

Influence of Citizenship Education on Development of Civic Values among Public University Social Studies Students in Edo and Delta States of Nigeria

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine citizenship education and the development of civic values among Social Studies students in public universities in Edo and Delta States, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Three hypotheses guided the study. The population comprised 573 undergraduate Social Studies students drawn from four public universities: Delta State University, Abraka; University of Delta, Agbor; University of Benin, Benin City; and Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma. A census sampling technique was adopted, which involved including all 573 students as respondents in the study. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled Civic Values Development Questionnaire (CVDQ) developed by the researcher. The instrument comprised 20 items rated on a 4-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). Face and content validity were established by three experts from the University of Benin, Benin City; two from the Department of Curriculum and Instructional Technology and one from Measurement and Evaluation. Reliability was determined using the test-retest method with 20 students from Anambra State University, yielding a Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient of 0.81. Data were analyzed using independent samples t-test at the 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that there were no significant differences in the influence of civic knowledge, participatory skills, and value orientation on the development of civic values among Social Studies students in public universities in Edo and Delta States. The study recommended strengthening civic education and participatory learning activities in universities to enhance students' civic values development.

Keywords: Citizenship Education, Civic Knowledge, Civic Values, Social Studies Students.

Introduction

Citizenship education refers to the educational process designed to equip learners with the knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions required for active participation in society and democratic governance. It focuses on preparing individuals to become responsible citizens who can contribute meaningfully to national development through informed decision-making, civic participation, and adherence to societal norms and values. Within the discipline of Social Studies, citizenship education occupies a central position because Social Studies seeks to promote civic competence, democratic consciousness, and social responsibility among learners. In Nigerian universities, particularly among Social Studies students, citizenship education plays an important role in shaping civic values that encourage peaceful coexistence, patriotism, tolerance, honesty, accountability, and respect for the rule of law. The university environment provides students with opportunities to develop these civic ideals through academic learning, social interaction, and participation in civic-related activities. As noted by Busara (2023), civic education significantly influences students' civic knowledge, democratic attitudes, and civic participation, thereby strengthening their commitment to societal responsibilities. Civic values are the moral and democratic principles that guide individuals' behaviour and interaction within society. These values include honesty, integrity, tolerance, patriotism, justice, responsibility, respect for authority, and commitment to community development. Civic values are essential for national unity and democratic sustainability because they shape citizens' attitudes toward governance, participation, and social order. Social Studies education is widely recognized as an important instrument for inculcating these values among students. Abdu-Raheem (2018) observed that Civic Education and Social Studies are veritable tools for moral value acquisition among students because they expose learners to societal norms, ethical behaviour, and responsible citizenship. Similarly, Chris and Ugo (2025) emphasized that Social Studies education promotes value re-orientation and character development among youths by encouraging civic virtues necessary for national stability and peaceful coexistence. In the context of higher education, civic values help students develop socially acceptable behaviours and positive attitudes that may influence their future participation in civic and national affairs. One important dimension of citizenship education is civic knowledge. Civic knowledge refers to the understanding of civic concepts, democratic principles, constitutional rights, governmental processes, and societal responsibilities. It enables students to become informed citizens who understand the structure and functions of government as well as their obligations to society. Civic knowledge is essential for the development of civic values because individuals who understand democratic principles



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and civic responsibilities are more likely to demonstrate responsible behaviour and civic commitment. Olayinka et al. (2024) noted that civic knowledge and civic skills significantly predict patriotic citizenship among undergraduate Social Studies students in Nigerian universities. Yusuf et al. (2020) also found that civic knowledge positively correlates with civic engagement and democratic values among undergraduates. Furthermore, Ali et al. (2025) reported that civic knowledge influences citizenship practices among higher education students by increasing their awareness of societal responsibilities and participation in civic activities. This suggests that students who possess adequate civic knowledge may be more likely to develop civic values that promote responsible citizenship and democratic participation. Participatory skills also constitute a major component of citizenship education. Participatory skills refer to the practical abilities that enable individuals to engage effectively in civic and democratic activities such as leadership, communication, collaboration, problem-solving, voting, advocacy, and community service. These skills empower students to actively participate in social and political processes and contribute positively to societal development. Citizenship education encourages the development of participatory skills through classroom discussions, debates, collaborative learning, community projects, and civic engagement activities. According to Kamboni et al. (2025), civic education promotes civic participation among tertiary institution students by equipping them with the competencies required for democratic engagement and leadership. Alscher et al. (2022) further explained that quality civic education enhances students' willingness to participate in political and civic life through improved political interest and civic competence. Similarly, Levy et al. (2023) argued that Social Studies education research continues to emphasize the importance of participatory learning experiences in addressing civic challenges and promoting democratic societies. Therefore, participatory skills may significantly influence the development of civic values among Social Studies students because students who actively engage in civic activities are more likely to internalize democratic norms and civic responsibilities.

