

# Human Right Education on Social Studies Students' Knowledge of Civic Consciousness for Character Formation in Secondary Schools in Ogun State, Nigeria

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## Abstract

The study examined human right education on Social Studies students' knowledge of civic consciousness towards character formation in secondary schools in Ogun State, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Population comprises of five secondary schools in Odeda Local Government, Ogun State. Simple random sampling technique was used to select five schools in which 30 Students were chosen from each of the selected secondary schools to make a total of 150 respondents as sample for study. A self-developed questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. It was developed in 2 Likert scale of Agreed and Disagreed. The instrument was moderated by experts who affirmed its validity. Reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha. Data collected were analyzed using simple percentage and standard deviation statistical tools. Findings revealed that, human rights education will move students to understand human rights concepts to examining their experiences from a human rights perspective and incorporating these concepts into their personal values and decision-making process. Human right education promotes awareness and understanding of human rights issues so that people's rights will not be violated. It develops skill, ability and attitudes necessary for the defense and respect for human rights, so people do not violate the rights of others. Hence, human right education is vital for social cohesion and character formation. Therefore, Social Studies teachers should be adequately prepared to be able to teach the students about human rights that is a key component of 21st century civic education. Teachers should periodically be given orientation through seminars and workshops on human right and what constitutes their violation, with emphasis on international acceptable best practices on the subject matter.

### **Background to the Study**

One of the greatest challenges currently facing the Nigerian society is character deficits (Momodu, 2015). This is indeed reflected in many outcries from the public and the media. Over the years, especially since the 1970s, it has become fashionable among people to lament the decline of moral values if not the total moral degeneration in modern Nigerian society, particularly among the youths (Onyeama, 2013). This is because the youths of today have been entangled by youthful lust, pride, arrogance, disrespect, disobedience and indiscipline, degenerating to youths' uncultured behaviour (Momodu, 2015). However, education is one of the most important issues for the Governments worldwide. For everybody knows that a way to progress for any nation is through the path of education. For the scope of education is not just linked with the scientific discoveries or inventions, no doubt these are the very important aspect, but education on the other hand is very much linked with the progress of the moral world of man. Education is a fundamental human right and essential for the exercise of all other human rights. It promotes individual freedom and empowerment and yields important development benefits. Human right education is the knowledge, skill and values of human rights.

The United Nation Decade for human right education in Adegbite (2020) has defined human rights education as, "training, dissemination and information effort aimed at the building of a universal culture of human rights through the imparting of knowledge and skill and the molding of attitudes which are directed to: - a) The strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedom. b) The full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity. c) The promotion of understanding respect gender equality and friendship among all nations, indigenous people and racial, national, ethnic religious and linguistic group. d) The enabling of all persons to participate effectively in a tree society. e) The furtherance of the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of Peace (Greenberg, 2007). Human right education also provides a basis for conflict resolution and promotion of social order. Human right education is also increasing by recognized as effective strategy to prevent human rights abuse.

Human rights should be part of every one's education, human right is not a subject that can be studied at a distance. Students should not just learn about the Universal Declaration, racial injustice, homelessness without also being challenged to think about what it all means for them personally (Bynuin, &Porter, 2005). Human right education means a lifelong process by which people at all levels of development and also in all strata of society learn respect for the dignity of others. The moral principles of human rights education are to set certain standards of human behavior, human values and are regularly protected as legal rights in national, international law and for civil consciousness.

According to Belozertsev (2010), civic consciousness is the definition of great importance in many aspects. First, it identified with the problem of social development. Second, it is relevant to the development of civil society, openness and accessibility of information about any sphere of life of state and a person. So, the role and importance of civic consciousness is increasing as a worldview phenomenon during the education of

students at universities. Third, the definition of civic consciousness should be analyzed from a system and structural perspectives with special attention to the formation of value-normative attitude of students that effect on cultural and national identification. Education of civic consciousness should be based on the ideas of patriotism, statehood, morality, and legality for character formation (Belozertsev,2010). Civic consciousness is the foundation on which the ideological maturity of a young person should be built. The authors like Adediran (2024) and Adebayo (2019) offer a frame of reference for analyzing content and structure of civic consciousness as a personal worldview phenomenon, forming at students during education.

Social Studies knowledge according Adediran (2024) is seen as a dynamic and problem-solving discipline encompasses character formation. Character is a psychological notion that refers to all the habitual ways of feeling and reacting that distinguish one individual from another. Character formation as being the object of education is indeed a very deep and complex issue. It deals with individual and the whole system of his thoughts, believes, habit, values and all those parts of his personality which are reflected in his behaviour. To Ogundiran (2012), Social Studies lays emphasis on character formation as most of the societal problems which the subject was designed to address are predominantly youth-related, either as perpetrators or as victims or both of social problems. Within the school programme, Social Studies draws its contents from social sciences, humanities, local communities, current affairs and world problems, which do not exclusively belong to one particular discipline (Akinbote, 2016). Hence, its synthesis themes from these disciplines to solve human multifaceted problems.

