

**INCULCATING DEMOCRATIC VALUES AMONG
NIGERIAN YOUTHS FOR NATION-BUILDING:
IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL STUDIES AND
CIVIC EDUCATION**

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Abstract

It is impossible to overstate the importance of Social Studies and civic education for any country hoping to lead the way in progress. Since effective and moral citizenship is essential to a country's progress, Social Studies education is crucial. Beyond democratic ideals and characteristics exhibited by its people, no country can prosper. The Social Studies curriculum includes lessons that instruct young people and students on the concepts, values, and customs of citizenship in a democratic republic. This study looks at the ways that civics and Social Studies education might help Nigerian youth develop democratic principles for the country's development. The study used content analysis and descriptive research design as its methodology. One hundred and fifty young people from the Ekiti State University's EAUED campus were used in total. The acquired data was subjected to chi-square inferential statistics analysis. The paper's conclusion is that young people in Nigeria should demonstrate democratic values by creating a robust and civil society. Among other things, the paper makes the following recommendations: training for good citizenship should not be limited to the

formal school curriculum; efforts should be made to recognise Social Studies and Civic education as a course with high democratic and academic values and could be achieved through public enlightenment programmes. For the sake of creating the nation, radio programmes that teach young people democratic ideas and principles ought to be promoted. Teachers also need to uphold high moral standards and behave morally upright, transparent, and selflessly in public.

Keywords: Democracy, Democratic values, Nation-Building, Youths, Social Studies, Civic Education

Introduction

Nigeria, formerly regarded as the “Giant of Africa” and having a prominent position in the Western press, has now lost its standing among other countries despite having an abundance of natural resources and a rich human capital that are just waiting to be used for significant development (Ajiboye, Amosun, Ajitoni & Gbadamosi, 2018). A country’s wealth, the strength of its defences, or the allure of its public institutions do not define its level of success. Instead, it is determined by the number of educated people living there and the degree of social development in the community (Akinjide, 2006). Consequently, a call to action was made by Akinjide (2006) and other responsible comments, addressing men and women of all backgrounds to endorse an educational programme that cultivates civic virtues and desired democratic principles in people.

The Social Studies curriculum includes lessons that instruct pupils on the concepts, values, and customs of citizenship in a democratic republic. Giving pupils the skills they need to participate fully in society and execute their civic duty is the main objective of Social Studies (Yusuf, 2023). Students can explore Nigerian principles via history and other cultures through Social Studies, which enables them to pinpoint holes in their democratic governments and suggest ways to close them. However, Social Studies are value-laden, and when young people are not fully

assimilated into their families' and society's norms and values, value disintegration occurs (Yusuf, Bello, Ajidagba & Obafemi, 2015). In Nigerian society, virtues like integrity, self-control, fairness, fair play, diligence, honesty, and contentment are highly regarded. These are ideals that are taught and learnt openly in the Social Studies curriculum, and they are values that Nigerian society respects, claim Muritala, Isiaka, Bello, and Yusuf (2019).

Political instability, porous borders, a disdain for the rule of law, sectarian bloodshed, terrorism, militancy, widespread corruption, advance-fee fraud (419), thuggery, and militancy are among the problems that beset Nigeria. Some writers have called Nigeria a failing nation due to the system's many social and political vices. The high prevalence of instability, poverty, hunger, and unemployment that permeates every conceivable stratum of the political and economic landscape has further aggravated the issue. The enormous degree of mistrust and suspicion that permeates Nigerian society has made almost everyone a suspect of wrong values. The quest of materialism has led to an increase in immorality and a disregard for human life, with murder, abduction for ransom, and ritual becoming commonplace in Nigerian society. Other crimes include infanticide, fratricide, matricide, patricide, and suicide.

Let me emphasise that merit is being undermined and vices have taken the place of virtues. The good values necessary for the society's nation-building and sustainable development have been supplanted by these negative ones. According to (Njoku, 2015), if Nigeria is serious about nation-building, then the rise of negative values must be adequately communicated to youths and children as the root cause of negativity in the country's value system. Education in Social Studies can give young people optimism for the future and self-assurance that they can address social and environmental issues that affect them personally as well as others in their community, state, or country (Osakwe, 2009).

