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STUDENT'S PERCEPTION OF CHARACTER EDUCATION  
AND SOCIAL VALUES FOR GREATER PRODUCTIVITY IN  
SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION

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**Abstract**

The essence of education is to help impart, preserve and understand values in teaching and learning under the guide of instructional best practices in schools. Hence, there is the need to implement and promote character education and social values as formal school-based programs. The paper examined students' perception of character education and social values for greater productivity in social studies education. The study adopted descriptive survey design and the population for the study comprised all the NCE 2 – 3 students from four (4) Colleges of Education in Lagos State. The sample for the study comprised 300 students from the four colleges of education. The instrument for data collection was a constructed questionnaire titled, Students Perception of Character Education and Social Values for Greater Productivity in Social Studies Education Student's Questionnaire (CESVGPSSEQ). The instrument for the study was validated by the experts and the data collected was analysed using the inferential statistics of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient to test the null hypotheses

stated. The findings show that a significant relationship exists between character education and the promotion of greater productivity in social studies education, a significant relationship exist between receiving character education in rural and urban schools and a significant relationship exists between character education and social values in social studies. It was recommended that Government should make character education an imposing challenge on parents and educators, to instill in the children the needed social values of the society by means of orientation; curriculum experts should include character education to in social studies curriculum at all levels since the school is seen as a place where students feel a sense of closeness and connection to others; conferences, seminars and workshops should be organized regularly to train teachers adequately on how to impart these needed knowledge to the students.

**Key words:** Students' Perception, Character Education, Social Values, Productivity, Social Studies Education.

## Introduction

Teaching Character Education basically is reinforcing the values practised at home and in society. It is high time that all the different agents of character development worked as a team rather than pushing responsibility to one of the stakeholders alone and expect any magic overnight from such stakeholder. The concepts that have fallen under this term include social and emotional learning and cognitive development, life skills education, health education, violence prevention, critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and conflict resolution and mediation. Character education is an umbrella term loosely used to describe the teaching of individuals and groups in a manner that will help develop civic, good mannered behaviour, non-bullying, compliant or socially acceptable beings to a relatively settled general disposition of a person to do what is morally good, where the general disposition can be analyzed into traits or virtues that hang together in certain ways (Davis, 2003).

'Social values' is concerned with the organization of social relations between the communities' values, social norms, beliefs

and customs that need to be reformed to promote social order in the society. The essence of social studies is to study human social, physical, cultural, economic, political and religious environment and of how human beings interact with and control the social environment, provide human needs and aspiration and solve human problems in the society, since human beings do not live in isolation but live among groups in the society. As such character language is found pervasively in classrooms and schools. It is found routinely in the conversations between teachers and students. Character refers to good traits that are on regular display (Wynne & Ryan, 1997), sets of habits that pertain our actions in a relatively fixed way. Morality is viewed as the system of rules that regulate the social interactions and social relationships of individuals within societies which is based on the concepts of welfare, trust, justice (Smetana, 1997).

Berkowitz (2002) define character as an individual's set of psychological characteristics that affect that person's ability and inclinations to function morally. Seven psychological characteristics make up the moral anatomy: moral behaviour, moral values, moral personality, moral emotion, moral reasoning, moral identity and other foundational characteristics that support moral functioning.

Character, as it relates to character education, most often refers to how good a person is. In other words, a person who exhibits personal qualities like that which society considers desirable might be considered to have good character and developing such personal qualities is often seen as a purpose of education; that is why development of character is a solution to social problems and a worthy educational ideal (Miller & Kim, 1988)

Character education is concerned with educating an individual or groups with the principles that conform to the standards of behaviour and character based on those principles and the inherent complex of attributes which determine a person's moral and ethical actions and reactions.

In the view of Rawls (1999), character can be molded by antecedent circumstances of the institutions regulated by the two

principles of justice. Yet these insights about the effect of institutions on character seem to raise other, more troubling questions. If character is the result of social and political institutions beyond control, then perhaps people are not in control of their characters at all and becoming decent is not a real possibility. Thomas (1989) uses Aristotle's discussions of self-love and friendship to argue that friendship helps to develop and maintain good character. And if one is interested in understanding what the nature of moral character is and the extent to which it can be altered, one will find useful examples of both moral and character in literary writing.

Hoffman (1991) observed that the role of moral education in schools is to reinforce values gained at home. Each child, from birth, by virtue of his environment, belongs to a significant group. Family members, friends, relatives, teachers and administrators play a major role in the formation of the character of each child because the teacher cannot solely shoulder this important responsibility. The character education has pointed to very different psychological traditions, ethical theories, curricular objectives and pedagogical preferences. The purpose of character education is also contested for some educator's character education prevent against the rising tide of youth disorder and is motivated by deep anxiety about adolescent risk behavior, misconduct and delinquency (Brooks & Goble, 1997).

