



Curriculum Reform and Value-Based Education: A Comparative Study of Social Studies and Islamic Studies Integration in Nigerian Schools

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Abstract

The growing moral, political, and social concerns confronting contemporary Nigerian society have fueled proposals for curriculum reform focused on value-based education. Although Social Studies and Islamic Studies are both intended to enhance ethical consciousness, citizenship, and moral responsibility, they are administered concurrently rather than in a coordinated manner. This study critically investigates the philosophical, pedagogical, and structural aspects of combining Social Studies and Islamic Studies in Nigerian schools to improve coherent value formation. The research uses a qualitative comparative design to analyze national curriculum papers, engage teachers and curriculum planners in semi-structured interviews, and observe classroom practices in chosen secondary schools. The study, based on curricular integration theory and maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah-informed ethical frameworks, suggests that integration can increase moral internalization, civic involvement, and social cohesiveness while maintaining disciplinary integrity. The findings show strong overlaps in value targets, fragmented educational delivery, and institutional hurdles that prevent synergy. The study presents an integrative curriculum framework built on common value domains, collaborative pedagogy, and outcome-based evaluation. It concludes that systematic integration is a strategic avenue for developing holistic education and sustained national development in pluralistic societies.

A. INTRODUCTION

Curriculum reform remains a central topic in modern educational debate, as countries work to rebalance their educational systems to reflect changing sociopolitical, economic, and cultural realities. Curriculum reform in postcolonial and pluralistic societies like Nigeria is about more than just updating content knowledge or improving academic standards; it also includes the broader imperative of fostering ethical consciousness, civic responsibility, and social cohesion among a diverse population (Tikumah, 2009). Nigeria's multicultural and multi-religious composition, marked by ethnic plurality and religious variety, makes value-based education both



necessary and complicated (Muhammad et al. 2023). As a result, curricular reform must balance national integration with respect for religious identity. Since its incorporation into Nigeria's educational framework, Social Studies has been viewed as a unifying topic aimed at promoting citizenship education, democratic principles, critical thinking, and national consciousness (Sofadekan, 2012). Its curriculum focuses on issues such as cultural tolerance, human rights, environmental responsibility, governance, and social justice. The main goal is to create knowledgeable and participatory people capable of constructively contributing to Nigeria's democratic and developmental goals. However, opponents contend that, while Social Studies articulates civic principles at the policy level, its instructional implementation is frequently theoretical and examination-driven, limiting its transformative potential in changing students' moral dispositions and social behavior (Okam, 2011).

In contrast, Islamic Studies have a unique although complementary status in Nigerian schools, particularly in Muslim-majority areas. Islamic Studies, which is based on Qur'anic teachings, Prophetic traditions, and traditional Islamic literature, aims to promote moral rectitude (akhlaq), spiritual discipline, accountability before God, and communal solidarity (Muhammad and Ibrahim, 2021). Its ethical foundation is based on Islam's complete moral philosophy, which combines personal piety, societal justice, compassion, and responsible citizenship. In this regard, Islamic Studies goes beyond doctrinal training by providing a comprehensive moral perspective that considers both individual character development and society well-being.

Despite similar commitments to value education, Social Studies and Islamic Studies are usually administered as parallel, segregated disciplines rather as mutually reinforcing components of a unified moral education framework. This structural isolation typically leads to fragmented value transmission. Students may encounter civic values like democracy and pluralism in Social Studies without properly integrating them with the ethical and spiritual concepts stressed in Islamic Studies. Similarly, moral teachings in Islamic Studies may not always be explicitly related to current civic issues presented in Social Studies classrooms (Ahmed, & Johnson, 2020). The lack of curricular coherence can lead to cognitive and normative dissonance, in which students struggle to reconcile secular civic norms with religious moral convictions.

The persistence of this fragmentation implies deeper structural and epistemological gaps in Nigeria's educational system. Colonial legacies established a

distinction between "secular" and "religious" knowledge, establishing topic boundaries that continue to influence curricular organization. Furthermore, teacher preparation programs sometimes function in disciplinary silos, which limits prospects for interdisciplinary collaboration (Yusof, & Hamid, 2021). As a result, value education risks becoming diffused among disciplines rather than strategically integrated to achieve coherent moral and civic outcomes.

