

ASSESSMENT OF CIVIC EDUCATION CURRICULUM AND INCULCATION OF NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN KANO STATE

BY

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Abstract

National consciousness is an indispensable tool meant to create awareness and build well informed citizens. It assists in building a virile, strong and united nation. Mostly, national consciousness promotes national unity, patriotism, popular participation, sustainable development, peace, respect for diversity and national integration in a multi ethnic nation like Nigeria. More so, most of the variables mentioned are acquired through the learning of Civic Education. This study is born out of motivation to find out whether the Nigerian senior secondary school civic curriculum addresses the significant topics identified as variables of national consciousness and as such a research question was raised in this regard. The study, therefore, aimed at examining the content of the Nigeria national value syllabus, a curriculum document that contains five school subjects among which civic education is found, to ascertain whether it inculcates national consciousness or otherwise. 250 SSS3 students in all the selected secondary schools in Kano were used to satisfy the quantitative requirements of the study. Content analysis was explored in examining the civic syllabus for qualitative requirements as well. Both quantitative and qualitative data established that the civic curriculum inculcates national consciousness. However, it was revealed from the content analysis that there is no single topic on history of Nigeria and leadership. Therefore, recommendation was that, any review of the civic curriculum should have enough topics related to the history of Nigeria and its leadership. This would further assist in knowledge about the nation and deepen the understanding of national issues in the learners.

Keywords: *Civic education, Curriculum and National consciousness*

Introduction

Civic Education is essential for every student and the general public for various reasons, among which are: It improves people's capacity to be conscious of their rights, roles and duties as citizens and that they respect that of others. More so, it creates awareness among citizens on the duties of the government to them, and in return their obligations as citizens to the government. The subject instills good leadership qualities in students and in the process, developing future known in terms of equity, justice, democracy, tolerance, respect for constituted authority, respect for individual opinion, respect for the rule of law, fundamental human rights, among others. Above all, it brings about positive and harmonious relationship that leads to peaceful co-existence in the country. Furthermore, Civic Education remains a tool for inculcating national consciousness in citizenry in Nigeria and Africa. The effort to make Civic Education a compulsory subject in secondary school commenced in 1999 when the then president Olusegun Obasanjo approved its teaching in primary and secondary schools across the country. Also, in November and December, 2006, when the Presidential Forum on Education directed the National Technical Committee on Civic Education (NTCCE) to work in synergy with the National Orientation Agency (NOA) to coordinate the development and implementation of Civic Education at the Senior Secondary School. This decision borne out of the presidential mission for the development and transformation of Nigerian youths into effective and responsible citizens who are able to productively contribute to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Nigeria Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC, 2007).

With the above expectation from the teaching and learning of Civic education, it is expected that level of national consciousness should be at appreciable level, but it seems reverse is the case considering the unpatriotic behaviors and attitude of citizens in the country. It has gone bad that citizens are even taking arms against the state while youths are now expert in fraud business giving the country a bad image in the comity of nation. Funso & Adedutan (2021) concluded that curriculum planners need to enrich Civic Education with more values-oriented topics explicitly to balance up with the implicit values by the teacher's pedagogy. In support of the Funsho's view, civic education should be more focused in teaching of values that will ensure positive behaviors

on the part of citizenry. The act of negative behaviors in the country left one wonder if our educational system still impacts positive values. In the observation and an unorganized interview conducted by researcher where the students' opinions were sought on what will be their action if they found huge amount of money that belongs to somebody. It is surprising that majority of the students maintained that they would not return the money to the owner and some of them even see such money as a gift from God. This calls for inquiry into civic curriculum and other related curriculum on their capacity to instill moral values apart from national consciousness. The realities in the neighborhood reveal many shortcomings in the living styles of younger ones makes anyone worrisome, whether civic education is achieving the stated civic ideal in national values set for the country. However, individual does not automatically become responsible and disciplined without proper orientation and education into citizenship (Levision, 2014).

It is on the premise of the above information that, the researcher embarked on a scholarly article on the role civic education plays in inculcation of national consciousness which turns out to build informed and patriotic citizens. It is obvious that with the introduction and implementation of civic education from 2009, much research have not been done in Nigeria to unravel the level of mission accomplishment, it is as a result of this that this paper inquires into the civic education curriculum and its capacity in inculcation of national consciousness.

