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Caring, Sharing and Giving without any Hesitation: Teacher Educators' Perceptions and Practices of Citizenship Education at Sultan Qaboos University in Oman

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Abstract: Citizenship education has been recognised as a desirable attribute of students both by the educational system and Sultan Qaboos University in Oman. The aims of citizenship education will be difficult to achieve unless teacher educators incorporate citizenship education as a main outcome of their courses. Yet, that mainly depends on their understanding of the meaning of citizenship and what the component is that they ought to develop. The current article aims to analyse the perceptions of teacher educators about citizenship and their related teaching practices. Study adopted a qualitative method to collect the data by interviewing five teacher educators from college of education, Sultan Qaboos University. The findings showed that those educators associated citizenship with patriotism and a personally responsible vision of citizenship. In addition, they reported limited practices pertinent to citizenship education and clearly expressed their need for professional development in citizenship education.

Keywords: *Citizenship education, citizenship in Arab contexts, education in Oman, international education, teacher education.*

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Introduction

Since the beginning of the 21st century, there has been a worldwide surge of interest in citizenship education (CE). This concept has continued to occupy a large space in education literature, especially in Western and Asian contexts, where much of the recently published studies were conducted. This interest in CE has been sparked by national and international transformations and translated in several ways, such as by introducing courses on CE and programmes and initiatives at school in several countries. As a result, teacher education was required by many scholars to cope with these transformations, as they directed their attention to prepare future teachers to help their students to be engaged and participatory citizens on both national and global levels (An, 2014; Carr, 2008; Estelles & Romero, 2018; Li & Tan, 2017; Martin, 2008, 2010; Patterson et al., 2012; Peterson & Knowles, 2009; Sunal et al., 2009). Some studies focused on the relationship between teachers' education and a global perspective (Estelles & Romero, 2016; Holden & Hicks, 2007; Marri et al., 2014; Merryfield, 1998; Rapoport, 2010, 2015; Robbins et al., 2003; Zong, 2009). Correspondingly, some education faculties' vision goals related to preparing their future teachers for CE. Yet, this is not the case at the Faculty of Education at the Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), which is situated in Muscat, the capital of Oman. Although there is some empirical evidence on the CE status with regard to teacher education (AlMaamari, 2009), we still know little about how CE is perceived and practiced by the teacher educators (TEs) in Oman.

This article highlights the necessity of discovering the perspectives of a group of TEs in one college of education in one Arab country, namely Oman, to understand how this concept is perceived outside the context where it was generated and where it has evolved. It was assumed in some previous studies that teacher educators have a richer perspective than their students on the relationship between citizenship and preparing teachers for developing citizenship (Estelles & Romero, 2018). Koh et al. (2013) state that the provision of education for citizenship is necessary for equipping the future teachers with the requirement of exercising citizenship. This article begins by introducing the meaning of citizenship both in Western and Arab thoughts. Then, the relationship between teacher education and CE will be highlighted. Finally, the research methodology and the results of the study will be introduced.

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Concept of Citizenship

Several scholars are in agreement that the meaning of citizenship differs across contexts and accordingly is subject to different interpretations depending on historical geographical, economic and socio-political ideologies dominant in the context at that time (Koh et al., 2013; Koutselini, 2008). Fouts and Lee (2005) argued that citizenship not only takes on a different meaning from place to place but can also be redefined over time. Thus, as this study is conducted in an Arab context that might differ in its imagination of citizenship from the Western thought, it is necessary to present the meaning of citizenship from both perspectives. With regard to the Western perspective, Osler and Starkey (2003) define citizenship as a set of rights and duties related to nation states. According to Oldfield (1990), a citizen's rights consist of self-government and reciprocal trust amongst citizens. However, it is a citizen's obligation to participate in making the community more strong and stable. Miller (2000) differentiated between two perspectives of citizenship: liberal and civic republican. The liberal perspective was criticised for putting too much emphasis on the rights of the citizens in comparison to the civic republican perspective, which largely values the duties of citizens, especially showing patriotism towards the nation. Yet Delanty (2000) argued that citizenship is the membership of a political community, involving active participation and identity. In democratic states, as Sunal et al. (2009) argue, active participation is what constitutes good citizenship.

