

## Teachers and Students' Assessment of Efficacy of Secondary School Social Studies Curriculum in Promoting Unity in Diversity in Nigeria

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### **Abstract**

*This study examined teachers and students' assessment of efficacy of secondary school social studies curriculum in promoting unity in diversity in Nigeria. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. The population of the study comprised all the public Upper Basic Social Studies teachers and students in Ibadan, Nigeria which is 326,917, while the target population consisted of all the public Upper Basic III Social Studies teachers and students in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria which is estimated to be 24,583. Simple random sampling and purposive sampling approaches were used to select 430 respondents (400 Upper Basic III Social Studies students and 30 teachers) for the study. Researcher design instrument with reliability coefficients of 0.76 was used for data collection. The data collected were analysed using summated mean and independent t-test. The study revealed that the extent to which Social Studies Education promotes national unity among students in Nigeria was high; Social Studies Education classroom practices were effective in the attainment of national unity among students in Nigeria; and that Social Studies teachers and students were indifferent in their observation regarding the efficacy of secondary school social studies curriculum in promoting unity in diversity among students in Nigeria. It was concluded that Social Studies curriculum is efficacious in the promotion of unity in diversity in Nigeria. Based on this, it was recommended among others that Social Studies curriculum should be periodically reviewed to meet the current challenging situations capable of threatening the unity of the Nigeria.*

**Key words:** Teachers, Students, Social Studies Curriculum, Unity in Diversity

### **Introduction**

National unity is significant in the quest for a strong, united and prosperous nation. Unity is among the factors dictating the direction of development of every society. Without the spirit of oneness among members of a society, such a society will be stagnant. The significance of unity was recognized as a driven factor for global progress by the United Nations. This recognition was evident in the declaration made in 1998 regarding the establishment of harmonious relationship among people of the world. In a similar manner, the quest to achieve unity is embedded the purpose of establishing the African union (African Union Commission, 2012). The need to achieve this objective led

to the incorporation of security and peace council in countries like Cairo and Egypt in the year 1993; Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution in Lusaka and Zambia in the year 2011; and the promulgation of the Solidarity for Peace and Security in Africa on the 8th November, 2012 (African Union Commission, 2012).

National unity involves having the feeling of oneness towards one's own country not minding individual differences in the areas of race, religion, culture or caste. It has to do with national spirit and the feeling unite people of different beliefs and dialects together in a common activity or endeavor (Ashiwaju, 2002). For national unity to take effect, individuals must have worked together to build systems capable of enhancing the prosperity of the nation and its citizens (Hauwa, 2021). With respect to this assertion, Nigeria leveraged on national unity as one of the strongest weapons employed for the attainment of independence. This is contained in the speech delivered by the first prime minister of Nigeria, Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, during the independence of the country on 1st October, 1960. The, then, prime minister said' "...We are indeed proud to have achieved our independence, and proud that our efforts should have constituted to this happy event" (Ezeoba & Okafor, 2019). In the statement, collective nouns were used to clearly indicate that it wasn't one person's effort, but indeed a joint effort of all Nigerians not minding their religious affiliation, ethnic groups, and gender (Torpev, 2013).

The significance of Nigeria unity was reiterated by the then head of state of the federal republic of Nigeria, General Yakubu Gowon after the civil war of 1964 that lasted for 30 months. Despite the civil war that put the nation's unity at stake, Nigerians demonstrated unity in diversity by coming together as indivisible entity. In his speech after the war, General Yakubu Gowon calls for the need to pursue the attainment of reconstruction, rehabilitation, and reconciliation for the national unity, after which he declared general amnesty for those that perpetrated the civil war (Ezeoba & Okafor, 2019). The crises of numerous ethnic, social, and religious militant organizations, in particular, has caused many Nigerians to notice a bold handwriting on the wall warning that the unity of the country is under danger. These might have necessitated Ezeoba (2012)'s opinion that the country is in disunity. This is premised on the prevalence of inter-tribal wars happening in some parts of the country, banditry, youth restiveness,

police brutality, kidnap incidences, and extra judicial killings, militancy, incidence of jail breaking (Laraba, 2015), and the recent attack on a Catholic church in Owo, Ondo State, Nigeria. If these waves of vices are not quickly and effectively checked, it will undermine the unity of the entire country.

