

## THE CAPABILITY OF SOCIAL STUDIES TO INCULCATE MORAL AND SOCIAL VALUES INTO LEARNERS

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### Abstract

*This study determines the extent and capability of Social Studies, compared to three other subjects, in transmitting and developing social and moral values in secondary school students. It is a survey research study involving eighty-eight Social Studies teachers as respondents. Relevant data were collected through the administration of a researcher-designed questionnaire titled "Moral and Social Values Development through Social Studies". Data collected were analysed using simple percentage and the chi square ( $\chi^2$ ) statistical analysis. The result indicated that CRK mostly inculcates moral values while Social Studies teaches social values more than any of the four subjects compared, and that while Moral Instruction is already phased out at the secondary school, Social Studies is adequately equipped to inculcate moral and social values into the learners.*

### Introduction

The contemporary Nigerian society is characterised by lawlessness, high crime rate, social and political instability, religious intolerance, inter-ethnic and communal clashes, human trafficking, ritual killings, materialism and the undesirable activities of touts and miscreants. What are the causes? One may ask. The causes are due to abject lack of or inadequate inculcation and development of moral and social values in the citizens coupled with poverty. Charity, they say, begins at home. The family should be the first agent to inculcate effective values into the young ones who later become adults of the society.

However, inadequate employment opportunities and the hydra-headed inflation in the country put a heavy burden on parents which force them to search relentlessly for their daily bread to keep the family moving. Many parents become "visitors" to their wards at the dinner table on Sunday because they leave home while their wards are still on bed and return late to meet them on bed again. The big question then is, who now takes care of the moral upbringing of these children?

Since the family, the primary agent of moral socialisation, has turned its attention to bread-winning alone, the moral and social training of the child is left to second-

ary agents, especially the school. The society now places the bulk of the responsibility of social and moral training, as well as the inculcation of acceptable values and attitudes in the child, is placed on the school. This calls for the dumping of the children (as early as age one) in the school where they always spend the whole day.

However, it is very pertinent to inculcate and develop those standards and principles that are considered desirable and treasured by the society in children for effective national development. The development (in the child) of the treasured moral and social values like justice, prudence, togetherness, comradeship, hard work, honesty, dedication and chastity become an important role of which the school has to focus its attention. Little wonder, then, that this important role of the school is stressed in the National Policy on Education (1998:8), that the national educational goals (among others) should be

*the inculcation of the right types of values and attitudes for the survival of the individuals and the Nigerian Society...and in consequence the quality of instruction at all levels has to be oriented towards inculcation of the following values: respect for the worth and dignity of the individual... moral and spiritual principles in interpersonal and human relations.*

These moral and social values and attitudes must therefore form the bulk of the content of the school's curriculum. Expectedly however, not all the school's subjects will perform this role equally. Hence, while some focus on the inculcation of practical technical skills, basic and scientific knowledge; some are interested in moral development while some focus on the development of social values and attitudes.

Very few subjects or disciplines have broad based focus and input as Social Studies, which derives its basis of existence from various traditional disciplines. This broad-based knowledge enables Social Studies to deal with mankind's social, physical, economic, political, cultural, moral, religious, scientific and technological problems at any place where people are living or have lived in the past (Akinlaye 1997:3). The purpose of this search for knowledge, among others, is to develop in the young learners positive attitudes of togetherness, honesty, integrity, hard work, fairness and justice at work and at play as their contribution to the development of the (Nigerian) society. (Akinlaye 1997; Adetoro, 2000). This paper therefore seeks to determine the extent to which social studies has achieved this purpose in the lives of our contemporary secondary school students. This is done by comparing four secondary school subjects, which are taught to inculcate moral and social values into the students. That is, Christian Religious Knowledge (CRK), Islamic Religious Knowledge (IRK), Moral Instruction and Social Studies. Necessary information was sought from Social Studies teachers for this purpose.



## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The following questions were raised to test the role of Social Studies in inculcating moral and social values into the students.

1. Which of the selected subjects mostly teach moral and social values?
2. At what level in the secondary school is moral and social values development in learners adequately taken care of?
3. What is Social Studies teachers' perception of moral and social values?
4. Is Social Studies adequately equipped for moral and social values development in learners?
5. Is there any difference between teachers' perception of moral and social values and the capability of Social Studies to develop these values in students?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Sample**

The population sample consisted of 88 Social Studies teachers (out of the 100 sampled) from the 304 public junior secondary schools in Lagos State with an average of one Social Studies teacher per school.

