Forging Patriotism among Youth in Lagos: Unveiling the Impact of Social Integration and Civic Education

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Abstract
Every society's level of excellence is primarily determined by how much its citizens love and support their country, the main objective of the study is to examine forging patriotism among youth and unveiling the impact of social integration and civic education. The study adopted a quantitative research design that employed Simple random sampling, the study focused on suburban areas in Lagos State, this area was chosen due to low youth participation in national activities, with a sample size of 171 youth for the study, data were collected using self-administered questionnaires to gather data among the selected respondents and were analyzed using the statistical tool. Pearson's correlation was used to analyze the data, and the findings revealed that the level of patriotism and social integration was good, however, the level of civic education was negative. As an implication, the youth should be sufficiently educated to ensure they are patriotic toward the nation.
Keywords: Patriotism, Social Integration, Civic Education, Youth.

Introduction
The quality of every society's level of excellence is primarily determined by how much its citizens love and support their country; no society can rise above the caliber of its own country (Abbas, 2022). Patriotism is a concept that has evolved over centuries and has played a significant role in the history of nations and societies, it refers to the love, loyalty, and devotion individuals have for their country (Smith, 2020). Patriotism is the internal connection that a citizen has to his nation, those who have a strong sense of loyalty and pride in their nation will be inclined to make sacrifices for it (Liu & Lee,2020). In the context of Nigeria, according to the National Population Commission of Nigeria (NPC, 2021), Nigeria is a multi-ethnic country with a population of over 200 million with (65%) youth population National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, In a021). The complex history marked by colonialism, ethnic tensions, and political situations, have affected the perceptions and orientation of its citizens toward patriotism (Oduwole, 2020). The main objective of this study is to examine forging

patriotism among youth in Lagos; Unveiling the impact of social integration and civic education.

Patriotism is a deep sense of pride, loyalty, and commitment to one's country which is crucial for building a cohesive and progressive society (Olatunji & Amzat, 2021). In Lagos, Nigeria's most populous and diverse city, fostering a sense of patriotism among the youth is of paramount importance, as the economic and cultural heart of Nigeria, Lagos is home to a vibrant mix of ethnicities, religions, and social backgrounds, making it a microcosm of the broader Nigerian society, the youth make up a significant portion of the city's population and play a vital role in shaping its socio-economic and political future. However, challenges such as socioeconomic disparities, ethnic tensions, and political apathy can hinder the development of a unified national identity, addressing these challenges through social integration and civic education initiatives can cultivate a generation that is not only aware of their civic responsibilities but also actively engaged in the nation-building process (Olatunji & Amzat, 2021; Achimugu, Ado., & Akpa, 2021). Despite Lagos's dynamic environment, there is a growing concern about the lack of patriotism and national consciousness among its youth, this absence of patriotic sentiment can lead to social fragmentation, increased apathy towards civic duties, and a decline in national unity, economic hardship, unemployment, political corruption, and a weak educational system contribute to the alienation of young people from national affairs (Uzochukwu & Akueshi, 2021).

Moreover, the influence of globalization and the pervasive reach of social media expose youth to diverse ideologies, which can sometimes create confusion about their national identity, without deliberate efforts to implement social integration and civic education programs that emphasize patriotism, there is a risk of nurturing a disengaged and disillusioned youth population, such disengagement could have long-term negative impacts on the socio-political stability and development of Lagos and Nigeria as a whole (Odoemelam & Adesope, 2021; Jimoh, 2022). Exploring the impact of social integration and civic education on fostering patriotism among youth in Lagos is crucial for several reasons, firstly, promoting a shared sense of national identity and pride can help bridge ethnic, religious, and social divides, fostering unity and reducing the potential for conflict, secondly, instilling a sense of patriotism encourages youth to take an active role in societal development, including participating in democratic processes, volunteerism, and community service, this civic engagement is essential for the health of Nigeria's democracy and governance, thirdly, a patriotic youth population is more likely to contribute positively to the economy, motivated by a desire to improve their community and country, this can lead to increased innovation, entrepreneurship, and overall economic growth (Odeh, 2022; Olufemi, 2023).

Furthermore, patriotism involves an appreciation and respect for the nation's cultural heritage, educating youth about Nigeria's history, values, and traditions can help preserve and celebrate the rich cultural diversity of Lagos, in an era of rapid globalization and digital influence, promoting patriotism also serves as a countermeasure against the negative impact of external ideologies that may undermine national values (Enos & Buba, 2023; Akinyetun, 2024). It provides a framework for youth to critically engage with global content while maintaining a strong national identity, by focusing on these areas, this topic aims to provide insights into effective strategies for nurturing a patriotic youth population in Lagos, thereby contributing to the overall stability, unity, and progress of Nigeria.

