

Original Research Paper

# Measuring Multi-Ethnic Students Citizenship Competence: Domains and Indicators

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**Abstract:** The current study aims at developing and validating an instrument to measure citizenship competences among multi-ethnic students. It was developed based on the Iceberg Competency Model (McBer, 1996) and citizenship competence from the works of (Ten Dam and Volman, 2007; Ten Dam *et al.*, 2010; 2011). The Citizenship Competences Framework was developed prior to indicators/items development. The Framework contained four constructs namely acting democratically, social responsibility, conflict management and dealing with differences. Indicators within these four constructs were developed and verified by experts. They were then used in the instruments. A survey was carried out involving 60 multi-ethnic students in Malaysia. Data gathered was analysed using Exploratory Factor Analysis and Reliability Analysis. Results showed that only 14 indicators/items from four constructs are valid and reliable to be used. Results suggest there are three new groups (indicators/14 items) emerged for measuring citizenship competences. We synthesised these 14 items into three new constructs namely (1) respecting others' voices, (2) ethnic tolerance and (3) problem solving oriented. These new constructs and items presented in this study are supposed to be considered in researching multi-ethnic student citizenship competence.

**Keywords:** Validity, Exploratory Factor Analysis, Confirmatory Factor Analysis, Reliability Analysis, Multi-Ethnic Students, Citizenship Competence

## Introduction

Nations with good citizen values are fundamental for a country successful. A country stability and development are dependent on the quality of people living in a country and how the leaders manage a country. People in a democratic country are supposed to have high competency level as democratic nations. They are supposed to have in-depth understanding on democratic behaviour and able to behave democratically. In order to develop good citizens, educational system and practice are supposed to be at a high level as well. This is because educational experience is a contributing factor for a country development. Nik (1996) suggests the quality of a value system in a society is a pillar in a country's development. This includes the noble and patriotic values among the people. The implementation of citizenship values in school curriculum is an educational fundamental principle. Positive citizenship

values are supposed to be promoted within or outside of the classroom. It aims at producing a good and perfect individual. Social education or citizenship education would nurture individuals in the community to be able to decide for both their own personal and the public's interests, which may affect the future (Johnson, 2001). Brimall and White (2000) stated that the curriculum objectives of civic education in Britain is to provide the knowledge, skills and understanding to play effective roles at the local, national and international levels. This informs that the national promotes each individual become an informed citizen capable of thinking effectively as well as responsibly in carrying out their duties and observing rights.

Citizenship values are closely linked to the development and construction of an individual's attitudes and behaviours towards his or her surroundings or the issues in the country (Sirat, 2004). According to the Social Learning Theory, people do not merely react to external influences as if they are

organisms that do not think, but they actually choose, manage and transfer stimuli that impinge on them (Bandura, 1982).

Citizenship education in Malaysia was taught through a subject called civics, which was introduced in schools in 1954 following the recommendations in the Annual Education Report 1952. This subject is a branch of knowledge that provides citizenship training to students at school (Sidin and Aziz, 1992). The evaluation of the implementation of civic and citizenship education in 1978 and 1985 has not helped to improve the status of the subject. In fact, the subject was abolished and citizenship education was incorporated into history and moral education for Form One to Form Five.

The subjects of civics and citizenship education have been reintroduced in stages to the Malaysian school system since 2005. A major goal of civics and citizenship education is to build awareness among students regarding roles, rights and responsibilities in the community and nation to produce members of society and citizens who are united, patriotic and able to contribute to the betterment of the community, nation and world (MEM, 2014). There are three main objectives to be achieved through learning this subject: Knowledge, skills and values. The first objective covers the acquisition of knowledge, which is related to the roles and responsibilities of an individual as a citizen for the development and prosperity of the nation. The second objective is related to skills, including the proficiency of self-discipline in each individual to respond to the progression of society and the nation. The third objective is related to the values, including efforts to foster citizens who should be able to act based on knowledge and skills learned. This includes creating individuals who are always grateful and proud to be a citizen of a sovereign country, Malaysia.

