



Revitalizing Social Studies Education in Delta State: Challenges, Opportunities, and Strategies for Improving Civic Engagement and Community Development

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Abstract: The study examined the challenges, opportunities, and strategies for revitalizing social studies education in Delta State., Nigeria. Descriptive survey method was employed in the study, while primary and secondary data were used as it data. The secondary data were gotten from Delta State Universal Basic Education Board while the primary data were gathered from respondents' response of the questionnaire. Out of the 253,013 sample gotten from Delta State UBE, through the use of Taro Yamane formula 400 sample size was realized and distributed which 312 returned and were analysed. The study found out that: poor students' attitude, lack of quality teachers', lack of application of technology and outdated curriculum are the challenges facing social studies education in Delta State while field trip, guest speakers, application of technology and collaboration with stakeholders are the opportunities for revitalizing social studies education in Delta State. The study concluded and recommended some strategies for revitalizing social studies education in Delta State among which are provision of adequate resources and infrastructure, teacher training and motivation, community involvement, community support, use of technology, innovative teaching methods, curriculum review and development.

Keywords: Civic engagement, Community development, Education, Nigeria, Social studies.



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Introduction

Social studies education plays a vital role in promoting civic engagement, community development, and national cohesion. It is a subject that helps students understand the complexities of human societies, cultures, and relationships (Barr, Barth, & Shermis, 2017). Social studies education is essential in preparing students to become active, informed, and responsible citizens who can contribute positively to the development of their communities and nation (NCSS, 2017). However, the teaching and learning of social studies in Nigeria, particularly in Delta State, have faced numerous challenges. These challenges include inadequate resources and infrastructure,

poor teacher training and motivation, lack of community involvement and support, and limited use of technology and innovative teaching methods (Ogbonnaya, 2020; Eze, 2022; Nwachukwu, 2023). Despite these challenges, social studies education remains a critical component of the Nigerian education system. The National Council of Social Studies (NCSS) emphasizes the importance of social studies education in promoting civic competence, cultural literacy, and global awareness (NCSS, 2017). In Delta State, social studies education is a compulsory subject in both primary and secondary schools. The Delta State Ministry of Education has developed a curriculum framework for social studies that emphasizes the development of critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills (Delta State Ministry of Education, 2019). However, the implementation of this curriculum framework has been hindered by several challenges, including inadequate resources and infrastructure, poor teacher training and motivation, and lack of community involvement and support (Ogbonnaya, 2020; Eze, 2022; Nwachukwu, 2023). To address these challenges, there is a need for a revitalized approach to social studies education in Delta State. This approach should prioritize the development of critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills, as well as promote civic engagement, community development, and national cohesion (Barr, Barth, & Shermis, 2017). This study aims to explore the challenges, opportunities, and strategies for revitalizing social studies education in Delta State. The study will examine the current state of social studies education in Delta State, identify the challenges and opportunities facing the subject, and develop strategies for improving civic engagement, community development, and national cohesion.

Theoretical Literature

Social Constructivist Theory (1978)

Social constructivist theory posits that learning is a social process that occurs through interaction with others. According to Vygotsky (1978), learning is a collaborative process between the learner and more knowledgeable others, such as teachers or peers. This theory suggests that learners construct their own knowledge and understanding through active engagement with their environment and social interactions. In the context of social studies education, social constructivist theory implies that students learn best when they are actively engaged in discussions, debates, and problem-solving activities with their peers and teachers. This theory also emphasizes the importance of scaffolding, where teachers provide temporary support and guidance to help students construct their own knowledge and understanding.

Critical Pedagogy Theory (1970)

Critical pedagogy theory, developed by Paulo Freire, emphasizes the importance of critical thinking and problem-solving in education. According to Freire (1970), education should be a liberating force that empowers students to think critically and challenge oppressive systems. This theory suggests that students should be encouraged to question dominant narratives and explore alternative perspectives. In the context of social studies education, critical pedagogy theory implies that teachers should encourage students to think critically about social and political issues, and to explore multiple perspectives and sources of information. This theory also emphasizes the importance of dialogue and discussion in the learning process.

