

REBRANDING CIVIC EDUCATION FOR SMART ACHIEVEMENT OF
CIVIC GOAL IN NIGERIA: A QUALITATIVE EXPLORATION
¹**OMIYEFA Muraina Olugbenga, Ph.D** & ²**ADEDUNTAN Ronke Iyabo**

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¹OMIYEFA Muraina Olugbenga, Ph.D & ²ADEDUNTAN Ronke Iyabo

¹Institute of Education,
Obafemi Awolowo University,
Ile-Ife, Nigeria
E-mail: ¹momiyefa@oauife.edu.ng
Tel: ¹08030699630

²Department of Social Sciences Education,
University of Lagos, Akoka Yaba, Lagos, Nigeria
E-mail: ²vesselofmercy2@gmail.com
Tel: ²08025591034

Abstract

Civic Education is a unique educational brand that is essential for capacity building to effectively practice democracy. Therefore, Civic Education was designed as a core, cutting-across subject in senior secondary education in Nigeria. However, there seems to be inadequate understanding of the subject's role and likely threats from other educational brand competitors affecting Civic Education's brand identity in Nigeria. Through qualitative exploration design, this study presented issues necessitating the rebranding of Civic Education to effectively position it for the achievement of civic goals. The researchers adopted content analysis and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) for data collection. Thematic coding was employed in data analysis which was presented in a rich narrative format. A sample size of 16 students for FGD was purposively selected using a non-probability method of sampling. The study helped to establish the current brand status of Civic Education in Nigeria, discover brand-competitor threats to Civic Education and charted a rebranding process for repositioning the subject. The findings exposed Civic Education as a moderately strong (50%) educational brand. Although government was the main external brand competitor, the content analysis and FGD identified poor risk reduction and lack of strategic direction as the crucial internal weakness of Civic Education. Recommendations were made for the subject's rebranding process which comprised the government's urgent action to review the curriculum and upgrading teachers' pedagogy to enhance skillful presentation of the brand. These steps will essentially promote students' confidence in Civic Education brand through recognizable skills that could be engaged beyond classroom walls.

Keywords: Civic Education, Civic goal, Qualitative exploration, Rebranding

Introduction

Rebranding education in Nigeria is a giant stride to improve the nation's quality of education and human capital for effective functioning, at all levels and

sectors of society. Civic Education (CE) as an educational brand is not limited to Nigerian schools, rather it is a contemporary worldwide recognised subject. Despite Civic Education's prominent benefits to individuals, groups and the nation at large (Enyiaka, Aminigo & Osaat, 2018), this educational brand seems not adequately explored by many adults including teenagers who are directly experiencing the curriculum. Therefore, there is a diminished interest, poor motivation and commitment of students toward CE especially at the senior secondary education level. Generally, the poor attitudes towards CE (Enyiaka, et al., 2018; Bello, 2021) also transcend into weak capacity to carry out civic actions as many students are unskilled to participate in the society democratically.

Enyiaka, et al., (2018) described CE as an indispensable and paramount component of education generally. This is due to CE's capacity to equip learners to recognise their rights and duties, and with skills carry out those functions for the progress of the society. According to the Nigeria Educational Research and Development Council [NERDC] (2016; 2020) and Bello (2021), CE is not a hidden educational brand; it was designed and established as a core subject both at Basic Education and Senior Secondary Education [SSE] levels. The NERDC labelled CE as a compulsory, cross-cutting subject. Civic Education as a core subject is offered across all the four fields of study at SSE namely: Science and Mathematics, Technology, Humanities, and Business Studies. Adedigba (2019) reported NERDC's step to reviewing the CE curriculum at the Basic Education level, an exercise quoted to be one of the best educational practices, that is, reviewing a curriculum at every five years intervals.

Civic Education was re-introduced in 2008 at the SSE level by the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN). The subject aimed at enhancing positive image of Nigeria and achieving value-reorientation goal comprised in the Millennium Development Goals for 2000-2015 (NERDC, 2009). Civic Education's main curriculum goal thus, is to develop responsible and disciplined students as members of the society. However, the nation's curriculum agency – NERDC, has left the CE curriculum at the SSE level unreviewed since its implementation began in 2009. This made Enyiaka, et al., (2018) to conclude that a nation's level of civility, commitment to civic responsibility and overall development is dependent on its quality of CE. The view above was upheld citing Aristotle's philosophy of CE as a form of moral education to the citizens.

