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Assessment of the Impact of Social Studies Curriculum in Minimizing Anti-Social Behaviours Among Students of Colleges of Education, North-Central, Nigeria

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A B S T R A C T
The study assessed the impact of Social Studies curriculum in minimising anti-social behaviours among students of Colleges of Education in North-Central Nigeria. Three research questions and hypotheses guided the study. The research design employed was descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised 6,836 Social Studies students. The Modified Research Advisors (2010) was used to determine the sample size of 400 used for this study. The instrument used for data collection was Social Studies Curriculum in Minimizing Anti-Social Behaviours Questionnaire (SSCMABQ). The instrument was validated and subjected to reliability test using Cronbach Alpha and internal consistency of 0.85 was found. Data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer research questions while one sample t-test was used to test hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that Social Studies curriculum content has positive impact in minimizing aggressive behaviour, Social Studies teaching methods positively influence students' adherence to rules and Social Studies teaching resources have positive impact in addressing the problem of lack of self-control among students in Colleges of Education, North-Central Nigeria. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that Social Studies curriculum should be enriched with topics and activities that promote emotional intelligence and non-violent behaviour; lecturers should use student-centered methods that actively engage learners and encourage adherence to societal rules and institutions should provide relevant and engaging teaching materials that help students develop self-control.

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Introduction

Education is a tool used to develop the individual so that he becomes useful to himself, his family and the society generally. Education is a tool used to develop the individual so that he becomes useful to himself, his family and the society generally. Due to importance attached to education, UNESCO (2025) defines education as the **process of acquiring knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes that enable individuals to contribute to their societies and lead fulfilling lives**, effectively equipping them to adapt to their environment and live purposefully (para. 1). This conception underscores that education empowers individuals to live useful, meaningful lives through meaningful societal contributions (Apase & Yawe, 2019). Since the return of Nigeria to democratic rule in 1999, the country has been facing national security challenges across the six geo-political zones. Instances of **bomb blasts, oil pipeline vandalism**, **kidnappings**, **armed robbery** and **political assassinations** continue to intensify Nigeria's security challenges, stretching the nation to its limits and, at times, threatening its very existence (Obayori et al., 2025).

Anti-social behaviours among students, including examination malpractice, cultism, truancy, bullying, stealing and general indiscipline, remain persistent concerns for Nigeria's educational system because they erode learning outcomes, undermine school ethics and compromise the future professionalism of trainee teachers. Earlier empirical work in Nigeria identifies examination malpractice, lateness, cultism, stealing and rudeness as recurring manifestations of student anti-social conduct and links them to factors such as peer influence, weak school discipline, family breakdown and media effects (Ojo, 2015).

Social Studies as an academic discipline and curriculum area is explicitly designed to develop civic knowledge, values and social skills that underpin responsible citizenship. In the Nigerian context Social Studies combines elements of history, government/civics, geography and sociology and aims to foster social awareness, critical thinking, problem solving and participatory attitudes among learners — outcomes that, theoretically, should reduce the propensity for anti-social conduct if the curriculum is delivered effectively. Several recent programmatic and empirical accounts therefore treat Social Studies not simply as content to be taught but as a vehicle for social stability, national cohesion and moral formation (Eluowa & Onyekpe, 2025).

Curriculum, as defined by Wahab and Bello (2020), is a way of preparing individuals to become productive citizens and useful members of the society to which they belong. Despite the curriculum's intentions, implementation gaps blunt its preventive potential. Studies reviewing Social Studies implementation in Nigeria point to challenges such as outdated curriculum content, inadequate teacher preparation, shortages of instructional materials, weak pedagogical methods and limited use of active, values-based approaches. Where instruction relies on rote transmission rather than values socialization and critical civic engagement, the curriculum's capacity to discourage anti-social behaviour is reduced. Innovations such as e-learning and multimodal instruction have shown promise in improving attitudes and engagement in Social Studies, but access and teacher capacity remain uneven across states and institutions (Eluowa & Onyekpe, 2025).