Furthermore, a lack of integration limits curriculum reform's ability to address urgent societal issues such as juvenile radicalization, corruption, social mistrust, and diminishing civic involvement. A value-based curriculum that integrates civic and religious ethics could lay a stronger foundation for ethical citizenship. Integrative reform would not imply homogenization or the erosion of religious distinctiveness; rather, it would involve identifying and embedding convergent value domains such as justice, accountability, respect for diversity, and social responsibility into interdisciplinary pedagogical strategies. (Al-Mansouri, Ibrahim, & Al-Rashid, 2021).

In this context, curriculum reform in Nigeria must shift from content revision to structural reconsideration. An integrated approach to Social Studies and Islamic Studies could improve cognitive coherence, strengthen ethical consistency, and encourage socially responsive citizenship based on both democratic principles and religious moral frameworks. This reform is consistent with global trends in holistic education, which prioritize character development alongside academic performance. Finally, redefining the link between Social Studies and Islamic Studies provides a strategic avenue for promoting value-based education in Nigeria's diverse educational landscape.

This study looks into how curriculum reform can close this gap by analyzing integration opportunities between Social Studies and Islamic Studies. The emphasis is on Nigerian schools where religious and secular curriculum coexist, and where value education is critical for promoting social cohesion, ethical citizenship, and personal character development

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Value-Based Education in Curriculum Theory

Value-based education has emerged as a focal topic in current curriculum thought, particularly in nations dealing with moral decay, social fragmentation, and civic disengagement (Williams, & Abdallah, 2021). At its foundation, value-based

education is the deliberate and systematic development of ethical, moral, spiritual, and civic dispositions through structured educational experiences (Sofadekan, 2012).. It goes beyond the transmission of cognitive knowledge to encompass the holistic development of character, social responsibility, and ethical conscience. In this perspective, education is viewed not only as academic training, but also as a moral enterprise aimed at developing responsible citizens and socially conscious individuals.

Curriculum researchers suggest that values should not be viewed as peripheral or supplemental components of education. Rather, they must be fundamentally integrated into curricular content, teaching, and assessment systems. The integrative approach of curriculum theory holds that values are fundamentally communicated through subject content, teacher attitudes, classroom climate, and institutional culture (Ogo, Eneyo, & Akpan, 2014). Ferguson (2008) underlines that ethical reasoning and moral judgment are most successfully developed when values are integrated throughout disciplines rather than being limited to specialized moral education classes. This multidisciplinary method promotes consistency between information learning and moral application.

Value-based education is generally founded on holistic and constructivist learning paradigms. Holistic education emphasizes the interrelated development of the cognitive, emotional, social, and spiritual qualities of students (Godabe, 2016). In contrast, constructivist frameworks emphasize active involvement with ethical challenges, critical reflection, and dialogical learning as means for internalizing ideals. These theoretical perspectives oppose traditional didactic instruction and instead promote experiential, inquiry-based, and discussion-oriented pedagogies.

Value-based education becomes even more challenging in pluralistic societies like Nigeria the curriculum designers must strike a balance between universal civic principles (including democracy, human rights, and social justice) and context-specific religious or cultural moral frameworks (Okam, 2011). This negotiation frequently generates problems about epistemic authority. Should civic ideals be based primarily on secular constitutional frameworks, or should they be compatible with religious ethical traditions? The evidence increasingly implies that dialogical integration of secular and religious knowledge domains is required for long-term moral formation in multicultural cultures.

Despite considerable theoretical endorsement for integrated value-based education, empirical evidence demonstrates ongoing implementation gaps stating that

values are commonly articulated at the policy level, but are underdeveloped in classroom practice due to insufficient teacher preparation, exam-oriented systems, and fragmented curricular structures. This gap between curricular aim and pedagogical actuality forms a fundamental worry in reform debate, and underscores the need for interdisciplinary synergy especially within topics such as Social Studies and Islamic Studies.