However, the poor appreciation of CE and low understanding of its distinctive functions has further contributed to its suffering unstable students' commitment, interest and motivation. Parents often give low support to students' commitment towards CE while rating the subject as insignificantly important. The stiff competition from closely related and weak perception of Civic Education is quite challenging (Bello, 2021; Schmitt, 2021). Enyiaka, et al. (2018) found that major hindrances to quality CE in Nigeria include the misconception of the subject cum poor elaboration of its nature, purpose and implementation in schools.

In Israel, Cohen's appointment as a Minister was terminated due to his

introduction of CE and approval of textbooks for the subject which was described as government lack of political will to support CE in moulding citizenship (Enyiaka, et al., 2018). Schmitt (2021) listed two main factors responsible for youths' poor understanding of Civic Education in Switzerland. These are challenges with the transversal nature of CE and pedagogy employed in instructional delivery. The status of the subject being not established in a specific field of study (transversal nature) resulted in the poor perception of the subject. In Nigeria, Bello (2021) identified Government (subject under Humanities field) as the main competitive threat to students' attendance of Civic Education classes. Bello also found a correlation with students' performances in both CE and Government, in Kwara State, Nigeria. The subjects in Humanities field of study listed by NERDC (2016) include Arabic, Christian Religious Studies, Economics, French, Geography, Government, History, Islamic Studies, Literature-in-English, Music, and Visual Arts.

According to Enyiaka, et al., (2018), citing Peterson, CE is a formative enterprise. Rebranding will therefore, improve Civic Education's brand identity, making it more attractive to students; and enhancing the brand's functional capacity to adequately equip students for effective citizenship. The purpose of this explorative study thus seeks to assess the current brand status of Civic Education in Nigeria, to examine the brand-competitor threat to Civic Education and identify rebranding process to position CE in achieving the civic goal in Nigeria.

Barlow and Stewart (2004) simply defined a brand as the unique identity of any product or service. Meanwhile, Gardener and Levy cited by Sabrina (2012) described a brand as a meaningful symbol with stories that help in product or service identification. The American Marketing Association – AMA (2023) pointed to a brand as a name, logo, term, sign and design or a combination of these aspects purposely for identification and differentiation of goods and services from other competitors. The AMA's update on brand description summed it up from customer's perspective. It described a brand as a product's recognition derived through the accumulation of a customer's experiences of and reactions to a product or service.

Laying credence to this, Sabrina (2012) opined that a customer's experiences and reactions are influenced by either the design, advertising, direct use and the media comment on such brand. However, Sabrina noted that branding is not just labelling to differentiate a product or service rather, it is a complex process. This process involves different attributes and complex tasks through which a brand's distinctive dimensions provide satisfaction to the customers. Sabrina (2012) broadly defined a brand as a unique identity that is specific to a product or service which is well communicated to targeted customers through terms (words), symbols, design, experiences or combination of these attributes.

Brand identity therefore, is the recognizable features or crucial elements of a brand designed to influence consumers' mindset in identifying and distinguishing the brand. Brand identity differs subtly from brand's image. Brand identity is essentially the processes or ways adopted in branding a product to influence a distinctive image

in the client's mind (customer's experiences) (Tarver, 2022). Qualtrics (2023) defined a brand's image as customers' perception of a brand based on their interaction or experiences with such over time.

Brand identity building, according to Tarver (2022), is a multi-disciplinary and strategic effort that includes any supportive element to improve the overall communication of a brand's message and achievement of the brand's goal. The branding process is a recognised, simplified strategy by an organization to enhance smart, quality design of a product or service for growth (Rosati, 2020). Tarver (2022) suggested four steps to branding that cut across all enterprises including carrying out a SWOT (strength, weakness, opportunity and threats) analysis of an enterprise, determination of a brand's main goal, identification of customers and establishing brand's personality to be communicated in a consistent message. Qualtrics (2023) also supported these four steps which were considered as fundamental to building strong brand image. That begins with defining a brand's mission, vision and values; having a brand positioning statement, creating brand personality and identifying key audiences. Qualtrics admitted that a SWOT analysis is built into the process of brand statement creation.

