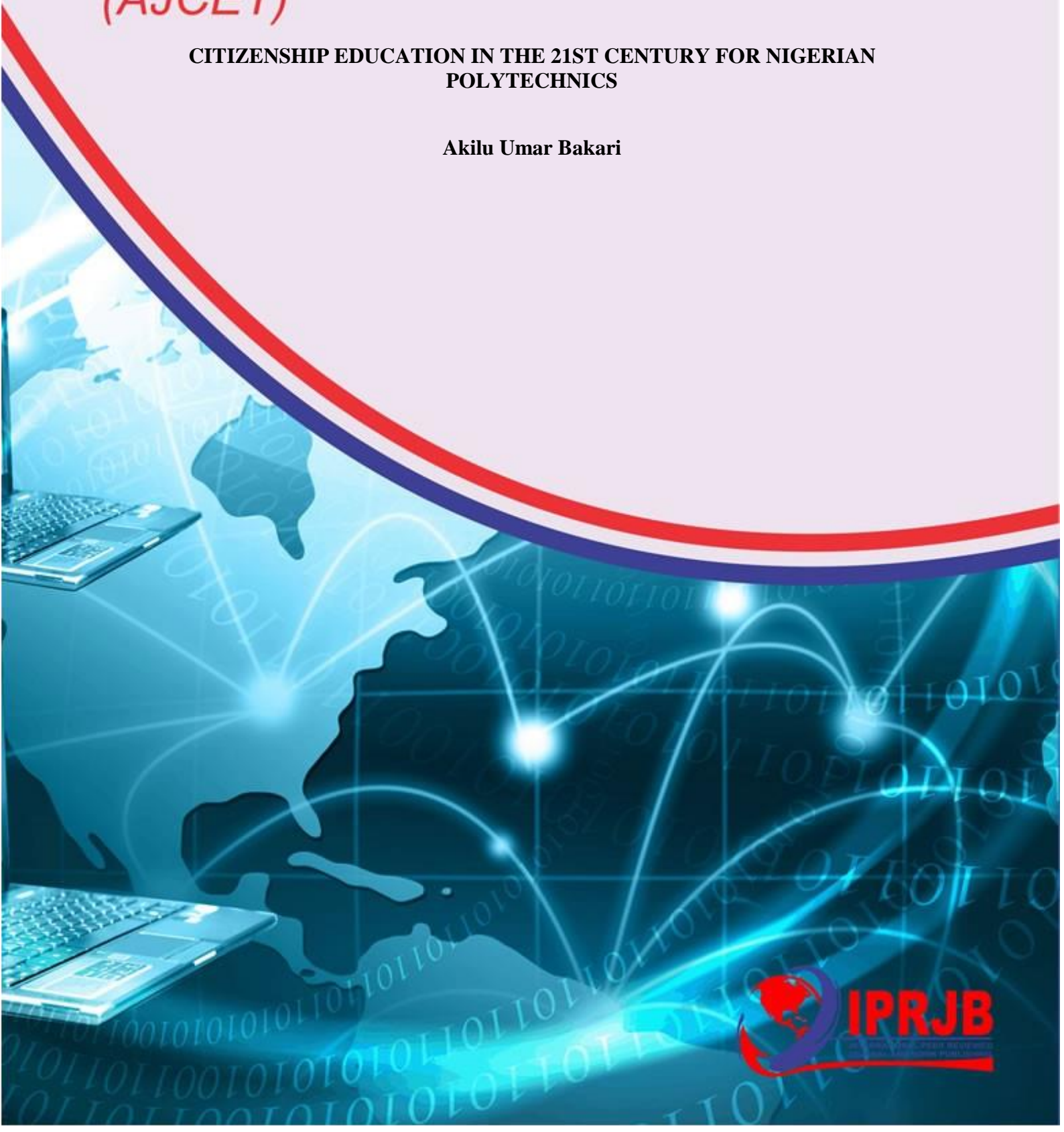


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**CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY FOR NIGERIAN  
POLYTECHNICS**

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### **Citizenship Education in the 21st Century for Nigerian Polytechnics**



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### **Abstract**

**Purpose:** Three substantial problems are visible in the teaching of citizenship education in the polytechnic. Firstly students are studying the courses only with the intention of passing their examinations and getting a diploma. Secondly the issues of ideology. It is whenever we notice the problematic that we will appreciate the ideology attractiveness of the course, which hinges on Western developmental framework. Thirdly the problem encountered by the teacher of citizenship education. This study intend to provide some useful information on how to be a good citizen of a particular nation, for both staff and students in Nigerian polytechnics.