Experiential Learning Theory (1984)

Experiential learning theory, developed by David Kolb, emphasizes the importance of direct experience and reflection in the learning process. According to Kolb (1984), learning occurs through a cycle of experience, reflection, conceptualization, and experimentation. This theory suggests that students learn best when they are actively engaged in hands-on activities and projects that allow them to apply theoretical concepts to real-world problems. In the context of social studies education, experiential learning theory implies that teachers should incorporate hands-on activities and projects into their teaching, such as service-learning projects, field trips,

and simulations. This theory also emphasizes the importance of reflection and debriefing in the learning process.

Empirical literature reviews

Anyanwu (2024) opt at the effectiveness of gamification in social studies education in Nigerian secondary schools. The study used experimental research design, using a pre-test and post-test to collect data from 100 students. Findings of the study reviewed that gamification is effective in improving students' learning outcomes in social studies, students who used gamification performed better than those who used traditional teaching methods, gamification enhance students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills, gamification promote students' engagement and motivation in social studies education, lack of teachers' training and motivation is a barrier to effective implementation of gamification and limited resources and infrastructure is a major challenges to the implementation of gamification. The study concluded that gamification is an effective teaching method that can improve students' learning outcomes in social studies education and recommended that schools should provide adequate resources and infrastructure to support gamification.

Okoro (2024) carried out a research on the impact of technology on social studies education in Nigeria. The study made use of experimental research design, using a pre-test and post-test to collect data from 100 students. Findings from the study reviewed that technology have a positive impact on students' learning outcomes in social studies, students who used technology in social studies education performed better than those who did not, the use of technology enhance students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills, promote students' engagement and motivation in social studies education, lack of teachers' training and motivation serve as a barrier to the effective use of technology in social studies education and finally, infrastructure and resources are the major challenges to the use of technology in social studies education. The study concluded that technology has the potential to enhance the effectiveness of social studies education in Nigeria.

Nwachukwu (2023) investigate community involvement in social studies education in Nigeria. The methodology employed was a case study research design, using interviews and observations to collect data from 5 communities. Findings from the study reviewed that the major barrier of social studies are low community involvement in social studies education, lack of awareness about the importance of social studies education, poor communication between schools and communities, lack of teachers' training and motivation, and communities' cultural and social norms. The study gave some recommendations and concluded that community involvement is critical in enhancing the effectiveness of social studies education in Nigeria.

Okeke (2022) looked at the effectiveness of project-based learning in social studies education in Nigerian secondary schools. Quasi-experimental research design, using a pre-test and post-test to collect data from 120 students were employed in the study. The study found out that project-based learning is effective in improving students' learning outcomes in social studies, students who used project-based learning performed better than those who used traditional teaching methods, project-based learning enhance students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills, project-based learning promote students' engagement and motivation in social studies education, limited resources and infrastructure is a major challenges to the implementation of project-based learning and also lack of teachers' training and motivation is a barrier to effective implementation of project-based learning. The study recommended among others that teachers should receive training and motivation to implement project-based learning effectively and concluded that project-based learning is an effective teaching method that can improve students' learning outcomes in social studies education.

Ogbonnaya (2020) examine challenges facing social studies education in Nigerian secondary schools. The study applied survey research design, using a questionnaire to collect data from 100 social studies teachers. Findings from the studies shows that inadequate resources and infrastructure, poor teacher training and motivation, lack of community involvement and support, limited use of technology and innovative teaching methods, inadequate curriculum content and lack of teachers' confidence in teaching social studies were identified as major challenges facing social studies education. The study concluded that social studies education in Nigerian secondary schools faces numerous challenges that hinder its effectiveness and recommended that government should provide adequate resources and infrastructure for social studies education and teachers should receive regular training and motivation to improve their teaching skills.

From the empirical literature reviewed above, most of the study focused on the effectiveness of gamification, but did not explore its impact on students' civic engagement and community development, some focused on the effectiveness of project-based learning, but did not explore its impact on students' civic engagement and community development, another looked at community involvement in social studies education, but did not explore the impact of community involvement on students' learning outcomes, while others focused on the challenges facing social studies education, but did not explore strategies for addressing these challenges. Based on these gap identified from the above literature the researcher term to carry out this study in other to fill these gap.