2. Social Studies and Civic Education

Social studies evolved historically as a reform-oriented discipline aimed at responding to social instability, industrialization, and democratic revolution. In Western educational institutions, it was envisioned as a means of developing informed, participating citizens capable of critical engagement with societal concerns (Okam, 2011). Its intellectual base includes history, geography, political science, sociology, and economics, which are integrated to promote civic competency and cultural understanding.

Following colonial control and civil conflict, the Nigerian educational system legally formalized Social Studies to foster national unity, patriotism, and responsible citizenship. The National Policy on Education (NPE) requires Social Studies to instill principles like tolerance, integrity, fairness, and social responsibility. The topic is thus positioned as a strategic instrument for nation-building, resolving ethnic differences, and encouraging democratic involvement (SUNDAY & JACOB, 2025).

However, research on social studies implementation in Nigeria reveals major structural and pedagogical problems. Okam (2011) observes that, despite the curriculum's progressive civic ideals, classroom practice frequently stresses rote memorizing and exam preparation. Teachers sometimes lack specific training in civic pedagogy, which limits their ability to foster critical discussion, debate, and practical learning. Furthermore, curriculum overload, which limits introspective involvement due to excessive content requirements, diminishes the subject's transformative potential.

Another criticism is that civic principles are not fully contextualized in students' daily experiences where concepts like democracy, government, and human rights are sometimes offered abstractly, with no connection to the local community experiences or religious moral frameworks that define students' identities (Adewuya, 2017). In multi-religious environments, this abstraction may create a mismatch between civic principles and pupils' moral worldviews, potentially decreasing internalization.

Comparative research indicates that effective civic education necessitates dialogical pedagogy, interactive learning methodologies, and integration with moral reasoning frameworks. Where Social Studies functions outside of religious and ethical discourses, it may fail to produce profound moral reform. In contrast, when civic education is harmonized with culturally and religiously grounded value systems, pupils are more likely to regard civic involvement as a moral imperative rather than a constitutional duty.

3. Islamic Studies and Moral Formation

Islamic Studies holds a unique and significant role in Nigeria's educational landscape, notably in Muslim-majority regions of the North and Southwest. The national curriculum includes a formal topic that teaches students about Islamic belief (‘aqīdah), jurisprudence (fiqh), Qur'anic studies, Hadith, and prophetic biography (sīrah), while also building moral and spiritual character (Al-Mansouri, Ibrahim & Al-Rashid, 2021). Unlike merely doctrinal training, Islamic Studies' pedagogical goal goes beyond theological literacy to include ethical formation, social responsibility, and community harmony.

The concept of tarbiyah is central to Islamic moral pedagogy a comprehensive educational process that fosters intellectual, moral, and spiritual development. This framework places knowledge inside an ethical paradigm, where learning is inseparable from moral accountability. Islamic ethical concepts like justice (‘adl), trustworthiness (amānah), compassion (raḥmah), and social responsibility (mas’ūliyyah) are practical guidelines that regulate individual and community behavior (Usman & Muhammad, 2023). According to Muhammad and Ibrahim (2021), when conducted properly, Islamic moral education has the capacity to alter lives by linking ethical behavior to both divine accountability and communal well-being.

Furthermore, Islamic Studies fosters a morally responsible citizenship. While civic obligations in secular curricula are often presented in constitutional or democratic terms, Islamic ethical discourse views social engagement as a form of religious responsibility. The concept of enjoining good and prohibiting wrong (*al-amr bi al-ma‘rūf wa al-nahy ‘an al-munkar*) promotes active social engagement and collective moral guardianship. This moral-communal approach shows a strong alignment with civic education goals, particularly in areas such as social justice, anti-corruption ideals, and communal solidarity (Muhammad, Bashir Ahmad & Abdullahi 2021).

