



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



## Perception of undergraduate students on the impact of social studies education in achieving the sustainable development goal 5 in Kogi State, Nigeria

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### Abstract

The researchers investigated the perception of undergraduate students on the impact of social studies education in achieving the sustainable development goal 5 in Kogi State, Nigeria. With gender inequality persisting as a significant challenge globally, understanding the effectiveness of educational interventions like social studies education becomes paramount. This study utilized a descriptive survey design to elicit information from a target population of 583 undergraduate social studies students across two universities in Kogi State. Taro Yamane's (1967) sampling formula was used to select a sample size of 237 students, but was increased to 267 in order to account for possible attrition with data collection. Two research questions were raised and two hypotheses were formulated and tested. The instrument for data collection was the SSEASDGGE which was validated and the reliability index of 0.855 was obtained using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the research questions while the chi-square test of goodness-of-fit tested the null hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. This study revealed amongst others that female social studies students demonstrated higher knowledge and positive attitude regarding gender roles and equality more than their male counterparts. However, the respondents reported a limited engagement in gender equality related activities outside the classroom and expressed a perceived need for improved access to educational resources and activities on gender equality. It was recommended amongst others that social studies teacher training programmes should establish partnerships with local communities and NGOs to provide students with opportunities for hands-on learning and community engagement in gender equality advocacy. This study contributes to the growing body of literature at the nexus of education and sustainable development with implications for policy, practice, and future research aimed at fostering gender equality in Kogi State and beyond.

**Keywords:** Social Studies; Education; Sustainable Development; Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); Gender Equality; Sustainable Development Goal 5

### 1. Introduction

In Nigeria, research evidence shows that Social Studies has a special task to perform in transforming Nigeria into a modern state through nurturing to create awareness of and sensitivity to man's environment, (Shaibu, 2020). Similarly, Ogunbiyi (2011) opined that the rationale for the inclusion of social studies education into the school curriculum in Nigeria is governed by the belief that social studies have the capacity to positively influence, modify, and change student's behavior in the direction of acceptable norms, values, and attitudes of the society. This is sequel to the belief that Social Studies deals with the inculcation of positive societal values and attitudes designed to make an individual a functional member of the society.

Achieving gender equality is a global commitment under the Sustainable Development Goals. The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a set of 17 global goals adopted by the United Nations in 2015. They aim to address various social, economic, and environmental challenges by 2030, including poverty, inequality, and climate

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change, environmental degradation, peace, and justice. The impact of Social Studies education in achieving the Sustainable Development Goal 5 of Gender Equality is a topic of interest in the field of education and sustainable development. Corroborating this view, Dania and Igbani (2016) argued that social studies is significant in national development and meeting the needs and aspirations of any society. Though the relationship between education and sustainable development is difficult and complex, social studies education holds the key to a nation's ability to develop and attain sustainable development, especially when aimed towards improving the status of women, promoting environmental protection and inculcating good moral values for sustainable national development.

Gender equality and women's empowerment is a key component of the sustainable development goals. Women play significant and diverse roles from home, to the workplace, and to the society at large. The promotion of gender equality has a dual rationale vis-à-vis entrenching human rights and social justice (equal opportunities, rights and responsibilities), and ensuring that boundless equality between men and women is a pre-condition for sustainable people-centered development (Sharma et al, 2006). Gender equality is core to the developmental-agenda and principle of the United Nations. Just like the millennium development goals (MDGs), the sustainable development goals (SDGs) also give priority to gender quality and women empowerment. In fact, the SDGs cannot be achieved without gender equality, knowing that women constitute half of the world's population and cannot be neglected in the development process. The International Monetary Fund (IMF, 2018) averred that the latest economic review of Nigeria's economy says closing the gender gap would mean higher growth and productivity, and greater economic stability. Similarly, putting an end to all forms of discrimination against women and girls is not only a basic human right, but also crucial to accelerating sustainable development in the country (UNDP, 2019).

