

## Social studies education as a propeller for teaching global intercultural understanding

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### Abstract

This paper examined Social Studies Education as a propeller for teaching global intercultural understanding. The paper discusses social studies education as a propeller for teaching global intercultural understanding by explicitly examining Social Studies Education, propeller, teaching, global, and intercultural understanding. Also, the ideas that propelled the teaching of social studies for intercultural understanding, criteria for the teaching of intercultural understanding, the place of social studies in the promotion of cultural values, as well as social studies content for propelling global intercultural understanding were thoroughly discussed in this study. In order to promote a culture of tolerance, respect for human rights, and justice, intercultural understanding aims to assist the numerous ethnic and linguistic communities that comprise the majority of modern states. In light of the theoretical viewpoints on Social Studies Education and intercultural understanding, this paper addresses the social studies programme's applicability to such curricular reviews and emphasizes the scope and key elements of intercultural understanding as well as the requirements for achieving it. It is recommended in this study that Social Studies curriculum should be restructured for effective teaching of intercultural understanding and cultural values.

**KEYWORDS:** Social Studies Education, Propeller, Teaching, Global, Intercultural Understanding

### Introduction

Social Studies as a discipline is designed to foster in learners a better understanding of the cultural values that guides the interactions of man with his physical and social environment. It is the most integrated of all discipline in the field of education, its scope covers human right education, sex and sexuality education, drugs education, morality education, peace education, teachers education, community development, multicultural education, security education among many others (Akpama, Ohanyere & Inyang, 2022). This broad nature makes Social Studies education one of the most appropriate disciplines in Colleges of Education and Universities to meet the cultural values and moral goals of the society. Intercultural understanding is an indispensable part of living with others in the diverse world of the twenty-first century (Egan & Effiom, 2022). Through education, it helps young people develop into responsible local and global citizens who are capable of coexisting and collaborating in a globalized society.

As envisioned in the second National Development Plan (1970–1994), Nigeria is still a long way from becoming a unified, free, and democratic society, and its people have not fully embraced the values and ethos of effective citizenship necessary to realize the nation's dream of independence. The number of intra-ethnic, inter-ethnic, and inter-religious conflicts that the Nigerian state has had to deal with in its 80 years of existence as an independent "nation" is a clear indication of this; instead of decreasing, there has been a sharp rise in xenophobic expressions, the hardening of ethno-regional positions, and the proliferation of ethnic militias that have unleashed varying degrees of violence (Egwu, 2001). In a similar vein, there is a rising wave of religious fundamentalism, millenarian religious movements of all kinds, and an extreme of religious intolerance that has led to numerous cases of intra- and inter-religious violence.

Drawing a clear distinction between interreligious and interethnic conflict—and vice versa—becomes exceedingly challenging frequently, particularly when these crises involve the nation's north-south division. Like other African republics, Nigeria looked for ways to bring its many ethnic, linguistic, and religious groups together, particularly within the context of formal education. Nigerian schoolchildren are supposed to learn social conventions and

cultivate a sense of cooperation and team spirit starting in pre-primary education. According to FRN (2008), a child's primary education should include "citizenship education as a basis for effective participation in contribution to the life of the society." The policy documents also emphasize that the specific goals for secondary education for Nigerian children are to develop and promote Nigerian languages and cultures within the framework of the global cultural heritage; to foster national unity by highlighting the commonalities that bind us in our diversity; and to raise a generation of individuals who are capable of thinking independently, valuing the opinions and feelings of others, upholding the dignity of labour, appreciating the values outlined in our broad national goals, and acting as law-abiding citizens (FRN, 2008).

