

## Nigerian Secondary School Teachers' Perception of Social Studies Relevance on the Development of Responsible Citizenship

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### Abstract

This study investigated perceptions of Social Studies in the development of responsible citizenship among secondary school teachers in Ogun State, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive research design. A total sample of 308 teachers drawn from five local governments of Oguneast senatorial district of Ogun state, were selected through stratified random and simple random sampling techniques. Data collected was analyzed using Mean score, standard deviation, simple percentages, and t-test of significance. The result shows that the majority of teachers have a negative perception of Social Studies education to responsible citizenship. The study shows no significant difference in teachers' gender, qualification, and experience in knowledge of responsible citizenship skills and values. The study recommends that teachers should be given in-service training to acquire more knowledge on the role Social Studies play in responsible citizenship development. In addition, only professional and competent teachers should be employed to teach Social Studies.

**Keywords:** Responsible citizenship, knowledge perception, gender, years of experience.

### 1. Introduction

In the last two decades, the issue of citizenship has attracted the attention of academics, politicians, and policymakers across the globe. In addition, it has also increased interest in the recognition of the relevance of education in understanding and resolving national and international issues in the social, political, cultural, economic, and environmental spheres. Contemporary human society is bedeviled with a myriad of social ills like high crime rate, political upheavals, religious intolerance, interethnic and communal clashes, disrespect for constituted authority, human trafficking and kidnapping, ritual killings, material and wealth worshipping, militancy, youth restfulness, etc. The causes of these problems are abject lack of or inappropriate inculcation and development of moral and social values in the citizenry (Jimoh, 2016; Ogunyemi, 2011).

Responsible citizenship is the means by which individual and even collective advancement requires service, social understanding, effort, character, civic efficacy, and morals discipline. If students are well trained in knowledge, but lack these qualities, their knowledge will prove harmful to themselves and society. Responsible citizenship as it has been argued is a catalyst to national development (Enu & Effiom 2012). The young one must be properly equipped for the right future to contribute meaningfully to the socio-economic development of society when they are properly brought up. Proper upbringing of children enhances their capacity to love their country, and develop an understanding of the culture which is dynamic and ever-changing. Walker (2015) believed that everyone has a duty to be a responsible citizen. But, unfortunately, not everyone takes this responsibility seriously. The role of education is moving beyond the development of knowledge and cognitive skills to

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the building of values, life skills, and attitudes among learners. Education is expected to facilitate international cooperation and promote social justice, peace, tolerance inclusive, secure, and sustainable world (UNESCO, 2014).

All disciplines claim to be capable of developing responsible citizens but not in totality like social studies. They do teach a segment of knowledge of human life which may not bring a total engineering of human beings in relation to their environment. Social Studies, as an interdisciplinary school subject, is perceived as synonymous with citizenship education (Ajiboye, 2009) which is capable of teaching students the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to function as responsible citizens. Social Studies is the study of dynamic interactions among people and the elements of their environment, as well as the challenges arising from the multi-faceted human interactions within an expanding local, national, regional, and global environment. It also includes developing the ability and skills required to respond in an informed and responsible manner to these challenges as they arise (Ogunyemi, 2006). Social Studies has come to be seen as a study that emphasizes the process of identifying and solving problems that have to do with the survival of the people. Survival here is beyond one having the ability to live but it also includes the ability to maintain an orderly, decent, and progressive life. The social studies curriculum has a nature that, according to Ogunyemi (2006), could be described as a problem-solving discipline. It is an interdisciplinary subject that draws upon history, geography, economics, law, political science, and other disciplines (Western Canadian Social Studies, (2002). Ikwumelu, (2012) saw social studies as a discipline that deals with social change and ensures a meaningful interaction of the recipients with their physical and social environment attained.

Social Studies is seen as the totality of experience a student goes through after being exposed to a course based on the human interminable problems in the chosen environment with full knowledge of variable factors such as historical, religious, economic, psychological, cultural, scientific, and technological which are responsible in a human web of interactions that aid environment (Babatunde, 2012). Nwoji (2006) viewed Social Studies as a living subject that deals with the matter of the moment as a preparation for the moment and the future. She also added that social studies is a discipline that deals with social change, a better future, and problem-solving. Ogundare (2000) argued Social Studies is not simply social science simplified for pedagogical purposes but it is a study of the problem of survival in an environment and how to find solutions to human problems.

In Nigeria, Social Studies is to prepare young people to be good citizens in a world that is becoming increasingly complex. Social studies as citizenship education seeks to provide students with the knowledge, skills, values, dispositions, and attitudes that will enable them to actively participate as citizens in a democracy (Ajiboye, 2009). Social Studies generate, and develop intelligent, responsible, and self-directed citizens who are expected to explore opportunities to develop their potential as well as contribute their quota to the improvement of group living within a social Milieu (Okam 2011). Babatunde (2013) added that the focus of social studies is to transform the citizens for national transformation.