Good citizenship has been subject to different interpretations which attempt to identify what attributes form a "good citizen" (Abowitz & Harnish, 2006; Bank, 2008; Shively, 1997; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). Shively (1997) differentiated between two kinds of citizens: enthusiastic and democratic. Westheimer and Kahne (2004) highlighted three kinds of citizens: personally responsible, participatory and social-oriented. Abowitz and Harnish (2006) introduced three types of citizens: civic-republican, liberal and transnational. However, Bank (2008) proposed four kinds of citizens according to their attributes: legal, minimal, active, and transformative.

The typology of Westheimer and Kahne (2004) was widely utilised to understand citizenship vision in the previous studies (Estelles & Romero, 2018; Li & Tan, 2017; Leung, 2014). According to this typology, the personally responsible citizen is characterised by good character, honesty, responsibility and being law-abiding, pick, and putting the waste in it places. The participatory citizen is required to be an active participant in civic life and the social activities local, nationally, and internationally. The justice-oriented citizen is more concerned about social problems and engaging in structured critique of the community's issues.

Unlike Western scholars, Arab scholars argued that "citizenship" is a word imported from Western languages and there is no word in Arabic dictionaries that is equivalent to it (Alkhashit, 2007). According to AlMaamari (2002), citizenship linguistically is derived from *Al Watan* (homeland), which is the "place where an individual settles" and, by dwelling in *Al Watan*, the individual becomes *Mowatan* (citizen). However, politically, the liberal Western perspective on citizenship has been dominant in the majority of Arabic literature about citizenship (e.g. AlMaamari, 2009; Al-Qahtani, 2018; Faour & Muasher, 2011). Accordingly, citizenship is seen either through an identity lens as a sense of belonging or through a constitutional lens as a status that entitles individuals to some privileges. Taking Oman into consideration, the constitution, which was issued in 1996, highlights that Omani citizens have rights including free education, health care, social benefits, freedom in practising religious rites, equality before the law, freedom of opinion and expression, and so on. Yet, the influence of liberal thought on the Arab scholars' perspective on citizenship does not mean the absence of other cultural factors such as the Islamic principles that stress the balance of rights and obligations and social solidarity. In other words, although the Islamic perspective acknowledges individuals' rights, obligation towards community is more valued. As a result, citizenship is understood as good conduct by people and adhering to the values of helping others and bringing about change to their life in order to build a strong community.

Teachers and CE

Teachers' perceptions and understanding of CE have been subject to several studies during the last two decades. As Thornton (2005) stated, teachers are influenced in their teaching by their own epistemological and ideological perceptions of the concept and learning. Furthermore, Reichert and Torney-Purta (2019) highlighted that there is more possibility for topics related to CE to be taught when teacher are more familiar about it. Furthermore, Koh et al. (2013) stress that teachers' understanding of citizenship in order to, if required, to provide them with needed training to support accomplishing their role in 'modelling citizenship'. Therefore, the success of CE largely depends on the effectiveness of the teachers. On the basis of these assumptions, scholars have explored pre-/in-service teachers' viewpoints and practice of CE.

Examining teachers' ideas and practices in a study conducted in the Netherlands, Leenders et al. (2008) found that teachers linked their citizenship perceptions to their objectives, age groups and type of schools and teaching subject. Prior (1999) investigated the features of a good citizen in Australia from the viewpoints of stakeholders. He found that effective CE requires teachers to have a shared meaning of desirable characteristics of effective citizen. Unfortunately, Sunal et al. (2009) in their study in USA showed that pre-service teachers had a shallow meaning of democracy, the CE and the teaching methods to achieve the goals of the later. Similarly, in the UK, Cleaver et al. (2006) reported that several studies asserted that teachers reported that they felt inadequately prepared to teach CE. However, the study

conducted in Singapore by Koh et al. (2013) found that teachers have strong national feelings. Yet they found only moderate tendency to engagement in political and social activities. Recently, Estelles and Romero (2016) conducted a study to understand how a group of TEs at the University of Cantabria in Spain conceptualise CE and whether they link it to global citizenship. They showed that the inclusion of global perspectives by these TEs was very limited and that those who had a stronger attitude towards to social justice proved more global interest. In the same vein, Li and Tan (2017) found in their study that aimed at exploring Chinese teachers' perceptions of the "good citizen" that citizenship is understood as personally responsible practices. They called for professional training for teachers as a necessary prerequisite for building a more broad understanding of citizenship. More recently, Estelles and Romero (2018) attempted to understand the role of TEs in preparing their student teachers (STs) to be participatory and ethically engaged citizens in Spain. They found that the TEs attached citizenship to three meanings: personally responsible citizenship (vote in election, give donation and help others), participatory citizenship in decision-making on common issues, and justice-oriented citizenship (which entails creation of a fairer society).

