

APPRAISAL OF SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION FOR CULTURAL SHARING AND TRANSFORMATION TOWARDS VALUE RE-ORIENTATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract:

As a nation characterized by a rich tapestry of ethnic diversity, Nigeria faces challenges related to cultural identity, social cohesion, and moral values, particularly among the youth. Social Studies education serves as a vital instrument for fostering cultural sharing and facilitating transformation towards value re-orientation in Nigeria. As a country characterized by its rich diversity, the integration of various cultural perspectives within the Social Studies curriculum promotes mutual understanding, respect, and appreciation among students from different ethnic backgrounds. By engaging with diverse cultural narratives, students are not only able to connect with their heritage but also learn to value the cultures of others, thereby promoting social cohesion. Through the promotion of core values such as tolerance, civic responsibility, and social justice, Social Studies education plays a significant role in value re-orientation. By preparing students to become informed and active citizens, it cultivates a generation that is equipped to contribute positively to societal development and address pressing social issues. As Nigeria continues to navigate the complexities of cultural identity and societal challenges, the importance of an effective and comprehensive Social Studies curriculum cannot be overstated. It is imperative for policymakers and educators to prioritize the enhancement of Social Studies education as a means to foster cultural understanding and value re-orientation, ultimately contributing to a more harmonious and progressive society. It was therefore recommended that Social Studies curriculum should be revised to include more diverse cultural content that reflects Nigeria's ethnic plurality. This enhancement should incorporate local histories, traditions, and contemporary societal issues to foster a deeper understanding of cultural diversity among students.

Keywords: Appraise, Cultural Sharing, Transformation, Orientation, Value

Introduction

Cultural diversity is one of the defining characteristics of Nigerian society, with over 250 ethnic groups, each possessing distinct languages, customs, and traditions. This rich cultural mosaic has historically presented both opportunities for unity and challenges for national cohesion (Falola, 2021). In recent years, the increasing influence of globalization, modernization, and the rapid expansion of technology have contributed to a shift in cultural values, leading to concerns about the erosion of traditional norms and values, particularly among Nigerian youth. As a result, there has been growing interest in strategies that can promote cultural sharing, foster value re-orientation, and preserve cultural heritage within the context of national development (Akinwale, 2022).

Social Studies education plays a critical role in this regard, as it is specifically designed to inculcate societal values, promote national unity, and facilitate an understanding of cultural differences. Introduced into Nigerian schools to address societal problems and help mold responsible citizens, Social Studies is a multidisciplinary subject that integrates history, geography, government, and sociology to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to function in a complex society (Ogundele & Adeyemi, 2023). The subject is particularly relevant in Nigeria, where it can serve as a platform for cultural sharing and transformation by fostering intercultural understanding and promoting the values of tolerance, cooperation, and respect for diversity (Ajibade, 2023). However, despite its potential, there is

growing concern that Social Studies education has not been fully optimized to address the pressing issues of cultural decay and value erosion in contemporary Nigeria. Many scholars argue that the current Social Studies curriculum lacks sufficient emphasis on the practical application of cultural values and fails to adequately address the challenges posed by globalization and cultural homogenization (Olaoluwa, 2023). The result is a generation of students who are increasingly disconnected from their cultural roots and who may lack the critical thinking skills needed to navigate the complexities of cultural integration and transformation in a rapidly changing world.

The need for value re-orientation has become even more urgent in the face of rising moral decadence, youth involvement in crime, and the weakening of traditional family structures, all of which are linked to a decline in cultural values (Adesina, 2022). Value re-orientation refers to a deliberate effort to realign individuals' beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors with societal norms and values that promote ethical conduct, responsibility, and respect for others (Eze, 2022). In Nigeria, such efforts are crucial for addressing the challenges of corruption, tribalism, and social unrest, all of which are rooted in the failure to instill shared values across different cultural groups.

The role of education, particularly Social Studies, in fostering value re-orientation cannot be overstated. Through education, young people can be equipped with the knowledge and understanding needed to appreciate their cultural heritage and recognize the importance of ethical values in building a peaceful and cohesive society (Abdulrahman, 2023). Social Studies, with its focus on citizenship, ethics, and societal values, is ideally positioned to serve as a tool for value re-orientation. By promoting critical reflection on cultural practices and fostering a sense of shared identity among students from different ethnic backgrounds, Social Studies can contribute to the development of a more culturally integrated and value-driven society. This study seeks to appraisal of Social Studies Education for Cultural sharing and transformation towards value re-orientation in Nigeria.