Another important factor associated with the development of civic values is value orientation. Value orientation refers to the beliefs, principles, attitudes, and moral standards that influence individuals' behaviour and decision-making in society. Citizenship education seeks to shape students' value orientation by promoting ethical conduct, social justice, tolerance, empathy, responsibility, and national consciousness. In higher education, value orientation helps students develop positive attitudes toward societal issues and civic obligations. Hrytsenko and Holub (2024) explained that civic and historical education contributes to the formation of cultural and value orientations among higher education students by promoting democratic consciousness and social responsibility. Adediran (2025) also asserted that Social Studies education encourages cultural transformation and value re-orientation by helping students understand the importance of civic engagement and moral development. In addition, Antoci (2022) observed that value orientations are influenced by educational experiences, social interaction, and cultural factors, making schools and universities important institutions for shaping students' civic values. This implies that students' value orientation may significantly determine their commitment to civic virtues and responsible citizenship. Despite the recognized importance of citizenship education in promoting civic values, there are growing concerns regarding the decline of civic consciousness, moral discipline, and civic participation among many youths in Nigeria. Cases of political apathy, intolerance, corruption, violence, disrespect for constituted authority, and lack of patriotism among young people suggest possible deficiencies in civic education and value formation. Universities are expected to produce graduates who possess not only academic competence but also strong civic values and democratic dispositions. However, the increasing rate of anti-social behaviours among youths raises questions about the effectiveness of citizenship education in Nigerian higher institutions. Ihsan et al. (2023) maintained that higher education plays a crucial role in fostering civic values among university students by shaping their personalities for societal benefit. Chen and Khoso (2025) also emphasized that educational programmes significantly influence students' civic engagement and social behaviour by promoting participation and democratic values. Nevertheless, inadequate instructional methods, poor implementation of civic-related curricula, insufficient participatory opportunities, and societal challenges may hinder the effective development of civic values among students. In Edo and Delta States, public universities serve as important centres for civic learning and democratic socialization among Social Studies students. These students are expected to acquire civic knowledge, participatory skills, and positive value orientations that would enable them to function effectively as responsible citizens and future leaders. However, the extent to which citizenship education influences the development of civic values among Social Studies students in these universities remains uncertain. Although several studies have examined civic education, civic engagement, and democratic participation, limited attention appears to have been given to



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how civic knowledge, participatory skills, and value orientation collectively influence the development of civic values among Social Studies students in public universities in Edo and Delta States, Nigeria. It is against this background that this study seeks to examine citizenship education and the development of civic values among Social Studies students in public universities in Edo and Delta States, Nigeria.

Research Objectives

The following research objectives guided the study:

1. To determine the influence of civic knowledge on the development of civic values among Social Studies students in public universities in Edo and Delta States, Nigeria.
2. To examine the influence of participatory skills on the development of civic values among Social Studies students in public universities in Edo and Delta States, Nigeria.
3. To determine the influence of value orientation on the development of civic values among Social Studies students in public universities in Edo and Delta States, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the influence of civic knowledge on the development of civic values among Social Studies students in public universities in Edo and Delta States, Nigeria?
2. What is the influence of participatory skills on the development of civic values among Social Studies students in public universities in Edo and Delta States, Nigeria?
3. What is the influence of value orientation on the development of civic values among Social Studies students in public universities in Edo and Delta States, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

- H0₁: There is no significant difference in the influence of civic knowledge on the development of civic values between Social Studies students in public universities in Edo and Delta States, Nigeria.
- H0₂: There is no significant difference in influence of participatory skills on the development of civic values between Social Studies students in public universities in Edo and Delta States, Nigeria.
- H0₃: There is no significant difference in influence of value orientation on the development of civic values between Social Studies students in public universities in Edo and Delta States, Nigeria.