Gender inequality remains a significant challenge globally and in Nigeria, including Kogi State. Globally, 49 countries lack laws that protect women from domestic violence and 47% of homicide victims killed by an intimate partner or family member are women (UN Women, 2018). Nigeria, as a diverse and populous nation, faces multifaceted challenges in realizing gender equality. Despite progress in recent years, issues such as gender-based violence, unequal access to education, and limited economic opportunities for women still persist. Also, Nigeria is among the 10 percent of countries worldwide that exhibit the highest levels of gender discrimination according to the OECD's Social Institutions and Gender Index, with an assessment of "high" or "very high" in all of the evaluated categories (discriminatory family code, restricted physical integrity, son bias, restricted resources and assets, restricted civil liberties). It also falls into the group of countries with highest gender inequality in human development outcomes (UNDP, 2016) As estimated by the National Bureau of Statistics (2020), women constitutes 49.2% of the total population in Nigeria and form the highest number of poverty group. Nigeria like many African countries is a patriarchal society with men in dominance, which continues to negatively impact the participation of women in nation building (Ekpu, 2019). Poignantly, gender inequality in Nigeria is relatively high compared to peer countries—that is, countries at similar levels of development. By implication, Nigeria as a nation is likely going to be "missing out on a key ingredient to economic success" and attainment of sustainable development goals (IMF, 2018). Social Studies education, a fundamental component of the national curriculum, holds the potential to influence attitudes, perceptions, and behaviours that contribute to gender disparities. In this line of thought, Ikwumelu (2012) affirms that one of the aims of social studies is to make students loyal to their society and to develop a commitment to act responsibly and reasonably. The desire is to enable an individual to be capable of distinguishing between negative and positive actions and thereby adhere to those values and attitudes that are positive for the individual in particular and the society in general. Social studies education plays a pivotal role in advancing gender equality by fostering a deep understanding of this societal issue and encouraging active engagement in addressing them.

Despite global efforts to achieve gender equality, there is a dearth of research specifically investigating the perception of undergraduate students on the impact of social studies education in achieving the Sustainable Development Goal 5 of Gender Equality in Kogi State, Nigeria. Existing literature often overlooks the potential of social studies education to empower individuals with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to challenge gender norms and promote equality. The main purpose of this study was to determine whether social studies education influences students' knowledge and awareness of gender equality within the context of the SDG 5. Also, to assess the influence of social studies education in shaping the attitudes of students regarding gender roles and equality.

This study contributes to the ongoing discourse on the role of education in sustainable development, specifically focusing on gender equality. Understanding the role of social studies education in shaping students' perceptions on gender equality can help teachers improve their teaching strategies and content delivery that will promote a more inclusive and equitable educational environment where students are empowered to challenge gender stereotypes and advocate for equality. By focusing on Kogi State, this study contributes to the region-specific data that can inform policy and educational strategies tailored to local contexts.

### 1.1. Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

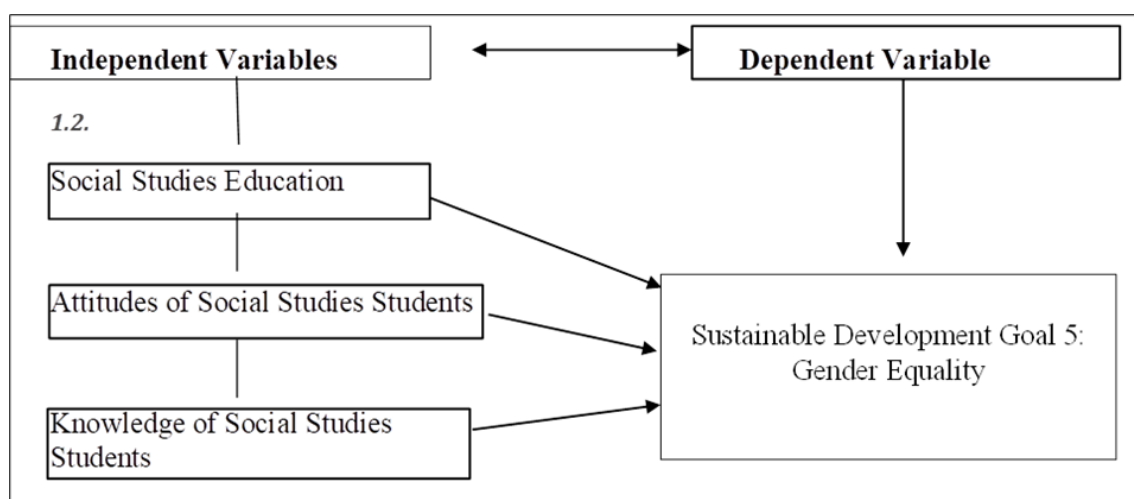
- Does social studies education influence the knowledge of undergraduate students' in relation to gender equality within the context of SDG 5?
- Does social studies education play a role in shaping the attitudes of undergraduate students regarding gender roles and equality?

