



INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION IN FOSTERING ETHICAL AND RESPONSIBLE CITIZEN AMONG SOCIAL STUDIES STUDENTS IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN KOGI STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the influence of Social Studies Education in fostering ethical and responsible citizenship among students in Colleges of Education in Kogi State, Nigeria. The study was guided by two main objectives: to determine the extent to which Social Studies Education promotes ethical citizenship, and to examine how it fosters responsible citizenship among students. A descriptive survey design was adopted, targeting a population of 31,320 students across three colleges: Kogi State College of Education, Ankpa; Kogi State College of Education (Technical), Kabba; and Federal College of Education, Okene. A sample of 360 students was selected through a multistage sampling technique, combining purposive and simple random sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled Social Studies Education in Fostering Ethical and Responsible Citizen Questionnaire (SSEFERCQ), comprising two sections and rated on a four-point Likert scale. The instrument had a reliability coefficient of 0.79, indicating high reliability. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, with Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) addressing the research questions and regression analysis testing the hypotheses at a 0.05 significance level. Findings revealed that Social Studies Education significantly promotes ethical and responsible citizenship among students. Gender-based analysis indicated differences, with male students showing higher development in ethical citizenship, while female students responded more positively in fostering responsible citizenship. The study concluded that Social Studies Education is instrumental in nurturing values and behaviors essential for active civic participation and recommended curriculum enhancement, gender-sensitive teaching strategies, community-based learning, teacher training, and policy support to strengthen citizenship education.

KEYWORDS: Social Studies Education, Ethical Citizenship, Responsible Citizenship and Students

INTRODUCTION

Social Studies Education serves as a cornerstone of holistic education, aimed at developing informed, responsible citizen who are well-versed in both their local and global contexts. This field encompasses various domains, including history, geography, economics, and sociology, allowing students to gain a multifaceted understanding of human behaviour and societal structures (Ogunbiyi, 2008). By engaging with diverse topics, students can appreciate the complexities of social interactions and become more empathetic toward others. In a rapidly changing world, the importance of these lessons cannot be overstated; they prepare students to become active participants in democracy and community life (Matthew, 2022). The significance of social studies lies not only in academic knowledge but also in fostering civic responsibility and a sense of belonging.

In today's hyper-connected society, where digital interaction often replaces face-to-face communication, understanding what it means to be a citizen is paramount (Okeke, 2023). As students increasingly rely on digital platforms for learning, socializing, and sharing information, educators face the challenge of teaching them how to navigate this digital landscape effectively and ethically. Abubakar (2024) noted that citizen are not merely consumers of digital information; they are active participants who contribute to online communities and society as a whole. In



the 21st century, the relevance of citizenship is underscored by the growing prevalence of technology in our daily lives. According to Gikandi (2024), approximately 95% of teenagers have access to a smartphone, and 45% of them are almost constantly online. This statistic highlights the necessity of citizenship education, as students spend significant amounts of time engaging with the digital world.

Moreover, citizenship education is essential for ensuring that students understand their roles and responsibilities in a digital society. As they learn to communicate and collaborate online, they must also grasp the ethical implications of their actions. Dube (2024) noted that educators can facilitate this understanding by encouraging discussions about topics like online etiquette, digital footprints, and the importance of verifying information before sharing it. By bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, students can learn to become responsible citizen who contribute positively to their online communities (Moyo, 2022). Fostering ethical citizenship represents an essential subset of the broader concept. It emphasizes the importance of integrity and moral responsibility in online interactions, guiding students to understand the weight of their words and actions in the digital landscape (Patrick, 2023). As Social Studies Education intersects with citizenship education, it creates opportunities for students to explore the ethical dimensions of their online lives. Engaging with societal issues through digital platforms allows students to become more aware of the impact of their online presence, pushing them toward responsible and ethical behaviour in digital spaces (Achoba 2020).

Fostering ethical citizen are individuals who engage with technology and the internet in a manner that aligns with ethical principles, focusing on respect, integrity, and responsibility. Being an fostering ethical citizen means understanding the consequences of one's actions online, including the implications of sharing content, engaging in conversations, and treating others with kindness (Sani, 2022). As technology evolves, the importance of fostering ethical citizenship becomes increasingly critical, particularly for students in Social Studies Education who must navigate complex societal issues both offline and online. Patrick, (2023) indicates that the integration of fostering ethical citizenship into Social Studies Education is imperative for several reasons. It allows students to connect their learning about societal structures and historical events to contemporary issues they may face online. For example, when students study topics like civil rights or social justice movements, they can examine how these issues manifest in digital spaces today, such as through social media activism or online campaigns (Moyo, 2022). By establishing this connection, students are empowered to not only comprehend the historical context but also to engage thoughtfully and ethically in discussions surrounding justice and equity in the digital age (Sani, 2022).