Teacher Education and Citizenship in Arabic Contexts

In general, the Arabic literature on CE clearly shows dissatisfaction with the role of the educational systems in developing "good citizens" who can critically participate in developing their countries for a better future. According to the project conducted by the Carnegie Middle East Center, Faour and Muasher (2011) states that educational reforms in Arab countries directs more attention to technical aspects while the productive learning that focus on students' needs to be an active citizen receives less emphasis. Similarly, a study conducted by AlMaamari (2014) to uncover the status of CE in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries concluded that CE is closer to the minimalist approach that focuses on historical and geographical information, which seeks to develop loyal and informed citizens, and less focused on the maximalist approach that aims to develop participatory citizens. The findings of previous studies conducted in Oman (AlMaamari, 2002, 2009; AlZadjali, 2002), Kingdom of Bahrain (Eaid, 2004) and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Akhdar, 2005; Zayed, 1997) revealed that CE emphasises the value of the homeland at the expense of developing critical skills needed for citizens in modern societies.

With regard to the relationship of teachers with CE, the literature showed some important indicators for this study. The study that was conducted by AlMaamari (2009) to investigate the perceptions of CE of the initial STs of social studies and their tutors in Oman, revealed that they view CE as an approach to strengthen the national unity and develop students' pride in their country. In addition, the study highlighted a gap between the demands of developing CE at the schools and the goals of teacher education. Similarly, AlMaamari and AlNaqbi (2011) found through their study that investigated the perceptions of social studies and science teachers in Oman and the UAE that they defined citizenship as a united feeling of belonging to the homeland and that the "good citizen" is one who shows pride in belonging to homeland and nation. AlGhamdi (2010) found that Saudi Arabian teachers encounter problems in developing activities to reinforce citizenship. Furthermore, AbuAlhmael (2019) highlighted the necessity of training teachers in how to link all educational curricula values to CE in order to prepare the students for encountering the rapid transformations. Likewise, Al-Qahtani (2018) insists on equipping the teachers with skills that allow them to create a rich classroom environment for participating. Similarly, in their study of the role of the educational college in enhancing national loyalty in the student teachers, who specialised in kindergarten education in Kuwait, they found a need for reviewing the preparation programme in order to consolidate the national loyalty values of those teachers before they commence their profession.

On the basis of the above, it is clearly evident that citizenship in teacher education in some Arab contexts, including Oman, is subject to growing attention by scholars. The findings showed the necessity of equipping the student teachers with a set of citizenship values such as national loyalty, social work and belonging to the country. Nonetheless, they highlight an inadequate focus on citizenship in current programmes for TEs. As Koh et al. (2013) stated, there is a link between provision of CE in teacher education and the teachers' attitudes towards developing it in schools. As a result, focusing on exploring the perceptions of TEs on CE in Oman, will help to understand to what extent those educators take this issue into consideration when they prepare future teachers.

Methodology

Research Goal

Exploring the perceptions of TEs on CE in the College of Education, Sultan Qaboos University, in order to understand to what extent those educators take this issue into consideration when they prepare future teachers.

The Context of the Study

The College of Education (COE), which was opened in 1986, at Sultan Qaboos University offers teachers preparation programmes for middle and high school at undergraduate and postgraduate degree. The college was established mainly to prepare effective teachers, to assist in achieving a good education in the Country. According to AlRubay'ee (2004), the college specifically aimed to prepare qualified teachers with positive attitudes to employ new teaching methods and direct attention to reinforcing Islamic and Arabic values with STs. This college is the only governmental college of education in the whole Oman, which aims to prepare its STs to cope with increasing challenges in the world, especially creating a balance between preparing the students for the competitive job market and preparing them to be citizens in a country that has continuously developed. With the dominance of a discourse market in Oman in the last 20 years, it clearly appears that incorporating CE not only in pre-service teaching education programmes but also in the educational systems.