### *Citizenship Education: Issues and Challenges*

Previous studies are more inclined towards the implementation of citizenship education, but it is difficult to obtain instrumentation that determines its impact on students. Past studies also focus less on what students learn about citizenship at school and more on the difference among students from different schools. Meanwhile, the instrumentation available outside Malaysia has measured sub-components, such as critical skills, moral judgment, social skills and concern for others (Ten Dam and Volman, 2007). There are limited studies have focused on the ability to act in social situations. Indeed, the lack of negotiation skills, religious tolerance and misunderstanding among multi-ethnic residents are found to be major contributors for ethnic clashing in Malaya (Mohamed Ali and Mohammad Redzuan, 2012). Indeed, there is limited study focuses on

multi-ethnic students citizenship competences. Therefore, this study focuses on the development of citizenship constructs that could explain student citizenship.

The concept of citizenship is different from one community to another. It may have a link with the country's philosophy. In a democratic country, diversity in societies is supposed to be well managed as the rights of people are vital for harmonious society (Glass, 2000; Haste, 2004). The situation may in a socialism and communism. Democracy can be seen as working cooperatively as a way of life (Dewey, 1966/1916) in which the permissibility to function in heterogeneous situations such as at work, at home and on the road is deemed important. According to Westheimer (2008), good citizenship implies an individual is able to critically evaluate different perspectives, generate strategies for change and reflect on issues of justice, equality and democracy. It may be fair to state that the ability to function in an acceptable manner and in a responsible manner in the community is part of 'good citizenship'. Based on the past studies, the current paper utilises the concept of citizenship development, which operates based on two internal concepts: Student citizenship and students' abilities or competencies. Citizenship education is seen as an addition to the formation of students' competencies, which allows them to take part in social assignments (Ten Dam and Volman, 2007). Based on the study of citizenship competencies, Ten Dam *et al.* (2010) consider four types of citizenship competences: (1) acting democratically, (2) acting in ways responsibilities in a democracy, (3) differences and (4) conflict management. However, the main question is regarding the competences required by students of various ethnic groups to carry out this social work.

'Good citizenship' refers to the ability of individuals to function in an acceptable situation and make a significant contribution to the community (Ten Dam *et al.*, 2011). Therefore, there is a need to identify the critical knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to carry out the social tasks in an appropriate manner. Ten Dam and Volman (2007) obtain the definitions of the components through a survey of citizenship and education. Four major social tasks and the definitions of the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for the tasks were presented to specialists from secondary education and school education in the Netherlands Inspectorate Dutch Education and science experts who concluded that social tasks represent students' practices when aged between 11 and 16 years (Ten Dam *et al.*, 2011).

### *Research Framework*

This study utilises the research framework based on McBer (1996) Iceberg Competency Model. This model

emphasises three major components of competency namely: Knowledge, skills and attitudes. Knowledge competency refers to the information that is owned by someone in a field, while skill competency is the ability to complete a task physically and mentally, i.e., practical ability. Personal competence or attitudes are personal values and behaviours, i.e., personal attributes that are to be internalised and practiced. These three domains (knowledge, skills and attitudes) were then combined with the citizenship elements (Ten Dam *et al.*, 2010). Ten Dam *et al.* (2010) identified that there are four main elements that are democratic acts, social responsibility and conflict management and managing differences.

### *Objectives of the Study*

This study aimed at developing and validating instruments for measuring citizenship competences among multi-ethnic students. Specifically, the study intends to identify the most relevant indicators and internal consistency for each items in the instruments for measuring citizenship competences.

## **Methodology**

This study was based on a small scale study using a survey research design that aims to develop and validate instruments for determining student citizenship competencies. According to Cohen *et al.* (2007), the research design is a process of taking data from a certain time, often using questionnaires. This research was completed in four stages:

### *Stage 1: Developing Research Framework*

The framework used in this study was based on Ten Dam *et al.* (2010) concept of citizenship competences, which emphasises four social tasks: (1) To act in a democratic manner, (2) social responsibility, (3) conflict management and 4) managing differences. The framework was used as a general guideline for a questionnaire development.