There is need to complete an assessment of the varying degrees to which these and other nation-building tactics are advancing the nation. It is undeniable, though, that there is still a long way to go before the Nigerian idea is fully realized. In fact, the wave of ethno-religious conflicts that appears to be a permanent fixture of the Nigerian nation-state attests to a pervasive tendency toward violence, which in and of itself is a marker of intolerance, disregard for the rights of other people and groups, denial of justice and fair play, and other lifestyle choices that are inimical to good citizenship and the advancement of the nation. The main target of this paper is to investigate Social Studies Education as a propeller for teaching global intercultural understanding, which could further inspire the creation of a new generation of citizens who are willing to put in a lot of effort to realize the objectives of Social Studies.

### **Conceptual clarifications**

In this paper, key concepts like Social Studies, Social Studies Education, Intercultural Understanding, Intercultural Competence, and Intercultural Education are vividly discussed as follows:

#### ***Social studies education***

According to Augsborg (2006), Social Studies programmes reflect the changing nature of knowledge, fostering entirely new and highly integrated approaches to resolving issues of significance to humanity. Egan (2021) defined Social Studies Education as a discipline that is concerned about the community and societal wellbeing with much focus on promoting indissoluble nationhood. Over the last fifty years, the scholarly community has begun to rethink disciplinary boundaries and encourage more integration across disciplines. This process has been spurred by pressures such as the following:

Social issues, such as poverty, crime, and public health, are increasingly understood to transcend the boundaries of disciplines, cultures, and nations. As these issues grow increasingly complex, the work to develop solutions demands an increasingly integrated view of scholarly domains and of the world itself. Many scholars now define themselves by the issues and problems they address and use several disciplines to inform their work (Unimna & Unimke, 2018). Entirely new departments and programmes reflect this development

Technology provides increasing easy access to databases that are cross-disciplinary and multidisciplinary as well as scholarship in many disciplines. Scholars increasingly consider themselves to be members of the international academic community and share findings regularly across intellectual and geographic boundaries. Therefore, the objectives of Social Studies Education include:

- i) Create awareness of and sensitivity to man's environment;
- ii) Influence man's attitudes positively to social, cultural, political values and total environment;

- iii) Enable man to acquire skills for solving societal and environmental problems;
- iv) Equip man with the basic understanding and knowledge of the total environment; and
- v) Encourage voluntary participation in social and civic duties while developing the sense of responsibility.

Other roles played by Social Studies Education according to Odey, Enu and Unimke (2022) include:

- i) The development of National consciousness and commitment as necessary ingredients for nation building;
- ii) The inculcation of social value and skills for active social life
- iii) The development of intellectual skills, knowledge and abilities for better understanding of the immediate and remote environment;
- iv) Developing rational thinking ability for practical social life;
- v) Identifying and solving problems using problem solving techniques; and
- vi) Promoting value awareness and utilization of some values in tackling dynamic problems in the society (Ogundare, 2010).

### ***Propeller***

A propeller is a device that generates thrust, particularly one that powers a vehicle (such a ship or airplane) by means of a central hub on which radiating blades are arranged and twisted to form a helical surface. According to Merriam-Webster, it is also a mechanical device that rotates a shaft that has two or more broad, angled blades attached to it for propelling a boat or aircraft. By pushing against air or water, a propeller is a rounded blade that revolves in a circle to assist in moving a vehicle. The propeller of a speed boat spins against the water to propel it ahead. A propeller is a tool or a way to move something forward. It is distinguished by behavior, assertiveness, or personality power. Something can be made to move in a certain direction by using a propellant. You will engage in a certain activity if anything motivates you to do so. To propel something, usually with great power, into a new location: a rocket launched into space (Collins COBUILD Advanced Learner's Dictionary).