Since its beginning, the COE has undergone several changes and transformations, both quantity and qualitatively. More recently, the college's programmes were accredited by the NCATE for seven years (2016–2022). For achieving that aim, the college developed a conceptual framework for their graduates consisting of four domains: academic and specialist expertise, diversity in teaching, personal attitudes and values, cultural and lifelong learning, and technology skills. Nevertheless, no reference was made to citizenship regarding attitudes and values for student teachers, which might be reconsidered in a review based on the TE's perceptions. This assumption is supported by the university's statement of graduates' outcomes which stresses that "SQU graduates should value good citizenship qualities" by engaging in social and international arena and dealing with contemporary challenges (Sultan Qaboos University, 2015, p. 106). In addition, in the university's strategic plan (2016–2020), emphasizes that university teaching and research must be taken into account the regional and global (Sultan Qaboos University, 2015).

Although, as stated above, the COE has undergone several developments during the current decade, among them was international accreditation, CE has not yet been transferred into a policy in the college. Therefore, the present study originates from the necessity for exploring how CE is perceived and practised by the college's faculty members in addition to exploring their views about the ways to incorporate it. There is no research base concerning the perceptions of Omani educators of citizenship and CE. Accordingly, any proposal to incorporate CE in teacher education programmes must depend on the active cooperation and high awareness of the educators who are going to implement it.

Sample and Data Collection

The participants were selected purposefully as it was important to reach those TEs who have some interest in CE in terms of research and teaching. That was achieved by reviewing the annual records of academic activities for the last year in the college in order to identify those who have been engaged in topics related to CE in research, seminars and community service. Five participants fulfilled this criterion, and all of them agreed to take part in the study. One of the TEs was female and four were male. Concerning areas of expertise, two participants belong to the Curriculum and Instruction Department, which includes different knowledge areas related to school subjects that are taught at Omani schools. The other three participants belong to the Islamic Science Department, Art Department, and Educational Foundation Department.

Table 1. The characterisation of the sample

Names	Gender	Country	Specialization
Ahmad	M	Gordan	Science Education
Khalid	M	Egypt	Art Education
Lila	F	Egypt	Educational Foundation
Mubarak	M	Tunisia	Islamic Sciences education
Abdullah	M	Oman	English Education

Analyzing of Data

The study is based on a qualitative methodology to collect data and analyse it (Radnor, 2002). According to this approach, researchers need to take note of the following (Strauss & Corbin, 1997): firstly, that data analysis and conclusions should be firmly rooted in the data. The researcher in this study is passionate about issues of CE and has previous experience in dealing with same methodology which help to minimize the challenges that might arisen during the study. Findings from this study can better inform the possibilities of incorporating CE in TE programmes at the COE, and, to a great extent, other TE institutions in Oman and beyond in other Arab contexts, which are somehow similar.

The aim of employing semi-structured interviews was to obtain in-depth qualitative data. I seek out to examine candidates' interpretation of various discourses of CE, their definitions of citizenship and CE, and their practices related to CE. The goal was not to assess for the "correct" definition of CE, but to determine if the candidates had a critical and self-reflective understanding of CE and the ability to incorporate it in their courses accordingly.

Analysing of the data was done by identifying the themes emerging from the transcriptions. As Radnor (2002) stated, good reliability of data analysis depends on discussion with independent readers. Keeping this in mind, one independent reader, who has prior experience, participated in reading of the transcripts and noted emerging themes. Consequently, the developing codes consists of three themes: Citizenship is communitarian and patriotic feelings; CE is not an integral component in TE; and an independent course is the suitable approach to CE.

In analysing the interviews, I adopted grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1997). According to this theory, the sequence of analysis starts open coding of the data and identifying indicators of concepts and categories that fit the data. Then, construction of the themes by classifying repeated categories and concepts. Simultaneously, comparison among categories was applied in order to identify similar thoughts or practises in the same categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1997).

Findings

The findings of the study are presented according to the emerging themes that were generated by the interviews: citizenship is communitarian and patriotic feelings, CE is not an integral component of TE, independent course is the suitable approach for CE and Professional development is necessary for TEs.

Citizenship is communitarian and patriotic feelings

By and large, the TEs' perceptions reflected mainly the controversial nature of citizenship. Specifically, they associated it with four meanings: belonging, identity, rights and, more importantly, obligations. This reflected the fact that citizenship is not a static notion in the context of the study, which led the teacher educators to providing one definition for it. Obviously, their perspective on citizenship is associated with communitarian and patriotic feelings more than with constitutional aspects that look at citizenship mainly as a legal status. In other words, none of the five TEs referred to the Omani constitution as a source of defining rights and obligations. Those TEs highlighted two meanings of citizenship: citizenship as a belonging feeling and citizenship as a set of obligations. They put lesser emphasis on citizenship as both identity and rights.