Colleges of Education are pivotal in this conversation because they prepare the next generation of basic-and-lower-secondary school teachers who will themselves deliver Social Studies to millions of pupils. Research on student engagement and teacher-training contexts in Nigerian colleges highlights that student-teachers' attitudes, values and behavioural dispositions are shaped within the college environment and through the curriculum they experience. In short, if Social Studies in Colleges of Education is weakly implemented, the chance to influence large cohorts of future teachers and by extension, their pupils, in ways that reduce anti-social behaviours is missed. This makes an empirical assessment of the curriculum's impact in Colleges of Education, especially within specific geopolitical zones such as North-Central Nigeria, both timely and policy-relevant (Institute of Agricultural Research and Development [IIARD], 2025).

Ezeoba (2019) emphasized the integration of peace education concepts into the Social Studies curriculum for junior secondary schools. The study identified strategies such as incorporating cultural similarities, human rights, and conflict resolution topics, which are instrumental in promoting peaceful behaviours among students. A meta-analysis by Wilson and Lipsey (2017) synthesized research on the effectiveness of school-based programmes for preventing or reducing aggressive behaviour and revealed significant reductions in aggressive behaviour among intervention groups, especially when programs were well-implemented and targeted high-risk youth. Similarly, a study by Jones et al. (2024) focused on understanding how changes in individual and classroom-level processes relate to changes in aggressive behaviour over a school year. The research highlighted that Social Emotional Learning (SEL) programmes foster reductions in aggression through improving students' social and emotional skills and creating emotionally supportive learning environments. Additionally, a systematic review by Jiang (2025) evaluated the efficacy of school-based programs on aggressive behaviours among children and adolescents and found that interventions grounded in specific theories, including social interdependence theory and social learning theory, exhibited enhanced efficacy in curtailing aggression among youth.

A growing body of research underscores the significant influence of Social Studies teaching methods on students' adherence to rules. Effective pedagogical strategies not only enhance academic outcomes but also foster positive behavioural patterns, including compliance with classroom and school regulations. Johnson and Johnson (2019) identified five essential elements for successful cooperative learning:

positive interdependence, individual and group accountability, promotive interaction, social skills development, and group processing. These elements collectively promote a sense of responsibility and mutual respect among students, leading to improved adherence to classroom rules. Gillies (2022) further emphasized that cooperative learning fosters higher academic achievement and better social interactions, which are crucial for maintaining discipline in the classroom. Atieku et al. (2023) reported that the use of audio-visual aids and interactive tools made lessons more engaging, leading to increased student participation and better adherence to classroom rules. Technology-enhanced instruction caters to diverse learning styles, thereby reducing behavioural issues stemming from disengagement.

Social Studies teaching resources in enhance students' self-control. These resources, encompassing various instructional strategies and materials, have been instrumental in fostering self-regulation and reducing behavioural issues among students. Arslantas and Kurnaz (2023) conducted a study to examine the effect of self-monitoring strategies within Social Studies courses on students' self-monitoring, self-regulation, and academic achievement. The findings revealed that implementing self-monitoring techniques significantly improved students' ability to observe and control their behaviours, leading to enhanced academic performance. Oyediji and Okwilagwe (2022) explored the effects of self-directed learning and collaborative methods on junior secondary school students' Social Studies learning outcomes in Oyo State. Their research indicated that self-directed learning approaches significantly enhanced students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills. By engaging students in active learning processes, these methods promoted greater self-control as students took ownership of their learning and behaviour. Similarly, Oyibe (2022) emphasized the importance of self-directed learning strategies in promoting critical thinking and problem-solving skills among Social Studies students. The study highlighted that when students are encouraged to take initiative in their learning, they develop better self-regulatory behaviours, leading to improved self-control.

