
ASSESSMENT OF THE PERCEPTION OF SOCIAL STUDIES
ON CITIZENSHIP DEVELOPMENT AMONG
UNDERGRADUATE SOCIAL STUDIES STUDENTS IN
TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN SOUTHWESTERN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the perception of Social Studies on citizenship development among the Nigerian Youth and determined the best practices on how Social Studies can be used as means of raising good and responsible citizenry. The study adopted descriptive research design of survey research type. The target population comprised undergraduate students in tertiary institutions in Southwestern Nigeria. The sample size was made up of 360 undergraduate Social Studies students, selected using multistage sampling procedure. A validated instrument titled "Perception of Social Studies on Citizenship Development Questionnaire" (PSSCDQ) was used to collect information from the respondents who are undergraduate Social Studies Students. Data collected were analyzed using a descriptive statistics of frequency counts, simple percentages and mean. The results among others showed that youths had positive perception of Social Studies and Citizenship Development with weighted average of 3.51.

Also, Encouraging students' participation in school governance ($\bar{x}=3.34$), Encouraging students' participation in simulations of democratic processes and procedures ($\bar{x}=3.73$), Enhancing of administrative reform ($\bar{x}=3.57$), Putting in place and solidifying electoral reform $\bar{x}=3.64$) are some of the best practices of raising good and responsible citizenry through teaching of Social Studies in Southwestern Nigeria. The study concluded that the identified statements are strong variables capable of impacting positively among the youths.

Keywords: *Assessment, Perceived Impacts, Social Studies, Citizenship Development, Undergraduate Students*

Introduction

In recent times, the wave of social ills and unpatriotic activities among Nigerian youth call for urgent solutions. Among these are armed banditry, inter-ethnic conflict, religious insurgency in the North, secession threats, intolerance of political oppositions leading to imprisonment and assassination, non credible and contentious elections which led to military incursion into political governance. Scholars claim that military rule via coups d'état caused the demise of the democratic system and citizenship ethos in Nigeria. Twenty-six years of military rule created adverse impacts instead of the expected positive changes on citizenship development (Aluko, 1998; Falade, 2007 as cited in Samuel, 2015).

Oyeleke (2011) stated that citizenship has been the core concept for social studies education since the early 20th century and effective citizenship development is the basis of Social Studies Education. Social Studies Education and Citizenship Development is aimed at effecting positive changes in citizens and inculcating national consciousness and unity. According to Ezegebe, Eskay, Anyanwu and Abiogu (2014), Social Studies is designed to enable the citizens have the right to form of citizenship training, acquire right form of values, aspirations, skills, norms, customs, attitudes and science and technological know-how that will enable them to be functional

members of the society. While Citizen Development in Social Studies has to do with learners' exposure to Civic and Political knowledge and fostered engagement in community programme; effective Citizenship is the degree of knowledge, dispositions, values and skills developed by learners to engage in diverse citizenship activities. It involves learning and demonstrating diverse citizenship traits through actual participation in ecological activism, community service and showing interest in state activities (Andrews, Cowell, Downe, Martin and Turner, 2008; Okeahialam, 2013). However, there is general belief by many Nigerians that today's Citizenship Education programmes do not adequately address the problems of the country (Falade 2011).

Yusuf, Agbonna, Jekayinfa and Saliu (2011) in Ruth, Gamkur and Solomon (2019) examined the effects of Citizenship Education component of Social Studies on civic literacy and attachment of upper basic studies in Ilorin Metropolis. The result of the study revealed that the more the students were exposed to Citizenship component of Social Studies on a regular basis, the more they acquire the needed civic literacy and attachment. Other studies showed that civic instructions overtly impacted on citizenship knowledge and participation in countries like Kenya, Nigeria, Dominican Republic and South Africa (Finkel, 2002; Finkel & Ernst, 2005; Finkel & Smith, 2011; Collier & Vicente, 2011 as cited in Samuel, 2015).

Social Studies Education is perceived differently by different educators. Irmiya (2007) cited in Ruth and Solomon (2019) asserted that the differences in perception of Social Studies Education have created misconceptions in the minds of ignorant people. It is important to state that misconceptions of Social Studies Education are found among student teacher of Faculties of Education in Nigeria. To some group of students, it is the study of social sciences courses; to other group of students, it is reflected inquiry leading to critical thinking, problem solving and citizenship transmission; and yet to another group, it is an integration of concepts and ideas from different subject areas only.