With regard to citizenship as a sense of belonging, all the teacher educators except one view citizenship in terms of belonging. Khalid, who specialised in art education, expressed his view about belonging by saying it is many things 'family, friends, streets, memories which have been planted in the homeland'. This sense of belonging, from the point of view of Abdullah, can be identified by showing responsibility towards the society where you live and interacting with others; it is about caring, sharing and giving without any hesitation'. Accordingly, they all acknowledged the positive characteristics that resulted from a sense of belonging, such as 'maintenance of social cohesion' (Ahmad); 'Maintenance of public spaces such as streets and institutions like schools' (Khalid); and 'tolerance, dialogue, and accepting other opinions' (Lila).

It seems that realities influence their views about what can be regarded as important for citizenship. To put it differently, Lila, for instance, was more worried about social cohesion as she comes from another Arab context that has witnessed several disputes on the grounds of religion. By contrast, Abdullah, who is an Omani, has never mentioned the words "tolerance" or "accepting others" as the people in Oman live in harmony without any clashes that can be attributed to religious factors.

The second meaning of citizenship getting great attention from the teacher educators is that related to the reciprocal relationship between rights and responsibilities. Yet, citizens' duties dominated their perceptions of citizenship, although two of them referred to rights as the other face of the coin. Three teacher educators mentioned rights in general without giving it a high priority in comparison to duties. Khalid, for example, regarded it as a 'given that is accorded to the citizen', which means the rights are not a right taken through struggle. From their perspectives, a person cannot deserve the title "citizen" unless he/she highly exercises his duties towards his/her homeland. One duty, as Ahmad claimed, for instance, is 'positive conduct of the citizen in this society'. Yet this is a vague word that is subject to different meanings, either positive or negative, as it highly depends on who has the authority to define it. In other words, engagement in political discussions, from the viewpoint of government, is not positive conduct, as it challenges the government's claims. In comparison, this is desirable conduct in Western thought of a "good citizen". Abdullah summarised the citizens' duties as follows: 'I think it is impossible for citizenship to be real unless citizens are enthusiastic to give to society despite their hurts, and unless they compete to volunteer in order to develop their society'. Therefore, the teacher educators believed that citizen duties are more related to the social arena, which does not provoke any controversial issues. Khalid is convinced that citizenship duties are 'maintaining public spheres and abiding by social conduct'. Likewise, Lila stressed the importance of dialogue to solve social problems. Nonetheless, Abdullah used 'giving and volunteering' to explain the duties of citizenship, focusing on the social obligation instead of political participation. In fact, none of the teacher educators mentioned the political duties of citizenship, which might reflect the problematics of politics in Oman and Arab contexts, which some of those participants belong to.

Interestingly, two teacher educators argued that citizenship is an identity related to history and language without any referring to multiculturalism that modern societies witnessed in the era of globalisation. Ahmad viewed citizenship as a

link among those who shared language, history, and religion. Similarly, Mubarak regarded citizenship as 'religious identity which links the people of the same nation'. These perspectives showed that cultural influences play an important role in understating how citizenship is recognised in the Omani context.

Similarly, the perspectives of the TEs about citizenship influenced their views about the characteristics that constitute a "good citizen". Generally, the majority of them associate "good citizen" with a set of characteristics close to personal and social spheres. Focusing on adaptation to the reality instead of attempting to change it. Ahmad claimed, 'from my point of view, I think that the citizen has to be active and has to adapt himself to his society's traditions. We have a set of values showing the society's originality that require from us to be proud of it'. According to the TEs, this value system includes 'good reputation, honesty, good manner and not committing fraud' (Khalid) and 'diligence and commitment' (Lila). Abdullah added that a good citizen has to 'prove sincerity, perseverance and honesty'.

