



Article

Social Studies Curriculum Implementation and Peace Building among Students in Colleges of Education in North-Central Nigeria

Edinoh Kingsley, PhD*¹

1. Civic Education Unit Test Development Department

National Examinations Council (NECO) Headquarters

Minna, Niger State, Nigeria

*Correspondence: edinohkings@gmail.com

Citation: Kingsley E. Social Studies Curriculum Implementation and Peace Building among Students in Colleges of Education in North-Central Nigeria. Sustainable Resource Innovation Journal 2026, 1(1), 12-27.

Received: 15th Jun 2026

Revised: 30th Jun 2026

Accepted: 10th Jul 2026

Published: 05th Agust 2026



Copyright: © 2026 by the authors.
Submitted for open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license
(<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)

Abstract: This study examined the influence of Social Studies curriculum implementation on peace building among students in Colleges of Education in North-Central Nigeria. The study was motivated by persistent security challenges, communal conflicts, and declining social cohesion within the region, which underscores the need for teacher education programmes capable of preparing future educators as agents of peace and responsible citizenship. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The study population comprised 17,913 Social Studies students in twelve public Colleges of Education in North-Central Nigeria, from which a sample of 385 respondents was selected using multistage sampling procedures. Data were collected using a researcher-developed questionnaire titled Social Studies Curriculum Implementation and Peace Building Questionnaire (SSCIPBQ), which yielded a Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of 0.80. Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) were used to answer the research question, while an independent samples t-test tested the hypothesis at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that students perceived Social Studies curriculum implementation as having a positive influence on peace building (Grand Mean = 3.48, SD = 0.59). Respondents agreed that effective curriculum implementation promotes democratic values, cultural understanding, conflict-resolution skills, responsible citizenship, and national integration. Furthermore, no statistically significant difference was found in students' perceptions based on age ($t - 383 = -0.371, p = .711$). The study concludes that effective implementation of the Social Studies curriculum represents an important educational strategy for strengthening peace building among pre-service teachers. It recommends continuous professional development for lecturers, adequate instructional resources, learner-centred pedagogies, and strengthened institutional support to maximise the peace-building potential of Social Studies Education.

Keywords: Social Studies Education; Curriculum Implementation; Peace Building; Teacher Education; Colleges of Education; North-Central Nigeria

Introduction

Education remains one of the most powerful instruments for promoting peaceful coexistence, democratic citizenship, and sustainable national development. Beyond transmitting knowledge and developing occupational skills, contemporary education is increasingly expected to cultivate values, attitudes, and competencies that enable learners to participate responsibly in diverse societies characterised by social, political, religious, and cultural differences. Within this broader educational mandate, Social Studies Education occupies a strategic position because of its emphasis on citizenship education, democratic participation, human rights, cultural understanding, social responsibility, and peaceful conflict resolution. Consequently, the effective implementation of the Social Studies curriculum has become increasingly important in countries experiencing social instability and recurring conflicts, including Nigeria, Wali-Essen. Edinoh & Chukwuemeka [1].

Globally, education systems are increasingly recognised as critical platforms for advancing peace, social cohesion, and intercultural understanding. UNESCO's Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development highlights the central role of curriculum implementation in equipping learners with the knowledge, skills, values, and behaviours required to foster peaceful, inclusive, and democratic societies. The Recommendation further emphasises that peace education should be integrated throughout teaching, learning, and assessment rather than treated as an isolated component of the curriculum. Similarly, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development argues that education should develop learners' social and emotional competencies, critical thinking abilities, collaborative problem-solving skills, and civic engagement necessary for addressing complex contemporary societal challenges [2], [3].

Within Africa, persistent insecurity, violent extremism, ethnic conflicts, communal violence, and political instability have renewed scholarly interest in the role of education in promoting peace building and preventing violent conflict. Contemporary educational reforms increasingly advocate curriculum implementation approaches that develop learners' intercultural competence, tolerance, empathy, and democratic values capable of strengthening national unity and sustainable development. Teacher education institutions have become particularly important because they prepare future teachers whose professional practices influence successive generations of learners.

Nigeria presents a particularly compelling context for examining the relationship between Social Studies curriculum implementation and peace building. Despite numerous governmental interventions aimed at promoting national integration, the country continues to experience insecurity associated with communal conflicts, farmers–herder disputes, banditry, terrorism, kidnapping, cultism, electoral violence, and other forms of social unrest. These challenges have affected educational institutions, disrupted learning, displaced communities, and weakened social cohesion, particularly within North-Central Nigeria, Edinoh; Amana, Edinoh & Saidu [4], [5].

North-Central Nigeria occupies a strategic geographical and cultural position within the country, serving as a meeting point for diverse ethnic, religious, and linguistic groups. While this diversity provides opportunities for cultural enrichment, it has also contributed to recurring communal conflicts, competition over resources, identity-based tensions, and social fragmentation. These realities underscore the need for educational programmes capable of strengthening peaceful coexistence and preparing future teachers as agents of social transformation.

Social Studies Education was introduced into the Nigerian educational system to address many of these societal challenges through citizenship education, civic responsibility, value orientation, cultural integration, democratic participation, and peaceful conflict resolution Edinoh, Asemota. & Wakili [6]. The National Commission for Colleges of Education designed the Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) Social Studies programme to produce professionally competent teachers capable of promoting rational thinking, responsible citizenship, social justice, and national integration. Effective implementation of the curriculum is therefore expected to develop learners' capacities for dialogue, co-operation, critical thinking, empathy, tolerance, and peaceful conflict management.

However, despite these laudable objectives, concerns remain regarding the extent to which Social Studies curriculum implementation translates into meaningful peace-building outcomes among students. Reports of cult-related activities, violent protests, intolerance, substance abuse, and other forms of anti-social behaviour involving students in some tertiary institutions have raised questions about whether the intended objectives of the curriculum are being fully realized [7]. These concerns

suggest that curriculum implementation, rather than curriculum design alone, deserves greater scholarly attention.

Empirical studies have consistently demonstrated that learner-centred instructional strategies, democratic classroom practices, collaborative learning, and participatory pedagogies significantly influence learners' civic attitudes, conflict-resolution skills, and pro-social behaviours. Nevertheless, many existing studies have concentrated on basic and secondary education, with comparatively limited attention devoted to Colleges of Education where future teachers receive professional preparation Ogunode, Edinoh & Olatunde-Aiyedun [8]. Furthermore, relatively few studies have investigated students' perceptions of how Social Studies curriculum implementation contributes to peace building within North-Central Nigeria, a region that continues to experience significant security and social cohesion challenges.