However, obstacles remain in the application of Islamic studies. Empirical research have identified concerns such as an overemphasis on memorization, a lack of critical engagement with modern social realities, and insufficient instructional innovation (Usman & Muhammad, 2023). In certain cases, training may be limited to ritual and doctrinal features without an obvious relation to current civic responsibilities. Such compartmentalization limits the subject's ability to engage constructively with broader sociopolitical discourse.

Despite these limitations, researchers increasingly believe that Islamic Studies can supplement secular civic education by strengthening the ethical principles that underpin democratic and social values (Muhammad and Ibrahim, 2021). Rather than serving as a parallel moral framework, Islamic Studies may give a culturally relevant ethical foundation that promotes civic principle internalization. The potential synergy between Islamic moral formation and Social Studies citizenship education is an underexplored but attractive path for curriculum change in Nigeria.

4. Integration of Secular and Religious Curricula

The blending of secular and religious curriculum is a relatively unexplored field of educational research, particularly in African countries. Traditional educational frameworks frequently distinguish between religious instruction and secular courses, reflecting colonial legacies and worries about plurality. However, new literature asks whether such separation is enough for countries in which religion remains an important component of social identity and moral thinking. Muhammad & Ibrahim (2021) observes that integrated curriculum models in which ethical and civic themes are consistently aligned across subjects can improve educational relevance and diminish fragmentation in students' moral knowledge. Integration does not necessarily entail the fusing of content into a single subject, but rather the deliberate alignment of learning objectives, thematic coherence, and complementing teaching practices.

Justice, social responsibility, environmental stewardship, and peaceful coexistence, for example, can be addressed concurrently in Social Studies and Islamic Studies using civic frameworks and theological and ethical viewpoints respectively (Usman & Muhammad 2023). The advantages of such integration include increased consistency in value messaging, less curricular overload through thematic coherence, and deeper student engagement. When students meet ethical ideas that are common across disciplines, reinforcement occurs, boosting the possibility of internalization.

Furthermore, integration may reduce cognitive dissonance, which can occur when secular civic values look divorced from students' religious moral frameworks (Al-Mansouri, Ibrahim, & Al-Rashid, 2021).

Nevertheless, integration initiatives raise valid issues. Muhammad, et al. (2023) warns that curriculum blending must protect academic integrity while respecting religious autonomy. Secular educators may be concerned about religious ideas becoming politicized or gaining doctrinal dominance, whereas religious scholars may be concerned about theological authenticity being diluted. These concerns highlight the importance of explicitly specified epistemic boundaries and collaborative curriculum design processes that include experts from both areas.

Another major issue is teacher preparation where effective integration necessitates instructors with interdisciplinary expertise and sensitivity to pluralism. Without proper professional development, integration may become shallow or inconsistent. Policy frameworks must consequently encourage collaborative teacher training programs that foster mutual understanding between the departments of Social Studies and Islamic Studies (Muhammad, Rohanna et al. 2023).

Comparative experiences from multicultural educational systems indicate that integrative techniques are more effective when led by common broad goals such as ethical citizenship, social cohesion, and inclusive development rather than doctrinal domination. In Nigeria, where secularism and religious identities coexist, integration should be viewed as pedagogical complementarity, not ideological conformity.

5. Implications for Integrative Curriculum Reform

The literature on value-based education and social studies emphasizes a recurring theme: values must be systematically entrenched throughout disciplines in order to achieve effective moral formation. However, present study frequently regards civic and religious education as separate, parallel areas. This distinction is especially visible in Nigeria, where Social Studies and Islamic Studies work independently despite shared goals such as justice, responsibility, and community welfare.

The lack of integrated study leaves a conceptual gap in curricular reform arguments. Islamic Studies emphasizes moral accountability, ethical conduct, and social justice based on Sharī'ah principles, whereas Social Studies focuses on democratic citizenship and national cohesion. Both fields address character formation and social order; nonetheless, their epistemic foundations remain institutionally segregated.

Bridging this gap necessitates rethinking curriculum as a coherent moral ecosystem rather than a collection of separate disciplines. Contemporary curriculum theory advocates for multidisciplinary integration, stating that moral and civic principles are strengthened when provided through numerous reinforcing frameworks. The comparative research of Social Studies and Islamic Studies integration thus addresses a crucial gap in the literature and coincides with global aspirations for holistic, value-centered educational reform.