Concept of Culture in Nigeria

Culture refers to the shared beliefs, values, customs, and practices of a group of people, shaping their worldview and influencing their behaviours. In Nigeria, culture is a dynamic and multifaceted concept that reflects the diversity of its population, consisting of over 250 ethnic groups with distinct languages, traditions, and social structures (Edewor, 2021). This diversity makes Nigeria one of the most culturally rich nations in the world, yet it also poses challenges for national cohesion and identity.

Nigerian culture is often characterized by language, religion, social norms, festivals, and traditional art forms. Language is a significant marker of cultural identity, with major ethnic groups like the Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo having their own distinct languages (Adeoye & Okolo, 2020). Religion also plays a pivotal role, with Islam, Christianity, and traditional African beliefs coexisting, often influencing societal norms and values.

Traditionally, Nigerian societies are communal, with strong emphasis on family ties, respect for elders, and adherence to cultural norms. According to Afolayan and Omole (2022), these social norms govern daily interactions and are reinforced through oral traditions, proverbs, and folklore. Nigerian festivals, such as the Durbar festival in the north, the Osun-Osogbo festival in the southwest, and the New Yam festival in the southeast, are cultural expressions that foster communal solidarity and cultural continuity (Ogunbiyi, 2020).

An Overview of Social Studies Education

Social Studies education is a multidisciplinary field that integrates knowledge from various social sciences and humanities to foster civic competence and social understanding among students. The development of Social Studies education can be traced back to the early 20th century in the United States, where it emerged as part of progressive education reforms aimed at addressing societal issues through a broader curriculum (Martorella, 2018). In Nigeria,

Social Studies education was introduced in the post-colonial era as a tool to promote national unity, cultural integration, and civic responsibility among students (Ajiboye & Adebayo, 2012). The subject was designed to address the challenges of nation-building by educating young people on the importance of understanding their socio-cultural environment and fostering a sense of national identity.

The primary objective of Social Studies education is to cultivate students' understanding of the world around them, including the social, political, economic, and cultural systems that influence their daily lives. According to Salami and Adewale (2020), the goals of Social Studies education include: developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills, promoting an understanding of democratic values and practices, fostering cultural awareness and respect for diversity and encouraging civic participation and responsible citizenship.

Social Studies education also emphasizes the importance of social justice, equality, and human rights, equipping students with the knowledge and skills necessary to address societal challenges and contribute to positive social change (Falayajo & Akinleye, 2019).

One of the critical functions of Social Studies education is its role in shaping the social values and attitudes of students. Through the study of historical events, civic institutions, and cultural practices, students are exposed to diverse perspectives that help them develop a more inclusive and tolerant worldview. In Nigeria, where ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity is a defining characteristic of society, Social Studies plays a crucial role in promoting mutual understanding and cooperation among different groups (Olaoye & Adegbeye, 2021). Moreover, Social Studies education helps students understand the impact of social policies and practices on their communities, encouraging them to become active participants in the democratic process. By exploring topics such as governance, human rights, and social justice, students learn the importance of advocating for equality and fairness in society (Omotayo & Adekunle, 2023). This empowerment fosters a sense of civic responsibility and prepares students to engage in meaningful ways with their communities and the broader society.

Despite its importance, Social Studies education in Nigeria faces several challenges. One of the most significant is the lack of adequately trained teachers who can effectively deliver the subject matter in a way that engages students and promotes critical thinking (Abdulraheem, 2022). Additionally, the curriculum often suffers from overcrowding, with Social Studies topics competing for time with other subjects, leading to a superficial treatment of important issues (Akindele & Olaniyan, 2021). Another challenge is the limited availability of teaching resources, particularly in rural areas where schools often lack access to up-to-date textbooks, learning materials, and technology that can enhance the teaching of Social Studies (Amadi & Odukoya, 2020). These challenges hinder the ability of Social Studies education to fully realize its potential in fostering cultural understanding, civic engagement, and value re-orientation among students.

Cultural Sharing and Transformation through Education

Cultural sharing refers to the process by which individuals and groups exchange, adopt, and integrate cultural elements such as beliefs, customs, languages, and practices across different societies. Education serves as a powerful medium through which cultural sharing and transformation can occur. In diverse and multi-ethnic societies like Nigeria, education is often positioned as a vehicle to foster mutual understanding, respect, and peaceful co-existence among various cultural groups. Through education, students are exposed to different worldviews, cultural practices, and histories, thereby promoting cultural awareness and creating opportunities for societal transformation. Education creates a structured environment in which individuals from diverse backgrounds can engage with and learn about cultures beyond their own. This exchange is particularly vital in multicultural societies where social cohesion depends on mutual understanding and respect.