In conclusion, while there is a robust theoretical case for Social Studies as a preventive tool against anti-social behaviours, empirical evidence focused on Colleges of Education in North-Central Nigeria remains limited or scattered. With rising concerns about youth restiveness and recurring reports of exam malpractice and indiscipline in tertiary settings, there is a clear need for focused, context-sensitive research that (i) assess the impact of Social Studies curriculum contents in minimizing aggressive behaviour among students, (ii) examine the impact of Social Studies teaching methods in addressing rule breaking among Students and (iii) determine the impact of the impact of Social Studies teaching resources in addressing problem of lack of self-control among Students in Colleges of Education, North-Central, Nigeria. This study addresses that gap by assessing the impact of the Social Studies curriculum in minimizing anti-social behaviours among students of Colleges of Education in North-Central Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide this study:

1. How does the Social Studies curriculum content impact the reduction of aggressive behaviour among students in Colleges of Education, North-Central Nigeria?
2. In what ways do Social Studies teaching methods influence students' adherence to rules in Colleges of Education, North-Central Nigeria?
3. How do Social Studies teaching resources contribute to addressing the problem of lack of self-control among students in Colleges of Education, North-Central Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide this study and were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

H_{o1}: The Social Studies curriculum content has no significant impact on minimizing aggressive behaviour among students in Colleges of Education, North-Central Nigeria.

H_{o2}: Social Studies teaching methods do not significantly influence students' adherence to rules in Colleges of Education, North-Central Nigeria.

H_{o3}: Social Studies teaching resources have no significant impact in addressing the problem of lack of

self-control among students in Colleges of Education, North-Central Nigeria.

Methodology

The study employed survey research method. Here the researcher surveyed the veiws of students on the impact of Social Studies curriculum in minimizing anti-social behaviour among College of Education students in North Central, Nigeria. The population of the study comprised six thousand eight hundred and thirty six (6,836) Social Studies students in Colleges of Education in North-Central Nigeria. The Modified Research Advisors (2010) was used to determine the sample size from the students' population. The sample size of the study was 400. This sample size of the study was determined by proportionate sampling technique to select from the targeted population because the population of the schools varies from one another. While purposive sampling technique was used in selecting the colleges of education used for the research work. The study used 12 conventional Colleges of Education in North Central, Nigeria that offer Social Studies as a course of study, the other colleges of education that were not selected was due to the fact that they do not offer Social Studies as NCE programme.

The instrument used for data collection was structured questionnaire titled "Social Studies Curriculum in Minimizing Anti-Social Behaviours Questionnaire (SSCMABQ)" which was developed by the researcher. The instrument was validated by two experts and a pilot test was carried out in one College of Education that was not part of the sampled institutions selected for this study. The reliability of SSCMABQ was determined using Cronbach Alpha and the internal consistency was found to be 0.85.

Data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer research questions. The criterion mean of 2.5 was used to analyse each item. One sample t-test was used in testing of hypotheses at $P \leq 0.05$ level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: How does the Social Studies curriculum content impact the reduction of aggressive behaviour among students in Colleges of Education, North-Central Nigeria?

Table 1: Respondents' Responses on Social Studies Curriculum Content Impact in the Reduction of Aggressive Behaviour among Students

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{x}$	Std. Dev.	Decision
1	The Social Studies curriculum content adequately addresses the causes of aggressive behaviour among students	87	259	31	23	3.03	.684	Agreed
2	The topics in the Social Studies curriculum help students develop positive conflict resolution skills	90	244	45	21	3.01	.749	Agreed
3	The curriculum teaches students the importance of tolerance and respect in interpersonal relationships	101	236	39	24	3.04	.699	Agreed
4	Social Studies lessons provide practical strategies for students to control aggressive impulses	99	264	28	9	3.13	.758	Agreed
5	The curriculum encourages students to engage in peaceful dialogue instead of resorting to aggression	112	257	26	5	3.19	.637	Agreed
6	Social Studies content promotes emotional intelligence and self-awareness, which help reduce aggression	89	295	12	4	3.17	.792	Agreed
7	The moral and ethical values emphasized in Social Studies help students manage anger effectively	96	255	33	16	3.08	.683	Agreed
8	Classroom discussions in Social Studies help students understand the negative effects of aggressive behaviour	98	266	29	7	3.14	.769	Agreed

9	The Social Studies curriculum includes real-life case studies that demonstrate the consequences of aggression	102	248	38	12	3.10	.781	Agreed
10	The content of Social Studies has contributed to a noticeable reduction in aggressive behaviour among students	99	269	24	8	3.15	.658	Agreed
	Aggregate Mean					**3.10**		**Accepted**

Source: Field Survey (2025) **(N = 400)**

Table 1 shows the responses of the respondents on Social Studies curriculum content impact in the reduction of aggressive behaviours among NCE students in the North-Central. From table 1, all items were agreed upon by the respondents. The aggregate mean score of 3.10 indicates that Social Studies curriculum content impacted the reduction of aggressive behaviour among students in Colleges of Education, North-Central Nigeria.

