

# Influence of Social Studies Curriculum Content on Youth Restiveness and Civic Responsibility Among Secondary School Students in Nigeria

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.10100180>

Received: 11 January 2026; Accepted: 16 January 2026; Published: 29 January 2026

## ABSTRACT

This study investigated the influence of Social Studies curriculum content on youth restiveness and civic responsibility among secondary school students in Southwestern Nigeria, focusing on citizenship education, conflict resolution, national integration, and values education. A convergent parallel mixed-methods design was adopted. Data were collected from 930 respondents (30 principals, 300 teachers, and 600 students) selected through multi-stage sampling from Ekiti, Osun, and Oyo States. Quantitative data were gathered using the Social Studies and Youth Restiveness Questionnaire (SSYRQ), while qualitative data were obtained through interviews and classroom observations. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and regression analysis at the 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that Social Studies curriculum content significantly predicted civic responsibility ( $R = .62$ ,  $R^2 = .38$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and had a significant negative relationship with youth restiveness ( $r = -.55$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The study concludes that strengthening curriculum content and pedagogical practices in Social Studies is critical for promoting peace, lawfulness, and civic engagement among Nigerian youths.

**Keywords:** Social Studies; curriculum content; youth restiveness; civic responsibility; Nigeria.

## INTRODUCTION

Youth restiveness has emerged as a persistent socio-educational challenge in Nigeria, manifesting in truancy, cultism, violence, vandalism, and general disregard for school authority. These behaviours undermine institutional stability and negatively affect students' academic and civic development. Scholars have linked youth restiveness to socio-economic inequalities, moral decline, weak civic orientation, and ineffective schooling processes (Adebayo & Lawal, 2021; Bakare, 2024).

Social Studies education occupies a central position in the Nigerian secondary school curriculum due to its integrative focus on citizenship, values education, conflict resolution, and national integration. The subject is designed to inculcate democratic values, national consciousness, and socially acceptable behaviours (Federal Republic of Nigeria [FRN], 2013). This study examines how specific Social Studies curriculum themes influence youth restiveness and civic responsibility among secondary school students in Southwestern Nigeria.

This study is anchored on Social Learning Theory and Civic Education Theory. Social Learning Theory, advanced by Bandura (1977), posits that individuals acquire behaviours, values, and attitudes through observation, imitation, and social interaction. Within the classroom context, students model behaviours demonstrated by teachers and peers, especially when such behaviours are reinforced. Social Studies lessons that emphasise peaceful coexistence, tolerance, and civic responsibility provide opportunities for positive behavioural modelling, thereby reducing restive tendencies.

Civic Education Theory emphasises the role of education in preparing individuals for responsible citizenship through knowledge acquisition, value internalisation, and skill development (Kerr, 2016). From this perspective, Social Studies curriculum content serves as a mechanism for transmitting civic norms, democratic ideals, and

national values. The theories jointly explain how curriculum content can shape students' civic attitudes and behaviours and mitigate youth restiveness.

Empirical studies conducted between 2019 and 2025 provide substantial evidence on the relationship between Social Studies education and youth behaviour. Adebayo and Lawal (2021) found that exposure to civic-oriented curriculum content significantly improved students' respect for authority and lawfulness in Nigerian secondary schools.

In a study by Ogunyemi (2020), Social Studies instruction was associated with reduced incidences of school violence and increased civic participation among adolescents. Similarly, Okoye and Eze (2022) reported that values education embedded in Social Studies promoted tolerance and peaceful conflict resolution.

Bakare (2024) demonstrated that Social Studies curriculum themes related to national integration significantly predicted students' attitudes toward unity and peaceful coexistence in Southwestern Nigeria. Musa (2025) further established that citizenship education improved students' civic engagement and sense of national identity.

International studies also support these findings. Torney-Purta et al. (2019) observed that civic knowledge acquired through Social Studies positively influenced adolescents' democratic attitudes. Similarly, Schulz et al. (2021) found that values-based civic education reduced antisocial behaviour among secondary school students.