### ***Teaching***

In an educational institution, teaching is the practice of imparting skills (knowledge, know-how, and interpersonal skills) to a student, learner, or any other audience (Musial, Pradere & Tricot, 2012). The definitions of mentalism have led to the belief that teaching is exclusively human. The definition of teaching in psychology is the teacher's goal to impart knowledge, behaviour, or skill. This suggests that in order to exhibit theory of mind abilities, the teacher must evaluate the potential learner's current level of knowledge. Teaching was thought to be exclusively human as theory of mind and intentions are hard, if not impossible, to evaluate in non-human animals (Kline, 2015). On the other hand, if the purpose of education defines it, then it becomes feasible to evaluate its existence in non-human animals. A definition proposed by Caro and Hauser (1992) is functionalist. Three requirements need to be satisfied for a behaviour to be classified as teaching:

- i) It is necessary to watch the teacher's behaviour only in the presence of an unsuspecting person;

- ii) The behaviour has a cost for the teacher, or at the very least, no immediate advantage;  
and
- iii) The behaviour may result in a learning opportunity for the student.

### ***Global***

The term "global" encompasses anything from the entire planet to the international, transcontinental, and even universal. Global also means that all countries on all continents are taken into account in the same way. Global, global, universal: alterations have the potential to affect the international economy (Vocabulary.com). Global in nature, encompassing the entire planet; neither localized nor restricted. Concerning the entire world: We hope that a new age of harmony and collaboration has dawned. We have the opportunity to create a Nigeria that looks outside and fulfils its obligations to the world. As a leader, he unlocked fascinating opportunities for international cooperation. A new worldwide study to examine the impact of intercultural awareness education has just begun (Vocabulary.com). A subjective sense of meaning or purpose in life arises from a global meaning that includes a cohesive worldview, feelings of being on track with one's aims and beliefs, and the conviction that one's own existence counts (George & Park, 2017).

### ***Intercultural Understanding***

Intercultural understanding (ICU) is the capacity and readiness to communicate with people from other cultural backgrounds. It is thought to include information, abilities, and awareness necessary for productive cross-cultural interactions (Dalib, Harun, Yusofl, & Ahmad, 2017). Intercultural understanding is the result of fusing a set of affective attitudes with cognitive information about other cultures. Understanding one's own culture, other civilizations, and the parallels and discrepancies among them all constitutes knowledge (Hill, 2006). Both the cognitive and emotive areas are included in intercultural understanding.

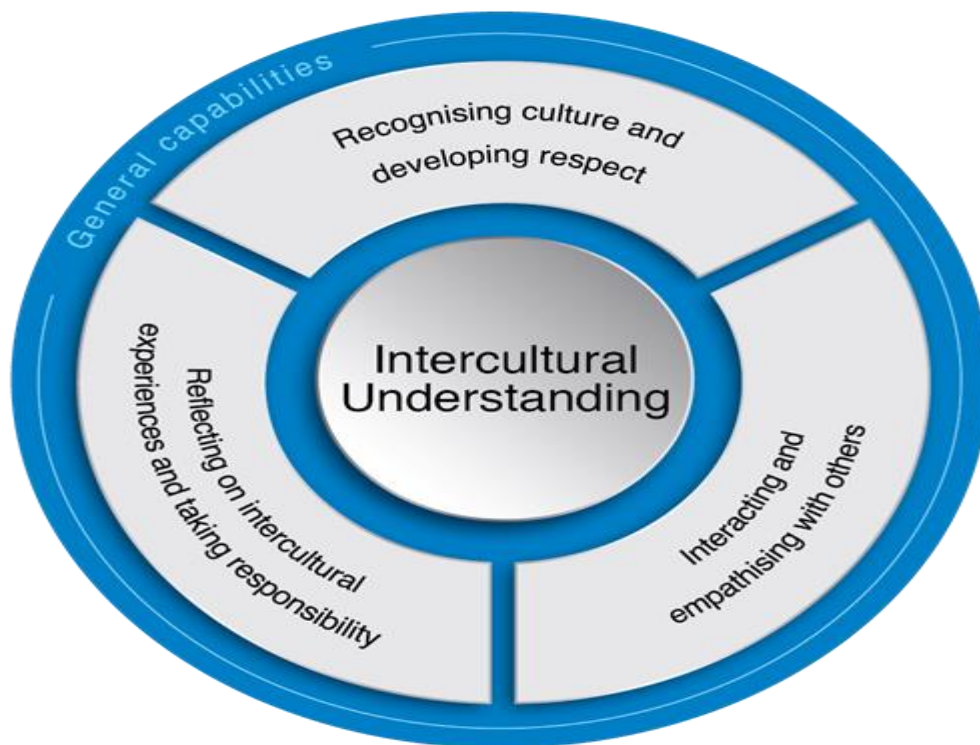
Knowledge about one's own and other cultures is included in the cognitive component of intercultural understanding (Hill, 2006). It also involves understanding how different cultures differ and how they are similar. Even though education is a crucial element, intercultural understanding requires more than just knowledge. It's also essential to have positive attitudes about different cultures, such as curiosity, empathy, and respect (Arasaratnam & Doerfel, 2005; Deardorff 2006; Rappaport, 2015). Intercultural sensitivity refers to an individual's affective reaction to cultural differences. It has been conceptualised in two ways: (1) as the affective aspect of intercultural communication competence (Chen and Starosta, 2010) and (2) developmentally as the subjective (phenomenological) experience of cultural difference (Bennett, 2008). It is conceptualised as an important element of intercultural competence (Hammer & Bennett, 2003), wherein increased intercultural sensitivity leads to increased intercultural competence.