Research Question 2: In what ways do Social Studies teaching methods influence students' adherence to rules in Colleges of Education, North-Central Nigeria?

Table 2: Respondents' Responses on Social Studies Teaching Methods Influence Students' Adherence to Rules in Colleges of Education

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{x}$	Std. Dev.	Decision
11	Interactive teaching methods in Social Studies help students understand the importance of following rules	97	262	21	20	3.09	.769	Agreed
12	Role-playing and simulations in Social Studies classes encourage students to practice rule adherence	100	249	35	16	3.08	.681	Agreed
13	Discussion-based Social Studies lessons enhance students' awareness of the consequences of rule-breaking	105	239	36	20	3.07	.685	Agreed
14	The use of case studies in Social Studies helps students appreciate the benefits of obeying rules	103	267	24	6	3.17	.714	Agreed
15	Teachers' reinforcement of classroom rules during Social Studies lessons influences students' respect for school regulations	111	261	24	4	3.20	.792	Agreed
16	Social Studies lessons that include group activities teach students cooperation and respect for rules	92	297	9	2	3.20	.794	Agreed
17	The problem-solving approach in Social Studies helps students recognize the importance of structured rules in society	99	261	30	10	3.12	.655	Agreed
18	Storytelling and real-life examples in Social Studies make students more conscious of ethical behavior and rule adherence	101	268	26	5	3.16	.689	Agreed
19	The questioning and inquiry method in Social Studies helps students critically assess the role of rules in maintaining order	103	250	36	11	3.11	.637	Agreed
20	Social Studies teaching methods have contributed to a noticeable improvement in students' discipline and rule compliance	100	272	22	6	3.17	.713	Agreed
	Aggregate Mean					**3.14**		**Accepted**

Source: Field Survey (2025) **(N = 400)**

Table 2 shows the responses of the respondents on Social Studies teaching methods influence students' adherence to rules in Colleges of Education in the North-Central. From table 2, all items were agreed upon by the respondents. The aggregate mean score of 3.14 indicates that Social Studies teaching

methods influenced students' adherence to rules in Colleges of Education in the North-Central Nigeria.

Research Question 3: How do Social Studies teaching resources contribute to addressing the problem of lack of self-control among students in Colleges of Education, North-Central Nigeria?

Table 3: Respondents' Responses on Social Studies Teaching Resources Contribution in Addressing Problem of Lack of Self-Control among Students

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{x}$	Std. Dev.	Decision
21	Visual teaching aids (charts, videos, and posters) used in Social Studies help students understand the importance of self-control	74	242	44	40	2.88	.787	Agreed
22	The use of real-life case studies in Social Studies classes helps students learn how to manage their emotions effectively	92	249	39	20	3.02	.649	Agreed
23	Role-playing activities supported by Social Studies teaching resources encourage students to practice self-control in different situations	106	238	32	24	3.07	.686	Agreed
24	Interactive digital tools (e.g., multimedia presentations, e-learning platforms) in Social Studies classes help students develop patience and self-discipline	98	270	24	8	3.15	.636	Agreed
25	Group discussions facilitated with Social Studies materials help students reflect on the impact of impulsive behaviour	104	268	22	6	3.18	.705	Agreed
26	Social Studies textbooks and instructional materials emphasize self-control as a necessary skill for responsible citizenship	95	284	14	7	3.17	.721	Agreed
27	Teaching resources such as storytelling and documentaries help students understand the consequences of a lack of self-control	92	259	34	15	3.07	.711	Agreed
28	Teachers' use of real-world examples and illustrations in Social Studies promotes self-awareness and self-restraint among students	91	266	28	15	3.08	.692	Agreed
29	The availability and use of engaging teaching resources in Social Studies make it easier for students to internalize self-control strategies	101	256	31	12	3.12	.683	Agreed
30	Social Studies teaching resources have contributed to a noticeable improvement in students' ability to manage their emotions and behaviours	102	270	18	10	3.16	.690	Agreed
	Aggregate Mean					**3.09**		**Accepted**