Literature Review

Patriotism

Patriotism is the love, devotion, and a strong differential concern for one's locality, state, region, or country, shown in thought and action (Hamada, 2021). Patriotism is a multifaceted idea, that has been researched in several fields, including political science, sociology, psychology, and philosophy (AlRamiah et al., 2017; Erez & Laborde, 2019). Studies have emphasized the significance of patriotism in developing unity and understanding among youth and building a harmonious community. Aziz et al (2017), argued that patriotism plays a role in building robust and resourceful people, particularly the younger generation. (Salih, 2019). Emotional attachment, love, and commitment to one's country are midst the essential fundamentals (Aziz et al., 2017; Montez de Oca and Suh, 2019). Patriotism entails defending one's country from challenges both internal and external and maintaining its position, prestige, and influence (Mitchell, 2019; Salih, 2019).

Patriotism in Nigeria is a topic of great importance, given Nigeria's past experiences with colonial rule, military control, and unrest in society, patriotism is associated with a sense of love and pride for the nation, its history, and its people, however, fundamental obstacles including corruption, poverty, and unstable politics pose serious problems for Nigerian patriotism. Nigerians celebrate national holidays like Independence Day, which falls on October 1, and democracy day June 12 as a way to show their patriotism (Oduwole, 2020). These occasions provide Nigerians a chance to unite and commemorate their common cultural and historical heritage. The development of patriotism is influenced by components such as socialization, education, culture, and historical events (Salih, 2019). According to research, patriotism benefits both people and society, better social cohesiveness, racial harmony, and readiness to make contributions to a greater cause are all associated with it (Reicher, 2017; Verkuyten, 2019). Patriotism improves persuasion engagement, promotes civic engagement, and social integration, and improves the overall well-being of individuals (O'Brien, 2019).

Civic Education

Civic education is an integral component of general education programs, it helps citizens understand the national culture and arouses their love for the country (Huynh et al.,2023). As a result of the importance placed on three key components of civic education citizenship knowledge, civic values, and civic skills, these emphasize raising people's acquaintance of the country as an independent nation with a vision to defend the principles of their constitution, which safeguards and cherishes the rights and obligations of her citizens and fosters patriotism (Moorthy et al., 2021). It has been observed that the concept of patriotism changes as an outcome of civil education, and the interpretation of these ideas is the revitalization of patriotism across cultures as the most significant spiritual, moral, and social value (Gulsina et al., 2023).

The problem of the civic and patriotic education of young people is of concern to scientists in almost all countries, this is because civic consciousness and patriotism are integral characteristics of a strong, unified, and full-fledged state, from an early age, a person should be brought up in the spirit of respect for the achievements of their country and pride in its culture (Uzakbayeva et al 2014; Fedorova et al 2021). The integrity of the unity of the territory and other components (language, traditions, culture, etc.) gradually forms a sense of

patriotism which is love for the homeland as well as the civic consciousness of a representative of a certain country. Otherwise, civic consciousness and patriotism are the necessary conditions for the existence of any society, it is a challenging task to separate patriotism from civic consciousness as patriotism determines the development of the individual as a citizen. Without patriotism, it is impossible to develop a sense of personal and social significance (Omelchenko et al 2015) Without love for the motherland, it is impossible to realize your citizenship.

Educating youth in patriotism goes hand in hand with promoting civic engagement, patriotic citizens are more likely to participate in democratic processes, including voting, volunteering, and community service, this active involvement in civic affairs strengthens democratic institutions and leads to more effective governance Umarova, (2023). In an increasingly interconnected world marked by cultural diversity and global challenges, the education of youth in the spirit of patriotism holds paramount importance, patriotism not only instills a profound love for one's country but also nurtures essential values and attitudes that contribute to the well-being of nations when properly understood, promotes tolerance and inclusivity (Rizvi, 2019; Akkari & Maleq, 2020). Educated youth recognize that their state is made up of diverse communities, and they appreciate the contributions of all citizens, regardless of their backgrounds, and ensure that these values are passed down to future generations. It creates a cycle of commitment to the nation, where each generation instills in the next a deep love and responsibility for their country (Ismail, et al 2019).

Social Integration

Social integration is a multifaceted notion representing a person's ability to engage in economic, cultural, social, and political activities (Brydsten et al., 2019). Studies show that social integration plays a crucial role in creating economic and political integration, and is seen to be the most advanced and last stage of social integration, and financial integration is seen as the beginning of social integration (Lu et al., 2013; Gu and Yeung, 2020; Lin et al., 2020; Xia and Ma, 2020). Social integration positively impacts citizens' patriotism, highlighting the interaction between individual and their community (Ertas, 2013; Ji et al., 2020; Wen & Hanley, 2016). Social integration has been revealed to have an impact on developing a sense of belonging, security, and patriotism, particularly for ignored groups (Wang et al., 2017; Valli et al. 2019). Social integration of the population can promote economic development as well as maintain social harmony, however, social integration has attracted widespread attention from scholars and has become a major topic in sociology and patriotism studies (Chen and Wang, 2015; Body-Gendrot and Martiniello, 2016; Yang et al., 2020). Social integration is regarded as a multidimensional concept, which describes the capacity of people to participate in social, cultural, economic, and political life in the local community (Brydsten et al., 2019).