Teachers' characteristics have also been identified as factors capable of influencing how teachers handle subjects which has a later effect on students. Adeoti and Olufu (2016) submitted that these are qualities that can be measured with tests or derived from their academic or professional records. These characteristics, as identified by Mise, Odera, and Mary (2013) included qualities of teachers that are viewed as personal, such as mental ability, age, gender, sex, qualification, teaching experience, and educational background. Amachukwu and Ololube (2015) observed that both the teachers' teaching experience and educational qualifications are positively correlated to students' achievement. Thus, teachers' experience is a good determinant of how effectively teachers see Social Studies playing key role in citizenship as well as manage classroom instruction to produce successful learning outcome. Gender is a natural composition which most studies have reported to influence human behaviour.

Sabbe and Aelterman (2007) claimed that 'so far, gender difference research has not been able to uncover clear differences between male and female teachers. This implies that the extent to which teachers' gender will influence their perception of the relevance of Social Studies as a tool for developing responsible citizenship cannot be ascertained unless investigated since studies in the area are inconclusive.

Similarly, there may be difference in the perception of teachers based on their qualifications, Adeyemi and Peleyeju (2006) observed that teachers' qualification is an important indicator that even affect students' achievement. This agrees with the report of Darling-Hammond (2000) who found that teachers with higher degrees were positively associated with high academic performances.

Summarily, several explanations have been given by researchers on the relevance of Social Studies in developing responsible citizens in Nigeria, but studies have not adequately addressed how teachers perceive the challenge of Social Studies for their day-to-day practice. This researcher has observed that many of the Social Studies teachers simply take their assignment as one of the usual things done to fulfill their employment obligations to the students and their employers. Under such a situation, the teaching of Social Studies cannot achieve the original intent of curriculum planners who introduced the school subject. Therefore, this study focused on how Social Studies teachers view the relevance of the subject in developing responsible citizens.

In the recent past, several attempts have been made to address the challenge of developing responsible citizens as a way of revitalizing the collapsed ethics and values of the Nigerian nation. Successive Nigerian governments have tried to address social ills and problems affecting Nigerians and introduce programs like War Against Indiscipline (WAI) and Kick Against Indiscipline (KAI). Also, Civic Education has been introduced as an additional school subject to Social Studies as a way of increasing opportunities to make children learn about their civic responsibilities. However, it appears that all these efforts have not achieved the desired results in making young Nigerians conduct themselves in manners that promote orderliness and peaceful co-existence in society. This has negative implications on the society's image nationally and internationally. This might be a result of the fact that teachers are meant to actualize the objective of Social Studies which will induce responsible citizenship. Where teachers of Social Studies have a negative view on the relevance of the subject in developing citizenship might not be of help in attaining responsible citizenship for students. Hence, this study investigated secondary school teachers' perception of responsible citizenship in Ogun State.

The following research questions guided this study:

1. How do teachers perceive the relevance of social studies education to responsible citizenship?
2. Do male and female teachers differ in perceptions of Social Studies to responsible citizenship?
3. Do teachers' perceptions of the relevance of Social Studies to responsible citizenship differ according to qualification?

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1. Sample and Sampling Procedure**

Three hundred and fifty (350) teachers were selected from five local governments of the Oguneast Senatorial District of Ogun State. Seven (7) were randomly selected from each local government, and from each school ten (10) teachers were selected. However, only three hundred and eight (308) teachers who completed and returned the questionnaire were used for the analysis.

A structured 4-point Likert self-designed questionnaire titled "Relevance of Social Studies to Responsible Citizenship Questionnaire (RSSRCQ) was used as an instrument. It is structured to elicit responses from the respondents in line with the research questions. In section B, a total of twenty items are generated following the Likert Scale model with options ranging from Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagree (D) to Strongly Disagreed (SD). To ascertain the reliability of the instrument, a test-retest method was used. The Cronbach alpha of 0.80. was generated.

Data collected from the schools were pooled and analyzed using frequency counts and simple percentages for broad perspectives on the responses. Research question 1 was answered using mean score, frequency, and percentage, while the mean score and above was taken as high. Questions 2 and 3 were addressed using the t-test.

