

Parents' and Teachers' Perceptions of the Role of Citizenship Education in Nation Building: Implications for Counselling in Nigeria

Sunusi Muhammad Kani, Ph.D

Department of Educational Foundations
Kano University of Science and Technology, Wudil
smkgwale@yahoo.com

Ezeodo Calista Chinwe

Department of Social Science Education
University of Nigeria, Nsukka
calista.ezeodo@unn.edu.ng



Abstract

The study aimed at investigating teacher's and parent's perception of the role of Citizenship Education in nation building: Implications for counselling in Nigeria. Descriptive survey research design was adopted. The sample consisted of 95 teachers and 76 parents, selected through convenient sampling procedure. Twenty three (23) item structured questionnaire, with Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.73, was used to collect data. Data was analyzed using mean and t-test. The results revealed that Citizenship Education plays significant roles in nation building through fostering commitment to the fundamental values and principles that bind Nigerians together; promoting informed discussion on public issues among citizens; among others. The t-test analysis showed a significant difference between teachers and parents perceptions of the role of Citizenship Education in nation building. Recommendations made suggested a balanced public awareness to further communicate the roles of Citizenship Education to the project of nation building.

Keywords: citizenship, education, nation, building, counselling

Introduction

Interest in citizenship education has escalated worldwide in the last decade. Some view this dimension of education as an opportunity to prepare young people to understand and become involved in the civic life of their communities, from the local to the global. Other writers view it as a way to respond to a range of existing social and civic concerns (Heater, 2000). Some scholars have emphasized knowledge about government structures and processes while others have included notions of identity, cultural diversity, and political literacy. Interestingly, Olatunji (2008) defines citizenship education as a programme aimed at inculcating in an individual the skills for effective participation in the process of democratic development and on how to live in freedom. The National Curriculum Handbook for Secondary Teachers in England (1999), describes the importance of Citizenship Education as follows: Citizenship Education gives pupils the knowledge, skills and understanding to play an effective role in the society at local, national, and international levels. It helps them to become informed, thoughtful and responsible citizens who are aware of their duties and rights. Mgbor and Mgbor (2002) conceptualized citizenship education as that type of education designed to expose the citizens to their rights, obligations and duties to the state as well as help them to contribute efficiently to nation building. Citizenship education can be likened to Education for Sustainable Development which seeks to transfer knowledge, values and skills to enable them participate in decision making process, learn the ways things are done individually and collectively, locally and globally, that will improve the quality of life now without damaging the planet in the future (UNESCO, 2009). Bowles and Gintis, in Michael and Lian (2003), posit that the development of Citizenship Education is a key force in stabilizing and legitimating the nineteenth-century nation-state and in securing of a sense of national identity through the provision of a universal education, inventing public ceremonies, and mass-producing public monuments. Citizenship Education in the context of this paper is a systematic method of training the citizens on social, economic, political, cultural, and religious values, as well as their duties and obligations which they owe the Nigerian state, towards the realization of the goals of nation building. The national goals of education which necessitated the inclusion of Citizenship education in the Nigerian curriculum are as follows:

- a) a free and democratic society
- b) a just and egalitarian society

- c) a united, strong and self-reliant nation
- d) a great and dynamic economy
- e) a land of bright and full opportunities for all citizen (FRN, 2013).

From these goals, one can deduce that the idea of Citizenship Education hinges on the development of individual's civic knowledge, values, skills, and more importantly, the confidence and motivation to participate in public life. To buttress this fact, Kerr (2004), stresses that Citizenship Education is essential in creating awareness to fundamental human rights and underlying freedom which negates fear, ignorance, prejudice and apathy. Oluniyi (2011) opined that the aim of Citizenship education is to equip young citizens with the knowledge of their rights and responsibilities, to be able to play active roles in the development of the society. Mathews and Dilworth (2008) opine that Citizenship Education teaches citizens to genuinely participate and effect positive change within the political community. Obiadi in Beston (2018), expressed that Citizenship Education helps individuals to make incisive decisions and to take responsibility for their own lives and community and as well teaches individuals on the importance of patriotism in ensuring the realization of unity, progress and stability. Imperatively, the essence of Citizenship education is therefore geared towards moulding the thoughts, hearts, actions and behaviour of citizens so as to facilitate the improvement of man for the development of human society. Hence, citizenship is not merely about formal rights; it is about participation in social life and being able to contribute to the integration of the society. Citizenship has a normative component which includes the acceptance of national and societal values. It is also important to emphasize that the process of synthetic nation building is hinged on the quality of Citizenship Education available to the citizens. Thus, the contemporary agendas for nation building in the 21st century, show that the key force in stabilizing and legitimating nation building is by providing a worthwhile Citizenship education to the citizens. However, despite the vast amounts of research focused on Citizenship Education, there appears to be a lack of prior research directly examining teacher's and parent's perception of the role of Citizenship Education in nation building. More so, the lack of interest in Citizenship Education can be linked to, among others, the widespread insecurity, hate crimes, underdevelopment, ineffective leadership, corruption, and cultural antagonism that undermine the project of nation building in Nigeria. This reality suggests the need for a therapeutic intervention of a professional counsellor to re-educate the citizens on the roles of Citizenship Education in building

