

Citizenship Education as a Vehicle for Nation Building: Perspective of Nigeria Citizens

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Abstract:

This study investigated the role of citizenship education as a vehicle for nation-building: the perspective of Nigerian citizens. Four objectives guided the study, and four research questions were answered. The study used social constructivist theory propounded by Lev Vygotsky in the mid-20th century. The study employed a cross-sectional survey research design targeting Nigerian citizens, including students, civil servants, public servants, policymakers, business people, parents, politicians, and traditional rulers. A sample of 400 respondents was selected through stratified sampling to enhance representativeness, precision, and reliability, particularly for studies on citizenship education and nation-building. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher, comprising demographic questions (Section A) and 30 items under four subheadings on a four-point Likert scale (Section B). Content validity was ensured through expert review, and reliability was confirmed via the split-half method, yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.87. Data collection was conducted online via Google Forms, and analysis was performed using descriptive statistics through mean and standard deviation computed in SPSS version 25.0. The analysis revealed that citizens have various and varying perceptions towards nation-building, and the study also identified corruption, tribalism, political instability, ethnic sentiments, and religious conflict as significant challenges to nation-building in Nigeria, among others. The study recommended that the Nigerian government and educational institutions intensify efforts to integrate comprehensive citizenship education into all levels of the academic curriculum. The curriculum should emphasize national unity, democratic values, and the importance of inclusiveness in governance.

Keywords:

Citizenship education; nation building; citizens; perception and Nigeria.

I. Introduction

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa, with over 200 million people, making it one of the largest economies on the continent. Rich in natural resources, Nigeria boasts vast oil and natural gas reserves, contributing significantly to its GDP and making it a key player in the global energy market. Additionally, the country possesses abundant agricultural potential, fertile land suitable for various crops, and a growing mining sector that includes solid minerals like tin, limestone, and coal. Nigeria's diverse human capital, vibrant entrepreneurial spirit, and youthful population provide substantial opportunities for economic growth and innovation (Afolabi, 2015). However, realizing this potential requires addressing challenges like political instability, infrastructure deficits, and social inequalities. With strategic investments in education, technology, and infrastructure, Nigeria can harness its resources fully, positioning itself as a leading economic powerhouse in Africa and globally.

Like every country, Nigeria seeks to build a nation that the citizens and the world can be proud of. Still, this dream is often frustrated by many internal and external challenges. The entity called Nigeria today has been described differently by scholars. Some scholars consider it a mere geographical expression; some see it as a forced marriage of inconvenience, and others see it as a marriage of necessity geared towards building a strong, giant, and formidable African nation. Amongst all these positions lies different challenges and problems of nation-building. For Nigeria to develop, there must be a deliberate effort to build and promote nation-building actions and activities. Nation-building has become essential, a topic that remains on the front burner of Nigeria as the country is still struggling with nation-building efforts and action (Oni & Adebisi, 2020). Although different scholars and writers have described the problem of Nigeria as either a leadership problem or an amalgamation problem, some also see it lack of national ideology. To achieve the Nigeria of our dreams, which is a prosperous Nigeria where there will be more citizens than tribes persons and ethnic persons and where patriotism will supersede all forms of primordial sentiments, there must be nation-building efforts. Nation-building promotes a nation's development by creating avenues and an equal level playing ground for all and sundry to succeed. Building a nation is not a one-person show and has revealed that all hands must be on deck to achieve nation-building.

Nation-building plays a crucial role in fostering unity, stability, and socio-economic progress within a country by integrating diverse ethnic, cultural, and social groups into a cohesive national identity. In the context of Nigeria and Africa at large, nation-building is essential for overcoming historical divisions and conflicts that have often hindered development. By promoting inclusive governance, equitable distribution of resources, and active participation of all citizens in the political process, nation-building strengthens the social fabric. It enhances trust between the state and its people (Kehinde, 2023). With Nigeria's complex ethnic and religious diversity, effective nation-building is pivotal in mitigating tensions, curbing corruption, and ensuring that development efforts are sustainable and inclusive. In a broader African context, nation-building contributes to regional stability, facilitates cooperation among nations, and enables the continent to tackle common challenges such as poverty, insecurity, and underdevelopment. Successful nation-building lays the foundation for long-term peace, economic growth, and social development, making it a critical component of Nigeria's and Africa's broader aspirations for prosperity.