Against this background, the present study examines the influence of Social Studies curriculum implementation on peace building among students in Colleges of Education in North-Central Nigeria. By focusing on pre-service teachers, the study contributes empirical evidence capable of informing teacher education policy, curriculum implementation, and peace education initiatives aimed at strengthening peaceful coexistence and sustainable national development [9].

Statement of the Problem

The National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE, 2012) designed the Social Studies Education curriculum to produce professionally competent teachers equipped with the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes necessary to promote responsible citizenship, democratic participation, peaceful coexistence, and national integration. The curriculum emphasises critical thinking, cultural understanding, civic responsibility, conflict resolution, and value reorientation, with the expectation that graduates will serve as agents of peace and social transformation within schools and the wider society.

Despite these objectives, Nigeria continues to experience persistent insecurity characterised by communal conflicts, farmers–herder clashes, ethnic tensions, religious extremism, banditry, kidnapping, electoral violence, and other forms of social instability. North-Central Nigeria has been particularly affected by these challenges, resulting in displacement, destruction of livelihoods, disruption of educational activities, and weakened social cohesion [10]. These realities raise important questions regarding the effectiveness of educational interventions designed to promote peaceful coexistence and national unity.

Institutions of higher learning, particularly Colleges of Education, are expected to nurture future teachers who demonstrate tolerance, empathy, democratic values, and peaceful conflict-management skills. However, observations within some tertiary institutions suggest the continued occurrence of behaviours such as cult-related activities, intolerance, student unrest, substance abuse, violent demonstrations, and other forms of anti-social conduct that undermine the objectives of Social Studies Education [11]. These developments have generated concerns regarding whether the curriculum is being implemented effectively enough to achieve its intended peace-building outcomes.

Although previous studies have examined Social Studies Education, civic education, peace education, and curriculum implementation independently, comparatively few empirical investigations have specifically examined the relationship between Social Studies curriculum implementation and peace building among students in Colleges of Education, particularly within North-Central Nigeria. Existing studies have largely concentrated on primary and secondary education or have assessed curriculum implementation from teachers' perspectives rather than from the experiences of pre-service teachers who constitute the direct beneficiaries of the curriculum.

Given the strategic role of Colleges of Education in preparing future teachers, understanding students' perceptions of how Social Studies curriculum implementation contribute to peace building is essential for strengthening teacher education programmes and informing educational policy [12]. It is against this background that this study investigates the influence of Social Studies curriculum implementation on peace building among students in Colleges of Education in North-Central Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of Social Studies curriculum implementation on peace building among students in Colleges of Education in North-Central Nigeria.

Specifically, the study sought to:

- i. determine the influence of Social Studies curriculum implementation on peace building

among students in Colleges of Education in North-Central Nigeria; and

ii. examine whether students' perceptions of the influence of Social Studies curriculum implementation on peace building differ according to age.

Research Question

The following research question guided the study:

RQ1: What is the influence of Social Studies curriculum implementation on peace building among students in Colleges of Education in North-Central Nigeria?

Research Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis was tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

H₀₁: There is no statistically significant difference in students' perceptions of the influence of Social Studies curriculum implementation on peace building based on age.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study have practical implications for teacher education, curriculum development, educational policy, and peace-building initiatives in Nigeria.

For students, the study highlights the importance of Social Studies Education in developing democratic values, civic responsibility, empathy, intercultural understanding, and conflict-resolution skills necessary for peaceful coexistence within educational institutions and society.

For Social Studies lecturers and teacher educators, the findings provide empirical evidence supporting the adoption of learner-centred pedagogies, participatory instructional strategies, and experiential learning approaches capable of strengthening students' peace-building competencies.

For the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) and curriculum planners, the findings provide evidence that may guide future curriculum review, implementation monitoring, and quality assurance initiatives aimed at improving teacher preparation programmes.

The findings are equally valuable to educational policymakers, peace-building organisations, and non-governmental organisations, as they demonstrate the strategic contribution of curriculum implementation to national peace-building efforts and provide evidence for strengthening educational interventions within conflict-prone regions [13].

Finally, the study contributes to the growing body of scholarship on Social Studies Education, curriculum implementation, and peace education by providing empirical evidence from Colleges of Education in North-Central Nigeria. It also provides a useful foundation for future research on teacher education and peace-building within higher education.

Scope of the Study

This study focused on the influence of Social Studies curriculum implementation on peace building among students in Colleges of Education in North-Central Nigeria. Specifically, the study examined students' perceptions regarding the contribution of curriculum implementation to the development of peace-building competencies and investigated whether these perceptions differed according to age.

The study was conducted among Social Studies students drawn from six public Colleges of Education located in Kogi, Niger, and Plateau States. These institutions were selected to provide representation of both Federal and State Colleges of Education within North-Central Nigeria. The Federal Capital Territory was utilised only for the pilot testing of the research instrument.

Social Studies Curriculum Implementation

Social Studies Education is widely recognised as an interdisciplinary field that integrates knowledge from the social sciences and humanities to prepare learners for responsible citizenship, democratic participation, social responsibility, and peaceful coexistence. The discipline seeks to develop learners' knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, and dispositions required for effective participation in contemporary society. Within teacher education, Social Studies occupies a strategic position because it prepares future teachers to foster civic competence, national integration, intercultural understanding, and conflict-resolution skills among successive generations of learners.

Contemporary educational literature distinguishes between curriculum design and curriculum implementation. While curriculum design concerns the development of educational objectives, content, learning experiences, and assessment strategies, curriculum implementation refers to the actual translation of these curriculum intentions into classroom practice. Curriculum implementation therefore encompasses teachers' instructional decisions, pedagogical approaches, classroom interactions, assessment practices, utilisation of instructional resources, and learners' engagement throughout the

teaching-learning process.

Effective curriculum implementation depends upon several interconnected factors. These include teacher competence, instructional leadership, learner-centred pedagogies, adequate instructional materials, supportive institutional environments, continuous professional development, and systematic monitoring of instructional quality. Consequently, even well-designed curricula may fail to achieve intended educational outcomes when implementation is weak or inconsistent.

Within the Nigerian educational system, the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) positions Social Studies as a core professional discipline for preparing teachers capable of promoting democratic citizenship, cultural integration, civic responsibility, value reorientation, and national development. The curriculum is designed to expose learners to issues relating to governance, human rights, environmental sustainability, conflict management, social justice, cultural diversity, and responsible citizenship. Through these experiences, students are expected to acquire competencies that contribute to peaceful coexistence both within educational institutions and the wider society [14].

