



EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND ACCULTURATION AS PREDICTORS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' COMMITMENT TO CIVIC PARTICIPATION IN ADO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF EKITI STATE

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Abstract

The study examined emotional intelligence and acculturation as predictors of secondary school students' commitment to civic participation in Ado Local Government Area of Ekiti State. The population for the study were all secondary school students, in Ado Local Government Area of Ekiti State. Five public and five private secondary schools were selected using stratified random sampling technique. A total sample of 200 secondary school students were randomly selected for the study. The instrument used for the study was a self-constructed questionnaire titled 'Commitment to Civic Participation Scale (CCPS)' with reliability coefficient of 0.75. The study revealed that emotional intelligence and acculturation relatively and jointly predict secondary school students' commitment to civic participation. It was also revealed that emotional intelligence predicts students' commitment to civic participation more than acculturation. It was therefore recommended that students should be encouraged to become more enlightened with acculturation through multicultural education. Also, Government agencies and Non-Government agencies should organize regular orientation workshop for the students in order to further create awareness on the importance of civic participation to the society.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Acculturation, Civic Participation, Civic Commitment.

Introduction

Constitutional democracy requires informed, effective, and responsible citizens for its maintenance and improvement. If the society is to survive and thrive, citizens must have adequate knowledge of its principles and institutions, skills in applying this knowledge to civic life, and dispositions that incline them to protect individual rights and to promote the common good of the society (Vontz, Metcalf, & Patrick, 2000). Citizens' robust participation in community issues, working on community problems, collective engagement with government agencies is a fundamentally important component of life in any democratic society (Flanagan & Gallay, 2007).

Citizens' claim of rights and entitlements as provided in the 1999 Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria are founded on inalienable duties because rights and duties are two sides of the same coin. Majority of Nigerians have been making demands on the state without fulfilling their basic civic and ethical obligations. However, citizens expect good infrastructural facilities and social amenities such as good road network, health services, pipe-borne water and so on from the government while boycotting the payment of taxes.

Adolescence is an important time for identity formation. The identity development process involves discerning one's roles and responsibilities in society and deciding which values, beliefs and



goals are most essential to one's core self (Erikson cited in (Tenelle, 2013). Adolescence is also a period that is stormy and stressful with heightened tension and attendant difficult developmental task of social adjustment. Over the years, scholarly attention to the developmental foundations and precursors of adolescent civic action has waxed and waned. Attention tends to increase when there are concerns about generational replacement, specifically about whether the younger generations are motivated and skilled in the civic domain such that they could replace their elders as engaged citizens and the settings where civic dispositions and skills for action can be nurtured are up to the tasks.

Several studies on civic participation in the formative years focus on the development of civic dispositions and commitments. Civic commitments according to Flanagan, (2009) are typically measured on scales that tap the extent to which youth feel dedicated to certain goals such as serving their country and community (patriotism), improving inter-group relations and understanding (tolerance), promoting equality or social justice, working diligently in harmony for the betterment of the community (hardworking and cooperation) etc. Adolescents' civic participation are positively associated with endorsing above listed goals.

Levels of civic participation are assumed to vary according to numerous social and psychological characteristics. There are various environments in which adolescents may develop civic dispositions and skills. Understandably, much of the related research on such enabling environments for adolescents focuses on formal learning opportunities, which occur both inside and outside of schools. Jahromi, (2007), in a chat with a teacher-in-training said that the younger generations care about the world. "The students started a programme to raise awareness about poverty in the developing world and

addressing global poverty through micro-loans. One of the events they organized to raise fund featured students living on \$2.50 per day for one week. This is a dramatic example of students' social awareness and civic action, but such examples and more subtle forms of adolescents' civic involvement happen every day across the country and the world. What compels United State adolescents toward such civic action? What repels average Nigerian children from such action?

Existing researches provided a basis for understanding many characteristics and conditions that lead to or prevent adolescents' commitment to civic participation. Some scholars such as Cemalcilar, (2009) and Foster-Bey, (2008) addressing precursors to civic participation suggested that demographic characteristics such as age, race, socio-economic status, citizenship status, and gender are important in predicting commitment to civic participation. Other, such as Matsuba, Hart, & Atkins, (2007) showed how social attitudes or dispositions are predictors of commitment to civic participation. Some researchers emphasize the importance of political and civic knowledge and skills as a necessary precursor to civic participation (Carpini & Keeter, 1996; Galston, 2001) although such knowledge is not sufficient to predict commitment to civic participation and certainly doesn't guarantee or explain involvement.

In studies evaluating the relationship between life contexts and civic engagement, the characteristics of these contexts are generally measured through individual perceptions, instead of aggregating them in order to obtain the average perception of individuals living in a particular context. Recent methodological developments in the study of life contexts show the importance of measuring commitment to civic participation among secondary school students at the individual level.