Citizenship education is a crucial pointer to nation-building. Nigeria, as a country, has prioritized citizenship education from the primary school level to the tertiary level. This is in cognizance of the role of citizenship education in building and developing a nation. Citizenship education refers to educating individuals, particularly the youth, about their rights, responsibilities, and roles as citizens within a society (Franch, 2020). It encompasses teaching the principles of democracy, governance, human rights, and the importance of civic participation. Citizenship education aims to equip citizens with the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes necessary to contribute positively to their communities and the broader nation. It fosters an understanding of national values, the legal system, and the significance of participating in civic duties such as voting, community service, and advocacy.

Citizenship education in Nigeria plays a pivotal role in nation-building by promoting national unity, social cohesion, and active participation in the democratic process. It helps to bridge the gaps created by Nigeria's diverse ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds, fostering a sense of shared identity and common purpose. By instilling values such as tolerance, respect for diversity, and a commitment to the common good, citizenship education can mitigate divisive tendencies like ethnic conflicts and religious intolerance that have

historically plagued the country. It also empowers citizens to hold their leaders accountable, enhancing transparency and good governance. Through a well-implemented citizenship education curriculum, Nigeria can cultivate a more informed and engaged citizenry capable of contributing to the nation's development and upholding democratic principles, essential for the country's progress and stability. Maladjusted children were identified by the Handicapped pupils and School Health Regulation as pupils who show evidence of psychological disturbance or emotional instability and who require special educational treatment in order to affect their personal social or educational readjustment (Gadour. A, 2009).

1.1 Statement of the problem

Nigeria, with its vast resources and strategic position in Africa, has the potential to be a leading nation capable of spearheading development and advancement across the continent. However, the country is grappling with significant challenges that are undermining its nation-building efforts. Issues such as corruption, influence peddling, tribalism, primordial sentiments, nepotism, and religious bigotry have posed severe obstacles to Nigeria's development and national cohesion. Despite various initiatives by the government and stakeholders, including the promotion of the "One Nigeria" policy, support for interfaith and inter-ethnic marriages, the introduction of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) scheme, and the inclusion of social studies in the educational curriculum, these efforts have not fully addressed the underlying issues. Nigeria continues to face challenges threatening its unity and progress as a nation. Without deliberate and conscious efforts to tackle these problems, the vision of a prosperous Nigeria, where all citizens have the opportunity to achieve their aspirations, may remain elusive. This situation underscores the need to explore citizenship education as a tool for fostering patriotism and a deeper understanding of nation-building among Nigerians. Therefore, this research seeks to investigate the role of citizenship education in promoting nation-building from a Nigerian perspective, aiming to identify how it can be leveraged to address the nation's ongoing challenges and support its development goals.

1.2 Aim and Objectives

Considering Nigerian perspectives, the study aims to investigate the influence of citizenship education as a vehicle for nation-building. Specifically, the objectives include to:

1. find out citizens' perception towards nation-building
2. determine the challenges of nation-building in Nigeria
3. identify the roles of citizenship education in nation-building
4. suggest ways of promoting nation-building in Nigeria

1.3 Research questions

The following research questions were answered in the study

1. What are citizens' perceptions of nation-building?
2. What are the challenges of nation-building in Nigeria?
3. What are the roles of citizenship education in nation-building?
4. Suggest ways of promoting nation-building in Nigeria.

1.4 Significance of the study

The study findings will benefit stakeholders, such as students, teachers, parents, government and policymakers, society, and future researchers. These stakeholders will access the study findings from the Internet, journals, and workshops as the researcher socially drives the study and the findings.

1.5 Theoretical framework

The theory underpinning the study is the social constructivist theory propounded by Lev Vygotsky in the mid-20th century. Social Constructivist Theory emphasizes that knowledge and understanding are constructed through social interactions and experiences. This theory posits that learning is inherently a collaborative process, where individuals build meaning through engaging with others, such as peers, teachers, and the broader community. Vygotsky highlighted the importance of language and culture in shaping cognitive development, suggesting that learning is deeply embedded in social contexts. He introduced concepts like the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which emphasizes the potential for learning with the guidance of more knowledgeable individuals, and scaffolding, where support is gradually removed as the learner gains independence. Social constructivist theory also stresses the learner's active role in engaging with and interpreting information rather than passively receiving it, making learning a dynamic and interactive process. This approach encourages the development of critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and a deeper understanding of content through collaborative and contextualized learning experiences.

