

The Role of the National Education Course in Developing Citizenship Dimensions Among Jordanian University Students: A Case Study of Al-Isra University

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Abstract

This study aimed to explore the role of the National Education course in developing the dimensions of citizenship among Jordanian university students, taking Al-Isra University as a model. A questionnaire was designed and validated for reliability and validity to achieve the study's objectives. It was administered to 334 undergraduate students enrolled in the National Education course during the first semester of the 2024/2025 academic year at Al-Isra University in Jordan. The results revealed that the role of the National Education course in developing the dimensions of citizenship among Jordanian university students was high. The "political dimension" ranked first, while the "economic dimension" ranked fifth and last. The study also found statistically significant differences in the role of the course attributed to gender, with males scoring higher and no statistically significant differences attributed to the type of faculty. Based on these findings, the researcher proposed several recommendations and suggestions.

Keywords: National Education course, citizenship dimensions, university students, Al-Isra University

1. Introduction

National education is a fundamental educational tool aimed at enhancing the sense of national belonging and instilling human values and national principles, such as democracy, social justice, equality, and the rights and duties of individuals. This contributes to the concept of good citizenship. National education is viewed as an effective tool for fostering active citizenship, which includes awareness of individual rights and duties and participation in social and economic development. The course provides knowledge about the country's history and culture. It aims to instill values of active participation in society by studying constitutional principles, human rights, and the state's relationship with its citizens. This enables students to understand their societal roles, enhancing their sense of responsibility toward their nation.

Teaching national education is a cornerstone of curricula in many countries, aiming to foster national belonging and instill values and principles that contribute to building good citizens. Additionally, it enhances awareness of a country's history, culture, and traditions. National education significantly influences shaping the awareness of future generations, equipping them to understand their societal roles and contribute to their nation's progress and prosperity (Tarhouni & Sassi, 2020).

Xiao (2010) emphasizes that national education is as important as any other form of education in the social upbringing of individuals. Its content requires essential national knowledge, skills, and attitudes to produce responsible and active citizens. Frihat (2010) defines it as a socialization process aimed at creating a good citizen who is proud of and loyal to their country, adheres to its heritage and cultural identity, and prioritizes national interest over personal interest while demonstrating good morals and readiness to sacrifice for the nation.

National education curricula occupy a leading position among the main tools used by educational systems to help their youth develop their potential to the fullest extent, enabling them to become responsible and productive members of society concerned about their community's issues and priorities (Al-Aatki, 2023). These curricula aim to equip learners in schools and universities with knowledge and skills to act effectively at national and global levels while fostering moral, spiritual, and cultural growth, enabling them to be responsible thinkers within and beyond university settings. The curricula also promote mutual respect, tolerance, and active engagement (Crick, 2000).

According to Anagreh, Bawaneh, and Daminhour (2008), various terms are used for national education, focusing on different aspects such as political education (government systems), civic education (values and social norms), and national education (preparing active members of society). Institutions such as families, educational establishments, mosques, and media are key channels for disseminating national values, with universities playing a significant role in fostering citizenship values among students.

Given the increasingly globalized world and its associated challenges, such as rapid technological changes and cultural diversity, citizenship extends beyond national boundaries to address global issues (Al-Amri, 2022). The researcher thus developed a framework for citizenship dimensions to assess the role of the National Education course in fostering these

dimensions among Jordanian university students.

1.1 Concept of Citizenship

Citizenship derives from the word “nation” and refers to where an individual resides, whether born or raised there. Citizenship denotes the social and legal relationship that binds individuals, balancing individuality, democracy, and adherence to laws, including military service, taxation, and societal contributions (Hebert & Sears, 2011). Universities are pivotal in fostering citizenship, aiming to nurture citizens committed to their faith, nation, and community (Al-Awamreh & Al-Zboon, 2014). The objectives of higher education in Jordan include fostering national belonging, intellectual independence, and a sense of responsibility (Jordanian Higher Education Law, 2001).

Dimensions of Citizenship: A review of the literature (Al-Amri, 2022) identifies the following dimensions of citizenship:

- 1) Legal Dimension: Regulates the relationship between rulers and the ruled, balancing individual interests and societal needs.
- 2) Social Dimension: Involves socialization processes, safeguarding dignity, and fostering community relationships.
- 3) Cultural Dimension: Emphasizes spiritual and psychological aspects, respecting cultural identity.
- 4) Political Dimension: Reflects citizens’ freedoms and participation in governance.
- 5) Economic Dimension: Highlights individuals’ connection to the labor market and securing a basic standard of living.