In recent decades, intercultural understanding has gained more attention in both educational and research settings. This emphasis on understanding diverse cultural responses to various aspects of the human experience can be attributed, in part, to increased international mobility and, in part, to the effects of globalization at the local and national levels (Zapata-Barrero, 2017). From an educational standpoint, more students are finding themselves in classrooms where diverse cultures are represented, more national schools are offering an international education, and more international schools are operating worldwide. An internationally focused curriculum may be assumed to be important for international schools with globally mobile pupils, but is increasingly being recognized as of relevance within national contexts too, as Walton, Priest, and Paradies (2013) have stated. With its expansion

in a variety of fields, one would wonder what the International Primary Curriculum and other internationally oriented curricula like the International Baccalaureate have in common.

### **Ideas that propelled the teaching of social studies for intercultural understanding**

According to Koutlaki and Eslami (2018), the key ideas for Intercultural Understanding are organised into three interrelated elements in the learning continuum, as shown in figure 1.



**Figure 1: Organising Elements for Intercultural Understanding**

**Source:** Koutlaki & Eslami (2018).

**a) Recognising Culture and Developing Respect:** In this constituent, students must recognize, notice, characterize, and analyze progressively complex aspects of both their own and other people's cultural identities. With the options offered in the learning regions, students leave their familiar environments to investigate novel concepts and first-hand accounts pertaining to certain ethnic groups. By contrasting their experiences and knowledge with those of others, they are able to see similarities and differences in their lives as well as the necessity of critically reflecting on these differences in order to try and comprehend them. Pupils respect the rights and viewpoints of others and acknowledge and value individual diversity (Koutlaki & Eslami, 2018). In developing and acting with intercultural understanding, students:

- i) Investigate culture and cultural identity;
- ii) Explore and compare cultural knowledge, beliefs and practices; and
- iii) Develop respect for cultural diversity.

**b) Reflecting on Intercultural Experiences and Taking Responsibility:** The development of pupils' ability to interpret or consider the significance of experience is a crucial component of intercultural learning. Through contemplation, students can get a deeper understanding of how culture shapes the conduct of people and communities in certain situations. Students are urged to consider how they have behaved and responded to cross-cultural interactions, as well as what cultural factors may have played a role. Pupils acquire the ability to "stand between

cultures," balance opposing cultural viewpoints and values, and accept accountability for their own acts and relationships with others from both within and outside of their own culture. In developing and acting with intercultural understanding, students:

- i) Reflect on intercultural experiences;
- ii) Challenge stereotypes and prejudices; and
- iii) Mediate cultural difference.