### 1.2. Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

- H0<sup>1</sup>: Social studies undergraduate students will not display significant opinion on their knowledge of gender equality within the context of the SDG 5.
- H0<sup>2</sup>: Social studies undergraduate students will not display significant opinion on their attitudes towards gender roles and equality.

## 2. Literature Review



**Figure 1** Schematic diagram showing the relationship between Independent and Dependent Variable

In this schema, the Sustainable Development Goal 5 of Gender Equality is the dependent variable which represents the goal to be achieved. Social Studies education is the independent variable contributing to the achievement of the SDG 5. While, the social studies education provides the foundational understanding of gender dynamics, inequalities, and barriers to empowerment. The attitudes and knowledge of social studies students represents the efforts to challenge stereotypes, and advocate for gender equality through campaigns, education, and community engagement within their immediate communities. This schema illustrates how social studies serves as a crucial pillar in understanding, advocating for, and implementing initiatives aimed at achieving the Sustainable Development Goal 5.

### 2.1. Social Studies as a Concept

The National Policy on Education in Nigeria recognized the need for Social Studies Education in providing the desired social orientation needed after the independence in mobilizing the citizens for staunch growth and national development. The subject was adopted in Nigeria about 50 years ago as a result of the quest for relevance in the Nigerian education. The traditional subjects like Geography, History and Civics inherited from the colonial education system according to Mbaba and Omabe (2012) were lacking both in purpose and content to meet the immediate needs of the Nigerian child and the society at large.

Obaje (2015) opined that social studies are a broader field than that which is covered by the social sciences. Consequently, it is accurate to see that social studies as an applied field, which attempts to fuse scientific knowledge with ethical, philosophical, religious, and social considerations which arise in the process of decision making as practices by the citizens. In terms of content, Social Studies was institutionalized to bridge the gap earlier created by the social

sciences in terms of the relationship between knowledge acquisition and social progress (Shuaibu & Shaibu, 2018). Similarly, Zaria and Bulya (2006) views Social Studies as a programme of study which a society uses to instill in students, knowledge, skills, attitude and actions it considers important concerning the relationship human being have with each other, their environment and themselves. nsidered necessary for sound and functional Social Studies education.

As postulated by Ifegbesan et al (2017), the contents of the social studies curriculum in Higher Education Institutions should include: socio-cultural, environmental and economic perspectives. The Social Studies education curriculum promotes critical thinking, problem-solving, and awareness about the interconnectedness of the environmental, social, and economic systems. The goal is to create environmentally responsible and socially conscious citizens who can contribute to a more sustainable future. There are a number of key themes in the social studies education curriculum which focus on citizenship, peace and conflicts, poverty alleviation, ethnicity, democracy and governance, natural resource management and biological diversity. The social studies education curriculum in higher education should therefore adopt sustainability principles and sustainable development in these four main dimensions namely:

- Social - SDG 1 [end poverty], SDG 2 [zero hunger], SDG 3 [good health and well-being], SDG 4 [quality education], SDG 5 [gender equality] and SDG 10 [reduced inequalities];
- Environmental - SDG 6 [clean water and sanitation], SDG 7 [affordable and clean energy], SDG 12 [responsible consumption and production], SDG 13 [climate action], SDG 14 [life below water] and SDG 15 [life on land];
- Economic - SDG 8 [decent work and economic growth], SDG 9 [industry, innovation and infrastructure] and SDG 11 [sustainable cities and communities].
- Governance - SDG 16 [peace, justice and strong institutions], SDG 17 [partnerships for the goals].

In Nigeria, the Social Studies curriculum is critical for achieving the sustainable development goals because it can promote awareness and understanding of the current challenges facing the country. Social studies education promotes creativity and innovation which enables individuals to identify and apply creative solutions in their respective communities to solve the country's economic, social and political problems. By enhancing students' understanding of global challenges and fostering critical engagement with social justice issues, social studies education contributes to building a more equitable and sustainable society.