The historic movement from utilitarian to academic morality has been a factor in determining the present nature of the problem of moral education. When men began to reflect upon the reasons for the prevailing mores, they searched for utilitarian ones. The customs must be upheld, they thought, because with only this can the prosperity of the individual be assured. This springs from the fact that the mores are founded either upon natural law or as it is usually the conception, upon the supposed will of the supernatural powers. Among the historic facts that have determined the character of the problem of moral instruction today is that of change and variety in the moral codes. ([www.scu.edu/ethics/publications/iie/v13n1/interview.html](http://www.scu.edu/ethics/publications/iie/v13n1/interview.html) retrieved, 2015).

Human desires have a function that the task of self-control is not so much by suppressing the evil and encouraging the good.

Stengel and Tom (2006) opined that an important phase of the theory of moral culture is concerned in the relation of morality to the total aim of education. Liberal education has, from time immemorial, occupied itself with ethical culture, especially its civic and social phases. But the development of leisure led to phases of culture calculated to minister rather than give individual gratification to social service.

Watkins (1976) affirms that there are varieties of alternatives to dealing with moral and character education in the schools. First, one can ignore it completely, which assumes the issue is outside the bounds of proper curriculum. The interest by professional organizations and the public suggests that this view is inappropriate. Secondly, one can take a values-neutral stance and provide opportunities for students to clarify and defend their own values without making recommendations or advocating a particular viewpoint. A third approach is to teach students a specific process to follow when making decisions and putting these into action. This is the approach of the analysis view used in values- education and assumes character decisions are made rationally (Metcalf, 1971). Another cognitive-oriented approach is to engage students in discussions of relevant character issues with the expectation that students who hear their peers discuss the issue from a higher level will gravitate to that position. A fifth approach is to teach students a given set of values and accompanying appropriate actions; this is the position taken by the inculcation approach to values clarification. A final approach is to use the inculcation, values education, analysis, and moral development approaches described above when and where appropriate and then to have students put their thoughts and feelings into action in a variety of social actions as suggested in the action learning (Cottom, 1996). The cognitive component of character consists of both a knowledge base on right and wrong as well as the rational and creative processes necessary to work with that knowledge base to make sound moral decisions. There is a related value system that defines what the individual holds in high esteem or to which the individuals are attached. These are the criteria that students use to make moral or ethical judgments. Affective approaches include as values clarification and self-esteem

building, moral decision making and most recently, character education which concentrated on the study of ethical principles and their application to dilemmas such as euthanasia or capital punishment. Moral decision making assumed that under the right conditions, children would figure out ethical principles for themselves and generalise what they learned to their everyday moral opportunities (Thomas, 1991). Character education means creating a culture that calls for everyone in the school community to be the best people they can be. Such school programs that work are in fact, a giant mutual improvement process involving students, teachers, administrators, parents, and other stakeholders. Character education, usually enthusiastic about the idea but daunted by the problem of fitting it into crammed curricula. ([http:// www.scu.edu/ethics/publications/ie/v10n1/education.html](http://www.scu.edu/ethics/publications/ie/v10n1/education.html). Retrieved, 2015).

In general, character good or bad, is considered to be observable in one's conduct (Walberg & Wynne, 1989). Thus, character is different from values in that values are orientations or dispositions whereas character involves action or activation of knowledge and values. From this perspective, values are seen as one of the foundations for character. In the context of the model of human behaviour values include both cognitive and affective components, but not necessarily cognitive or behavioural components.

Narvaez and Rest (1995) affirm that an approach called Integrative Ethical Education (IEE) is a crucial option which is guided by the key findings from educational science with respect to expertise development, and includes several key steps:

1. Establish caring classroom community;
2. Foster a supportive climate for moral behavior and high achievement;
3. Cultivate ethical skills;
4. Use an apprenticeship approach to instruction
5. Develop self-regulation skills.

The first two steps and possibly step 4, if understood as the zone of proximal development, are already included in the suite of skills of the best practice instructor. The remaining steps are rooted

in the four component model of moral functioning and expertise development.