Recent scholarship increasingly emphasises that curriculum implementation should move beyond knowledge transmission towards competency-based learning. UNESCO argues that contemporary curricula should intentionally develop learners' cognitive, social-emotional, and behavioural competencies required for peace, global citizenship, and sustainable development. Similarly, the OECD Learning Compass 2030 advocates learner-centred educational experiences that encourage critical thinking, collaboration, ethical reasoning, empathy, and civic engagement as essential competencies for addressing increasingly complex societal challenges.

The implementation of Social Studies curricula therefore requires pedagogical approaches that actively engage learners in constructing knowledge through inquiries, dialogue, reflection, collaboration, problem-solving, community participation, and experiential learning. Research consistently demonstrates that participatory instructional approaches – including debates, simulations, role play, project-based learning, service learning, and cooperative learning – enhance students' understanding of democratic principles while strengthening interpersonal relationships and conflict-resolution skills, Wali-Essien, Edinoh & Chukwuemeka.

Conversely, teacher-centred instructional approaches that emphasise memorisation, examination preparation, and passive learning provide comparatively fewer opportunities for learners to internalise democratic values or develop practical peace-building competencies. Consequently, the quality of curriculum implementation rather than curriculum documentation alone largely determines whether intended citizenship and peace education outcomes are realised.

Within Colleges of Education, effective implementation of the Social Studies curriculum assumes additional significance because pre-service teachers are expected not only to acquire knowledge but also to develop professional competencies that will shape their future classroom practices. Teachers who experience learner-centred, democratic, and participatory learning environments during their own professional preparation are more likely to adopt similar instructional approaches throughout their teaching careers. Thus, strengthening curriculum implementation within teacher education institutions contributes directly to improving educational quality, democratic citizenship, and long-term peace building.

Peace Building

Peace building has evolved from a narrow emphasis on conflict resolution to a broader process involving the prevention of violence, promotion of social justice, strengthening of democratic institutions, and development of sustainable relationships capable of addressing the structural causes of conflict. Contemporary peace-building scholarship recognises that sustainable peace extends beyond the absence of violence to include the presence of equity, inclusion, social cohesion, respect for diversity, human rights, and participatory governance.

The concept gained international prominence following the work of Johan Galtung, who distinguished between negative peace, defined as the absence of direct violence, and positive peace, characterised by the presence of justice, equality, social inclusion, and harmonious social relationships. Positive peace therefore requires educational, political, economic, and cultural structures capable of reducing inequalities and promoting cooperative relationships among diverse groups.

Similarly, John Paul Lederach conceptualised peace building as a long-term process of transforming relationships, strengthening institutions, promoting dialogue, and developing local capacities for managing conflicts constructively. Rather than focusing exclusively on resolving

immediate disputes, peace building seeks to create social conditions that minimise the recurrence of violent conflict through education, reconciliation, community participation, and institutional reform.

Within educational contexts, peace building involves deliberate efforts to cultivate learners' capacities for empathy, tolerance, critical reflection, intercultural understanding, democratic participation, dialogue, co-operation, and non-violent conflict resolution. Peace-building education therefore integrates cognitive learning with the development of social-emotional competencies and ethical values that enable learners to participate constructively within increasingly diverse societies.

Recent international policy frameworks further reinforce the educational dimension of peace building. UNESCO's Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development identifies education as a fundamental instrument for fostering cultures of peace by developing learners' knowledge, values, attitudes, behaviours, and competencies necessary for peaceful coexistence, global citizenship, and sustainable development. Likewise, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4.7 emphasises education's responsibility to promote human rights, gender equality, appreciation of cultural diversity, and peaceful societies through effective curriculum implementation and transformative pedagogy.

Within Nigeria, peace building assumes particular importance because of persistent communal conflicts, religious extremism, insecurity, farmers – herder disputes, electoral violence, kidnapping, and other forms of social instability. These challenges have highlighted the importance of educational institutions as platforms for developing future citizens capable of promoting national integration, intercultural dialogue, and peaceful conflict management.

Social Studies Education contributes significantly to these objectives because its curriculum intentionally addresses citizenship education, democratic values, cultural diversity, social justice, environmental responsibility, human rights, and conflict resolution. Through learner-centred implementation, students develop the knowledge, attitudes, and practical skills necessary to appreciate diversity, challenge stereotypes, negotiate differences peacefully, and participate responsibly within democratic society.

For pre-service teachers enrolled in Colleges of Education, peace-building competencies possess additional professional significance. Teachers influence learners' attitudes, behaviours, and value systems through both formal instruction and everyday classroom interactions. Consequently, teacher education institutions bear considerable responsibility for preparing graduates capable of modelling democratic values, facilitating inclusive learning environments, preventing violence, and promoting peaceful relationships within schools and communities, Edinoh, Asemota & Wakili.

Social Learning Theory

This study is principally anchored on Social Learning Theory (SLT), developed by Albert Bandura (1977, 1986). The theory posits that learning occurs through observation, imitation, modelling, and interaction within social environments. Bandura argued that individuals acquire behaviours, values, attitudes, and competencies by observing significant others and the consequences of their actions. Rather than viewing learning as a product of direct reinforcement alone, Social Learning Theory proposes that behaviour is shaped through the reciprocal interaction of personal factors, environmental influences, and behavioural responses – a process Bandura described as reciprocal determinism.

Within educational settings, teachers function as important role models whose instructional practices, classroom interactions, communication styles, and behavioural dispositions significantly influence students' learning and social development. Students observe how teachers demonstrate fairness, resolve disagreements, encourage collaboration, respect diversity, and facilitate democratic participation. Through repeated observation and meaningful classroom experiences, learners gradually internalise these behaviours and reproduce them in their interactions with others.

Social Studies Education provides an ideal environment for the application of Social Learning Theory because its objectives extend beyond cognitive knowledge to encompass the development of democratic values, responsible citizenship, cultural understanding, empathy, co-operation, and peaceful conflict resolution. Effective implementation of the curriculum creates opportunities for students to observe positive behaviours, engage in collaborative learning, participate in classroom discussions, undertake community-based activities, and practise peaceful methods of resolving interpersonal differences. These learner-centred experiences strengthen students' capacities for dialogue, negotiation, tolerance, and responsible social participation.

Bandura also introduced the concept of self-efficacy, defined as an individual's belief in their

ability to organise and execute behaviours necessary to achieve desired outcomes. In the context of peace building, students who develop confidence in their ability to communicate effectively, mediate conflicts, collaborate with others, and participate responsibly in civic life are more likely to demonstrate peaceful behaviours both within educational institutions and in society. Accordingly, effective implementation of the Social Studies curriculum should not only transmit knowledge about peace but should also enhance learners' confidence to apply peace-building skills in real-life situations.

