

## USE OF CIVIC IDEALS AND PRACTICES IN BUILDING THE FUTURE OF SOCIAL STUDIES

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### Abstract

*The society we live in today is plagued with different social problems such as cultism, human trafficking, armed robbery, election rigging, cheating, thuggery and terrorism. Acquiring the right type of values will help solve these problems. This paper examined the use of acceptable values in solving this menace. The views of John Dewey in his pragmatic approach to solving problems were used to explain the methods that can be explored to actualize this. Civic Education and Social Studies teaches knowledge, skills, attitudes and values. There are a lot to gain if these and the concept of discipline with hardwork is emphasized at all levels of the society. This will make our youths who are leaders of tomorrow change their orientation on avenues where some people use to get rich without working for such wealth. It concludes and recommends that teachers teaching Social Studies and Civic Education should be versed in the subject matter and teach concepts that will make students know that they can achieve greatness in life through hardwork and that it is when they do this that the country can be a better place to live. Also, the law enforcement agents should assist in to curb the excesses of our youth who are lured to perpetrate crime and that government should take the advice of experts in these fields to better reposition our values systems for rapid social, economic and political development.*

**Key-words:** Civic Education, Social Studies, values, Pragmatism, Civic engagement, Norms, Society, Development

### Introduction

Civic Education is a subject that is taught in both primary and secondary schools in Nigeria. It remains an important means of teaching the populace about individual rights and what duties and responsibilities the leaders and the led have (Olaitan, 2007). According to Federal Ministry of Education (2007), Civic Education is a classroom subject introduced into the Nigerian school curriculum as part of the basic education program for the purpose of developing Nigerian people into responsible citizens. A lot is learnt in this subject. It inculcates good societal virtues in the individuals which will lead to the realisation of national objectives as set out in the National Policy of Education Federal Republic of Nigeria, (2013) Which are building of: (a) A free and democratic society; (b) A just and egalitarian society; (c) A united, strong and self-reliant nation; (d) A great and dynamic economy; (e) A land full of bright opportunities

for all citizens. Effective implementation of Civic Education provides a philosophical and structural framework on which to base the teaching of skills and strategies that re-inforces reasoned decision-making skills, evaluation of information, practical application of civic virtues and an in-depth understanding of citizenship responsibility (Kidwell, 2005 cited in Ajibola, Lukman and Habiba, 2014).

The Civic Education curriculum addresses young Nigerians in the formative educational years (Yahya 2013). The content address issues that are important to developing young people into responsible citizens. This means the young people will imbibe the values, norms, knowledge, actions and activities for the development of the country. Elements of Civic Education are real because they affect people's lives (Azebanwa, 2010).

Every citizen has a big role to play in the development of a country. This is premised in the address former United States of America,

President Obama (2009) to American's school children "we will need the insights and critical thinking skills you gain in history and Social Studies to fight poverty and homelessness, crime and discrimination and make our nation fairer and freer. You need the creativity and ingenuity you develop in all your classes to build new companies that will create new jobs and boost our economy" from the above, it is clear that knowledge gained in Social Studies and Civic Education can assist in the transformation of the society.

Civic Education is not only subjected to Social Studies or politics in schools but it applies to all learning processes as well as interdisciplinary skills. Civic Education is basically concerned with current social development. In the schools, students learn skills which enable them to function properly in the society. The fact that the schools are obliged to give every student the needed skills required to excel and be functional members of the society is not enough, the schools are obliged to give every student the opportunity of an individually appropriate education.

Amadi in Igu (2009) defined values as cherished and acceptable standards of behaviour. In this 21<sup>st</sup> century, we have witnessed developments in Science and Technology. This, no doubt has led to improvement in the standard of living. As good as the development is, it has its negative consequences in the lives of the people. There is need to address the trends of moral decadence among the people and other social vices which result from technological development. One of these fields is the teaching of value education.

According to Philip-Ogoh and Adus-Salam (2014) citing Danladi and Akinseye explained that Social Studies entails lifelong education stressing on learning and acquisition of positive social, economic and political values, attitudes and skills for judicious utilization of human and natural progress. Ezegebe in Igu (2009) outlined the following as the objectives of Social Studies:

- (i) To help man develop valuable and socially acceptable concepts, ideals and philosophy of life
- (ii) To help man develop proper value judgment and ability to criticize, select and place events in the proper perspectives.
- (iii) To help Nigerian teachers, pupils and students to discover what is good and unique in the physical, social and economic environments which hitherto have been neglected.