a Nigeria that will reflect the yearnings and aspirations of all, irrespective of the differences in religion, culture, ethnic and party affiliations.

Counselling is a profession designed to help a client learn how to make decisions and formulate new ways of behaving, feeling, and thinking. According to the British Association for Counselling (BAC), as cited in Mcleod (2003),

the term counselling includes work with individuals and with relationships which may be developmental, crisis support, psychotherapeutic, guiding or problem solving The task of counselling is to give the 'client' an opportunity to explore, discover and clarify ways of living more satisfyingly and resourcefully (p. 7)

Counselling is a process of helping people in, among others, (i) the acquisition of an understanding of the origins and development of emotional difficulties, leading to an increased capacity to take rational control over feelings and actions, (ii) becoming better able to form and maintain meaningful and satisfying relationships with other people, (iii) becoming more aware of thoughts and feelings that had been blocked off or denied, or developing a more accurate sense of how self is perceived by others, (iv) the development of a positive attitude towards self, marked by an ability to acknowledge areas of experience that had been the subject of self-criticism and rejection, and (v) inspiring in the person a desire and capacity to care for others and pass on knowledge and to contribute to the collective good through political engagement and community work (Mcleod, 2003). No doubt, counselling is relevant in assisting Nigerians to achieve the role of citizenship education in nation building. Hence, the specific purpose of this study is to ascertain teachers' and parents' perception of the role of citizenship education in nation building and its implications for counselling in Nigeria.

John Krumboltz Career Choice Theory (1976) is relevant to the study. The major notion of the theory states that an individual has several alternatives or courses of action and; that certain events occur with the alternatives and; that each event must have a set of values attributed to it that is measurable. Career Choice Theory focuses on how individuals utilizes the information or knowledge available to enhance the implementation of some decisions regarding self, work, and other life opportunities.

Krumboltz further stated that there are five general steps involved in any decision making process; specification of the problem-which means the issue to be decided on; examination of the options or alternatives available; selection of the best alternatives and then; feedback or correction. Given the anti-nation building indices of widespread insecurity, hate crimes, underdevelopment, ineffective leadership, corruption, cultural antagonism in the country, Krumboltz Theory of Choice Making becomes critical in this study because it can provide alternative ways for the citizens to embrace and reflect the Citizenship Education objectives which are crucial for sustainable nation building.

Statement of the problem

Citizenship Education is the body of knowledge that conveys to the learners set of values and behaviours that are considered vital and necessary for sustaining a country's democratic life through the teaching of the rights and responsibilities of citizens. The basic objectives of citizenship education in Nigeria among others include: to create an awareness on the provisions of the Nigerian constitution and the need for democracy in Nigeria; to sensitize Nigerians about the functions and obligations of the government; to assist in raising responsible, well informed and self-reliant Nigerian citizens and; to inculcate the right type of values and attitudes for the development of the individual and the Nigerian society (FRN, 2013). According to Okpoko and Okpala (2008), citizenship education can, therefore, be viewed as a method of transmitting knowledge, skills, and political, economic, social and administrative cultures to the citizens of a state for national development. The authors are of the view that effective citizenship education will be evident in Nigerian people when they exhibits appropriate type of values and attitudes based on sound knowledge and self-reliance; and participates in public efforts and activities that contribute to community and national development.

