

Citizenship Socialization Process and National Integration: Appraisal of Civics and General Studies Courses in Nigerian Schools

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Abstract

Efforts at nation-building in Nigeria are hindered by various social problems linked to the low level of national integration among its religiously, regionally and ethnically diverse population. This paper examined citizenship socialization courses and subjects at the three (3) levels of education (Basic, Secondary and Tertiary) in Nigeria that are designed to promote national integration. The courses and subjects include Citizenship Education, Civic Education and General Studies (Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution and Nigerian Peoples and Culture). Similarly, key concepts such as socialization, citizenship socialization courses and national integration are conceptualized. The Functionalists sociological perspective was adopted as a theoretical framework to establish the link between citizenship socialization courses and subjects and promotion of national integration. However, despite the link or potential of citizenship education in raising the level of national integration, the paper identified some constraints on the extent to which citizenship socialization courses and subjects promote the desired national integration among the people of Nigeria. These challenges include the current assessment methods in schools, which focus on testing cognitive rather than affective abilities, the problem of inadequate funding of education in general, large size lecture halls and other poor teaching and learning conditions and Low credit units or time on the time table on specific curriculum subjects and courses meant citizenship socialization for national integration. To address these challenges, the paper suggests diversifying assessment and evaluation methods, among other strategies, to improve the teaching of citizenship socialization courses and promote national integration in Nigeria.

Keywords: citizenship socialization, general studies, socialization, national integration

Nigeria is a heterogeneous society with many forms of diversities. It is multi-ethnic country because according to the last national population census conducted in 2006 cited in Mahuta and Ladan (2016), there are over 250 ethnic groups in Nigeria. The Hausa/Fulani, the Yorubas and Igbos are the dominant

because they constitute nearly 60% of the population. Other ethnic groups such as Dakarkari, Nupe, Ebira, Igala, Gwari, Kanuri, TIV, Idoma, Ijaws, Anaungs, Urhobos, Birom, Afrizara, Alago, Tarok, Eggan, Katab, Bassa, Shuwa-Arab, Mumuye, Chamba, Bajuu, Isoko, Itsekiri, Iyowo, Ibibios, Efiks, Ogonis and numerals others are the minority ethnic groups. Other diversities are in the areas of language, religion and cultural practice.

Religiously, Islamic faith predominantly exists in the north-western and north-eastern regions of the country, encompassing states such as Sokoto, Zamfara, Borno, Yobe, Katsina, Kano, Kebbi, Jigawa, Bauchi, Taraba, Gombe, and Adamawa. On the other hand, Christianity is more prominent in the south-eastern and south-southern geographical zones, including states like Imo, Enugu, Anambra, Abia, Ebonyi, Delta, Edo, Bayelsa, Rivers, Cross River, and Akwa Ibom. The south-western and north-central zones, which include Lagos, Oyo, Ogun, Ondo, Ekiti, Osun, Kaduna, Niger, Plateau, Nasarawa, Benue, Kogi states, and the Federal Capital Territory, have a relatively balanced number of Muslims and Christians. There are also pockets of adherent of Traditional religion in all parts of the country (Mahuta & Ladan 2016)

The nation's highly diversified multi-ethnic, religious and multi-linguistic dimensions however often have negative impact on national integration. Although various measures and strategies were adopted at different points of time in pursuit of national integration, the rate of conflict and social violence arising from these diversities remain at the increase. Haliru (2012) maintained that Nigeria failed to resolve its ethno-religious and political violence which contributed to the weakening of democratic governance and national integration. Similarly, insurgency, hate speeches, cattle rustling, consistence farmers-herdsmen clashes, settler-non settler conflict can all be linked to low level of integration (Okam & Danladi, 2011).