### **Instrument**

A questionnaire on Social and Moral Values Development in Learners Through Social Studies was constructed for data collection. It has six sections (A-F). Section A sought information on respondents' background - sex, age bracket, qualification, area of specialisation and years of experience. Section B sought information for answering research questions 1 and 2. Section C for question 4. Section D for question 3. Section E for question 4 while Section F provides suggestions from respondents on more concepts or topics for further development of values by Social Studies education.

The questionnaire was validated by an expert in the Faculty of Education, Lagos State University. The reliability was established at 0.88 using the test re-test reliability.

### **Data Analysis**

The analysis was done by computing the responses in percentages for research questions 1-4 and the chi square ( $X^2$ ) statistic for research question 5.

### **Research Question One**

Which of the selected subjects mostly teaches moral and social values at the secondary school level? Table 1 below shows the analysis.

**TABLE 1: The Subject that mostly Teaches Moral and Social Values (In Percentages)**

Item	Statement	CRK	IRK	Moral	Soc. Std Inst.	No. Response	Total
1	The subject that mostly teaches moral values	(48) 54.55	(4) 44.55	(16) 18.18	(4) 4.55	(16) 18.18	(88) 100
2	The order in which they teach moral values	(32) 36.36	(4) 4.55	(16) 18.18	(20) 22.72	(16) 18.18	(88) 100
3	The subject that mostly teaches social values	(8) 9.09	-	(16) 18.18	(52) 59.09	(12) 13.64	(88) 100
4	The order in which they teach social values	(28) 31.82	(4) 4.55	(8) 9.09	(40) 45.45	(8) 9.09	(88) 100
	<b>Total</b>	(116) 32.95	(12) 3.41	(56) 15.91	(116) 32.95	(52) 14.77	(352) 100

It could be observed from Table 1 above that the respondents tipped CRK as the subject that mostly teaches moral values (54.55%) in item 1 and 36.36% in item 2, followed by Social Studies (22.72%) in their ranking in item 2 (though with biases against IRK and Moral Instruction). In their capacity to teach social values however, Social Studies is tipped first ahead of others (with 59.09% and 45.45% ranking respectively).

#### Research Question Two

At what level in the secondary school is moral and social values development in students adequately taken care of? Table 2 below shows the analysis.

**Table 2: The School Level at which Moral and Social Values are adequately taken care of (In Percentages)**

Item	Statement	CRK	IRK Inst.	Moral	Soc. Std	All	None
5	Subject currently being offered in the secondary school	(48) 54.58	(46) 52.27	(4) 4.55	(72) 81.82	(8) 9.09	(8) 9.09
6	Those offered by JSS students only	(28) 31.82	(7) 7.95	(4) 4.55	(72) 81.82	-	-
7	Those offered by both JSS & SSS students	(76) 86.36	(52) 59.09	(4) 4.55	(16) 18.18	-	-
8	Elective at JSS	(60) 68.18	(53) 59.09	(48) 54.58	(4) 4.55	-	-
9	Elective at SSS	(48) 54.58	(60) 68.18	(52) 59.09	(480) 4.55	(52) 59.09	



From the analysis in table 2, it could be observed that all the subjects are currently being offered at the secondary school level except Moral Instruction [CRK 54.58%, IRK 52.27% and Social Studies 81.86% (item 5)]. Out of these three, Social Studies is offered by JSS students only (testified to by 81.82% in item 6). It could also be observed that out of the three, CRK and IRK are elective at both the senior secondary and junior secondary school levels while Social Studies is not an elective at the JSS thereby being a compulsory subject.

### Research Question Three

What is Social Studies teachers' perception of moral and social values? Table 3 below presents the analysis.