Presently, the Nigerian unity and democracy is under threat, especially with rising insecurity, rampant ethnic violence and religious crises including leadership crises that have become a common occurrence in Nigeria. Iyamu as cited in Yusuf (1999) views citizenship education as a conscious effort to inculcate in the youth, a set of values and attitude contingent on the need and problems of the society. If the views of Yusuf were taken into consideration, then can the authors claim that the teaching of citizenship education in Nigeria has not achieved its objectives? It is in order to justify this claim

that the authors are investigating the teachers' and parents' perceptions of the role of citizenship education in nation building and its implications for counselling in Nigeria. Indeed, senior secondary school teachers and parents are in a place that can assist in ascertaining whether the teaching of citizenship education has appropriately foster the needed national unity and stability for the development of the Nigerian nation.

Research questions

1. What is the perception of senior secondary school teachers on the role of citizenship education in nation building?
2. What is the perception of senior secondary school parents on the role of citizenship education in nation building?

Hypothesis

Ho1: There is no significant difference between the perceptions of senior secondary school teachers and parents on the role of citizenship education in nation building.

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey design. The target population for this study consisted the teachers and parents of the students in five randomly selected Senior Secondary School in Dala Zonal Education Authority of Kano State. A total 227 teachers and 253 parents constituted the population. The sample size of the study comprised of 95 teachers and 76 parents, conveniently selected from the total population of the study.

Data were collected using researchers' developed questionnaire titled 'Perceptions of Teachers and Parents on the Role of Citizenship Education Questionnaire' (PTPRCEQ). The questionnaire has two sections, A and B. Section A gathered demographic information; while section B contained 23 items on the perceived roles of Citizenship Education in nation building. Items of section B were scored on 4-point response categories of strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree with assigned values of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. Initially, the questionnaire had 19 items and was increased to 23 by experts who vetted it to ensure validity. To ensure the reliability of the questionnaire, 25 copies were trial tested on teachers of Government Senior Secondary School, Sharada which was not part of the study. The scores

obtained were subjected to Cronbach Alpha analysis and a reliability coefficient of 0.73 was obtained.

The copies of the questionnaire were personally distributed by the researchers to the teachers and parents with the help of a research assistant. Completed copies were collected on the spot while some were retrieved a day after distribution. The return rate was 100% for both the teachers and parents. Data analysis was done using mean, standard deviations and t-test statistics. Mean value of less than 2.5 was rejected while a mean value of 2.5 and above was accepted. The hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Presentation of results

Research question 1: What are the perceptions of senior secondary school teachers on the role of citizenship education in nation building?

Table 1: Teachers perceptions of the role of citizenship education in nation building

S/N	Roles of Citizenship Education	N	Mean	SD	Decision
Citizenship education					
1.	Helps one to understand some basic laws of the state	95	2.41	0.69	Rejected
2.	Provides information on the duties and obligations to the state	95	2.23	1.07	Rejected
3.	Fosters commitment to the fundamental values and principles that bind Nigerians together	95	3.10	0.57	Accepted
4.	Fosters cooperation between citizens and state	95	2.32	0.96	Rejected
5.	Promotes informed discussion on public issues among citizens	95	2.51	0.92	Accepted
6.	Encourages patriotism	95	2.71	0.84	Accepted
7.	Motivates citizens to perform civic duties	95	2.12	1.14	Rejected
8.	Helps in moulding responsible citizens	95	2.83	0.85	Accepted
9.	Encourages the citizens to influence the public policy-making process	95	2.64	1.06	Accepted
10.	Gives insight on the workings of a constitutional government	95	2.89	0.89	Accepted
11.	Exposes the rights and responsibilities of citizens	95	2.41	0.84	Rejected
12.	Promotes informed participation in civic activities	95	2.40	1.10	Rejected
13.	Educates citizens on their rights and privileges	95	2.43	0.84	Rejected
14.	Provides information on the duties and obligations to the state	95	1.72	1.07	Rejected

15.	Encourages citizens to respect the values of different ethnicity	95	2.44	0.85	Rejected
16.	Teaches rich Nigerian cultures	95	2.23	0.87	Rejected
17.	Exposes individuals to skills and values in the society	95	2.71	0.73	Accepted
18.	Leads to proper understanding of key government institutions	95	2.90	0.48	Accepted
19.	Exposes the role of state to the citizens	95	1.83	0.97	Rejected
20.	Encourages peaceful coexistence among Nigerians	95	2.51	1.07	Accepted
21.	Gives a sense of self belonging	95	2.20	0.75	Rejected
22.	Encourages self-reliance	95	2.22	1.05	Rejected
23.	Promotes active citizenship	95	2.41	0.91	Rejected