1.2 Research Problem

Activating citizenship values contributes significantly to national security, stability, and development. As key developmental institutions, universities play a critical role in shaping youth in various spheres. Observing negative behaviors among university students, such as absenteeism, property damage, and campus violence, motivated this study to explore the role of the National Education course in enhancing citizenship values among Jordanian university students.

1.3 Objectives

- 1) Identify gender-based differences in the course’s impact.
- 2) Investigate faculty-type differences in the course’s impact.

1.4 Research Question

- 1) Are there statistically significant gender-based differences in the course’s impact?
- 2) Are there statistically significant differences based on faculty type?

1.5 Significance of the Study

- **Topical Importance:** This study highlights the role of national education in fostering citizenship dimensions.
- **Practical Implications:** Identifying the inclusion of citizenship dimensions in the National Education course to guide teaching practices.
- **Target Group:** University students' maturity makes them more attuned to national issues.

1.6 Terminology

- **National Education:** A course fostering interactions within local and national communities, emphasizing allegiance and knowledge of national history and political systems (Atiyyah, 2017).
- **Citizenship Dimensions:** Social, legal, political, and cultural aspects that define active citizenship.
- **National Education Course:** A mandatory subject introduced in Jordanian universities in 2007 (Al-Qadi, 2021).
- **Al-Isra University:** A private Jordanian university established in 1991 in Tneib, south of Amman.

1.7 Scope and Limitations

- **Population:** Undergraduate students enrolled in the National Education course at Al-Isra University.
- **Geographic Scope:** Al-Isra University, Amman.
- **Temporal Scope:** First semester of the 2024/2025 academic year.
- **Instrument:** Data collection was confined to validated and reliable tools.

2. Previous Studies

Gutiérrez-Aguilar et al. (2024) examined the connections between digital skills and digital citizenship among Peruvian university students. The study used a descriptive correlational technique using a sample of 906 students. The outcomes of this study revealed that the development of participation abilities, whether in conventional face-to-face settings or on digital internet platforms, has a substantial influence on the creation of digital citizenship. This finding has significant implications for digital skills education, emphasizing the importance of prioritizing and actively encouraging participatory skill development in the digital era. While the value of digital skills in today's society is well recognized, the link between digital skills and digital citizenship stands complicated and diverse.

Lee (2024) assessed the degree of "critical" global citizenship represented in English textbooks for middle school students in South Korea. The research utilized a content analysis approach,

concentrating on textual representations in two English textbooks, specifically examining their capacity to deconstruct racism in the United States and the possible connection between such representations and global citizenship education in English language acquisition. Key findings indicated a notable deficiency of sufficient historical, social, and cultural settings pertaining to race in the United States, as illustrated in the analyzed textbooks.

Samar, Ballantyne, and Ham (2024) investigated the degree of global citizenship development within educational policies in Punjab, Pakistan. A deductive thematic analysis of pertinent educational policies was conducted to evaluate the representation of global citizenship and sustainable development in Pakistan's educational plans. The findings indicated the incorporation of global citizenship and sustainable development principles in international agendas and educational programs in Punjab, Pakistan. The description of the national education strategy and Punjab's Education Sector Plan 2019/20–2023/24 mirrored UNESCO's discourse on global citizenship under the Sustainable Development Goals and the OECD's global competency framework as outlined in the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA).

Van (2024) examined the extent of global citizenship education within general education curriculum in Singapore, South Korea, Vietnam, and Australia. The research employed a content analysis technique, utilizing educational policy and civic education textbooks from these nations as the analytical sample. The findings showed that all four nations' educational systems place a high value on global citizenship education. These countries have made concerted efforts to guarantee that their educational institutions develop internationally adaptable citizens. The study also revealed certain shortcomings in global citizenship education in the nations studied. The findings highlighted the crucial role of global citizenship education in educating future generations to handle current problems and seize global possibilities. Vietnam's revised general education curriculum incorporates global citizenship education aims through fundamental themes and learning outcomes. With the implementation of this curriculum, it is critical to study and incorporate other countries' experiences in global citizenship education to increase students' awareness and sense of responsibility to the international community while also contributing to a sustainable and globally integrated Vietnamese society.