Meaning of Civic Education

Civic Education for senior secondary education is a core compulsory school subject that cut across the element of Government, Social studies, History and emerging issues which broaden the knowledge geared towards operational form to enable the nation achieve four key goals of National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS). The word "civic" is a Greek word which implies citizens of a city or an area. This then means that civic education is as a result of careful decision of the government to lead its citizens to acquire some kind of knowledge, facts, skills, abilities, values, virtues, attitudes and behavior that are acceptable in the society and useful in building a balanced and great nation.

Civic Education is a type of educational and learning process that is pertinent to expose and create awareness in students at all levels of education (formal or informal), to the right values, attitudes and behaviour that are acceptable in the society where they live in. It is a kind of teaching and learning process that individuals and groups in the community must learn in order to relate well with other people and contribute their quota in development of the nation. Ajibola et al (2014) maintained that there is a compelling relationship between civic education and sustainable development. That is why civic education is identified as a potent force in the pursuit of developmental challenges. Ityanzughul et al (2014) defined Civic Education as the process of learning which focuses on learning and accommodating customs and traditions of other people apart from theirs. Going by this definition, civic education is seen as a subject that fosters national unity and integration needed in a heterogeneous nation like Nigeria. Nigeria is a country with more than 250 ethnic groups, and the different ethnic groups have to live in harmony to achieve national development. Civic Education becomes imperative considering the tribal agitation in Nigeria by Independent People of Biafra (IPOB) and Yoruba nation spearheaded by Kanu and Sunday Igboho respectively. The agitations simply show that there are issues that have to be given attention in order to achieve peaceful co-existence.

More so, Civic Education by definition; is that form of education which is primarily designed and organized in content and function so as to produce good and useful people who know what events happen within the country and beyond. An informed citizen requires civic education knowledge to keep him updated and by the update of the civic values, individual becomes a responsible and useful member of the nation. Ukegbu et al (2014) maintained that the main aim of civic education is to develop and change young people into effective, responsible, good and well- informed people who are active and productive in the society. He further reiterated that the essence of civic education is to make one a good citizen of one's country. Aliyu (2021) concluded that civic education is geared towards helping Nigeria as a state to live in unity and harmony as one indivisible, indissoluble, democratic and sovereign nation founded on the principle of justice freedom and equality.

In view of the above, it could be concluded that civic education as a subject taught in school aims at inculcating moral values, skills and attitudes in an individual with the desire or consciousness to use their abilities to solve

developmental challenges facing the nation. Furthermore, it is a study that instills in the individual's mind, the consciousness and love which foster nation building through honesty, patriotic zeal, unity of purpose, economic freedom and political participation.

Civic Education as Core Compulsory Subject

Civic education is an important tool meant to instill national consciousness in our national life today that it has formed the core of our national character moulding and essence of education. It remains so due to the following reasons according to Ken (2014):

1. It is the means through which citizens are liberated from ignorance and equipped with needed skills, political, economic, social and administrative consciousness which is necessary to facilitate and maintain national consciousness.
2. It develops in the citizen good values, patriotism and provokes in them the resolve to become good citizens.
3. It enlightens, educates and helps in individual intellectual development.
4. Civic education is essential for the existence and sustenance of democracy since it teaches the citizens the basic tenets of democratic process, principles, and practices and fosters in them the zeal to participate in the political process.
5. It encourages the youth to be patriotic and nationalistic in words and in deeds.
6. It emphasizes the need to be law-abiding and keep a peaceful nation.
7. With the knowledge of civic education, governance is made much easier.
8. It enables the citizens to know what duties and obligations they owe to the state and what state owes the citizens.
9. With civic education, effective and proactive leaders are produced. It is a training platform for good and patriotic future leaders in many sphere of human endeavor.

In support of the above, Enu and Esu (2011) listed the core values Nigeria wants inculcated in young students as shown in civic education and the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS) goal, one of the key basis on which the curriculum was reviewed. These core values are as follow: discipline, honesty, accountability, respect for constituted authority, cooperation, popular participation and moral courage. With the core values intended to instill by civic education, it is believed that civic education curriculum is geared towards building an informed citizen who understands the country and ready to give all it takes to support the nation. More so, discipline in our national life could be taken seriously using civic education to instill such at the secondary school level. It is therefore important to have capable hands in implementation of the civic education curriculum in order to ensure that the stated objectives earlier set are achievable without giving room for failure.