Wynne (1989) reported that the quality of relationships among faculty and adults in authority is a major factor in the development of student character. An atmosphere of adult harmony is vitally important. According to Wynne, schools effectively assisting pupils in character development are:

1. directed by adults who exercise their authority toward faculty and students in a firm, sensitive, and imaginative manner and who are committed to both academics and pupil character development;
2. staffed by dedicated faculty who make vigorous demands on pupils and each other;
3. structured so that pupils are surrounded by a variety of opportunities for them to practice helping (prosocial) conduct;
4. managed to provide pupils both individually and collectively with many forms of recognition for good conduct;
5. oriented toward maintaining systems of symbols, slogans, ceremonies, and songs that heighten pupils' collective identities;
6. dedicated to maintaining pupil discipline, widely disseminated discipline codes that are vigorously enforced and backed up with vital consequences;
7. committed to academic instruction and assigned pupils significant homework and otherwise stressed appropriate academic rigor;
8. sensitive to the need to develop collective pupil loyalties to particular classes, clubs, athletic groups, and other sub entities in the school;
9. sympathetic to the values of the external adult society, and perceive it as largely supportive and concerned with the problems of the young;
10. open to enlisting the help, counsel, and support of parents and other external adults, but willing to propose important constructive changes in the face of ill-informed parent resistance;

In the view of Robert (1997), the work of character education in schools and homes always starts with the adults. Moral decline of the youth is the result of reflection in the children who learn what are modeled. Teachers and parents must demonstrate not only the right behavior, but also the kind of thoughtfulness that makes a moral education more than the human version of obedience in school. At its best, character education cultivates an appreciation for the power of story, reflection and the essential tools of habit and reason in dealing with the complexities of daily life and discrete initiatives that replace an activity or that are added to the school's curriculum. Although there are character education programs available, commercially and otherwise, most advocates urge the public schools to take an infusion approach to educating for character. William (1992) affirms that an infusion approach to character education aims to restore the formation of students' characters to a central place in schooling. Rather than simply adding on character formation to the other responsibilities of schools, such as numeracy, literacy, career education, health education and other goals, a focus on good character permeates the entire school experience. In essence, character education joins intellectual development as the overarching goals of the school. Furthermore, character education is seen, not in competition with or furnishing added support to knowledge and skill acquisition goals, but as an important contributor to these goals. To create a healthy learning environment, students need to develop the virtues of responsibility and respect for others, eliminate habits of laziness, sloppiness and acquire habits of self-control and diligence, in form of social values. The infusion approach is based on the view that the good habits that contribute to the formation of character in turn contribute directly to the academic goals of schooling (Thomas, 1991)

Critical to the infusion approach is using the curriculum as a source of character education; this is particularly true of the social studies, history and other social sciences subject's curricula. The primary focus of these subjects is the study of human beings, real and fictitious. William (1992) further observed that the curricula of schools not only contain the core knowledge of culture but also moral heritage. An important element of the infusion approach is

the language with which a school community addresses issues of character and the moral domain. Teachers and administrators, committed to an infusion approach, use the language of virtues and speak of good and poor behaviour and of right and wrong. Other most popular approaches to character education are service learning, sometimes called community service. These approaches are a conscious effort to give students opportunities, guidance, and practice at being moral actors

Approaches aim for quick behavioural results, rather than helping students better understand and commit to the values that are core to our society, helping them to develop the skills for putting values into action in life's complex situations in social studies. These include:

1. Cheerleading involves multicolored posters, banners, and bulletin boards featuring a value or virtue of the month; lively morning public-address announcements; occasional motivational assemblies; and possibly a high-profile event such as a fund-raiser for a good cause.
2. Praise-and-reward approach seeks to make virtue into habit using positive reinforcement. Elements include catching students being good and praising them or giving them chits that can be exchanged for privileges or prizes. In this approach, all too often, the real significance of the students' actions is lost, as the reward or award becomes the primary focus.
3. Define and drill calls on students to memorize a list of values and the definition of each students' simple memorization of definitions seems to be equated with their development of the far more complex capacity for making moral decisions.
4. Forced formality focuses on strict, uniform compliance with specific rules of conduct, formal forms of address, or other procedures deemed to promote order or respect of adults.

Lang (1995) in Child Development Project (CDP) designed to help teachers and parents enhance children's prosocial behaviors and attitudes with a program shaped by three general propositions

1. adults play an active and important role in shaping the development of children's character;
2. character develops from within the child on the basis of the child's own thinking and experiences; and
3. Given an adequate family environment, children will be disposed to being concerned about others as well as themselves.

The interventions are designed to influence three different but interrelated systems affective, cognitive, and behavioral. The Child Development Programme teaches relevant prosocial values (specifically fairness, consideration, helpfulness and social responsibility as well as teaches needed social skills and commitment to prosocial values). It is based on the idea that children need to learn both specific skills and the accumulated moral wisdom of our culture with appropriate social conventions.