Several scholars have decried the wave of social ills by Nigerian citizens especially among university students, as there are prevalence

of immorality, dishonesty, unpatriotic and disloyal practices among the rank-and-file of Nigerian citizenry (Fabiya, 2009; Kehinde-Awoyele and Jekayinoluwa, 2012; Mofoluwawo, Jarimi and Oyedele, 2012; Omiyefa 2016).

Addressing the issue of determining the perceived impact of Social Studies Education and citizenship development among university undergraduate students involve seeking answer to these questions. First, are there expected behavioural traits of the Nigerian youth in the context of Social Studies and Citizenship Education? Secondly, is there a relationship between Social Studies and the raising good and responsible citizenry? This study intends to assess the perceived impact of Social Studies and Citizenship Development among University undergraduate students in Tertiary Institutions in Southwestern Nigeria. It is assumed that the student teachers' perception could be influenced by such factors like needs, interests, experience and ability as major determinants (Mallum and Haggai, 2000).

Salawu (2019) pointed out that students learn desirable values and attitudes, skills that drive and direct a society. The values held in the society shape the behaviour of the people, and when values are good they are transmitted from generation to another generation. In line with this assertion, Omiyefa and Adetoro (2017) lamented that responsible citizenship is the hallmark of every promising society while civic competence is the central focus of civil education. Equally, the National Council for Social Studies (2013) sees civic competence as the possession of required skill knowledge or ability to engage in active participation and societal life, school and local community activities.

Social Studies Education has the aim of promoting civic competence of the citizens. Supporting this view, Mbaba and Omabe (2012) opine that Social Studies is a vehicle through which desired culture, values and norms of society are being inculcated to its young ones. Hence, Social Studies as an agent of citizenship training could help impact on the youth democratic values like recognizing opposition, voting rationally, defending the nation, participating in election and above all respect to the rule of law and constituted authorities. It is therefore, necessary to have an assessment of the

perceived impact of Social Studies Education and Citizenship Development among University undergraduate students in tertiary institutions in South Western Nigeria.

Researchers like Hollon, Anderson and Roth, (1991); Prawat and Anderson, (1988); Adeyemi, (2013) have shown that teachers' perceptions and beliefs do not only have considerable influence on their instructional practices and classroom behaviour but are also related to students' achievement and that school location could also have influence on students' academic attainment. Previous related research findings on perceived impact of Social Studies and Citizenship Development among other findings showed that teachers perceived content such as core values, environmental education, history, family life education and current events have the most important contents.

Yusuf, Agbonna, Jekayinfa and Saliu (2011) revealed that the more the students were exposed to social component of Social Studies on a regular basis the more they acquire the needed civic literacy and attachment. Also, Yusuf (2005) further showed that Social Studies students have a more positive opinion on political participation than none Social Studies students. Researchers have revealed extent to which the goals of Social Studies education are implemented to promote effective citizenship. Specifically, there are limited studies on the assessment of the perception of Social Studies on Citizen Development among students in Tertiary Institutions in Southwestern Nigeria; hence this study.

Purpose of the Study

The general objective of this study is to assess the impacts of Social Studies on citizenship development among Students in tertiary institutions in Southwestern Nigeria. The specific objectives of this study are to:

1. examine the expected behavioural traits of the Nigerian youth in the context of good and responsible citizenry;
2. examine the impact of Social Studies on citizenship development on the Nigerian youth; and
3. determine the best practices on how Social Studies can be used as means of raising good and responsible citizenry.

Research Questions

The following research questions were generated for the study:

1. What are the expected behavioural traits of the Nigerian youth in the context of good and responsible citizenry?
2. What are the impacts of Social Studies on citizenship development on the Nigerian youth?
3. What are the best practices on how Social Studies can be used as means of raising good and responsible citizenry?

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive research design of survey research type. The target population comprised undergraduate students in tertiary institutions in Southwestern Nigeria. The sample size was made up of 360 undergraduate Social Studies students, selected using multi-stage sampling procedure. At first stage, simple random sampling technique was employed in selecting three States (Osun, Ekiti and Ogun) out of the six states that made up Southwestern Nigeria (Osun, Oyo, Ekiti, Ondo, Ogun and Lagos). At the second stage, one conventional university (either Federal or State) and one affiliated university (either Federal or State) were purposively selected from each of the three states selected. The selection was done on the basis that at least one conventional university and one affiliated university where Social Studies as a course of study is offered at the degree level in either federal or state. These include: Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife (Conventional University) and University of Ibadan Regular Degree Programme, Osun State College of Education, Ilesa centre (Affiliated University) for Osun state. Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti (Conventional University) and University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Regular Degree Programme, Ikere Ekiti College of Education, Ikere Centre (Affiliated University) for Ekiti State as well as Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun (Conventional University) and Olabisi Onabanjo University, Regular Degree Programme, Tai Solarin College of Education, Omu- Ijebu (Affiliated University) for Ogun State.