Recent educational research continues to affirm the relevance of Social Learning Theory in explaining how classroom environments influence learners' civic attitudes, pro-social behaviours, and conflict-resolution competencies. Studies have consistently shown that democratic classroom climate, cooperative learning, positive teacher modelling, and participatory instructional strategies significantly enhance learners' empathy, social responsibility, civic engagement, and peaceful interpersonal relationships. These findings reinforce the proposition that curriculum implementation provides an enabling environment through which students acquire the competencies necessary for peace building.

The present study therefore adopts Social Learning Theory as its principal explanatory framework because it clearly explains how effective implementation of the Social Studies curriculum influences students' acquisition of peace-building competencies through observation, participation, modelling, and collaborative learning experiences.

Transformative Learning Theory

To complement Social Learning Theory, this study also draws upon Transformative Learning Theory, proposed by Jack Mezirow. The theory explains how learners critically examine previously held assumptions, beliefs, values, and perspectives through reflection and dialogue, leading to meaningful personal and social transformation. According to Mezirow, learning becomes transformative when individuals encounter experiences that challenge existing viewpoints and stimulate critical reflection, enabling them to reconstruct more inclusive, rational, and socially responsible perspectives.

Within Social Studies Education, transformative learning occurs when students critically engage with issues relating to democracy, human rights, cultural diversity, conflict, citizenship, social justice, and national integration. Through debates, simulations, reflective discussions, case studies, collaborative projects, and community engagement activities, learners are encouraged to question stereotypes, examine prejudices, appreciate multiple perspectives, and develop greater empathy for people from different cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. These transformative experiences contribute directly to peace building by replacing intolerance, prejudice, and hostility with understanding, co-operation, and mutual respect.

Transformative Learning Theory therefore complements Social Learning Theory by explaining the internal cognitive processes through which observed experiences become enduring changes in beliefs and behaviour. While Social Learning Theory explains how students acquire peace-building behaviours through modelling and interaction, Transformative Learning Theory explains why these experiences produce lasting changes in attitudes, values, and dispositions.

Application of the Theories to the Study

The integration of Social Learning Theory and Transformative Learning Theory provides a comprehensive explanation of how Social Studies curriculum implementation contributes to peace building among students in Colleges of Education. Social Learning Theory emphasises the importance of modelling, observation, interaction, and participatory learning, whereas Transformative Learning Theory highlights critical reflection and perspective transformation as mechanisms for behavioural change.

Accordingly, this study assumes that effective implementation of the Social Studies curriculum provides educational experiences that enable students to acquire democratic values, empathy, intercultural competence, conflict-resolution skills, and responsible citizenship through both social interaction and critical reflection. These competencies are essential for preparing pre-service teachers capable of fostering peaceful coexistence within schools and the wider Nigerian society.

The theoretical framework therefore provides a strong conceptual foundation for examining the influence of Social Studies curriculum implementation on peace building among students in Colleges of Education in North-Central Nigeria.

Empirical research consistently demonstrates that curriculum implementation plays a central role in developing learners' civic competencies, democratic values, conflict-resolution skills, and peace-building dispositions. However, contemporary evidence suggests that curriculum quality alone does

not guarantee positive educational outcomes; rather, the effectiveness with which teachers implement the curriculum largely determine whether intended learning objectives are achieved.

A comprehensive meta-analysis of 90 peace education interventions involving approximately 15,000 learners found that peace education programmes significantly improved empathy, co-operation, conflict-resolution skills, civic responsibility, and prosocial behaviour while reducing aggression and violent tendencies. The study concluded that peace education is most effective when delivered through participatory, learner-centred pedagogies rather than conventional teacher-centred instruction.

Similarly, a systematic review of international peace education programmes reported that effective curriculum implementation requires contextual relevance, active learner participation, supportive school cultures, and well-prepared teachers. Schools that integrated peace education across teaching, learning, and assessment demonstrated stronger improvements in students' democratic participation, intercultural competence, and social responsibility than schools where peace education was treated as an isolated instructional topic.

Within the Nigerian context, recent studies have reported that Social Studies teachers generally perceive the curriculum as appropriately designed to promote citizenship education, peace building, cultural integration, and responsible civic participation. Nevertheless, inadequate instructional resources, insufficient teacher professional development, overcrowded classrooms, and inconsistent implementation practices continue to limit the curriculum's effectiveness.

Research conducted among Social Studies teachers in North-Central Nigeria similarly found that while curriculum objectives strongly emphasise democratic citizenship and national integration, learner-centred instructional strategies are not consistently implemented because of limited teaching resources and inadequate pedagogical support. The researchers therefore recommended continuous professional development and stronger institutional monitoring to improve curriculum implementation.

Other Nigerian studies have shown that cooperative learning, classroom dialogue, problem-solving activities, role play, and community engagement significantly improve learners' understanding of peace education concepts compared with traditional lecture methods. These findings reinforce contemporary educational theories advocating learner-centred instructional approaches for developing civic competence and peaceful conflict-management skills.

International research further demonstrates that teacher competence remains one of the strongest predictors of successful curriculum implementation. Teachers who employ discussion-based learning, collaborative inquiry, simulations, reflective practice, and project-based learning consistently report higher levels of student engagement, empathy, democratic participation, and intercultural understanding than teachers relying primarily on expository instruction.

Institutional factors have also received considerable empirical attention. School leadership, availability of instructional materials, manageable class sizes, supportive learning environments, and effective quality assurance mechanisms have all been identified as significant predictors of curriculum implementation quality. Educational institutions characterised by collaborative leadership and adequate instructional support generally achieve stronger outcomes in citizenship education and peace-building competencies.

Although substantial empirical literature exists on Social Studies Education, peace education, curriculum implementation, and civic education separately, relatively few studies have examined these variables together within Colleges of Education in North-Central Nigeria. This gap justifies the present study.

The literature reviewed demonstrates that Social Studies Education has received considerable scholarly attention because of its contribution to citizenship education, democratic participation, civic responsibility, intercultural understanding, and sustainable development. Likewise, peace-building research has increasingly recognised education as a strategic mechanism for preventing violent conflict, strengthening social cohesion, and promoting responsible citizenship. Contemporary studies consistently report that learner-centred curriculum implementation contributes positively to learners' conflict-resolution skills, empathy, democratic values, and peaceful coexistence.

Despite these advances, important gaps remain in the existing literature.