In view of this, different measures are adopted in Nigeria in an attempt to use education or school to inculcate patriotism and sense of unity in diversity as a basis for peace and national integration. Part of these efforts, was the curriculum review at different levels of education in Nigeria (Basic, Secondary and Tertiary) where citizenship socialization courses and subjects were reviewed. Similarly, the reviewed secondary schools education curriculum developed in 2011 as contained in the National Policy on Education revised 2013 made provision for Civic Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). At tertiary levels, courses meant for citizenship instruction such as Nigerian Peoples and Culture, Peace studies and Conflict Resolution, Citizenship Education were restructured and reinvigorated in line with the philosophy of the National Policy on Education geared towards better human relationship, self-reliance, effective citizenship, national consciousness, and national integration (National Universities Commission [NUC], 2022).

The aim of citizenship socialization process at tertiary level is to consolidate on the impact made on learners by other citizenship socialization subjects taught at Basic and Secondary levels to bring about change in the

conduct and disposition of youths in matters related to national integration as a basis to produce good and active citizens, well-informed about their rights, working of government, patriotic, responsible, disciplined and conscientious, morally sound with love for his/her state. As studies revealed, over the years, the academic performance of learners in these citizenship socialization courses have been good and encouraging but negative attitudes and values which these courses are designed to counter seems to be at the increase even among university graduates (Abdullahi & Moses-Ojo, 2016). Thus, the paper seeks to examine what are the constraints on the extent to which citizenship socialization courses and subjects promote national integration in Nigeria and also what are the strategies to overcome the challenges.

Conceptual Clarification

Some key concepts namely, socialization, citizenship socialization and national integration are clarified.

Socialization

Socialization is simply a process whereby a person's behaviour is modified to conform to expectations held by members of the social group to which one belongs. According to Victor (2015) socialization is a process of developing a self. This means that through socialization, an individual develops a sense of self awareness and self-identity. In similar way, Bello (2013) defines socialization as a method of social control which involves teaching or training people to act or behave in an acceptable way, according to the societal norms. Through socialization process therefore, individuals become functional members of a particular group and take on the values, behaviour and beliefs of the group's other members. From the foregoing, Socialization can simply be viewed as the process by which an individual internalizes the norms and values of the society.

Citizenship Socialization

The concept of citizenship socialization as coined in this paper refers to those courses offer in Nigerian schools that are designed in objectives and content in order to expose students to their political and social environment, their civic rights and duties, Nigeria's cultural diversity as well as enabling them internalize national values to be good and active citizens. citizenship socialization are also courses meant to consciously inculcate certain values, habits, skills and attitudes which the society considers desirable and essential for its survival as a unit and for its development. Therefore, citizenship socialization courses are subjects at various levels of education in Nigeria that contains the curriculum of citizenship education through which citizenship training is facilitated. The courses or subjects are titled differently across the levels and forms of education in Nigerian schools namely Basic, Secondary, Tertiary levels of education as well as non-formal education; as depicted in Figure 1. They include Civic Education at basic and secondary schools, Citizenship Education at Colleges of Education and Polytechnics as well as