From each of these six selected institutions, sixty (60) undergraduate Social Studies students were selected using simple

random sampling technique totaling 360 respondents the questionnaire that gave answer to the three research questions that emanated from the study. A validated instrument titled “Perception of Social Studies Citizenship Development Questionnaire” (PSSCDQ) was used to collect information from the respondents who are undergraduate Social Studies Students. The instrument is divided into four sections. Section A, elicited respondents’ biodata, Section B had eight items that elicited information on the expected behavioural traits of the Nigerian youth in the context of good and responsible citizenry. Section C had nine items that elicited information on the impact of Social Studies on Citizenship Development on the Nigerian Youth while Section D had 11 items that elicited responses on the best practices that Social Studies can be used as a means of raising good and responsible citizenry. Sections B, C and D made use of four Likert scales ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. The weight of 4 was attached to Strongly Agree (SA), 3 to Agree (A), 2 to Disagree (D), and 1 to Strongly Disagree (SD). The content validity of the instrument was carried out through cross-examination and verification of only items that are relevant and valid which eventually constituted the contents of the questionnaire. The draft questionnaires were given to the experts in Social Studies and Educational Evaluation for scrutiny and the suggestions and recommendations were adhered to. The instrument was later trial tested in another university outside the state of coverage on 40 undergraduate Social Studies students using Cronbach alpha and yielded the reliability coefficient of 0.79.

Data collected were analyzed using a descriptive statistics of frequency counts, simple percentages and mean.

Results

Research Questions

1. What are the expected behavioural traits of the Nigerian youth in the context of good and responsible citizenry?

Table 1: Expected behavioural traits of the Nigerian youth in the context of good and responsible citizenry

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{x}
1	Participation	203 (56.4%)	110 (30.6%)	28 (7.8%)	19 (5.3%)	3.38
2	Accountability	199 (55.3%)	124 (34.4%)	27 (7.5%)	10 (2.8%)	3.42
3	Transparency	249 (69.2%)	82 (22.8%)	19 (5.3%)	10 (2.8%)	3.58
4	Obedience to rule of law	244 (67.8%)	97 (26.9%)	14 (3.9%)	5 (1.4%)	3.61
5	Consensus oriented	169 (46.9%)	141 (39.2%)	30 (8.3%)	20 (5.6%)	3.28
6	Effectiveness and Efficiency	246 (68.3%)	109 (30.3%)	2 (6%)	3 (8%)	3.66
7	Responsiveness	191 (53.1%)	115 (31.9%)	34 (9.4%)	20 (5.6%)	3.33
8	Inclusiveness and Equity	211 (58.6%)	112 (31.1%)	27 (7.5%)	10 (2.8%)	3.46
Total Average						3.08

Source: Fieldwork, 2020

Table 1 shows the expected behavioural traits of the Nigerian youth in the context of good and responsible citizenry in South Western Nigeria. The table shows that the students agreed to all the items: Participation (\bar{x} = 3.38), Accountability (\bar{x} = 3.42), Transparency (\bar{x} = 3.58), Obedience to Rule of Law (\bar{x} = 3.61), Consensus Oriented (\bar{x} = 3.28), Effectiveness and Efficiency (\bar{x} = 3.66), Responsiveness (\bar{x} = 3.33) as well as Inclusiveness & Equity (\bar{x} = 3.46). Furthermore, based on the value of the total average (3.08 out of the maximum 4.00 that can be obtained), the result therefore showed that the above items are the major expected behavioral traits of the Nigerian youth in the context of good and responsible citizenry.