Social Studies course is one of the effective courses for values education. It is important for teaching values due to the historical quality of its content, with information about different cultures and stories of life and having a multi-disciplined structure (Kan 2010). It appears very sound and accurate to say values education is best taught using Social Studies concept but one important area is that the teacher's knowledge and skills are applied to make the final decision. When this is considered from the perspective of identifying the activities that Social Studies teachers conduct with the framework of values education, it will show the problems that occur during such implementation.

The importance of values is emphasized when the Nigeria Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC 2017) introduced the teaching of Religion and National Values (RNV) which later became National Values Education (NVE) which comprises of Social Studies, Civic Education and Security education. There are many social problems in the society among them are: terrorism, cultism, examination malpractices, kidnapping, child abuse, rape and murder. Social Studies have some concepts that will help to solve some of these problems.

This paper is linked to John Dewey's pragmatic theory of democracy. According to this theory, "Democracy is not restricted to single countries. Every group can deal with its own issues on the premise of equal freedom" (Moller, 2008). In a civilized society, it is good to accommodate all shades of opinion.

This is important because our contribution will in no small measure lead to the development of the society. For someone to be accessible in a cultural and everyday manner is a decisive and important element for the development of democratic decision-making and responsibility at schools and the way the culture is learned. Beutel and Beutel (2010) raised the question why there is no culture of participation in class via an appreciative and equal way of communication via a transparent way of evaluation and feedback on pupils. It is to be noted that human beings have different talents and this is where their intelligence lies. Therefore, all shades of opinion should be accommodated in our drive for better society.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Nigeria society has over the years witnessed social problems at different levels. These are examination malpractice, thuggery, terrorism, kidnapping, election rigging, human trafficking, armed robbery, cheating in many forms, cultism and insecurity. Many researches had been conducted in making Social Studies achieve its goal in the inculcation of values. Findings showed that Social Studies education can bring about sustainable development in any society. Many of these works did not address how civic ideals and practices can be used to build the future of Social Studies.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The objectives of the study are to:

- i. identify the concept of teaching Social Studies.
- ii. examine the teaching of Civic Education.
- iii. examine different social problems in Nigeria.
- iv. investigate the extent knowledge of values helped to build the future of Social Studies.

### **Research Questions**

- i. How has the teaching of Social Studies solved social problems in Nigeria?
- ii. To what extent did the skills acquired in the teaching of values promote development in Nigeria?

### **Methodology**

The study used a survey research design. Population was all Secondary School teachers in Akure South Local Government Area in Ondo State. Fifty (50) respondents were purposively selected. The research instruments were a questionnaire on (a) How the teaching of Social Studies solve societal problems (b) The extent the skills acquired in teaching values promote development in society. This comprises ten (10) items each structured along a four-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Strongly Disagree (SD) and Disagree (D). This was trial tested using teachers in the Secondary Schools whose area of specialization was social sciences. The reliability was arrived at from the interview earlier conducted. The choice of Social Studies teachers was because it is believed that only teachers teaching in secondary schools and specialized in Social Studies can have the right answer. The teachers that were selected responded to the items based on their dispositions. Data were collected from their responses in researchers administered questionnaire.

### **Results**

Research Question 1: How has the teaching of Social Studies solved social problems in Nigeria?

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on the teaching of Social Studies**

Statements	Mean	Std Deviation	N
Social Studies Teaches hardwork	1.44	.501	50
Discipline is impaired in the Youth	1.14	.351	50
Creates Awareness of evolving Social Physical environment	1.42	.499	50
Skills are acquired	1.84	.650	50
Positive attitude of togetherness is acquired	1.28	.454	50
Teaching of emerging issues is emphasized	1.58	.499	50
Civic Education concepts is easy to understand	1.42	.499	50
Knowledge of civic concepts is good to promote	1.58	.499	50
Civic Education teaches good values	1.58	.499	50
I like Social Studies	1.58	.499	50

Correlation value between Social Studies teaches hardwork and discipline is impaired in youth is .46 (46%). Significant value is .001. It has positive relationship because the value is within  $P < 0.005$ . This agrees with Social Studies promote and sustain culture. Correlation value between Social Studies teaches hardwork and creates awareness of evolving social and physical environment is -.76 (-76%). Significant value is .000. This shows positive relationship. The analysis corroborates the fact that Social

Studies teaches hardwork and creates awareness of evolving social and physical environment. Social problems affect the development of a country. Therefore, the teaching of Social Studies and Civic Education will help to eradicate social ills in our society. This is clear from the table because the mean score and standard deviation confirm this. To a large extent the society will be a better place to live. Everybody will imbibe the spirit of hardwork.