It seems clear that participants are unable to separate the attributes of the good human that Islamic principles stress from the attributes that a modern state requires from the citizen. Therefore, TEs in their perspectives on a good citizen, mainly reflect a moral vision more than a civic vision associated with participation and responsibilities. It is evident that their perspective is influenced by cultural factors, mainly Islamic thought of a good Muslim. That is to say, the participants are linking citizenship to their cultural traditions instead of viewing it as a Western concept requiring civic contract and real participation in developing the public realm. Yet, two participants expressed different perspectives on a good citizen. Lila highlighted the importance of 'accepting diversity and counting all opinions', while Mubarak referred to the necessity of 'initiative for volunteering'. These two comments expand the vision to accommodate some attributes that relate to the global citizen, who widens his horizon to the wider world and helps others in order to be satisfied himself. Again, this is evident in that TEs regard citizenship as a human value instead of a civic and political activity that requires criticism, protest, joining parties, and exercise the freedom of expression.

CE is not an integral component in TE

Although CE is not regarded to be an integral component in TE programmes at COE, the TEs acknowledged the importance of integrating it. Overall, there are different justifications behind their beliefs in the necessity of CE for future Omani teachers, who, according to previous study, received insufficient preparation in CE (AlMaamari, 2009). Ahmad makes it more clear: 'A preparation programme is not only pertinent to professional development, but it is necessary for preparing student teachers for living and for enabling them to adapt society's customs. Contrarily, Khalid argued that:

Integrating CE in teacher preparation is crucial to challenging the negative impacts of the technology on our generation, especially social media, which leads to spreading rumours and mockery among society's components, that requires correction by teaching students about the duties and responsibilities of citizenship.

However, Lila influenced by international transformations, is convinced that CE is necessary for teachers for two reasons. Firstly, citizenship is regarded by UNESCO as the main purpose of sustainable development. Secondly, citizenship can be employed as a means to build coexistence, which is necessary for 'combating religious extremism and class division that threatens the Arab world in particular and the world in general'. Yet, Abdullah seemed influenced by market discourse in education that demands from teachers that they show citizenship and a sense of belonging. Similarly, Mubarak argued that the teacher's curriculum needs to strengthen a sense of belonging in order for them to convey it to their students.

These perspectives on the importance of CE for student teachers guided the limited practices of their educators regarding CE. Ahmed, who is a specialist in Methods of Teaching Science, claimed that he attempts in his courses 'to make students be proud of the role played by Arab and Muslim scientists in developing the sciences and scientific thinking'. Khalid was guided by his expertise in arts to strengthen public values by training his students to prepare curriculum units about cooperation, cleanliness, and community. Yet, Lila, was inspired by the values that Physical Education requires to be held by the students. She links her vision of citizenship 'as coexistence among individuals and people' to her teaching. In addition, she reflects that she works to 'spread the sports values that were emphasized by Pierre de Coubertin, the founder of the Olympic Games, including tolerance, sportsmanship, justice, equality and non-racism'.

Conversely, Abdullah's teaching perspective on citizenship is to develop problem-solving skills. He mentioned that in his course Method of Teaching English he assigned some problems for students such as teaching English and Omani identity, and asked them to apply a problem-solving approach to deal with it. In fact, this is the only indication of citizenship being linked with skills despite the importance of skills in exercising citizenship responsibilities, whether they are mental or performance skills.

An independent course is the suitable approach to CE

The perceptions of those TEs of the aspects of CE that are required to be included in TE programmes at COE vary. Interestingly, they are not different from their perspectives on both their understanding of citizenship and their limited teaching practices. Four of them stressed enhancing the development of values that help teachers to be good humans, which results in making them role models for their students. Ahmad highlighted the importance of 'including teaching ethics and explaining the role of the teacher in developing his nation', while Khalid considered the importance of social values such as 'cooperation, working in a group, and participation in society's affairs and also developing a sense of duty towards public institutions'. Yet Lila valued the necessity of learning about respecting human rights in order to prepare the teacher, who 'works to maintain equality among the students and let their voices be heard regardless of what is the matter'. Far from that, Mubarak called for incorporating cultural identity, especially the topics that relate to 'moral values and social customs'. Nevertheless, Abdullah argued that student teachers are required to be familiar with privileges and duties of citizenship.