Although there are differences in the definition and measurement of social integration depending on the context, most scholars measure social integration from the aspects of economic integration, political integration, cultural integration, and psychological integration, studies found that financial integration is considered the starting point of social integration, which plays a fundamental role; While psychological integration, established on the dimensions of economic and political integration, is well-thought-out the advanced and final stage of social integration (Lu et al., 2013; Gu and Yeung, 2020; Lin et al., 2020). People with different backgrounds share common norms and rules of society and feel a sense of belonging

to the host place society may have different habits, interests, or religions, but a subjective sense of belonging and actual rights and responsibilities as actual citizens, are the two important aspects of social integration (Xia and Ma, 2020). Studies suggest that social integration encourages the formation of social bonds and shared identities, which are essential for developing a collective national identity, this collective identity can enhance patriotic sentiments among individuals, promoting a sense of unity and national pride, this interconnectedness between social integration and patriotism highlights the importance of inclusive social policies and educational programs that encourage interaction among different social groups (Johari, 2021; Rao, 2022).

Research shows that social integration is a significant factor in fostering patriotism, and enables individuals to see themselves as part of a larger national community. Lee et al. (2019) argue that social capital, characterized by networks of relationships and mutual trust, is critical for social integration and, consequently, for cultivating patriotic feelings, when individuals engage in social activities and develop relationships across diverse groups, they are more likely to grow a sense of belonging to their country, this sense of belonging is a crucial component of patriotism, as it instills a desire to contribute positively to the nation and support its well-being. Even with the potential benefits of social integration for promoting patriotism, several challenges can hinder these processes, ethnic and cultural diversity, economic disparities, and social inequalities can create barriers to effective social integration (Anjum & Aziz, 2024). When individuals feel marginalized or excluded from mainstream society, their sense of belonging and identification with the nation may weaken, leading to abridged patriotic sentiments. As argued by (Ainscow, 2020 and Garrick et al. 2024), overcoming these challenges requires targeted efforts to promote inclusive policies and practices that address inequalities and ensure that all individuals, regardless of their background, have opportunities to participate in the social, economic, and political life of the country.

To enhance social integration and patriotism, it is essential to implement strategies that promote inclusivity, cultural understanding, and active citizenship, educational programs that emphasize civic education and the importance of social cohesion can play a pivotal role in this regard, as highlighted by Ismail et al (2019), civic education helps citizens understand their national culture and fosters a sense of loyalty and love for their country. Additionally, community-based initiatives that encourage interaction among different social groups can help build trust and mutual respect, essential components of social integration and patriotism, by creating environments that inspire social interaction and understanding, societies can cultivate a strong sense of national identity and loyalty among citizens. Social integration not only fosters patriotism but also plays a crucial role in ensuring national unity and stability, when individuals feel integrated into society, they are more likely to support the political and social structures of their country, thereby contributing to a stable and cohesive nation-state. Deitelhoff & Schmelzle, (2023), societies that achieve high levels of social integration tend to experience lower levels of social conflict and higher degrees of political stability, this is because integrated societies have stronger social bonds and a greater commitment to shared goals and values, in contrast, a lack of social integration can lead to social fragmentation, ethnic tensions, and even violence, which undermine the sense of patriotism and loyalty to the nation.

The role of government and institutions in promoting social integration and patriotism is critical, governments can implement policies that encourage integration through education, economic opportunities, and inclusive social practices, as noted by Elias & Mansouri (2023), institutional support is necessary to create environments where diverse groups feel valued and included. Schools, for instance, can serve as critical sites for fostering social integration by promoting inclusive curricula that underscore the country's diverse cultural heritage and shared national identity. Additionally, public policies that address social inequalities and provide equal opportunities for all citizens can help strengthen the sense of belonging and loyalty to the country, effective governance that promotes social justice and inclusivity is therefore essential in cultivating a patriotic citizenry committed to the nation's well-being.

Methodology
A quantitative research method was employed, this study used a simple random sampling technique to select the respondents, this criterion suits the present study because his sampling technique provides great benefits, where the participants have an equal and fair chance of being selected, the population of the study was the youth in Lagos, Nigeria, The research focused on suburban areas in Lagos State, this area was chosen due to low youth participation in national activities, which includes Badagry local government area, Ikorodu local government area ibeju-lekki local government area, and epe local government area, self-administered questionnaires was used for data collection, the study employed the modified Cochran formula for sample size calculation in smaller populations where 171 respondents were eventually selected as the sample size. Statistical Package for Social Sciences was used for analysis.