### *Stage 2: Designing and Validating the Instrument*

Stage 2 involves a development of indicators and items that are based on the framework. The items were then reviewed by three experts in sociology and educational studies. Comments and suggestions from these experts were taken into account for improvement of the instrument independently. All the items have been corrected according to the experts' comments. It should be noted that all the items are written in the Malay language as it aims at students in Malaysia. In order to ensure the accuracy of translated items, all the items have been checked by language expert. The revised

instruments then were reviewed by a group of students (n = 10) in order to check its face validity. Overall, the items in the instruments are representative of each construct. A 5-point Likert scale was used.

### *Stage 3: Survey*

A small scale survey was carried out in selected national schools in Malaysia involving 60 multi-ethnic students. The respondents were selected using a random sampling technique. This technique is appropriate as the respondents have an equal chance of being selected as a sample without any selection bias. It should be noted that there are ongoing debates regarding an appropriate sample size to validate new instruments. Johanson and Brooks (2010) investigated the choice of a sample size for the purpose of validation and recommended, "... 30 representative participants from the population of interest is a reasonable minimum recommendation for a pilot study where the purpose is preliminary survey or scale development" (p.399). In this study, the population of interest is multi-ethnic students from national secondary schools. Malhotra (2007) recommended a sample size ranging from 15-30 is sufficient for identifying the validity scores and reliability of a new instrument. Based on those recommendations, 60 multi-ethnic respondents were randomly chosen for the current study. As the current study aimed to validate an instrument that will be used for a larger data collection, data gained will be used to improve the instrument. They cannot be used for generalisation to the population. However, it may be relevant to indicate that the number of multi-ethnic students aged 16 in Malaysian National Secondary Schools in 2014 was 359,916 (MEM, 2014). This is to note that there is insufficient data for the number of students in 2015.

### *Stage 4: Data Analyses*

Data gathered from the survey was analysed using SPSS by focusing on Exploratory Factor Analysis and Reliability analysis.

## **Results**

### *Factor Analysis*

A factor analysis was carried out to test the model of Citizenship Competency that has been proposed by Ten Dam *et al.* (2010). Table 1 shows there are two components in measuring citizenship competences namely ability to do something (under the construct of 'Skills' and the components of thinking, desire and willingness (under the construct if 'attitudes'). Each construct are supposed to be considered.

Table shows detailed explanation of the components and social tasks for each category. Four social tasks have been identified to be relevant for measuring students' abilities to do something relating to citizenship. The other four components are relating to students' attitudes towards citizenships. In order to analyse the valid items for each components, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test of sphericity have been carried out.

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test of sphericity were conducted to exploratory factor analysis. Table 2 shows that the KMO test resulted in a value of 0.915. This value was above the cut-off level of 0.6 (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2001), indicating that the sample was adequate to test factor analysis.

Table 3 shows that there are nine components (constructs) for measuring citizenship competency; however results show that there are 24 items are measuring various components. The following items are found to be in various group: C21, C26, 27, C28, C29, C30, C31, C32, C33, C34, C35, C41, C42, C43, C44, C45, C46, C47, C48, C49, C50, C51, C52, C57 and C59. This indicates that the item is not valid to measure the construct (component). Indeed the *r* values for most items are weak. In order to ensure the items that are mainly measuring the constructs, only the items that are grouped in one component/group are supposed to be considered. In order to carry out exploratory factor analysis, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test of sphericity have been carried out for the second time.

### Data Reduction

Table 4 shows the results of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test of sphericity after the data reduction. All 24 items are removed from the list as it measures various constructs/components. After data reductions, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test of sphericity were again conducted to exploratory factor analysis. Results showed that the KMO test is 0.898 indicating that the sample was adequate to test factor analysis.

Table 5 shows the pattern Matrix for two constructs where the results demonstrated that are 14 items and three constructs are found to be valid for measuring citizenship competency. In order to check the reliability of all items, two statistical analyses were carried out i.e., Item-total correlation and Inter-item correlation.