National Consciousness

National consciousness means the creation of awareness among citizens to know that they are citizens of Nigeria and be conscious of the happenings in the country. National consciousness binds people together and urges them to identify with the nation in all its struggles. To develop national consciousness, the civic curriculum is meant to instill knowledge about the country, values, patriotism, respect for the country, and traditions of the country. While promoting national unity, patriotism and national pride, the civic curriculum also encourages respect for, and acceptance of those belonging to other cultures and ethnicities all in the name of national integration.

National consciousness is the awareness that one belongs to an ethnic or political group with the aim of sustaining the norms and interest, giving substantial economic support to the nation, defence against external threat and internal division, obedience to constituted authority as well as initiating and espousing ideas that can foster meaningful transformation, growth and development (Oguzie N, 2014). In line with Oguzie view, consciousness on the part of citizen remains an essential value that promotes nation building and as such making people to render selfless service for the development of the nation. With the inculcation of national consciousness, citizens are aware of their rights and that of others and protect the rights for the well-being of the entire people in the society. According to Udoye et al (2014) the interest of the nation comes before individual preferences. By this opinion, different tribes need to see themselves as Nigerian before giving consideration to ethnic affiliation, by doing so, there will be love of the country at heart of citizen and that translate to national

unity that is highly needed in a multi-ethnic nation like Nigeria.

Gbenga (2017) defined national consciousness as the aspiration and commitment of one's self towards the state's affairs or assignment and advocacy for unity. This has to do with putting one's country interest before one's personal ethnic or tribal interests. National consciousness plays an important role in socio-economic and political developments in Nigeria. Mostly, national consciousness promotes national unity, sustainable development, peace, respect for diversity, patriotism, and others. Furthermore, the way to promote the national consciousness is by giving a deserving priority to the teaching and learning of Civic Education, a major educational tool for building useful and informed citizens.

However, national consciousness is the strong feeling of love, commitment, loyalty and affection that enables a citizen to work for the growth, development and progress of his nation. It is the awareness that enables the individual to pursue the interest of the nation above personal, ethnic, religious or tribal interest. It is the affection that compels an individual to advocate for the total freedom and unity of his nation. Olumayowa (2018) opined that, national consciousness which has not only resonated within the consciousness of the nation's diverse peoples, but has also inspired them to think of themselves as members of the same community. It is pitiable that people put ethnic interest above national interest and this act remains big threat to Nigeria's unity and existence. Abdullahi et al (2021), further reiterated that to keep country at crossroads in terms of development and achieving true national program and policies, we need undiluted national consciousness in forms of cultural integration, gender equality and appropriate sports activities to enhance effective management of education in order to remain a united, reliable, respected and dependable nation.

In support of the above views, Gbenga (2017) view that various factors that enhances promotion of national consciousness like: Inter-ethnic marriage, hospitality, National Youth Service Corps, public holidays, National anthem and pledge have greater role to play in building a strong and united nation couple with citizens who are aware of the emerging issues in their nation. Above all, civic education has significant role to play in this regard as the subject remains focused on building an informed citizens who are aware of the national issues and have at heart, the love of the country.

Nigeria Needs for Civic Education

"The teaching and learning of Civic Education in Nigeria's Primary and Secondary Schools has become fundamental especially in the face of dwindling levels of national consciousness, social harmony and patriotic zeal. As far back as the 1980s, it became painfully evident that the lack of Civic Education and patriotic orientation had led to disorientation in schools and the larger society. Conditions such as these necessarily need the intervention of Civic Education for the achievement of national development. Nigeria also needs Civic Education to correct her societal ills. Events of the recent past have shown that Nigeria is on the brink of losing its much-cherished sense of nationhood, cultural identity and indeed, hospitable spirit. The prevalent trend of corruption, indiscipline, disrespect for both elders and the rule of law, non-committal to duty are some of the manifestations of negative values in the Nigerian Society. These call for urgent value reorientation because of their far-reaching impact on national development. Furthermore, the need for Civic Education in Nigeria is fundamental because it teaches the right attitudes. Students and pupils are meant to understand what right attitudes and wrong attitudes are. For instance, Civic education discourages bad attitudes such as, laziness, truancy, keeping bad company, drug abuse, bribery, and so forth. While should it encourages, hard work, truth, integrity, loyalty, sense of responsibility and above all love for one's country. Citizens are taught to do away with bad behaviours such as: indecent dressing, cheating in examination, stealing, bullying others, and the likes" (Oyelami, Abayomi, and Olatunde, 2011). In the same vein, and more importantly, Civic Education has the objective of exposing students and general public to various ways of achieving community and national development, such as right values, religious tolerance, right and duties of citizens, among other things. All these will enhance the capacity of an individual to contribute to community, national and global development.