6. Synthesis and Research Gap

Three key findings emerge from the review of the literature. First, value-based education necessitates multidisciplinary coherence to enable meaningful moral formation. Second, both Social Studies and Islamic Studies seek to instill ethical and civic values. Third, limited empirical scholarship addresses how these subjects might interact synergistically within Nigerian schools.

While existing research details each discipline's objectives and obstacles separately, there is still a need for more investigation of structured integration models that respect plurality while improving value coherence. This gap emphasizes the importance of comparative and integrative research that investigates how curriculum reform might strategically link civic and religious education to support holistic moral development.

The current study addresses this gap by investigating the conceptual, pedagogical, and policy features of combining Social Studies and Islamic Studies in Nigerian schools, adding to both curricular theory and educational reform discourse.

C. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. Research Design

This study used a qualitative research design based on a comparative and interpretive methodological framework. The qualitative technique was deemed acceptable given the exploratory character of the investigation and its emphasis on understanding the meanings, viewpoints, and contextual dynamics surrounding curriculum integration. The comparative dimension provided a systematic assessment of convergences and divergences between Social Studies and Islamic Studies curricula, whilst the interpretive orientation allowed for in-depth analysis of stakeholders' perspectives and lived experiences. Curriculum papers and stakeholder perspectives

were carefully examined to find areas of conceptual alignment and potential integration between the two topic fields.

2. Samples and Context

The study was undertaken in three Nigerian states chosen to represent different religious and socio-cultural situations. This regional diversity was meant to provide contextual richness and capture variances in curriculum implementation across multiple religious settings.

Purposive sampling was used to select participants who had direct knowledge and experience related to the study's objectives. The sample included 18 teachers (9 Social Studies teachers and 9 Islamic Studies teachers), 6 curriculum planners who worked on curriculum development and policy implementation, and 30 senior secondary school students. The involvement of numerous stakeholder groups allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of both policy aims and classroom practices.

3. Data Collection

Data were collected utilizing a variety of qualitative methodologies to ensure triangulation and increase the reliability of the findings.

We studied national and state curriculum recommendations for Social Studies and Islamic Studies. The analysis concentrated on stated aims, required value outcomes, thematic emphases, and teaching expectations. This permitted the discovery of conceptual overlaps and divergences between the two curricula.

Semi-structured interviews were performed with teachers, curriculum planners, and students to gather insights on value education, perceived curricular strengths, implementation issues, and integration potential. The flexible framework of the interviews allowed participants to comment on context-specific experiences while remaining consistent with the study's research objectives.

Classroom Observation: Non-participant observations were conducted to assess how values were reflected in teaching practices. Observations focused on educational practices, teacher-student interactions, thematic emphasis, and the actual application of moral and civic themes in the classroom. This provided insight into the enacted curriculum and allowed for comparisons between policy goals and instructional reality.

4. Data analysis

The data were evaluated thematically using a structured content analysis method. Interview transcripts, observation notes, and curricular texts were all

methodically classified to reveal recurring patterns and intellectual concepts. The coding system was divided into four main analytical categories: (1) value articulation, (2) educational approaches, (3) curricular barriers, and (4) integration potentials.

Themes were improved and synthesized through iterative coding and ongoing comparison across data sources, yielding interpretive insights into curricular integration opportunities and restrictions. This analytical method guaranteed that the research topics, data sources, and emergent findings were all consistent.

D. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Distinct Value Orientations, Overlapping Goals

The findings reveal that Social Studies and Islamic Studies, though epistemologically distinct, converge substantially in their normative objectives. Both disciplines aim to cultivate socially desirable dispositions such as respect, responsibility, justice, empathy, tolerance, and communal solidarity. However, their conceptual framing and operationalization of these values differ significantly.