**Table 3: Social Studies Teachers' Perception of Moral and Social Values (In Percentages)**

Item	Statement	Yes	No	No Idea	Total
1	Moral means exhibiting good behaviour	(80) 90.91	(8) 9.09	-	(88) 100
2	Moral means ability to distinguish between right and wrong	(76) 86.36	(12) 13.64	-	(88) 100
3	Morals can also mean justice	(76) 86.36	(12) 13.64	-	(88) 100
4	Moral is righteousness	(72) 81.82	(16) 18.18	-	(88) 100
5	Moral habits means standard behaviour	(80) 90.91	(8) 9.09	-	(88) 100
6	A moral man does not have loose behaviour	(84) 95.45	(4) 4.55	-	(88) 100
7	A moral man is a disciplined man	(84) 95.45	-	(4) 4.55	(88) 100
8	Values are principles considered desirable and treasured by the society	(80) 90.91	(8) 9.09	-	(88) 100
9	Social values are desirable social behaviour and principles	(84) 95.45	(4) 4.55	-	(88) 100
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>(716) 90.40</b>	<b>(72) 9.09</b>	<b>(4) 0.51</b>	<b>(792) 100</b>

From Table 3 above, 90.40% of the respondents agreed with the conceptual meaning provided for morals, values and social values while 9.09% negatively responded. This shows that Social Studies teachers understood the meaning of moral and social values.

**Research Question Four**

Is Social Studies adequately equipped for moral and social values development in the learners? Table 4 presents the analysis.

**Table 4: Social Studies Capability to Equip Learners with Moral and Social Values (In Percentages)**

**Section D**

Item	Statement	Yes	No	No Idea	Total
1	The concepts in Social Studies are adequate for developing moral values in learners	(52) 59.09	(24) 27.27	(12) 13.64	(88) 100
2	The concepts are adequate to develop social values in students e.g. co-operation, patriotism, loyalty, honesty etc.	(72) 81.82	(16) 18.18	-	(88) 100

**Section E**

1	Social Studies teaches good behaviour	(80) 90.91	(8) 9.09	-	(88) 100
2	It encourages students to distinguish between right and wrong	(80) 90.91	(8) 9.09	-	(88) 100
3	Social Studies teaches justice	(76) 86.36	(12) 13.64	-	(88) 100
4	Social Studies students are disciplined	(84) 95.45	(4) 4.55	-	(88) 100
5	Social Studies students do not have loose behaviour	(80) 90.91	(8) 9.09	-	(88) 100
6	Social Studies encourages disciplined acts	(88) 100	-	-	(88) 100
7	Social Studies makes learners to know and understand their rights	(88) 100	-	-	(88) 100
8	Knowing their rights makes Social Studies students to be controllable	(80) 90.91	(8) 9.09	-	(88) 100
9	Knowing their rights discourages Social Studies students from practising anti-social and immoral acts.	(80) 90.91	(8) 9.09	-	(88) 100
10	Social Studies does not encourage hooliganism.	(84) 95.45	-	(4) 4.55	(88) 100
11	Immoral acts can be curbed through Social Studies	(72) 81.82	(16) 18.18	-	(88) 100
12	Social Studies can help curb various acts of hooliganism in the school	(80) 90.91	(8) 9.09	-	88 100
<b>Total</b>		<b>(1096)</b> 88.96	<b>(120)</b> 9.74	<b>(16)</b> 1.3	<b>(1232)</b> 100



From Table 4, 88.96% of the respondents agreed to the fact that Social Studies is adequately equipped to develop moral and social values in the learners through their positive responses to the various items, while 9.74% disagreed.

#### Research Question Five

Is there any difference between teachers' perception of moral and social values and the capability of Social Studies to develop these values in students? Table 5 below presents the analysis

**Table 5: Analysis of the Difference between Teachers' Perception of Moral and Social Values and Social Studies Capability to develop these Values in Students**

Variable	F	YES	NO IDEA	NO	TOTAL	CAL. X <sup>2</sup>	TABLE X <sup>2</sup>
Perception of Moral and Social Values (Table 3)	88	716 90.4	72 9.09	4 0.51	792 100		
Perception of Social Studies Capabilities (Table 4)	88	1096 88.96	120 9.74	16 1.3	1232 100	3.4	7.82
TOTAL		1812 89.52	192 9.49	20 0.99	2024 100		

From Table 5 above, the calculated X<sup>2</sup> yielded a table value of 7.82 at 0.05 level of significance while the calculated value was 3.4. Since the table value is greater than the calculated value, therefore, there is no significant difference between teachers' perception of moral and social values and their perception of the capability of social studies to develop these values in students.

