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Exploring the Understanding of Teachers and Learners on Citizenship Education in Ghana

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Abstract:
A citizen is a person with membership in a political community such as a country or city. This person owes loyalty to the state by birth or naturalization and in return enjoys the protection of the state or nation. A citizen is also a resident of a city or town, especially one entitled to vote and enjoys other privileges there. Citizenship education seeks to train persons living within specified boundaries on how to relate in their political locality, hence, emphasis is placed on gaining knowledge, skills, methods and values needed to function effectively within the political community. From this study, we are able to confirm that teachers and learners alike understand the essence of citizenship and the need for citizenship education. Over 85% and 88% of learners and teachers respectively believe such education brings about the development of civic competences and participation to make learners critical thinkers and enlightened citizens.

Keywords: Citizenship, citizenship education, civic, responsibilities, teachers, learners

1. Introduction

1.1. Citizenship

Citizenship can be described as the most perfect form of membership in a political community (Basok, Ilcan, & Noonan, 2006). It is highly defined in terms of one's duties as a member of a well-defined political enclave. This means that the citizen enjoys certain privileges within this defined boundaries and in turn owes a duty to every member within the community and must also live up to expectation so far as the broad goals of the community is concerned. In this definition, it is apparent that the citizen has certain amounts of freedom yet there is a limitation to this freedom on the basis of one's age, and any other condition, be it social or otherwise. Barbalet (1996) indicates that citizenship can be described as membership in a political entity. A citizen also has the right to influence the decision-making process by which the citizens are governed. Since citizens are necessarily inhabitants of a particular political entity, there may be legitimate variations in citizenship depending on the values and traditions of the society. Basic to understanding citizenship is that it has to be grounded in democracy.

Kerr (1999) and McLaughlin (1992)also mention that citizenship is contested along a continuum that ranges from minimal to maximal interpretations. The location of citizenship on the continuum is related to underlying political beliefs and contrasting interpretations of democracy. Kerr (1999) identifies citizenship as a formal status, and it is seen in formal, legal and juridical terms. It primarily focuses on the question of who qualifies to be a citizen. This leads to narrow formal approaches to citizenship education which is largely content-led and knowledge-based with an emphasis on transmission of information. It lends itself to didactic teaching approaches.

In the view of Tamakloe (1994), citizenship has mainly revolved around two points: first, an individual identified as member of a country. This was then regulated by man-made laws rather than on the membership of a family, clan, religion or inherited status. The rights and responsibilities of the individual are therefore confined by law in contrast to roles and religion conferred by inheritance. The second point was that, citizenship meant that laws were made, administered and judged by the citizens. These citizens were both rulers and the subjects. They were not merely subjects of a king who made rules and

dictated to them. This was the prevailing view of citizenship education in 5th century Athens, implying that the citizens participated actively in the affairs of the state.

2. Background

2.1. Citizenship Education

According to the Arnot et al., (1996), citizenship education is, helping learners to understand and accept ethical ideals as their own and being able to think and act intelligently on civic issues. The association further add that the basic requirement of citizenship education programme should include, creating understanding, ability to work in groups, in a way that is in line with democratic principles. In the 21st Century, citizenship education is defined as training learners from early childhood to become clear thinkers and enlightened citizens who participate in decisions concerning society (UNESCO 1998).

Butts (1980) posits that citizenship education embraces fundamental values of the political community, a realistic insight and scholarly knowledge of the working political institutions and processes including the skill of political behaviour required for effective participation in a democracy. Here, it is clear that he emphasizes the role of citizenship education in the education of people to relate to their political community. In other words, citizenship education should place emphasis on acquisition of knowledge, skills attitudes and values needed to relate effectively with the political community. In the words of Shafritz (1988) citizenship education is the dynamic relation between citizen and his nation. This involves rules of what a citizen may be willing to do, example to vote, can be forced to pay tax or can refuse to pledge allegiance to his state. It is pertinent to state that, there is a clear distinction between a citizen and the subject. Whereas the citizen governs and also takes part in decision making process, the subject on the other hand is governed and he is not part of decision making but contributes his or her share for the upliftment of the society.