As noted by Banks (2020), multicultural education allows for the incorporation of various cultural narratives within the classroom, encouraging students to appreciate the richness of cultural diversity. By integrating multiple cultural perspectives into curricula, schools can

promote tolerance and reduce ethnocentric attitudes, ultimately fostering cultural sharing. For instance, Social Studies education in Nigeria is designed to expose students to the historical, social, and cultural realities of the country's numerous ethnic groups. This exposure helps students develop a sense of national identity while respecting cultural differences (Adeyemi & Salami, 2022). Through subjects like history, literature, and civic education, students learn about the values, customs, and traditions of various Nigerian cultures, which strengthens the bonds of national unity. As students become more aware of the diversity within their country, they are more likely to appreciate and engage with cultural practices other than their own.

While cultural sharing promotes understanding, education also plays a crucial role in the transformation of cultural norms and practices. Cultural transformation refers to the dynamic process by which societies adapt to new ideas, technologies, and global influences, often reshaping traditional values and practices. According to Sleeter (2021), education has the potential to be a transformative force that challenges outdated cultural norms and promotes progressive values such as equality, human rights, and environmental sustainability. In the context of Nigeria, where traditional practices such as early marriage and gender inequality persist, education can be instrumental in fostering more equitable social norms. As argued by Olanrewaju and Adekunle (2023), schools are key sites for challenging harmful cultural practices and promoting human rights.

By educating young people about issues like gender equality, environmental protection, and global citizenship, the curriculum can instill values that are essential for societal progress. For instance, teaching about the rights of women and children can help students question and eventually discard oppressive cultural practices. Moreover, education serves as a platform for integrating global cultural practices with local traditions. This process of cultural hybridization, often facilitated by global educational exchanges and digital learning platforms, enables individuals to adopt elements of global culture without entirely losing their indigenous identity (Appiah, 2019). Through exposure to different languages, technologies, and forms of governance, education facilitates a cultural transformation that balances local values with global ideals.

Value Re-orientation in the Nigerian Context

Value re-orientation refers to a conscious and deliberate effort to change societal beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours that are deemed to have deteriorated or deviated from accepted moral, ethical, or cultural standards. In the Nigerian context, value re-orientation has become a critical topic due to the perceived erosion of traditional values such as honesty, integrity, discipline, respect for elders, and communal responsibility. These values, once upheld by various Nigerian cultures, are seen as being threatened by factors such as corruption, materialism, and moral decadence, particularly among the youth (Adeyemi & Adekoya, 2023).

Value re-orientation involves instilling or re-invigorating a set of values that guide the behaviour of individuals and groups within a society. It seeks to modify or replace negative values with positive ones that enhance social cohesion, development, and moral uprightness. In Nigeria, this concept has become part of national discourse due to increasing concerns about widespread corruption, poor governance, insecurity, and the weakening of the educational system (Ajayi, 2022). These issues reflect not just structural challenges but also a crisis of values.

Nigeria, with its rich cultural heritage, was once a society grounded in values of communalism, respect for elders, integrity, and hard work. Pre-colonial Nigerian societies placed high importance on moral education through family structures, religious institutions, and traditional leadership systems. However, with the advent of colonization, modernization, and globalization, there was a gradual shift towards more individualistic and materialistic ideals, leading to the erosion of many indigenous values (Obasi & Eze, 2021). In the post-colonial era, Nigeria's economic struggles, coupled with political instability and corruption, further deepened the moral crisis. National campaigns such as the "War Against Indiscipline" (WAI) launched in 1984 were efforts by the government to re-establish discipline and moral values among the

populace. However, the effectiveness of such programs has been limited, and recent efforts have focused on youth re-orientation and civic education to revive societal values (Eke, 2022).

Role of Social Studies Education for Cultural Sharing and Transformation Towards Value Re-orientation in Nigeria

Social Studies education plays a pivotal role in the cultural landscape of Nigeria, a nation characterized by its rich tapestry of ethnicities, languages, and traditions. As globalization and modernization pose challenges to traditional values, Social Studies education emerges as a critical tool for promoting cultural sharing and transformation. This process is essential for value re-orientation, especially among the youth, who are at the forefront of cultural change. Here are roles of Social Studies education in fostering cultural sharing, facilitating transformation, and ultimately promoting value re-orientation in Nigeria. Promoting cultural sharing: Cultural sharing refers to the exchange and appreciation of diverse cultural practices, beliefs, and values among different ethnic groups. Social Studies education provides a platform for students to engage with various cultures, fostering an environment of mutual respect and understanding.