Human right as element of Social Studies according to Adediran, Adebajo and Adetunji, (2014) imparts the skills needed to promote, defend and apply human rights in daily life, human being is born equal in dignity and rights. These are moral claims are inalienable and inherent in all individuals by virtue of their humanity alone, irrespective of religion, caste, colour, creed, gender, culture are formulated and articulated is known as human rights and its education whether it is formally or informally is known as human right education (National Council for the Social Studies, 2010). Human right education promotes knowledge, values, beliefs, skills and attitudes that encourage all individuals to uphold their own rights and those of others. It develops understanding of everyone's common responsibilities and duties to make human rights a reality in each community in the society. It constitutes an essential contribution to the long-term prevention of human rights abuses and represents an important investment in the endeavour to gain a just society in which all human rights of all persons are valued and respected (Adediran, Adebajo, & Adetunji, 2014) Human right education builds knowledge skill and attitudes prompting behaviour that upholds human rights. It is a process of empowerment which helps identify the human rights issues and seek solutions (Warsaw, 2003). It teaches students to examine their experiences from the human rights point of view enabling them to integrate these concepts into their values and even decision-making. Human right education is a path way which empowers people to create behaviour, knowledge, skill, attitude and value which would promote equality and dignity, within the society (Welch,

2005). It should be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights. It should promote understanding tolerance and friendship among society, racial groups, religious groups and all among nations. Therefore, through these, human right education students will be able to examine both the global and domestic implication of human rights themes they are exposed to and have the knowledge of civil consciousness towards character formation.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of this paper is to examine human right education on Social Studies students' knowledge of civic consciousness towards character formation in secondary school in Ogun State. Specifically, research objectives are to:

- i. Examine the roles of human right education in the elevation of society
- ii. Examine the impacts of human right education on students' knowledge of civic consciousness for character formation

Based on the study, the research questions are;

- i. What are the roles of Human Right Education in the elevation of society?
- ii. What are impacts of human right education on students' knowledge of civil consciousness towards character formation in Secondary School in Ogun State?

### **Methodology**

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Population comprises all secondary schools in Odeda Local Government Area of Ogun State. Simple random sampling technique was used to select thirty (30) students from five (5) selected secondary schools in Odeda Local Government to make a total of one hundred and fifty (150) respondents as sample for study. A self-developed questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. It was developed in 2 Likert scale of Agreed and Disagreed. The instrument was moderated by experts who affirmed its validity. Reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha. Data collected were analyzed simple percentage statistical tool.

### **Presentation of Data Analysis and Results Discussion**

What are the roles of human right education in the elevation of society?

**Table 1**

S/N	Items	Agreed		Disagreed		Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	S.D
		Freq (N)	Percent %	Freq (N)	Percent %		
1.	Human right education focuses on the sociological as well as psychological aspects of human right	140	70.0%	60	30.0	3.20	1.078
2.	Human right education includes learning about how human rights promote participation in decision making and the peaceful resolution of conflicts	160	80.0%	40	20.0	3.17	0.884
3.	Human right education is legal education for social transformations and human sensibility.	152	76.0%	48	24.0%	2.98	1.012
4.	Human right education is people working together to bring about human rights, justice and dignity for all	140	70.0%	60	30.0%	3.17	1.088
5.	It helps people to understand human rights, value human rights and take responsibility for respecting, defending and promoting human rights	153	76.5	47	23.5	3.22	1.079
<b>Weighted Mean (<math>\bar{x}</math>) = 3.148 and STD = 1.0282</b>							

Table one above, shows that human right education focuses on the sociological as well as psychological aspects of human right ( $\bar{x} = 3.2$ ,  $SD = 1.078$ ), human right education includes learning about how human rights promote participation in decision making and the peaceful resolution of conflicts ( $\bar{x} = 3.17$ ,  $SD = 0.884$ ), human right education is legal education for social transformations and human sensibility ( $\bar{x} = 2.98$ ,  $SD = 1.012$ ), human right education is people working together to bring about human rights, justice and dignity for all ( $\bar{x} = 3.17$ ,  $SD = 1.088$ ) and it helps people to understand human rights, value human rights and take responsibility for respecting, defending and promoting human rights ( $\bar{x} = 3.22$ ,  $SD = 0.841$ ). From table one above, research question one has a weighted mean of 3.148 while the bench mark is 2.50. It can be concluded that human right education plays a vital role on the elevation of society.