**Methodology:** This work adopted qualitative research design, and some readymade materials for data collection. These prompt the researcher to carry out this study for easy access of information.

**Findings:** Education for involved democratic citizenship as an educational drive overcomes the disintegration transversal connections of the different devotions, and could become a part of citizenship consolidation. There has been a focus on the cure of social and environmental harms ascending from the certainty that education must be focused towards the foundation of a serious and publically involved citizenship, helping to realize social reality and its problems and to build social thinking to manage the difficulty of this reality, and encouraging participation in the formation of democracy and enlightening cohabitation.

**Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy:** Serious importance need to be given to citizenship education from primary to post-secondary level of education in the Nigerian polytechnics. Multi - disciplinary approach should be employed as a method of teaching citizenship education at higher level of education. Citizenship education should be introduced at all levels of teachers training institutions.

**Keywords:** *Citizenship Education, 21st Century, Polytechnics, Nigerian.*

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## INTRODUCTION

In the 1990s, with the explosion of the concern for Citizenship Education, controversial issues again have become a focus of educational interest. Over the following years the programmers of various countries have launched public curriculums that recognize the knowledge and skills imparted in schools are unconnected from daily life situations of young people and complex problems of the modern world (Young, Commins and Kington, 2002). Dewey maintains that, teaching of the social sciences promote the development of reflective thinking applied to real problems of society which is a way of learning how to participate in democracy. In this regard, in recent years, Citizenship Education has become an integrative concept of different educational goals that unite in an emancipatory learner-centred education.

Indeed, education for participatory democratic citizenship as an educational purpose overcomes the breakup relations of the different purposes, and could become an element of curriculum integration. Within this new interest in educating for a democratic and participatory citizenship, there has been a focus on the conduct of social and environmental problems arising from the belief that education should be directed towards the formation of a critical and socially engaged citizenship, helping to realize social reality and its problems and to form social thinking to manage the obstacle of this reality, and boosting connection in the design of democracy and improving coexistence (Canal *et al.*, 2012).

However, it is undesirable to state that the minds of the early peoples in Nigeria were limited by imaginary, which galvanized nervousness in the individual who was not free to develop as his western counterpart (Ayeni, 2012). In some part of Nigeria, religious dogma were and are still constraints on individual thinking and freedom of thought, and because the constraints dominate thinking, they also govern behaviour. The individual acted out in blind obedience, not because he is guided by reason but because his sense of reasoning is clouded by excessive religious fanaticism and dogma, superstitious balderdash and ethnocentric arrogance. This is evident in the belief in and worship of terror, incessant bombing and mass killings caused by indoctrinated religious fanatics in some parts of the country. These events of recent past have indicated that Nigeria is on the brink of losing her much cherished sense of nationhood, cultural identity and, indeed, hospitable spirit (Ogunbiyi and Soluade, 2011).

The recent crises in Nigeria defied boundaries ranging from political and social to religious and sometimes appearing to have economic connotations. The recurring problems and explanations for this growing state of low sense of patriotism and nationalism emanates from the fact that Nigerian citizens are ignorant, or perhaps confused, of their duties and obligation towards the nation and sense of responsibility towards fellow citizens. The principle of living a high moral life, based on civic duties and responsibilities, in other to have a good name is always appreciated and cherished in all human societies. This is because it is a common adage that a good name is better than 'gold or silver', hence the drive for civic values and orientations (Danladi, 2011).

The Nigerian National Policy on Education (2004) stresses that the philosophy of education should be geared towards equipping the learner to cultivate values of effective citizenship and civil responsibility. The Policy endorses that the philosophy behind all forms of instructions in schools is to be measured in terms of their roles in producing citizens with skills, competencies, moral values and reasoned judgments to effectively live, interact, interrelate and contribute

positively to economic, social, political and cultural development of the Nigerian society (Okobiah, cited in Okam and Ibrahim, 2011).