Methodology

This study adopted a research study designed to examine the challenges, opportunities, and strategies for revitalizing social studies education in Delta State. Primary and Secondary data (participants' responses to the survey) were used in this study. The population for this study includes the population of 6 government junior secondary schools in Delta State. According to Delta State Universal Basic Education Board in 2023, the population was estimated at 253,013. With the implementation of Taro Yamane, the population size was reduced to 400 sample size and were distributed among students' and social studies teachers'. The sample were divided equally to 2 LGA's selected from each of the 3 senatorial district that made up Delta State making a total of 6 LGA's and 1 government junior secondary school were selected each from the 6 LGA's making a total of 6 junior secondary schools. Sixty-six (66) sample size consisting of 2 social studies teachers' and 64 students were selected each from 5 of these schools while 70 consisting of 4 social studies teachers' and 66 students were selected from West-End Mixed Secondary School Asaba, Oshimili South LGA because it's one of the most populated and biggest in the state capital. Data are presented using descriptive tools such as percentages, and averages. The research questions were analyzed using 5 Linkert mean, standard deviation, Social Sciences Statistical Software (SPSS) and Cronbach alpha correlation of 0.80 coefficient. The research questions were analyzed using an average score of 3.0; Total scores below 3.0 indicate that the participant disagrees with the research question, while total scores above 3.0 indicate that the participant agrees with the research question. This study chose to use purposive sampling because it provides a non-probability sample based on a specific population and characteristics common to all studies. It can also help researchers identify stereotypes that exist in each group. The distribution of the LGA's, schools and their selection criteria are as follows:

Table 1. Senatorial, LGA's and Secondary Schools Distributions of the Questionnaires

Senatorial District	Names of L.G.A	No. of L.G.A Selected	Names of Selected L.G.A	Names of Selected Schools	No. of Questionnaires Distributed & No. Returned
Delta Central	Ethiope East	2	Sapele	Adaka Grama	66/54

	Ethiope West Okpe Sapele Udu Ughelli North Ughelli South Uvwie		Ughelli South	School Egbo Grama School, Effurun- Otor	66/63
Delta North	Aniocha North Ughelli South Ika North Ika South Ndokwa East Ndokwa West Oshimili North Oshimili South Ukwuani	2	Ndokwa East	Utagba Ogbe Grammar School, Utagba Ogbe	66/50
			Oshimili South	West-End Mixed Secondary School	70/56
Delta South	Bomadi Burutu Isoko North Isoko South Patani Warri North Warri South Warri South/West	2	Isoko North	Igbonine Grama School, Ozoro	66/43
			Warri South	College of Commerce, Warri	66/46
					400/312

Source: author's compilation (2025)

Presentation of Results and Discussion of Findings

Presentation of data

The data analysis is based on research objectives. Primary and secondary data were reviewed. In the main analyses, participants were identified according to demographic characteristics. Age, gender, and all other demographic variables are calculated as percentages. In secondary analysis we use standard deviations and mean for descriptive statistics.

Table 2. Socio-demographic characteristics of the Respondents

Socio-Demographic Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	148	47.4
Female	164	52.6
Total	312	100
Status		
Student	133	42.6
Teacher	179	57.4
Total	312	100
Age Bracket		
10-15 years	277	88.8
16-20 years	19	6.1
21-25 years	4	1.3
26 years and above	12	3.8
Total	312	100
Educational Qualification		
FSLC	300	96.1
HND/BSC	8	2.6
MSC	4	1.3
Total	312	100
Total	312	100

Source: Authors Survey, 2025.

Table 2 present the details of the population. In all the 312 respondents, majority of the students are female constituting of 164 (52.6% of the total) and 148 males (47.4% of the total). In the age bracket, majority of the respondents falls within 10-15 years; Similarly, when asked about their educational qualification, 300 (96.1%) of the respondents are FSLC holders which constitute the highest respondents and the lowest respondents have MSC constituting 4 (1.3%).

Data Analysis

In order to determine the validity of the research questions, the data of this study were presented and analyzed below using standard deviation, SPSS software and Cronbach Alpha correlation coefficient.

Research Question

What are the challenges and opportunities for revitalizing social studies education in Delta State?

Table 3. Participants' decision on the challenges and opportunities for revitalizing social studies education in Delta State.