2. What are the impacts of Social Studies on Citizenship Development on the Nigerian Youth?

Table 2: Impacts of Social Studies on Citizenship Development on the Nigerian Youth

S/N	Statements	SA	A	D	SD	X
1	Provision of societal amenities and understanding	224 (62.2%)	83 (23.1%)	42 (11.7%)	11 (3.1%)	3.44
2	Promotion of political participation	164 (45.6%)	145 (40.3%)	27 (7.5%)	24(6.7%)	3.25
3	Development of love and responsibility to the nation	271 (75.3%)	88 (24.4%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.3%)	3.75
4	Inculcation of civic and obligations in the life of the learners	191 (53.1%)	115 (31.9%)	34 (9.4%)	20 (5.6%)	3.33
5	Inculcation of values	249 (69.2%)	89 (24.7%)	15 (4.2%)	7 (1.9%)	3.61
6	Upliftment of moral tone in the life of the learners or citizens	267 (74.2%)	91 (25.3%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (0.6%)	3.73
7	Building in youths the spirit of national consciousness and patriotism	198 (55.0%)	135 (37.5%)	17 (4.7%)	10 (2.8%)	3.45
8	Inculcating an act of respect to the constituted authority	255 (70.8%)	100 (27.8%)	2 (0.6%)	3 (0.8%)	3.69
9	Transmission of cultural heritage in the life of the youths	197 (54.7%)	120 (33.3%)	26 (7.2%)	17 (4.7%)	3.38
Total Average						3.51

Source: Fieldwork, 2020

Table 2 shows the impacts of Social Studies on citizenship development on the Nigerian youth in South Western Nigeria. The table shows that the students agreed to all the statements: Provision of societal amenities and understanding ($\bar{x} = 3.44$), Promotion of political participation ($\bar{x} = 3.25$), Development of love and responsibility to the nation ($\bar{x} = 3.75$), Inculcation of civic and obligations in the life of the learners ($\bar{x} = 3.33$), Inculcation of values ($\bar{x} = 3.61$), Upliftment of moral tone in the life of the learners or citizens ($\bar{x} = 3.73$), Building in youths the spirit of national consciousness and patriotism ($\bar{x} = 3.45$), Inculcating an act of respect to the constituted authority ($\bar{x} = 3.45$), and Transmission of cultural heritage in the life of the youths ($\bar{x} = 3.38$). Furthermore, based on the value of the total average (3.51 out of the maximum

4.00 that can be obtained), the result therefore revealed that youths had positive impact of Social Studies on Citizenship Development.

3. What are the best practices of raising good and responsible citizenry through teaching of Social Studies?

Table 3 Best practices of raising good and responsible citizenry through teaching of Social Studies

S/N	Statements	SA	A	D	SD	X
1	Providing instruction in government, history, law and democracy	198 (55.0%)	111 (30.8%)	41 (11.4%)	10 (2.8%)	3.38
2	Incorporating discussion of current local, national, and international issues and events in the classroom, particularly those that young people view as important to their lives	265 (73.6%)	76 (21.1%)	9 (2.5%)	10 (2.8%)	3.66
3	Designing and implementing programs that provide students with opportunities to apply what they learn through community services that is linked to the formal curriculum and classroom instruction	209 (58.1%)	124 (34.4%)	17 (4.7%)	10 (2.8%)	3.48
4	Offering extracurricular activities that provide opportunities for young people to get involved in their schools or communities	234 (65.0%)	102 (28.3%)	8 (2.2%)	16 (4.4%)	3.54
5	Encouraging students' participation in school governance	203 (56.4%)	105 (29.2%)	22 (6.1%)	30 (8.3%)	3.34
6	Encouraging students' participation in simulations of democratic processes and procedures	267 (74.2%)	91 (25.3%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (0.6%)	3.73
7	Enhancing of administrative reform	238 (66.1%)	97 (26.9%)	18 (5.0%)	7 (1.9%)	3.57
8	Putting in place and solidifying electoral reform	250 (69.4%)	97 (26.9%)	6 (1.7%)	7 (1.9%)	3.64

9	Bringing about a stable judicial reform	206 (57.2%)	102 (28.3%)	28 (7.8%)	24 (6.7%)	3.36
10	Curbing corruption at all levels	195 (54.2%)	104 (28.9%)	48 (13.3%)	13 (3.6%)	3.34
11	Developing a workable national outlook	233 (64.7%)	95 (26.4%)	22 (6.1%)	10 (2.8%)	3.53
Total Average						3.50

