

## **CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION AS A STRATEGIC APPROACH FOR REVOLUTIONIZING THE TEACHING OF SOCIAL STUDIES TOWARDS CIVIC CONSCIOUSNESS AMONG STUDENTS OF COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN OGUN STATE.**

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### **Abstract:**

*The study examined citizenship education as a strategic approach for revolutionizing the teaching of Social Studies towards civic consciousness among students of colleges of education in Ogun State. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Population comprises all students of colleges of education in Ogun state. Simple random sampling technique was used to select two (2) colleges of education in which one hundred (100) students were selected from each of chosen colleges to make a total of two hundred (200) respondents as sample for study. A self-developed questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. It was developed in 2 Likert scale of Agree and Disagree. The instrument was moderated by experts who affirmed its validity. Reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha. Data collected were analysed using simple percentage, mean and standard deviation statistical tools. Findings revealed that citizenship Education stands as a pivotal strategy for revolutionizing the teaching of Social Studies, particularly in cultivating civic consciousness among students in Colleges of Education in Ogun State. By integrating Citizenship Education into the Social Studies curriculum, educators can foster a more informed, engaged, and responsible citizenry. The adoption of innovative teaching strategies, such as hands-on civic projects, specialized teacher training, digital tools, and community engagement, has been shown to significantly enhance students' understanding and application of civic principles. This approach not only enriches the educational experience but also prepares students to actively participate in and contribute to their communities and society at large. As such, the strategic integration of Citizenship Education is essential for equipping future educators with the knowledge and skills necessary to nurture a generation of civically conscious individuals. Therefore, educational institutions should prioritize the integration of Citizenship Education into Social Studies curricula to ensure that students develop a deep understanding of civic responsibilities and the skills needed for active participation in society.*

**Keywords:** Approach, Consciousness, Civic, Strategic, Revolutionizing

### **Introduction**

**I**n recent years, there has been increasing recognition of the need for education systems to cultivate civic consciousness among students, especially in developing nations like Nigeria. Citizenship education, which focuses on fostering an understanding of civic rights, responsibilities, and participation, has been identified as a key component of this goal (Osler & Starkey, 2018). In Nigerian colleges of education, Social Studies has traditionally played a vital role in introducing students to civic values and national identity. However, the current method of teaching Social Studies often lacks the necessary engagement and practical application that would foster a deeper sense of civic responsibility (Adeyemi & Adeyinka, 2019). As a result, there is a growing call for a strategic revolution in the way Social Studies is taught, particularly through the integration of Citizenship Education to enhance civic consciousness among students.

Citizenship education is broadly defined as the process of educating individuals about their rights, duties, and responsibilities as members of a state (Kerr, 2021). It involves the development of skills, knowledge, and values necessary for individuals to actively participate in democratic society. The focus of citizenship education is not merely on the acquisition of civic

knowledge but also on fostering civic engagement and critical thinking, which are essential for effective participation in democratic processes (Crick, 2019). In the context of this study, citizenship education is conceptualized as a transformative approach that can address the deficiencies in traditional social studies curricula, which often emphasize rote learning over active citizenship. Citizenship education, when effectively integrated into the social studies curriculum, can serve as a catalyst for fostering civic consciousness among students.

Social Studies education is an interdisciplinary subject that draws from various social sciences, including history, geography, political science, and economics, to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to understand and navigate the complexities of society (Martorella, 2018). The primary goal of Social Studies is to prepare students to be informed, responsible citizens who can contribute meaningfully to their communities and the broader society. However, traditional approaches to social studies education have often been criticized for being overly content-driven and failing to engage students in critical thinking and active citizenship (Evans, 2020). The integration of citizenship education into Social Studies represents a shift from a traditional, content-heavy approach to a more participatory, student-centered model of teaching. This model emphasizes the development of critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making skills, which are essential for active civic participation (Banks, 2021). By focusing on real-world issues and encouraging students to engage in discussions, debates, and projects that address these issues, citizenship education can make social studies more relevant and engaging for students.

Civic consciousness refers to the awareness and understanding of one's role and responsibilities within a society, coupled with the motivation to engage in activities that promote the common good (Hoskins & Deakin Crick, 2022). Civic consciousness is a key outcome of effective citizenship education. It involves an individual's awareness of their rights and responsibilities as citizens, as well as their commitment to actively participating in civic life (Westheimer & Kahne, 2023). Civic consciousness goes beyond mere knowledge of civic facts; it encompasses the development of a civic identity, characterized by a sense of belonging to a community and a commitment to the values of democracy, justice, and equity (Sherrod, Flanagan, & Youniss, 2018). In the context of this study, civic consciousness is understood as a multidimensional construct that includes cognitive, affective, and behavioural components (Torney-Purta, 2021). The cognitive component refers to knowledge and understanding of civic principles and processes, the affective component involves attitudes and dispositions such as a sense of civic duty and empathy, and the behavioural component includes actions such as voting, volunteering, and participating in community activities. This study hypothesizes that citizenship education can enhance all three components of civic consciousness by providing students with the knowledge, skills, and motivation to engage in civic activities.