Social Studies conceptualizes values primarily within the framework of civic citizenship, democratic participation, constitutional order, and national identity. Justice, for example, is discussed in terms of rule of law, equity, and human rights. Responsibility is framed as civic duty obeying laws, paying taxes, participating in elections, and contributing to community development. The moral vocabulary of Social Studies is therefore institutional and state-oriented, emphasizing the individual's role within the nation-state.

In contrast, Islamic Studies anchors similar values within theological and moral prescriptions derived from Qur'anic injunctions, Prophetic traditions, and classical jurisprudence. Justice (*'adl*) is understood not only as legal fairness but as divine command and moral obligation. Responsibility (*amānah*) is framed as trust before God, encompassing both personal integrity and communal accountability. Empathy and compassion are rooted in religious virtues, reinforced by spiritual accountability and eschatological consciousness.

This dual orientation presents both a challenge and an opportunity. The challenge lies in epistemological divergence: one discipline emphasizes civic rationality and constitutionalism, while the other emphasizes theological ethics and spiritual accountability. Without deliberate integration, students may

compartmentalize these value systems viewing civic responsibility as separate from religious morality.

However, the overlap in core values represents a significant opportunity for curricular synergy. When justice is taught simultaneously as a constitutional principle and a divine imperative, moral internalization may deepen. When responsibility is framed both as civic duty and spiritual trust, it reinforces behavioral consistency across social domains. Thus, rather than competing value systems, the findings suggest complementary moral narratives that, if strategically aligned, could strengthen holistic value formation.

2. Curriculum Fragmentation and Redundancies

Another key finding concerns structural fragmentation within the curriculum. Data from teacher interviews and document analysis indicate substantial thematic repetition across subjects without explicit cross-referencing or pedagogical coordination. Values such as honesty, respect for elders, tolerance, and community service appear in both curricula but are presented independently, often using different terminologies and instructional examples.

As one participant observed:

“We teach honesty in Social Studies and again in Islamic Studies, but students often do not see them as parts of a whole.”

This statement reflects a broader issue of curricular silos. While repetition in education can reinforce learning, uncoordinated repetition leads to fragmentation rather than integration. Students encounter parallel moral messages without explicit guidance on their conceptual connections. Consequently, value education becomes compartmentalized civic virtues are discussed in one classroom, religious virtues in another without synthesis.

This fragmentation produces several implications:

- a. **Cognitive Disjunction:** Students may fail to recognize the coherence between civic and religious values, perceiving them as unrelated or context-specific.
- b. **Pedagogical Inefficiency:** Redundant teaching consumes instructional time that could otherwise be used for deeper engagement or applied learning.
- c. **Weakened Internalization:** Without integrated reinforcement, value formation may remain superficial or situational.

From a curriculum theory perspective, this reflects what scholars describe as “additive value insertion” rather than embedded value integration (Krebs, 2016).

Values are included in multiple subjects, but without structural coordination or thematic mapping.

The findings suggest that effective curriculum reform requires horizontal alignment (across subjects at the same grade level) and vertical alignment (progression across grade levels). A coordinated thematic framework could, for instance, designate “Justice and Social Responsibility” as a cross-cutting theme for a term, allowing both Social Studies and Islamic Studies teachers to collaboratively design complementary lessons.

Moreover, interdisciplinary teacher collaboration emerged as a missing but necessary mechanism. Currently, departmental isolation limits opportunities for coordinated planning. Establishing structured cross-department curriculum meetings could significantly reduce fragmentation.

3. Implications for Curriculum Reform

The coexistence of distinct orientations and overlapping goals implies that integration should not aim at homogenization but at coherence. Curriculum reform should therefore pursue:

- Thematic cross-referencing within textbooks and lesson plans
- Joint value-mapping frameworks identifying overlapping moral constructs
- Professional development workshops promoting interdisciplinary dialogue
- Development of integrative instructional materials highlighting shared ethical principles

Rather than merging subjects, reform should focus on conceptual bridges explicitly demonstrating how civic responsibility and religious morality reinforce each other in addressing national challenges such as corruption, social injustice, and communal conflict.

