in moral dilemma approach to value-clarification. They are, confrontation of the dilemma, definition of terminology, explanation of terminology, testing reasoning for a position; and reflecting on reasoning for a position. Thus, in order to teach secondary school students to clarify their value on HIV/AIDS, the teacher has to introduce the dilemma to the students. All basic terminologies are to be defined; followed by the explanation of the nature of the dilemma(HIV/AIDS), vis-à-vis its mode of transmission, prevention, lack of cure, and how to relate to people living with HIV/AIDS. The learners are to be asked to take a position,(positive or negative) and then to explain why they have chosen such positions. It is expected that if this model is well applied in a Social Studies classroom where HIV/AIDS is slated for instruction, the secondary school students will learn better about HIV/AIDS, by demonstrating knowledge of the subject matter and eliciting desirable attitude towards the pandemic.

However, this last assertion may be regarded as a speculation, more importantly that there is little or no empirical fact to back up the proof of efficacy of the strategy in the Nigerian context. Although Ogunyemi(1994) experimented the moral dilemma model of value-clarification on pre-service teachers knowledge and attitude to population education, and arrived at a result indicating that it is efficacious, it is not certain that it may be useful in teaching secondary school students to acquire sufficient knowledge and develop desirable attitude to HIV/AIDS. Olagunju,
Busari and Ogunbiyi (2004), who arrived at a positive result about the efficacy of peer-tutoring and role-play in teaching about HIV/AIDS in secondary schools using the science curriculum, suggest that there is the need to investigate the impacts of value-clarification on students’ knowledge and practices that are HIV/AIDS-risky. Their emphasis on knowledge and practices leave gap for an examination of attitude, which is a prerequisite for risk-related practices. These challenges have therefore motivated this study; which is out to experiment the efficacy or otherwise of the moral dilemma model, an aspect of value-clarification strategy, with a view to providing answers to the following research questions:

- Will moral dilemma model of value-clarification be efficacious in assisting secondary school students to acquire relevant knowledge about HIV/AIDS?
- Will moral dilemma model of value-clarification be efficacious in assisting secondary school students to develop desirable attitude towards HIV/AIDS?

**Methodology**

Two intact classes of Junior Secondary School Class One (JSS I) students participated in the study i.e. 147 and 130 who were selected as experimental and control group respectively. The rationale for the selection of JSS I students was that they are at the onset of puberty; and are vulnerable to peer and emotional pressures that may subject them to making mistakes of embarking on health-risk-related behaviours. They therefore deserve to be properly guided before they start to experience such pressures. It is hoped that they would be able to evaluate their actions and inaction after being exposed to values associated with living a healthy and sickness-free lives. The 147 students were exposed to a 7-day continuous instruction using the moral dilemma model of value-clarification. While the 130 students were involved in the regular school work which also involved teaching about HIV/AIDS under the topic “Health Institution” using the expository method. The set of students were from two different schools. A teaching plan of Moral Dilemma Model of Value-clarification on HIV/AIDS developed according to the proforma suggested by Ogunyemi (2000) is summarized viz:

**Confrontation of the dilemma**

Here, current statistics of people living with HIV/AIDS and the number of youth involved were provided. The teacher explained that if care is not taken, everybody may have AIDS, including the teacher and the students; and that everyone on earth could die one after the other and there will be no one to live on earth again. Students were guided to figure out the benefit between living as a healthy being or living with a sickness that will despise treatment and yet end up killing one. Here the problem of dying young and the value of living longer, healthy life is emphasized.