Source: Field Survey (2025) **(N = 400)**

Table 3 shows the responses of the respondents on Social Studies teaching resources contribution in addressing the problem of lack of self-control among students in Colleges of Education, North-Central Nigeria. From table 3, all items were agreed upon by the respondents. The aggregate mean score of 3.09 indicates that Social Studies teaching resources contribute in addressing the problem of lack of self-control among students in Colleges of Education in the North-Central Nigeria.

Test of Hypotheses

H_{o1}: The Social Studies curriculum content has no significant impact on minimizing aggressive behaviour among students in Colleges of Education, North-Central Nigeria.

Table 4: Summary of One Sample T-test on Social Studies Curriculum Content as an instrument in Minimising Aggressive Behaviour

Variable	N	$\bar{x}$	Std. Dev.	t	df	P
Curriculum Content and Aggressive Behaviour among Students Scores	400	29.574	7.109	109.327	399	.000

Table 4 shows the opinion of Colleges of Education students towards the impact of Social Studies curriculum content as an instrument in minimising aggressive behaviour among students. From the result, calculated t-statistic, t(109.327) is large in magnitude suggesting a meaningful difference. The p-value (.000) is **less than 0.05**, meaning that the result is **statistically significant**. The null hypothesis which stated no significant impact was rejected. Therefore, Social Studies curriculum content has significant impact in minimizing aggressive behaviour among students in Colleges of Education, North-Central Nigeria.

Ho_2: Social Studies teaching methods do not significantly influence students' adherence to rules in Colleges of Education, North-Central Nigeria.

Table 5: Summary of One Sample T-test on Social Studies Teaching Methods as an instrument in Influencing Students' Adherence to Rules

Variable	N	$\bar{x}$	Std. Dev.	t	df	P
Social Studies Teaching Methods and Students' Adherence to Rules Scores	400	35.146	9.548	120.508	399	.000

Table 5 shows the opinion of Colleges of Education students towards the influence of Social Studies teaching methods as an instrument to students' adherence to rules. From the result, calculated t-statistic, t(120.508) is large in magnitude suggesting a meaningful difference. The p-value (.000) is **less than 0.05**, meaning that the result is **statistically significant**. The null hypothesis which stated no significant influence was rejected. Therefore, Social Studies teaching methods significantly influence students' adherence to rules in Colleges of Education, North-Central Nigeria.

Ho_3: Social Studies teaching resources have no significant impact in addressing the problem of lack of self-control among students in Colleges of Education, North-Central Nigeria.

Table 6: Summary of One Sample T-test on Social Studies Teaching Resources as an instrument in Addressing Problem of Lack of Self-Control among Students

Variable	N	$\bar{x}$	Std. Dev.	t	df	P
Social Studies Teaching Resources and Lack of Self-Control among Students Scores	400	32.864	10.297	116.829	399	.000

Table 10 shows the opinion of Colleges of Education students towards the influence of Social Studies teaching methods as an instrument to problem of lack of self-control among students. From the result, calculated t-statistic, t(116.829) is large in magnitude suggesting a meaningful difference. The p-value (.000) is **less than 0.05**, meaning that the result is **statistically significant**. The null hypothesis which stated no significant impact was rejected. Therefore, Social Studies teaching resources have significant impact in addressing the problem of lack of self-control among students in Colleges of Education, North-Central Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The finding from hypothesis one that Social Studies curriculum content has a significant impact on curbing aggressive behaviour among students in Colleges of Education in North-Central Nigeria suggests that the subject plays a vital role in promoting positive behavioural change. This result underscores the effectiveness of curriculum components such as civic education, conflict resolution, human rights, and