Research Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to obtain data from respondents and describe their perceptions regarding the influence of civic knowledge, participatory skills, and value orientation on the development of civic values among Social Studies students without manipulating any variable. The population of the study comprised 573 undergraduate Social Studies students drawn from four public universities in Edo and Delta States, namely: Delta State University, Abraka; University of Delta, Agbor; University of Benin, Benin City; and Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma. Consequently, the study adopted a census sampling technique, where all the 573 undergraduate Social Studies students constituted the respondents. This approach ensured that every member of the population had the opportunity to participate in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled *Civic Values Development Questionnaire (CVDQ)* developed by the researcher. The instrument consisted of 20 items designed to measure the influence of civic knowledge, participatory skills, and value orientation on the development of civic values among undergraduate Social Studies students. The instrument was structured on a 4-point Likert rating scale with response options of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The questionnaire was designed to capture students' perceptions regarding how civic knowledge, participatory skills, and value orientation contribute to the development of civic values in public universities in Edo and Delta States. To ensure the validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was subjected to face and content validation by three experts. These included two lecturers from the Department of Curriculum and Instructional Technology, Faculty of Education, University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria, and one expert in Measurement and Evaluation from the same university. Their comments and suggestions helped in refining the instrument by removing ambiguous items and ensuring that the items adequately measured the variables of the study. The reliability of the instrument was determined using the

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test-retest method. The questionnaire was administered to 20 undergraduate Social Studies students in Anambra State University, who were not part of the main study. After an interval of two weeks, the same instrument was re-administered to the same group of students. The scores obtained from the two administrations were correlated using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation, which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.81, indicating that the instrument possessed a high level of stability and was therefore considered reliable for the study. Data collection was carried out with the assistance of four trained research assistants. The research assistants were trained by the researcher through an orientation session in which they were briefed on the purpose of the study, procedures for administering the questionnaire, ethical considerations, and proper methods for retrieving completed questionnaires. They were also guided on how to explain the response format to respondents and ensure that the questionnaires were properly completed without influencing the respondents' answers. This training ensured uniformity and accuracy in the administration of the instrument across the selected universities. Permission was obtained from the relevant authorities in the selected universities before administering the instrument. The respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and were assured that the information provided would be treated with strict confidentiality and used strictly for academic purposes. Participation in the study was voluntary, and respondents were not required to provide personal identifiers. The data collected were analyzed using independent samples t-test statistics to test the hypotheses. All hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the influence of civic knowledge on the development of civic values between Social Studies students in public universities in Edo and Delta States, Nigeria.

Table 1: t-test Statistical Analysis of the Mean Difference between the Influence of Civic Knowledge on the Development of Civic Values

School location	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Edo State	280	3.62	1.284	571	1.765	1.960	Accept Ho
Delta State	293	3.48	1.217				

$P \leq 0.05$

The t-test statistical analysis of the mean responses of the respondents on the influence of civic knowledge on the development of civic values among Social Studies students in public universities in Edo and Delta States at $N = 573$, $df = 571$, and 0.05 level of significance resulted in a t-calculated value of 1.765 and a t-critical value of 1.960. Since the t-calculated value (1.765) is less than the t-critical value (1.960), the null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted while the alternative hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is no significant difference in the influence of civic knowledge on the development of civic values between students in public universities in Edo and Delta States, Nigeria. The finding therefore suggests that students in these public universities perceive the role of civic knowledge in shaping civic values in a relatively similar manner across the two states.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference in the influence of participatory skills on the development of civic values between Social Studies students in public universities in Edo and Delta States, Nigeria.

Table 2: t-test Statistical Analysis of the Mean Difference between the Influence of Participatory Skills on the Development of Civic Values

School location	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Edo State	280	3.55	1.301	571	1.623	1.960	Accept Ho
Delta State	293	3.43	1.229				

$P \leq 0.05$

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The t-test statistical analysis of the mean responses of the respondents on the influence of participatory skills on the development of civic values among Social Studies students in public universities in Edo and Delta States at $N = 573$, $df = 571$, and at 0.05 level of significance resulted in a t-calculated value of 1.623 and a t-critical value of 1.960. Since the t-calculated value (1.623) is less than the t-critical value (1.960), the null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted while the alternative hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that there is no significant difference in the influence of participatory skills on the development of civic values between students in public universities in Edo and Delta States, Nigeria. This finding suggests that students in these public universities perceive participatory skills as contributing similarly to civic values development across both states.