First, most empirical studies on peace education and curriculum implementation have focused on primary and secondary schools, while comparatively little attention has been devoted to Colleges of Education, where future teachers receive professional preparation [15]. This represents a significant gap

because pre-service teachers will ultimately shape the values, attitudes, and behaviours of future generations of learners.

Second, previous Nigerian studies have largely examined curriculum implementation from the perspectives of teachers, school administrators, or curriculum developers. Comparatively fewer investigations have explored students' perceptions of how Social Studies curriculum implementation influences the development of peace-building competencies. Since students constitute the direct beneficiaries of curriculum implementation, their perceptions provide valuable evidence regarding the effectiveness of educational programmes.

Third, although several studies have examined Social Studies Education, civic education, or peace education independently, relatively few have investigated the direct relationship between Social Studies curriculum implementation and peace building within teacher education institutions. Existing studies frequently emphasises curriculum content while paying comparatively less attention to how implementation processes influence learners' attitudes, values, and behavioural outcomes.

Fourth, there remains limited empirical evidence focusing specifically on North-Central Nigeria, a region characterised by recurring communal conflicts, farmers – herder disputes, insecurity, ethnic tensions, and social fragmentation [16]. Given these contextual realities, examining curriculum implementation within this region provides important evidence capable of informing educational policy and peace-building initiatives.

Finally, much of the earlier Nigerian literature relied on descriptive discussions of Social Studies Education without integrating contemporary theoretical perspectives on social learning, transformative learning, or competency-based education. The present study addresses this limitation by anchoring its investigation on Social Learning Theory and Transformative Learning Theory, thereby providing a stronger theoretical explanation for how curriculum implementation influences peace-building competencies among pre-service teachers [17].

Accordingly, this study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by examining the influence of Social Studies curriculum implementation on peace building among students in Colleges of Education in North-Central Nigeria. The study provides empirical evidence capable of informing curriculum implementation, teacher education, educational policy, and peace-building interventions within Nigeria and similar educational contexts.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design to examine the influence of Social Studies curriculum implementation on peace building among students in Colleges of Education in North-Central Nigeria. The design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to obtain data from a representative sample of respondents and describe their perceptions regarding the phenomenon under investigation without manipulating any study variables. Descriptive survey designs are particularly suitable for educational research involving attitudes, perceptions, opinions, and behavioural tendencies within naturally occurring settings.

Study Area

The study was conducted in North-Central Nigeria, one of the country's six geopolitical zones. The region comprises Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, and Plateau States, together with the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. North-Central Nigeria occupies a strategic position because of its ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and religious diversity. However, the region has also experienced recurring communal conflicts, farmers – herder disputes, insecurity, and other challenges affecting peaceful coexistence. These characteristics make the region particularly suitable for investigating issues relating to Social Studies Education and peace building.

Population of the Study

The target population consisted of 17,913 Social Studies students enrolled in the twelve (12) public Colleges of Education located within North-Central Nigeria during the period of the study.

Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample of 385 students was selected using a multistage sampling procedure.

The first stage involved the purposive selection of Kogi, Niger, and Plateau States because each possessed both Federal and State Colleges of Education, thereby ensuring institutional representation within the study. These states also provided adequate geographical coverage of the North-Central region.

The second stage involved selecting six public Colleges of Education from the three states.

Finally, proportionate random sampling was employed to select respondents from the participating institutions according to student population, ensuring that each student had an equal opportunity of participating in the study.

The sample size was considered statistically adequate for representing the study population and facilitating meaningful descriptive and inferential analyses.

Instrument for Data Collection

Data were collected using a researcher-developed questionnaire titled the Social Studies Education and Peace Building Questionnaire (SSEPQBQ).

The questionnaire comprised two sections.

Section A elicited demographic information relating to respondents' age and institutional characteristics.

Section B contained eleven statements measuring students' perceptions regarding the influence of Social Studies curriculum implementation on peace building. Responses were measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1).

Validity of the Instrument

The questionnaire underwent face and content validation by specialists in Social Studies Education, Curriculum Studies, Educational Measurement and Evaluation, and Peace Education. Their observations regarding clarity, relevance, content coverage, and alignment with the study objectives were incorporated before the final administration of the instrument.

Reliability of the Instrument

A pilot study involving respondents outside the main study area was conducted to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. Reliability was estimated using Cronbach's Alpha, which produced a coefficient of 0.80, indicating satisfactory reliability for educational research.

Procedure for Data Collection

Following approval from the management of the participating Colleges of Education, the researcher, assisted by trained research assistants, administered the questionnaires directly to respondents during lecture periods. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. Completed questionnaires were retrieved immediately after completion, resulting in a high response rate suitable for statistical analysis.

Method of Data Analysis

Data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Descriptive statistics comprising means and standard deviations were used to answer the research question.

The hypothesis was tested using an independent samples t-test at the 0.05 level of significance.

A criterion mean of 2.50 served as the benchmark for interpreting respondents' perceptions. Mean scores equal to or greater than 2.50 indicated agreement, whereas values below 2.50 indicated

Results

Respondents' Perceptions of Social Studies Curriculum Implementation and Peace Building

The research question sought to determine the influence of Social Studies curriculum implementation on peace building among students in Colleges of Education in North-Central Nigeria. Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were used to analyse the responses. A criterion mean of 2.50 served as the benchmark for decision making, with mean scores above 2.50 indicating agreement [18], [19].

Table 1. Students' Perceptions of the Influence of Social Studies Curriculum Implementation on Peace Building (N = 385)

Item	Statement	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Social Studies develop learners' civic knowledge and democratic values necessary for peaceful coexistence.	3.71	0.51	Agree
2	The curriculum equips students with skills for solving personal and societal problems peacefully.	3.39	0.62	Agree
3	Proper implementation of the Social Studies curriculum promotes peace building within tertiary institutions.	3.44	0.57	Agree

4	Social Studies help learners appreciate ethnic diversity and national integration.	3.56 0.58 Agree
5	The curriculum discourages ethnic loyalty that undermines national unity.	3.43 0.59 Agree
6	Understanding cultural diversity reduces conflicts among students.	3.46 0.63 Agree
7	Social Studies promote tolerance and peaceful coexistence among diverse groups.	3.39 0.59 Agree
8	Effective curriculum implementation contributes significantly to national peace building.	3.56 0.64 Agree
9	Exposure to Social Studies broadens students' global perspectives and critical thinking.	3.48 0.64 Agree
10	The curriculum develops responsible citizens capable of promoting peace.	3.45 0.60 Agree
11	Government and NGOs should support curriculum implementation through adequate learning resources.	3.46 0.58 Agree
Grand Mean 3.48 0.59 Agree		

Interpretation

The findings presented in Table 1 indicate that respondents generally perceived Social Studies curriculum implementation as having a positive influence on peace building [20]. The overall mean score of 3.48 (SD = 0.59) exceeded the criterion mean of 2.50, suggesting a high level of agreement among students. The highest-rated item (M = 3.71, SD = 0.51) indicated that Social Studies contribute to the development of civic knowledge and democratic values essential for peaceful coexistence. Similarly, respondents acknowledged that effective curriculum implementation enhances national integration, intercultural understanding, critical thinking, and responsible citizenship.

