

INFLUENCE OF EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT ON STUDENTS' CITIZENSHIP AND NATIONAL SECURITY AWARENESS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN DUTSIN-MA LGA, KATSINA STATE

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Abstract

The study investigated the influence of educational assessment on students' citizenship and national security awareness in secondary schools in Dutsin-Ma LGA, Katsina state. The study was guided by the two objectives, among which are; to examine the influence of educational assessments on students' attitudes towards national security awareness in secondary schools in Dutsin-Ma LGA, Katsina state. Two corresponding research questions were in line with the objectives. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprises 4,109 principals, teachers and students of secondary schools in Dutsin-Ma from which 9 principals, 86 teachers and 257 students were randomly selected as sample for the study. Citizenship and National Security Awareness Questionnaire (CANSAQ) was used and validated by two experts in the department of educational psychology and counselling, measurement and evaluation unit, with reliability Coefficient of 0.67. The research questions were answered using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation. The findings of the study revealed that educational assessments have a positive influence on students' attitudes toward national security and citizenship in secondary schools in Dutsin-Ma LGA. Lastly, the study concluded that educators face several challenges in integrating national security and citizenship education into assessments such as lack of resources, insufficient training, and challenges in aligning curriculum content with assessment criteria. Based on the findings, the study recommended among others that educational policymakers and school administrators should ensure that national security and citizenship themes are embedded across curricula and assessments at all educational levels.

Key words: Influence, Assessment, Citizenship, National Security Awareness

Introduction

Education is universally acknowledged as one of the most powerful tools for shaping the future of nations, as it cultivates knowledge, skills, values, and behaviors necessary for social, economic, and political stability (World Bank, 2018; Osler & Starkey, 2006). Beyond equipping individuals with academic knowledge, education plays a critical role in fostering civic consciousness and promoting social cohesion, particularly in an era marked by complex national and global challenges. National security, in particular, is a crucial area where

education can have significant implications, given its role in sustaining peace, protecting national values, and fostering societal resilience (UNESCO, 2017; Davies, 2004). For countries facing emerging threats such as terrorism, cyber-attacks, misinformation, or internal unrest, cultivating a strong sense of civic responsibility and national security awareness among citizens is imperative (Busher, Choudhury, Thomas, & Harris, 2017). Citizenship education serves this purpose by aiming to develop informed, active, and responsible citizens who can constructively engage with their societies and contribute to national development. It addresses not just civic rights and duties, but also ethical, social, and political issues, fostering democratic values, critical thinking, and participation (Kerr, 1999; Schulz et al., 2010).

According to the United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), education is essential for building inclusive, peaceful, and just societies, emphasizing the role of education in nurturing global citizenship and human rights (UNESCO, 2015). This aligns with the view that a well-educated populace is better equipped to understand their responsibilities and roles in sustaining national security and democratic governance (Osler & Starkey, 2006; Print, 2007). In many nations, the concept of national citizenship is being redefined due to globalization, migration, and shifting geopolitical landscapes. Education systems must adapt by helping students understand the evolving nature of citizenship and preparing them to be active participants in national and global affairs (Banks, 2008; Heater, 2004). A key component of citizenship education is national security awareness understanding both internal and external threats, emergency preparedness, and the broader geopolitical context in which a nation operates (Davies, 2004; Print & Smith, 2000).

Educational assessments, which are essential tools for evaluating the success of instructional goals, play a critical role in this process. Traditionally focused on core academic competencies such as literacy and numeracy, assessments are now being expanded to include broader civic and socio-political competencies (Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald, & Schulz, 2001; Schulz et al., 2010). This includes measuring students' awareness of national security, critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and civic responsibility. For example, written assignments and essays can assess students' ability to reason about real-world issues, while surveys can capture attitudes and engagement (Cohen & Peled, 2011; Hoskins & Crick, 2010). Formative assessments those carried out during instruction such as classroom discussions, simulations, and reflective exercises, can be used to monitor students' developing understanding of civil rights, national duties, and global security concerns. Summative assessments, including standardized exams or final projects, evaluate students' comprehensive understanding and their ability to apply civic knowledge to real-world scenarios (Torney-Purta et al., 2001; Schulz et al., 2018). National security in the 21st century has moved beyond traditional military defense to include a wider array of issues such as cyber threats, environmental security, and the spread of disinformation. Educational responses must thus go beyond simply conveying facts they should foster resilience, digital literacy, and collaborative problem-solving (UNESCO, 2017; Busher et al., 2017). By educating students on these multifaceted threats and teaching them how to evaluate information critically, education contributes to building societies that are not only informed but also resistant to manipulation and destabilization (Davies, 2004; Hoskins & Crick, 2010).