To address the country's current issues, the desire for national unity has grown significantly. Members of non-governmental organizations have also reportedly come forward to appeal for national unity, according to Chigozie (2012). Nigerians feel that unity is a necessary condition for building a better Nigeria because it is so highly demanded in the nation. In keeping with this, the 1999 Nigerian constitution's preamble focused on peace and togetherness as the ideal way for Nigerians to live (FRN 1999). The Nigeria National Policy on Education emphasized that Nigeria unity and harmony are the basic principles that would make the country to remain indivisible, in dissolvable, democratic, and sovereign nation which was founded on the bases of freedom, equality and justice (FRN 2004). The success or otherwise of this country depends on harmonies living among the populace. The unity of Nigeria is therefore an issue that cannot be taken for granted. In achieving this unity, Social Studies as a problem-solving subject has role to play.

Social Studies is a field of study that incorporates different discipline, especially disciplines in social science and humanities. As put forward by Odor and Nwahan (2005), the study of Social Studies involves unveiling man and the outcome of his interactions with his political, economic, physical, psychological and cultural environment. As an interdisciplinary body of knowledge, social studies it provides people with valuable information necessary for life, help people to acquire desirable attitudes, social habits, values, and other useful skills that are paramount for the individual and societal survival (Hauwa, 2021). In relation this, Ezoba (2012) stressed that the messages of Social Studies are needed for national unity. This is on the notion that the subject is designed to accommodate human differences that often fuel disunity. The contents of Social Studies are derived from social science subjects that are meant for the reformation of human behaviour for unity, peace and development.

As observed by Ezeuzo (2011), Social Studies is meant are to: (a) develop good citizenship capable of uplifting moral character and also promote social understanding in

the society; (b) promote unity and economic development of the nation; (c) prepare students for the world of work and create awareness problems that are likely to be encountered daily; (d) ensures the development of critical thinking, problem solving skills and the ability to decision for the survival and progress of the nation; (e) promote acculturation and socialization spirit among citizens in the society; and (f) develop a capacity to acquire basic skills such as listening, analysis, observation, which are essential for sound judgment (Laraba, 2015). It can be deduced from the general goals of introducing Social Studies it is means to lays emphasis on effective learning domain. This, by implication will make it possible for the learners to be trained such that they will appreciate the need for unity in diversity, develop the spirit of oneness and interdependence to members of local and the international communities.

Odedele and Egotanwa (2004) endorsed the inclusion of national unity and nation integration in the social studies curriculum by highlighting the necessity of national integration for Nigeria's prosperity, peace, and understanding. The argument in favor of national integration is that it tends to foster a sense of unity, dependence, and collaboration among citizens for the fulfillment of our wants and services. In support of this, Enu and Effiom (2012) believed that social studies curricula naturally tend to give students the opportunity they need to apply their civic knowledge, skills, and values toward the development of solutions to pressing issues in classrooms or society at large. The social studies education curriculum in Nigeria should be developed to set the country's society on a course for growth and development in order to achieve national integration (Hauwa, 2021). This is where social studies education plays a role in promoting national growth and integration.

The introduction of Social Studies into the curriculum was not premised on the need to meet certain units or number of subjects. Its introduction was intentional and the intention was to towards solving pressing Nigerian problem. Nigerian experienced what can be called colonial trauma and it was necessary to get organized programmes that could help in alienating them from colonial mentality (Fageyinbo, 2004). Apart from the colonial trauma, the civil war that happened in the country also created a lot of differences among the citizens, especially due to divergences ethnic, historical backgrounds and cultural affiliations. This, therefore, necessitated the introduction of

Social Studies as a tool for healing the wounds of the civil war, and equally achieving unity despite our diversity. This is in relation to the observation of Laraba (2015) that Social Studies is capable of promoting much needed unity, integration and stability. This suggests that Social Studies and national unity can be said to birds of the same feathers, flying toward one direction – oneness and progress.

Despite the significance of Social Studies in the attainment of national oneness, the rate of crime and related social vices is on the increase in Nigeria and the global space. According to Ezeoba and Okafor (2019), the level of social vices in Nigeria is high. Observing high level of social vices even with the presence of Social Studies among the subjects offered at secondary school level could mean that the effectiveness of the subject is questionable. Yusuf, Daramola, Bello and Obafemi (2015) examined the effectiveness of Social Studies curriculum content for the attainment of sustainable development in Nigeria, and found that the content of upper basic Social Studies was not adequate, as assessed by teachers. However, Ekeamadi (2018) found that Social Studies was effective in the promotion national integration among students in Lagos state, and that Social Studies classroom practices improves the general relationship among secondary school students. This suggests conflicting submissions regarding Social Studies ability to promote oneness and global sustainability. Hence, the need for the current study to validate the outcomes of the existing studies.