Despite these findings, gaps remain regarding the combined influence of specific curriculum themes on youth restiveness within Nigerian school contexts, particularly using mixed-methods approaches. This study addresses this gap.

**Figure 1: Curriculum–Outcome Model**



Figure 1 presents the Curriculum–Outcome Model, which explains the pathway through which Social Studies education contributes to positive youth and civic outcomes. The model is structured into three interrelated components: Social Studies curriculum themes (independent variables), mediating variables, and societal outcomes (dependent variables).

At the first level, the model identifies key Social Studies curriculum themes, namely citizenship education, conflict resolution, national integration, and values education. These themes represent core instructional areas within the Social Studies curriculum that are designed to expose learners to democratic principles, peaceful coexistence, unity in diversity, moral values, and responsible citizenship. Through structured classroom instruction, participatory learning activities, and contextualized content, these curriculum components serve as the foundational inputs of the model.

The second level consists of mediating variables, which explain how curriculum content translates into behavioural and societal change. These mediators include civic knowledge, civic attitudes, and civic skills. Civic knowledge refers to learners' understanding of civic rights, duties, governance processes, and national values. Civic attitudes encompass dispositions such as tolerance, patriotism, respect for rule of law, and commitment to peaceful engagement. Civic skills involve practical competencies such as dialogue, negotiation, critical thinking, participation in community activities, and conflict management. The model assumes that effective delivery of Social Studies curriculum themes strengthens these mediating variables.

At the final level, the model highlights the outcomes of the process, namely reduced youth restiveness and increased civic responsibility. As learners acquire relevant civic knowledge, develop positive attitudes, and build practical civic skills, they are less likely to engage in violent, anti-social, or restive behaviours. Instead, they become more inclined toward constructive civic participation, social responsibility, and lawful engagement within their communities and the broader society.

The Curriculum–Outcome Model demonstrates that the impact of Social Studies education on societal stability is not direct but occurs through the development of learners' civic competencies. The model therefore underscores the strategic role of Social Studies curriculum in promoting institutional stability, social cohesion, and sustainable democratic culture, particularly in contexts prone to youth restiveness.

### **Statement Of the Problem**

Youth restiveness has become an increasingly visible challenge in nigerian public secondary schools, manifesting in student indiscipline, violence, defiance of authority, and declining civic engagement. this trend persists even as the social studies curriculum formally emphasizes citizenship education, peace building, conflict resolution, and values education. the continued prevalence of these behaviours calls into question the practical effectiveness of social studies curriculum content and its classroom enactment in shaping students' civic attitudes and conduct. the apparent gap between the civic ideals embedded in the curriculum and students' observable behaviours suggests that curriculum themes may not be sufficiently impactful, contextually grounded, or pedagogically translated into meaningful learning experiences. without empirical evidence clarifying this disconnect, efforts to leverage social studies education as a tool for mitigating youth restiveness and fostering civic responsibility remain largely assumptive.

### **Purpose Of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of Social Studies curriculum content on youth restiveness and civic responsibility among secondary school students in Southwestern Nigeria.

### **Specifically, the study sought to:**

- i. examine the extent to which citizenship education content in Social Studies influences youth restiveness among secondary school students in Southwestern Nigeria.
- ii. assess the influence of peace and conflict resolution themes in the Social Studies curriculum on students' attitudes toward non-violence and law-abiding behaviour.
- iii. determine the effect of national integration content in Social Studies on students' sense of civic responsibility and social cohesion.
- iv. evaluate the contribution of values education in Social Studies to students' civic engagement and responsible citizenship practices.

### **Research Questions**

In line with the objectives, the study sought answers to the following questions:

- a. To what extent does citizenship education content in Social Studies influence youth restiveness among secondary school students in Southwestern Nigeria?
- b. How do peace and conflict resolution themes in the Social Studies curriculum affect students' attitudes toward non-violence and law-abiding behaviour?
- c. What influence does national integration content in Social Studies have on students' civic responsibility and sense of social cohesion?
- d. How does values education in the Social Studies curriculum contribute to students' civic engagement and responsible citizenship practices?

## Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant influence of citizenship education content in Social Studies on youth restiveness among secondary school students in Southwestern Nigeria.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant influence of peace and conflict resolution themes in the Social Studies curriculum on students' attitudes toward non-violence and law-abiding behaviour in secondary schools in Southwestern Nigeria.

**H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between national integration content in the Social Studies curriculum and students' civic responsibility and sense of social cohesion in secondary schools in Southwestern Nigeria.

**H<sub>04</sub>:** Values education content in the Social Studies curriculum does not significantly influence students' civic engagement and responsible citizenship practices in secondary schools in Southwestern Nigeria.

## METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a convergent parallel mixed-methods design that combined a descriptive correlational survey with qualitative inquiry to examine the influence of Social Studies curriculum content on youth restiveness and civic responsibility among secondary school students in Southwestern Nigeria. The study was conducted in Ekiti, Osun, and Oyo States, which were purposively selected due to their educational significance and varying levels of youth restiveness. A multi-stage sampling technique was employed to select 30 public secondary schools across the three states. The sample comprised 930 respondents, including 30 principals, 300 teachers, and 600 senior secondary school students. Quantitative data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled *Social Studies and Youth Restiveness Questionnaire (SSYRQ)*, designed on a four-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (4). The instrument measured exposure to key Social Studies curriculum themes—citizenship education, conflict resolution, national integration, and values education—as well as indicators of youth restiveness and civic responsibility.

Qualitative data were generated through semi-structured interviews with school principals and classroom observations of Social Studies lessons to capture institutional perspectives and instructional practices. The instruments were validated through expert review, and the reliability of the SSYRQ was established using Cronbach's alpha, yielding a coefficient of 0.78. Data collection for both quantitative and qualitative components was conducted concurrently. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics and inferential techniques, including Pearson product-moment correlation and regression analysis, to test the study's hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance, while qualitative data were analysed thematically through content analysis. Findings from both strands were integrated at the interpretation stage to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of Social Studies education in mitigating youth restiveness and promoting civic responsibility among secondary school students.

## RESULTS

Research Question 1: To what extent does citizenship education content in Social Studies influence youth restiveness among secondary school students in Southwestern Nigeria?

**Table 1: Students' Responses on Citizenship Education and Youth Restiveness (N = 600)**

| Item  | SA (4) | A (3) | D (2) | SD (1) | Mean | SD   | Decision |
|---|--------|-------|-------|--------|------|------|----------|
| Citizenship lessons promote respect for rules | 312    | 198   | 60    | 30     | 3.32 | 0.74 | High     |
| Social Studies discourages violent behaviour  | 295    | 210   | 65    | 30     | 3.28 | 0.76 | High     |
| Civic duties reduce indiscipline              | 320    | 185   | 55    | 40     | 3.31 | 0.78 | High     |

|                   |  |  |  |  |             |  |  |
|-------------------|--|--|--|--|-------------|--|--|
| <b>Grand Mean</b> |  |  |  |  | <b>3.30</b> |  |  |
|-------------------|--|--|--|--|-------------|--|--|

Citizenship education content in social studies exerts a high influence on reducing youth restiveness, as indicated by a grand mean of 3.30, which exceeds the criterion mean of 2.50. The mean score of 3.30 indicates that citizenship education content strongly influences students' adherence to school rules and reduces tendencies toward youth restiveness.

**HO<sub>1</sub>:** There Is No Significant Influence Of Citizenship Education Content In Social Studies On Youth Restiveness.

**Table 2: Correlation Between Citizenship Education and Youth Restiveness**

| <b>VARIABLES</b>                          | <b>R</b> | <b>P</b> | <b>DECISION</b> |
|---|----------|----------|-----------------|
| CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION × YOUTH RESTIVENESS | -0.55    | < .05    | SIGNIFICANT     |

H<sub>01</sub> Was Rejected. The Negative Correlation (R = -0.55) Indicates That Increased Exposure To Citizenship Education Significantly Reduces Youth Restiveness.