Methodology

The method used for this study is a combination of quantitative and qualitative studies. A questionnaire was developed to collect quantitative data from SS3 students in ten senior secondary schools in Kano Metropolis in the Northern Region of Nigeria. The instruments were validated by three higher education experts, one in

Education Administration, Curriculum studies, and measurement and evaluation respectively, and two secondary school civic teachers with 10-years post teaching experience. The instrument was then trial tested on 40 students respectively in a school located outside Kano metropolis. And the reliability was measured using Cronbach Alpha which yielded an alpha result of .80 and .83 respectively indicating high level of internal consistency of each construct’s items and thus, an acceptable level of internal reliability (Field, 2013)

The choice of SS 3 students was as a result of the fact that these were students who had been exposed to all the content of the civic syllabus and were preparing to write their final examinations. Therefore, they were in a better position to provide appropriate evaluative responses. Secondly, a qualitative interpretive inquiry that uses content analysis as a tool to examine documents was also employed in the examination of the civic syllabus. Qualitative content analysis, as Bryman (2004, p. 542) explains, is an “approach that emphasizes the role of the investigator in the construction of the meaning of texts.” When used to analyse documents, it allows the researcher(s) to construct categories or themes out of the data, which can then be interpreted in the light of the research objective. In this regard, the Nigeria senior secondary school 2009 civic syllabus was considered critical and adequate for the analysis of national consciousness in the curriculum. Topics in the civic syllabus that had elements of national consciousness were identified. The topics were understandably those that focused on national issues. Furthermore, the topics were critically studied to see how related were they to the national issues. Separated into three categories: (i) explicit, (ii) implicit (both of which included topics that advanced national consciousness); and (iii) a category of those that were not related to national consciousness. Explicit topics are topics that specifically provide national conscious elements while implicit topics do not, on face value, contain national conscious elements. By separating topics into these three categories, it was possible to unearth those discourses that related, explicitly or implicitly, to national consciousness. The collection of quantitative data allowed frequencies and percentages to be determined, which gave direction to the results.

Results and Discussion

The quantitative result of the study is presented in Table 1. The result emanated from the responses provided by the SS3 civic education students. The qualitative data is also presented thereafter.

Table 1: Students’ views on how the Nigeria civic education syllabus inculcates national consciousness

S/NO	Statement	Agree N (%)	Disagree N (%)
1	The civic education as a subject substantially reflects issues on National identity	240(88.8)	10(11.2)
2	Civic education inculcates positive values	245(98)	5(2)
3	Civic education enhances national consciousness	248(99.2)	2(0.8)
4	Civic education promotes national integration	230(92)	20(8)
5	Civic education assist in building a strong and united nation	200(80)	50(20)
6	Civic education enhances understanding of Nigeria as a country	245(98)	5(2)
7	Civic education maintains national integrity	247(98.8)	3(1.2)
8	Civic instruction encourages community services	213(85.2)	37 (14.8)
9	Civic education teaching awakens one’s spirit to serve the nation	249(99.6)	1(0.4)
10	Civic instruction promotes inter-ethnic marriage as a means for national integration	240(96)	10(4)
11	Civic education exposes students to emerging issues in the nation	227(90.8)	33(9.2)

With the exception of item 5 and 8 the majority of the respondents agreed that the civic curriculum inculcate national consciousness. Be that as it may, it could be concluded from the data above that learners were exposed to national consciousness issues in the civic classroom. From the respondents’ responses, the study found that most of the topical issues in civic curriculum are capable of building an informed citizen who is ready to serve their nation. Indeed, the inclusion of national consciousness related topics in the civic curriculum is to inform students of the existence of nationhood and an attempt to build a patriotic individual. The Civic Education curriculum according to Yahya (2013) addresses young Nigerians in the formative educational years. The contents address issues that are important to developing young Nigerian people into responsible citizens. In other words, the curriculum enables our young people imbibe the values, norms, knowledge, actions and activities for sustaining development.