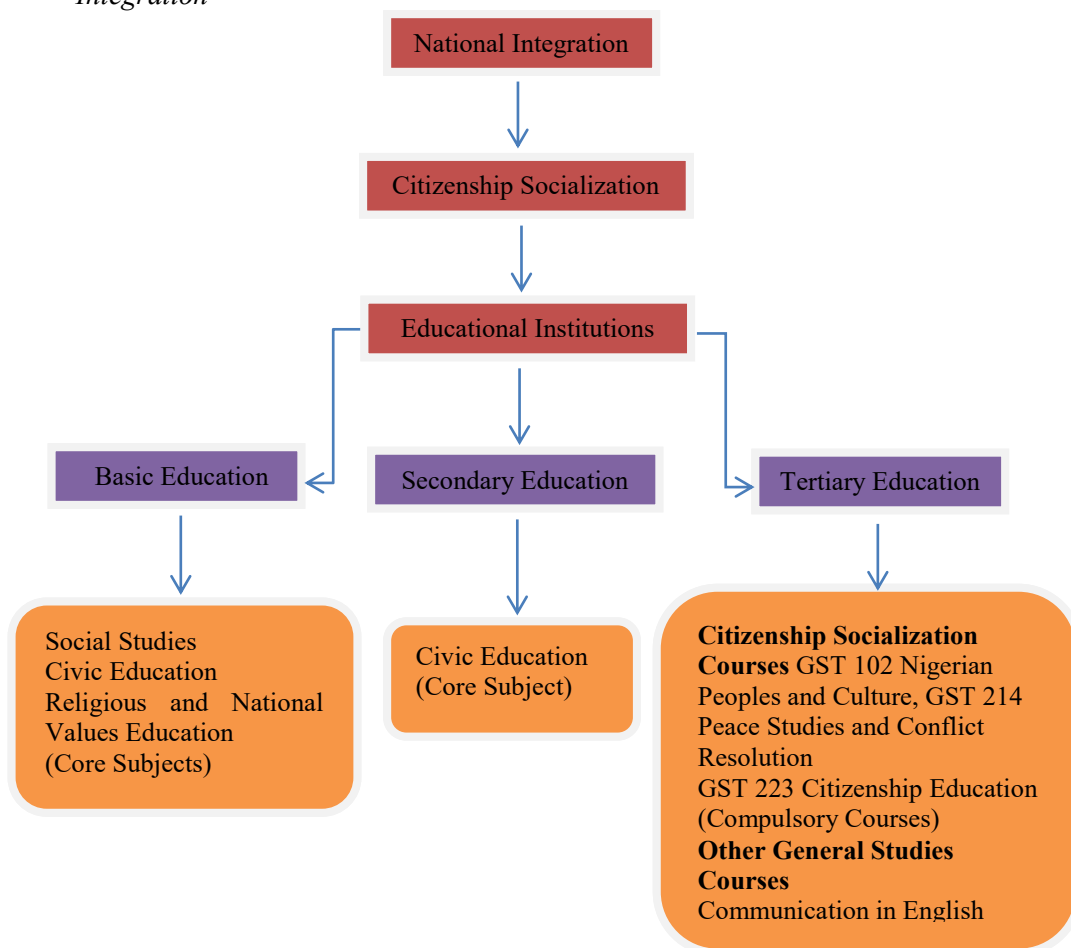
Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution and Nigerian Peoples and Culture at university. (National Commission for Colleges of Education NCCE, 2018; National Universities Commission, NUC 2022). However, at the university level the two courses under General studies programme identified as citizenship socialization courses for national integration are namely: Peace studies and Conflict Resolution and Nigerian Peoples and Culture which are compulsory courses for all undergraduate students.

National Integration

National integration is the feeling of oneness, common identity amongst citizens of the country. Even though there exist many divisive factors such as regions, languages, and tribes, and so on, there is sense of unity in diversity and

Figure 1

The Relationship Between the key Concepts in Socialization and National Integration



Source: FGN (2013) and NUC (2022)

oneness among the citizen. National integration also means putting national interest ahead of regional, ethnic, or any interest. Within and among the groups that make up a community, integration embodies a state of fusion or harmonious interaction and interrelation of the values and functions of persons and groups to make them an identifiable single entity with common attributes, goals, purposes and objectives. Integration can be fostered through socialization process. It is however important to state here that there is no group or nation where there is a perfect state of integration. According to Okam and Danladi (2011), the degree of integration in general and within and among individuals and groups vary and are affected by historical, religious, economic, political factors, above all, the level of social awareness or consciousness and socialization processes.

Theoretical Framework

Functionalists' perspective provides basis for the paper. Among the proponents of the theory are Auguste Comte, Emile Durkheim and Talcott Parson among others (Haralambos & Holborn 2017). Functionalism is based on the notion that social events can best be explained in terms of the role they play or their contribution to the continuity of the society. The theory according to Ogunbameru (2010) focused on society as an entity in which all of the components (family, political, economic, and religious as well as education) work together cooperatively and cohesively for the betterment of the overall society. Thus, going along with the theory, education as a social institution contains sub-branches which are operationally referred to as citizenship socialization courses (Civic education, Social studies, Citizenship education, Peace studies and Conflict resolution among others) which are the set of values and norms for the society and its citizenry.