According to Akpan and Akpan (2021), the curriculum of Social Studies is designed to incorporate elements of local cultures, thereby encouraging students to appreciate their cultural heritage while also learning about others. The integration of cultural content in Social Studies classes facilitates discussions about cultural identity and diversity. For instance, through collaborative projects, role-plays, and cultural presentations, students can share aspects of their backgrounds, fostering an inclusive atmosphere that values diversity (Iji, 2020). This exposure not only enhances students' understanding of their cultural roots but also cultivates a sense of belonging and respect for others.

Facilitating cultural transformation: Cultural transformation involves changes in cultural practices and values, often resulting from external influences or internal societal shifts. Social Studies education serves as a vehicle for this transformation by equipping students with critical thinking skills that encourage them to analyze and question traditional norms and values. As highlighted by Olatunji and Odukoya (2022), students are taught to reflect on societal issues such as gender inequality, corruption, and environmental degradation, which are prevalent in Nigeria. Through this reflective process, students can identify and challenge negative cultural practices that may hinder societal progress. For example, Social Studies education can address harmful traditional practices, promoting more equitable and sustainable alternatives (Usman & Balarabe, 2023). This shift not only aids in cultural transformation but also reinforces the importance of adapting to contemporary societal values while respecting cultural heritage.

Value re-orientation: value re-orientation refers to the process of reshaping individuals' values and beliefs to align them with societal goals and aspirations. Social Studies education is instrumental in this process by promoting core values such as respect, tolerance, and civic responsibility. The Nigerian educational curriculum emphasizes the need for value re-orientation, particularly in light of the challenges posed by corruption, moral decadence, and social injustice (Eze, 2023). The teaching of Social Studies encourages students to engage in community service and participate in civic activities, fostering a sense of social responsibility. As students learn about the principles of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, they are better equipped to contribute positively to their communities (Obasi, 2021). This engagement promotes active citizenship, enabling students to become change agents who advocate for social justice and ethical behavior.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Social Studies education serves as a vital instrument for fostering cultural sharing and facilitating transformation towards value re-orientation in Nigeria. As a country characterized by its rich diversity, the integration of various cultural perspectives within the Social Studies curriculum promotes mutual understanding, respect, and appreciation among

students from different ethnic backgrounds. By engaging with diverse cultural narratives, students are not only able to connect with their heritage but also learn to value the cultures of others, thereby promoting social cohesion. Through the promotion of core values such as tolerance, civic responsibility, and social justice, Social Studies education plays a significant role in value re-orientation. By preparing students to become informed and active citizens, it cultivates a generation that is equipped to contribute positively to societal development and address pressing social issues. As Nigeria continues to navigate the complexities of cultural identity and societal challenges, the importance of an effective and comprehensive Social Studies curriculum cannot be overstated. It is imperative for policymakers and educators to prioritize the enhancement of Social Studies education as a means to foster cultural understanding and value re-orientation, ultimately contributing to a more harmonious and progressive society.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that;

- i. The Social Studies curriculum should be revised to include more diverse cultural content that reflects Nigeria's ethnic plurality. This enhancement should incorporate local histories, traditions, and contemporary societal issues to foster a deeper understanding of cultural diversity among students.
- ii. Educators should receive ongoing training focused on culturally responsive teaching strategies. Professional development programs should equip teachers with the skills to effectively facilitate discussions on cultural sharing, critical thinking, and value re-orientation in their classrooms.
- iii. Schools should implement experiential learning opportunities, such as cultural exchanges, community service projects, and field trips to culturally significant sites. These activities should promote direct engagement with various cultures, enhancing students' understanding and appreciation of diversity.
- iv. Educational institutions should collaborate with cultural organizations, museums, and community groups to create programs that promote cultural sharing and understanding. Partnerships can facilitate workshops, guest lectures, and cultural festivals that enrich the educational experience.
- v. Students should be encouraged to participate in civic activities and community development projects as part of their Social Studies education. This involvement should help instill a sense of social responsibility and empower students to advocate for positive change within their communities.
- vi. Educational authorities should develop assessment tools that measure students' understanding of cultural diversity, social values, and civic responsibilities. Regular evaluations should be conducted to assess the effectiveness of Social Studies education in achieving its objectives related to cultural sharing and value re-orientation.
- vii. Government policies should prioritize the importance of Social Studies education in the national curriculum. Investments should be made to ensure adequate resources, funding, and infrastructure are in place to support effective teaching and learning in Social Studies.

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