**Definition and explanation of terminologies in the dilemma**

Each of the following was defined and explained: HIV (human immunodeficiency virus); CD4 – cell or T – helper cell; Infectious disease; Opportunistic infections; Opportunistic disease(s); AIDS (acquired immune-deficiency syndrome); Unprotected sexual intercourse; Mother-to-child transmission; Sharing of sharp objects; Blood transfusion; Unhygienic circumcision; Signs and symptoms of HIV/AIDS (prolonged diarrhea), swollen glands, white spot in the mouth, severe weight loss, recurrent fever, nausea and vomiting, skin rashes etc.; How to prevent contact with HIV/AIDS - abstaining from sexual intercourse, being faithful to one’s sex
partner, condom used appropriately. Do not’s of HIV/AIDS e.g. Do not (1) practise commercial sex (2) have unprotected sex (3) accept blood without evidence of laboratory screening (4) use sharp objects with other people - whether known or unknown to be infected or not etc; How to know exactly that one has HIV/AIDS - sero-status, voluntary HIV counseling and testing, ELISA, (Enzymes Linked Immunosorbent assay), HIV anti-bodies in the blood, western blot, antiretroviral medicines, immunity boosting etc.

The nature of the dilemma

The teacher explains that “HIV/AIDS kills. Once its virus enters into the body, the person starts to manage his/her body. He/she will be living on drugs, most of whom have their negative consequences”. Teacher guides the students to discuss the following consequences of HIV/AIDS - Physical: The person may have two or more of each of Nausea (feeling like vomiting.), diarrhea, migraine, headaches, dementia and insomnia; may be hospitalized for a long time, and be living on drugs, that require strict compliance. Emotional: Depression, anger, violence, despair, hopelessness, suicidal tenderness, dependency and helplessness. Social: Discrimination, stigma, rejection, abuse, ridicule, hate, fear, criminal behaviour and self-incarceration and sometimes prostitution; and Economical: poverty, unemployment, homelessness, hunger etc. “The teacher stresses that AIDS does not discriminate - The black, the white or red, the young and old, and a new baby can contract it. It cannot be cured, unlike other sickness or disease. The best way not to contract it is to avoid behaviour that will make one to contract it”. The students were guided to have insight into, and to discuss how HIV/AIDS, sexually-transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancy and drug use, relate to, and how they can affect longevity, health and wellbeing and career; and how fidelity and abstinence and proper condom use are best approaches to avoid contracting HIV/AIDS. The advantages derivable from prompt, voluntary and regular testing and counseling, proper use of drug, avoidance of rape tendencies and vulnerability, eating of health promoting good foods, exercise and rest were also discussed. The need to assist people living with HIV/AIDS and not stigmatize them were also analyzed with a view to clarifying the values the youth already held about each issue.

Testing reasoning for a position

Here students were made to reason along, by taking common positions on value of having a career in a healthy sickness-free body; avoidance of unwanted pregnancy, or becoming a teenage father; value of voluntary HIV counseling and testing; helping people living with HIV/AIDS, and avoidance of illicit drugs use and rape.

Reflecting on reasoning for a position: Here reasons were adduced for positions that were taken above in the context of value for life(living and not dying),living healthy life, achieving one’s life career goals, reducing pressure on the government, family and community and avoiding the risk of discrimination following contracting HIV/AIDS and having appropriate approaches to people living with HIV/AIDS by eliciting desirable attitude to them.

The teaching sessions were done by Social Studies Teachers in each of the schools. The teachers involved in the moral dilemma exercise were trained on how to use the model; while teachers of the control group were encouraged to ensure that the scheme of work on Health Institution, a topic in the Nigerian JSS I Curriculum is followed to the letter: so as to have a basis for comparison with the experimental group. Two research instruments were developed and validated by the researcher, namely Test of Knowledge of HIV/AIDS(r=0.74) and Test of Attitude to HIV/AIDS(r=0.78). The Test of Knowledge was a 30-item multiple choice objective test measuring knowledge of basic terminologies on HIV/AIDS, mode of transmission,
prevention, stigmatisation and assistance of people living with HIV/AIDS. Other issues measured were HIV testing and counselling, management of HIV/AIDS and effects of HIV/AIDS on its patient, his/her family member, the government and the community. The Test of Attitude, a 25-item instrument however measured prevention of HIV/AIDS, assistance for people living with HIV/AIDS, HIV/AIDS counselling and testing and HIV/AIDS management. The efficacy of the model was assessed following a post-test administration of the research instruments. The Test of knowledge was marked on a total of 30 marks for each research participant. Each participant’s score was converted to a percent-correct score. The Test of Attitude, a 4-point scale, was graded over a total of 100 marks. The average (mean) scores of all the participants were found on each level (knowledge and attitude) and were then compared with the control group to examine which strategy is likely to be more efficacious in teaching for better understanding of issues surrounding HIV/AIDS and development of desirable attitude to the pandemic.