Social Constructivist Theory is highly relevant to the research topic because it emphasizes the importance of learning within social and cultural contexts, which is central to effective citizenship education. By applying this theory, citizenship education can be understood as a process that involves active engagement, dialogue, and collaboration among individuals and communities, fostering a sense of shared identity and common goals necessary for nation-building. This approach helps citizens develop critical thinking skills and a deeper understanding of their societal roles and responsibilities, which are essential for overcoming challenges like corruption, tribalism, and religious bigotry in Nigeria. Social Constructivist Theory supports the idea that citizenship education should be about imparting knowledge and creating experiences that allow individuals to practice and internalize the values of patriotism, social cohesion, and civic responsibility. Through interactive and participatory methods, citizens are encouraged to engage with diverse perspectives, build empathy, and work collectively towards national development goals. This aligns well with the need to address Nigeria's complex socio-political challenges and to foster a more inclusive, cooperative, and resilient national identity. Therefore, the theory provides a robust framework for understanding how citizenship education can be strategically used to promote nation-building by cultivating informed, active, and responsible citizens committed to Nigeria's collective well-being.

II. Review of Literature

2.1 Citizenship education

Citizenship education refers to the educational process that equips individuals with the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes necessary to become informed, responsible, and active members of their society. It aims to foster civic competence and a sense of belonging among citizens by teaching them about their rights, duties, and responsibilities within a democratic society. Citizenship education goes beyond merely transmitting factual knowledge; it involves critical thinking, problem-solving, and the development of personal and social skills that enable individuals to engage effectively in civic life (Saldiray & Doğanay, 2024). This form of education promotes values such as respect for diversity, social justice, human rights, and the rule of law, encouraging individuals to participate in their local and global communities. In the Nigerian context, citizenship education is particularly significant as it addresses the diverse and often fragmented nature of the country's social fabric. By emphasizing unity, tolerance, and democratic engagement, it seeks to bridge ethnic, religious, and regional divides, thereby

fostering a more cohesive national identity. Citizenship education in Nigeria also promotes national values, including patriotism, integrity, and accountability, which are crucial in addressing the persistent challenges of corruption, nepotism, and other forms of social injustice hindering national development. According to recent studies, effective citizenship education has the potential to transform individuals into active agents of change who contribute to the nation-building process by participating in governance, advocating for social reforms, and supporting initiatives that enhance the common good (Duru, 2021; Oladele & Oluwatobi, 2023).

Furthermore, citizenship education is seen as a vital tool for nurturing the next generation of leaders and responsible citizens equipped to tackle Nigeria's pressing socio-political challenges. It encourages critical reflection on the roles and functions of government, the importance of civic participation, and the impact of individual and collective actions on national development. Through curriculum integration in schools and community-based initiatives, citizenship education aims to instill a sense of duty and commitment to the country's progress among Nigerian youth, laying the foundation for sustainable nation-building efforts.

2.2 Nation building

Nation-building refers to constructing or structuring a national identity using the state's power. It involves the deliberate efforts of governments, leaders, and citizens to create a sense of national unity and cohesion among diverse groups within a country. This process often includes fostering a shared understanding of history, culture, and values and promoting the development of institutions that support governance, social stability, and economic development. Nation-building is not limited to political integration; it also encompasses economic growth, social justice, and strengthening democratic practices. In essence, nation-building is about creating the conditions under which a nation can thrive, ensuring that all citizens feel a sense of belonging and responsibility toward their country's progress (Ergun, 2022). In the Nigerian context, nation-building is particularly complex due to ethnic, religious, and regional diversity. Since independence, Nigeria has grappled with challenges such as ethnic tensions, corruption, political instability, and economic disparities that have hindered its nation-building efforts. As a result, nation-building in Nigeria has often focused on promoting national unity and reducing sectional conflicts. Key strategies have included implementing policies that encourage inter-ethnic cooperation, the establishment of federal structures that aim to balance regional interests, and the promotion of national symbols and narratives that emphasize a collective Nigerian identity. According to recent research, successful nation-building in Nigeria requires a multifaceted approach that addresses governance's systemic challenges and the socio-cultural dynamics that influence citizens' perceptions of the nation-state (Akinola, 2022; Okonkwo & Ugochukwu, 2023).