Similarly, Aggarwal (1982) also sees citizenship education as the development of ideas, belief, habit, behavior, attitude of an individual so that one may become a useful member of the society. In the words of Payne as quoted by Aggarwal (1982) "citizenship education occurs when learners come to the school to learn to be healthy, to acquire civic practice, to participate in home betterment, to properly utilize leisure and the like" p.193. Barth (1991) equally defines citizenship education as "the main goal of social studies is an integration of social sciences and humanities for the purpose of instruction in citizenship education". (Clark, 1973) also agrees that citizenship education has a very broad scope and is simultaneously the concern of all the courses and other activities in the school. Again, he identifies a very strong relationship between citizenship education and political science. From this view, it can be deduced that other social science subjects like economics, sociology, and geography among others are embedded in the scope of citizenship education.

The Ministry of Education (2007) states that citizenship education is a subject that aims at producing competent, reflective, concerned and participatory citizens who will contribute to the development of the communities and country in the spirit of patriotism and democracy. It focuses on problems/challenges of human survival in Ghana. The subject exposes learners to the persistent contemporary issues hindering the development of the nation and the desired attitude, values and skills needed to solve these problems. The subject is introduced into the curriculum at the upper primary level (Primary 4 to Primary 6) to make children appreciate basic concepts and values that underlie a democratic political community and constitutional order to enable them uphold and defend the Constitution of Ghana at all times.

The scope, content of citizenship education covers the child's role as an effective and participatory member of the democratic political community (Adams, Andoh, & Quarshie, 2013). It emphasizes civic responsibility and service rendering. The issues selected are those that are necessary to promote the child's active participation in the public life and community issues in an informed, committed and constructive manner, with focus on a common goal. The subject integrates knowledge and information from many areas of study including Civics, Hygiene, Social Studies, Life Skills and Religious and Moral Education. Issues such as the promotion of good governance, democracy, sustainable management of environment, peace and human rights have been emphasized. The syllabus introduces the child to critical and reflective thinking, decision making, positive attitude and value building. It also focuses on personal and civic responsibilities, as well as, the rights that come with them. Ministry of Education (2007) also states that citizenship education is allocated five (5) periods a week, with 30 minutes for each period. The five periods should be divided into 2 double periods of one hour each, and a single period of thirty.

From the expositions aforementioned it can be deduced that citizenship education is regarded as the process of equipping the individual with knowledge, values, attitudes and skills. These are deemed needful to improve on their relations with the political climate in their community and relation with other members of the community as well as active group participation. However, this paper focuses on a case analysis of the perspectives of two stakeholders (teachers and learners') to explore their understanding of citizenship education in the Ghanaian context.

2.2. Contributions of Other Social Science Subjects to Citizenship Education

Many scholars have projected that some social science subjects like economics, geography, history, environmental studies and others are essential in developing citizenship education in the context of nature, content, resources, methodology and goals. Since citizenship education is an integrated course, its subject nature demand that it integrates facts from other social science subjects like social studies, government, geography, civics, economics and others.

According to African Social Studies and Environmental Studies Program (ASSEP), social studies is seen as the integration of social sciences and the humanity concepts for the purpose of promoting and practicing effective problem

solving, decision making, citizenship skills on social, economic and political issues and problems. In similar view, social studies is an integrated approach to the study of the social sciences and other related subjects like music, arts and craft with the view to preparing students to fit into society (Boadu, 2016). From the above definitions it can be seen that social studies and other social science subjects like economics, geography and others contribute to the development of teaching and learning of citizenship education.

Talking about the nature, there is a commonality that runs through citizenship education and other social science subjects. Citizenship education gains its identify from social science subjects such as history, government, economics, geography, sociology and others. History provides for a rich understanding of contemporary society and politics (Faas, 2011). Without the root of history, politics can bear no fruit. History deals with those matters that are central to democratic society which are essential ingredient for citizenship education. Some of the history topics that are also treated in social studies are citizenship and human right, national identity and symbols, democratic principles and others. Also, there are some geographical topics which are treated in citizenship education. Some of these subjects are regions, keeping our environment clean and the rest. The scope of government covers topic such as rights and responsibilities, the role of the media in nation building, citizens and citizenship and others. Social sciences are primarily concerned with those manifestations of human activities and those occurring within the society that involves social consequences and relations which are of great importance to citizenship education.