**Table 2:** What are the impacts of human right education on students' knowledge of civil consciousness towards character formation in Secondary School in Ogun State?

S/N	ITEMS	AGREED		DISAGREED		Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	S.D
		Freq (N)	Percent %	Freq (N)	Percent %		
1.	It fostering students' equality, non-discrimination and respect for the rights of all.	150	75.0%	50	25.0%	3.15	1.016
2.	It equips the students with knowledge, values, skills attitudes towards civil consciousness	166	83.0%	34	17.0%	3.43	0.954
3.	It helps students to exercise and protect the human rights of themselves	180	90.0%	20	10.0%	3.56	0.819
4.	It summarizes moral behavior established as human social product to promote certain important human interests	148	74.0%	52	26.0%	3.11	1.058
5.	It enabling of all persons to participate effectively in a free society.	160	80.0%	40	20.0%	3.30	1.008
<b>Weighted Mean (<math>\bar{x}</math>) = 3.308 and STD = 0.971</b>							

Table 2 above, shows human right education fostering equality, non-discrimination and respect for the rights of all ( $\bar{x} = 3.15$ ,  $SD = 1.016$ ), it equips the students with knowledge, values, skills attitudes towards civic consciousness ( $\bar{x} = 3.43$ ,  $SD = 0.954$ ), it help students to exercise and protect the human rights of themselves ( $\bar{x} = 3.56$ ,  $SD = 0.819$ ), it summarizes moral behaviour established as human social product to promote certain important human interests ( $\bar{x} = 3.11$ ,  $SD = 1.058$ ) and It enabling of all persons to participate effectively in a free society ( $\bar{x} = 3.30$ ,  $SD = 1.008$ ). From table 2 above, research question 2 has a weighted mean of 3.308 which is above the bench mark of 2.50. It can be concluded that human right education influence students' knowledge of civil consciousness towards character formation in Secondary School in Ogun State

### Discussion of Findings

Table one revealed the role of human right education in the elevation of society. It was indicated that human right education focuses on the sociological as well as psychological aspects of human right, promote participation in decision making and the peaceful resolution of conflicts, is a legal education for social transformations and human sensibility. It was further reveled that human right education helps people to understand human rights, value human rights and take responsibility for respecting, defending and promoting human rights. The findings agree with National Council for the Social Studies (2010) who stated that Human right as element of social studies imparts the skills needed to promote, defend and apply human rights in daily life. Human being is born equal in dignity and rights. The moral principles of Human rights are to set certain standards of human behavior, human values and are regularly protected as legal rights in national and international law. This is the fundamental rights to which a person is inherently entitled.

Right are often considered fundamental to civilization, being regarded as establishment pillars of society and culture. Basic concepts of values of human right play a significant role in promotion of human right in the society.

Table 2 therefore shows the impact of human right education on students' knowledge of civil consciousness towards character formation in secondary school in Ogun State. It was shows that Human Right Education fostering equality, non-discrimination and respect for the rights of all, equips the students with knowledge, values, skills attitudes towards civil consciousness, it helps students to exercise and protect the human rights of themselves, summarize moral behavior established as human social product to promote certain important human interests and enabling of all persons to participate effectively in a free society. This finding echo that of Murphy, Ruane (2003) who stated that human right education is a path way which empowers people to create behaviour, knowledge, skill, attitude and value which would promote equality and dignity, within the society. It should be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights. It should promote understanding tolerance and friendship among society, racial groups, religious groups and all among nations.

### **Conclusion**

Human right should be part of everyone's education, human right education nurture respect for others, self-esteem and hope. Human right education gives people a sense of responsibility for respecting and defending human rights and empowers them through skills to take appropriate action. It helps people knowing about being able to use global, regional, national and local human rights instruments and mechanism for the protection of human rights instruments and mechanism for the protection of human rights. It provides help in strategy appropriate responses to injustice, discrimination, intolerance and violation of rights. Hence, Human right education is vital for social cohesion and character formation. It emphasizes our common humanity above our individual differences and so is fundamental in combating discrimination and elevating the society.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that;

1. Social Studies teachers should be adequately prepared to be able to teach the students about Human Rights that is a key component of 21st century civic education.
2. To create students' right awareness, sermons and workshop should be organized for teachers, administration and students by education agencies.
3. There should be more advocacy in publicizing the Nigerian constitution and all its amendments, so as to make it available to schools and the general public
4. Teachers should periodically be given orientation through seminars and workshops on human right and what constitutes their violation, with emphasis on international acceptable best practices on the subject matter.
5. The students book list should include a copy of the Nigerian Constitution and generally school rules as a matter of compulsion, all teachers and secondary school administration should be made to own a copy of these documents.

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