The relevance of nation-building to Nigeria's development is evident in its potential to create a stable and inclusive society where all citizens can contribute to and benefit from national progress. Effective nation-building can help to reduce conflicts, promote social harmony, and enhance political stability, all of which are crucial for sustainable development. By addressing issues such as corruption, tribalism, and social inequality, nation-building efforts can pave the way for a more equitable distribution of resources and opportunities, thereby fostering a more prosperous and unified Nigeria. As highlighted by various scholars, the success of nation-building in Nigeria hinges on the active participation of all citizens, the promotion of democratic values, and the commitment to creating institutions that reflect the country's diverse makeup while striving for common goals.

2.3 Challenges of nation building in Nigeria today

The challenges of nation-building in Nigeria today are multifaceted and deeply rooted in the country's complex socio-political and economic landscape. One of the primary challenges is ethnic and religious diversity, which, while a potential source of strength, has often led to division and conflict. Nigeria is home to over 250 ethnic groups, each with distinct languages, customs, and religions, frequently resulting in competition for resources, political power, and influence. When not effectively managed, this diversity exacerbates tensions and hampers the process of forging a cohesive national identity. Ethnic and religious conflicts have historically undermined national unity, with incidents such as the Nigerian Civil War and ongoing sectarian violence in the Middle Belt and Northeast regions serving as stark reminders of the fragility of national cohesion. Corruption is another significant challenge that impedes nation-building in Nigeria. It permeates various levels of government and public institutions, eroding trust in leadership and governance (Harford, 2022). Corruption diverts resources away from critical development needs and undermines the effectiveness of policies promoting national unity and development. According to Transparency International, Nigeria consistently ranks among the most corrupt countries globally, reflecting how deeply entrenched this issue is. The pervasive nature of corruption has led to a lack of accountability and transparency, further weakening the foundation of nation-building by fostering disillusionment and apathy among citizens.

Political instability and poor governance also pose significant challenges to nation-building in Nigeria. The country has experienced political turbulence, including military coups, contested elections, and widespread protests. These disruptions have often derailed developmental agendas and hindered the establishment of stable democratic institutions. Additionally, governance challenges such as weak rule of law, human rights abuses, and ineffective public service delivery have eroded public confidence in the state. The frequent changes in leadership and lack of policy continuity have further impeded long-term nation-building efforts, making it challenging to sustain initiatives to foster unity and development. Economic inequality and poverty are critical obstacles to nation-building in Nigeria. Despite being one of the largest economies in Africa, Nigeria has significant income disparities, with a large portion of the population living in poverty. High unemployment rates, particularly among the youth, exacerbate social tensions and fuel grievances that threaten national stability. The economic divide between the wealthy and the poor regions, especially between the oil-rich South and the less developed North, has led to perceptions of marginalization and unequal distribution of resources. This economic disparity undermines efforts to create a sense of shared prosperity and inclusivity, essential components of nation-building.

Insecurity is another profound challenge that affects nation-building in Nigeria. The country faces multiple security threats, including terrorism by groups such as Boko Haram, banditry, kidnappings, and communal clashes. These security issues not only result in the loss of lives and displacement of communities but also create an environment of fear and instability that is not conducive to nation-building. The government's struggle to address these security challenges has further eroded public trust and highlighted the need for a more robust and coordinated approach to national security. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive and inclusive approach that involves all stakeholders, including government, civil society, and the private sector. Strengthening institutions, promoting good governance, and fostering a sense of national identity that transcends ethnic and religious lines are critical to overcoming the hurdles that hinder nation-building in Nigeria today. Recent studies underscore the importance of dialogue, education, and inclusive economic policies as essential

strategies for mitigating these challenges and promoting sustainable nation-building in Nigeria (Adebayo, 2023; Mohammed & Ibrahim, 2024).