Dispositional variables such as emotional intelligence and acculturation then come to mind in this regard, that is, predicting adolescents' level of civic participation and level of their commitment.

Emotional intelligence according to Balogun (2014) involved the ability to understand and manage one's and others' emotion, feelings of emotions, to discriminate among them and to use information to guide one's thinking and action. Bar-On, (2002) submitted that individuals with higher level of emotional intelligence possess five traits which are: intrapersonal component, interpersonal component, adaptability component, stress management component and general mood component. Intrapersonal component is the ability to understand, manage and controls one's emotions. Interpersonal component is the ability to understand how others feel and relate with them. Adaptability component is the ability to adapt and cope with society's demands. It is also the ability to adjust one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviour to changing situations and conditions in the society. Stress management component is the ability to manage, change, adapt, and solve stressful situation and strong emotions without falling apart but by actively coping with stress. Lastly, general mood component is the ability to look at the brighter side of life and maintain a positive attitude even in the face of adversity (Optimism).

In addition, measures of emotional intelligence and commitment are positively correlated. Emotional intelligent people tend to be more flexible, assertive, optimistic, capable of communicating their feelings to others, influencing others people's feelings, and controlling their own emotions thus, they are often capable of adjusting to or withdrawing from pressure and regulating stress. Emotionally intelligent individuals are always confident, and tend to focus on the

good side of life (Furnham & Petrides, 2003). Since the findings of past studies on the connection between Emotional Intelligence and commitment especially to civic participation were inconclusive, there is a need to further investigate this relationship among adolescent within the Nigeria context.

Furthermore, acculturation is another variable in this study, according to Banks, (2004) it connotes misalignment between an organization native to one cultural paradigm and collection of social norms necessary to its support in another paradigm. The phenomenon stems from the cultural plurality or the multicultural nature of the society provoking diversity by requiring resolution. Diversity itself is not problematic, but achievements of various cultures differ sometimes in an irreconcilable manner.

Acculturation theory has historically focused on individual and group level changes in behaviour, attitude and values that occur in response to a new cultural environment (Kim & Abue, 2001). Researchers such as Padilla & Perez, (2003) have suggested that individuals respond and react to their new cultural environment, but mechanism to explain individuals' understanding and integration of their experiences have not been sufficiently advanced.

Findings from the western countries may not be applicable to or reflect happenings in Nigeria due to socio-cultural differences. Therefore, relying on western findings alone may not give a clear picture of the determinants of civic commitment among secondary school students in Ado Local Governed Area of Ekiti State. It makes sense to study factors that may influence the development of commitments to civic participation among adolescence because it is a critical period for development of socio-political orientations. It is in view of the above, that this study examined the emotional intelligence



and acculturation as predictors of secondary school students' commitment to civic participation in Ado-Local Government Area of Ekiti State.

Purpose of the Study

This study examined the:

1. Level of awareness and commitment of secondary school students to civic participation in Ado local government area of Ekiti State;
2. Joint and relative prediction of emotional intelligence and acculturation on secondary school students' commitment to civic participation.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of secondary school students' civic participation in Ado local government area of Ekiti State?
2. What is the level of secondary school students' commitment to civic participation in Ado local government area of Ekiti State?

Research Hypotheses

1. Emotional intelligence and acculturation will not jointly predict secondary school students' commitment to civic participation
2. None of emotional intelligence and acculturation will best predict secondary school students' commitment to civic participation

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive research design of the survey type. The population for this study consisted of all secondary school students both public and private in Ado Local Government Area of Ekiti State. Two hundred secondary school students were selected from five public and five private secondary schools using stratified random sampling technique. For the purpose of data collection, a 20-item questionnaire titled 'Commitment to Civic Participation Scale (CCPS)' was constructed and used for the study after validation. A reliability coefficient of 0.75 was obtained using test retest. The researcher personally

visited the sampled schools to administer the questionnaires which were collected and scored on Likert type rating scales. General questions were analyzed using descriptive analysis such as frequency count, percentage mean and standard deviation while the hypotheses formulated were tested at 0.05 level of significance using regression tools.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the level of secondary school students' awareness of their civic responsibilities in Ado local government area of Ekiti State?

Table 1: Level of Senior Secondary School Students' Awareness of Civic Responsibilities in Ado-Local Government Area of Ekiti State.

Level of Civic Participation	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low			29	14.50
Moderate	44.26	5.093	132	66
High			39	19.50
Total			200	100

Table 1 revealed that out of 200 respondents, 29 representing 14.50% had low level of participation. Those who had moderate level were 132 representing 66% while those with high level were 39 representing 19.50%. This implies that the level of secondary school students' awareness of their civic responsibilities was moderate.