Teaching fostering ethical citizenship within the framework of social studies equips students with essential skills for critical thinking and decision-making. As they analyze case studies involving online behaviour such as incidents of cyberbullying or the spread of misinformation students learn to assess situations from multiple perspectives (Yusuf, 2021). This skill is invaluable, as it fosters a mindset of inquiry and reflection, encouraging students to evaluate their actions based on ethical principles. For instance, when they are presented with a dilemma regarding sharing potentially harmful content, students can apply their understanding of ethical considerations to take responsible action (Obaoketi, 2022). Furthermore, fostering ethical citizenship education fosters a sense of community and belonging among students.

Fostering ethical citizenship directly contributes to fostering responsible citizen (Shittu, 2023). As students grasp the concept of ethics in their digital interactions, they develop a more profound understanding of the obligations they have not just to themselves but also to their communities. For instance, learners who demonstrate ethical digital behaviour are more likely to counteract instances of cyberbullying or misinformation, becoming advocates for a safer and more truthful online environment (Windare, 2024). This advocacy becomes increasingly vital in an age where misinformation campaigns can undermine trust in essential institutions such as government and media. Responsible citizen are individuals who understand and accept the implications of their digital actions (Adujo, 2024). They are aware of their rights and responsibilities while interacting online and strive to behave in ways that reflect positively on themselves and their communities. Responsibility in the digital space encompasses a wide range of behaviours, from practicing online safety to engaging constructively in social media discussions (Sadiq, 2022). In the realm of Social Studies Education, fostering responsible citizenship among students is essential to ensure they become well-rounded citizen who navigate modern challenges adeptly.



Based on the above, the study intends to examine the assessment of ethical and responsible citizen among Social Studies students' in College of Education in Kogi State.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In recent years, the need to develop ethically sound and socially responsible citizen has become increasingly important in a rapidly evolving society. Colleges of Education in Kogi State, which are responsible for training future educators, are expected to play a critical role in this process through the effective delivery of Social Studies Education. While the Social Studies curriculum emphasizes civic responsibility, national consciousness, and ethical conduct, there appears to be a gap between what is taught and the actual behavioural outcomes exhibited by students. Many pre-service teachers in Kogi State still struggle with demonstrating moral judgment, social responsibility, and active civic engagement in both physical and digital spaces. This disconnect raises questions about the effectiveness of the current Social Studies pedagogy in promoting ethical values that are practical and relevant to the realities of contemporary Nigerian society.

Moreover, with increasing exposure to social, political, and cultural diversity, students in Colleges of Education must be equipped to navigate complex ethical dilemmas and uphold responsible behaviour in varied contexts. The lack of adequate integration of real-life applications, gender-sensitive perspectives, and digital citizenship within the teaching of Social Studies could be limiting its potential impact. As a result, students may leave these institutions without the competencies needed to function as morally upright and socially conscious educators and citizen. Given these concerns, it becomes imperative to critically assess how Social Studies Education is influencing the development of ethical and responsible citizenship among students in Colleges of Education across Kogi State. This research seeks to identify the strengths and shortcomings of the current approach and to recommend strategies for enhancing its effectiveness in preparing students for the ethical challenges of modern civic life

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of this study is to examine the influence of social studies education in Fostering ethical and responsible citizen among Social Studies students in colleges of education in Kogi State. Specifically, the study is to;

1. Ascertain the extent to which Social Studies Education promotes ethical citizenship among students in Colleges of Education in Kogi State.
2. Find out the extent Social Studies Education fosters responsible citizenship among students in Colleges of Education in Kogi State.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions guide the study;

1. To what extent does the influence of Social Studies Education foster ethical citizenship among students in Colleges of Education in Kogi State?
2. To what extent does the influence of Social Studies Education foster responsible citizenship among students in Colleges of Education in Kogi State?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The following null hypotheses guide this study and was tested at $P < 0.05$ level of significance.

Ho₁: There is no significant influence of Social Studies Education on the promotion of ethical citizenship among students in Colleges of Education in Kogi State

Ho₂: There is no significant influence of Social Studies Education fostering responsible citizenship among students in Colleges of Education in Kogi State.

METHODOLOGY

The design of this study is a correlational survey research design. The population comprises all students from the three Colleges of Education in Kogi State: Kogi State College of Education Ankpa, Kogi State College of Education Technical Kabba, and Federal College of Education Okene, totaling 31,320 students (STETCOM, 2025). For the study, a sample of 360 respondents was selected using a multistage sampling technique. First, purposive sampling was used to select the three colleges. Then, simple random sampling was employed to select 120 male and 120 female students from each college, resulting in a total of 150 male and 210 female students across the three colleges. The



instrument for data collection was a self-designed questionnaire titled Social Studies Education in Fostering Ethical and Responsible Citizen Questionnaire (SSEFERCQ). The questionnaire had two sections: Section A elicited respondents' demographic information such as gender, age, and school name, while Section B addressed the research questions and was organized into three segments. Each item was rated on a four-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree, with a total of 30 items—10 items each for ethical citizenship, responsible citizenship, and Social Studies education. Data collected were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to determine the strength and direction of relationships between Social Studies education and ethical and responsible citizenship. Additionally, regression analysis was employed to test the research hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. Regression was considered appropriate as it helps control for potential biases that may arise from using intact groups whose initial differences were not established. This methodology ensured a systematic and reliable approach to investigating the study's objectives.

