

A PROPOSED ACTION PLAN IN BRIDGING CITIZENSHIP TO LIFE FOR JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS OF A PUBLIC SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of citizenship education within social studies and explores the conditions necessary for fostering active, meaningful student participation. Utilizing a descriptive-normative survey design, the research assessed the citizenship practices of Grade 7 public junior high school students to determine if personological variables influence their civic engagement. The findings reveal that most respondents belong to low-income families and graduated from public elementary schools. Students rated respecting the Philippine flag and valuing the Filipino identity as their most practiced citizenship role, while remembering and commemorating the heroes' sacrifices was the least practiced. Crucially, the study found a significant difference in the overall practice of citizenship roles based on annual family income, suggesting that economic disparities impact civic modeling at home. However, no significant differences were observed regarding the students' elementary school background or transferee status. Overall, the data indicates that various citizenship indicators are not frequently practiced by the students. To address this, the study recommends that educators ensure fair treatment and equal opportunities regardless of economic status and enhance the teaching of civic responsibility. Finally, the study proposes an action plan for schools to adopt in order to effectively bring citizenship to life for junior high school students.

Keywords: *Citizenship education, Civic engagement, Social studies, Action plan, Junior high school*

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INTRODUCTION

The overarching goal is to transform the nation's political culture at both national and local levels, empowering individuals to think independently as active citizens. Citizens should be willing, capable, and equipped to influence public life while exercising critical judgment to evaluate evidence before speaking and acting. Furthermore, this initiative seeks to build upon existing traditions of community involvement and public service, radically extending these practices to youth and fostering their confidence to develop innovative forms of civic engagement and action.

In an era characterized by rapid societal evolution, globalization, and information and communication technological advancements, individuals must adapt to fundamental shifts in lifestyles, perspectives, and behaviors. Educators play a vital role in guiding students to navigate these changes—distinguishing between the potential advantages and opportunities of globalization and digital innovation, while recognizing their associated risks and pitfalls. Ultimately, educational institutions must cultivate a sense of freedom and ethical responsibility to help students make informed decisions.

Stakeholders are encouraged to collaborate toward an inclusive model of globalization—one that avoids marginalization, reinforces human solidarity, and distributes benefits equitably rather than widening socioeconomic and cultural divides.

According to the social change model, citizenship is defined as “the process whereby the individual and the collaborative group become responsibly connected to the community and the society. . . to work for positive change on behalf of others and the community” (Higher Education Research Institute, 2015, p. 23). Civic engagement is frequently used interchangeably with citizenship or considered a primary outcome of citizenship development (Jacoby, 2015). It is further defined as acting upon an elevated sense of responsibility toward one’s community, encompassing a broad range of activities such as fostering civic awareness, contributing to civil society, and serving the common good. Ultimately, civic engagement embodies principles of global citizenship and interdependence.

OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of this study was to examine the level of practice of citizenship roles among Grade 7 public junior high school students. Specifically, it sought to: Determine the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of annual family income, elementary school background, and enrollment status. Assess the extent of students’ practice of citizenship roles. Determine whether significant differences exist in the practice of citizenship roles when students are grouped according to their profile variables. Propose an action plan to enhance citizenship education and civic engagement. There is no significant difference in the students’ practice of citizenship roles when grouped according to annual family income, elementary school graduated from, and enrollment status.

METHODOLOGY

The present study used a descriptive - normative survey which was an approach / design to problem solving which sought to answer questions to real facts relating to existing conditions. This was a technique of quantitative description which determined the prevailing conditions in a group of cases chosen to study.

RESULTS

An examination of the Demographic Profile of Respondents indicated that all 350 participants were enrolled in Grade 7. A significant majority belonged to families with an annual income of ₱7,891– ₱15,780 ($n = 117$, 33.4%) or less than ₱7,890 ($n = 69$, 19.7%). Furthermore, most respondents completed their elementary education at public institutions ($n = 323$, 92.3%) and were classified as non-transferees ($n = 261$, 74.6%). Regarding the Practice of Citizenship Roles, participants assigned the highest mean score to respecting the Philippine flag and valuing Filipino identity ($M = 3.60$, $SD = 0.51$, “True of Me”). Conversely, remembering and honoring the sacrifices of national heroes received the lowest mean rating ($M = 3.11$, $SD = 0.58$, “Moderately True of Me”). Analyses of Differences in Citizenship Practice Across Profiles yielded the following findings: Annual Family Income: A one-way ANOVA demonstrated a statistically significant variation across income brackets, $F = 5.83$, $p < .001$. Respondents in the highest income category ($>₱78,900$) exhibited the greatest level of engagement ($M = 3.66$, $SD = 0.08$), whereas those in lower brackets demonstrated lower engagement levels ($M = 3.18$ to 3.22). Elementary School Background: An independent samples t-test revealed no statistically significant difference between graduates of public

schools ($M = 3.28$, $SD = 0.48$) and private schools ($M = 3.83$, $SD = 0.55$), $t = 1.89$, $p = .17$. Enrollment Status: Similarly, no statistically significant difference was observed between transferee students ($M = 3.52$, $SD = 0.55$) and non-transferee students ($M = 3.25$, $SD = 0.48$), $t = 0.44$, $p = .51$.

SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS

The findings of the study reveal that the vast majority of Grade 7 respondents come from economically disadvantaged households and public elementary backgrounds. In terms of civic participation, the students demonstrate selective engagement, exhibiting strong adherence to symbolic patriotism—such as respecting the national flag and valuing Filipino identity—while participating far less in historical and commemorative practices like honoring national heroes. Crucially, annual family income emerged as a significant factor influencing civic engagement, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis for this variable; higher-income households appear to provide greater civic modeling opportunities, whereas socioeconomic constraints among lower-income families may restrict engagement outside the classroom. In contrast, elementary school background and transferee status showed no statistically significant effect on the students' citizenship practices, resulting in the acceptance of the null hypothesis for both variables.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, several key recommendations are proposed. First, teachers must ensure that all students are taught, given equal opportunities, and treated fairly regardless of their economic status in life.

Furthermore, educators must be sensitive to the needs and feelings of students whose basic physiological needs are not being met. It is also essential that teachers enhance the instruction of citizenship for all students, irrespective of personological factors like their economic background. They must inculcate in the minds and hearts of their students that active citizenship is expected of every individual in the country and that it can be learned and practiced in various ways.

Finally, the school must adopt the proposed action plan to enhance the teaching of citizenship and effectively bring it to life among junior high school students. To address the key findings of the study, a targeted three-point action plan is proposed. First, to address the low practice in honoring national heroes (mean = 3.11), the Social Studies Department, Araling Panlipunan Club, and Grade 7 teachers will enhance Historical Appreciation & Heroic Legacy through “Buhay Bayani” interactive living history exhibits and hero profile project-based learning modules, aiming for 85% student participation in commemorative events. Second, to mitigate the significant disparities observed across income brackets, the School Administration, Social Studies Department, and Guidance Office will promote Equitable Civic Engagement by implementing zero-cost classroom civic projects and parent-community civic modeling seminars, ensuring that 100% of economically disadvantaged students participate without financial burden. Finally, to counteract the overall infrequent practice of citizenship indicators, Grade 7 Advisers, the Supreme Student Government (SSG), and community stakeholders will facilitate Community & Civic Immersion by organizing campus clean-up and stewardship drives alongside regular classroom “Reflection Circles,” with success evidenced through documented student civic logs and increased leadership.

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