#### Discussion

The study revealed that the enormous role of character moulding through moral and social values inculcation vested on the school is being shouldered by some subjects in the school curriculum with varied degrees (Table 1). This is expressed by the teachers' ranking of CRK higher in moral values inculcation followed by Social Studies, the reverse is the case in the inculcation of social values, while other subjects trailed behind. However, it is generally accepted that both subjects equally inculcate these values into learners with 32.95% positively favouring both of them. These two subjects (CRK and Social Studies) tend to respond to the goals of education as stated in National Policy on Education (1998), that education should ensure the inculcation of the right types of values and attitudes for the survival of the individuals and the Nigerian society.

At the level of inculcation however, Social Studies that mostly inculcates

social values is compulsory and restricted to the junior classes while CRK (and IRK) that inculcate moral values are elective at both the junior and senior classes while Moral Instruction is being phased out of the secondary school (table 2). This is an indication that these values are inculcated at the junior secondary level (via Social Studies) while their inculcation is optional at the senior secondary level.

The restriction and optional nature of these value-laden subjects to the JSS level may be inimical to the Nigerian society since the parents who should provide necessary guidance are either in the market selling or behind their tables in offices. Moreover, the secondary school years coincide with the adolescent stage of the learners during which every avenue at character moulding should be exploited. Curriculum planners have foreseen this, hence they planned and included Social Studies syllabus for the senior secondary level. Despite the existence of this syllabus, students are either unaware or deliberately do not want to offer the subject at that level. Some teachers however are oblivious of the existence of Social Studies syllabus for the senior secondary level.

On their perception of moral and social values (Table 3) and Social Studies capability to inculcate these values (Table 4), teachers generally understood the meaning of moral and social values with 90.4% positively responding to the various interpretations given, while 88.9% were convinced of Social Studies capability in inculcating these values. There is, however, no significant difference between their perception on these two variables (meaning of the values and Social Studies capability (Table 5). That means a teacher who understood what these values are equally perceived Social Studies as capable of inculcating them. This equal perception means that since they (the teachers) understood what social and moral values are, they also knew the concepts (contained in Social Studies) that can adequately inculcate these values into learners. This explains why they were able to suggest more concepts that could be included in the Social Studies curriculum to further fortify it for this social responsibility.

The adequate understanding of the meaning of moral and social values by the teachers coupled with their great conviction about the capability of Social Studies to effectively inculcate these cherished values into the learners show that Social Studies teachers are capable of transmitting these values if the restriction handicap is removed. Hence, they suggested the inclusion into the Social Studies curriculum of more concepts and topics like functions of religion and religious tolerance, discipline in our national life, accident prevention and management, effects and ways of controlling cultism in our schools and manpower development.

Unlike other discrete subjects, the integrative nature of Social Studies provides it with an eclectic status and broad based content to enable it provide desirable values and attitudes to learners which include the fostering of positive, useful and meaningful social, physical and cultural attitudes in the learners (Akinlaye, 1997; Adetoro 2000). If given the adequate status in the school timetable therefore, there is the assurance that Social Studies will greatly help in reducing the moral decadence



which Ibezim (1994) says every Nigerian knows exists in our nation, rather than majority looking up to the government for solution.

## **CONCLUSION**

Some salient conclusions could be made from the study. There are:

1. Social Studies is adequately equipped and capable of effectively inculcating moral values (like some other subjects) and social values (more than many other subjects) into the learners at the secondary school.
2. Also, the role of the school in character moulding through inculcation of moral and social values via subjects offered by students is dwindling. This is based on two factors:
  - i) A character moulding subject like Moral Instruction is being phased out from the school timetable.
  - ii) Subjects vested with this responsibility are either offered at the junior secondary level only or are elective at the senior secondary level. The implication being that majority of the senior secondary students are left at the peril of the societal vices since no serious attempt is made to ensure the subtle means of character moulding through course of ferings.
3. National development through inculcation of moral and social values expressed in the National Policy on Education could be a mirage if the status quo on subject offering by senior secondary students is maintained.
4. The continued restriction of subjects like Social Studies and the elective nature of subjects like CRK and IRK may be dangerous to effective moral and social values inculcation into the students which may consequently hamper their positive contribution to national development.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following are therefore recommended:

1. That the existing secondary school Social Studies curriculum be reviewed to include more concepts to enable it effectively develop social and moral values in students.
2. That Social Studies should also be made a core (compulsory) subject at the senior secondary level.
3. That Social Studies be made one of the pre-requisites for admission into higher institutions of learning especially for Arts and Social Science students.
4. It should be made a core course (given the status of General Studies) at the tertiary level of Nigerian education.

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