Specifically, the finding has revealed that topics dealing with national consciousness inculcate into students the appropriate national values that enable students to participate effectively in nation building and contribute to the community well-being. In conclusion, the viewpoints of the respondents in item 6, relating to knowledge about Nigeria clearly shows the impact of civic education as a school subject in inculcation of national consciousness among students in Kano metropolis. This is in line with the view of Aliyu. M. et al, (2021) who opined that peace and national unity will be achieved when citizens understand societal problems and have the skills to resolve conflicts constructively and live by national standards for justice and equality and appreciate peoples’ diversity in a heterogeneous Nigeria.

Results

Research Question 1: To what extent is Nigerian Civic Education Curriculum enhances national consciousness?

Table 2: Themes in Nigerian Civic Education Curriculum (NCEC)

SS1	SS2	SS3
Our Values	Citizenship Education	Characteristics of Human Right
Emerging Issues	Democracy and National development	Public Service in a Democracy
Citizenship		Civil Society
Representative Democracy	Dangers of political apathy	Constitutional Democracy
Pillars of Democracy	Achieving popular participation in politics	Human Trafficking
Human Rights	Limitations of Human Rights	
Cultism	Drugs and Drug Abuse	
Law and Orderliness	Responsible Parenthood	
	Traffic Regulations	
	Relationship	
	Respect for constituted authority	
	Capitalist Democracy	

Source: NERDC (2009)

Table 2 showed that the entire themes were explicitly stated on national consciousness out of the twenty-five (25) themes listed in the NCEC by NERDC (2009) above for SS1-SS3. This is 100% of the entire curriculum, thus the NCEC had done excellently well in incorporating themes that instill the spirit of awareness about Nigeria into Civics Education curriculum. The curriculum focused on main topics capable of making the students aware of the expected values that give the country good image in the comity of nations. More so, emerging issues bedeviling the nation are explicitly covered by the curriculum and this will further enhance students to be aware of the problems in the country and keep themselves informed as other issues are unfold. However, the syllabus failed to have a single topic talking about history of Nigeria as a country and leadership as well, bearing in mind that civic education is the only subject that affords the science and commercial students the opportunity of awareness of happenings in the nation. From the table 2 above, the entire themes really focused on national issues and it could therefore be said that civic education enhances national consciousness. This is in line with the thought of Ken. M (2014) who maintained that civic education is a means through which citizens are liberated from ignorance and equipped with needed skills, political, economic, social and administrative consciousness which is necessary to facilitate and maintain national consciousness.

Conclusion

The civic curriculum educates students with relevant knowledge, skills and values on national consciousness and national unity. This is reflected in the responses of the civic students who participated in the study. An assessment of the curriculum reveals that the entire topics directly address national consciousness issues. The topics in the curriculum have link with national consciousness one way or the other. With the findings from the content analysis, the efforts of the civic curriculum towards inculcating national consciousness as evidenced in the discussion seem clear. Therefore, it is evident that the civic education curriculum has the capacity to inculcate national consciousness among the students in Kano state. The doubt about the contribution of senior school civic curriculum to national consciousness ought to be clear considering the analysis of this study. It is high time to rescue civic education from the perception that it is primarily duplication of social studies, but a subject that inculcates national consciousness through the fostering of a sense of national identity, awareness, unity and patriotism. It is therefore concluded that; the civic education curriculum inculcates national

consciousness among students of secondary school in Kano state despite the exclusion of history of the country and her leadership.

Recommendations

1. Civic curriculum should incorporate a significant number of discussions relating to current affairs specifically relating to Nigeria history. This would enhance and deepen the national consciousness in the learners.
2. There should be timely review of civic curriculum to accommodate current issues in Nigeria.
3. The civic curriculum should be maintained as a tool to solve many unpatriotic problems in the country, and as such, priority should be given to its implementation by the qualified teachers.
4. Regular assessment of the civic curriculum contents should be done to keep the curriculum up to date.

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