
ASSESSMENT OF SOCIAL STUDIES UNDERGRADUATES'
LEVEL OF PATRIOTISM: IMPLICATION FOR SUSTAINABLE
DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

It is not an easy task to develop the feeling of belonging, love, pride and caring among students. The goal of this study is to recognize formal education in preparing individuals towards active citizenship and fostering positive attitude and behaviour toward the country. A descriptive research design of survey type was employed to obtain information from Undergraduates who have acquired patriotic content knowledge of Social Studies. This study therefore investigates the proposition that patriotic contents of Social Studies contributes to students' patriotic reflections and attitudes toward their country. The researcher specifically explores the impact of SSE 321 (Social Sciences Education Course) titled: Nationalism and Patriotism in Nigeria. An extensive empirical research was conducted among 110 Undergraduates who were purposively selected as study population in Institute of Education University of Ilorin. Findings revealed that SSE 321 had impacted on the Undergraduates; patriotic reflections and attitudes among these Undergraduates was also high; There was no significant difference in the patriotic reflection and

attitude of undergraduates based on gender. The study concluded that Patriotic reflection and attitude of undergraduate is high and neither male nor female differed in their patriotic reflection and attitude.

Keywords: Patriotic Content, Patriotic Reflection, Patriotic Attitudes, Social Studies Undergraduates.

Introduction

Social Studies as a school subject attempts to teach learners the summarization of all experiences they may be exposed to within the various environments they find themselves. The subject is interested in developing in learners the appropriate knowledge, skills, values and attitudes which make them become contributor to their immediate community and a responsible member of the larger society. One of the primary goals of introduction of Social Studies into the school curriculum is centered around the developing in learners the appropriate skills and attitudes which will make them to become activists and contributors to the society meaningfully. It is therefore becoming necessary for the learners to take cognizance of their society; its nature; its problem and its prospects. In view of this Social Studies Education according to Ogundare (2003) provides the structure the school focus for the preparation of citizens, this means, the commitment to foster human dignity and national process are key to the structure of Social Studies curriculum.

Research on patriotism has been troubled by a confusing array of terms, definitions and expected consequences in which patriotism is variously defined as a sense of national loyalty, a love of national symbols, specific beliefs about a country's superiority and a crucial ingredient in the development of civility to mature nation (Huddy & Khatib, 2007). Patriotism is characterized with the feelings of belonging, love, pride and caring for a country. As a political concept, it implies loyalty to the country without emphasizing any ethical attributes, this means the political and social reflections of patriotism bring about either a positive or negative tendency based on the approach to the citizenship

education. Patriotism is identified to be negative due to its blinds, and obedient aspects, while it is positive due to its democratic, constructive, and critical aspects (Ozturk, Malkoc & Ersoy, 2016). Further still, blind patriotism is associated with authoritarianism and nationalism, while constructive patriotism believed that loyalty to the country means to develop a critical approach to that country. The critical loyalty in constructive patriotism aims to improve and transform national policies; hence it is classified positively as a citizenship value. But blind patriotism is characterized with agreeing to national policies even if they are against and detrimental to the human rights.

In addition, blind patriotism ignores subgroups in the society, constructive patriotism embraces all citizens. To this end, blind patriotism is evaluated as nationalism while constructive patriotism is regarded as a democratic citizenship value. In essence, blind (uncritical) and constructive (critical) patriotism involves loyalty to and pride for one's country. This is because, blind patriotism has tendency to exercise influence within with the fear of external aggression (Barnes, 2010). This means, blind patriotism is tilting towards nationalism because it depicts the idea of guarding a nation against foreign domination. On the other hand, constructive patriotism criticizes the national policies, and supports them as long as they comply with the national goals and democratic values, including interpreting of the nation's history from different aspects (Huddy & Khatib, 2007). Also, Negedu and Atabor (2015) concluded that nationalism is closely related to geographical concerns, while patriotism is attracted to humanitarian feelings.

The acquisition of patriotic values is necessary for the existence of modern democratic societies that Nigeria desire, it must be noted that patriotism is not an inborn value, it can be acquired over time and within social settings, this means, individuals' reflections of patriotism and level of patriotic attitudes depend largely on social habits and the type of education provided in that country, including the pedagogical competency of the teachers. that is, there is a fundamental difference between pedagogy that emphasizes the acquisition of knowledge through teacher instruction and pedagogy that emphasizes practical application of learning through

interaction processes and experiences as means to give students proper understanding of why they have to contribute to modern democracy. One of the requisites for the existence of modern democratic societies is the identification of its member with their community and a sense of allegiance to it, this is because, the performance of modern democratic societies depends largely on the spontaneous unforced support of its members (Brezovsek & Hacek, 2006). Equally, promoting the patriotism of the students is only possible with the teachers who are equipped with these virtues (Tonga & Aksoy, 2014). This is to conclude that, the relationship that exists between teacher's instructional practices and their patriotic attitudes are mutualistic.