**c) Interacting and Empathise with others:** This element gives intercultural learning an experiential dimension in situations that might be face-to-face, virtual, or vicarious. It entails students learning how to interact to and move between different cultural groups through engagement. Students adopt fresh perspectives on well-known ideas. This promotes adaptation, flexibility, and a readiness to try out novel cultural experiences. By seeing other people's viewpoints and experiences as though they were their own, empathy helps pupils grow a sense of solidarity with others. Empathy involves imagining what it might be like to 'walk in another's shoes' and identifying with others' feelings, situations and motivations. In developing and acting with intercultural understanding, students:

- i) Communicate across cultures
- ii) Consider and develop multiple perspectives
- iii) Empathise with others.

### **Teaching for Intercultural Understanding**

Personal, interpersonal, and social knowledge and skills are all incorporated into intercultural understanding. Through their encounters with people, texts, and places across the curriculum, students are taught to appreciate and analyse critically both their own and others' cultural viewpoints and practices (Ruth, 2018). Teaching for intercultural understanding encouraging students to build on similar interests and experiences, negotiate or mediate difference, and draw connections between their own and other people's lives are all part of teaching for intercultural understanding.

Social Studies Education helps students become more adept at critical analysis of cross-cultural experiences as well as communication and empathy. It gives students the chance to reflect on their own attitudes and views in a different way, which helps learners, understand both themselves and other people better (Weatherall, 2019). The curiosity of pupils in the lives of others is piqued by intercultural awareness. It encourages novel and constructive cross-cultural behaviours and fosters values and attitudes like curiosity, concern, empathy, reciprocity, respect and responsibility, open-mindedness, and critical awareness. Soong (2018) identified three dispositions as key to the development of intercultural understanding in the Australian Curriculum, despite the fact that all are important in learning to live together: expressing empathy, displaying respect, and taking responsibility.

### **Criteria for the teaching of intercultural understanding**

The following are the criteria for teaching intercultural understanding: brainstorming, field trips, improvisation and examination as a group, cultural value exploration, cross-cultural teams, simulation and teamwork through interaction and intercultural communication through role play.

i) **Brainstorming:** A creative thinking method for generating fresh concepts and finding solutions to issues is brainstorming. Using this ideation technique, teams can foster fresh perspectives and come up with answers as a group. An environment that is open and creative

is fostered via brainstorming, which promotes unfettered thought and permits the expression of any idea without fear of criticism. Although it can be done alone as well, this technique usually involves a group of people (Forsyth, 2014).

According to Haddou, Camilleri, and Zarate (2014), brainstorming is an approach that allows people to freely think while coming up with ideas and sharing expertise to address a specific technical or commercial problem. In addition, brainstorming is a collaborative exercise in which participants exchange ideas as soon as they occur to them. Ideas for next action are categorized and ranked at the end of the session. When organizing a brainstorming session, it's critical to specify the subject matter precisely. Overly precise topics can limit creativity, and poorly defined topics won't produce enough ideas that are immediately useful.

Another crucial factor is the makeup of the brainstorming group. It should comprise those who have a direct connection to the topic as well as those who can offer original and surprising thoughts. Employees from both inside and outside the company may be a part of it (Haddou, Camilleri & Zarate, 2014). Using the brainstorming technique, a group of people collaborate to generate ideas on the spot in response to a stimulus (Henningesen & Henningesen, 2013). The purpose of brainstorming, according to Henningesen and Henningesen (2013), is to produce a large number of ideas rapidly while encouraging "out-of-the-box" thinking. After that, the concepts are debated, combined, and improved. In the end, the group strives to come to an agreement on the ultimate list or most effective method of problem-solving.

ii) **Field Trips:** Wilson (2011) defined a field trip as a school or class trip with an educational intent, in which students interact with the setting, displays, and exhibits to gain an experiential connection to the ideas, concepts, and subject matter. Field trips can also be referred to as instructional trips, school excursions, or school journeys. Field trips are defined as student experiences outside of the classroom at engaging places intended for educational reasons by Tal and Morag (2019). According to Behrendt & Franklin (2014), Field trips can be planned for five purposes:

- i) To provide first-hand experience;
- ii) To stimulate interest and motivation in science;
- iii) To add relevance to learning and interrelationships;
- iv) To strengthen observation and perception skills; and
- v) To promote personal or social development.