These findings suggest that students view Social Studies Education as an important educational mechanism for promoting peace-building competencies within Colleges of Education and the wider Nigerian society.

Research Hypothesis

H₀₁

There is no statistically significant difference in students' perceptions of the influence of Social Studies curriculum implementation on peace building based on age.

Table 2. Independent Samples t-test Comparing Students' Perceptions by Age

Age Group	n	Mean	SD	t	df	p	Decision
15–20 years	200	3.53	0.20				
21–25 years	185	3.54	0.19	-0.371	383	0.711	Not Significant

Interpretation

The independent samples t-test revealed no statistically significant difference in students' perceptions of the influence of Social Studies curriculum implementation on peace building based on age, $t(383) = -0.371$, $p = .711$. Since the probability value exceeded the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was retained [21]. This finding indicates that students across both age categories shared similar perceptions regarding the contribution of Social Studies curriculum implementation to peace building.

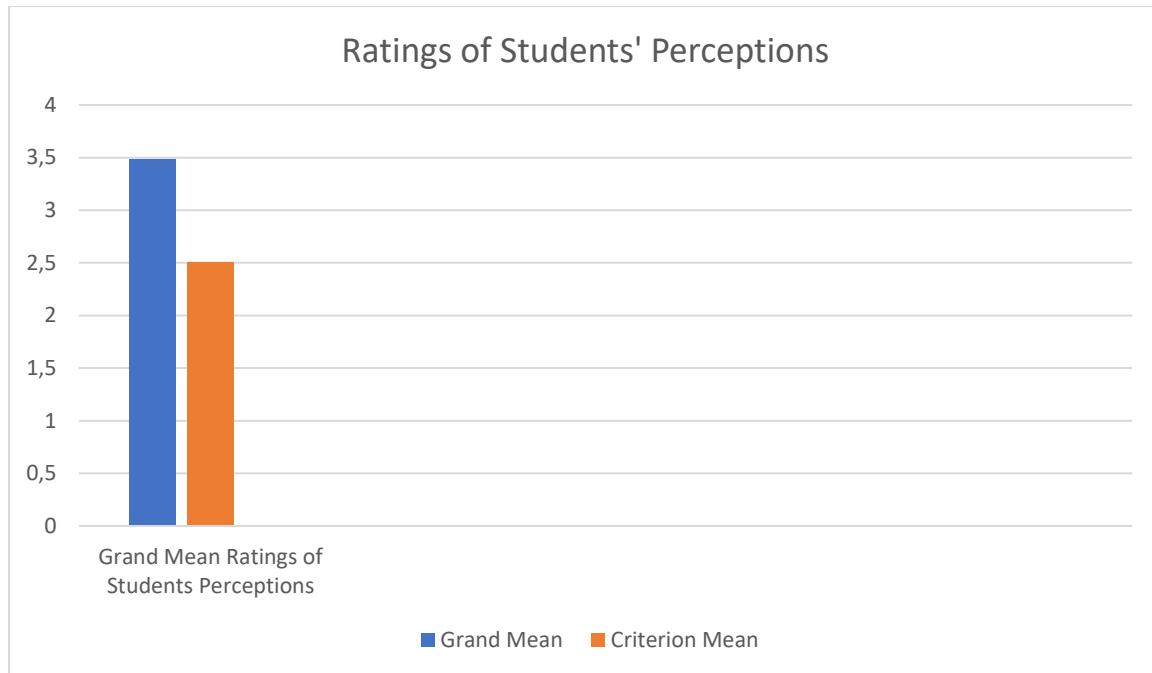


Figure 1: Grand Mean Ratings of Students' Perceptions

Interpretation:

Figure 1 illustrates that the grand mean (3.48) was substantially higher than the criterion mean (2.50), indicating that respondents perceived Social Studies curriculum implementation as positively influencing peace building.

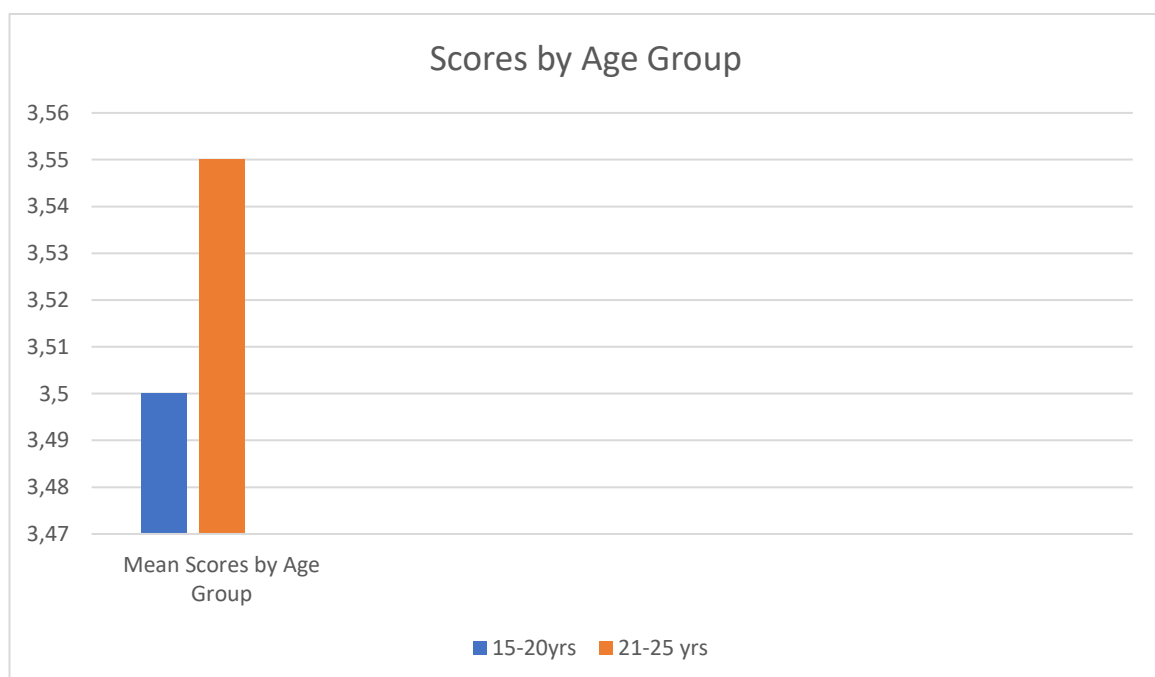


Figure 2: Mean Scores by Age Group

Interpretation:

The chart shows minimal variation between the two age groups, corroborating the t-test result that age did not significantly influence students' perceptions.