Brand identity creates a strongly recognised brand, also attracts and sustains stakeholders' (students, parents, board and public) interest and patronage of such services (Sabrina, 2012). Branding added no ills to any institution rather it offers critical advantages to a product or service (Rosati, 2020). Benefits of branding span across product identity, differentiation, prevention of imitation, protection of customers from unwanted manipulation, boosting client's confidence in the product, and enhancement of product's functionality or added-values to customer's experiences (Davis, 2010; Sabrina, 2012; Rosati, 2020). Branding greatly determines a service or product's performance also in the financial market with capacity to keep the clients engaged (Sabrina, 2012). Brand identity that is strong will strengthen the product or service popularity the competition in the market notwithstanding (Tarver, 2022).

Brand Identity (BI) theory has several models. BI inferred that for a service to be top-mostly desired by the customers, it must have a strong identity. A brand's identity comprised of a brand's image, positioning, and personality. Brand identity improves marketing and acceptability of products and services in the corporate world of business. Brand identity, according to Sabrina (2012), is dependent on the unique branding process an organization adopts. Examples of BI models are Brand Personality Dimension by Aaker in 1997, Brand Identity Prism by Kapferer in 1992 and Branding Process Dimension by de Chernatony and Riley in 1998.

De Chernatony and Riley (1998) listed eight dimensions as components of branding process to a strong brand identity. These include brand's name, function, symbols, ownership, service relationship, legal protection, notation, and risk reduction and strategic direction. The service component shapes organization's relationship with consumers, while symbols of a brand determine brand's personality to prevent imitation from competitors (Sabrina, 2012, Rosati, 2020). Sabrina (2012)

noted that how skillfully a product is presented will influence how customers become confident of such brand. It therefore means that an organization should be strong in a brand's risk reduction and strategic direction for a brand to make a strong impression of confidence on users. That is customer's satisfaction increment (Olaore & Kuye, 2019).

The ideology of rebranding thus is to serve as the foundation of growth through quality enhancement (Edsall, 2021). However, the branding concept has its value in the educational sector. The brand identity theory became relevant to this study through its promotion of schools need to create a unique identity that will set it apart from other schools. The identity to be promoted as brand uniqueness ranges from school's mission, values and goals well communicated to the targeted audience. A brand whose identity is weak, or difficult to different and easy to imitate without good added-value will require rebranding (Davis, 2010; Sabrina, 2012; Bello, 2021). Olaore and Kuye (2019) concluded that branding is a way to providing solutions to a company's problems and puts a company at a strategic valued place with the consumers.

Purpose of the Study

The study ultimately investigated issues of rebranding Civic Education to effectively position it for achieving civic goal in Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

- i. determine the current brand status of Civic Education (CE) in Nigeria;
- ii. examine which brand competitor(s) weakens CE as an educational brand;
- iii. make a comparable analysis of CE and its main subject-competitor;
- iv. identify the perceived challenges affecting CE in schools from students' views; and
- v. determine essential benefits students gain from CE.

Research Questions

The following questions were raised to guide the study:

- i. What is the current brand status of Civic Education (CE) in Nigeria?
- ii. Which brand competitor(s) weakens CE as an educational brand?
- iii. How comparable is CE and its main subject-competitor?
- iv. What are the perceived challenges affecting CE in schools from students' view?
- v. Which essential benefits do students gain from CE?

Methodology

This study adopted exploratory study design for in-depth understanding (Creswell, 2013) of the current state, challenges and how Civic Education can be rebranded in Nigeria. Qualitative method through content analysis and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was engaged for data gathering. Five questions guided the groups'

discussion tagged “Discussion Guide to Rebranding Civic Education: Issues and Ways Out (DiGRCE)”

The study's universe population involved public schools under Education District VI, Lagos state. According to the State Education Management Information System [SEMIS], there are six Educational Districts [EDs] generally in Lagos state, and further sub-divided into zones. Education District VI [ED VI] comprised of three zones with fifty senior secondary schools [SSS]. There are twelve SSS in Ikeja Zone, sixteen in Mushin Zone and twenty-two in Oshodi-Isolo Zone (SEMIS, 2018). The target population was Mushin Zone which had average number of schools (16) for ED VI.

Generally, this study employed a non-probability sampling method, involving a purposive sampling technique. Although a multi-stage sampling procedure was employed in target population zone selection, which was further divided to evolve two schools; using proximity of the Local Council Development Area (LCDA) within the Zone. The sample size of 16 students comprised of eight males and females respectively were involved in the FGD. These students were all in SSS 3 classes cutting across the four categorised field of study, namely; science (pure science) and mathematics, technology, humanities (arts) and business studies (commercial) (NERDC, 2017). Two students purposively selected from each class field of study made up the eight males (School A) and eight females (School B).