The comprehensive study of the human being, including his interactions and activities in his physical, social, cultural, and technical environments, is the main goal of Social Studies. The goal of Social Studies is to thoroughly convey all the knowledge

and abilities necessary for an individual to survive in society by studying man as a whole. Education systems in Nigeria and other nations place a great value on Social Studies as a vital subject of study. Because of its focus on imparting knowledge, skills, and desirable values for societal growth, it is a required subject of study in many educational systems across the world. The primary objective of the junior secondary school Social Studies civic education curriculum, according to Jekayinfa (2017) and Yusuf (2023), is to teach citizens about civic responsibility in order to produce informed citizens who would translate knowledge and attitudes into desired socio-civic behaviour.

The inculcation and practise of democratic values are important for social progress in any human civilization. Values serve as a foundation for socially acceptable behaviour and are heavily impacted by cultural and contextual factors. Values have always been a major issue in education, society at large, and the field of Social Studies education in particular. Every community, regardless of how advanced, has its own set of morals. According to Ekeh (2019), these ideals are passed down from generation to generation. One of the coordinated efforts made by the educational system and curriculum to produce politically mature citizens is the teaching of democratic values in Social Studies and Civics classes. In light of this, this article investigates how Social Studies and civic education might be used to instill democratic values in Nigerian youth in order to create a more robust country. Clarifying democratic concepts, democratic values, and nation-building were also looked at.

Democracy: Democracy is a form of political governance founded on equal opportunity and the consent of the governed. It is a productive way of life founded on core principles or values. People are valued, treated with dignity, given the freedom to choose, accept, and carry out their responsibilities. Dahl (1956) defined democracy as a system in which the general populace has substantial influence over the political establishment. Democracy is a manner of life – it's not just a system of government – that promotes peaceful coexistence. It entails getting rid of the

obstacles posed by national boundaries, race, and class that prevent people from understanding the full consequences of their actions (Dewey, 1916).

In a democracy, Social Studies education is centred on democratic values. Values are the tenets or benchmarks of excellence that guide every choice we make. People's views, beliefs, and behaviours are shaped by their values. It also guides our goals and desires. Democratic values, then, are guidelines or norms that govern the behaviour of democratic citizens. Democratic principles include equality of opportunity for everyone, respect for the individual, consideration for the well-being of others, and the right to participate in decision-making. Encouraging democratic values means getting everyone involved in problem-solving and decision-making processes. According to Fan, Usman, and Bawa (2015), a recognised list of democratic values is required for modern democracy to exist. These values include: electoral credibility, legitimacy, honesty, loyalty, patriotism, cooperation, fairly conducted elections, willingness to rule, majority vote, tolerance of diversity, national loyalty as opposed to sectional loyalty, and electoral credibility (NERDC, 2005 & Nnamdi, 2009). Every promising society must prioritise responsible citizenship as a fundamental prerequisite for long-term, sustained national growth. When residents are encouraged to discuss issues among themselves and find common ground instead of depending on a higher authority, a country can truly experience democracy. Essentially, Social Studies and citizenship education should instill democratic ideas in our young people.

Social Studies is a discipline that solves problems and is culturally specific. According to Osakwe (2010), Social Studies can be used to change society. As a social education and study course, Social Studies imparts in pupils the fundamental knowledge, abilities, attitudes, and behaviours that society values regarding the interactions that people have with one another and their surroundings. In order to produce productive citizens, Social Studies emphasises cognitive abilities, functional skills, and desirable attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours. It is an organised, integrated study of people and their physical and social

environments (Okojie, 2007). This definition informs the following goals that Social Studies aims to advance:

Knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and assessment as they relate to the elements of the physical and social-cultural environment are all included in this. When students gain practical skills, they become more efficient and productive in handling their own lives and interacting with the political, social, economic, and physical settings. Such beliefs, values, and behaviours aid in the process of development. Patriotism, integrity, probity, truthfulness, harmony, cohabitation, timeliness, functional interdependence, inventiveness, and so on are examples of these virtues. It is clear from the justification above that Social Studies aims to develop individuals into well-rounded, productive, and useful citizens.

The goal of the academic area of civic education is to inform students about their rights, obligations, and roles as involved and active members of a democratic society. It seeks to provide students with the information, abilities, and attitudes needed to engage with their communities, make wise decisions, and advance society. Civic education, according to Sebiomo(2011), places a strong emphasis on deference to and respect for the government. Respecting and obeying leaders is a virtue that will help society advance.

Civic education imparts societal ideals, according to Balogun & Yusuf (2019). It covers a wide range of subjects, including political engagement, active citizenship, fundamental human rights, democratic ideals, forms, structures, and functions of government, the rule of law, and other social issues. Through civic education, students are prepared to be law-abiding, accountable citizens who can consistently make moral decisions and behave honourably. Social Studies and civics education work hand in hand and share the goal of preparing students to be morally upright individuals. Students that receive civic education learn about democratic procedures like elections as well as civic responsibilities, polite social interactions, tolerance, and peaceful cohabitation.