Results and Discussion
Demographic variables

Table 1
Frequency distribution on demographic characteristics (n = 171)

Variable	N	%
Gender		
Female	71	42
Male	100	52
Age group		
18 – 25 years	43	24.7
26 – 32 years	77	45.3
33 – 40 years	51	30
Ethnic group		
Hausa	25	14.7
Yoruba	87	51.6
Igbo	59	34.7

Religion

Christianity	99	58.6
Islam	72	42.4

Educational Background

Secondary School	24	14.1
National Diploma	26	15.3
Higher Diploma	33	19.4
Bachelor's Degree	39	22.4
Master Degree	49	28.8

Table 2
Correlation between Individual variables and Patriotism

Variables	Patriotism	Social Integration	Civil Education
Social Integration	-.812**	-	
Civil Education	-.656**	0.00	-

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2- tailed)

Table 1 shows a strong statistically significant positive of ($r = 0.812$, $p < 0.05$) between social integration and patriotism measurement, this suggests that patriotism among the youth will be higher in states that adopt social integration. This is in agreement with studies conducted by Xia and Ma, (2020) and Martiniello, 2016; Yang et al. (2020) concluded that social integration is consistent and has a highly positive impact on patriotism, social integration promotes economic development, and social harmony and affects the patriotism of the youth. This concords with studies by Brydsten et al., (2019), who stated that Social integration is regarded as the capacity of people to participate in cultural, economic, and political life in the local community which reassures them to be patriotic toward their nation. This also supports the study by Fernando & Patriotta, (2020) that a strong sense of identity and belongingness in one's society will promote development, values, and behaviors that positively enhance patriotism toward the state, the effects of social participation on youths' social integration were established to be positive and significant, the results suggest that social participation among the youth contributes to patriotism and influences their national identity. The social identity of Nigerian youth can be enhanced by strengthening their presence in political participation, familiarity with national values, and establishing social relationships among them, thus improving their social integration.

However, based on table 1, the results revealed that there was a negative relationship of ($r = -0.656$, $p < 0.05$) between civil education and patriotism measurement. The results supported the previous studies by suggesting that the enhancement of the environment and atmosphere of the community is a crucial precondition for the adaption, assimilation, and identification of the youth population (Li et al., 2012; Zou and Deng, 2020). Meanwhile, the results imply the harmonious relationship and abundant social resources embedded in social networks, can improve youths' positive perceptions of the nation, thus strengthening the positive effects of social participation on social integration. It has been observed that the concept of patriotism

changes as an outcome of civil education, and the interpretation of these ideas is the revitalization of patriotism across cultures as the most significant spiritual, moral, and social value (Gulsina et al., 2023).

Conclusion
Based on the findings of this study, it is clear that the level of social integration was perceived as good, while civic education, on the other hand, was found to be moderate by the respondents. According to Huynh et al. (2023), civic education helps citizens understand the national culture and arouses their love for the country, this means that the impact of civic education will result in better and higher patriotism. Therefore, there is a need to improve the curriculum to enhance civic education, particularly regarding citizenship knowledge, civic values, and civic skills, the acquisition of patriotic values is necessary for the existence of the modern democratic societies that Nigeria desires. 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 levels of patriotic attitudes depend largely on social habits and the type of education provided in that country, including the pedagogical competency of the teachers (Cnaan & Park, 2019; Satherly et al., 2019; Nathanson, 2020). Thus, fostering patriotism among youth in Lagos through improved civic education and social integration is essential for nurturing a generation that is committed to the nation's well-being and capable of contributing to its development.

The findings of this study serve as a source of empirical evidence for the Ministry of Education, policymakers, and curriculum designers on the level of social integration, civic education, and patriotism among youth in Lagos State, Nigeria. Before this research, there was a lack of empirical and theoretical evidence regarding these research variables in the state, this gap led to ambiguity and doubts among policymakers and practitioners about incorporating these variables within the context of patriotism. This study suggests that policymakers and curriculum designers establish programs that inspire youth to become more patriotic. The population of this study is limited to only four local government councils in Lagos, Nigeria; therefore, similar research can be conducted in other states of Nigeria, finally, further study is required to adopt qualitative research techniques.

This study is driven by the urgent need to cultivate patriotism among the youth in Lagos, given their critical role in shaping Nigeria's future, in a rapidly changing social environment, where globalization and cultural diversity influence young people's identities, fostering a strong sense of national belonging is paramount. The study explores how social integration and civic education can effectively promote patriotic values, encouraging youth to actively participate in nation-building, by analyzing these factors, the research seeks to provide insights into how youth can be molded into responsible, engaged citizens who are committed to the growth and unity of their country. However, this study aims to contribute to educational strategies and policies that strengthen national cohesion and civic responsibility among the younger generation.

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