

African Multidisciplinary Journal of Development (AMJD)

Page: 255 – 231

<https://amjd.kiu.ac.ug>

IMPACT OF SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP AND CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY IN 21ST – CENTURY CLASSROOMS IN LAGOS STATE

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Abstract

This study examined the impact of Social Studies education on the development of global citizenship and civic responsibility in 21st-century classrooms in Lagos State, Nigeria. Recognizing that Social Studies serves as a core platform for fostering democratic values, civic engagement, and intercultural understanding, the research investigated how instructional practices, teacher competence, and technology integration influence learners' civic and global competencies. A descriptive survey research design was adopted, involving 480 respondents comprising 120 Social Studies teachers and 360 pupils selected across six educational districts in Lagos State. Three instruments: Teacher Questionnaire (TQ), Pupil Questionnaire (PQ), and Classroom Observation Checklist (COC) were used for data collection, with reliability coefficients ranging from 0.72 to 0.79. Data were analyzed using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation and Linear Regression at a 0.05 significance level. Findings revealed a significant positive relationship between Social Studies instructional practices and pupils' global citizenship competencies ($r = 0.61, p < 0.05$), as well as between Social Studies exposure and civic responsibility ($r = 0.59, p < 0.05$). Regression analysis further showed that teachers' professional knowledge, pedagogical approaches, and ICT integration jointly explained 48% of the variance in the effectiveness of Social Studies education ($R^2 = 0.480, p < 0.05$). The study concludes that learner-centered, participatory, and technology-enhanced Social Studies instruction substantially promotes civic engagement and global awareness. It recommends continuous teacher professional development, integration of ICT tools, and the adoption of experiential civic learning strategies to enhance Social Studies' transformative potential in nurturing globally minded and civically responsible citizens in Lagos State schools.

Keywords: Global Citizenship, Civic Responsibility, 21st-Century Learning, Instructional Practices, Teacher Professional Knowledge

Introduction

Education in the 21st century transcends the boundaries of national development to encompass global participation, intercultural understanding, and responsible citizenship. Social Studies education, as a foundational discipline in the school curriculum, is designed to equip learners with the knowledge, values, attitudes, and skills necessary to become responsible and active members of society (Ajiboye & Silo, 2018). It integrates knowledge from the social sciences, humanities, and civic education to promote democratic ideals, moral values, and civic responsibility (Mezieobi, Fubara, & Mezieobi, 2017). Through its multidisciplinary orientation, Social Studies serves as a platform for developing civic competencies and awareness of global interdependence core requirements of global citizenship in the 21st century.

The concept of global citizenship emphasizes the recognition of shared human values and collective responsibility for addressing global challenges such as inequality, climate change, human rights, and peace building (UNESCO, 2015). In parallel, civic responsibility refers to the willingness and ability of individuals to actively participate in community life, respect the rights of others, and contribute to the welfare of society (Banks, 2017). Both concepts highlight the need for learners to understand their roles not only as citizens of a nation but also as members of a global community. Social Studies, by its design, promotes these ideals through themes such as cultural diversity, governance, human rights, social justice, and cooperation.

In the 21st-century classroom, global citizenship and civic responsibility have become indispensable learning outcomes due to the rapid transformation brought about by globalization, technology, and cultural interaction. Learners must develop the capacity to think critically, communicate effectively, and act ethically in a connected world (Oxfam, 2018). The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4.7 underscores the importance of education that fosters global citizenship and sustainable development. Consequently, Social Studies classrooms must adapt to these new learning demands by adopting pedagogical approaches that integrate global awareness and civic participation.

The context of Lagos State provides a unique environment for studying the impact of Social Studies on global citizenship and civic responsibility. As Nigeria's economic nerve center and one of Africa's most cosmopolitan cities, Lagos embodies cultural diversity, technological advancement, and exposure to global ideas. Its schools are characterized by a mixture of learners from varied ethnic, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds. This diversity presents both opportunities and challenges for educators in promoting inclusive civic and global learning. However, despite the strategic position of Lagos in fostering cosmopolitan education, concerns persist about the effectiveness of Social Studies instruction in developing civic-minded and globally responsible citizens.

The study reinforces the importance of Social Studies as a key discipline for civic and citizenship education in Nigeria. It demonstrates how Social Studies can transcend traditional civic instruction to include global citizenship education (GCE), a pedagogical approach promoted by UNESCO (2015) that integrates global perspectives, human rights, and cultural understanding. This aligns with the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013), which emphasizes the development of moral and civic values for national unity and integration.