The question that readily comes to mind here is 'how can institutions of learning develop patriotism in students'? Patriotism is directly connected to Social Studies lesson as it is involved in the social studies curriculum and it is one of the major citizenship values, this means developing favourable reflections about patriotism among students is a key objective of Social Studies Education and it remain curriculum framework for democratic citizenship education that is relevant to modern times. The ability to sustain modern democracy should also be the concern of many countries of the world. Sustainable democracy that this study is seeking is encompassment of flawless constitution, collective ability to manage opposition, representativeness and masses oriented programmes. Therefore, sustainable democracy connotes democracy that meets the needs and aspirations of the masses in the modern societies. The professional body for social studies puts forward the primary purpose of Social Studies as helping learners to make an informed, reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world (National Council for Social Studies, 2007). In this development, Social Studies education has an important role in providing students with the awareness of good citizenship and patriotism. Ozturk et al, (2016) studies also revealed that Social Studies course is the most appropriate, but not the only context to teach the value of patriotism. It is against this background the study exploits the experience and instructional practices in the

teaching and learning processes of SSE 321 class of Social Studies undergraduates, taught by the researcher of this study in the contact three of 2017 session. Sandwich is a teacher education programme for students whose course consisting of periods of study with periods of work in business or educational institutions, the programme is organized to enable this category of undergraduates to acquire practical experience through various courses offered to regular students too. It is a five years programme in the institute of education of university of Ilorin.

SSE 321 is titled: Nationalism and Patriotism in the university where this study was carried out, the major contents taught in this course are as follows: (i) concept of nationalism (ii) National identity (iii) concept of patriotism (iv) Differences between nationalism and patriotism (v) reflections on patriotism and Nigerian unity. The instructional practices and pedagogical approaches adopted by the teacher in teaching all the contents, took into consideration the backgrounds, needs and interests of individual students. Thus, the teacher employed instructional approaches which is expected to cultivate the values, beliefs and principles of democratic living in students, the teacher facilitates this through interaction processes that are persuasive, these includes, speeches, written and oral material, and historical narratives of the past and present, dead and living notable Nigerian nationalists and patriots. These processes are identified as theoretical traditions of the Social Studies, namely: citizenship transmission; the social science and reflective thinking models as cited by (Nwabuani & Azuh, 2014). The competencies students acquired during civic instruction are affected by their teachers' beliefs, attitude and behaviour (Ersoy, 2014). Equally, students' engagement in critical deliberation of controversial issues, and historical narratives and concepts can be used in the construction of civic identity (Carretero, Haste & Bermudez, 2016). The general objective of this study is to examine the patriotic level of Undergraduates students and its implication for sustainable democracy. Specifically, the study examined the level of patriotic reflection of Social Studies on SSE 321 class; and the level of patriotic attitudes of Social Studies undergraduates. This study

further focused on two research questions and two hypotheses to guide the study:

Research Questions

1. What is the level of patriotic reflection of Social Studies undergraduates on SSE 321 class?
2. What is the level of patriotic attitudes of Social Studies undergraduates who acquired patriotic content of Social Studies education?

Hypotheses

H₀1: There is no significant difference in patriotic reflection of male and female Social Studies undergraduates who Attended SSE 321 class.

H₀2: There is no significant difference in patriotic attitude of male and female sandwich undergraduates who acquired patriotic content of Social Studies education.

Method

A descriptive research design of survey type was employed to obtain information from Social Studies undergraduates who have acquired patriotic content knowledge of Social Studies education in their contact 3 in 2017 contact session. All Social Studies undergraduates who attended SSE 321 class in 2017 contact session that were taught by the researcher form the population for this study. 110 Social Studies undergraduates, comprising of 43 male and 67 females were purposively sampled. A researcher-designed questionnaire of 30 items was used to elicit information from the respondents on their reflections on SSE 321 class and patriotic attitude. The items used 4 likert type scale of Very true of me (4) to Not true of me (1) and was validated by experts in Measurement and Evaluation in the Department of Social Sciences Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin. The questionnaire was personally administered and retrieved by the researchers after which it was collated for data analysis. The obtained data were analyzed using percentage and t-test statistics. Percentage was used to answer

research question one and two while t-test was used to test the two null hypotheses postulated at 0.05 alpha level of significant.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the level of patriotic reflection of Social Studies undergraduates on SSE 321 class?