The implementation of citizenship education activities varies in accordance with teachers' viewpoint concerning the major purpose of citizenship education. Despite the variations, citizenship education has the same goal with other social science subjects such as government, geography, socials studies and others. According to Matorella as stated by Eshun & Mensah (2013), "the primary purpose of social studies is to develop reflective, competent and concerned citizens. Tamakloe (1994) underscores the main objective of social studies as citizenship education. UNESCO (1998) give three main objectives of citizenship education: the first is to educate people in citizenship and human rights, the second being to exercise sound judgment and critical thinking, and the final being acquisition of a sense of individual and community responsibilities.

It is realized that the goal of citizenship education always means good citizenship and emphasizes moral, human and intelligent actions on the citizen. The various description and definitions of goals of citizenship education are similar to social studies, history, geography, government civics and other social science subjects. It is important to note that since social studies is described as citizenship education; the goals of citizenship education also constitute the goals of social studies and other related subjects. In view of the above assertion, other social science subjects also share the same goals and objectives. McClendon (1965) identified the following as the goals of citizenship education:

- Making students respect and uphold the laws and its agencies.
- Making students believe in the equality of opportunities for all people in the society.
- Make students accept civic responsibility and discharge them to the best of their ability.
- Make learners understand and accept democratic principles and guide in evaluating one's own behaviour.

Bart (1983) also enumerated some goals of citizenship education which serves as the embodiment of goals of other social science subjects. These include:

- Acquire skills to examine values and beliefs.
- Finding solutions to pertinent problems of society.
- Encouraging the application of knowledge through active participation in society.
- Gaining knowledge about human condition and this includes the past, present and future.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

The basic research design used in this study was the descriptive survey (qualitative). This type of survey involved collecting data in order to elicit information and responses to questions concerning the current status of the population with respect to one or more variables. The researchers used this design because of the need to identify the relationship between the variables and give accurate descriptions on those relationships. Researchers were concerned with 'casualty' and wanted to seek knowledge about the relationship between variables, thus, detailed data on the phenomenon of interest in this study was collected. This was achieved using a questionnaire to describe and justify the existing conditions and practices. An accurate description, analysis and interpretations of such variables would increase the knowledge and understanding of the researchers. This helped in making plans for improving the current status of the phenomenon in terms of what existed.

3.2. Population

The population consisted of the views of some selected learners and teachers in selected basic schools in the Mfantsiman Municipality where citizenship education is taught as core subject. Again, this population composed of learners from mixed schools. Teachers teaching citizenship education in the upper primary schools were equally part of this population. Male as well as female teachers were considered in the sampling.

3.2.1. Sample and Sampling Procedure

The sample size used for the study included all citizenship education learners and teachers in five selected primary schools in the Mfantsiman Municipality. The sampling procedure used for the study was simple random sampling for the learners and census for the teachers. Simple random sampling was used by the researchers due to time factor and numerous schools and limited financial resources. Census was used for the teachers because of their small number hence all citizenship education teachers were involved. The simple random method was advantageous because each learner had an equal chance of being selected to participate in the study.

3.2.2. Data Analysis

The data collected was edited in order to delete the questions that were not answered. The data collected was classified. After classification of the data, percentage tables were used to analyze the data collected; the statistical tool employed for analyzing the data was descriptive statistics method. Also the computer software; Statistical Package for the Service Solution (SPSS) Software was used in analyzing the data collected. In measuring the direction of responses, frequency distribution tables were used to determine the percentages of the respondents to the questions in the questionnaires in order to obtain accuracy and efficiency of data interpretation of the study.

The preliminary data analysis showed that for the learners, 45.6 percent were males and 54.4 percent were females, indicating that the ratio of males to females is less. On the other hand, there were 50.4 percent males to 49.6 percent female teacher respondents. This also implies that both male teacher respondents and female teacher respondents' ratio are almost equal, albeit, the male teacher ratio is slightly higher than the female teacher ratio in the Mfantsiman Municipality.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1. Understanding Citizenship Education (Perspectives of Teachers and Learners)

From Table 1 below, 128 (92.0%) of the teachers agreed that citizenship education is the subject which has the development of civic competence and skills as it goal but only 8 (5.8%) of the teachers disagreed to this meaning. This implied that most of the teachers agreed with Ministry of Education (2007)'s definition on citizenship education. It can also be seen that 133 (95.7%) agreed whiles 8 (5.8%) disagreed to the meaning that citizenship education develops the ideas, beliefs, behaviour and attitude of an individual so that he/she becomes useful member of the society.