The instruments had content validity. The curriculum for CE and Government studied are official documents. Content analysis checklist was a robust method and Discussion Guide for the FGD with coding frames derived from literature review. These instruments were verified through Social Studies experts input (McLeod, 2013). The reliability however was enhanced through free interaction during discussion and systematic procedure employed in coding the data following pursuit of second opinion input to limit researchers' bias. This reduced errors in judgement (Kleinheksel, Rockich-Winston, Tawfik, & Wyatt, 2020). Thematic analysis was employed in interpreting the data gathered. The coding was analysed through word categorization and measuring (counting/frequency).

Results

Rich narrative report was employed including use of tables for easy identification of facts and percentage as a statistic rating.

Research Question One: What is the current brand status of Civic Education in Nigeria?

In analysing Civic Education curriculum, the eight elements contained in Brand Processing Dimension of de Chernatony and Riley (1998) were employed as coding frames using content analysis method. Table 1 showed the result:

Table 1: Dimensions and Brand Status of Civic Education in Nigeria

Branding Dimension	Brand Process	Civic Education's Brand Status		Whose Responsibility
		Strong	Weak	
Name	Distinction Name	✓	X	Government
Function	Recognizable function or capacity	✓	X	Government & Teacher
Symbols	Symbols or personalized design that makes a brand difficult to be imitated	X	✓	Government & Teacher
Ownership	Corporate or formal endorsement and ownership of a brand	✓	X	Government & its Agencies (NERDC)
Service	Relationship building with customers or end users of a brand	X	✓	Teacher
Legal Protection	Formal protection from competitor's infringement	X	✓	Government
Notation	High quality information that empowers customers for quick decision making	X	✓	Teacher
Notation	Skillful presentation of a brand to increase customer's confidence with unique added-values	✓	X	Teacher
Risk Reduction and Strategic Direction	Skillful presentation of a brand to increase customer's confidence with unique added-values	X	✓	Teacher

Key: X= Absence of BI Dimension; ✓ = Presence of BI Dimension

The content analysis indicated a moderately low brand identity of CE. The Civic Education brand is strong in four (4) dimensions and weak in four (4) dimensions respectively. The CE brand is thus rated as 50% strong in brand identity.

Research Question Two: Which brand competitor(s) weakens CE as an educational brand?

The research question two was answered through FGD with students on their perception of Civic Education and closely related subjects grouped by NERDC (2017) as Humanities field of study. The discussants' report was reported in Table 2.

Table 2: Brand Competitors weakening CE as an Educational Brand as perceived by Respondents

Subject	Number of Discussants	Percentage Score	Remarks	Spot the Difference
Government	13	81.25%	CE and Government teach similar topics and contents. Both subjects are like repetitions	Very few differences in terms of words usage with several similar topics.
History	2	12.5%	Tells stories of what often goes on the society including current affairs for students learning	CE uses stories but less of emphasis on quoting dates. CE also talks about more interesting, current controversial issues beyond politics
Economics	1	6.25%	Elements of the government policies and programmes are in CE such as public service as government's institution	Economics is more about trade policies of a nation and the effects on the people.
	16	100%		

Table 2 revealed that thirteen (81.25%) out of 16 (100%) discussants identified Government brand as the major threat that weakens CE as an educational brand. Three Discussants (18.75%) admitted History and Economics as threats CE also. Therefore, the FGD findings showed Government as the main subject threat to CE's brand identity.

Research Question Three: How comparable is CE and its main subject-competitor (Government)?

With the majority (81.25%) of discussants in the FGD identifying Government as main subject-competitor to CE, the researchers carried out a comparative check of both subjects using content analysis.