Students visit places on field trips that are exclusive and cannot be replicated in the classroom. Every student takes note of the natural environments and gives the experience significance that is unique to them. Students can explore with ideas through interactive exhibitions, which frequently make it impossible to do so in a traditional classroom. As students integrate and adjust to new knowledge and cognition, previously covered material in the course suddenly becomes pertinent (Lei, 2010a). The field trip's experiential learning is connected to previous experiences and classroom learning through the venue and the classroom (Lei, 2010b).

iii) **Improvisation and Examination as a Group:** An improvisational anecdote can be made to come to life in order to better describe the circumstance. Students' perspectives on the varied cultural experiences will probably converge or diverge through attentive observation. The discrepancies between experience, perception, and understanding will prompt further thought, discussion, and argument, which makes the divergence more valuable. But while the narrative

is being recounted, they should hold their opinions to themselves and avoid from passing judgment. After listening, they might need to clarify the situation with a few questions (Forsyth, 2014). Students will be engaged in the notion that, on occasion, the rationale behind a cultural situation is not clearly defined but rather negotiated through reviewing and commenting on the experience and these opposing perspectives. The other members of the group should have a moment to contemplate the situation.

**iv) Cultural value exploration:** To show students that each of us has a set of cultural values that shape our observable behaviour, instructors can show them the "cultural iceberg" image. This allows students to reflect on how their initial interpretations of the behaviour of their classmates and instructors may not have taken these deeper influences into account (Haynes, 2019).

**v) Cross-cultural teams:** For group assignments, instructors might designate teams so that students can work with peers from different cultural backgrounds to accomplish a shared goal, thereby developing their intercultural competency (Alizadeh & Chavan, 2015).

**vi) Simulation and Teamwork through Interaction:** The goal of this method is to motivate students to apply their newly gained knowledge to adopt diverse cultural behaviours right away—the more surprising, the better. This is done in order to observe what goes on around them and to test their classmates. Request that each student group identify two comparable verbal or nonverbal behaviours that illustrate cultural norms for behaviour. The foundation of this approach is the notion that students need to demonstrate how culture can affect people's expectations and behaviours. In each group, one student will take on the roles of secretary and observer while recording the other students' (verbal and nonverbal) responses. Given that it is frequently human nature to form opinions on its own and then act or respond to them, this role is crucial. The students might report back to the class or to their own group after completing this task (Elomäki, Kantola, Kolvunen, & Ylöstalo, 2018).

**vii) Intercultural Communication through Role Play:** The students can now move on to creating an educational activity as they have gained more in-depth knowledge and experience through study and interactions with their peers. The students can use simulations to distil their learning experiences, and in groups, they can create a creative role play around intercultural communication. They can then create a script and dialogue to demonstrate cultural differences using the research and the responses or comments they have received (De Coster & Zanoni, 2018).

### **The place of social studies in the promotion of cultural values**

The place of Social Studies in the promotion of cultural values for national integration in Nigeria cannot be over emphasized. It could be better understood when one views its aims, objectives and methodology vis a vis the national philosophy. Onifade (2002) agreed that the primary and overriding purpose and features of Social Studies programme is citizenship education. Additionally, he stated that obtaining excellent citizenship requires knowledge and skills to comprehend information, values, beliefs, and social participation. Put differently, social studies encompasses more than just learning facts; it also involves developing values, attitudes, and abilities. A person who possesses certain desirable traits, such as having a democratic perspective, believing in decency and fair play, and being patient and willing to adopt the customs, traditions, and nationalistic aspirations of his country, might be considered a successful citizen.