Source: Fieldwork, 2020

Table 3 shows the best practices of raising good and responsible citizenry through teaching of Social Studies in Southwestern Nigeria. The table shows that undergraduate students agreed to all the statements: Providing instruction in government, history, law and democracy ($\bar{x} = 3.38$), Incorporating discussion of current local, national, and international issues and events in the classroom, particularly those that young people view as important to their lives ($\bar{x} = 3.66$), Designing and implementing programs that provide students with opportunities to apply what they learn through community services that is linked to the formal curriculum and classroom instruction ($\bar{x} = 3.48$), Offering extracurricular activities that provide opportunities for young people to get involved in their schools or communities ($\bar{x} = 3.54$), Encouraging students' participation in school governance ($\bar{x} = 3.34$), Encouraging students' participation in simulations of democratic processes and procedures ($\bar{x} = 3.73$), Enhancing of administrative reform ($\bar{x} = 3.57$), Putting in place and solidifying electoral reform ($\bar{x} = 3.64$), Bringing about a stable judicial reform ($\bar{x} = 3.36$), Curbing corruption at all levels ($\bar{x} = 3.34$) and Developing a workable national outlook ($\bar{x} = 3.53$). Furthermore, based on the value of the total average (3.50 out of the maximum 4.00 that can be obtained), it can therefore be deduced that all the statements above are the best practices of raising good and responsible citizenry through teaching of Social Studies in Southwestern Nigeria.

Discussions

The study assessed the perception of social studies on citizenship development. The findings of this study indicated that undergraduate students agreed that Nigerian youth are expected to exhibit good behavioural traits such as political participation, accountability,

transparency, adhere to the principle of the rule of law and possess other democratic values and positive attitude. This result is in line with the findings of Shittu and Ruth (2019) who revealed that students perceive the implementation of Social Studies goals as sufficient to promote effective citizenship. Also, undergraduate students of Social Studies of Colleges of Education endorsed all the goals of Social Studies as relevant to promote good citizenship traits in students. The findings corroborate the assertion of Mezieobi, Fubara and Mezieobi (2013) that Social Studies addresses the social needs, social realities and social aspiration of Nigerians.

This study also showed the impact of Social Studies on citizenship development. Evidently, 3.51 of 4.0 had positive view on the impact of Social Studies on Citizenship Development. Supporting this view, Yusuf (2005) observed the unprecedented role of Social Studies Education in developing effective and viable citizens for nation building.

Lastly, this study also revealed the best practices of raising good and responsible citizenry through teaching of Social Studies. Evidently, more respondents supported incorporating discussion of current, local, national and international issues and events in the classroom, encouraging students' participation in school governance, providing students with opportunities to apply what they learnt through community services is linked to the formal curriculum and classroom instruction.

Also, through the inculcation of other democratic values and skills, as structured in the objectives of Social Studies Education are crucial means of equipping the learners with attitudes, political socialization, patriotic feelings and consciousness or raising good and responsible citizenry. The results of this finding also revealed the perceived positive impact of Social Studies and Citizenship development on the university undergraduate students.

The finding is in line with the finding of Almaamary and Menter (2013) who revealed the provision of a wide range of view about Citizenship Education and Social Studies in terms of function, the approaches to its introduction and the appropriate teaching method to deliver it. He stated that the respondents viewed it as a means to build national pride and unity, which are necessary to

maintain stability in the country. Values restoration and building are roles of Social Studies Education. Therefore, curbing corruption at all levels and providing instruction in government, history, law and democratic values are essential for achieving effective citizenship development, nation building and social stability in Nigeria.

Conclusion

The roles of Social Studies on Citizenship Development are the expected behavioural traits and best practices shown by students due to classroom instruction to develop Effective Citizenship. Effective Citizenship Development goal in the Nigerian Policy on Education evolved from the National goals. It is evident that the more the students are exposed to citizenship components of Social Studies on a regular basis, the more they acquire the needed civic literacy and attachment. Undergraduate students agreed that major expected behavioural traits include accountability, transparency, political participation, obedience to rule of law, responsiveness, inclusiveness and equity etc. which are necessary ingredients of responsible and good citizenry. Indeed, respondents perceived positive impact of Social Studies on citizenship development of the Nigerian Youth in South western Nigeria, such as inculcation of respect to the constituted authority and promotion of political participation etc. Therefore, Social Studies Education as an integrated discipline can only achieve meaningful objectives to the learner and the society in general when it is properly perceived by Social Studies teachers in Nigeria. Hence, there is need for expert in the field to emphasis on the integrated model of Social Studies. As the objectives of Social Studies Education in the universities is to transform Nigeria society through youth imbued with acceptable values, attitudes and skills and intellectual power for national reconstruction development and unity (Mezieobi, 2007).

Recommendations

Government should finance research in Social Studies in view of its relevance to effective citizenship development. There is need for Social Studies lecturers in the Nigerian Universities to extend citizenship training to the Nigerian public through conferences,

seminars, workshops and publications. More training for undergraduate Social Studies students in innovative strategies so as to inculcate democratic values in the learners. Social Studies and Civic Education should be taught by qualified Social Studies experts. This is to promote citizenship training and Development.

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