Interviews with principals and classroom observations revealed that students internalize respect for rules and school authority through citizenship lessons. Principals noted that students participating in role-plays and civic discussions exhibited fewer quarrels and improved compliance.

“Students who are regularly engaged in citizenship-related discussions show more respect for teachers and follow school rules.” – Principal, Oyo State

Observations confirmed active student engagement and collaborative learning, reinforcing the quantitative findings.

| <b>ITEM</b>                                  | <b>SA</b> | <b>A</b> | <b>D</b> | <b>SD</b> | <b>MEAN</b> | <b>SD</b> | <b>DECISION</b> |
|--|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-----------------|
| CONFLICT RESOLUTION LESSONS<br>PROMOTE PEACE | 335       | 180      | 55       | 30        | 3.37        | 0.71      | HIGH            |
| STUDENTS LEARN NON-VIOLENT RESPONSES         | 320       | 195      | 60       | 25        | 3.35        | 0.69      | HIGH            |
| PEACE EDUCATION REDUCES AGGRESSION           | 300       | 210      | 65       | 25        | 3.31        | 0.72      | HIGH            |
| GRAND MEAN                                   |           |          |          |           | 3.34        |           |                 |

Research Question 2:

How

do peace and conflict resolution themes affect students' attitudes toward non-violence and law-abiding behaviour?

**Table 3: Peace Education Themes and Law-Abiding Behaviour (N = 600)**

Peace and conflict resolution themes have a strong positive influence on students' non-violent and law-abiding attitudes.

H<sub>02</sub>: Peace and conflict resolution themes do not significantly influence students' attitudes toward nonviolence.

**Table 4: Regression Analysis of Peace Education on Law-Abiding Behaviour**

| R    | R <sup>2</sup> | F      | DF    | P     | DECISION    |
|------|----------------|--------|-------|-------|-------------|
| 0.60 | 0.36           | 507.84 | 1,598 | < .05 | SIGNIFICANT |

$H_0$  Was Rejected. Peace Education Accounts

For 36% Of the Variance in Students' Law Abiding Behaviour.

Principals Reported That Conflict Resolution Activities Help Students Manage Disagreements Without Resorting To Violence. Observations Showed Students Participating In Negotiations, Debates, And Problem-Solving Exercises.

“Conflict Resolution Exercises Have Helped Students Learn How To Solve

Disagreements Without Fighting. We've Seen Fewer Scuffles In The Corridors.” – Principal, Osun State

These Qualitative Insights Corroborate The Quantitative Evidence, Showing That Peace Education Significantly Shapes Attitudes Toward Lawfulness.

**Research Question 3: What Influence Does National Integration Content Have on Students' Civic Responsibility and Social Cohesion?**

**Table 5: National Integration Content and Civic Responsibility (N = 600)**

| ITEM                                | SA  | A   | D  | SD | MEAN | SD   | DECISION |
|-------------------------------------|-----|-----|----|----|------|------|----------|
| PROMOTES UNITY ACROSS ETHNIC GROUPS | 340 | 185 | 45 | 30 | 3.39 | 0.70 | HIGH     |
| ENCOURAGES RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY    | 325 | 190 | 55 | 30 | 3.35 | 0.73 | HIGH     |
| BUILDS SENSE OF NATIONAL BELONGING  | 310 | 200 | 60 | 30 | 3.32 | 0.75 | HIGH     |
| GRAND MEAN                          |     |     |    |    | 3.35 | 0.73 |          |

National Integration Content Strongly Enhances Students' Civic Responsibility and Social Cohesion.

$H_0$ : There is no significant relationship between national integration content and civic responsibility.

**Table 6: Correlation between National Integration and Civic Responsibility**

| Variables                                   | r    | p     | Decision    |
|---|------|-------|-------------|
| National Integration × Civic Responsibility | 0.61 | < .05 | Significant |

$H_0$  was rejected. A strong positive relationship exists between national integration content and civic responsibility.