moral instruction in shaping students' attitudes and responses to interpersonal challenges. By engaging with content that emphasizes empathy, tolerance, social responsibility, and non-violent communication, students are more likely to adopt constructive behaviours and reject aggression. The implication is that a well-structured Social Studies curriculum can serve not only academic purposes but also as a strategic tool for behavioural reformation and social cohesion in higher education institutions. The result align with the findings of Ezeoba (2019) who found that strategies such as incorporating cultural similarities, human rights, and conflict resolution topics, which are instrumental in promoting peaceful behaviours among students. Also Wilson and Lipsey (2017) synthesized research on the effectiveness of school-based programs for preventing or reducing aggressive behaviour. The analysis revealed significant reductions in aggressive behaviour among intervention groups, especially when programs were well-implemented and targeted high-risk youth. Additionally, a systematic review by Jiang (2025) evaluated the efficacy of school-based programs on aggressive behaviours among children and adolescents. The findings indicated that interventions grounded in specific theories, including social interdependence theory and social learning theory, exhibited enhanced efficacy in curtailing aggression among youth.

Results in hypothesis two showed that Social Studies teaching methods significantly influence students' adherence to rules in Colleges of Education, North-Central Nigeria. This highlights the critical role of pedagogy in shaping students' behaviour. This suggests that when lecturers employ interactive, student-centred, and participatory teaching methods – such as discussions, role-playing, simulations, and case studies – students are more likely to internalize societal norms, understand the importance of rule-following, and demonstrate greater discipline within the school environment. Effective teaching methods not only make the learning process engaging but also model democratic values and responsible citizenship, thereby fostering a school culture where rules are respected and upheld. This finding emphasizes the need for continuous professional development of Social Studies educators to ensure the use of methods that promote both academic learning and behavioural regulation. The result agrees with the finding of Atieku et al. (2023) who reported that the use of audio-visual aids and interactive tools made lessons more engaging, leading to increased student participation and better adherence to classroom rules. Technology-enhanced instruction caters to diverse learning styles, thereby reducing behavioural issues stemming from disengagement. Gillies (2022) further emphasized that cooperative learning fosters higher academic achievement and better social interactions, which are crucial for maintaining discipline in the classroom. Johnson and Johnson (2019) identified five essential elements for successful cooperative learning: positive interdependence, individual and group accountability, promotive interaction, social skills development, and group processing. These elements collectively promote a sense of responsibility and mutual respect among students, leading to improved adherence to classroom rules.

In hypothesis three, it was found that Social Studies teaching resources have significant impact in addressing the problem of lack of self-control among students in Colleges of Education, North-Central Nigeria. This indicates that the quality and availability of instructional materials play a crucial role in shaping student behaviour. Well-developed resources such as textbooks, audio-visual materials, case studies, real-life scenarios, and interactive tools help to concretize abstract concepts like self-discipline, emotional regulation, and responsible decision-making. These resources provide students with relatable content and practical situations that encourage reflection and behavioural modeling. When students are exposed to consistent, engaging, and value-driven instructional materials, they are more likely to internalize the importance of self-control and apply it in their daily interactions. This underscores the need for institutions to invest in and regularly update relevant teaching resources to enhance the behavioural and cognitive development of students. The result concur with the finding of Arslantas and Kurnaz (2023) who revealed that implementing self-monitoring techniques significantly improved students' ability to observe and control their behaviours, leading to enhanced academic performance. Oyediji and Okwilagwe (2022) indicated that self-directed learning approaches significantly enhanced students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings collectively affirm that Social Studies plays a transformative role in shaping students' behaviour and social competencies in Colleges of Education in North-Central Nigeria. The curriculum content effectively curbs aggressive behaviour, while appropriate teaching methods promote

adherence to institutional rules. Additionally, the use of relevant and engaging teaching resources addresses the issue of poor self-control, and well-designed evaluation strategies foster empathy among students.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following are recommended:

1. The Social Studies curriculum should be enriched with topics and activities that promote emotional intelligence and non-violent behaviour.
2. Lecturers should use student-centered methods that actively engage learners and encourage adherence to societal rules.
3. Institutions should provide relevant and engaging teaching materials that help students develop self-control.

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