Watson, Solomon, Battistich, Schaps & Solomon, (1989) observed that there are five kinds of experiences that are deemed important for the development of children's prosocial orientations:

1. supportive adult-child relationships; children are inclined to emulate adults with whom they have positive relationships;
2. exposure to societal values not only social customs and conventions but also the accumulated moral wisdom of adult society (expose children to prosocial models and explain the reasons for moral action);
3. opportunities for peer interaction and prosocial action help children to develop self-control, increase their moral and social understanding and concern for their fellows;
4. An opportunity to think about and discuss moral issues and work of structural development lists has demonstrated that children strive to develop coherent moral systems. This is fostered by providing opportunities to discuss and think about moral situations; as children approach adolescence their trust in adult authority weakens and they strive for independence. At this stage children will need to have reasons for moral action that they regard as their own;

5. Experiences that promote understanding of others and the ability to take the perspective of others has been proposed by cognitive developmental theorists as a central ingredient of prosocial action.

### The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine character education and social values for greater productivity in Social Studies Education.

### Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between character education and the promotion of greater productivity in Social Studies
2. There is no significant relationship between receiving character education in urban and rural schools.
3. There is no significant relationship between character education and social values in Social Studies.

### Method

The study was a descriptive survey design focused on investigating character education and social values for greater productivity in social studies education. The population for the study comprised all the NCE 2 – 3 students from four (4) Colleges of Education in Lagos State namely: Federal College of Education (Technical) Akoka, Lagos State College of Education Ijanikin, St. Augustine College of Education, (PROJECTIME) Akoka and Lagos State College of Primary Education Epe. The sample for the study comprised 300 students, 75 each randomly selected from each sampled institution, to investigate character education and social values for greater productivity in social studies. These students were drawn using purposive sampling technique from the selected colleges of education students in Lagos State. The researchers constructed a questionnaire titled Character Education and Social Values for Greater Productivity in Social Studies Education Student's Questionnaire (CESVGPSSSEQ). The instrument has 15 items which measured character education and social values in social studies. A four point scale of strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), strongly disagree (SD)

disagree (D) instrument was validated by experts in the field of education social studies and test and measurement. The researchers distributed and collected the copies of questionnaire with the help of four research assistants from the colleges of education. Copies of the instrument were returned for statistical analysis, since the entire questionnaires were filled. The data collected were analysed, using the inferential statistics of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient to test the null hypotheses stated. Chi-Square was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance while the findings were represented in line with the research questions and research hypotheses of the study.

**Hypotheses Testing**

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between character education and the promotion of greater productivity in social studies

Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient statistic was used to test this hypothesis, and the results of the analysis of the data are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Relationship between character education and the promotion of greater productivity in social studies

| Variables            | Mean Score ( $\bar{x}$ ) | SD   | MD   | Df  | r-cal | r-critical |
|----------------------|--------------------------|------|------|-----|-------|------------|
| Character education  | 24.30                    | 4.39 |      |     |       |            |
| Greater productivity | 22.70                    | 4.52 | 1.60 | 518 | 0.62* | 0.138      |

Source: Field Survey 2015

Table 1 showthat the calculated r-value of 0.62 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.138 given 518 degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected and the

alternative hypothesis was accepted. This means that a significant relationship exists between character education and the promotion of greater productivity in social studies

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between receiving character education in urban and rural schools

Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient statistic was used to test this hypothesis, and the results of the analysis of the data are presented in table 2.

Table 2: Relationship between receiving character education in urban and rural schools

| Variables     | Mean $\bar{x}$ | SD   | MD   | Df  | r-cal | r-critical |
|---------------|----------------|------|------|-----|-------|------------|
| Urban schools | 24.30          | 4.39 |      |     |       |            |
| Rural schools | 22.68          | 4.82 | 1.62 | 518 | 0.59* | 0.088      |

Source: Field Survey 2015

Table 2 shows that the calculated r-value of 0.59 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.088 given 518 degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. This means that there is a significance relationship between receiving character education in urban and rural schools.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant relationship between character education and social values in social studies. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient statistic was used to test this hypothesis, and the results of the analysis of the data are presented in table 3.