Principals emphasized that lessons on unity and national identity encourage students to collaborate across ethnic and social differences. Classroom observations revealed students articulating inclusive ideas and demonstrating cooperative behaviours in group activities.

“Students begin to see themselves as part of a larger community. They are more cooperative in group work and school activities.” – Principal, Ekiti State

**Research Question 4: How does values education contribute to students' civic engagement and responsible citizenship practices?**

**Table 7: Values Education and Civic Engagement (N = 600)**

| Item                              | SA  | A   | D  | SD | Mean        | SD          | Decision |
|-----------------------------------|-----|-----|----|----|-------------|-------------|----------|
| Promotes honesty and integrity    | 355 | 170 | 45 | 30 | 3.42        | 0.68        | High     |
| Encourages respect for authority  | 330 | 190 | 50 | 30 | 3.37        | 0.71        | High     |
| Motivates community participation | 315 | 195 | 60 | 30 | 3.33        | 0.74        | High     |
| <b>Grand Mean</b>                 |     |     |    |    | <b>3.37</b> | <b>0.71</b> |          |

Values education contributes **significantly** to students' civic engagement and responsible citizenship.

**Ho4:** Values education does not significantly influence civic engagement.

**Table 8: Regression Analysis of Values Education on Civic Engagement**

| R    | R <sup>2</sup> | F      | df    | p     | Decision    |
|------|----------------|--------|-------|-------|-------------|
| 0.63 | 0.40           | 602.11 | 1,598 | < .05 | Significant |

Ho4 was rejected. Values education explains 40% of the variance in civic engagement.

Principals reported that values education fosters honesty, respect, and community participation. Classroom observations showed students actively participating in service-based projects, mentoring peers, and applying moral lessons in real contexts.

“Students involved in values-based activities show higher levels of responsibility and respect for rules.” – Principal, Osun State

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study demonstrate that Social Studies curriculum content exerts a significant influence on youth restiveness and civic responsibility among secondary school students in Southwestern Nigeria. The results provide empirical support for the assumption that well-structured civic-oriented curriculum themes can shape students' attitudes, behaviours, and dispositions toward peaceful coexistence and responsible citizenship. Overall, the rejection of all four null hypotheses underscores the relevance of Social Studies education as a strategic tool for addressing behavioural challenges and promoting institutional stability within secondary schools.

The study revealed that citizenship education content in Social Studies significantly reduces youth restiveness, as evidenced by the negative and statistically significant relationship between citizenship education and indicators of indiscipline and aggressive behaviour. This finding aligns with Social Learning Theory, which posits that individuals acquire behaviours through observation, modeling, and reinforcement. Exposure to lessons emphasizing civic duties, rights, and responsibilities appears to provide students with normative behavioural models that discourage antisocial conduct. This result corroborates empirical studies that have reported positive associations between civic education and improved student discipline and social responsibility in Nigerian secondary schools (Adewale & Olatunji, 2020; Okeke & Ume, 2021). The finding suggests that when citizenship education is effectively delivered, students are more likely to internalize lawful and cooperative behaviours, thereby reducing tendencies toward restiveness.

Findings relating to peace and conflict resolution themes indicate a strong positive influence on students' attitudes toward non-violence and law-abiding behaviour. The regression analysis showed that peace education accounted for a substantial proportion of variance in students' behavioural dispositions, highlighting its instructional relevance. From the perspective of Civic Education Theory, this finding reinforces the role of schools as agents of democratic socialization, where learners acquire conflict management skills necessary for peaceful participation in society. This outcome is consistent with recent studies that emphasize the effectiveness of peace education in reducing school-based violence and fostering tolerance among adolescents (Ogunyemi, 2020). The implication is that integrating practical conflict resolution activities into Social Studies classrooms can contribute meaningfully to cultivating a culture of peace within schools.