Social studies as a problem solving subject in any society was introduced to solve the numerous prevailing problems in society (Odey, Enu & Unimke, 2022). It was first introduced in the United States of America and Britain in 1921 and 1945 respectively. The United States



of America, a country with a large multicultural population, was searching for a topic that would bring its people together on a social level. In contrast, Britain sought to integrate its citizens following the Second World War's conclusion in 1945. Through the use of the school, social studies education was intended to help Nigeria heal from the wounds of the civil war, eradicate ethnicity, and foster cooperation, good citizenship, and national unity, among other things (Ezegbe 1988).

According to Kisson (1981), the committee overseeing the Social Studies curriculum in elementary schools, Social Studies is a common education about how people interact with their social and physical surroundings. It is not a study, but rather a way of life that explains how people affect and are influenced by their social, political, economic, psychological, and cultural environments.

Social studies is an academic field that centers on studying people and how they affect their surroundings, are influenced by them, and are able to survive the effects of their surroundings. It highlights how resilient humans are to environmental shocks and how they might be used for human benefit. Is it possible for social studies education to advance cultural values in Nigeria? To dispel this uncertainty, keep in mind that the National Policy on Education (2014) serves as the foundation for the objectives of social studies. The document includes the following learning objectives:

- i) The development of a sense of national consciousness and unity;
- ii) The instillation of the proper values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and Nigerian society; and
- iii) The mental training necessary for an understanding of the outside world, the acquisition of relevant skills, and the enhancement of one's physical, mental, and social abilities and competences as tools for daily life and social advancement.

According to Gold (2000) Social Studies objectives which are derived from national goals includes:

- i) To teach the learners to respect the rights and opinions of others;
- ii) To be skilled in securing, evaluating and presenting information;
- iii) To assure social and civic responsibility;
- iv) To learn about vocational activities and opportunities;
- v) To exercise critical judgment; and
- vi) To understand and promote social process.

The overall aim of Social Studies Education is to make learners become patriotic, socially responsible and good citizens by understanding the social milieu therein (Unimna & Ameh, 2018). The values which the discipline inculcates in the learners according to include an appreciation of the diversity of Nigeria positive thinking, cooperation and honesty. Thus, it is evident that social studies may instil cultural values that can aid in Nigeria's integration with Africa as a whole.

### **Social studies content for teaching global intercultural understanding**

One of the key roles of social studies education is the development of national consciousness, cultural values, and commitment as necessary ingredients for nation building.

This will improve global intercultural understanding, which focuses on sharing, creating, and contesting different cultural perceptions and practices, and supports the development of a critical awareness of the processes of socialization and representation that shape and maintain cultural differences (Unimke, Enu & Esu, 2019). As intercultural understanding identifies knowledge, skills, behaviours, and dispositions that support students in developing and acting with intercultural understanding at school and in their lives beyond school, social studies education raises awareness of cultural diversity and sensitivity to man's environment. Intercultural understanding, on a personal level, helps students interact with both their own and other cultures, strengthening their sense of identity and ability to transition between their own and other people's worlds (Kalantzis & Cope, 2015). Students also learn to recognize the attitudes and systems that influence their own personal narratives and identities. This suggests that teaching social studies promotes intercultural understanding on a global scale.

Education in social studies fosters the growth of cognitive talents, information, and skills for a deeper comprehension of both the local and global environment. As students gain the ability to recognize, analyze, and resolve cultural disparities in both their own and other countries, global intercultural awareness is advanced. They gain the ability to act on what they have learned, accept accountability for their relationships with others, and develop into global intercultural citizens (Byram, 2018). Education in social studies helps people think logically for actual social situations and equips them with problem-solving abilities for both society and the environment. This promotes worldwide intercultural understanding because intercultural approaches help diverse socio-cultural groups communicate with one another, learn from one another, and collaborate for the betterment of society as a whole. By opposing actions that violate human rights rather than merely classifying them as "cultural traditions," it also provides an alternative to cultural relativism. By providing everyone a voice, intercultural understanding encourages equitable opportunity and active engagement.