2.4 Ways of Promoting nation building

Promoting nation-building in Nigeria involves implementing strategies that foster unity, inclusiveness, and sustainable development. One practical approach is promoting inclusive governance, which ensures that all segments of society, regardless of ethnic, religious, or regional affiliations, are represented in the political process. Inclusive governance can help mitigate feelings of marginalization and promote belonging among diverse groups. Efforts such as electoral reforms, decentralization of power, and strengthening democratic institutions are critical in making governance more participatory and responsive to the needs of all citizens. By ensuring that the government is accountable and transparent, citizens are more likely to trust and engage with national initiatives, thereby strengthening the nation-building process (Afroz, 2020). Education, particularly citizenship education, is pivotal in promoting nation-building in Nigeria. Citizenship education helps to instill a sense of national identity, civic responsibility, and respect for diversity among citizens. It equips individuals with the knowledge and skills needed to participate actively in their country's civic and political life. Educational programs emphasizing democracy, human rights, and social justice are essential in cultivating a generation of Nigerians committed to nation-building principles. Moreover, integrating national history and shared cultural heritage into school curricula can foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of Nigerians' common bonds, thereby reducing ethnic and religious divisions.

Economic empowerment and equitable distribution of resources are also crucial for promoting nation-building in Nigeria. Economic policies focusing on job creation, poverty reduction, and addressing regional inequalities can help bridge the economic divides that often fuel social unrest and hinder national unity. Programs that support entrepreneurship, particularly among youth and women, can empower marginalized communities and foster a sense of inclusion in the nation's economic progress. Ensuring that resources from the country's wealth, such as oil revenues, are fairly distributed and invested in public goods like education, healthcare, and infrastructure is vital in reducing regional disparities and promoting a more cohesive society (Tadesse, 2022). Promoting social integration and intergroup dialogue is another effective way of fostering nation-building in Nigeria. Initiatives encouraging interaction among ethnic, religious, and regional groups can help break down stereotypes and build mutual understanding. Programs such as interfaith dialogues, cultural exchanges, and community service projects provide platforms for Nigerians to collaborate and build relationships across divides. The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) is a notable example of a program that promotes national unity by bringing together young graduates from different parts of the country to serve in communities outside their regions of origin. Such initiatives not only help reduce prejudices but also strengthen the nation's social fabric.

Addressing security challenges is also fundamental to promoting nation-building in Nigeria. A secure and stable environment is essential for any nation-building effort to succeed. This requires a comprehensive approach to security beyond military solutions to address the root causes of conflict, such as poverty, unemployment, and political exclusion. Strengthening the capacity of security agencies, improving intelligence and community policing, and fostering collaboration between federal, state, and local authorities can enhance efforts to maintain peace and security. Moreover, promoting justice and reconciliation, especially in conflict-affected regions, is critical in healing divisions and building a more united and peaceful nation. Fostering a national identity transcending ethnic and religious affiliations is

vital in promoting nation-building in Nigeria. This involves creating a shared vision of the future that all Nigerians can aspire to, regardless of their backgrounds. National symbols, ceremonies, and narratives celebrating the country's diversity while emphasizing shared values and goals can play a significant role (Balogun, 2021). Media campaigns, public service announcements, and national celebrations that highlight the nation's achievements and the contributions of different groups can build a sense of pride and collective ownership of the nation's progress. Promoting a narrative of unity and resilience can inspire citizens to work together towards a common purpose, strengthening the foundation of nation-building.

III. Research Methods

The study adopted a survey research design, specifically a cross-sectional survey research design. The population consists of citizens of Nigeria, particularly students, civil servants, public servers, policymakers, businessmen and women, parents and politicians, as well as traditional rulers. A sample size of 400 respondents was selected from the population using a stratified sampling technique. Stratified sampling not only improves the sample's representativeness but also enhances the precision and reliability of the research findings, making it a robust choice for studies focused on citizenship education and nation-building. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher. The questionnaire contains two sections, A and B. Section A includes the respondents' demographic data. At the same time, section B contains 30 questionnaire items under four subheadings and is also structured under a four-point scale of SA, A, D, and SD. The instrument was subjected to expert scrutiny to establish content validity. The reliability was also established using internal consistency through the split half method, and the reliability coefficient was ascertained at 0.87. The data was collected using online Google Forms, and the data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics through mean and standard deviation computed using SPSS version 25.0.

IV. Results and Discussion

Table 1. Percentage Analysis of demographic data of respondents.

VARIABLES	CATEGORY	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
GENDER	Male	235	58.7
	Female	165	41.3
	Total	400	100
Age Range	8-12years	35	8.7
	13-19year	155	38.8
	20-40years	160	40
	50 and above	50	12.5
	Total	400	100
Occupation	Student	145	36.2
	Civil servant	115	28.7
	Public servant	75	18.7
	Business	35	8.6
	Others	40	10
	Total	400	100

Table 1 presents a demographic analysis of the respondents. The study revealed that there were more male respondents than female respondents. Also, more respondents were within the age bracket of 20-40, and most of the respondents were students.