Abu Kaf (2023) conducted a study to identify the degree to which Jordan's sixth-grade national education textbook incorporates dimensions of national identity. The study employed a descriptive-analytical methodology, analyzing the content of the first and second parts of the textbook. An "analysis form" consisting of 55 values distributed across five dimensions—national, political and legal, social, cultural, and environmental—was prepared to achieve the study's objectives. The findings revealed that the inclusion levels of national identity values were as follows: the social dimension was high, and the cultural and political/legal dimensions were moderate. In contrast, the national and environmental dimensions were low.

Al-Amri (2022) conducted a study to examine the extent to which dimensions of citizenship are incorporated in national education textbooks for basic education in Yemen. The researcher

developed a list of citizenship dimensions and analyzed the textbooks in light of these dimensions. The findings revealed varying degrees of inclusion for societal, religious, and national dimensions, ranging from high to moderate to weak. Political, economic, and technological dimensions were found to be weakly incorporated.

Al-Qadi (2021) studied the effect of the National Education course in building national values among Jordanian university students from their perspective. The study sample included 350 students from Al-Balqa Applied University. A descriptive survey approach, a questionnaire with 36 items, and 2 open-ended questions were employed. The findings suggested that the National Education course played a moderate influence in the development of national ideals. Students made 12 ideas to improve the course's role, highlighting the need of include religious and faith-based elements in the program.

Al-Shouihat (2019) conducted a study to determine the role of faculties of educational sciences in Jordanian universities in developing students' citizenship values and to explore the differences in this role based on gender, academic level, and specialization. The study sample included 538 students from five universities. The study used a descriptive-analytical method and employed a questionnaire for data collection. The results showed that the role of these faculties in developing students' citizenship values was moderate. The fields were ranked as follows: tolerance, loyalty and belonging, scientific values, and political values. Gender differences favored females, while differences based on specialization favored humanities faculties. No significant differences were observed based on academic level.

Zboon and Nimer (2017) conducted a study to assess Ajloun University College's contribution to developing citizenship values from students' perspectives. A questionnaire was administered to a sample of 334 students. The findings indicated that the college's contribution to developing citizenship values was high, with significant gender-based differences favoring male students.

Dweiri (2017) conducted a study to examine the extent to which the fifth-grade national education textbook in Jordan incorporates citizenship values through content analysis. The study used a content analysis methodology with a textbook content sample. A tool comprising 54 items across three domains—social, political, and economic citizenship values—was prepared. The results revealed that social citizenship values ranked first in the first part of the textbook, followed by political citizenship values, and lastly, economic citizenship values. In the second part, political citizenship values ranked first, followed by social citizenship values and economic citizenship values.

Hamza (2016) conducted a study to identify political, social, and economic citizenship values included in the "Citizenship and Human Rights" textbook for secondary school students in Saudi Arabia. A content analysis tool was developed based on citizenship dimensions. The results indicated that the political and social citizenship values were strongly represented, while economic citizenship values were weakly included.

Moumni, Moumni, and Rabađi (2013) studied how the National Education curriculum at Al-Balqa Applied University promotes citizenship values among students. A questionnaire was created and delivered to a randomly selected group of 1.119 students. The findings

demonstrated a high level of efficacy in the curriculum's function in promoting citizenship ideals. There were no significant variations depending on gender, college, academic level, or educational qualification characteristics.

2.1 Commentary on Previous Studies

1) National education and its associated values have garnered significant attention from researchers and educators.

2) The studies varied in sample size and scope, targeting university- and school-level national education curricula.

3) Objectives ranged from analyzing textbooks to assessing the role of universities in fostering citizenship values.

4) The geographical scope spanned Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Korea, Australia, and locally in Jordan. However, few studies specifically examined the role of national education courses in fostering citizenship dimensions among Jordanian university students.

5) The current study benefited from previous research in shaping its theoretical framework and designing its research tool.

6) Unlike prior studies, this research focuses on the perspectives of students currently enrolled in a national education course, investigating whether gender differences exist and identifying the specific citizenship dimensions promoted by the course.

3. Methodology and Procedures

This section outlines the steps in conducting the current study, focusing on the methodology, sample, tool, application procedures, and study variables.

3.1 Study Methodology

The study employed the descriptive survey method to analyze data using a questionnaire.