Social studies education makes it possible to instil social values and life skills that lead to an active social life. This promotes global intercultural understanding because it helps students draw connections between their own and other people's worlds, build on interests and commonalities, and negotiate or mediate differences. It helps students become more adept at critical analysis of cross-cultural experiences as well as communication and empathy. It gives individuals the chance to reflect on their own attitudes and views in a different way, which help students' understand both themselves and other people better.

Social Science Education gives people the fundamental information and awareness of the entire environment, which favorably affects their attitudes toward social, cultural, political, and environmental values. By encouraging students to draw connections between their own and other people's worlds, to build on their common interests and experiences, and to negotiate or mediate difference, this promotes worldwide intercultural understanding. It helps students become more adept in communicating, empathizing with others, and critically analyzing cross-cultural encounters (Hamot, 2019). It gives individuals the chance to reflect on their own attitudes and views in a different way, which helps them understand both themselves and other people better. The curiosity of pupils in the lives of others is piqued by intercultural understanding. It encourages novel and constructive cross-cultural behaviours and fosters values and attitudes like curiosity, concern, empathy, reciprocity, respect and responsibility, open-mindedness, and critical awareness.

## Conclusion

The study critically x-rayed Social Studies Education as a propeller for teaching intercultural understanding by explicitly examining Social Studies, Social Studies Education, intercultural understanding, intercultural competence, and intercultural education. The scope and key elements of intercultural understanding, the place of Social Studies in the promotion of cultural values, the criteria for the achievement of intercultural understanding as well as the significance of Social Studies Education in advancing global intercultural understanding were thoroughly discussed in this paper.

Since the present wave of ethno-religious violence has severely impeded Nigeria's ambitions to become a cohesive, free, and democratic nation, action must be taken right away. Galtung (2003) suggests that nation-states should "pick the best from all" to create a transcultural society that respects political freedom without sacrificing the basic needs of all people. While attempts to establish a nation and encourage effective citizenship have taken a variety of paths, from structural to cultural to Marxian, recent events in the post-Soviet Union world seem to support this idea. The best chance of achieving this transculturalism is through social studies education that places a strong emphasis on intercultural and peace education, particularly within the school system. If Nigerian Social Studies is to fulfil its responsibility, it must effectively conceptualize relevant concepts and demonstrate more than "paper interest" in placing the subject in the right context.

One cannot stress the importance of intercultural understanding. The belief that nothing needs to be done because students from different countries already interact with one another in the classroom ignores the need to expand our understanding and compassion for others, regardless of how different they may seem from us. Stereotypical assumptions and prejudiced views must be dispelled. As we see on a daily basis in the media, prejudice and ignorance can result in brutality and bloodshed. It is the duty of all educators to promote intercultural awareness and strengthen each student's cultural identity (UNESCO, 2010). Many of our prejudices are ontologically embedded, as the study's findings demonstrated. For example, a text that seems to present all sides of a story can still be biased, curricula designed to acclimate students to a new environment can stifle inquiry through institutional indoctrination, and the provision of tidy, unremarkable facilities can stifle creative expression. In order to achieve high standards of intercultural tolerance and cooperation, many obstacles to intercultural understanding must be removed.

## Recommendations

Based on the foregoing, this paper suggests that intercultural understanding to be properly imparted to the learners through Social Studies Education:

- i) The subject Social Studies should be implemented at the Senior Secondary School level, which is a big gap yet to be filled;
- ii) Social Studies curriculum should be restructured for effective promotion of intercultural understanding and cultural values; and
- iii) Only Social Studies specialists should be employed to teach Social Studies, as other subject specialists would not do it well.

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