Table 3: Comparative Analysis of Civic Education and Governments

Subject Elements	Civic Education	Government
Teaching Focus	Teaching rights and responsibilities of individual citizens in a democracy including roles of the government and its institutions.	It focuses is on studying structure, functions and branches of government as group including the processes.
Listed Topics	Fundamental Human Rights, Structure of government, rule of law, Public Service, Democracy, Political participation.	Political theory, Human Rights, Rule of Law, International Relations, political parties

Subject Elements	Civic Education	Government
Student's Class Consistency	Core subject across all classes of students' groupings (Science & Technology, Humanities and Business Classes)	Core subject in the Humanities and partly required as elective in the Business Class
Higher Education's Significance (Admission Relevance)	Very insignificant as over 98% of University's programmes do not require CE as criteria for admission	Significantly required for higher education admission mostly in all humanities and Social Sciences programmes

Table 3 shows that Civic Education has so much similarities with Government in regards to the subject focus and listed topics. The CE however, is weak in consistency and higher education relevance for students' admission. Therefore, there is high similarity in Government listed topics with CE. Meanwhile, CE is comparable to its closest competitor, that is Government at addressing some concerned issues in Nigeria rebranding.

Research Question Four: What are the perceived challenges affecting CE from students' perspectives?

As revealed in the qualitative data, 12 out of the 16 Discussants pointed at the method of teaching experienced as a challenge in their learning of CE. Some of the issues include boredom, lack of practical activities to make teaching and learning; and discourage teacher-dominated classroom, too much talking or lecturing, students' passive class, and uninteresting teachers. All Discussants (100%) lamented poor practical civic activities in their study. Discussants 1a & b said “civic Education has no classroom practical like Chemistry and Biology.” Discussant 2a claimed “the subject is not so tasking like other sciences, like it is very simple but too much writing.” Discussant 2d clarified that “but I heard High school students abroad do carry out community service while learning CE. Why is it not so in Nigeria?”

Students' perception of CE as similar to Government and of lesser value due to its fluidity of nature. For example, discussant 1a challenged the need for CE. He queried “why teaching students a subject they hardly need for academic progress or admission and not so much respected because it is not needed for career path later.” Discussant 3c and 4a berated Civic Education's similarities with Government. For example, “CE and Government are just repeating almost same topics and ideas” Discussant 3c then said “can't the two subjects be merged as one and made compulsory for all students to pass for admission into university like English and Mathematics?”

Also, three discussants from Science Class Group considered CE as boring and irrelevant to their future career paths. However, one discussant (Technology class) and displayed enthusiasm about CE. Discussant 2B stated that “I enjoyed CE class

much because I have interest in politics to contest positions after I graduated from University” One was passionate to becoming a leader in future and thus agreed to the CE relevance.

Research Question Five: Which essential benefits do students gain from CE?

All the Discussants (100%) appreciated CE as full of values considered good for the society but 10 (62.5 %) Discussant considered those values as ideals that they found difficult to practise in the society. For instance, discussant 3c lamented on being considered fanatic if one she does not lie to cover up a friend's wrong deed. According to her “being honest to exposed wrong deeds of a friend makes others to look at her as a religious fanatic” Discussant 2a said “People's impatience in Lagos makes maintenance of queueing culture a difficult one to do. Everybody seems always to be in a hurry” Discussants 3a, 4b & 4c jokingly cut in to comment that “that means you are not smart with Lagos experience.” This was interpreted to mean that CE lessons stopped at teaching the values which was a mere talking.

All students agreed to gaining communication skill for sound interaction with people through Civic Education. For instance, Discussant 4d cited teacher's often encouragement in being kind, honest and civil while interacting with people. That is “Oh, no! Be polite and kind when discussing your views with others. Learn to treat your fellow citizens with respect.” On the areas of CE to be improved upon urgently, 10 respondents opted for teaching methods; 16 respondents opted for students' engagement in practical learning and six respondents opted for current social issues as listed topics

Discussion of Findings

The results as evident in Brand Identity theory showed that Civic Education has a moderately strong brand identity at 50% rate. However, the dimensions so affected weakens the brand recognition in the society. Also, given critical similarities of Government to CE, Government constitutes external threat that weakens CE brand. This is in consonance with the findings of Bello (2021), Tarver (2022) and Qualtrics (2023). Equally corroborating this, Davis (2010), Sabrina (2012), and Rosati (2020) affirmed that CE brand is weak in identity, differentiation and added-value from the student-discussants' perceptive. According to Enyiaka, et al. (2018), the government and its corresponding agency failed to utilize the needed political will in promoting CE brand coupled with unclear policy guiding the programme.

There are strong, internal weaknesses found in CE brand itself using the SWOT analysis (Tarver, 2022). Also, with Brand Process Dimensions scale, CE is weak in four critical areas suggested by de Chernatony and Riley (1998). The weak areas include understanding of CE capacity, ownership, service relationship and risk reduction and strategic direction dimensions.