Nigeria is a heterogeneous society with a lot of differences and conflict is an intrinsic and inevitable part or process of social life and characteristics of human existence. Citizenship socialization courses are designed to instil norms and values which national integration demands for the peace and survival of the whole society. This is because Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) cited in Ballantine and Spade (2012) maintains that society can survive only if there exists among its members a sufficient degree of homogeneity. Education (citizenship socialization courses) perpetuates and reinforces this homogeneity by fixing in the child from the beginning the essential similarities which collective life demands.

Citizenship Socialization for National Integration Courses in Nigerian Education System

Nigerian Educational system according to the National policy on Education as cited in the Federal Republic of Nigeria document (2013) is organized into three levels which are namely: Basic, Secondary and Tertiary Levels of Education. In each of these levels, there are subjects or courses through which citizenship socialization for national integration is facilitated. The courses or subjects are titled differently across the levels of education in

Nigeria. They include Social studies, Civic Education and Religious and National Values Education (at Basic Education), Civic Education (Secondary Education). At tertiary level, General Studies courses are offered by all universities which are core and compulsory for all students irrespective of their departments and programmes. The Core Curriculum Minimum Academic Standard (CCMAS) as cited in NUC (2022) identified 6 courses as General Studies (GST) courses which are listed below as:

- i. Communication in English;
- ii. Nigerian Peoples and Culture;
- iii. Philosophy, Logic and Human Existence;
- iv. Entrepreneurship and Innovation;
- v. Venture Creation; and
- vi. Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution.

The content, aims and objectives for General studies courses differ. However, the content of Nigerian Peoples and Culture as well as Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution is more related to the promotion of national integration. For instance, the Nigerian Peoples and Culture, GST 102 as coded in Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto students' handbook revised (2022) is envisaged to among other things:

- i. Instil in students, the knowledge of the plurality of Nigerian culture
- ii. Help students understand and have sound a knowledge of the cultural settings range of variations found between and among different ethnic groups, diversity of human cultures, the similarities and dissimilarities among them, and their cherished history
- iii. Understanding the traditional Nigeria people and major cultural areas and
- iv. Enable students understand other ethnic groups outside his own and in so doing, ethnic tolerance, understanding and mutual interrelationships across ethnic boundaries would be enhanced among others.

On the other hand, Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution or GST 214 is aimed at among other things to open students up to Peace and Conflict Resolution as necessary recipes for national development and also to awakening in students' consciousness, desire for peace and the need for working towards peaceful co-existence

Focusing on the General studies in other Nigerian universities, Nweke and Nwoye (2016) found that for the University of Ilorin, some objectives are to aid students to grow and develop the knowledge of their social, cultural and physical milieu which automatically will equip them to operate actively in their society. It is to socialize the Nigerian students to cultivate acceptable behaviours, attitudes, patriotism, nationalism and value the status of the constitution as well as create the awareness in students about the roles and obligations of Government at all levels among others.

While for the University of Ibadan, among the aim as explained by

Nweke and Nwoye (2016), is to open students up to a course of liberal education by which they can grow and broaden their knowledge of their social, cultural and natural environments.

In view of the objectives and goals, the contents of the citizenship socialization though slightly differ among the universities however they are derived from the universities minimum academic standard designed by the NUC.

Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution

Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution is an attempt to respond to the problems of conflict and violence ranging from the global and national to the local and personal. It is taught at university level as one of the general studies courses coded different by different universities. The contents of Peace studies and conflict resolution as contained in the Core Curriculum Minimum Academic Standard cited in NUC (2022) aim to keep readers (students) informed about the concepts and terminologies that are central to and recurrent in peace and conflict resolution studies such as concepts like harmony, tranquillity, serenity, calm, quiet, stillness and silence. Other terms are injustice, unfairness, prejudice, discrimination, inequality, deprivation, denial, exclusion and segregation among others.