Moreover, the integration of citizenship education and national security awareness into formal curricula has been associated with increased civic participation, including higher rates of voting, volunteering, and engagement in political dialogue (Torney-Purta et al., 2001; Print, 2007). Likewise, individuals exposed to national security education demonstrate a greater willingness to comply with emergency protocols and contribute to community resilience in times of crisis (Cohen & Peled, 2011). Educational assessments are thus pivotal not only in gauging student learning but also in guiding policy decisions. They offer critical feedback for curriculum development and instructional improvement, helping to identify gaps in students' understanding of civic and security-related issues (Hoskins, Villalba, & Van Nijlen, 2012). When designed and implemented effectively, assessments can serve as early indicators of societal knowledge trends and shape educational responses to emerging threats.

Educational assessments that emphasize citizenship and national security awareness are essential for shaping a well-informed and responsible populace. They help ensure that future generations possess the knowledge, values, and competencies needed to navigate complex societal challenges and contribute meaningfully to national development and security. The integration of such themes into curricula, supported by comprehensive and inclusive assessment methods, is vital for fostering a resilient, participatory, and peaceful society in an increasingly interconnected world (UNESCO, 2015; Schulz et al., 2018). It's against this background, therefore, the study intend to investigate Influence of Educational Assessment on Students' Citizenship and National Security Awareness in secondary schools in Dutsin-Ma LGA, Katsina State.

Statement of the Problem

The increasing complexity of global security threats and the growing need for active and informed citizenship have underscored the importance of integrating national security awareness and citizenship education into formal education systems (Ajayi, 2019; UNESCO, 2021). However, in many regions, including Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area (LGA) in Katsina State, there remains limited research on the role of educational assessments in shaping students' understanding of national security and their responsibilities as citizens (Okebukola, 2016; NERDC, 2013). In particular, there is a lack of comprehensive studies on how educational assessments in secondary schools contribute to developing national security awareness and citizenship values among students.

Despite the growing importance of national security in public discourse (Udeanya & Akinyemi, 2020), educational curricula in many secondary schools still focus primarily on academic subjects, with insufficient emphasis on national security education and civic responsibilities (Falade & Adeyemi, 2015). Furthermore, it is unclear whether the existing educational assessments in these schools effectively measure students' understanding of these critical issues or whether they provide the necessary feedback to improve students' engagement with national security topics (Obanya, 2010; WAEC, 2022). As a result, the potential role of educational

assessment in promoting national security awareness and responsible citizenship among students in Dutsin-Ma LGA remains underexplored.

This study seeks to address this gap by studying how educational assessments in secondary schools in Dutsin-Ma LGA are utilized to foster an understanding of national security and citizenship. Specifically, it aims to assess the extent to which these assessments shape students' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors related to national security issues, and to identify the challenges faced by educators in integrating such themes into their assessment practices.

Objectives of the Study

The study examines the influence of educational assessment on students' citizenship and national security awareness in secondary schools in Dutsin-Ma LGA, Katsina state. Specifically the study seeks to:

1. Examine the influence of educational assessments on students' attitudes towards national security awareness in secondary schools in Dutsin-Ma LGA, Katsina state.
2. Identify the challenges of educational assessments on citizenship education and national security awareness in secondary schools in Dutsin-Ma LGA, Katsina state.

Research Questions

1. What is the influence of educational assessments on students' attitudes towards national security awareness in secondary schools in Dutsin-Ma LGA, Katsina state?
2. What are the challenges of educational assessments on citizenship education and national security awareness in secondary schools in Dutsin-Ma LGA, Katsina state?

Methodology

Two objectives and their corresponding research questions were raised for the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The design is suitable because it helps in describing the existing conditions, and challenges faced by educators in integrating such themes into their assessment practices. The population of the study was 4,109 comprising the Principals, teachers and students from all the 20 secondary schools in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select 351 out of 4,109 respondents as the sample size for the study. Citizenship and National Security Awareness Questionnaire (CANSQAQ) was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by two experts from Test, Measurement and Evaluation Unit, Federal University Dutsin-Ma. The reliability of the instrument was determined using test re-test method and the data obtained was analysed using Pearson Moment Correlation and yielded a Coefficient of 0.67. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation. An interpretive benchmark of 2.50 was established for the outcomes, consistent with common practices in educational research where a mean score of 2.50 on a 4-point Likert scale is considered the threshold for agreement or significance (Boone & Boone, 2012; Agwu & Kalu, 2015).