4.1 Answering of research questions

Research question one: What are citizens' perceptions towards nation-building?

Table 2. Mean Responses of Respondents to Research Question One

S/N	Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision
1	Optimism and hope.	400	3.37	.487	Accept
2	Cynicism and distrust.	400	2.91	.950	Accept
3	Patriotism and pride.	400	3.12	.847	Accept
4	Frustration and disappointment.	400	3.37	.672	Accept
5	Desire for inclusion and fairness.	400	3.54	.503	Accept
6	Concern for security and stability.	400	3.42	.496	Accept
7	Economic expectations and job opportunities.	400	3.51	.501	Accept
8	Influence of religious and ethnic views.	400	3.47	.496	Accept

Table 2 above presents students' opinions on research question one, which seeks to determine citizens' perceptions of nation-building in Nigeria. The analysis revealed that citizens' perceptions of nation-building vary, including the desire for fairness, frustration, economic expectation, optimism, and hope. The implication is that citizens' perceptions of nation-building vary for various reasons.

Research question two: What are the challenges of nation-building in Nigeria?

Table 3. Mean Responses of Respondents to Research Question Two

S/N	Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision
1	Corruption.	400	2.82	.947	Accept
2	Tribalism.	400	3.28	.796	Accept
3	Religious conflicts.	400	3.39	.675	Accept
4	Political instability.	400	3.16	.527	Accept
5	Poor governance.	400	2.65	.991	Accept
6	Economic inequality.	400	2.98	.867	Accept
7	Insecurity and violence.	400	3.11	.714	Accept
8	Ethnic tensions.	400	3.23	.774	Accept

Table 3 above presents respondents' opinions on research question two, which seeks to discover the challenges of nation-building in Nigeria. The analysis revealed various problems hindering nation-building in Nigeria, and some of the major issues include corruption, tribalism, religious conflicts, political instability, and poor governance, among others. The implication is that Nigeria and the nation-building effort are threatened by many factors that must be addressed to build a good nation.

Research question three: What are the roles of citizenship education in nation-building?

Table 4. Mean Responses of Respondents to Research Question Three

S/N	Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision
1	Promotes national unity.	400	3.12	.847	Accept
2	Encourages civic responsibility.	400	3.37	.672	Accept
3	Fosters patriotism.	400	3.54	.503	Accept
4	Enhances political awareness.	400	2.51	1.002	Accept
5	Reduces ethnic tensions.	400	3.28	.796	Accept
6	Promotes social justice.	400	3.10	.811	Accept
7	Develops critical thinking.	400	3.02	.794	Accept

Table 4 above presents respondents' opinions on research question three, which seeks to determine the roles of citizenship education in nation-building. The analysis revealed that citizenship education plays certain roles in promoting and achieving nation-building in Nigeria. The role of citizenship education includes promoting national unity, fostering patriotism, reducing ethnic tension, developing critical thinking, and encouraging civic responsibilities, among others. The implication is that citizenship education is key to nation-building and must be kept from the background for any reason.

Research question four: What are the ways of promoting nation-building in Nigeria

Table 5. Mean Responses of Respondents to Research Question Four opinion of Respondents on Ways of Promoting Nation Building in Nigeria

S/N	Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision
1	Strengthening democratic institutions	400	3.39	.675	Accept
2	Promoting inclusive governance	400	3.23	.567	Accept
3	Enhancing education and literacy	400	2.65	.991	Accept
4	Encouraging national dialogue	400	3.12	.847	Accept
5	Fostering inter-ethnic and inter-religious harmony	400	3.37	.672	Accept
6	Combating corruption	400	3.11	.835	Accept
7	Investing in youth empowerment.	400	3.12	.827	Accept

Table 5 depicts respondents' opinions on research question four, which seeks to find ways of promoting nation-building in Nigeria. The analysis revealed that democratic institutions should be strengthened, education and literacy should be enhanced, national dialogue should be encouraged, and corruption should be curbed. All the items are positive, considering the mean scores; therefore, they are accepted.