### 3.2. Results and Analysis

**Table 1. Frequency and percentage distributions of respondents based on teachers' specialization, qualification, gender, experience, and location**

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Teachers' Specialisation</b>		
Social Studies	204	66.2
Non-Social Studies	104	33.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Teachers' Qualification</b>		
Degree	193	62.7
NCE	115	37.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	120	39.0
Female	188	61.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Year Experience</b>		
0-5years	52	16.9
6-above years	256	83.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1 shows that 204 (66.2 %) of the teachers specialize in Social studies as their area of specialization while 104 (33.8 %) of the teachers specialize in other areas (Geography, Yoruba, Economics, and Government) other than Social studies. This implies that the majority of the teachers are Social studies specialists. In the same table, it also shows that 193 of the teachers representing 62.7 percent of the teachers had a first degree while 115 representing 37.3 percent of the teachers sampled possess NCE. This implies that the majority of the teachers used in this study are Degree certificate holders. 120 (39.0 %) of the teachers are male while 188 (61.0%) of the teachers are female. This implies that the majority of the teachers are females. This is to suggest that the majority of the teachers are females. It shows that 52 of the teachers representing 16.9 percent of the teachers are less experienced while 256 representing 83.1 percent are highly experienced. This implies that the majority of the teachers are highly experienced.

**Table 2. Teachers' perception on the relevance of social studies education to responsible citizenship**

S/N	Social Studies teaching	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	S. D	Decision
1.	encompasses civic, citizenship, and family life education	164	59	58	27	3.16	0.89	High
2.	..is only concerned with the teaching of physical features in the environment.	62	82	98	66	2.45	0.74	Low

3.	can lead to solving youth-related problems like corruption, cultism, prostitution	89	74	94	51	2.66	0.56	High
4.	creates more problem in the curriculum than existed before it was introduced	56	58	78	116	2.17	0.44	Low
5.	makes students to appreciate cultural diversity and the need to accommodate other people's cultures	142	47	60	59	2.88	0.74	High
6.	is a cheap school subject that adds no value to our lives as citizens	128	94	65	21	3.06	0.86	High
7.	helps people to contribute to the development of a just and egalitarian society	59	45	125	79	2.27	0.46	Low
8.	cannot equip the young ones with the knowledge, skills and values they need to become responsible citizens	40	79	98	91	2.22	0.42	Low
9.	can promote the development of a free and democratic Nigeria	88	98	67	55	2.71	0.77	High
10.	makes learners become responsive and responsible citizens	121	116	53	18	3.10	0.84	High
11.	is needed to promote a land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens in Nigeria	47	87	75	99	2.26	0.83	Low
12.	teaches children about their world and interdependence among nations	103	86	65	54	2.77	0.78	High
13.	Positively mould students' behaviour and character	68	76	79	85	2.14	0.73	Low
14.	is a soft field for weak teachers and learners	25	98	59	126	2.07	0.29	Low
15.	promotes positive family values and how to live peacefully in the society	88	84	60	76	2.59	0.73	High
16.	only prepares children for the learning of arts and social science subjects in the upper classes of secondary schools	74	66	90	78	2.44	0.65	Low
17.	is the best means of producing responsible, well informed, and self-reliant young Nigerians	107	75	65	61	2.74	0.68	High
18.	is the most important school subject in Nigeria today	47	42	126	93	2.13	0.69	Low

Table 2, average mean of 2.5 determined teacher perception on the relevance of social studies education to responsible citizenship. Means below 2.5 were considered low perception while means above 2.5 were taken as high perception. Of the twenty items raised, 11 items recorded mean below 2.5 implying low perception while 9 items were above the mean of 2.5. This implies that majority of the teachers (55%) have low perception on the relevance of social studies education to responsible citizenship.

**Research Question 3:** Do male and female teachers differ in their perception of Social Studies education to responsible citizenship?

**Table 3. Difference in teachers' perception of Social Studies education to responsible citizenship according to gender**

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	Sig.
Male	120	50.80	7.750	.016	.672
Female	188	48.54	8.126		

Table 3 revealed a non-significant outcome ( $t = .016, P > 0.05$ ). Male teachers had a mean of 50.80 and female teachers had 48.54. This implied that the observed difference between male and female teachers on the perception of the relevance of Social Studies education to responsible citizenship is not statistically significant.

**Research Question 3:** Do teachers' perceptions of social studies education to responsible citizenship differ according to qualification?

**Table 4. Differences in teachers' perceptions of the relevance of Social Studies education to responsible citizenship differ according to qualification**

Teachers Qualification	N	Mean	SD	df.	t	Sig.
Degree	193	49.05	7.949	306	.300	.773
NCE	115	50.03	8.202			

The data in Table 4 revealed a non-significant outcome ( $t = .300, P > 0.05$ ). Degree holders have a mean of 49.05 ( $N = 193$ ) and NCE teachers have a mean of 50.03 ( $N = 115$ ). The table also shows a Std of 7.949 for degree holders and 8.202 for NCE holders. This implied that the observed difference between degree holders and NCE certificate holders on perception of the relevance of Social Studies education to responsible citizenship is not statistically significant. Hence, there is no difference between degree certificate holders and NCE certificate teachers in perception of the relevance of social studies education to responsible citizenship.