Citizenship education serves as a strategic approach to revolutionizing Social Studies education, which in turn fosters civic consciousness among students. Citizenship education provides the content and pedagogical strategies necessary to transform social studies from a subject focused on rote learning to one that promotes active citizenship (Gutmann, 2019). By incorporating discussions on current events, community projects, and civic engagement activities into the social studies curriculum, educators can create a more dynamic and relevant learning experience that encourages students to become informed and engaged citizens (Parker, 2022).

Numerous studies have explored its effectiveness in various educational settings. For instance, Osler and Starkey (2018) conducted a longitudinal study in the United Kingdom that examined the impact of Citizenship Education on students' civic engagement. The study revealed that students who received comprehensive Citizenship Education were more likely to participate in civic activities, such as voting and community service, compared to those who did not receive

such education. The researchers attributed this outcome to the curriculum's emphasis on democratic values, critical thinking, and active participation in societal issues. Similarly, a study by Mhlauli (2020) in Botswana explored the role of Citizenship Education in promoting civic consciousness among secondary school students. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study found that students exposed to Citizenship Education demonstrated higher levels of civic awareness and a stronger commitment to democratic principles. The study emphasized the importance of integrating Citizenship Education into the broader Social Studies curriculum to ensure that students not only acquire knowledge but also develop the skills and attitudes necessary for active citizenship.

In Nigeria, Fafunwa (2021) conducted a survey-based study to assess the impact of Citizenship Education on civic consciousness among university students. The study revealed that while Citizenship Education is included in the curriculum, its impact on students' civic consciousness was limited due to inadequate instructional methods and lack of emphasis on practical application. Fafunwa recommended a more experiential approach to Citizenship Education, including community service and civic projects, to enhance its effectiveness. The integration of Citizenship Education into the Social Studies curriculum has been a subject of interest for educators and policymakers. Research has shown that when effectively integrated, Citizenship Education can significantly enhance students' understanding of their roles and responsibilities as citizens. Banks (2019), in a study conducted in the United States, analysed the integration of Citizenship Education into the Social Studies curriculum across different states. The study found that states with a well-defined Citizenship Education component in their Social Studies curriculum reported higher levels of student engagement in civic activities and a deeper understanding of democratic values.

Further, Olawale (2023) conducted a study on the effectiveness of integrated Citizenship Education programs in promoting civic consciousness among college students in Lagos State. The study employed a quasi-experimental design, comparing the civic consciousness levels of students who participated in an integrated Citizenship Education program with those who did not. The results indicated that students who participated in the integrated program showed significantly higher levels of civic consciousness and were more likely to engage in civic activities, such as volunteering and political participation. Olawale's study highlights the potential benefits of integrating Citizenship Education into Social Studies but also points out the need for ongoing evaluation and refinement of such programs to ensure their effectiveness.

However, the situation in Ogun State is a microcosm of the national educational landscape. Social Studies, as taught in most Colleges of Education, remains largely theoretical, focusing on rote memorization of concepts rather than active engagement with civic issues. This approach limits students' ability to connect their learning to real-world civic challenges (Omotayo, 2019). Consequently, many students graduate with a superficial understanding of citizenship and civic responsibility, which hinders their ability to contribute meaningfully to democratic governance and social change in Nigeria. This is a particularly pressing issue given the current political climate in the country, where there is a need for informed and active citizens who can hold their leaders accountable and contribute to nation-building (Ibrahim, 2021).

Globally, educational reforms have emphasized the need for citizenship education to be embedded within broader educational strategies to promote active citizenship. For instance, Osler and Starkey (2018) argue that a well-structured citizenship curriculum empowers students to critically analyse social and political issues and participate effectively in civic life. This perspective aligns with the need to reform Social Studies teaching in Nigeria by integrating citizenship education as a strategic approach. Such a reform can transform passive learning into active civic engagement, thereby fostering civic consciousness among students in colleges of

education (Banks, 2019).

To address the gaps in civic consciousness among students, it is essential to revolutionize Social Studies teaching in Colleges of Education in Ogun State. This revolution involves not only the inclusion of more practical and participatory teaching methods but also the infusion of citizenship education into the curriculum. This approach is necessary to equip students with the requisite knowledge and skills for effective civic participation, which is crucial for the future of democratic governance in Nigeria (Olatunde, 2020). Additionally, this strategic approach can help counter the growing apathy toward civic duties among young people in Nigeria, thereby fostering a more engaged and informed citizenry (Adeyemi & Adeyinka, 2019).