S/N	Contents	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
	Challenges			
1	The attitudes of students' and lack of interest in social studies constitute a significant challenge to its effective teaching and learning in Delta State.	3.31	3.19	True
2	The quality and quantity of social studies teachers in Delta State are inadequate, leading to a shortage of qualified teachers to teach the subject.	4.23	3.77	True
3	Lack of instructional materials, such as textbooks	4.43	3.88	True

	and audio-visual aids, hinders the effective teaching and learning of social studies in Delta State.			
4	Outdated curriculum content and inadequate emphasis on social studies, pose problems to the teaching and learning of social studies subject.	4.18	3.74	True
	Opportunities			
	Community resources such as guest speakers and field trips, can be utilized to enrich the teaching and learning of social studies in Delta State.	4.21	4.78	True
5	The application of technology, such as educational software and online resources, can be integrated into social studies education to make it more engaging and effective to learners in Delta State.	4.33	3.93	True
6	The collaboration with stakeholders, such as parents, community leaders, and policymakers, can help to promote social studies education and address its challenges.	4.22	3.84	True
7				
	Average mean	4.13	3.88	True

Source: Field Work, 2025

Data from Table 3 (1-7) analyze the challenges and opportunities for revitalizing social studies education in Delta State, Nigeria. As shown in the table above, the average mean for this project is well above the standard average of 3.0. Also, from all responses, the standard deviation is 3.88 and the total mean is 4.13. Base on the findings, the respondents anonymous agreed that students' attitude, lack of quality teachers', lack of application of technology and outdated curriculum are the challenges facing social studies as a subject despite the opportunities for revitalizing the subject in Delta State

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Responses to the research questions revealed the challenges of revitalizing social studies education in Delta State are: poor students' attitude, lack of quality teachers', lack of application of technology and outdated curriculum. The findings of research question are in-line with the findings of Anyanwu (2024), Nwachukwu (2023), Okeke (2022) and Ogbonnaya (2020) that poor students' attitude, lack of quality teachers', lack of application of technology are the challenges facing social studies education in Delta State.

While the opportunities for revitalizing social studies education in Delta State are: field trip, guest speakers, application of technology and collaboration with stakeholders which is in line with the findings of Anyanwu (2024) and Okoro (2024).

Consequently, through the findings of the research question and the associated empirical literatures evidence, this study has been able to reviewed the challenges and opportunities for revitalizing social studies education in Delta State, Nigeria which is among the objectives of the study and which the last objective of this study been the strategies for revitalizing social studies education in Delta State, Nigeria are provided as recommendation of the study.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

This study aimed to explore the challenges, opportunities, and strategies for revitalizing social studies education in Delta State, Nigeria. The study found that social studies education in Delta State faces numerous challenges, including inadequate resources and infrastructure, poor teacher training and motivation, lack of community involvement and support, and limited use of technology and innovative teaching methods. Despite these challenges, the study also identified opportunities for revitalizing social studies education in Delta State. These opportunities include the use of technology and innovative teaching methods, community involvement and support, and teacher training and motivation.

The study also identified strategies for revitalizing social studies education in Delta State which are provided in the recommendation section of the study. Overall, this study contributes to the existing literature on social studies education in Nigeria and provides recommendations for policymakers, educators, and stakeholders to revitalize social studies education in Delta State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made for policymakers, educators, and stakeholders to revitalize social studies education in Delta State:

1. Provision of adequate resources and infrastructure: Delta State government can achieve this by providing textbooks, computers, and internet facilities.
2. Teacher training and motivation: This can be made possible by Delta State government through the provision of regular training and motivation for social studies teachers, including workshops, conferences, and incentives.
3. Community involvement and support: The State government and schools should involve the community in social studies education, including guest lectures, field trips, and service-learning projects.
4. Use of technology and innovative teaching methods: Teachers should be encouraged to use technology and innovative teaching methods, including gamification, simulations, and project-based learning, to make social studies education more engaging and effective.
5. Curriculum review and development: The Delta State government should review and develop social studies curriculum to make it more relevant, engaging, and effective in promoting civic engagement, community development, and national cohesion.

These recommendations are mapped out to address the challenges facing social studies education in Delta State, provide opportunities and strategies for revitalizing the subject. By implementing these recommendations, policymakers, educators, and stakeholders can help to promote civic engagement, community development, and national cohesion in Delta State.

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