### Reliability Analysis

Table 6 shows that all the items are statistically correlated where the values for overall Cronbach's Alpha is 0.886. Detailed analysis on item-total correlation revealed that all the items are statistically correlated where the minimum value for Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted is 0.873 and the highest value is 0.886. According to George and Mallery (2003), Cronbach's alpha coefficients of less than 0.6 are considered low and unacceptable, between 0.60 and 0.80 are acceptable and above 0.80 are considered good. Generally, the value used is the Cronbach's alpha value above 0.60 and is considered to have a good reliability index.

Table 1. Citizenship competency frameworks

Citizenship in terms of competence and citizenship components			
Constructs	Components	Social Tasks	Explanation
Skills	Ability to do something	Democratic act	Capable of asserting their views and listening to the opinions of others.
		Social responsibility	Capable of adapting to society.
		Conflict management	Ability to listen; put oneself in the situation of others and find a solution that is not biased.
		Managing differences	Ability in social situations with different cultural practices and values to tolerate others' ways of life.
Attitudes	Thinking, desire willingness	Democratic act	Ready to listen to the views of others, actively participate in discussions and contribute to critical ideas.
		Social responsibility	Support social justice, ready to provide assistance.
		Conflict management	Ready to examine conflicts, ready to consider views of others, find solutions together and reach a consensus
		Managing differences	The desire to know about the views and lifestyles of others, have a positive attitude and open mind about differences.

Source: Adapted and modified from Ten Dam *et al.* (2010)

Table 2. KMO and Bartlett's test for all items

Kaiser-Meyer-olkin measure of sampling adequacy	0.915	
Bartlett's test of sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	6065.867
	Df	780
	Sig.	0.000

Table 3. Pattern matrix for all items

Items	Components/constructs								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
C21			-0.364				0.834		
C22					0.7				
C23				0.677					
C24				0.67					
C25					0.536		0.324		
C26	0.263		-0.28		0.325			0.383	
C27					0.539				
C28				0.26	0.634	0.328			
C29				0.67					
C30				0.665	0.243	0.208		-0.23	
C31			0.394	0.271	-0.324				
C32			0.803						
C33			0.695					-0.201	
C34			0.676		0.244		-0.22	-0.276	
C35			0.73		0.239		-0.213		
C36	0.794								
C37	0.825								
C38	0.816								
C39	0.785								
C40	0.705								
C41			0.204		0.302			0.361	
C42			0.293	-0.229	0.292		0.499		
C43	0.37								0.545
C44	0.308	-0.338	0.411			0.307			
C45							0.505		
C46						0.429		0.928	
C47			0.249		0.222		0.28	0.226	-0.326
C48						0.654			
C49				-0.232		0.797			0.3
C50				0.201		0.574		0.379	
C51		0.49					0.486		
C52		0.667		0.205				-0.241	
C53		0.578			0.224			0.236	
C54		0.599						0.297	
C55		0.611	0.344						
C56	0.209	0.52				0.267			
C57	0.353	0.574							
C58		0.764							
C59						0.384			0.773

Table 4. KMO and Bartlett's test after data reduction

Kaiser-Meyer-olkin measure of sampling adequacy.		0.898
Bartlett's test of sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2068.427
	df	91
	Sig.	0

Table 5. Pattern matrix after data reduction

Item	Construct/Component		
	1	2	3
C22			0.700
C23			0.680
C24			0.776
C25			0.516
C36	0.84		
C37	0.847		
C38	0.868		
C39	0.803		
C40	0.791		
C53		0.635	
C54		0.866	
C55		0.899	
C56		0.556	
C58		0.629	