In light of the above, it is clearly evident that TEs are in disagreement about what are important aspects of CE that need to be incorporated in teacher education programmes, which reflects the controversial nature of CE, as mentioned in previous literature. As a result, these different perspectives on CE constitute a big challenge for the college, which consists of different cognitive backgrounds in their faculty. To tackle this challenge, building a faculty's awareness of CE is necessary in order to enable the educators to consecutively link their courses' content with CE. Obviously, two student educators direct the attention to this point. Ahmad argued that 'the nature of professional content of many course introduced by the college requires a logical justification, especially in the absence of clear objectives related to CE in teacher preparation programmes'. In light of that, Khalid highlighted the need for 'good training for faculty educators on how they can link CE components to their courses'. According to his perspective, this will minimise the 'educators fears that might put them in a problematic situation when they attempt to incorporate CE in a weak way'. Similarly, Lila was in favour of providing professional training in order to overcome the 'shortage of Arabic materials in CE that explain how those links might be achieved within the college programmes'. Accordingly, it seems that CE is currently not an objective for teacher preparation in the college and no policy has been provided yet to enlighten the TEs' efforts to implement CE in their teaching.

Professional development is necessary for TEs

Overall, as the TEs found some difficulties with incorporating CE in teacher preparation programmes, three of them were in favour of introducing CE as an independent and compulsory course to be taught by specialist educators with a full background in CE. As Khalid mentioned, this course can provide STs with the 'meaning of citizenship and good citizen' and 'this knowledge is necessary for students teachers to play the expected role in developing citizenship'. In addition, Mubarak added a set of topics that need to be incorporated in this course such as 'voluntary work, initiative to save the environment and national identity'. As he justified, these topics are taught in the Omani educational system and teaching STs about them will help them to transmit them to their students. On the contrary, Ahmad disagreed with introducing this course and he thought CE topics can be included in a course entitled 'Modern Oman Society', which is a general requirement introduced by the College of Art and Social Sciences. In his view, 'the content of this course can be selected jointly by the two colleges'. Again, these views expressed by the STs reflected a minimalist perspective on CE, as the content is regarded to be the most important component of CE.

However, two TEs believed that introducing CE in teacher education is not associated with students. Instead, it is associated with the conceptualisation background of CE of their educators. Abdullah put it directly, 'enlightening the educators about citizenship and the role of educational institutions in developing it is a priority at this time'. He added, citizenship is a complex concept and incorporating it in the courses requires giving educators the 'flexibility of selecting the content and assessment tools'. In the same vein, Lila focuses on the necessity of 'professional development in CE for all faculty members', as that will enlightening them about the 'method of linking CE to the specialist content', in addition to conducting 'interdisciplinary research in CE in order to enrich their knowledge about CE'. Khalid made a broader suggestion related to the policy level. He called for 'reconsidering the outcomes of teacher education programmes and incorporating citizenship as a main outcome'. According to his view, this step will lead to all programmes taking citizenship into consideration and working for incorporating it in all courses where that is possible and logical. This provokes the necessity of working from two sides: from the top down, to review the outcomes in light of CE requirements, and from the bottom up by disseminating a cultural change among the educators in the college.

Discussion

It is clear that participants have a strong sense of nationalism irrespective of their nationality. The views of the participants related to the minimalist perspective on citizenship described by Kerr (2002). Good citizenship from their perspectives entitles citizens to several things, among them 'caring, sharing and giving without any hesitation'; 'good reputation, honesty, good manner and not committing fraud'; 'diligence and commitment'; and 'proving sincerity, perseverance and honesty'. While building citizenship that enhances participation politically and economically is crucial for Oman currently, the TEs stressed a nationalist perspective on citizenship that revolves around symbolic

deeds. These understandings of citizenship are highly influenced by social and political discourses of citizenship which stress patriotism and citizens' obligations. In addition, they seem pertinent to the Islamic principles that emphasise obligation towards the community over the individual's rights in order to strengthen social solidarity (AlMaamari, 2009). Furthermore, by comparison, these thoughts are more close to the Asian perspective on citizenship. Li and Tan (2017) found that the desirable citizenship attributes of the citizens of China are collectivism, patriotism, and fulfilment of obligations with less reference being made to citizens' rights. Likewise, Kennedy (2004) concluded that Asian thought of citizenship is associated more with responsibilities towards family and the community. According to the views of those TEs, Omani has to be a "good person" in order to be a "good citizen". Therefore, they thought that teachers can only be "good citizens" by conducting their obligations in their daily personal life within the community.