The place of unity cannot be neglected if progress and development must be recorded in the country. This is which it is paramount that every nation must strive to achieve greater unity. Nigerians didn't seem to understand this concept, as seen by the widespread occurrence of social vices, societal turmoil, ethnic conflicts, and religious disagreements. Nigeria is one of the nations in the globe with diverse politics, linguistics, cultures, and religions. The lack of oneness, without which it will be difficult to achieve global sustainable development, has been fueled by divergences rather than oneness, despite various programmes put in place to instill a feeling of solidarity among residents. This raises questions about whether programmes that promote unity and integrate social studies instruction effectively helped those who engage in violent behavior. Social Studies was introduced into the school curriculum as a problem-solving subject for achieving unity in diversity. The introduction of the subject started in America, followed

by the British and later African nations among which is Nigeria. Despite the operation of Social Studies in our schools, the rate of crime and social vices seemed to be on the increase. This study, therefore, was conducted to examine teachers and students' assessment of efficacy of secondary school social studies curriculum in promoting unity in diversity in Nigeria.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The study examines teachers and students' assessment of efficacy of secondary school social studies curriculum in promoting unity in diversity in Nigeria. Specifically, the study examined the:

- i. extent to which Social Studies Education promotes national unity among students in Nigeria;
- ii. effectiveness of Social Studies Education classroom practices in the attainment of national unity among students in Nigeria;
- iii. difference in teachers' and students' assessment of efficacy of secondary school social studies curriculum in promoting unity in diversity among students in Nigeria;
- iv. difference in assessment of the effectiveness of Social Studies Education classroom practices in the attainment of national unity among students in Nigeria

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were answered in the course of the study.

- i. What is the extent to which Social Studies Education promotes national unity among students in Nigeria?
- ii. How effective is Social Studies Education classroom practices in the attainment of national unity among students in Nigeria?

### **Research Hypotheses**

- i. There is no significant difference in teachers' and students' assessment of efficacy of secondary school social studies curriculum in promoting unity in diversity among students in Nigeria.

- ii. There is no significant difference in teachers' and students' assessment of the effectiveness of Social Studies Education classroom practices in the attainment of national unity among students in Nigeria.

### **Methodology**

The research design adopted for this study was descriptive survey. The population of the study comprised all Social Studies teachers and students in Oyo State, Nigeria which is estimated to be 326,917 while the target population consisted of all the public Upper Basic III Social Studies teachers and students in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria which is estimated to be 1,340 teachers and 23,243 students, spread across about 1,000 public junior secondary schools in the city of Ibadan. Simple random sampling and purposive sampling approaches were used in the study. Simple random sampling approach was used to select 400 Upper Basic III Social Studies students from 30 randomly selected Upper Basic schools (Junior Secondary school) in the study area. In addition, purposive sampling was used to select Social Studies teachers in the selected school. This led to the selection of 400 students and 30 teachers. In all, 430 persons participated in the study. The sample size was informed by the specification of the 2006 Research Advisor, which indicated that a sample of 430 is appropriate for a population of 25,000. Researcher designed instrument was used for data collection. The instrument, which was structured into two parts, was tagged "Questionnaire on Teachers and Students' Assessment of Efficacy of Secondary School Social Studies Curriculum in Promoting Unity in Diversity in Nigeria".

The first part of the instrument measured the extent to which Social Studies Education promotes national unity among students. This part was designed on 4-Liker response format of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. The second part measured the effectiveness of Social Studies Education classroom practices in the attainment of national unity, and it was designed on 4-Liker response format of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly; while the third part of the instrument was designed on response format of Adequate and Not Adequate. Reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha method of reliability. To achieve this, the instrument was administered to 25 students who had the same characteristics with the actual respondents. The obtained responses were subjected to Cronbach Alpha. The instrument

has reliability coefficients of 0.76. The data collected were analysed using summated mean and independent t-test.

## Results

**Research Question 1:** What is the extent to which Social Studies Education promotes national unity among students in Nigeria?

To answer the research question, responses obtained on the extent to which Social Studies Education promotes national unity among students in Nigeria were coded and subjected to descriptive statistics of mean and percentage. Firstly, item by item analysis was done using mean as presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Item analysis of teachers and students' assessment of the extent to which Social Studies Education promotes national unity among students in Nigeria**

S/N	Items	Mean	SD
1	Social Studies education imparts knowledge of national integration on students	3.44	0.64
2	Social Studies education equips students with knowledge necessary to contribute meaningfully to the unity of the society in which they live	3.30	0.59
3	Social Studies education enhances attitudes that lead to interdependence and tolerance among students	3.29	0.66
4	Social Studies education promotes positive change in attitude which is capable of bringing unity among groups	3.22	0.61
5	Social studies education teaches unity among students	3.23	0.71

Having presented the item-by-item analysis of the items used in measuring how Social Studies Education promotes national unity among students in Nigeria, the researcher proceeded to the determination of the extent to which Social Studies Education promotes national unity among students in Nigeria. The minimum obtainable, maximum obtainable and range score of the respondents were 5, 20 and 15. The range was divided by the two extent/levels (high and low) and the cut off was approximately 8. Scores between 8-13 and 14-20 are categorized as low and high extent respectively. The result is presented in Table 2.