**Table 2: Correlations on the teaching of Social Studies**

Statements		Social Studies teachers hardwork	Discipline is impaired in the youth	Creates awareness of evolving social and physical environment
Social Studies teaches hardwork	Pearson	1	.455	-.754
	Correlation	-	.001	.000
	Sig (2-tailed)	50	50	50
	N			
Discipline is impaired in the youth	Pearson	.455	1	-.343
	Correlation	.001	-	.015
	Sig (2-tailed)	50	50	50
	N			

The results show that there is no relationship in the question raised. This supports the fact that development has its negative consequences in the lives of the people because many people are not disciplined.

Research Question 2: To what extent did the skills acquired in the teaching of values promote development in Nigeria

**Table 3: Descriptive Statistics on Values Acquisition**

Statements	Mean	Std Deviation	N
Honesty promote development	1.00	.000	50
Good to be courages	1.28	.454	50
Society a better place if we are disciplined	1.28	.454	50
Have knowledge of what is around us	1.28	.454	50
Resources should be well managed	1.14	.351	50
Contentment will reduce over ambitions	1.30	.463	50
Protection of human rights	1.00	.000	50
Uphold democratic values	1.44	.501	50
Rewards fo right attitude to work	1.28	.454	50
Fight corruption in Nigeria	1.28	.454	50

The skills acquired in the teaching of Social Studies will promote development .The values of mean and standard deviation confirm this. To

a large extent, the society will be a better place to live .Everybody will imbibe the spirit of hardwork.

**Table 4: Correlations on the extent skills acquired promote development**

Statements		Social Studies teachers hardwork	Discipline is impaired in the youth	Creates awareness of evolving social and physical environment
Honesty promote development	Pearson Correlation Sig (2-tailed) N	1 50	“ 50	“ 50
Good to be courageous	Pearson Correlation Sig (2-tailed) N	“ 50	1 50	1.000 50
Society will be a better place if we are disciplined.	Pearson Correlation Sig (2-tailed) N	“ 50	1.000 50	1 50

Correlation value between Good to be courageous and society will be a better place if we are discipline is 1.000, which is 100%. Significant value is .000. This shows that it has no relationship because the value is greater than 0.005. This supports the assertion that development has its negative consequences in the lives of the people because many people are not disciplined.

**Conclusion**

Civic Eduction and Social Studies are interwoven. The two subjects teach values.

Government activities geared towards stamping out corruption in our society should be given more support. This will make our citizens to imbibe hard work. Government agencies like the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Commission (ICPC) and National Orientation Agency (NOA) will further instill the spirit of discipline among the populace and be aware of government polices as it unfolds from time to time. This will make people to keep to the norms of the society and assist in making our dream of good people great nation achievable. It is clear from this study that

social problems abounds in the society we live. The teaching of Social Studies and Civic Education will help to eradicate these problems. Our youths who have acquired skills will further use it for the development of society. The idea of idleness will not be experienced which eventually gives room for all sorts of social vices.

### Recommendations

In order to stamp out the menace of social problems which requires the teaching of values that is embedded in Civic Education and Social Studies, the following are recommended :

- Activities that will expose citizens to the challenges of life, thereby preparing them for future should be taught at all levels both formally and informally because it will solve societal problems.
- Teachers should have an in-depth knowledge of the concepts and scope of the values taught in Social Studies courses /subjects. In-service training/seminars is necessary for teachers;It is when they are well equipped that they can impart the necessary education.
- There is need to expose students to the activities on how they will internalize these values for total upbringing in order to make them good citizens.
- Awareness of value orientation should be created by involving the mass media for information dissemination to make the society a better place.
- There should be consistency in what is taught. This must merge with expectation in their society to enable them apply it in their daily activities.
- A research should be conducted to know the needs of the students and people in the society. This will serve as an impetus for curriculum development because contentment will reduce over ambition.
- E-learning strategy should be used in Social Studies teaching

- Government should not only make the teaching of Social Studies and Civic Education compulsory but ensure it is a pre-requisite for admission into the University, This is important because of the values they impart.
- The teaching of values through Social Studies and Civic Education should be encouraged in order to make them to be good citizens and acquire citizenship education.
- The content scope of Social Studies and Civic Education should be widened to accommodate hardwork and discipline because no nation can develop where there is indiscipline and the citizens are lazy. These are the skills acquired in value education.

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