Data analysis on Table 1 revealed that teachers accepted that Citizenship Education plays the role of fostering commitment to the fundamental values and principles that bind Nigerians together; promoting informed discussion on public issues among citizens; encouraging patriotism; helping in moulding responsible citizens; encouraging the citizens to influence the public policy-making process; giving insight on the workings of a constitutional government; leading to proper understanding of key government institutions; exposing individuals to skills and values in the society, and; encouraging peaceful coexistence among Nigerians, and as such promotes nation building. While, the 14 items with mean score below the benchmark of 2.50, marked 'Rejected' were not considered as the roles of Citizenship Education in nation building. Furthermore, the closeness of the standard deviation scores on the roles of Citizenship Education in nation building indicated less variability of the scores from the mean. This finding indicates low perceptions of senior secondary school teachers on the role of citizenship education in nation building.

Research question 2: What are the perceptions of senior secondary school parents on the role of citizenship education in nation building?

Table 2: Parents perceptions of the role of citizenship education in nation building

S/N	Roles of Citizenship Education	N	Mean	SD	Decision
Citizenship education					
1.	Helps one to understand some basic laws of the state	76	1.92	0.45	Rejected
2.	Provides information on the duties and obligations to the state	76	2.80	0.72	Accepted
3.	Fosters commitment to the fundamental values and principles that bind Nigerians together	76	2.53	0.94	Accepted
4.	Fosters cooperation between citizens and state	76	1.72	0.87	Rejected
5.	Promotes informed discussion on public issues among citizens	76	2.12	0.79	Rejected
6.	Encourages patriotism	76	2.04	0.59	Rejected
7.	Motivates citizens to perform civic duties	76	1.93	0.78	Rejected
8.	Helps in moulding responsible citizens	76	2.23	0.92	Rejected
9.	Encourages the citizens to influence the public policy-making process	76	2.02	0.85	Rejected
10.	Gives insight on the workings of a constitutional government	76	1.91	0.65	Rejected
11.	Exposes the rights and responsibilities of citizens	76	2.24	0.69	Rejected
12.	Promotes informed participation in civic activities	76	1.93	0.67	Rejected
13.	Educates citizens on their rights and privileges	76	1.92	0.68	Rejected
14.	Provides information on the duties and obligations to the state	76	1.80	0.65	Rejected
15.	Encourages citizens to respect the values of different ethnicity	76	1.92	0.62	Rejected
16.	Teaches rich Nigerian cultures.	76	1.91	0.80	Rejected
17.	Exposes individuals to skills and values in the society	76	2.01	0.82	Rejected
18.	Leads to proper understanding of key government institutions	76	1.83	0.59	Rejected
19.	Exposes the role of state to the citizens	76	2.11	0.58	Rejected
20.	Encourages peaceful coexistence among Nigerians	76	1.70	0.68	Rejected
21.	Gives a sense of self belonging	76	1.93	0.63	Rejected
22.	Encourages self-reliance	76	2.03	0.89	Rejected
23.	Promotes active citizenship	76	1.93	0.66	Rejected

The data in Table 2 revealed that parents accepted that Citizenship Education provides information on the duties and obligations of citizens to the state and; fosters commitment to the fundamental values and principles that bind Nigerians together. They rejected the remaining 21 items marked ‘Rejected’ with criterion mean scores of less than 2.50, as the roles of Citizenship Education in Nigerian nation building. Hence, the reason for the closeness and less variability of the standard deviation scores on the roles of Citizenship Education in nation building from the mean. The rejected

items with mean score of less than 2.50 further indicated that parents are oblivious of some roles of Citizenship Education in nation building identified in the questionnaire.

Ho1: There is no significant difference between the perceptions of senior secondary school teachers and parents on the role of citizenship education in nation building

Table 3: t-test on the perceptions of teachers and parents on the role of citizenship education in nation building

Respondents	N	Mean	Df	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
Parents	76	2.0091	22	5.649	.000	Rejected
Teachers	95	2.4380				

The data on Table 3 showed t-test value of 5.649, with a probability value of .000 which is less than 0.05 level of significance. Since the significant value of 0.05 is greater than the sig. (2-tailed) value of .000, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is significant difference between teachers and parents perceptions of the role of Citizenship Education in nation building.