### **Objective of the study**

This study intend to provide some useful information on how to be a good citizen of a particular nation, for both staff and students in Nigerian polytechnics. The following are the specific objectives:

- i. To educate staff and students of Nigerian polytechnics on citizenship education.
- ii. To be fully aware of gravity of punishments best on differences offences committed by an individual in the Nigerian polytechnics.
- iii. To acquire a sense of individual and polytechnics responsibilities.

### **Research question**

- i. How can staff and students of Nigerian polytechnics become knowledgeable on citizenship education?
- ii. What is the gravity of punishment committed by an individuals in the Nigerian polytechnics?
- iii. What are the responsibilities of both individual and management of the Nigerian polytechnics?

### **METHODOLOGY**

This work adopted qualitative research design, and some readymade materials for data collection. These prompt the researcher to carry out this study for easy access of information.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The need for national unity and stability is greater now in Nigeria than ever before, especially with rampant ethnic violence and religions crisis. Many highly placed Nigerians on the pages of newspapers (punch 2018). Education is a potent instrument that can be used to foster peace and unity. Therefore this paper see the need to find the means of addressing such problems within the communities of the Nigerian polytechnics. This is no doubt will create for room for peace to rain in Nigerian polytechnics.

### **Conceptual Review**

The concept of citizenship education is a field that includes a wide range of philosophical, political, and ideological perspectives, and different educational approaches, objectives, and practices. Following Schugurensky & Myers (2003:2), define a traditional/elitist/minimalist orientation which conceives citizenship education as a process of social initiation. From this perspective, citizenship education is a tool for reproduction of the socio-economic order, and democracy as its political complement. Traditional citizenship education teachers are very close to the traditional civics education. They strive to install national loyalty and obedience to authority through national narratives, knowledge of geographical and historical facts and of the operation of government institutions. Their goal is to create good citizens, good consumers, and good patriots. In this view of minimal citizenship, there predominate content and a transmissive methodological approach, with no concern for attitudes as a central objective (McCowan, 2006).

Another orientation, defined as progressive/activist/maximalist, is based on an inclusive practice, and on curricular and educational elements themselves based on values that are difficult to measure in practice (Kerr, 1999). He further considers citizenship education as a tool for social reform and transformation, trying to encourage critical analysis, political commitment, transcultural respect, understanding, and active participation in public life. However, this work sees citizenship education as necessary knowledge needed by any citizen of a particular nations which help them to live a better life. According (Profile, 2020), this orientation involves a number of challenges related to:

1. The transition from a passive to an active citizenship in order to foster informed, responsible, and committed citizens with critical thinking skills.
2. The transition from a national to a global and ecological citizenship on a planet with finite resources.
3. The recognition of cultural diversity to promote an intercultural society beyond mere tolerance, based on solidarity, interaction, openness, and recognition of power relations
4. Participation in the public sphere, as well as recognition of the feminist perspective and of the importance of inequalities.
5. Changing from a formal citizenship to genuine democratic citizenship through the study of controversial issues such as the unequal distribution of wealth, or the influence of power in the media and the political system, in order to favor the reduction of the distance between the real world and an ideal world.

A participatory citizenship education needs a new school model, and in this sense the Global Citizenship Education (GCE) is based on the use of participatory methods that include discussion, debate, and argument, and tries to see how decisions made by people in other parts of the world affect our lives, just like our decisions affect the lives of others. Faced with the restrictive and removed view of the real problems by traditional civic education with a national identity, global citizenship education develops critical thinking about complex global issues, and for this it is necessary to treat controversial issues. This helps learners to explore and develop their own values, opinions, and attitudes for the coexistence, such as listening, respect for other points of view, decision making, exercising their rights and responsibilities, etc. Osakwe and Itejere (1993) define citizenship education as a system for the acquisition and internalization of the values, sentiment and norms of society in which they live and actually get involved to ensure that the common good of the citizens is provided for including resisting anti-social and unguided youthful desire.