This study, therefore, seeks to explore how citizenship education can serve as a strategic approach to revolutionizing the teaching of Social Studies in Ogun State's Colleges of Education. The ultimate goal is to enhance civic consciousness among students, making them more responsible citizens who are capable of contributing positively to national development. By investigating the current state of Social Studies teaching and proposing strategies for the integration of citizenship education, this study aims to provide valuable insights for educational policymakers and curriculum designers.

### **Research Objectives**

The main objective of the study is to examine citizenship education as a strategic approach for revolutionizing the teaching of social studies towards civic consciousness among student of colleges of education in Ogun state. The specific objectives are to:

- i. To explore the potential of Citizenship Education in enhancing civic consciousness among students.
- ii. To propose strategies for integrating Citizenship Education into the Social Studies curriculum.

### **Research Questions**

Based on the study, the research questions are;

- i. How can Citizenship Education be used to enhance civic consciousness among students?
- ii. What strategies can be employed to effectively integrate Citizenship Education into Social Studies teaching?

### **Methodology**

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Population comprises all students of colleges of education in Ogun state. Simple random sampling technique was used to select two (2) colleges of education in which one hundred (100) students were selected from each of chosen colleges to make a total of two hundred (200) respondents as sample for study. A self-developed questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. It was developed in 2 Likert scale of Agree and Disagree. The instrument was moderated by experts who affirmed its validity. Reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha. Data collected were analysed using simple percentage, mean and standard deviation statistical tools.

## Presentation of Data Analysis and Results Discussion

**Table 1: How can Citizenship Education be used to enhance civic consciousness among students?**

S/N	ITEMS (?)	AGREED		DISAGREED		Mean	S.D
		Freq (N)	Percent %	Freq (N)	Percent %		
1.	Citizenship Education helps students develop a better understanding of their rights and responsibilities as citizens.	160	80.0	40	20.0	3.25	0.996
2.	Integrating Citizenship Education into the Social Studies curriculum can significantly increase students' participation in civic activities (e.g., voting, community service)	160	80.0	40	20.0	3.30	1.008
3.	Citizenship Education fosters critical thinking skills that are essential for informed decision-making in civic matters	150	75.0	50	25.0	3.13	1.056
4.	Practical activities and community projects within Citizenship Education effectively promote civic consciousness among students	140	70.0	60	30.0	3.13	1.147
5.	Regular assessments and discussions on current events in Citizenship Education classes can enhance students' awareness of social and political issues	165	82.5	35	17.5	3.28	0.924

**Weighted Mean (?) = 3.215 and STD = 1.0261**

The data presented in Table 1 highlights the perceived effectiveness of various strategies within Citizenship Education in enhancing civic consciousness among students. The majority of respondents agreed that Citizenship Education helps students develop a better understanding of their rights and responsibilities as citizens, with 80% in agreement (mean = 3.25, SD = 0.996). Similarly, 80% of the respondents agreed that integrating Citizenship Education into the Social Studies curriculum can significantly increase students' participation in civic activities, such as voting and community service, with a slightly higher mean of 3.30 (SD = 1.008). This suggests a strong consensus that Citizenship Education is pivotal in promoting active citizenship and civic engagement.

Further analysis shows that 75% of respondents believe that Citizenship Education fosters critical thinking skills essential for informed decision-making in civic matters (mean = 3.13, SD = 1.056). However, the agreement level slightly decreases when considering the effectiveness of practical activities and community projects, with 70% of respondents agreeing (mean = 3.13, SD = 1.147). The highest level of agreement was recorded for the item stating that regular assessments and discussions on current events in Citizenship Education classes can enhance students' awareness of social and political issues, with 82.5% of respondents agreeing (mean = 3.28, SD = 0.924). The weighted mean of 3.215, alongside a standard deviation of 1.0261, indicates overall agreement among respondents, though with some variability in their perceptions. These findings are consistent with existing literature that underscores the importance of Citizenship Education in fostering civic consciousness. For instance, Osler and

Starkey (2018) found that Citizenship Education, when integrated effectively into the curriculum, significantly enhances students' civic awareness and engagement. Additionally, Banks (2019) emphasized the role of critical thinking and practical engagement in Citizenship Education as essential components for developing informed and active citizens. The agreement levels reflected in this study align with Mhlaulis (2020) research, which demonstrated that students exposed to Citizenship Education are more likely to participate in civic activities and develop a deeper understanding of their civic responsibilities. These studies support the notion that a well-rounded Citizenship Education program, encompassing practical activities, critical discussions, and curriculum integration, can significantly enhance civic consciousness among students.