Discussion of the findings

The discussions of the findings were made in line with the research questions that guided the study. The teachers affirmed that Citizenship Education plays roles in nation building as it fosters the commitment to the fundamental values and principles that bind Nigerians together; promotes informed discussion on public issues among citizens; encourages patriotism; helps in moulding responsible citizens; encourages the citizens to influence the public policy-making process; provides citizens with insights on the workings of a constitutional government; gives proper understanding of key government institutions; exposes individual citizens to skills and values in the society; and encourages peaceful coexistence among Nigerians. This finding coincides with the assertion of Bowles and Gintis, in Michael and Lian (2003), that the development of Citizenship Education is a key force in stabilizing and legitimating the nineteenth-century nation-state and in securing of a sense of national identity through the provision of a universal education, inventing public ceremonies, and mass-producing public monuments. The National Curriculum Handbook for Secondary Teachers in England (Department for Education and Employment, 1999), describes

the importance of Citizenship Education as follows: Citizenship Education gives pupils the knowledge, skills and understanding to play an effective role the society at local, national, and international levels. It helps them to become informed, thoughtful and responsible citizens who are aware of their duties and rights. It also teaches them about the economy, democratic institutions and values and; equally encourages respect for different national, religion and ethnic identities; and the ability to reflect on national issues.

Parents accepted that Citizenship Education provides the citizens with the information on the duties and obligations of citizens to the state and; as well fosters commitment to the fundamental values and principles that bind Nigerians together. Obiadi in Beston (2018), expressed that Citizenship Education helps individuals to make incisive decisions and to take responsibility for their own lives and community and as well teaches individuals on the importance of patriotism in ensuring the realization of unity, progress and stability. However, majority of the roles of Citizenship Education listed on the questionnaire were not acknowledged by teachers and parents, which suggest that teachers and parents are ignorant of some of the important roles of Citizenship Education in nation building.

The t-test results of teachers and parents perception of the role of Citizenship Education in nation building found a significant difference between teachers and parents perceptions of the role of Citizenship Education in nation building. The reasons for the such difference could be attributed to parents lack of knowledge on the roles of Citizenship Education in nation building.

Conclusion

Citizenship Education plays important roles in nation building through fostering commitment to the fundamental values and principles that bind Nigerians together; promoting informed discussion on public issues among citizens; encouraging patriotism; helping in moulding responsible citizens; encouraging the citizens to influence the public policy-making process; giving insight on the workings of a constitutional government; leading to proper understanding of key government institutions; exposing individuals to skills and values in the society; and, encouraging peaceful coexistence among Nigerians. The t-test results of teachers' and parents' perception on the role of Citizenship Education in nation building found a significant

difference between teachers and parents perceptions of the role of Citizenship Education in nation building.

Counselling implications

Counselling is a specialized form of intervention given by a counsellor to assist individuals to explore, understand and overcome issues in their lives which may be causing them difficulty, distress and/or confusion. Counselling involves helping an individual to become fully aware of and critically respond to their environment. Counselling for Citizenship Education, therefore, is a specialized service meant to develop, inspire and motivate the citizens to participate in public life, assume roles, understand their rights and perform duties, usually related to citizenship in a democratic system. Citizenship Education in the context of this study entails educating Nigerian citizens to become enlightened and to participate in decision making processes concerning the democratic development of the Nigerian society. This therapeutic education intervention should take place within and outside the four walls of the educational institutions.

In view of this, the findings of this study have several counselling implications for the citizens (students, teachers and parents), necessary for effective Citizenship Education in Nigeria. Taking into cognizance that the senior secondary school teachers and parents have rejected most of the items of the questionnaire, this implies that most of the expected roles of citizenship education are not recognized by the citizens. This calls for the need to involve the service of professional counsellors to further expose the citizens to the roles of Citizenship Education in nation building. Thus, counselling for Citizenship Education should centre on behavioural modifications that encourage issues of national consciousness, citizenship, democracy, human rights, values, and national development. It is therefore, essential that counsellors have the knowledge of the objectives and curriculum of Citizenship Education. In addition, the school counsellors should have ability to assess why Citizenship Education is important in advancing the Nigerian democracy. Counselling for citizenship education can be conducted within the spheres of educational, vocational and psycho-social guidance.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were suggested based on the findings:

1. Balanced awareness should be availed to the public to further communicate the roles of Citizenship Education to the project of nation building.
2. Counselling options ought to be adopted as remedial or re-education programme for promoting Citizenship Education.
3. Government at every level should encourage and sponsor adult education centres across the country to further enlighten parents on important roles of Citizenship Education in nation building.

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