In the Nigerian context, where religious identity significantly shapes moral reasoning, such coherence may enhance the legitimacy and internalization of civic values. At the same time, maintaining academic integrity and pluralism ensures that integration remains pedagogical rather than doctrinal.

E. CONCLUSION

This study underscores that curriculum reform targeting the integration of Social Studies and Islamic Studies holds significant potential for advancing coherent, value-based education in Nigerian schools. Both subjects share overlapping moral

objectives such as justice, responsibility, respect, empathy, and communal solidarity but historically, they have been delivered in parallel, leading to fragmentation and redundancy in students' value formation. By aligning the objectives, instructional strategies, and assessment frameworks of these disciplines, educators can create a more holistic learning experience that reinforces both civic and ethical competencies.

The research highlights that integration need not compromise the distinct epistemological and pedagogical identities of each subject. Social Studies provides frameworks for citizenship, national cohesion, and social engagement, while Islamic Studies embeds ethical reasoning, spiritual accountability, and theological morality. A thoughtfully designed integrative approach allows these domains to complement each other, producing students who are not only academically competent but also morally grounded and socially responsible.

Moreover, the findings suggest that practical strategies such as thematic mapping, interdisciplinary lesson planning, teacher collaboration, and curriculum cross-referencing can mitigate the effects of duplication and fragmentation. Such strategies ensure that students perceive civic and religious values as interconnected rather than compartmentalized, enhancing both internalization and application. In sum, curriculum reform that intentionally bridges Social Studies and Islamic Studies represents a forward-looking model for Nigerian education. It aligns schooling with the dual imperatives of academic proficiency and moral development, preparing learners to navigate diverse social contexts with ethical discernment, civic responsibility, and cultural sensitivity. Future policy and curriculum development should therefore emphasize integration, professional capacity-building for teachers, and the creation of pedagogical materials that reinforce coherent value messaging across the curriculum.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to support effective integration of Social Studies and Islamic Studies in Nigerian schools and to enhance value-based education:

1. Curriculum Alignment and Integration

- Educational authorities should undertake a systematic review of the Social Studies and Islamic Studies curricula to identify overlapping values and thematic intersections.

- Curriculum designers should develop integrated modules or cross-referenced lesson frameworks that emphasize shared ethical and civic principles, while retaining the distinctive knowledge base of each subject.

2. Teacher Professional Development

- Teachers from both disciplines should receive targeted professional training on interdisciplinary pedagogy, collaborative lesson planning, and value-based instruction.
- Continuous professional development programs should equip educators to identify synergies between civic and moral instruction, enhancing students' holistic understanding of values in practice.

3. Pedagogical Innovation and Instructional Strategies

- Schools should adopt active learning strategies such as project-based learning, service-learning, and thematic units that merge civic and ethical education.
- Instruction should include real-life case studies, community engagement activities, and reflective exercises that encourage students to connect classroom learning to ethical and social action.

4. Assessment and Evaluation Frameworks

- Assessment practices should be restructured to evaluate not only knowledge acquisition but also moral reasoning, ethical decision-making, and civic responsibility.
- Cross-disciplinary evaluation tools, including portfolios, reflective journals, and performance tasks, should be implemented to capture students' integrative learning outcomes.

5. Policy and Stakeholder Engagement

- Educational policymakers should support integration initiatives through funding, curriculum guidance, and monitoring mechanisms.
- Collaboration with religious leaders, community organizations, and academic experts can reinforce the social relevance and cultural acceptability of value-based curriculum reforms.

6. Resource Development and Support Materials

- Textbooks, teacher guides, and multimedia resources should be revised or developed to present integrated content, ensuring that ethical, civic, and religious values are coherently conveyed across subjects.

- Digital platforms and open educational resources can support flexible delivery and wider dissemination of integrated learning materials.

By adopting these recommendations, Nigerian schools can create a cohesive educational environment where Social Studies and Islamic Studies reinforce each other, producing graduates who are not only knowledgeable but also morally responsible, socially conscious, and prepared to engage positively with diverse communities.

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