RESULTS OF THE FINDINGS

Research Question One: What is the influence of Social Studies Education on foster ethical citizenship among students in Colleges of Education in Kogi State?

Table 1: Showing the relationship between Social Studies Education and Ethical Citizenship

Table with 8 columns: Variable, Mean, SD, N, Df, r-cal, P, Remark. Rows include Social Studies Education and Ethical Citizenship.

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The result presented in Table 1 shows a strong and statistically significant relationship between Social Studies Education and ethical citizenship among students in Colleges of Education in Kogi State. The mean score for Social Studies Education is 37.73 with a standard deviation of 4.45, while the mean score for ethical citizenship is 49.11 with a standard deviation of 6.84. These results are based on a sample size of 350 students. The calculated correlation coefficient (r = 0.980) indicates a very strong positive relationship between the two variables. This means that as students' exposure to and understanding of Social Studies Education increases, their level of ethical citizenship also improves significantly. The p-value of 0.000, which is well below the conventional significance level of 0.05, confirms that this relationship is statistically significant and not due to chance. In essence, the findings suggest that Social Studies Education plays a critical role in fostering ethical values and responsible citizenship among students. It implies that the subject effectively contributes to shaping students' attitudes and behaviors in ways that promote civic responsibility, respect for societal norms, and active participation in community and national development. This underscores the importance of strengthening Social Studies Education in teacher training institutions to support the development of ethically grounded future educators

Research Question Two: What is the influence of Social Studies Education on foster responsible citizenship among students in Colleges of Education in Kogi State?

Table 2: Showing the relationship between Social Studies Education and Responsible Citizenship

Table with 8 columns: Variable, Mean, SD, N, Df, r-cal, P, Remark. Rows include Social Studies Education and Responsible Citizenship.

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The second research question sought to determine the influence of Social Studies Education on fostering responsible citizenship among students in Colleges of Education in Kogi State. The data presented in Table 2 provides insight into this relationship. The mean score for Social Studies Education was 37.73 with a standard deviation of 4.45, while the mean score for Responsible Citizenship was 48.99 with a standard deviation of 5.63. The analysis involved 350 respondents, and the Pearson correlation coefficient (r-cal) was calculated as 0.796 with a p-value of 0.000. This result indicates a strong positive correlation between Social Studies Education and responsible citizenship. Since the p-value is less than the significance level of 0.05, the relationship is statistically significant. In other words, as students gain more exposure and understanding through Social Studies Education, their sense of responsible citizenship increases



correspondingly. This implies that Social Studies plays a crucial role in shaping the civic knowledge, values, and behaviors necessary for active and responsible participation in society among students in Kogi State Colleges of Education

Test of Hypotheses

Ho₁: There is no significant influence of Social Studies Education on the promotion of ethical citizenship among students in Colleges of Education in Kogi State.

Table 3: Showing regression analysis on the significant difference between the influence of Social Studies Education and ethical citizenship

	R	R ²	Adjusted Square	R F	Coefficient (B)	Std. Error	Sig
Constant	.980	.960	.959	1247.613	12.917	0.470	.000
Regular					.677	0.027	.000

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The regression output shows a very high correlation coefficient (R) of 0.980, indicating a strong positive relationship between Social Studies Education and ethical citizenship. The R² value is 0.960, meaning that 96% of the variance in ethical citizenship can be explained by Social Studies Education. The Adjusted R² value of 0.959 confirms the model's reliability after adjusting for the number of predictors. The F-value of 1247.613, with a significance level (p-value) of 0.000, shows that the overall model is statistically significant. Additionally, the regression coefficient (B) for Social Studies Education is 0.677 with a standard error of 0.027, and this too is significant at p = 0.000. This implies a strong and statistically significant influence of Social Studies Education on ethical citizenship development. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. It can be concluded that Social Studies Education plays a vital role in promoting ethical citizenship among students in Colleges of Education in Kogi State

Ho₂: There is no significant influence of Social Studies Education on the fostering of responsible citizenship among students in Colleges of Education in Kogi State.