Items	Disagree		Undecided		Agree		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Citizenship education is the subject which has the development of civic competence and skills as its goal.	8	5.8	3	2.2	128	92.0	141	100
Citizenship education is the development of ideas, beliefs, habits, behaviour and attitude of an individual so that he/she useful member of the society.	5	3.6	1	0.7	133	95.7	139	100
Citizenship education occurs when learners come to school to learn to be healthy, to acquire civic practices, to participate in home betterment and properly utilize leisure.	23	16.6	3	2.2	113	81.3	139	100
Citizenship education trains learners from early childhood to become thinkers and enlightened citizens who participate in decisions concerning society.	14	10.2	0	0.0	124	89.9	139	100

Table 1: Teachers' understanding of Citizenship Education

This affirms what Aggarwal (1982) stated that "citizenship education sees to the development of ideas, belief, habit, behaviour, and attitude of an individual so that one may become a useful member of the society". It was also identified that 113 (81.3%) teachers agreed that citizenship education occurs when learners come to school to learn to be healthy, to acquire civic practices, to participate in home betterment and properly utilize leisure. But 23 (16.6%) teachers disagreed to this definition. This means that almost all the teachers agreed with Payne as cited by Aggarwal (1982). Moreover 124 (89.9%) of the teachers accepted that citizenship education trains learners from early childhood to become thinkers and enlightened citizens who participate in decisions concerning society with barely 14 (10.2%) disagreeing.

From Table 2 below, 142 (97.2) of the learners agreed that Citizenship education is the subject which helps one to be a responsible member of society whiles only 2 (1.4%) disagreed. This means that majority of the learners agree with Ministry of Education (2007) definition that citizenship education is a subject that aims at producing competent, reflective and participatory citizen whiles only 1.4 percent of the learners disagree to Ministry of Education (2007). In addition, Aggarwal (1982) mentions that Citizenship Education involves the development of ideas, beliefs, habits behaviour and attitude of an individual s that he/she may become useful member of the society. Majority of the learners 73.8 percent agreed with the view of Aggarwal (1982) and only a few representing 4.1 percent of the learner disagreed. It can also be seen that, 135 (92.5%) learners agreed whiles 9 (6.1%) disagreed respectively that citizenship education occurs when learners come to school to learn healthy, to acquire civic practices, to participate in home betterment to properly utilize leisure and the like.

Items	Disagree		Undecided		Agree		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Citizenship education is the subject which helps one to be a responsible member of society.	2	1.4	2	1.4	142	97.2	146	100
Citizenship education is the development of ideas, beliefs, habits behaviour and attitude of an individual so that he/she may become useful member of the society.	9	6.1	2	1.4	135	92.5	146	100
Citizenship education occurs when learners come to school to learn healthy, to acquire civic practices, to participate in home betterment and properly utilize leisure.	32	22.1	6	4.1	107	73.8	145	100
The basic purpose of citizenship education is to help one know his/her rights and responsibilities	12	8.3	0	0.0	133	91.7	145	100

Table 2: Learners' Understanding of Citizenship Education

This implies that most of the respondents (learners) agreed to the assertion of Payne as cited by Aggarwal (1982) but only a few learners disagreed. Finally, 91.7 percent learners agreed with Butts (1980) that citizenship education is required for effective participation in a democracy, but only a few learners representing 8.3 percent disagree with the view of Butts (1980).

Majority of the teachers agreed to the view that, "citizenship education is the development of ideas, beliefs, habits, behaviour and attitude of an individual so that he/she becomes a useful member of the society", whilst a greater number of the learners were of the view that, "citizenship education is the subject which has the development of civic competence and skills as its goal." This was followed by, "citizenship education is the subject which has the development of civic competence and skills as its goal", as the second view of the teachers whilst the learners' second view of the definition of citizenship education is, "citizenship education is the development of ideas, beliefs, habits, behaviour and attitude of an individual so that he/she becomes a useful member of the society". The third observation made was that both teachers and learners agreed that, "the basic purpose of citizenship education is to help one know his/her rights and responsibilities". The least meaning of citizenship education from our findings from the view of both teachers and learners is that, "citizenship education occurs when learners come to school to learn to be healthy, to acquire civic practices, to participate in home betterment and properly utilize leisure".