**Research Question 4:** Do teachers' perceptions of the relevance of Social Studies education to responsible citizenship differ according to teaching experience?

**Table 5. Difference in teachers' perception of Social Studies education to responsible citizenship according to teaching experience**

Year of Teaching	N	Mean	SD	df.	t	Sig.
0-5years	52	46.44	6.890	306	.003	.210
6 years and above	256	50.02	8.140			

Table 5 revealed a non-significant outcome ( $t = .003, P > 0.05$ ). Less experienced teachers have a mean of 46.44 and experienced teachers have a mean of 50.02. This implied that the observed difference between the teachers with 0-5 years and 6 years above experiences the perception of social studies education to responsible citizenship is not statistically significant.

### 3.3. Discussion

The result of the findings shows that the majority of the teachers have a negative perception of the relevance of social studies education to responsible citizenship. This means that teachers did not necessarily see social studies as aiding responsible citizenship. Different reasons may have advanced for this result. This could be because about 40% of the teachers did not really study social studies. Thus, may not have a good understanding of how social studies education may be relevant to responsible citizenship. The study's finding agrees with that of Keene, Baamphattha, and Moffat (2013), which shows social studies

curriculum is failing to achieve the goal of citizenship education and helping learners acquire values that are consistent and supportive of democracy. However, the finding disagrees with the report of Roth and Desautels (2004), who submitted that social studies plays a vital role in promoting citizenship education. Also, Kwenin (2020) found a strong consensus among teachers that citizenship education issues are of great importance in social studies.

Furthermore, there is no difference between male and female teachers in perception of the relevance of Social Studies education to responsible citizenship. This implies that gender did not affect the perception of social studies teachers on the relevance of Social Studies education to responsible citizenship. This may be because male and female teachers teach under similar conditions and both are concerned with the issue of responsible citizenship. This finding is consistent with Almaamary, & Menter, (2013) and Petersen, (2014) who investigated gender differences and workplace expectations for male and female educators.

There is no difference between degree certificate holders and NCE certificate teachers in their perception of the relevance of social studies education to responsible citizenship. Hence, the perception of teachers on the relevance of Social Studies education to responsible citizenship is not affected by their qualifications. This may be because most social studies teachers used in this study are experienced. This is contrary to the finding of the view of Abdu-Raheem (2018), who argued that teachers' qualification is a determinant factor of his/her perception of teaching social studies for citizenship education. The higher the qualification of a teacher, the more of a positive mind he/she has toward social studies education as a veritable tool for promoting effective and responsible citizenship.

There is no difference between less experienced and experienced teachers in their perception of the relevance of Social Studies education to responsible citizenship. This implies that teachers' years of experience did not affect their perception of the relevance of social studies education to responsible citizenship. It would have been expected that teachers with longer years of experience would have a more positive perception of Social Studies education's relevance to responsible citizenship. However, the finding of this study is at variance with Ladd (2008), who reported that, on average, teachers with more than 20 years of experience are more effective than teachers with no experience, but are not much more effective than those with 5 years of experience. Yusufu, Utulu, and Achor's study (2021) indicated that teachers' qualifications and years of experience in Social Studies have significant differences and contributions to their perception.

Put differently, Social Studies seek to achieve citizenship education and cultivate democratic-minded citizens. Realizing this goal requires a deeper understanding of the pedagogical practices, the teachers' perceptions, and their level of awareness of citizenship education. At the classroom and school levels, citizenship education gives students the opportunity to observe, imitate and practice critical agency and make reflections necessary against the backdrop of the rapid pace of globalization.

#### **4. Conclusion and Recommendations**

From the findings obtained, it was concluded that most teachers have a low perception of the relevance of Social Studies education to responsible citizenship. The length of years of experience of the teachers was also found not to have much influence on the teachers' perception. This implies that teachers' years of experience did not affect their perception of the relevance of Social Studies education to responsible citizenship.

However, the study's findings revealed that while most teachers have high knowledge of responsible citizenship, they possess a relatively negative perception of the relevance of Social Studies education to responsible citizenship. This is despite the vital role which Social Studies plays in the promotion of Citizenship Education. The close link between Social Studies and Citizenship

Education would therefore need to be further explored to improve the teachers' perception, given that they both emphasize social participation, active student engagement, and the use of discovery or inquiry learning.

Citizenship would need to be politically driven by Social Studies teachers who are well-trained and competent to handle educational reforms. Hence, to achieve sound citizenship behavior among students, teachers teaching citizenship education which is a component of Social Studies must reactivate the right knowledge in teaching the subject. This will greatly complement Social Studies teaching and assist teachers' perception positively of the relevance of Social Studies towards bringing responsible citizenship.

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