3.2 Study Population

The study population consisted of all undergraduate students at Al-Isra University enrolled in the National Education course during the first semester of the academic year 2024/2025, totaling 476 students (196 males and 280 females).

3.3 Study Sample

The study sample included 334 undergraduate students (70% of the population) enrolled in the National Education course during the same semester. The sample was chosen using a convenience sampling method. Table 1 presents the sample distribution based on gender and college type.

Table 1. Distribution of the study sample of Al-Isra University students enrolled in the National Education course during the first semester of 2024/2025 by gender and college type

College Type	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Scientific	50	66	116
Humanities	83	135	218
Total	133	201	334

3.4 Study Tool

The Questionnaire on the Role of the National Education Course in Promoting Dimensions of Citizenship

To achieve the study objectives, a questionnaire was developed after reviewing theoretical literature and available scales, such as those by Abu Kaf (2023), Al-Amri (2022), Al-Abadi and Al-Shwaihat (2019), Al-Ziboun and Nimer (2017), Al-Awamra and Al-Ziboun (2014), and Al-Ghaishan (2011).

The tool comprised 33 items rated on a five-point Likert scale:

- 5 = Strongly Agree
- 4 = Agree
- 3 = Neutral
- 2 = Disagree
- 1 = Strongly Disagree

Scores were categorized as follows:

- Low: 1.00–3.33
- Moderate: 3.34–3.67
- High: 3.68–5.00

The questionnaire was revised after validation by 10 academic experts from public and private universities in Jordan. Two items were removed, grammatical errors corrected, and several items rephrased. The final version included 31 items distributed across five dimensions:

- Political (Items 1–7)
- Religious (Items 8–13)
- National (Items 14–19)
- Economic (Items 20–25)
- Environmental (Items 26–31)

Table 2. Correlation coefficients of questionnaire items with total scores

Political Dimension	Correlation	Religious Dimension	Correlation	National Dimension	Correlation	Economic Dimension	Correlation	Environmental Dimension	Correlation
1	.444**	8	.844**	14	.743**	20	.599**	26	.753**
2	.591**	9	.791**	15	.842**	21	.699**	27	.722**
3	.770**	10	.803**	16	.770**	22	.624**	28	.737**
4	.815**	11	.659**	17	.869**	23	.599**	29	.879**
5	.683**	12	.850**	18	.743**	24	.596**	30	.832**
6	.784**	13	.865**	19	.769**	25	.564**	31	.711**
7	.755**								

A pilot study involving 40 students outside the study sample was conducted to ensure construct validity. Pearson correlation coefficients between items and total scale scores were calculated, showing statistical significance at 0.05 and 0.01 levels. Table 2 presents the results.

3.5. Reliability

Reliability was confirmed using test-retest reliability and Cronbach's alpha for internal consistency:

- Overall test-retest reliability: 0.964
- Cronbach's alpha for internal consistency: 0.953

Table 3 shows the reliability coefficients for each dimension and the total score

Table 3. Reliability coefficients for dimensions and total score

No.	Dimension	Items	Test-Retest	Cronbach's Alpha
1	Political	1–7	0.804	0.911
2	Religious	8–13	0.876	0.918
3	National	14–19	0.871	0.866
4	Economic	20–25	0.816	0.840
5	Environmental	26–31	0.858	0.907
	Total Score	1–31	0.953	0.964

3.5 Study Procedures

1) Defined the study population and sample of undergraduate students enrolled in the National Education course during the first semester of 2024/2025 at Al-Isra University.

2) Reviewed theoretical literature and related studies.

3) Prepared and validated the study tool.

- 4) Administered the tool to the study sample.
- 5) Collected and analyzed the data.
- 6) Addressed study questions, discussed findings, and provided recommendations.

3.6 Study Variables

- 1) Role of the National Education course in promoting citizenship dimensions: Three levels (High, Moderate, Low).
- 2) Gender: Two categories (Male, Female).
- 3) College type: Two categories (Scientific, Humanities)

3.7 Statistical Analyses

- Means and standard deviations to answer Question 1 and determine the levels of the role of the National Education course in promoting citizenship dimensions.
- Independent samples t-test to determine statistical differences based on gender and college type for Questions 2 and 3.

4. The Conclusion

The researcher reached a set of results and recommendations that can be summarized as follows:

4.1 Results and Discussion of Question One

What is the role of the National Education Course in fostering the dimensions of citizenship among Jordanian university students?