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

Table 6. Item-total correlation

Item	Scale mean if item deleted	Scale variance if item deleted	Corrected item-total correlation	Squared multiple correlation	Cronbach's alpha if item deleted
C22	54.6066	51.978	0.443	0.263	0.884
C23	54.5789	51.700	0.502	0.324	0.881
C24	54.8283	52.476	0.406	0.261	0.886
C25	54.5873	51.271	0.487	0.347	0.882
C36	54.2022	50.190	0.642	0.567	0.875
C37	54.1911	50.288	0.650	0.609	0.874
C38	54.1440	49.985	0.669	0.611	0.873
C39	54.1801	50.592	0.684	0.599	0.873
C40	54.1856	51.440	0.612	0.509	0.876
C53	54.3186	50.012	0.553	0.353	0.879
C54	54.3878	50.494	0.569	0.495	0.878
C55	54.3712	51.273	0.547	0.467	0.879
C56	54.5900	50.626	0.545	0.365	0.879
C58	54.1745	51.289	0.612	0.434	0.876

Table 7. Inter-item correlation matrix

	C22	C23	C24	C25	C36	C37	C38	C39	C40	C53	C54	C55	C56	C58
C22	1.000*													
C23	0.297*	1.000*												
C24	0.197*	0.423*	1.000*											
C25	0.418*	0.375*	0.334*	1.000*										
C36	0.324*	0.318*	0.245*	0.290*	1.000*									
C37	0.291*	0.326*	0.273*	0.242*	0.687*	1.000*								
C38	0.287*	0.331*	0.224*	0.338*	0.600*	0.679*	1.000*							
C39	0.280*	0.375*	0.301*	0.330*	0.579*	0.607*	0.681*	1.000*						
C40	0.276*	0.307*	0.172*	0.343*	0.557*	0.517*	0.598*	0.641*	1.000*					
C53	0.313*	0.264*	0.241*	0.350*	0.309*	0.353*	0.379*	0.372*	0.346*	1.000*				
C54	0.223*	0.364*	0.262*	0.260*	0.360*	0.380*	0.354*	0.341*	0.298*	0.433*	1.000*			
C55	0.225*	0.293*	0.249*	0.321*	0.286*	0.329*	0.325*	0.350*	0.317*	0.397*	0.634*	1.000*		
C56	0.295*	0.236*	0.256*	0.214*	0.404*	0.370*	0.382*	0.390*	0.343*	0.427*	0.370*	0.371*	1.000*	
C58	0.307*	0.301*	0.249*	0.266*	0.423*	0.377*	0.418*	0.454*	0.427*	0.427*	0.466*	0.458*	0.506*	1.000*

\*Significant at the level 0.05 (note: the values in the table are referred to r values)

Table 7 shows that all items are significantly correlated related. This means that the items are reliable to be used in measuring citizenship competence.

## Discussion

Analysis from this study suggest that are only 14 items (indicators) that are valid for measuring citizenship competence. The existing constructs introduced by Ten Dam *et al.* (2010) are not parallel with the current study. All the 14 items (indicators) are grouped into three new constructs. We conclude that three new constructs emerged from the data (that have to be considered based on the current study) are (1) Respecting Others' Voices, (3) Ethnic Tolerances and (3) Problem-Solving Oriented Friendship. Detailed items (indicators) under these three new constructs are as follows:

### Construct 1: Respecting others' Voices

- C22-ability to listen before talking
- C23-open minded in a group discussion
- C24-ability to make a stand using evidences
- C25-positive attitudes towards others' point of view

### Construct 2 Ethnic Tolerances

- C36-do academic revisions with multi-ethnic friends
- C37-accepting multi-cultural celebrations
- C38-eating with multi-ethnic friends together
- C39-carrying out recreation with friends from various ethnic backgrounds
- C40-assisting people irrespective of their ethnic backgrounds

### Construct 3 Problem Solving Oriented

- C53-sharing personal problems with trusted friends
- C54-striving for problems solutions
- C55-using appropriate strategies to overcome any problems
- C56-learning multi-cultural approaches for problem solution
- C58-having many friends from various socio-cultural backgrounds

These indicators see to support the previous study of citizenship competences in Mexico where it was found that the contributors to citizenship competences are as

follows: Tolerance, respect, analysis, judgment, responsibility and identity (Escorza *et al.*, 2014). The current study has contributed to the study of citizenship competences by highlighting the importance of human skills and attitudes, especially in accepting other point of view, tolerance and problem solving skills. Previous studies in this area seemed to be more likely focusing on cognitive aspects. For instance, Escorza *et al.* (2014) emphasises the association between cognitive abilities and human behaviour, where citizen competences encompassed of the elements of knowing and be sensitive to the social, economic and political reality; acting with civic solidarity and responsibility to improve the life quality of their community. Past study in Malaysia indicated that those elements have been stipulated clearly in professionals' circulars, but how it has been translated into practice requires further investigation (Awang *et al.*, 2013).