4.2. Role of other Social Sciences in Citizenship Education

From Table 3 below, 132 (94.3%) of the teachers agreed to the fact that citizenship education integrates concepts from other social sciences such as geography, economics, sociology, history and others. This goes in line with the African Social Studies and Environmental Studies Program which designates social studies as a form of citizenship education which integrates concepts from other social sciences and the humanity for the purpose of promoting and practicing effective problem solving, decision making and citizenship skills. However, only a few (5.0%) disagreed to this view. Also, 92.1 percent of the teachers agreed that other social science subjects contribute various resources that facilities effective teaching and learning of citizenship education. This is in line with the view of Tamakloe (1996) that the resource person is purported to have richer experience in a field of study than the teacher. This implies that citizenship education employs resource personnel from other social science subjects to teach and explain concept, facts and principles the teacher is not conversant with. But few of the teachers disagree to this. Finally, 90.6 percent of the teachers agreed that other social science subjects contribute various activities to citizenship education to the achievement of its general goals. Thus majority of the teachers' views are in line with

Barth (1991) the goals of citizenship education being an embodiment of goals of the social sciences whilst only 9.4 percent disagreed.

Items	Disagree No.	Disagree %	Undecided No.	Undecided %	Agree No.	Agree %	Total No.	Total %
Citizenship education integrates concepts from other social sciences such as geography, economics, sociology, history, etc.	7	5.0	1	0.7	132	94.3	140	100
Other social science subjects contribute various methods in the citizenship education curriculum.	8	5.7	3	2.2	128	92.1	139	100
Other social science subjects contribute various resources that facilitate effective teaching and learning of citizenship education.	8	5.7	1	0.7	131	93.6	140	100
Other social science subjects contribute various activities to citizenship education to the achievement of its general goals.	13	9.4	0	0.0	125	90.6	138	100

Table 3: Contribution of Social Science Subjects in Promoting Citizenship Education (Teachers)

From Table 4 below, 89 (61.0%) of the pupils agreed whiles 51 (34.9%) disagreed that environmental studies, integrated science and citizenship education are taught in the same way. This goes in line with Africa Social Studies and Environmental Studies Program which likens that social studies to citizenship education integrates concepts from other social sciences and the humanity for the purpose of promoting and practicing effective problem solving, decision making and citizenship skills. Also majority of the pupils 127(86.9%) agreed whiles 16 (11.0%) disagreed that other social science subjects contribute various resources that facilitate effective teaching and learning of citizenship education. From Table 4, it can be seen about 126(86.3%) of the pupils agreed with the statement that social science subjects like music, arts, crafts and others contribute to citizenship education as affirmed by Boadu (2016) who defines social studies as an integrated approach to the study of social sciences and other related subjects like music, arts and craft with the view to preparing students to fit into a society. From his definitions it can be seen that social studies and other social sciences like economics, geography and others contribute to the development of citizenship education. Also 131(90.4%) of the pupils agreed that some topics in integrated science and environmental studies are also taught in citizenship education whist 13 (8.9%) disagreed with the statement.

Items	Disagree No.	Disagree %	Undecided No.	Undecided %	Agree No.	Agree %	Total No.	Total %
Environmental studies, integrated science and citizenship education are taught in the same way.	51	34.9	6	4.1	89	61.0	146	100
Some topics in integrated science and environmental studies are also taught in citizenship education.	13	8.9	1	0.7	131	90.4	145	100
Other social science subjects contribute various resources that facilitate effective teaching and learning of citizenship education.	16	11.0	3	2.1	127	86.9	146	100
Social science subjects like music, arts and craft also prepare students to fit into the society.	15	10.3	5	3.4	126	86.3	146	100

Table 4: Contribution of Social Science Subjects in Promoting Citizenship Education (Students)

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

In summary, it can be said that both citizenship education teachers and learners in the Mfantsiman Municipality understand the meaning of citizenship education to be the development of ideas, beliefs, habits, behaviour and attitude of an individual so that he/she useful member of the society and citizenship education is the subject which has the development of civic competence and skills as its logical goals.

The Ghana Education service should employ qualified teachers to handle citizenship education in the upper primary. That is the teachers should be academically and professionally trained to have the knowledge and the requisite skills in handling citizenship education. Owing to the integrated nature and scope of citizenship education appropriate teaching methodologies like group discussions, field trips, simulations are highly recommended in the teaching of citizenship education.

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