Table 3: Relationship between character education and social values in social studies

| Variables           | Mean $\bar{x}$<br>Score ( $\bar{x}$ ) | SD   | MD   | Df  | r-cal | r-critical |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------|------|------|-----|-------|------------|
| character education | 22.37                                 | 2.70 |      |     |       |            |
| Social values       | 21.69                                 | 3.34 | 0.68 | 518 | 0.64* | 0.138      |

Source: Field Survey 2015

Table 3 shows that the calculated r-value of 0.64 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.138 given 518 degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. This means that character education is significantly related to social values in social studies.

#### Findings

1. A significant relationship exists between character education and the promotion of greater productivity in social studies
2. There is a significant relationship between receiving character education in urban and rural schools.
3. Character education is significantly related to social values in social studies.

#### Discussion

Result of the table in Hypothesis One shows that a significant relationship exists between character education and the promotion of greater productivity in social studies. This, in fact, is in line with the goals of social studies as a values-laden subject. In view of this assertion, Mezieobi (2012) affirm that value is an educative process in which there is a concerted effort to expose students to mostly desirable values without completely ignoring undesirable values, while allowing them freely and reflectively to choose their own values that will enable them effectively function in a society that is characterized by ever-present non-value-free circumstances, valuing and rational decision making. Similarly, Kristjansson (2002) pointed

to a crumbling of a belief in direct moral-character formation in schools, leading to moral concerns being sidelined from mainstream educational discourse in the Western world and marginalizing, if not wholly extirpating, references to the cultivation of the character of children via school curricula and other school processes. Educating the learner about moral and character education will go a long way since education in this context is the process that prepares young people for their social inheritance and advocates three dimensions of education which are development of knowledge, training of mental abilities, and development of character.

Hypothesis Two also indicates that a relationship exists between receiving character education in urban and rural schools. This is the product of an interaction between the child's cognitive structures and the structural features of the social environment. The capability for complex perspective taking and for understanding abstract concepts is associated with advances in moral reasoning. Kohlberg believes that moral development is promoted by social experiences that produce cognitive conflict which provide the child with the opportunity to take the perspective of others (Kohlberg, 1969). The closer alignment of the ethical conceptions of moral character with advances in the cognitive, developmental and personality sciences is a decided recent trend that should hold promise for educational intervention (Cunningham, 2005). If character refers to the moral qualities of personality then its explication for purposes of character education will require an account that is compatible with the best insights about psychological functioning and with well attested models of personality. In Blasi's (1980) review of empirical research on moral cognition and moral action after describing the relatively modest relations between moral judgment and moral behavior, he posited that the observed gap might be explained by moral identity or the extent to which moral values and goals are regarded as core or essential aspects of the self.

Hypothesis 3 shows that character education is significantly related to social values in social studies. Social Studies aims at helping students to inculcate desirable social habits, attitudes and values needed for the survival of the individual in the society, through a process of studying human beings, relationship with his or her

environment and with the desire to provide solutions to various complements problems in order to ensure humansurvival, having been equipped with the necessary tools such as values, attitudes, skills and knowledge (Lawal and Oyeleye, 2003). Values education makes the beneficiary to realize priorities, preferences, thoughts, ideas, views, actions, activities, behaviour, attitude, decision and practices that are guided or determined by values. Moral and character education presumably intends to influence the personality of children; or to leave its mark in a way that carnalizes a disposition to morality; or else cultivate those ethical virtues that are conducive for living and as well as the life that is good for one to live (Okere, 1989 in Mezieobi 2012). Therefore, the Social Studies curriculum evolved on the belief that social studies education should positively influence and modify the learner's behaviour in the direction of acceptable and current socio-cultural order. Social Studies program enables children to participate effectively now in the groups to which they belong and not to look only to their future participation as adults. The school serves as a laboratory for students to learn social participation directly and not symbolically. Social knowledge is constructed as students attempt to build coherent systems for thinking about and explaining their immediate environment and the elements that make up the larger world environment.

### Conclusion

Implementing character education and social values would defend an intentional and transparent commitment to the character formation of students, hence character considerations are crucial to the essential Self, self-integrity will hinge on whether one is self-consistent in action or one has a moral identity to the extent that character notions, such as being good, being just, compassionate or fair, is judged to be central, essential and important to self-understanding.

### Recommendations

1. Government should make character education and social values imposing challenges on parents and educators to instill

in the children the needed social values of the society by means of orientation

2. Curriculum experts should include character education in social studies curriculum in the institutions at all levels, since the school is seen as a place where students feel a sense of closeness and connection to others and are motivated to help themselves.
3. Conferences, seminars and workshop should be regularly organized to train teachers adequately on how to impart these needed knowledge to the students
4. Government and non-governmental organizations should inculcate character education and social values through public campaign
5. Religious organizations should teach character education through sermons and prayers in the various religions.

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