Through content analysis, from the list of subjects under the Humanities,

Government and History were found closely related to CE (NERDC, 2009, 2016 & 2020). While the students' FGD established Government as the main brand threat to CE, thus supporting Bello (2021) assertion on both subjects' strong correlation. Further discussion with the study's groups highlighted four major challenges to CE comprising of poor teaching methodology, which agreed with Enyiaka, et al. (2018) and Schmitt (2020) findings in Switzerland. Discussants' identification of very low practical activities for skills resulting in poor perception of CE agreed with earlier submission of Enyiaka, et al. (2018) on challenges facing CE. Students' complaints of CE having insignificant relevance to their academic and career choice corroborated Schmitt (2022) transversal nature of CE as a problem. This contributes to poor attitudes of unseriousness to CE.

Consequently, the positioning of CE brand was perceived insignificant by the Discussants due to CE not being required for higher education admission in Nigeria despite unlike other core subjects (English language and Mathematics). This made the government and NERDC (2017) description of CE, a contradiction and unstable position as main legal and formal curriculum authorities on positioning of the subject (CE). This is due to CE's weak identity in critical dimensions, such as service creation, symbols, protection from competitor's infringement and poor risk reduction emanating from either lack of or inadequate skillful presentation of the product by teachers as the implementers of CE curriculum (De Chernatony, & Riley, 1998). In agreement with Enyiaka, et al. (2018), the discussants agreed to benefiting more values and communication skills thus making CE to fit into the moral subject philosophy of Aristotle.

The students through the FGD revealed a low confidence in CE due to lack of skillful presentation of the instruction by the teachers. Students' experiences portrayed lack of commitment to CE since the subject relied more on teacher dominated method. Government as a threat cum less significant relevance of CE for higher education studies are critical issues discovered. Fundamentally, the student-discussants agreed to benefitting values immensely from CE including improvement in communication skills to have conversations with others. Conclusively, Civic Education's brand image comprised of the brand identity and students' feelings [based on experiences from CE's instruction and activities]. Adapting the Qualtrics (2023) brand image idea, CE brand image is as shown through Figure 1:

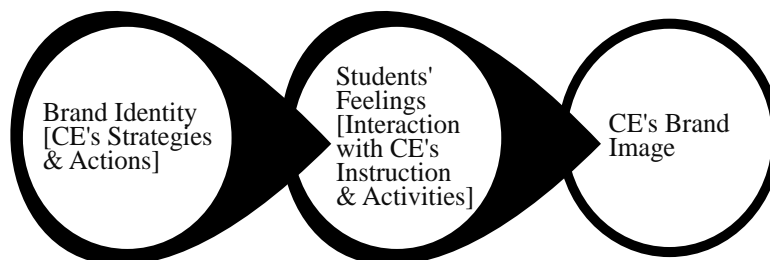


Figure 1: Brand Image Idea
Source: Adapted from Qualtrics (2023)

Conclusion

Although, the current brand identity of CE showed a 50%, moderate internal strength covering unique name, core function, endorsed as a core subject cross-cutting all fields of study and has notation for quality information to enhance citizenship generally. However, CE is found to be weak in critical areas such low risk reduction with poor strategic direction, weak symbols to distinguish the brand cum low service relationship with the students. The internal weaknesses of CE greatly undermine the areas of its strength. Also, there is so much similarity of CE in Government with 81% of the discussant stating Government as the closest brand threat. Despite CE's cross-cutting status and focus on individual student's role in democracy, Government curriculum contents appeared deeper and well elaborated than CE.

Recommendations

There is urgent, critical need for rebranding of Civic Education to promote its brand identity and enhance students' perception beyond the current status. The rebranding demands responsibility from both teachers and the government authorities. Government needs to execute a rebranding agenda for Civic Education curriculum. Rebranding process of CE requires attention in two essential dimensions which are: risk reduction through strategic direction and the service relationship areas. Rebranding CE should emphasize on students' civic engagement and responsibility. This could be done by reviewing the recommended students' learning activities in the curriculum. Teachers' education and workshops should be considered for rebranding. That is, updating teachers' methodology with relevant pedagogy for effective instructional delivery. This will enable teachers to project the subject's values, establish sound relationship with students (consumers) and skillfully present the subject to enhance students' capacity for skills beyond the classroom walls.

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