Results

Research Question One: What is the influence of educational assessments on students' attitudes towards national security awareness in secondary schools in Dutsin-Ma LGA, Katsina State?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of students' citizenship and national security awareness

S/ N	Item Statements	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Remark
1.	Educational assessments influence how students view national security issues.	351	2.91	.70	Agree
2.	Assessments helped students develop a better understanding of their responsibilities as citizens.	351	2.77	.66	Agree
3.	Students' attitudes towards national security do improve after completing assessments on the subject.	351	2.84	.69	Agree
4.	Assessments do contribute to students' sense of duty towards their community and country.	351	2.87	.69	Agree
5.	Educational assessments motivate students to act more responsibly in terms of national security and citizenship.	351	2.68	.64	Agree
Decision Mean			2.81	0.68	Agree

Table 1 shows that item 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 had mean scores above the mean benchmark of 2.50, this implies that respondents were of the opinions that educational assessments influence how students view national security issues, that assessments helped students develop a better understanding of their responsibilities as citizens, that students' attitudes towards national security do improve after completing assessments on the subject, that assessments do contribute to students' sense of duty towards their community and country and that educational assessments motivate students to act more responsibly in terms of national security and citizenship. However, from the responses of the respondents one can find that educational assessments have a positive influence on students' attitudes toward national security and citizenship in secondary schools in Dutsin-Ma LGA as indicated by the decision mean score of 2.81.

Research Question Two: What are the challenges of educational assessments on citizenship education and national security awareness in secondary schools in Dutsin-Ma LGA, Katsina state?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation on challenges of citizenship education and national security awareness.

S/ N	Item Statements	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Remark
1.	You encounter difficulties when including national security topics in educational assessments.	351	2.82	.68	Agree
2.	There are sufficient resources or materials to integrate national security and citizenship education into assessments.	351	2.46	.57	Disagree
3.	Educators do often receive professional development or training to effectively assess national security and citizenship education.	351	2.66	.63	Agree
4.	You face challenges in aligning the national security curriculum with the assessment criteria.	351	2.55	.59	Agree
5.	There are challenges in creating assessment questions that effectively measure students' understanding of national security.	351	2.61	.62	Agree
Decision Mean			2.62	0.62	Agree

Table 2 shows that item 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 had mean scores above the mean benchmark of 2.50, it implies that respondents were of the opinions that they encounter difficulties when including national security topics in educational assessments, that there are sufficient resources or materials to integrate national security and citizenship education into assessments, that educators do often receive professional development or training to effectively assess national security and citizenship education, that they face challenges in aligning the national security curriculum with the assessment criteria, and that there are challenges in creating assessment questions that effectively measure students' understanding of national security. However, from the responses of the respondents one can find that educators face several challenges in integrating national security and citizenship education into assessments such as lack of resources, insufficient training, and challenges in aligning curriculum content with assessment criteria as indicated by the decision mean score of 2.62.

Discussion of Findings

The finding in research question one revealed that educational assessments have a positive influence on students' attitudes toward national security and citizenship in secondary schools in Dutsin-Ma LGA. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Westheimer & Kahne (2004) who noted that assessments tied to participatory and justice-oriented citizenship education foster responsibility and civic engagement. Also with the findings of Banks (2008) who emphasized that transformative potential of assessments that engage students in discussions about democracy, rights, and responsibilities.

The finding in research question two revealed that educators face several challenges in integrating national security and citizenship education into assessments such as lack of resources, insufficient training, and challenges in aligning curriculum content with assessment criteria. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Ajiboye & Odetoro (2013) who found in a Nigerian context that teachers face significant challenges in implementing civic education, including poor infrastructure and lack of teaching materials. Also with the findings of Print, Ørnbo, & Nielsen (2002) who revealed that professional development gaps and curriculum misalignment as key obstacles in teaching and assessing citizenship education.

Conclusion

Based on the findings the study concluded that educational assessments have a positive influence on students' attitudes toward national security and citizenship in secondary schools in Dutsin-Ma LGA. Lastly, the study concluded that educators face several challenges in integrating national security and citizenship education into assessments such as lack of resources, insufficient training, and challenges in aligning curriculum content with assessment criteria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, discussions and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Education policymakers and school administrators should ensure that national security and citizenship themes are embedded across curricula and assessments at all educational levels.
2. Education ministries and teacher training institutions should provide regular professional development and resources to equip educators with the skills and tools needed to effectively assess national security and citizenship education.

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