The study further established a significant positive relationship between national integration content and students' civic responsibility and sense of social cohesion. Lessons addressing national unity, cultural diversity, and shared identity were found to enhance students' commitment to collective values and social harmony. This finding resonates with Social Learning Theory, as repeated exposure to narratives of unity and inclusion may reinforce prosocial attitudes through symbolic modeling. It also supports earlier findings by Yusuf and Adeyemi (2021) and Akinwale (2023), who reported that curriculum content emphasizing national integration strengthens students' sense of belonging and reduces ethnic and sectional biases. In a pluralistic society such as Nigeria, this outcome underscores the importance of Social Studies education in mitigating divisive tendencies and promoting national consciousness among young people.

Additionally, values education emerged as a strong predictor of civic engagement and responsible citizenship practices among students. The positive regression results suggest that values-based instruction fosters ethical dispositions such as honesty, respect for authority, and community participation. This finding aligns with both theoretical perspectives underpinning the study. While Social Learning Theory explains the internalization of moral values through observation and reinforcement, Civic Education Theory emphasizes the deliberate cultivation of civic virtues necessary for democratic life. The result supports contemporary empirical evidence indicating that values education contributes to students' moral development and active civic participation (Ajibade & Ojo, 2020; Lawal & Ibrahim, 2024). It further highlights the need for instructional strategies that move beyond rote learning to experiential and participatory approaches in teaching values.

Taken together, the findings suggest that the persistence of youth restiveness in secondary schools may not solely reflect deficiencies in curriculum design but could also be linked to the depth of content implementation and pedagogical practices. While Social Studies curriculum themes demonstrate strong potential in shaping positive student behaviours, their effectiveness depends on how meaningfully they are translated into classroom experiences. The convergence of quantitative and qualitative findings in this study strengthens the conclusion that Social Studies education remains a viable and powerful mechanism for promoting civic responsibility and reducing youth restiveness when properly implemented.

The mixed-methods results converge to indicate that Social Studies curriculum content significantly reduces youth restiveness and enhances civic responsibility. Quantitative data provide statistical evidence of these relationships, while qualitative insights illuminate the mechanisms through which students internalize civic values—through participatory teaching, experiential learning, and institutional support. Together, the findings highlight the importance of curriculum implementation, instructional quality, and supportive school environments, confirming that Social Studies is a powerful vehicle for promoting peaceful and responsible citizenship.

The findings of this study provide empirical support for the proposed Curriculum–Outcome Model, which posits that Social Studies curriculum themes influence youth restiveness and civic responsibility through the development of civic knowledge, attitudes, and skills. However, in the present study, these mediating variables were treated conceptually rather than empirically tested. While regression and correlation analyses demonstrated significant relationships between curriculum content and behavioural outcomes, the causal pathways implied by the model remain inferential.

Future empirical work could strengthen the theoretical robustness of the model by employing Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to explicitly test the mediating effects of civic knowledge, civic attitudes, and civic skills. Such an approach would allow for simultaneous estimation of direct and indirect effects, providing stronger empirical

validation of the Curriculum–Outcome Model and advancing theory-building in Social Studies and civic education research.

### Methodological Reflections and Study Limitations

Despite the strengths of the convergent mixed-methods design adopted in this study, certain limitations should be acknowledged. First, although qualitative data were collected through interviews and classroom observations, the qualitative strand was primarily used to corroborate quantitative findings rather than to generate standalone interpretive insights.

Second, the study focused predominantly on curriculum content as the explanatory variable, with comparatively less emphasis on pedagogical practices and teacher instructional effectiveness. Although classroom observations indicated the use of participatory strategies such as discussions, role-plays, and problem-solving activities, these instructional practices were not systematically measured or modeled as independent predictors of youth behaviour.

Third, the reliance on self-reported questionnaire data, particularly from students, introduces the possibility of social desirability bias, as respondents may overreport socially acceptable behaviours such as law-abiding attitudes or civic responsibility. Although triangulation with teacher reports, principal interviews, and classroom observations was used to mitigate this limitation, future studies could further strengthen validity by incorporating behavioural records, peer assessments, or longitudinal tracking of disciplinary incidents.