Table 1: Level of Patriotic Reflection of Social Studies Undergraduates who attended SSE 321 Class

S/N	Patriotic Reflection	VTM(%)	TM(%)	STM(%)	NTM(%)
1	I learnt that Nigeria has a lot of potentials to make the country great and peaceful	78(70.9)	26(23.6)	3(2.7)	3(2.7)
2	I did not learn about Nigeria identity at all	7(6.4)	9(8.2)	7(6.4)	87(79.1)
3	I feel more connected to a "we-group" than "they-group"	34(30.9)	53(48.2)	8(7.3)	15(13.6)
4	I learned that political loyalty of individuals should be patriotically extended to the nation-state	50(45.5)	48(43.6)	8(7.3)	4(3.6)
5	The memories of how nationalism evolved reminded me of the need to have a sense of belongings no matter the challenges facing the country	58(52.7)	45(40.9)	4(3.6)	3(2.7)
6	It was very interesting and exciting. I hope to have another class like it	50(45.5)	46(41.8)	9(8.2)	5(4.5)
7	I felt that it was not meaningful and I learnt a little or nothing	6(5.5)	13(11.8)	9(8.2)	82(74.5)
8	I even feel we should have more time for the class	52(47.3)	38(34.5)	13(11.8)	7(6.4)
9	At the end of the lesson, I do not see anything special	12(10.9)	4(3.6)	7(6.4)	87(79.1)
10	Altogether, if I criticize and oppose Nigeria policies, I do so because I know better now	34(30.9)	55(50.0)	8(7.3)	13(11.8)

Table 1 shows the level of patriotic reflection of Social Studies undergraduate who attended SSE 321 class in University of Ilorin. From the table, it could be observed that the respondents agreed to all the positive items to be true of them. Also, they agreed that all the negative items are not true of them. This is to mean that the SSE 321 had impacted on the Social Studies undergraduates who offered it such that it helped them to reflect well on what they have learnt during the course of the lessons. This is in line with Ozturk et al (2016) studies, which revealed that Social Studies course is the most appropriate context to teach the value of patriotism. It was also discovered from the result that 82.9% of the respondents agreed to the positive items and disagreed to the negative items. Therefore, the level of patriotic reflection of undergraduate students who attended SSE 321 class in 2017 at University of Ilorin is high.

Research Question 2: What is the level of patriotic attitudes of Social Studies undergraduates who acquired patriotic content of Social Studies education?

Table 2: Level of Patriotic Attitudes of Social Studies Undergraduates who acquired Patriotic Content of Social Studies Education

S/N	Patriotic Attitude	VTM(%)	TM(%)	STM(%)	NTM(%)
1	I love my country (Nigeria)	81(73.6)	24(21.8)	1(0.9)	4(3.6)
2	I am not proud to be a Nigerian	16(14.5)	10(9.1)	3(2.7)	81(73.6)
3	I feel great pride in that land, that is Nigeria	54(49.1)	42(38.2)	9(8.2)	5(4.5)
4	Although sometimes I may not agree with the government, so my commitment to Nigeria is not all that strong	15(13.6)	31(28.2)	24(21.8)	40(36.3)
5	In a sense, I am emotionally attached to my country and affected by its actions	39(35.5)	53(48.2)	10(9.1)	8(7.3)

6	It is not necessary for me to serve my country	16(14.5)	9(8.2)	8(7.3)	77(70.0)
7	When I see the Nigerian flag flying, I feel great	63(57.3)	38(34.5)	4(3.6)	5(4.5)
8	The fact that I am a Nigerian is an important part of my identity	65(59.1)	40(36.4)	2(1.8)	3(2.7)
9	It is constructive for me to develop an emotional attachment to my country	51(46.4)	44(40.0)	5(4.5)	10(9.1)
10	In general, I have no reason to have respect for the Nigerian people	5(4.5)	10(9.1)	9(8.2)	86(78.2)
11	I am always proud and feel good when I hear the singing of national anthem	64(58.2)	38(34.5)	4(3.6)	4(3.6)
12	I will be happy to spend my whole life outside Nigeria	7(6.4)	16(14.5)	16(14.5)	71(64.5)
13	I enjoyed discussing Nigeria with people from other countries	39(35.5)	43(39.1)	14(12.7)	14(12.7)
14	I always feel as if Nigeria's problems do not concern me	7(6.4)	13(11.8)	20(18.2)	70(63.6)
15	I am proud to tell others that I live in Nigeria	56(50.9)	39(35.5)	9(8.2)	6(5.5)
16	I feel emotionally attached to Nigeria	36(32.7)	53(48.2)	12(10.9)	9(8.2)
17	I feel a sense of belonging to Nigeria no matter the challenges	53(48.2)	39(35.5)	11(10.0)	7(6.4)
18	I do not care about the fate of Nigeria as it does not give me any concern	11(10.0)	15(13.6)	17(15.5)	67(60.9)
19	I am willing to work hard to help myself to be successful not Nigeria	23(20.9)	19(17.3)	15(13.6)	53(48.2)
20	I feel accepted as a member of society in Nigeria	49(44.5)	45(40.9)	7(6.4)	9(8.2)