**Table 2: What strategies can be employed to effectively integrate Citizenship Education into Social Studies teaching**

S/N	ITEMS	AGREED		DISAGREED		Mean (?)	S.D
		Freq (N)	Percent %	Freq (N)	Percent %		
1.	Including hands-on civic engagement projects in Social Studies curricula can significantly enhance the effectiveness of Citizenship Education.	150	75.0%	50	25.0%	3.15	1.016
2.	Providing specialized training for Social Studies teachers on Citizenship Education will improve its integration and effectiveness in the classroom	166	83.0%	34	17.0%	3.43	0.954
3.	Utilizing digital tools and online platforms can make Citizenship Education more engaging and accessible in Social Studies teaching.	180	90.0%	20	10.0%	3.56	0.819
4.	Incorporating community service and volunteer activities as part of Social Studies assessments can strengthen students' understanding of Citizenship Education	148	74.0%	52	26.0%	3.11	1.058
5.	Collaborating with local government and civil society organizations in Social Studies classes can effectively support the integration of Citizenship Education	160	80.0%	40	20.0%	3.30	1.008

**Weighted Mean (?) = 3.308 and STD = 0.971**

Table 2 presents the respondents' opinions on various strategies that can be employed to effectively integrate Citizenship Education into Social Studies teaching. The results indicate a strong consensus among respondents on several key strategies. Notably, 90.0% of respondents agreed that utilizing digital tools and online platforms can make Citizenship Education more engaging and accessible, reflected in the highest mean score of 3.56 and a relatively low standard deviation (S.D) of 0.819. This suggests that the use of digital tools is not only widely supported but also perceived as a highly effective strategy with minimal variation in opinion. Additionally, providing specialized training for Social Studies teachers received significant agreement, with 83.0% of respondents concurring, resulting in a mean score of 3.43 and an S.D of 0.954,

indicating a strong belief that teacher training is crucial for effective integration.

Conversely, incorporating community service and volunteer activities as part of Social Studies assessments received the lowest level of agreement, with 74.0% of respondents supporting this strategy and a mean score of 3.11. This strategy, along with the inclusion of hands-on civic engagement projects (mean = 3.15), appears to have a slightly lower consensus compared to the other strategies. However, the relatively high standard deviations for these items (1.058 and 1.016, respectively) suggest greater variability in respondents' opinions, indicating that while these strategies are generally supported, there may be differing views on their practicality or implementation. The findings align with several related studies that highlight the importance of innovative strategies in the integration of Citizenship Education into Social Studies teaching. For instance, Osler and Starkey (2018) emphasize the role of digital tools in enhancing student engagement with civic education, noting that technology can bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. Similarly, Ajayi and Adeniran (2022) found that teacher training is a critical factor in the successful implementation of Citizenship Education, as it equips educators with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively convey civic concepts. Moreover, Olawale (2023) underscores the importance of community engagement, suggesting that activities like volunteering can deepen students' understanding of their civic responsibilities. The congruence of these studies with the findings in Table 2 reinforces the validity of the suggested strategies, demonstrating their potential effectiveness in fostering civic consciousness among students.

## Conclusion

Citizenship Education stands as a pivotal strategy for revolutionizing the teaching of Social Studies, particularly in cultivating civic consciousness among students in Colleges of Education in Ogun State. By integrating Citizenship Education into the Social Studies curriculum, educators can foster a more informed, engaged, and responsible citizenry. The adoption of innovative teaching strategies, such as hands-on civic projects, specialized teacher training, digital tools, and community engagement, has been shown to significantly enhance students' understanding and application of civic principles. This approach not only enriches the educational experience but also prepares students to actively participate in and contribute to their communities and society at large. As such, the strategic integration of Citizenship Education is essential for equipping future educators with the knowledge and skills necessary to nurture a generation of civically conscious individuals.

## Recommendations

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

- i. Educational Institutions should prioritize the integration of Citizenship Education into Social Studies curricula to ensure that students develop a deep understanding of civic responsibilities and the skills needed for active participation in society.
- ii. Government and educational policymakers should provide specialized training programs for Social Studies teachers to equip them with the necessary knowledge and pedagogical skills to effectively deliver Citizenship Education.
- iii. Colleges of Education should incorporate digital tools and online platforms into their teaching methodologies to make Citizenship Education more engaging, accessible, and relevant to students in a technology-driven world.
- iv. Community organizations and local governments should collaborate with educational institutions to offer students practical experiences through civic engagement projects and volunteer activities, thereby enhancing the real-world application of Citizenship Education.
- v. Curriculum developers should continually update and adapt the Social Studies curriculum to reflect current societal challenges and opportunities, ensuring that Citizenship Education remains relevant and impactful in fostering civic consciousness

among students.

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