Research Question 2: What is the level of secondary school students' commitment to civic participation in Ado local government area of Ekiti State?

Table 2: Level of Senior Secondary School Students' Commitment to Civic Participation in Ado-Local Government Area of Ekiti State.

Level of Commitment	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low			34	17
Moderate	41.91	6.501	127	63.50
High			39	19.50
Total			200	100



Table 2 revealed that out of 200 respondents, 34 representing 17% had low level of commitment. Those who had moderate level were 127 representing 63.50% while those with high level were 39 representing 19.50%. This showed that the level of secondary

school students' commitment to civic participation was moderate.

Hypothesis 1: Emotional intelligence and acculturation will not jointly predict secondary school students' commitment to civic participation

Table 3: Regression Analysis showing Joint Prediction of Emotional Intelligence and Acculturation on Secondary School Students' Commitment to Civic Participation

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F-Value	Sig.
Regression	10712.729	2	4285.092	.364	.264	.263	45.367*	.000
Residual	17222.581	198	117.169					
Total	27935.310	200						

P < 0.05

Table 3 revealed that there is a positive multiple correlation between the predictor variables and commitment of secondary school students to civic participation (R = .364). This implied that all the predictor variables are factors that can predict commitment of secondary school students to civic participation. The value of the coefficient of determinant (R² = .263) indicates that all the predictor variables jointly accounted for 26.3% of the total variance in the commitment of secondary school students to civic participation while the remaining 73.7% unexplained variation could largely be due to other variables not examined in this study. This implies that there are

other variables that account for commitment of secondary school students to civic participation. The F-ratio (45.367) was significant at 0.05 level of significance. This implies that the predictor variables jointly provide a significant explanation for the variation in the commitment of secondary students to civic participation. Thus, the hypothesis that emotional intelligence and acculturation will not jointly predict secondary school students' commitment to civic participation was rejected.

Hypothesis 2: None of emotional intelligence and acculturation will best predict secondary school students' commitment to civic participation

Table 4: Regression Analysis showing Relative Prediction of Emotional Intelligence and Acculturation on Secondary School Students' Commitment to Civic Participation

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	19.753	1.022		19.325	.000
Emotional Intelligence	.367	.031	.355*	11.791	.000
Acculturation	.308	.027	.296*	-	.000
				11.317	

Dependent Variable: Commitment to Civic Participation * p < 0.05

The regression result in the table 4 revealed that emotional intelligence has the higher contribution to the total variance in the commitment of secondary school students to civic participation ($\beta = 0.355$) while

acculturation has the least predictive strength on secondary school students' commitment to civic participation ($\beta = 0.296$). This implies that emotional intelligence best predict the commitment of secondary students to



civic participation. Thus, the hypothesis that none of the dispositional variables (emotional intelligence and acculturation) will best predict secondary school students' commitment to civic participation was rejected.

Discussion

The findings revealed that the level of awareness of secondary school students of civic responsibilities in Ado-Local Government Area of Ekiti was moderate. The finding was not consistent with Amadi (2004) who submitted that the Nigerian society is undoubtedly saddled with increase in crime wave and lawlessness due to inadequate knowledge of building the nation. Perhaps, the desired values could be developed and expressed in individuals' discharge of their civic roles. However, the disparity in findings may be attributed to the introduction of Civic Education into the secondary school curriculum in 2007 thereby increasing the students' awareness of their civic responsibilities.

The findings also revealed that the commitment of students to civic participation in Ado Local Government area was moderate. This finding corroborated Lopez, Levine, Both, Kiesa, Kirby and Mercelo's (2006) findings who submitted that community participation is the most accessible form of civic engagement for young people and youth volunteerism has been steadily increasing. This perhaps might be attributed to the knowledge the students have acquired through Civic Education.

Findings also revealed that emotional intelligence and acculturation relatively and jointly predict secondary school students' commitment to civic participation. The study also found that emotional intelligence is a good predictor of secondary school students' commitment to civic participation, perhaps, due to the fact that it plays significant roles in shaping civic/ moral and ethical

behavior in citizen as revealed in the finding of Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, (2000).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, one major conclusion that could be drawn is that emotional intelligence and acculturation significantly predict secondary school students' commitment to civic participation. Thus, the following recommendations were made:

1. Government agencies and Non-Government agencies should organize regular orientation workshop for the students in order to further create awareness on the importance of civic participation to the society.
2. In order to enhance ones' emotional intelligence, student should be encouraged by their teachers to take responsibilities of their actions as well as be conscious of how they react to societal issues
3. Multicultural education should be encouraged in schools in order to enlighten or expose the student more to the cultures of different societies.

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