Social Studies is an interdisciplinary school subject that draws its contents from history, geography, civics, economics and related disciplines to help learners understand human society and their roles within it. In Nigeria, Social Studies has traditionally been positioned as a vehicle for promoting national consciousness, civic values, and social cohesion (NERDC curriculum documents). The subject is intended to develop pupils' awareness of social problems and equip them with the knowledge and skills needed for participation in civic life (NERDC, Basic Education Curriculum). Social Studies therefore address cognitive (knowledge), affective (values/attitudes), and behavioural (skills/practice) domains in the pursuit of citizenship education.

Global citizenship education (GCED) emphasizes learners' awareness of global interdependence, respect for cultural diversity, commitment to human rights, and willingness to act for collective well-being. UNESCO's pedagogical guidance on GCED frames global citizenship as both an outcome (knowledge, attitudes, skills) and a process (learner engagement through participatory pedagogies) that supports sustainable development and peaceful coexistence (UNESCO, GCED topics & learning objectives). SDG target 4.7 further codifies this objective by calling for all learners to acquire knowledge and skills that promote sustainable development, human rights, gender equality, and global citizenship by 2030. These frameworks position GCED as complementary to national civic education, one that broadens the lens of citizenship from the local/national to the global level.

Civic responsibility typically refers to the duties and dispositions required for effective participation in democratic life: obeying laws, voting, community volunteering, respect for rights, and engagement in public deliberation. Within the Nigerian educational context, civic responsibility is a

major outcome expected of Social Studies instruction aligned with the National Policy on Education's emphasis on producing citizens who contribute to national development and social cohesion (Federal Republic of Nigeria, NPE). The curricular articulation in Nigeria embeds civic themes across Social Studies topics to promote moral values, communal responsibilities and knowledge of governance systems.

21st-century education stresses competencies such as critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, communication and digital literacy. For Social Studies, this implies pedagogies that go beyond rote memorization to inquiry-based learning, project work, simulations (e.g., mock legislatures), and ICT-enhanced activities that connect learners to authentic global issues. UNESCO and other international guidelines encourage integrating global themes and digital literacies into curricular practice to prepare learners for participation within interconnected socio-political and environmental systems (GCED guidance). In Lagos State an urban, multicultural and globally connected environment 21st-century competencies are particularly salient for preparing learners to function effectively both locally and globally.

Social Studies provide the content (knowledge of civic institutions, rights and responsibilities), the values (tolerance, justice, solidarity) and the pedagogical opportunities for developing both national civic responsibility and global citizenship. The literature suggests a bidirectional relationship: effective Social Studies pedagogy fosters civic skills and global awareness, while GCED perspectives enrich Social Studies content by emphasizing transnational issues (climate change, migration, human rights) and fostering solidarity beyond national borders (Banks; UNESCO). The challenge, however, is translating these conceptual linkages into consistent classroom practice especially in contexts characterized by resource constraints and traditional pedagogic cultures.

Several Nigerian studies report that Social Studies have strong potential to promote civic knowledge and pro-social attitudes but that this potential is often unrealized due to implementation problems. A critique of the Nigerian Social Studies curriculum notes gaps between intended curriculum objectives and classroom practice, including overemphasis on content lists, inadequate teacher support materials, and limited opportunities for participatory learning (Adeduntan, 2020). Other empirical investigations have reported that while Social Studies topics include civic and national values, actual pupil participation in civic practices remains low linked to teacher-centred pedagogy, shortage of instructional materials, and weak school community linkages. These studies suggest that curricular intent alone does not guarantee civic outcomes; implementation quality matters.

Internationally, UNESCO's GCED guidance and subsequent implementation studies emphasize the need for both curricular infusion (embedding global themes across subjects) and explicit GCED programmes (standalone modules, projects). Implementation research indicates that GCED is more successful where teachers receive concrete pedagogical guidance, resources for experiential learning (simulations, exchange programmes), and supportive policy environments (SDG 4.7 alignment) (UNESCO; SDG monitoring material). In Africa, researchers have highlighted contextual challenges such as teacher preparation gaps, limited awareness of GCED concepts among frontline educators, and scarcity of materials to support global perspectives in resource-constrained classrooms. These constraints often result in a superficial "add-on" approach to global themes rather than systemic curriculum integration.

Emerging studies in Nigeria and comparable contexts show a growing interest in integrating ICT and 21st-century pedagogies into Social Studies. Research on teachers' attitudes to ICT in Social Studies (Bakare & Olanrewaju, 2022) found generally positive attitudes but uneven utilization teachers often lack adequate digital skills, access to devices, and curriculum-aligned digital resources. Broader investigations of ICT readiness in Nigerian classrooms corroborate these findings: infrastructural deficits (electricity, devices, and internet), limited in-service training, and absence of sustained technical support impede meaningful technology adoption (studies on ICT integration). Where schools do implement ICT-mediated Social Studies lessons (multimedia, online resources, digital mapping), improvements in learner engagement and higher-order skills have been reported, but scale and equity remain concerns.