To answer this question, the means and standard deviations for the role of the National Education Course in developing citizenship dimensions among Jordanian university students (with Isra University as a model) were calculated. Table 4 illustrates this:

Table 4. Means and standard deviations of the role of the national education course in developing citizenship dimensions among Jordanian University students, ranked in descending order by mean values

Rank	Dimension ID	Dimension	Items	Mean	SD	Level
1	1	Political	1–7	4.33	0.465	High
2	3	National	14–19	4.27	0.574	High
3	2	Religious	8–13	4.22	0.532	High
4	5	Environmental	26–31	4.06	0.737	High
5	4	Economic	20–25	4.02	0.651	High
Overall	--	Overall score	1–31	4.19	0.488	High

Analysis:

Table 4 indicates that the role of the National Education Course in fostering citizenship dimensions among Jordanian university students is at a high level, with an overall mean of 4.19 (SD = 0.488). The means of individual dimensions ranged between 4.02 and 4.33.

- The political dimension ranked first with the highest mean (4.33, SD = 0.465).
- National dimension ranked second (mean = 4.27, SD = 0.574).
- The religious dimension ranked third (mean = 4.22, SD = 0.532).
- The environmental dimension ranked fourth (mean = 4.06, SD = 0.737).
- Economic dimension ranked fifth (mean = 4.02, SD = 0.651).

The high rating of the political dimension is attributed to the specialized content of the National Education syllabus, which emphasizes engaging citizens in the democratic structure of the state, promoting teamwork, and rejecting violence.

This result aligns with studies by Zabon and Nimr (2017) and Momani, Momani, and Rabadi (2013), which reported a high impact of the National Education Course on citizenship values. However, it contradicts the findings from Qadi (2012) and Shweihat (2019), where the impact was moderate.

4.2 Results and Discussion of Question Two

Are there statistically significant differences at a significance level of (0.05) or lower in the role of the National Education Course in fostering citizenship dimensions among Jordanian university students due to gender?

The means, standard deviations, and T-tests for differences by gender are detailed in Table 5.

Table 5. T-Test results for gender-based differences in the role of the national education course

Dimension	Gender	n	Mean	SD	T-Value	DF	Sig.
Political	Male	133	4.42	0.471	2.935	332	.004
	Female	201	4.27	0.453			
Religious	Male	133	4.35	0.495	3.790	332	.000
	Female	201	4.13	0.539			
National	Male	133	4.37	0.577	2.794	332	.006
	Female	201	4.20	0.561			
Economic	Male	133	4.19	0.600	4.004	332	.000
	Female	201	3.91	0.660			
Environmental	Male	133	4.27	0.686	4.257	332	.000
	Female	201	3.93	0.740			
Overall	Male	133	4.33	0.461	4.381	332	.000
	Female	201	4.09	0.484			

Analysis:

Significant gender differences were found, favoring males across all dimensions ($p < .05$). Males scored higher overall (mean = 4.33) compared to females (mean = 4.09).

The researcher attributes this to greater male interest in political and national matters and more frequent participation in national events.

This finding is consistent with Zabon and Nimr (2017) but differs from Shweihat (2019), which favored females, and Momani, Momani, and Rabadi (2013), which found no significant gender differences.

4.3 Results and Discussion of Question Three

Are there statistically significant differences at a significance level of (0.05) or lower in the role of the National Education Course in fostering citizenship dimensions among Jordanian university students due to college type?

The T-test results for differences by college type are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. T-Test results for college-based differences in the role of the national education course

Dimension	College Type	n	Mean	SD	T-Value	DF	Sig.
Political	Scientific	116	4.27	0.524	-1.800	332	.073
	Humanities	218	4.37	0.429			
Overall	Scientific	116	4.12	0.571	-1.663	332	.097
	Humanities	218	4.22	0.435			

Analysis:

No statistically significant differences were found due to college type ($p > .05$). This is attributed to the course being mandatory for all students, exposing them to the same content.

This finding aligns with Momani et al. (2013) but differs from Shweihat (2019), which favored humanities students.

4.4 Recommendations

- 1) Maintain the National Education Course as a mandatory subject for all majors.
- 2) Enhance instructors' skills through training focused on active learning strategies.
- 3) Conduct similar studies using experimental methods.
- 4) Explore other dimensions of citizenship, such as social aspects.
- 5) Ensure balanced coverage of citizenship dimensions in the syllabus.

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