## Conclusion

Overall results indicated that four sub-constructs of citizenship competences introduced by Ten Dam *et al.* (2010) i.e., (1) acting in a democratic manner, (2) social responsibility, (3) conflict management and (3) managing differences require further detailed investigation. This is due to the statistical analyses from the current study showed that the indicators are gathered in three new constructs. Student's socio-environment may have influenced students' attitudes towards others (Awang *et al.*, 2014) and have affected their citizenship competences level.

As the study aimed at measuring citizenship competences in a democratic society, the constructs presented in this study may not appropriate in the communist and socialist countries. It may be fair to state that the instruments developed from this study are suitable to be used for measuring the level of a student's citizenship competence citizenship in democratic countries. Contextual differences (communism, democracy and socialism) are important aspects and major considerations when conducting research on citizenship competences and civic education. As the current study focuses mainly on human skills and attitudes, the future research on this topic has to consider the domains of knowledge, spiritual and socio-cultural values. Qualitative study may also helpful to identify new constructs and items for measuring holistic students' citizenship competences.

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## Author's Contributions

**Mohd Mahzan Awang:** The Leader of the Citizenship Competence project in Malaysia and the corresponding author for this paper. He is the project manager in preparing this paper.

**Alfitri:** Co-researcher who has prepared the literature and conceptual framework of the project.

**Abdul Razaq Ahmad:** Co-researcher who has analysed statistical data of this paper.

**Norila La Ulu:** Research fellow who has prepared the overall document for formatting and proofreading.

## Ethics

The indicators introduced in this paper are based on multi-ethnic society in Malaysia. It may not be suitable in different context of society. However, those indicators are still useful in developing instruments. It may be fair to state that the students voluntarily involved in this project. There is no major ethical issue from this paper.

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## Appendix

### *Multi-ethnic Citizenship Competences Inventory*

#### *Part A: Demographic of Respondents*

Name of School • Age • Gender • Ethnicity • Family Academic Background • Family Income

#### *Part B: Citizenship Skills*

B1 listening skills • B2 skills of discussion • B3 open mindedness • B4 ability to defend individual stance • B5 positive thinking • B6 community involvement • B7 responsibility in using public facilities • B8 responsible for cleanliness (recycling) • B9 responsibility in group activities • B10 ability to organise unity programmes • B11 ability to solve problems • B12 identifying problem factors • B13 connecting ideas to solve problems • B14 evaluation of problem solving • B15 planning • B16 interacting with multi-ethnic people • B17 appreciating multi-ethnic cultures • B18 multi-ethnic friends • B19 recreational activities with multi-ethnics • B20 helping skills

#### *Part C: Attitudes towards Citizenship*

C1 attitudes towards different opinions • C2 respecting others during discussion • C3 open mindedness • C4 attitudes in debating issues • C5 positive thinking • C6 community involvement • C7 attitudes towards public facilities • C8 volunteerism • C8 responsibility to environments • C9 attitudes towards public facilities group activities • C10 attitudes towards unity programmes • C11 attitudes towards public facilities in solving self-problems • C12 identifying problem factors • C13 connecting ideas to solve problems • C14 evaluating attitudes towards solving any problems • C15 planning • C16 attitudes while interacting with multi-ethnic people • C17 appreciating multi-ethnic cultures • C18 attitudes towards multi-ethnic friends • C19 recreational activities with multi-ethnics • C20 helping skills

## Note

The section of students' knowledge is not presented here. Contact me for the comprehensive instrument: mahzan@ukm.edu.my.