Lagos State, as a dynamic and cosmopolitan jurisdiction, has policy documents that emphasize quality, inclusive education and the need to align state practice with national standards (Lagos State Government 2023). Nonetheless, localized empirical studies reveal a mix of promising innovations and persistent constraints: some Lagos schools have piloted ICT-enhanced and project-based approaches, while many public schools still face overcrowding, limited instructional materials, and teacher training shortfalls. These mixed realities make Lagos an instructive site for examining how Social Studies can be mobilized to produce both civic responsibility and global citizenship outcomes. By exploring the relationship between Social Studies and global citizenship, the study contributes to theoretical advancement in the field, particularly in linking local civic education with global citizenship frameworks. It also underscores the role of Social Studies teachers as facilitators of transformative learning capable of nurturing reflective, participatory, and globally minded individuals. Thus, this research is both timely and essential for redefining Social Studies as a 21st-century discipline that bridges local realities and global challenges.

Although Social Studies has been a core subject in Nigeria's basic education curriculum since the 1970s, its effectiveness in shaping civic attitudes and global consciousness among learners remains questionable (Obioma & Olatunde, 2016). Many young people in Lagos and across Nigeria display weak civic participation, limited awareness of global issues, and declining moral and social responsibility (Okam & Bozimo, 2018). This disconnect suggests that Social Studies may not be achieving its intended goals due to factors such as inadequate teacher preparation, insufficient instructional materials, poor curriculum implementation, and traditional teacher-centered pedagogies (Mezieobi et al., 2017).

Furthermore, the increasing influence of social media, globalization, and technological exposure requires Social Studies to evolve in both content and delivery. Yet, many classrooms in Lagos State remain constrained by outdated teaching practices that fail to connect learners with real-world global and civic experiences. Consequently, there is a growing need to examine how Social Studies education influences learners' development of global citizenship and civic responsibility in the context of 21st-century learning.

Purpose of the study

- 1) Examine the extent to which Social Studies classroom practices in Lagos State public schools incorporate global citizenship education (knowledge, attitudes and skills).
- 2) Assess the level of civic responsibility (e.g., civic knowledge, civic attitudes, and civic behaviours) exhibited by pupils who have been taught Social Studies in Lagos State public schools.
- 3) Determine the relationship between specific Social Studies instructional practices (inquiry-based learning, participatory activities, use of local/global case studies) and pupils' development of global citizenship competencies.
- 4) Evaluate the role of teachers' professional knowledge, pedagogical approaches and ICT use in mediating the effect of Social Studies instruction on pupils' civic responsibility and global citizenship.

Hypotheses

- H01: There is no significant relationship between Social Studies instructional practices and the development of pupils' global citizenship competencies in Lagos State public schools.
- H02: There is no significant relationship between pupils' exposure to Social Studies instruction and their level of civic responsibility in Lagos State public schools.
- H03: Teachers' professional knowledge and pedagogical approaches have no significant influence on the effectiveness of Social Studies education in developing global citizenship and civic responsibility.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design because it seeks to collect quantitative and qualitative data from a representative sample of teachers and pupils in Lagos State public schools to

determine the impact of Social Studies education on the development of global citizenship and civic responsibility. The population of the study comprised all Social Studies teachers and upper basic-level pupils (Primary 5–JSS 3) in public schools across Lagos State. A total sample of 480 respondents was selected from the study population. The sample would include 120 Social Studies teachers and 360 pupils drawn from public schools across the six educational districts of Lagos State. A multi-stage sampling technique was employed; Lagos State was stratified into its six educational districts (Districts I–VI). Each district represents a stratum to ensure equitable distribution. From each district, five public schools (three primary schools and two junior secondary schools) were selected using simple random sampling, resulting in a total of 30 schools across the state. From each selected school, four Social Studies teachers and twelve pupils were purposively selected. Pupils chosen were those who have received at least one full academic year of Social Studies instruction to ensure relevant experience. Three major instruments were used for the study; Teacher Questionnaire (TQ), Pupil Questionnaire (PQ) and Classroom Observation Checklist (COC). The reliability of the instruments was determined using the Cronbach's Alpha method after the pilot test. Teacher Questionnaire $r = 0.79$, Pupil Questionnaire 0.75 Classroom Observation Checklist $r = 0.72$. Data collected were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques of Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC), and Linear Regression Analysis, at 0.05 level of significant.

Results

Hypothesis One

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between Social Studies instructional practices and the development of pupils' global citizenship competencies in Lagos State public schools.