**Table 2: Extent to which Social Studies Education promotes national unity among students in Nigeria**

Levels	Frequency	Percentage (%)
High	264	61.4
Low	166	38.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Result in Table 2 indicates that 264 (61.4%) of the respondents assessed that the extent to which Social Studies Education promotes national unity among students in Nigeria was high, while 166 (38.6%) assessed that the extent to which Social Studies Education promotes national unity among students in Nigeria was low. This shows that the extent to which Social Studies Education promotes national unity among students in Nigeria was high.

**Research Question 2:** How effective is Social Studies Education classroom practices in the attainment of national unity among students in Nigeria?

To answer the research question, responses obtained on the effectiveness of Social Studies Education classroom practices in the attainment of national unity among students in Nigeria were coded and subjected to means and percentage analysis. Firstly, item by item analysis was done using mean as presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: Item analysis of effectiveness of Social Studies Education classroom practices in the attainment of national unity among students in Nigeria**

S/N	Items	Mean	SD
1	Social Studies education engages students on solutions finding for the social problems that bedevil the society	3.39	0.58
2	Social Studies education enables students to understand each other better	3.16	0.79
3	Social Studies education socializes students towards good moral and social behaviours	3.19	0.56
4	Social Studies education in Nigerian school system exposes students to both their immediate and wider environments	3.05	0.79
5	Activities in social studies classes aid students to imbibe the spirit of friendship and cooperation	3.22	0.61
	<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>3.20</b>	<b>0.67</b>

Having presented the item-by-item analysis of the items used in measuring effectiveness of Social Studies Education classroom practices in the attainment of national unity among students in Nigeria, the researcher proceeded to the determination of how effective is Social Studies Education classroom practices in the attainment of

national unity among students in Nigeria. The minimum obtainable, maximum obtainable and range score of the respondents were 5, 20 and 15. The range was divided by the three levels of effectiveness (Not Effective, Effective, and Very Effective) and the cut off was approximately 5. Scores between 5-10 are categorized as “Not Effective”, scores between 11-15 are categorized as “Effective”, and 16-20 are categorized as “Very Effective” respectively. The result is presented in Table 4.

**Table 4: Effectiveness of Social Studies Education classroom practices in the attainment of national unity among students in Nigeria**

Effectiveness	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very Effective	106	24.7
Effective	213	49.5
Not Effective	111	25.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Result in Table 4 indicates that 106 (24.7%) of the respondents assessed Social Studies Education classroom practices to be “Very Effective” in the attainment of national unity among students in Nigeria, 213 (49.5%) assessed Social Studies Education classroom practices to be “Effective” in the attainment of national unity among students in Nigeria, while 111 (25.8%) assessed Social Studies Education classroom practices “Not to be Effective” in the attainment of national unity among students in Nigeria. This means that Social Studies Education classroom practices was effective in the attainment of national unity among students in Nigeria.

**H0:** There is no significant difference in teachers’[ and students’ assessment of efficacy of secondary school social studies curriculum in promoting unity in diversity among students in Nigeria.

To test the hypotheses, responses obtained on teachers’ and students’ assessment of efficacy of secondary school social studies curriculum in promoting unity in diversity among students in Nigeria were coded and subjected to independent t-test. The result is presented in Table 5.

**Table 5: Independent t-test on difference in teachers' and students' assessment of efficacy of secondary school social studies curriculum**

Respondents	No	Mean	Std.	t-value	df	p-value	Remark
Teachers	30	17.57	0.86	1.06	428	0.29	Not Significant
Students	400	17.37	0.98				

Results in Table 5 showed a t-value of 1.06 and p-value of 0.29 in which the p-value is greater than the alpha level of 0.05 ( $0.29 > 0.05$ ). Since 0.29 is greater than 0.05 alpha level of significance, the null hypothesis is not rejected. This means that there is no significant difference in teachers and students' assessment of efficacy of secondary school social studies curriculum in promoting unity in diversity among students in Nigeria.