Results

Premised on the methodology above, results derived are presented according to each question below.

Research Question 1: Will moral dilemma model of value-clarification be efficacious in assisting secondary school students to acquire relevant knowledge about HIV/AIDS?

Findings – The total percent-correct score obtained by students that participated in the moral dilemma instruction was 9,337.44. With a total number of 147 participants, the mean score obtained was 63.52. The control group had a percent-correct score of 3909.1. With 130 participants, their mean score was 30.09. The post-test performance of participants in the moral dilemma model of value-clarification group therefore averaged higher than those in the control group. By implication, the moral dilemma model of value-clarification may be more efficacious in assisting a better knowledge of HIV/AIDS issues than the expository method of teaching.

Research Question 2: Will moral dilemma model of value-clarification be efficacious in assisting secondary school students to develop desirable attitude towards HIV/AIDS?

Findings – The total percent-correct score obtained by students that participated in the moral dilemma instruction was 10,672.2. With a total number of 147 participants, the mean score obtained was 72.60. The control group had a percent-correct score of 6,182.8. With 130 participants, their mean score was 47.56. The post-test performance of participants in the moral dilemma model of value-clarification group therefore averaged higher than those in the control group. By implication, the moral dilemma model of value-clarification may therefore be more efficacious in assisting secondary school students to develop desirable attitude towards HIV/AIDS than when the expository method of teaching is employed in Social Studies.

Discussion

The Social Studies teacher is expected to be versatile in selecting appropriate teaching strategy in order to achieve the purpose for which a topic has been slated for instruction in the classroom. However, because the subject derives content from so many sources to form its own curriculum (Akinlaye, Mansaray & Ajiboye 1996), the teacher is faced with the dilemma of determining which strategy will be most appropriate to execute a teaching plan. From the results obtained in this study, it is likely that the moral dilemma model of value-clarification will be a better teaching strategy, in order to make Social Studies’ student learning about HIV/AIDS
in the secondary schools to have a better knowledge and understanding of HIV/AIDS issues than when taught with the conventional method of teaching.

It therefore suffices to generalise that issues associated with risks and challenges and those which require decision making such as reproductive and family health and HIV/AIDS are better taught using value-clarification strategy if we want the students to learn better and to also develop desirable attitudes. This opinion buttresses what Ogunyemi(1994) said about the efficacy of the value-clarification strategies and also provides a response to Olagunju, Busari and Ogubiyi(2004)'s call for a research to test the efficacy of value-clarification strategy via the teaching of the learning content of HIV/AIDS in the classroom; with a view to suggesting whether value-clarification will be good to enhance better understanding of HIV/AIDS issues and the development of desirable attitude towards the pandemic.

**Conclusion And Recommendation**

Based on the findings of this study, it may sound good to conclude that the moral dilemma model of value-clarification strategy, if properly adapted, could be a good teaching method that may not only facilitate a better knowledge and understanding, but also reinforce the development of desirable attitude towards HIV/AIDS. Thus, it could be recommended that teachers of Social Studies should learn how to design appropriate moral dilemma model in teaching some of the Social Studies topics that are designed to train in decision making such as HIV/AIDS or Population and Family Life; bearing in mind that by this the learners will learn better and demonstrate better understanding of concepts and appropriate attitude and behaviour which are the hallmarks of any Social Studies instruction.

**References**

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