On the other hand, the contents also comprise issues related conflict and its resolution whereby concepts like conflict, crisis, confrontation, disagreement, accord, pact, agreement and settlement are contained in the course content. The course also covers issues such as root causes of conflicts and violence in Africa, Indigene/settler phenomenon, peace-building, management of conflict and security and role of international organizations in conflict resolution, e.g. ECOWAS, African Union, United Nations, etc. (NUC, 2022).

Nigerian Peoples and Culture

Nigerian Peoples and Culture is a one-semester 2-credit units course. It is made up course outlines which include: Nigerians perception of the world, culture areas of Nigeria and their characteristics, evolution of Nigeria as a political unit, concept of functional education, social justice, individual and national development, norms and values and moral obligations of citizens. The course was an attempt to enable young Nigerians particularly undergraduate students be aware and appreciate culture and traditions other than their own. The contents of the course therefore deal with the study of Nigerian history where attempt was made to trace the pre-colonial history and the culture areas of Nigeria and the evolution of the country as a political unit. The course is also concerned with teaching students how to analyse and understand people's cultures from historical, sociological and anthropological angles.

By the end of the semester, students who were taught these courses are expected not only to pass the examinations, but also imbibe the spirit of peace

and conflict resolution as a basis for peaceful co-existence in a diversify and heterogeneous population.

Social Studies and Civic Education are taught at Basic and Secondary levels. As observed by Azebanwan in Jekayinfa, et al (2016) Civic Education covers contents such as Unity in diversity, dealing with conflict, the security, sectional interests, young people and the law among others, inculcation of the civic values such as honesty, loyalty, dedication, fair treatment, patience, contentment, tolerance and so on. All these values that formed the contents of citizenship socialization courses at Basic and Secondary levels of education are vital and essential ingredients in sustaining peace and national integration.

The inclusion of citizenship socialization courses in the curriculum of Nigerian schools is therefore expected to bring about desired changes in students that can to promote positive attitudes such as love of fatherland, dedication to service, tolerance of other peoples' views and socialize the learners to cultivate desirable habits, values, attitudes, nationalism, and to appreciate the status of the constitution as the will of the people.

Year in year out learners continue to receive instructions on these citizenship socialization courses. In a study conducted by Abdullahi and Moses-Ojo (2016) which involved undergraduate students of Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi State, it found that academic performance of students in the citizenship socialization course (GST 222) was high with percentage passes ranging from 69% to 96%. Put in other words, in 2013/2014 academic session, which was investigated by Abdullahi and Moses-Ojo (2016), a total of 2,561 candidates were registered for Nigerian Peoples and Culture (GST 222). Out of that number, 2,370 candidates representing 93% passed the course while only 191 candidates representing 7% failed.

On the basis of the findings, academic performance of students in the GST 222 course is high and positive. However, not much can be said about demonstration of the positive attitudes that national integration demands by the citizens. As endorsed by Bray, Clarke and Stephens cited in Mahuta and Ladan (2016) in Nigeria, there is a substantial difference between teaching or learning a subject such as civics (citizenship socialization courses) for examination purposes and actually employing the principles in one's life outside the classroom. As such, even where the curriculum of citizenship socialization courses emphasizes hard work, honesty, national identity and other positive citizenry attitudes desired for development, these may not necessarily be the attitudes display by teachers and others taking part in citizenship socialization process.

Therefore, despite citizenship socialization courses been enshrined in the curriculum of education in Nigeria and the high academic performance recorded, level of national integration among citizens is still low. Evidence of low level of national integration in Nigeria is reflected in many ways. The issue of indigene/settler is one of them. Indeed, over the years, Nigeria has witnessed various communal clashes traceable to frictions in the indigene-settler

relationships. Indigene-settler feud has led to the destruction of several lives and property. Instances of such as noted by Olakunle et al. (2016) were the Tiv/Jukun crisis in Taraba state, Ife/Modakeke crisis in Osun state and indigene – Hausa/Fulani conflicts in Plateau state among others.