**H<sub>0</sub>2:** There is no significant difference in teachers' and students' assessment of the effectiveness of Social Studies Education classroom practices in the attainment of national unity among students in Nigeria.

To test the hypotheses, responses obtained on teachers' and students' assessment of the effectiveness of Social Studies Education classroom practices in the attainment of national unity among students in Nigeria were coded and subjected to independent t-test. The result is presented in Table 6.

**Table 6: Independent t-test on difference in teachers' and students' assessment of the effectiveness of Social Studies Education classroom practices**

Respondents	No	Mean	Std.	t-value	Df	p-value	Remark
Teachers	30	14.40	1.85	0.89	428	0.37	Not Significant
Students	400	14.19	1.13				

Results in Table 6 showed a t-value of 0.89 and p-value of 0.37 in which the p-value is greater than the alpha level of 0.05 ( $0.37 > 0.05$ ). Since 0.37 is greater than 0.05 alpha level of significance, the null hypothesis is not rejected. This means that there is no significant difference in teachers' and students' assessment of the effectiveness of Social

Studies Education classroom practices in the attainment of national unity among students in Nigeria.

### **Discussion of findings**

The study examined teachers and students' assessment of efficacy of secondary school social studies curriculum in promoting unity in diversity in Nigeria. The outcome of the study showed that the extent to which Social Studies Education promotes national unity among students in Nigeria was high. This means that majority of the sampled teachers' and students' were of the view that Social Studies Education promotes national unity in diversity among students in Nigeria. This result is possible where knowledge of national integration was imparted into the students, where knowledge necessary to contribute meaningfully to the unity of the society is communicated to the students, and the content of the Social Studies curriculum promotes positive change in attitude which is capable of bringing unity among people. This result is in line with that of Ekeamadi (2018) who found that Social Studies was effective in the promotion national integration among students in Lagos State.

The result of the study also showed that Social Studies Education classroom practices were effective in the attainment of national unity among students in Nigeria. This means that the implementer of Social Studies curriculum necessitated classroom practices and activities capable of promoting the attainment of national unity among students from diverse background in Nigeria. This might be that the Social Studies teachers engages students on solutions finding for the social problems that bedevil the society, socializes students towards good moral and social behaviour and that activities in social studies classes aid students to imbibe the spirit of friendship and cooperation. The result of this study corroborates that of Ekeamadi (2018) who found that Social Studies classroom practices improves the general relationship among secondary school students. However, the result of this study refuted that of Yusuf, Daramola, Bello and Obafemi (2015) who found that the content of upper basic Social Studies was not adequate, as assessed by teachers. The variation observed in the result of this study and that of Yusuf, Daramola, Bello and Obafemi (2015) might be due to difference in study location and sample. In their study, Yusuf, Daramola, Bello and Obafemi (2015) observed only Social

Studies teachers in Kwara State, while the current study involved teachers and students in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.

Furthermore, the result of the study revealed that there was no significant difference in teachers' and students' assessment of efficacy of secondary school social studies curriculum in promoting unity in diversity among students in Nigeria. Also, there was no significant difference in teachers' and students' assessment of the effectiveness of Social Studies Education classroom practices in the attainment of national unity among students in Nigeria. This means that Social Studies teachers and students were indifferent in their observation regarding the efficacy of secondary school social studies curriculum in promoting unity in diversity among students in Nigeria. This result is possible where both the teachers and students were aware of the links between the curriculum contents of Social Studies and national unity. This result supported that of Laraba (2015) who found that Social Studies is capable of promoting much needed unity, integration and stability, and that teachers and students holds similar view regarding the significance of Social Studies.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that Social Studies curriculum is efficacious in the promotion of unity in diversity in Nigeria. This is based on the observed findings that the extent to which Social Studies Education promotes national unity among students in Nigeria was high, and that Social Studies Education classroom practices were effective in the attainment of national unity among students in Nigeria. Significant to note in this study is that despite the fact that Social Studies curriculum is efficacious in the promotion of unity in diversity in Nigeria, the rate of social vices is still alarming in the society. This might be that more attention was placed on the students' cognitive learning at the expense of their affective domain which is the most important ingredient needed for peaceful coexistence.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the discussions and the concluding remarks, the paper recommends that:

1. The outcome of the study showed that the extent to which Social Studies Education promotes national unity among students in Nigeria was high. In line with this revelation, the study of Social Studies Education should be made compulsory at the different level of education in the country.
2. Social Studies Education teachers should be sensitized on the need to sustain and improve on the quality of classroom practices which was found to be effective. This will go a long way in arousing the intellectual curiosity of the students and the desire to learn more.

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