Table 2 shows the level of patriotic attitudes of Social Studies undergraduates who acquired patriotic content of Social Studies education in University of Ilorin. From the table, it could be

observed that the respondents agreed to all the positive items to be true of them. Also, they agreed that all the negative items are not true of them. It could be said here that Social Studies undergraduates' patriotic attitude has increased since they all agreed to the positive items and disagreed to the negative items. It was also discovered from the result that 78.0% of the respondents agreed to the positive items and disagreed to the negative items. Therefore, the level of patriotic attitudes of undergraduate students who acquired patriotic content of Social Studies education in University of Ilorin is high. This could be due to the teacher's level of patriotic virtues and attitude. This could further be supported by the report of Tonga and Aksoy (2014) that, promoting the patriotism of the students is only possible with the teachers who are equipped with these virtues. Ersoy (2014) also reported that the competencies students acquired during civic instruction are affected by their teachers' beliefs, attitude and behaviour

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in patriotic reflection of male and female Social Studies undergraduates who attended SSE 321 class.

Table 3: t-test Analysis of the Patriotic Reflection of Male and Female Social Studies Undergraduates who attended SSE 321 class.

Gender	No	Mean	Std.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
Male	43	33.09	4.587	-0.730	108	0.467	Do not reject
Female	67	33.73	4.406				

Results in Table 3 shows that the calculated significant level is 0.467 which is greater than the alpha level of 0.05; therefore, hypothesis one is not rejected. This means that male and female Social Studies undergraduate who attended SSE 321 class do not differ in their patriotic reflection. This result also suggests that during the course of learning SSE 321 in 2017 contact session, the

lecturer was able to carry everybody along irrespective of their gender.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in patriotic attitude of male and female Social Studies undergraduates who acquired patriotic content of Social Studies education.

Table 4: t-test Analysis of the Patriotic Attitude of Males and Females Undergraduate Students who Acquired Patriotic Content of Social Studies Education

Gender	No	Mean	Std.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
Male	43	65.28	9.455	-0.309	108	0.758	Do not reject
Female	67	65.81	8.217				

Results in Table 4 show that the calculated significant level is 0.758 which is greater than the alpha level of 0.05; therefore, hypothesis two is not rejected. This means that male and female Social Studies undergraduate who acquired patriotic content of Social Studies education do not differ in their patriotic attitude. This also denotes that the knowledge acquired during the SSE 321 in 2017 contact session was gender base.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it could be concluded that patriotic reflection and patriotic attitude of Social Studies undergraduate who acquired patriotic content of Social Studies education (SSE 321) in 2017 contact session in University of Ilorin is high and that neither male nor female Social Studies undergraduate differed in their patriotic reflection and attitude. This study demonstrates that SSE 321 to some extent could encourage the development of new knowledge of Social Studies undergraduates which could shape their attitudes to contribute positively to the effective participation in the Nigerian society to achieve sustainable democratic society which is the goal of study. It could be deduced from the findings of this study that high patriotic

level of undergraduates could make them contribute positively to achieve modern democratic society, therefore future of democracy remains with educating the students to become an informed citizen who will sustain democracy.

Recommendations

In line with the findings of this study, the following recommendations can be made. among others:

1. Undergraduate students who are also prospective teachers should be encourage to sustain the level of their patriotic reflection to be able to motivate their students too.
2. Undergraduate students should build on their level of patriotic attitude to be able to persuade their own students during Social Studies class to influence their patriotic attitude.
3. That undergraduate students should channel their high level of patriotic attitude towards building democratic society.
4. That Social Studies lecturers should make their lessons impactful on the learners regardless of their gender and individual differences.

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