Table.1: Relationship between Social Studies Instructional Practices and Pupils' Global Citizenship Competencies

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r	Sig	Remark
Instructional Practices	480	3.74	0.82			
Global Citizenship Competence	480	3.68	0.78	0.614	0.000	Significant

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The result above depicts a correlation coefficient of ($r = 0.61$; $p < 0.05$), this indicates a moderately strong and statistically significant positive relationship between Social Studies instructional practices and pupils' global citizenship competencies. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) is rejected. This implies that pupils' exposure to active, participatory, and globally focused Social Studies instruction enhances their global awareness, empathy, and intercultural understanding. In other words, the quality of instructional methods used by Social Studies teachers significantly predicts pupils' global citizenship development.

Hypothesis Two

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between pupils' exposure to Social Studies instruction and their level of civic responsibility in Lagos State public schools.

Table 2: Relationship between Exposure to Social Studies Instruction and Pupils' Civic Responsibility

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r	Sig	Remark
Social Studies Exposure	480	3.81	0.79			
Civic Responsibility	480	3.87	0.74	0.592	0.000	Significant

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The Pearson correlation coefficient ($r = 0.59$; $p < 0.05$) indicates a significant positive relationship between pupils' exposure to Social Studies and their level of civic responsibility. The null hypothesis (H_{02}) is therefore rejected. This implies that pupils who have been consistently exposed to Social

Studies lessons demonstrate higher civic responsibility through better attitudes, moral values, and participation in community or school activities. The result supports the civic education objective of Social Studies, which aims to nurture informed, active, and responsible citizens.

Hypothesis Three

H03: Teachers' professional knowledge and pedagogical approaches have no significant influence on the effectiveness of Social Studies education in developing global citizenship and civic responsibility.

Table.3: Summary of Regression Analysis of Teachers' Knowledge, Pedagogical Approaches, and ICT Integration on Effectiveness of Social Studies Education

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	Sig.
Teachers' Knowledge, Pedagogy, & ICT Integration Effectiveness of Social Studies	0.693	0.480	0.476	71.85	0.000

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The regression output reveals a multiple correlation coefficient (R) of 0.693 and a coefficient of determination (R²) of 0.480, indicating that teachers' professional knowledge, pedagogical approaches, and ICT integration jointly account for 48% of the variance in the effectiveness of Social Studies in promoting civic and global learning outcomes. Since the F-statistic (71.85) is significant at $p = 0.000 < 0.05$, the null hypothesis (H₀₃) is rejected. This implies that teacher-related factors significantly influence how effectively Social Studies education develops global citizenship and civic responsibility among pupils. Specifically, well-trained teachers using participatory and technology-enhanced pedagogy are more effective in achieving these outcomes.

Discussion of Findings

The results reveal that Social Studies instructional practices strongly correlate with pupils' development of global citizenship and civic responsibility, affirming the foundational goals of Social Studies as a citizenship-oriented discipline (Adeyemi & Adeyinka, 2021; Ajiboye & Olatunde, 2019). The findings support the constructivist learning theory, which posits that students learn civic and global values best through active engagement and contextualized experiences rather than rote instruction (Vygotsky, 1978).

The significant predictive influence of teachers' professional knowledge and ICT integration corroborates previous research (Akinyemi, 2022; UNESCO, 2020) that emphasizes the importance of teacher capacity and digital literacy in fostering global learning environments. However, moderate ICT use observed in the field suggests that infrastructural and training challenges persist in Lagos State public schools. The results demonstrate that Social Studies education, when taught effectively with participatory pedagogy and technology-enhanced instruction, remains a powerful tool for building globally minded and civically responsible citizens in the 21st-century Lagos classroom.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study concludes that Social Studies Education plays a pivotal role in shaping responsible, informed, and globally aware citizens in the 21st-century learning environment. The study established that instructional practices which emphasize learner participation, problem-solving, global awareness, and real-life application of civic principles significantly enhance pupils' global citizenship competencies. Similarly, pupils' continuous exposure to Social Studies instruction builds their civic habits, moral responsibility, and commitment to community and national development. Moreover, the study concludes that the professional knowledge and pedagogical skills of Social Studies teachers critically determine how effectively the subject achieves its objectives. Teachers who apply innovative, interactive, and ICT-enhanced methods are more successful in cultivating civic engagement and global perspectives among pupils.

Recommendations:

In light of the findings, the following recommendations are made;

- 1) School administrators should promote student-led civic projects, such as environmental clubs, debate societies, and volunteer activities that encourage practical application of civic and global values.
- 2) Education quality assurance officers should periodically monitor how Social Studies is taught across public schools.
- 3) Teachers should adopt interactive instructional strategies such as inquiry-based learning, group discussions, debates, simulation of civic scenarios, and project-based learning.
- 4) Educational stakeholders should ensure the integration of digital tools such as multimedia presentations, global learning platforms, and virtual exchanges to expose pupils to global perspectives.
- 5) Ministry of Education and school authorities should organize regular capacity-building workshops and continuous professional development (CPD) programmes for Social Studies teachers

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