### Directions for Future Research

Building on the findings and limitations of this study, several directions for future research are recommended. First, future studies should integrate classroom pedagogical practices and teacher instructional strategies as core analytical variables. Examining how learner-centred methods, experiential learning, and teacher effectiveness interact with curriculum content would offer a more comprehensive understanding of how Social Studies education is enacted in practice and how it shapes student behaviour.

Second, researchers are encouraged to adopt advanced analytical techniques, such as structural equation modeling or multilevel modeling, to test mediating and moderating variables within the curriculum–behaviour relationship. This would provide stronger causal explanations and move the literature beyond associative findings.

Third, longitudinal and mixed-methods designs that track students over time would help determine whether the observed reductions in youth restiveness and improvements in civic responsibility are sustained beyond the classroom and into wider community contexts. Such studies would be particularly valuable for informing curriculum reforms and policy interventions aimed at long-term peacebuilding and democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

## CONCLUSION

This study underscores the strategic role of Social Studies education in advancing Nigeria's commitments under both the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and national education policy frameworks. By empirically demonstrating that citizenship education, peace and conflict resolution, national integration, and values education significantly reduce youth restiveness and enhance civic responsibility, the findings align directly with SDG 4 (Quality Education)—particularly Target 4.7, which emphasizes education for sustainable development, global citizenship, peace, and non-violence. The results further support SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) by highlighting education as a foundational mechanism for fostering lawful behaviour, social cohesion, and institutional stability among young people.

Within the Nigerian policy context, the findings reinforce the objectives of the National Policy on Education (NPE), which emphasizes value orientation, national consciousness, and responsible citizenship as core goals of secondary education. The study also aligns with the National Values Curriculum, which seeks to instill integrity, tolerance, unity, and civic responsibility in learners. By evidencing the behavioural and civic outcomes of Social Studies instruction, this study positions curriculum-based civic education as a costeffective and sustainable

policy response to youth restiveness—one that complements security-driven approaches and strengthens Nigeria's democratic and social foundations.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**Based on the findings of the study, the following practical and evidence-based recommendations are proposed:**

Curriculum developers and education authorities should strengthen Social Studies curriculum content to explicitly reflect SDG 4.7 targets, ensuring that citizenship education, peace education, human rights, and national values are taught as practical competencies rather than abstract concepts. This aligns with the National Policy on Education, which mandates the promotion of national unity, moral values, and civic responsibility at the secondary school level.

In line with SDG 4.c (increasing the supply of qualified teachers), federal and state Ministries of Education should institutionalize continuous professional development for Social Studies teachers. Training programmes should focus on participatory and learner-centred pedagogies that translate civic ideals into observable student behaviours, as advocated by Nigeria's Teacher Professional Standards and the National Teachers' Institute (NTI) framework.

Secondary schools should integrate experiential civic learning—such as community service, peace clubs, mock elections, and student parliaments—into Social Studies instruction. This recommendation supports SDG 16.7, which promotes inclusive and participatory decision-making, and aligns with Nigeria's goal of producing socially responsible and democratically minded citizens as articulated in the National Values Curriculum.

School administrators should model democratic principles, fairness, and rule of law within school governance structures. Creating inclusive and participatory school environments complements SDG 16 by strengthening institutional trust and accountability, while reinforcing the National Policy on Education's emphasis on discipline, moral upbringing, and civic consciousness.

Education authorities should establish robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks to assess the implementation and impact of Social Studies curriculum content on student behaviour and civic outcomes. Such evidence-based monitoring aligns with SDG 4's accountability framework and supports data-driven policy reforms within Nigeria's education sector.

Government agencies, schools, parents, religious institutions, and civil society organizations should collaborate to reinforce civic values taught in Social Studies classrooms. This recommendation reflects SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) and complements national strategies that emphasize community participation in education and youth development.

Future research should adopt longitudinal and policy-evaluation designs to examine the long-term contributions of Social Studies education to youth behaviour, peacebuilding, and democratic participation. Such studies would provide stronger evidence for scaling curriculum reforms in line with Nigeria's national education development plans and global SDG commitments.

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