Another issue that can be considered as indication of the low level of national integration among Nigerians is voting along Religious and Ethnic Lines which was obvious in some previous general elections conducted in the country. As observed by Ademola cited in Ozohu-Suleiman, (2012) a critical examination of how the fourth republic political parties conducted their activities during the electoral process of 1999, elements of ethnicity and regionalism manifested. For instance, the All Peoples Party (APP) had its membership majorly drawn from Hausa/Fulani, while the Alliance for Democracy (AD) leaned towards the Yoruba while People Democratic Party (PDP) had a little bit of national spread. Similarly, during the transition of 2011 general elections, regionalism and ethnicity were still common feature of the then political parties. This is because the ANPP which the former APP was still dominated by northerners while the APGA was exclusively for the Igbos in the Eastern part of the country (Ozohu-Suleiman, 2016).

Constraints on the Extent to which Citizenship Socialization Courses Promote National Integration in Nigeria

Citizenship socialization courses and indeed Education is considered as viable instrument for national integration. Therefore, decades of teaching of citizenship socialization courses at all levels of education ought to have inculcated in citizens the values envisaged. However, it is clearly evident that the much needed national integration envisaged is far from being accomplished. Many factors constrained the efforts of utilizing citizenship socialization courses to promote national integration in Nigeria. Some of which are itemized and discussed below:

- i. The issue of Assessment method of citizenship socialization courses that focus on testing cognitive rather than Affective abilities.
- ii. Attitudes of those who are saddled with responsibilities of citizenship socialization which counter desirable values expected to be instilled.
- iii. The problem of inadequate funding of education in general
- iv. Large size lecture halls and other poor teaching and learning conditions
- v. Low credit units or time on the time table on specific curriculum subjects and courses meant citizenship socialization for national integration.
- vi. Paucity of specialist teachers in the area of citizenship socialization for national integration
- vii. low teachers' motivation

Some of these factors are explained below:

Assessment method of citizenship socialization courses: Assessment method of citizenship socialization courses at all levels focuses more on cognitive rather than affective abilities. For instance, the prevailing large size classrooms in Nigerian tertiary institutions make effective teaching and learning difficult task. Such classrooms condition pose even greater challenge to effective assessment of students in General studies courses especially in the conduct of continuous assessment and examinations, its scoring and reporting. This among other factors necessitate many tertiary institutions in Nigeria to resort to using Computer Based Test (CBT) to easily measure and evaluate students' performance within short period of time. This type of assessment of CBT tend to mainly focus on testing students' cognitive learning abilities with little or no emphasis on the affective domains which citizenship socialization courses for national integration are designed to develop. Indeed, as cited in the National Policy on Education (2013), "attitudes, values, physical skills and abilities are important for the students as well as cognitive skills".

Negative attitudes of some instructors: All citizenship socialization courses and subjects strive to evolve and instil correct and positives values for peace and unity in diversity such as honesty, tolerance, integrity, hard work, selflessness among others. However, in relation to this, Nweke and Nwoye (2016) raised some philosophical questions regarding instructors who are supposed to be the role models which are:

- i. What value will a student learn when a lecturer who is supposed to be looked upon is seen selling out grades to the students without the normal process of passing continuous assessment and examinations?
- ii. What value will students assimilate where a lecturer throws morality to the wind by insisting that he or she must have a carnal knowledge of a student before he or she passes a particular course?
- iii. What value when a lecturer hardly comes to deliver lectures or comes late but proceeds with the lecture without apology for lateness?
- iv. What value when some lecturers and some personnel in the administrative sectors are members of secret societies?