Based on the typology of Westheimer and Kahne (2004), this kind of citizen must have good character, be honest, and be a law-abiding member of the community. Interestingly, the TEs seldom referred to the other two kinds of citizen mentioned by this typology, namely participatory and justice-oriented. This result validated the result reached by the studies conducted by both Li and Tan (2017) in China and Estelles and Romero (2018) in Spain, which reveal that teachers and TEs understand citizenship through personally responsible practices. Yet this pattern is not only confined to Arab and Asian perspectives, Fouts and Lee (2005) revealed from their study that teachers emphasised social dimensions over political dimensions and ranked "morality" and "duty" as priorities. Interestingly, civic participation was not a priority for those teachers, despite belonging to democratic educational systems. Similarly, Davies et al. (2005) found that teachers in England associated citizenship with welfare of others, and moral and ethical behaviour. Recently, Reichert and Torney-Purta (2019) found from a study covered a sample from 12 countries that teachers value developing community more than political participation.

Associating citizenship and its practices with a personally responsible vision showed a clear influence of the context on understanding citizenship. While Western discourse on citizenship is underpinned by the necessity to consolidate democracy by preparing citizens who are willing to overcome the justice-oriented issues in society, the Omani context, as it appeared from this study, is led by the patriotism that requires citizens to show loyalty to the country and avoid dealing with critical and controversial issues. Therefore, the focusing on personal traits of a person and his/her obligations towards the community by those TEs is more safe in comparison to developing critical thinking skills and discussing structural issues that might include some political criticism of authority. In this context, TEs believed that teachers are prepared to accept social and realities, as criticising them might lead to a person being regarded as a negative citizen. Kerr (2002) described this as a minimalist kind of CE, which is content-led and teacher-based. It is totally different from the maximalist concept that focuses on discussion, debate and active participation.

As the TEs understand CE in a narrow sense, their limited practices in and perspectives on incorporating it in teacher preparation programmes are influenced, as Reichert and Torney-Purta (2019) claimed, by their perceptions of CE. Accordingly, their practices were limited and focused on either nationalistic values such as being proud of Arab and Muslim scientists or personal traits like cooperation, cleanliness and coexistence. Therefore, a majority of them were in favour of introducing a distinct course for it instead of introducing it as an interdisciplinary issue in all courses, especially as it regards the main outcome for all students of the university. The reason behind that can be attributed to their (SQU, 2015). Therefore, they feel that there is a need for professional training on CE. In the words of Abdullah, teacher educators require 'enlightening ... about citizenship and the role of educational schools in developing it'. His view is supported by a set of Arabic studies (AbuAlhmael, 2019; AlMaamari, 2009; Al-Qahtani, 2018) and Asian-context studies (Li & Tan, 2017).

Providing TEs with professional development is underpinned by assumptions that expanding understanding of CE will lead to better practices. TEs at the College of Education, SQU, require professional development in the other approaches of citizenship according to the topology of Westheimer and Kahne (2004) in order to prepare Omani future citizens, who, as Faour and Muasher (2011), stated able to be active learner instead of being passive subjects who only think and behave according to what is stated by the authorities. This can rectify the gap that exists between the demands of developing CE at the schools and the practices of CE at TE (AlMaamari, 2009).

Conclusion

As shown from this study, TEs expressed personally responsible vision of citizenship which might not be compatible with what is expected from teachers' learning nationally and internationally. At the national level, Omani teachers are expected to be taught according to a new philosophy of education which was issued in 2017 and stressed developing a citizen to meet the requirements of 21st century challenges. In addition, productive citizenship is regarded by SQU, where the participating educators worked, as one main outcome that is to be achieved by all graduates, including the STs. With regard to the international level, it has been agreed by many scholars that achieving the requirements of citizenship that have been echoed around the world in the last two decades will be difficult if teachers are ill-prepared for developing citizenship. Therefore, educational aims stated in Oman's philosophy of education risk failure unless TEs incorporate CE as the main outcomes of their courses.

Recommendations

Recommendations for TEs at college of education, Sultan Qaboos University to incorporate CE as the main outcomes of their courses in order to help prospective teachers to successfully implement the Oman's philosophy of education. In addition, it is clearly evidence that enhancing the professional developing of TEs will help them to overcome the lack of confidence in their expertise in making a logical link between CE and their courses. A future research must be directed to study how student teacher think about the citizenship and global citizenship education as it became one main attribute of the college's graduates.

Limitations

This research is limited only to the TEs at the college of Education and their perceptions of CE which means the results must understood within this context. In other words, the data obtained from this study is not sufficient to develop a clear picture of how CE at Sultan Qaboos is incorporated at all colleges. As a result, further studies in the future are required to reveal how good citizenship as a main quality of University's graduates is developed.

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