### **Goal of Citizenship Education**

Like most concepts in social sciences, citizenship education defies a universally acceptable definition yet many scholars have attempted theorizing it. While others refer to it as civic education, personality training, political education, behavioral modification, others interpret it as human right education. Alutu and Ifedili (2012) explained the reasons why the meaning attached to the concept varies. In their words: ‘since nearly all human beings possess pleasure-seeking character, the desire to train for good citizenship is universal concept which varies from society to society depending on their specific desires and problems’.

Henceforth the nature and objectives of citizenship education in any given society is reliant on the presenting indicators in the social environment. This desperately validates Iyamu’s (1999)

definition of citizenship education as a mindful effort to teach in the youth, a set of values and attitude liable on the need and problems of the society. Omare (1999) also determines that the manifestation of citizenship education can be seen in the behavioral quality such as critical thinking, political activism, inquiry, goals and importance of good citizenship. Yusuf (2006) opposes that education for citizenship requires a citizen to be well informed and possess ability to gather facts, reject ethnocentrism, religious loyalty and develop confident national mindfulness. This means that citizenship education will develop in individual skills, attitudes and values that will enable them to show concern for the wellbeing and dignity of others, respecting the worth of others and approaching public resolution in a rational manner. In fact, at the mention of citizenship, the individual and the state come to mind. The education of an individual concerning himself and his state that will not only socialize but liberate and transform him for functional roles in a dynamic society is citizenship education (Anumba, 2013: 37).

However, the concept may be better called than defined. The papers state further that wherever possible, this participation should gradually link education and action to solve problems at the local, national and international levels. Students' involvement in the civilization of studies and of the educational institution they are attending should itself be aware a factor in civic education and an important element in international education. In her description of citizenship education, (Ogunbiyi & Oludeyi, 2014), postulate that it is the type of education that enables members of a society acquire full knowledge, not only of the state, but also of their duties and obligations to the state, their rights and expectations from the state, the stipulation of total orthodoxy with accepted ways and standards of life of the people, the need for full obedience with rules and regulations and total allegiance to the state.

The summary of it all is the need for important education that will change the citizens to live legally in the society and contribute meaningfully to its development. It is this kind of socialization orientation and training that can properly be referred to as education for citizenship. The aims and objectives of citizenship education are many and varied. They include socializing children against juvenile delinquency, disrespect for elders and all sharp practices that often transform into full-blown crimes such as youth hooliganisms, prostitution, examinations malpractices and gross campus misconduct.

In fact there has been public disruption over unemployment against the government, while those who have gained one employment or the other prove unusual absence and ingratitude towards their employers. The degree of corruption, fraud of public funds, looting government treasuries, diverting public funds and materials to private use, bribery and corruption they practice is abnormal. As earlier claimed in Falade (2008), the lack of the required citizenship characters in the life of the Nigerian citizens is directly or indirectly responsible for some citizens to think of breakup, disunity and conflicts in the country. To create a list of the purpose of citizenship education to the state, the people and the world, may be an endless quest.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Conclusion**

The Citizenship Education Programme was established as an important vehicle for the youths of Nigeria to understand their society, the diversity of its peoples and cultures, its problems and efforts to solve some of them. These objectives cannot be realized if the programme does not

experience review from time to time in the Nigerian polytechnics. Nevertheless Citizenship education in Nigerian polytechnics means more than the ordinary teaching of the fact about the society. It is about learning to understand, inform and believe in democratic functions as a living and changing process within the polytechnics environment. It aims to educate the citizenry some basic functional skills to be able to live a progressive and sustainable life for them to know their civic right and responsibilities and to contribute their quota to build a just, liberal and democratic society.

### **Recommendation**

The following are put forward as necessary steps that must be taken:

- Serious importance need to be given to citizenship education from primary to post-secondary level of education in the Nigerian polytechnics.
- Multi - disciplinary approach should be employed as a method of teaching citizenship education at higher level of education.
- Citizenship education should be introduced at all levels of teachers training institutions. This is because teachers must be prepared and well-found to effect the needed change in the children.
- Political office holders should be exposed to training in citizenship education.
- The Nigerian constitution should be subject to review from time to time, so that obsolete laws can be removed and replaced with new ones.
- Our leaders should respect the tenet of the constitution and the rule of law.

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