Some of these issues constitute serious constraint to the extent to which citizenship socialization courses promote national integration in Nigeria.

Inadequate funding: Section 13, provision 120 of the FGN (2013) clearly emphasized that education is an expensive social service and requires adequate financial provision from all tiers of government. However, as how far the Policy has been implemented (in terms of financing) is subject to criticism. In line with this, Uko (2024) argued that from 2015 to 2023, a paltry fraction of 5-7 percent of the total budget was allocated to education as against the UNESCO recommendation of at least 26 percent of the annual budget of any nation to education.

Low emphasis on citizenship socialization curriculum contents: Another constraint on the extent to which education contribute to national integration in

Nigeria is that specific curriculum contents meant principally for national integration are not given emphasis in the curriculum especially at secondary level of education where it exists, it is only being taught as topic in social studies. Even at Upper Basic level and Senior Secondary level where Civic Education is introduced to complement the teaching of citizenship education, the subject is not given adequate emphasis, Hours per week are usually low compared to subjects like Mathematics, English language and sciences. At Basic and Secondary levels of education in Nigeria, English Language and Mathematics each have at least four (4) periods per week as against Civic Education which usually has two (2) periods per week at most.

Paucity of specialists in citizenship socialization courses: Some of the teachers teaching Citizenship or Civic Education are neither teachers of Social Studies nor from the field of education; some of them are from other disciplines taking over to fill the vacuum created by inadequate trained teachers in the field. Adenipekun cited in Jekayinfa, et als. (2016) observed that the new Senior Secondary School Education Curriculum in Nigeria that contains Civic Education has thrown up a big challenge to Teacher Educators in the nation's Colleges of Education, Polytechnics and Universities as they have to review their Teacher Preparation Programmes in the context of knowledge of subject matter, teaching skills and competencies.

Low teacher motivation: Inadequate teachers' motivation which is the problem associated with teaching of most subjects in most educational systems of third world countries.

Problem of applying theories to real life situations by the actors: As endorsed by Bray, Clarke and Stephens in Mahuta, and Ladan (2016), there is a substantial difference between teaching or learning a subject such as civics for examination purposes and actually employing the principles in one's life outside the classroom. As such, even where the curriculum of citizenship education emphasizes hard work, honesty, national identity and other positive citizenry attitudes desired for development, these may not necessarily be the attitudes display by teachers and others taking part in training. Similarly, the theoretical nature of the school curriculum at all levels in Nigerian education does not encourage education for national integration.

Conclusion

All citizenship socialization courses and subjects at different levels have rich contents with potentials to promote peace and national integration in Nigeria. More efforts are however needed to address numerous constraints undermining achievement of their envisaged aims and goals are achieved.

Suggestions

Based on the issues raised in the paper, the following suggestions were made:

- i. There should be diversification of assessment method to enable comprehensive evaluation of all learners' domains of learning more

especially the affective abilities which citizenship socialization courses are meant to develop. This calls for utilization of other relevant instruments such as observation, self-reporting, rating scales and checklists among others.

- ii. There is the need for governments at Federal and state levels to improve budgetary allocation education to the UNESCO standard of 26% budgetary allocation on Education.
- iii. More resources should be invested in education to ensure that our education institutions and facilities really measure up to world class standards.
- iv. There should be rigorous public enlightenment campaigns by National Orientation Agency (NOA) at Federal level, States Ministries of Information, Mass Media, religious leaders, and traditional rulers among others on the need for citizens to imbibe virtues such as patriotism, patience, forgiveness, tolerance respect for the rule of law, national symbols and good governance.
- v. Curriculum subjects which the National Policy on Education considered as a means of promoting national integration such as General Studies, Social Studies Education, Citizenship Education, Civic Education should be given much needed emphasis at all forms and levels of education in Nigeria.
- vi. For the course to be interactive and for a more comprehensive teaching of the course, lecturer/student ratio should be addressed. Thus, universities should employ more lecturers to cater for the increasing population of students in General studies classes.

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