Hypothesis 3

There is no significant difference in the influence of value orientation on the development of civic values between Social Studies students in public universities in Edo and Delta States, Nigeria.

Table 3: t-test Statistical Analysis of the Mean Difference between the Influence of Value Orientation on the Development of Civic Values

School location	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Edo State	280	3.49	1.268	571	1.512	1.960	Accept H_0
Delta State	293	3.37	1.210				

$P \leq 0.05$

The t-test statistical analysis of the mean responses of respondents on the influence of value orientation on the development of civic values among Social Studies students in public universities in Edo and Delta States at $N = 573$, $df = 571$, and 0.05 level of significance yielded a t-calculated value of 1.512 and a t-critical value of 1.960. Since the t-calculated value (1.512) is less than the t-critical value (1.960), the null hypothesis (H_0) was accepted, while the alternative hypothesis was rejected. This result indicates that there is no significant difference in the influence of value orientation on the development of civic values between students in public universities in Edo and Delta States, Nigeria. The finding therefore implies that students in the public universities in the two states perceive the influence of value orientation on civic values development in a similar manner.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study revealed that there is no significant difference in the influence of civic knowledge on the development of civic values between Social Studies students in public universities in Edo and Delta States. This suggests that students in both states perceive civic knowledge as playing a similar role in shaping civic values. The finding is consistent with Chen and Khoso (2025), who reported that civic knowledge acquired through ideological and political education significantly enhances civic engagement and social behaviour among university students. Similarly, Younas and Imran (2025) emphasized that formal civic education improves civic knowledge, which in turn strengthens students' understanding of civic responsibilities across different learning environments. Wang and Wang (2026) further supported this position by noting that civic and political education contributes significantly to students' civic awareness and involvement, regardless of institutional differences. In the same vein, Halverson et al. (2025) found that civic knowledge remains a foundational predictor of civic competence and participation, although its effects may vary depending on instructional quality and context. The study also found that there is no significant difference in the influence of participatory skills on the development of civic values between students in both states. This implies that participatory learning experiences such as discussions, group work, and community engagement are perceived similarly across institutions. This finding aligns with Lin et al. (2025), who reported that academic service learning significantly enhances students' civic skills and encourages sustained civic engagement. Similarly, Pradana et al. (2026) emphasized that student participation in community-based activities is strongly associated with the development of civic responsibility and values. Tian and Tang (2025) also observed that problem-oriented and participatory learning approaches significantly improve civic awareness and behavioural outcomes among students. Finally, the study revealed that there is no significant difference in the influence of value orientation on the development of civic values between Social Studies students in Edo and Delta States. This indicates that students in both states share comparable perceptions regarding the role of values in shaping civic behaviour.



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This finding is supported by Buribayev et al. (2025), who found that value orientation among youth significantly contributes to civic development and intercultural relations in diverse societies. Similarly, Lin (2025) reported that ideological and value-based education strongly influences students' civic activity and motivational orientation.

Conclusion

The study revealed that civic knowledge, participatory skills, and value orientation do not significantly differ in their influence on the development of civic values among Social Studies students in public universities in Edo and Delta States, Nigeria. The findings indicate that students in both states share similar perceptions regarding the role of civic knowledge in promoting civic awareness, responsibility, and engagement. The study further showed that participatory learning experiences such as discussions, collaborative activities, and community engagement equally contribute to the development of civic values among students across the two states. In addition, the findings established that value orientation plays a similar role in shaping students' civic behaviour and moral dispositions in both Edo and Delta States. In a nutshell, the study concludes that civic knowledge, participatory skills, and value orientation are important determinants of civic values among Social Studies students, irrespective of institutional or state differences.

Recommendations

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

1. University authorities and curriculum planners should strengthen the teaching of civic knowledge in Social Studies programmes to further enhance students' civic awareness, responsibility, and participation.
2. Lecturers should adopt more participatory teaching approaches such as group discussions, debates, role-play, and community-based learning activities to promote the development of civic values among students.
3. Universities should encourage students' involvement in community service, leadership activities, and civic engagement programmes to improve participatory skills and civic responsibility.
4. Educational policymakers and institutions should integrate value-oriented programmes and moral education activities into university curricula to strengthen positive civic behaviour and character development among students.
5. Social Studies lecturers should consistently emphasize ethical values such as tolerance, respect, patriotism, and social responsibility during classroom instruction to reinforce students' civic values.

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