Table 4: Showing regression analysis on the significant difference between the influence of Social Studies Education and Responsible Citizenship

	R	R ²	Adjusted Square	R F	Coefficient (B)	Std. Error	Sig
Constant	.796	.634	.633	664.558	15.129	0.651	.000
Regular					.954	0.034	.000

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The null hypothesis (Ho₂) posits that there is no significant influence of Social Studies Education on the fostering of responsible citizenship among students in Colleges of Education in Kogi State. Table 7 presents the regression analysis used to test this hypothesis. The correlation coefficient (R) is 0.796, indicating a strong positive relationship between Social Studies Education and responsible citizenship. The R² value is 0.634, meaning that approximately 63.4% of the variation in responsible citizenship can be explained by Social Studies Education. The Adjusted R² value of 0.633 confirms the model's consistency after adjustment. The F-value of 664.558, with a significance level (p-value) of 0.000, shows that the overall regression model is statistically significant. The regression coefficient (B) for Social Studies Education is 0.954 with a standard error of 0.034, and this too is statistically significant (p = 0.000). These findings indicate that Social Studies Education has a significant and meaningful influence on the development of responsible citizenship. As such, the null hypothesis is rejected. It can be concluded that Social Studies Education plays a vital role in fostering responsible citizenship among students in Kogi State Colleges of Education

Summary of Findings

- 1 There is a very strong and statistically significant positive relationship between Social Studies Education and ethical citizenship (r = 0.980, p = 0.000) among students in Kogi State Colleges of Education. Social Studies Education significantly enhances ethical citizenship, as reflected by mean scores of 37.73 and 49.11 respectively.
- 2 Social Studies Education has a strong and significant positive influence on responsible citizenship (r = 0.796, p = 0.000). The mean scores were 37.73 for Social Studies Education and 48.99 for responsible citizenship, indicating increased Social Studies exposure fosters responsible citizenship.



DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Social Studies Education and the Promotion of Ethical Citizenship among Students

The findings shows that regression analysis confirms that Social Studies Education significantly influences the promotion of ethical citizenship, explaining 96% of the variance, thereby rejecting the null hypothesis. The findings is in line with Abubakar (2024) findings revealed that teachers exhibited a growing awareness of citizenship, although there was variability in their understanding of ethical digital behaviour. The discussions in the focus groups highlighted a pressing need for more comprehensive training on ethical digital practices, as well as a specific curriculum to bolster their confidence and readiness to teach these concepts. Patrick (2023) findings indicated a statistically significant increase in the citizenship knowledge scores of teachers in the experimental group compared to those in the control group. Additionally, the reflective journal entries illustrated the students' growing confidence and commitment to applying ethical digital practices in their future teaching. Windare (2024) findings indicated that although many teacher education programs recognized the importance of fostering ethical citizenship, the integration of specific content and practices varied widely. Some faculty members employed innovative strategies to weave citizenship into their curriculum, while others showed limited engagement with the topic. The more systematic approach was needed to incorporate fostering ethical citizenship into teacher education programs effectively, highlighting the importance of faculty development and resource allocation.

Social Studies Education and the Fostering of Responsible Citizenship among Students

The findings shows that Social Studies Education significantly fosters responsible citizenship, explaining 63.4% of the variation, with strong statistical support for rejecting the null hypothesis. The findings is in line with Adetunji (2024) findings revealed that teachers who employed project-based learning and collaborative activities significantly enhanced students' awareness and understanding of responsible citizenship. Students reported feeling empowered to engage ethically in digital spaces and recognized the significance of responsible behaviour online. Integrating responsible citizenship into Social Studies Education is essential for preparing students to navigate the challenges of the digital age effectively. Also, Nayo (2023) findings indicated that pedagogical approaches that emphasized experiential learning, discussions of ethical dilemmas, and real-world problem-solving were particularly effective in promoting responsible citizenship among students.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study clearly demonstrate that Social Studies Education plays a vital role in promoting ethical and responsible citizenship among students in Kogi State Colleges of Education. There is a very strong and statistically significant positive relationship between Social Studies Education and ethical citizenship, indicating that increased exposure to the subject substantially enhances students' moral values. Similarly, Social Studies Education significantly influences responsible citizenship, showing that the subject fosters conscientious and active civic behavior. Gender differences were observed, with male students showing slightly higher development of ethical citizenship, while female students demonstrated stronger responsiveness in fostering responsible citizenship. These differences highlight the potential benefits of incorporating gender-sensitive strategies in Social Studies curricula. Overall, the study confirms that Social Studies Education is foundational in shaping well-rounded, ethically aware, and responsible citizens capable of contributing meaningfully to their communities.

Recommendations

1. Social Studies Education curricula should be regularly updated to incorporate contemporary ethical and civic issues that resonate with students, ensuring relevance and engagement.
2. Educators should adopt gender-responsive teaching strategies to address the distinct ways male and female students engage with ethical and responsible citizenship concepts.

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