Summary of Findings

The study produced two major findings.

1. Students perceived that effective implementation of the Social Studies curriculum significantly promote peace building among learners. Respondents particularly recognised the curriculum's contribution to democratic citizenship, cultural tolerance, conflict resolution, critical thinking, and national integration.

2. There was no statistically significant difference in students' perceptions based on age, suggesting that the perceived influence of Social Studies curriculum implementation on peace building is consistent across the age groups represented in the study.

Discussion

The study examined the influence of Social Studies curriculum implementation on peace building among students in Colleges of Education in North-Central Nigeria [22]. The findings indicate that students perceived Social Studies curriculum implementation as making a significant contribution to the development of peace-building competencies. Specifically, respondents agreed that effective curriculum implementation promotes democratic values, cultural understanding, critical thinking, responsible citizenship, conflict-resolution skills, and national integration. The grand mean score of 3.48 (SD = 0.59) demonstrates a consistently positive perception among the respondents regarding the peace-building potential of the Social Studies curriculum.

The findings reinforce the contemporary understanding that curriculum implementation is the critical link between educational policy and educational outcomes [23]. Although curriculum documents may articulate lofty objectives relating to peace, citizenship, and national integration, these objectives can only be realised through effective classroom implementation characterised by learner-centred pedagogies, collaborative learning, reflective dialogue, and authentic civic engagement. Consequently, the present findings suggest that students recognise Social Studies not merely as an academic discipline but as an important educational instrument for fostering peaceful coexistence and social responsibility.

The results support Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which proposes that learners acquire attitudes, behaviours, and values through observation, modelling, interaction, and social participation. Within Social Studies classrooms, students observe democratic practices, respectful communication, collaborative problem-solving, and peaceful methods of resolving disagreements demonstrated by lecturers and peers. Through repeated participation in these learning experiences, students internalise behaviours associated with empathy, tolerance, co-operation, and responsible citizenship [24]. The positive perceptions reported by respondents therefore suggest that effective curriculum implementation provides meaningful opportunities for developing peace-building competencies through social interaction and experiential learning.

The findings also align with Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory, which explains how learners reconstruct their beliefs, assumptions, and value systems through critical reflection and dialogue. Social Studies Education encourages students to examine complex social issues, appreciate multiple perspectives, challenge stereotypes, and develop more inclusive understandings of citizenship and national identity. Such transformative learning experiences contribute significantly to peace building because they replace prejudice, intolerance, and social exclusion with empathy, mutual respect, and democratic participation.

The findings are consistent with UNESCO's recent position that education should intentionally cultivate learners' knowledge, values, attitudes, and competencies necessary for peaceful coexistence, global citizenship, and sustainable development [25]. UNESCO's 2023 Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Sustainable Development emphasises that curriculum implementation, teacher preparation, and participatory pedagogies constitute the primary mechanisms through which educational institutions can promote cultures of peace, human rights, and democratic engagement. The positive perceptions expressed by respondents therefore provide empirical support for contemporary international educational policy frameworks that advocate the integration of peace education across curriculum implementation rather than limiting it to isolated instructional topics.

Similarly, the findings correspond with the OECD Learning Compass 2030 framework, which identifies collaboration, critical thinking, empathy, ethical reasoning, and responsible citizenship as essential competencies required for addressing contemporary societal challenges. Effective implementation of the Social Studies curriculum therefore contributes not only to academic learning but also to the broader development of social-emotional competencies necessary for peaceful societies [26].

The present findings also corroborate recent empirical studies conducted within Africa, which has consistently demonstrated that learner-centred Social Studies instruction enhances students' democratic participation, intercultural competence, civic responsibility, and conflict-resolution skills. Studies by Edinoh; Edinoh & Wali-Essien, Awah, Edinoh & Ewhe, and other contemporary researchers similarly reported that participatory instructional approaches significantly improve learners'

appreciation of diversity, tolerance, dialogue, and peaceful conflict management. These studies collectively reinforce the argument that curriculum implementation represents one of the strongest educational determinants of peace-building outcomes.

An important finding of the present study is the absence of a statistically significant difference in students' perceptions based on age ($t=383=-0.371$, $p=.711$). This suggests that the perceived influence of Social Studies curriculum implementation on peace building is relatively consistent across younger and older students enrolled in Colleges of Education. The finding indicates that exposure to the curriculum exerts a comparable influence regardless of age, implying that educational experiences rather than demographic characteristics primarily shape students' perceptions of peace-building competencies.

The absence of age differences further supports Social Learning Theory, which emphasises that behavioural acquisition depends principally on exposure to meaningful learning environments rather than chronological age. Since students across both age categories experienced similar instructional environments, curriculum content, and classroom interactions, it is reasonable that they reported comparable perceptions regarding the influence of Social Studies Education on peace building [27].

Overall, the findings underscore the strategic importance of Social Studies curriculum implementation within teacher education. Because Colleges of Education prepare future teachers responsible for educating successive generations of learners, strengthening curriculum implementation has implications extending far beyond higher education. Graduates who internalise democratic values, conflict-resolution skills, intercultural competence, and responsible citizenship are more likely to reproduce these competencies within their future classrooms, thereby contributing to sustainable peace building and national development.

Conclusion

This study investigated the influence of Social Studies curriculum implementation on peace building among students in Colleges of Education in North-Central Nigeria. The findings demonstrate that students perceive effective implementation of the Social Studies curriculum as making a significant contribution to the development of peace-building competencies. Respondents recognised the curriculum's capacity to promote democratic citizenship, tolerance, intercultural understanding, critical thinking, responsible civic engagement, and peaceful conflict resolution.

The study further established that students' perceptions did not differ significantly according to age, indicating that the peace-building influence of curriculum implementation is consistently experienced across the sampled population. These findings reinforce the position that effective curriculum implementation constitutes an important educational strategy for promoting sustainable peace, social cohesion, and responsible citizenship within Nigerian higher education.