Scholars have defined nation building in a variety of ways. According to Ajayi (1995), nation building is the process by which different political entities shift their allegiance and commitment from a village, tribe, or community group to the greater nation unit. According to Falade (2008), nation building encompasses all endeavours aimed at promoting national cohesiveness, integration, and unity. It is the process by which several independent political entities are integrated into a state. Building a nation is the process of creating a state. The state takes on a deeper meaning when a political community is established. Conflicts and sectionalism have dotted Nigeria's path of nation-building. Nation building is the main objective of government and non-governmental organisations in emerging nations. Without the democratic principles that foster effective citizenship in the lives of the country's children, who will become tomorrow's leaders, the nation cannot be constructed. Therefore, it is essential to instill in young people the democratic principles, characteristics, and ideals that promote good citizenship and nation-building. Social Studies is a very powerful tool.

Democratic administration requires educated and engaged citizen participation (National Orientation Agency, 2006). Promoting knowledge of democratic ideas ought to concern a citizen of a democracy. Youths are a potential force in society everywhere in the world. The rationale is that they make up a sizable portion of the societal decision-making groups. Youth should not be spectators but rather the engine of democracy, and their involvement should extend beyond election seasons to include ongoing participation in the democratic process of governance. They have an obligation as engaged citizens to make sure that the interests of the people, not just a select group of powerful people, are represented in government decisions.

It is crucial to emphasise that young people's decision to participate or not depends on their understanding of, adherence to, and internalisation of these democratic values. This has serious implications for democracy and the polity at large as well as fundamental beliefs and constitutional principles. According to

National Orientation Agency (2006), each generation of society must learn civic facts, investigate democratic ideas and values, and make the connection between these ideas and the duty of citizenship. This is because the disposition that forms the fundamental values of democracy are not inherited or passed down through the genetic mode. These attitudes need to be encouraged and internalised via instruction, study, and setting a good example. In light of this, Social Studies education is essential both as a subject taught in schools and as a social programme designed to shape young people's moral principles in order to sustain democratic government.

The Social Studies curriculum includes lessons that instruct pupils on the principles, values, and customs of citizenship in a democratic republic. Giving pupils the skills they need to participate fully in society and exercise their citizenship is the main objective of Social Studies. Students can explore Nigerian ideals in many cultures and throughout history through Social Studies, which enables them to pinpoint holes in their democratic governments and suggest ways to close them. For the first time in school history, Social Studies and civics classes cover the topic of leadership and followership. According to Yusuf (2023), dishonesty, politicians, broken political promises, mediocrity, the leader's low level of education, the leaders' dubious academic certificates, election fraud, followers' frustration, fear of insecurity, and many other factors are some indicators of poor leadership and followership. The field of Social Studies provides answers to the aforementioned problems.

The only subjects taught in schools that address national values, leadership, followership, unity, equity, truthfulness, justice, integrity, and honesty are Social Studies and civics. These are useful instruments for the advancement of the country and also act as strong catalysts for the love, respect, and concern for one another that Nigerians have for their country (Yusuf et al 2015). Social Studies addresses a variety of social concerns, including cultism, human trafficking, drug trafficking, HIV/AIDS, unemployment, and violence and conflict resolution. The topic offers remedies in addition to shedding light on these difficulties.

It is important to note that pupils who learn these concepts develop into more responsible and perceptive adults.

It is imperative that educators, who are responsible individuals with strong moral principles, are the ones teaching kids the right ideals. In addition, they have to act with integrity, impartiality, commitment, promptness, selflessness, diligence, and proper moral behaviour when they are in public. Teachers of Social Studies must, by necessity, practise what they teach if they want their pupils to feel confident in their capacity to exhibit good citizenship and values, since they serve as mentors and role models for their students (Yusuf, 2007). Nigeria is currently dealing with an issue of immorality and rudeness among its youth. Youths and governmental officials generally disregard democratic values.

Objectives of the Study

This paper was designed to x-ray how Social Studies and Civic education can be used to inculcate democratic values for nation building among Nigerian youths. The specific objectives of this paper are:

- i. to determine the relationship which exists among democratic values, Social Studies and nation building; and
- ii. to investigate how Social Studies education can help to inculcate in Nigerian youths democratic values for nation building. Hence, the following research hypotheses are hereby postulated for the study.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between Social Studies and the inculcation of democratic values for nation building in Nigeria.
2. There is no significant relationship between male and female youths in the inculcation of democratic values for nation building.