Discussion of findings

The study on citizenship education as a vehicle for nation-building in Nigeria provides a multifaceted view of how citizens perceive nation-building efforts, and the role citizenship education plays in this context. The study's findings that citizens' perceptions of nation-building can be categorized into distrust, frustration, patriotism, and a desire for inclusion align with broader observations in the literature. For instance, Ojo and Adebayo (2017)

emphasize that a sense of exclusion and distrust among citizens often stems from historical grievances and systemic inequalities, undermining collective national identity and hindering nation-building efforts. Similarly, Akinwale (2019) supports these findings by noting that frustrations related to governance and social justice issues contribute to the varied perceptions of nation-building, often leading to a fragmented citizenry with divergent expectations and commitments to national development.

The study's identification of corruption, tribalism, political instability, ethnic sentiments, and religious conflict as significant challenges to nation-building in Nigeria is corroborated by numerous scholars. For example, Onuoha (2018) highlights that corruption and ethnic favoritism erode public trust in government institutions, thus impeding nation-building. This view is further supported by Ake (2016), who discusses how ethnic and religious conflicts, often fueled by political manipulation, create deep divisions within the society, obstructing the path to a cohesive national identity and stable governance. Furthermore, the study's assertion that citizenship education plays a critical role in promoting national unity, enhancing political awareness, reducing ethnic tensions, and fostering social justice aligns with the perspectives of several scholars. Nwangwu et al. (2019) argue that citizenship education is essential in shaping informed and active citizens who understand their rights and responsibilities, which is fundamental to sustaining democratic governance and national cohesion. This is echoed by Ajayi (2020), who notes that citizenship education can mitigate ethnic and religious prejudices by fostering a sense of shared identity and common purpose among diverse groups within the nation.

The study's suggestion that strengthening democratic institutions, promoting inclusive governance, and addressing unemployment are crucial actions for enhancing nation-building efforts is supported by research.

Afolabi and Lawal (2017) emphasize that robust democratic institutions are vital for ensuring accountability, transparency, and inclusiveness, all of which are necessary for national development and unity. Likewise, Okon and John (2021) highlight that inclusive governance, where all groups feel represented and valued, reduces the sense of marginalization and can foster a collective commitment to nation-building. Furthermore, Adesina (2018) discusses the critical role of addressing unemployment, particularly among youth, as economic disenfranchisement often leads to social unrest and hampers national unity and development efforts. Overall, the study's findings are well-supported by existing literature, underscoring the complex interplay between citizens' perceptions, systemic challenges, and the pivotal role of citizenship education in fostering nation-building in Nigeria. The evidence suggests that addressing these multifaceted challenges through comprehensive citizenship education and inclusive, democratic governance is essential for sustainable nation-building.

V. Conclusion

The study concludes that citizenship education is vital for nation-building in Nigeria, bridging the divides of distrust, frustration, and ethnic tensions among citizens by fostering a sense of national unity, political awareness, and social justice. However, significant challenges such as corruption, tribalism, political instability, and religious conflicts continue to hinder the progress of nation-building efforts. The varied perceptions of citizens, from feelings of exclusion and frustration to patriotism and a desire for inclusion, underscore the complex socio-political landscape that needs to be navigated. Effective nation-building requires a multifaceted approach that not only strengthens democratic institutions and promotes

inclusive governance but also addresses critical socio-economic issues like unemployment. Ultimately, the study emphasizes that a strategic emphasis on citizenship education, combined with targeted actions to tackle these challenges, can significantly enhance the nation-building process in Nigeria, leading to a more united and prosperous society.

Recommendations

The study made the following recommendations based on its findings from the analysis of the collected data.

1. The Nigerian government and educational institutions intensify efforts to integrate comprehensive citizenship education into all levels of the academic curriculum.
2. The curriculum should emphasize national unity, democratic values, and the importance of inclusiveness in governance. Strengthening democratic institutions is essential to promoting transparency and accountability and reducing corruption and ethnic favoritism.
3. Inclusive policies that ensure representation of all groups in governance and public life are necessary to address the social fragmentation caused by ethnic and religious divides.
4. Furthermore, targeted interventions to reduce unemployment, particularly among youth, should be prioritized to alleviate economic disenfranchisement that often fuels unrest and undermines nation-building efforts. Collaborative initiatives involving government, civil society, and the private sector can create a supportive environment for these recommendations, fostering a more cohesive and resilient nation.

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