Given the strategic role of Colleges of Education in preparing future teachers, strengthening the implementation of the Social Studies curriculum has the potential to generate long-term societal benefits by producing graduates capable of modelling peaceful behaviours and fostering democratic values in schools and communities throughout Nigeria.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

Teacher educators should adopt more learner-centred instructional approaches, including collaborative learning, debates, simulations, community-based learning, and problem-solving activities, to strengthen students' peace-building competencies.

The National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) should periodically review and monitor the implementation of the Social Studies curriculum to ensure that instructional practices align with contemporary peace education objectives and competency-based learning principles.

Continuous professional development programmes should be organised for Social Studies lecturers to enhance their pedagogical competencies in peace education, conflict resolution, global citizenship education, and transformative learning.

Federal and State Governments should provide adequate instructional resources, digital learning technologies, and funding required for effective implementation of the Social Studies curriculum within Colleges of Education.

Colleges of Education should strengthen partnerships with peace-building organisations, civil society groups, and community stakeholders to provide students with practical experiences in peace education, civic engagement, and conflict management.

Implications for Educational Policy and Practice

The findings have important implications for educational policy, curriculum development, and teacher education in Nigeria.

First, the study provides empirical support for integrating peace-building competencies more explicitly within teacher education curricula. Curriculum implementation should extend beyond content coverage to include pedagogical approaches that cultivate empathy, intercultural competence, democratic participation, and non-violent conflict resolution.

Second, educational policymakers should recognise Social Studies Education as a strategic component of national peace-building initiatives. Investment in teacher preparation, curriculum implementation, and instructional quality can contribute significantly to strengthening social cohesion and reducing conflict within diverse societies.

Third, Colleges of Education should institutionalise experiential learning opportunities that enable pre-service teachers to apply peace-building principles through community engagement, service learning, mediation activities, and civic participation programmes. Such experiences enhance the practical application of curriculum objectives and strengthen graduates' professional readiness.

Finally, educational quality assurance agencies should incorporate indicators relating to peace education, learner-centred pedagogy, democratic classroom practices, and social-emotional learning into institutional accreditation processes. These measures would encourage continuous improvement in curriculum implementation while aligning Nigerian teacher education with contemporary international educational standards.

REFERENCES

1. T. O. Amana, K. Edinoh, and Z. Saidu, "Training and retraining programme as panacea for effective implementation of Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS) in Nigerian universities," *Best Journal of Innovation in Science, Research and Development*, vol. 3, no. 6, pp. 631–642, 2024.
2. O. F. Awah, K. Edinoh, and P. O. Ewhe, "Impact of supervision on curriculum implementation in post-basic education and career development (PBECD) in Nigeria," *Excellencia: International Multi-Disciplinary Journal of Education*, pp. 248–253, 2024.
3. A. Bandura, *Social Learning Theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ, USA: Prentice-Hall, 1977.
4. A. Bandura, *Social Foundations of Thought and Action: A Social Cognitive Theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ, USA: Prentice-Hall, 1986.
5. L. Darling-Hammond, L. Flook, C. Cook-Harvey, B. Barron, and D. Osher, "Implications for educational practice of the science of learning and development," *Applied Developmental Science*, vol. 24, no. 2, pp. 97–140, 2020.
6. K. Edinoh, "Influence of social studies education on peace building and social stability among students of colleges of education in North-Central Nigeria," Ph.D. dissertation, School of Postgraduate Studies, University of Abuja, Abuja, Nigeria, 2023.
7. K. Edinoh, R. Asemota, and H. K. Wakili, "Teacher educators: Perceptions of technology integration in pre-service teacher education," *Spanish Journal of Innovation and Integrity*, vol. 52, pp. 116–130, 2026.
8. K. Edinoh, "Socio-economic consequences of internal boundary conflicts and resolution in Nigeria: Implications for social studies education," M.Ed. dissertation, School of Postgraduate Studies, University of Abuja, Abuja, Nigeria, 2016.
9. K. Edinoh and R. C. Wali-Essien, "Social studies education curriculum implementation in tertiary institutions in Nigeria," *International Journal on Economics, Finance and Sustainable Development*, vol. 5, no. 10, 2023.
10. A. F. Ersoy, "Active and democratic citizenship education and its challenges in social studies classrooms," *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, no. 55, pp. 1–20, 2014.
11. K. O. Ezeoba, *Social Studies Education in Nigeria: Principles and Practice*. Lagos, Nigeria: Cheston Agency, 2012.
12. J. Galtung, *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization*. London, U.K.: Sage Publications, 1996.
13. J. P. Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*. Washington,

DC, USA: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997.

14. J. Mezirow, *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*. San Francisco, CA, USA: Jossey-Bass, 1991.
15. National Commission for Colleges of Education, *Minimum Standards for Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE): Social Studies*. Abuja, Nigeria: NCCE, 2012.
16. OECD, *OECD Learning Compass 2030*. Paris, France: OECD Publishing, 2020.
17. OECD, *Beyond Academic Learning: First Results from the Survey of Social and Emotional Skills*. Paris, France: OECD Publishing, 2021.
18. OECD, *OECD Teaching Compass: Reimagining Teachers as Agents of Curriculum Changes*. Paris, France: OECD Publishing, 2025.
19. N. J. Ogunode, K. Edinoh, and T. Olatunde-Aiyedun, "Staff training in schools," *Journal of Innovation in Educational and Social Research*, vol. 1, no. 3, pp. 192–207, 2023.
20. C. C. Okam, *Contemporary Issues in Social Studies Education in Nigeria*. Jos, Nigeria: University of Jos Press, 2018.
21. M. A. Oluwatoyin, "Integrating peace education into the Nigerian educational system for national development," *Journal of Education and Practice*, vol. 5, no. 32, pp. 65–72, 2014.
22. A. C. Ornstein and F. P. Hunkins, *Curriculum: Foundations, Principles and Issues*, 8th ed. New York, NY, USA: Pearson, 2022.
23. United Nations, *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. New York, NY, USA: United Nations, 2015.
24. UNESCO, *Reimagining Our Futures Together: A New Social Contract for Education*. Paris, France: UNESCO Publishing, 2021.
25. UNESCO, *Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights, International Understanding, Co-operation, Fundamental Freedoms, Global Citizenship and Sustainable Development*. Paris, France: UNESCO, 2023.
26. UNESCO International Bureau of Education, *Curriculum and Learning for Lasting Peace*. Geneva, Switzerland: UNESCO-IBE, 2024.
27. R. C. Wali-Essien, K. Edinoh, and E. J. Chukwuemeka, "Social studies as a tool for peace education and navigating current realities in Nigeria," *Global Scientific and Academic Research Journal of Education and Literature*, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 1–10, 2025.