Methods

In order to ascertain how Social Studies education contributes to nation-building while upholding democratic values, this study used a descriptive research design. The entire young population at Ekiti State University, which is associated with Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, made up the study's population. 150 young people from the College's School of Arts and Social Sciences and School of Education, ranked 300 and 400, made up the study's sample. The purposive sample technique was used to pick 80 male and 70 female pupils. A structured questionnaire was the study's instrument. The split-half method was used to establish the instrument's reliability, yielding a coefficient of 0.83. Experts in the Social Studies Department of the Faculty of Arts and Social Science Education, University of Ekiti State, in affiliation with Emmanuel Alayande University of Education, Oyo, established the instruments' face and content validity. Inferential statistics based on chi-square analysis were used to examine the data.

Results

The study utilized the Chi-square (X^2) test to examine the aforementioned hypotheses. The Chi-square result was determined based on the established criteria for this method. Where the p-value is greater than the significance level of 0.05, the null hypotheses is accepted, indicating insignificance. Conversely, where the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating significance. The findings and discussions of the tests are presented as follows:

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between Social Studies and the inculcation of democratic values in promoting nation building in Nigeria.

Table 1: Chi-square Analysis

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Decision
Pearson Chi-Square	93.448 ^a	9	.023	Accepted
Continuity Correction	.188	9	.015	
Likelihood Ratio	3.819	1	.011	
No. of Valid Cases	4			

Table 1 showed that calculated Chi-Square (X^2) is 93.448 and tabulated value is 19.025, since the p-value 0.023 is less than the level of significant value 0.05, thus the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between Social Studies and the inculcation of democratic values in promoting nation building was rejected. This implies that Social Studies and Civic education is a prerequisite for the inculcation of democratic values for promoting nation building.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between male and female youths in the inculcation of democratic values for nation building.

Table 2: Chi-square Analysis

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Decision
Pearson Chi-Square	12.673 ^a	9	.022	Accepted
Continuity Correction	.188	9	.052	
Likelihood Ratio	3.819	1	.051	
No. of Valid Cases	3			

The result in Table 2 proved that calculated Chi-Square is 12.673 and tabulated value is 27.307. Since the p-value 0.22 is less than the level of significant value 0.05, thus the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between male and female youths in the inculcation of democratic values for nation building was accepted and the alternative hypothesis, rejected.

Discussions

The results are consistent with the submissions of Osakwe (2009) and Yusuf (2023) that the Social Studies and Civics curricula should include lessons on tradition, values, and beliefs in a democratic republic. This suggests that there is no meaningful connection between male and female youngsters when it comes to instilling democratic ideals for the development of the nation; in other words, discrimination based on gender has no place in the actualization of democratic values for nation building. The results are also consistent with Yusuf (2007) and the National Orientation Agency (2016), which argued that democratic citizens – both male and female – should be focused on improving awareness of democratic ideals.

Conclusion

Civic education and Social Studies are crucial to properly educating Nigerian youth to be responsible, evolving citizens who protect the law and advance democracy. Undoubtedly, armed robbery, dishonesty, and corrupt practises are only a few of the social vices that are pervasive in Nigerian society. It is clear that the absence of these ideas has been deeply ingrained in Nigerian society. However, one approach to effectively address this issue and instill certain democratic ideas in the next generation of leaders is to teach civics and Social Studies to the present and incoming generations of children.

Recommendations

The research has demonstrated the significance of Social Studies and Civic Education in fostering democratic principles in young people. In light of this, the following suggestions are made. Teachers who carry out Social Studies and Civics curricula need to be morally upright, accountable, and model democratic behaviour for the students by acting transparently, showing respect for others, being on time, and practising other virtues. Effective citizenship education shouldn't be limited to the curriculum of official schools. Radio shows that educate young

people about democratic ideals and ideas ought to be supported in order to foster good citizenship. In order to reawaken and re-direct youth towards active participation in the development of a virile nation, youth-oriented activities had to be initiated. To guarantee that all students, regardless of gender, comprehend the message conveyed and are prepared for active and responsible citizenship, teachers of the Social Studies and Civics curricula must use a gender-neutral approach. Social Studies and civic education should be taught both inside and outside of the official school system through public education initiatives in order to establish them as essential courses with strong democratic and academic qualities.

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