## **2.2. Concept of the Sustainable Development Goals**

The Brundtland Report (1987) provides the most popular definition of sustainable development as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own need.” Similarly, Blewitt (2017) viewed Sustainable development as an organizing principle for meeting human development goals while also sustaining the ability of natural systems to provide the natural resources and ecosystem services on which the economy and society depend.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were designed to replace the Millennium Development Goals as a set of universal objectives to tackle political, environmental, and economic problems facing the globe. The SDGs aim to address a wide range of social, economic, and environmental challenges to achieve a more sustainable and equitable world by 2030. The World Bank (2022) posited that successful development entails more than investing in physical capital, or closing the gap in capital. Development is concerned with societal well-being (in terms of access to safe water, rate of poverty, access to health care services, access to sanitation, life expectancy at birth, infant and maternal mortality rate, population estimate, and the process of achieving transformation of the society, adult illiteracy, population estimates, and gross domestic product (World Bank, 2022).

## **2.3. Concept of the Sustainable Development Goal 5 of Gender Equality**

The Sustainable Development Goal is aimed to 5 “achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.” It addresses gender-based discrimination and violence, while aiming for equal rights and opportunities for all genders. The SDG 5 has nine targets and fourteen indicators; the targets specify the goals and indicators represent the metrics by which the world aims to track whether these targets are achieved. Gender equality is not only a matter of social justice but also a critical driver of sustainable development (UN Women, 2018). Gender Inequality in society is a huge issue that cannot be tackled by education alone. However, educational systems and schools can contribute to gender equality rather than sustaining inequalities. Some areas of action may include; curriculum change, tackling sexual harassment in and around the school, the training of gender-sensitive teachers, and attention to diverse learning styles (Carli, 2020). In other words, education is essential for promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls as it can help to overcome cultural and societal barriers that prevent girls from accessing education, which in turn can lead to increased economic opportunities, improved health outcomes, and greater gender equality.

## 2.4. Theoretical Framework

The Critical Pedagogy learning theory is used as the most appropriate theory guiding this study.

### 2.4.1. Critical Pedagogy Learning Theory (1968)

The Critical pedagogy learning theory was propounded by Paulo Freire, a Brazilian Educator. He introduced this learning theory in 1968 primarily through his work on the "Pedagogy of the Oppressed". Freire's ideas have since had a profound impact on education, particularly in the context of social justice, empowerment, and transformative learning. Critical pedagogy is a theoretical framework that emphasizes challenging power structures and fostering critical thinking in education. This theory aims to create a transformative learning experience that empowers students to become active, socially conscious citizens. Critical pedagogy is a teaching and learning theory that emphasizes critical thinking, social justice, and empowerment. It encourages students to question societal norms and power structures while promoting a more equitable and inclusive education. It often involves open dialogue, problem-solving, and a focus on real-world issues to engage students in meaningful learning. When applied to social studies education, it involves fostering critical thinking, social awareness, and active citizenship among students.

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## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design to gather comprehensive data from the students on the impact of social studies education in achieving the SDG 5 in Kogi State. Emaikwu (2014) opined that the descriptive survey design is necessary to sample a fraction of the total population for a study and make references from the sample. This is because it is difficult to study the whole population at large. It is on the basis of this assertion that the researcher used the descriptive survey design for this study.

### 3.2. Area of the Study

This study was conducted across two public universities in Kogi State; Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba and Federal University, Lokoja. The state is located in the North Central geo-political zone of Nigeria. It is pertinent to note that the choice of both universities for this study is due to the fact that there is no known study of this nature on record in the state.

### 3.3. Population of the Study

This study covered a target population of 583 undergraduate students studying Bachelors of Education (B.Ed) in Social Studies programmes at the Department of Social Science Education, Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba and Federal University, Lokoja respectively. This population figure was obtained from the registry unit of the selected universities.

### 3.4. Sample and Sampling Technique

For the purpose of this study, the sample size of the students' was determined using the Taro Yamane's (1967) formula  $n=N/(1+N(e)^2)$  for calculating sample size in a population. Where:  $n$  = Sample size,  $N$  = Population size (583 students) and  $e$  = Desired level of precision (chosen as 0.05, indicating a 5% margin of error). Hence, the calculation for the sample size resulted in 237 participants as the minimum size but was increased to 267 to improve representativeness and to account for possible attrition usually associated with data collection.

### 3.5. Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument used for the collection of quantitative data in this study was a self-structured questionnaire titled "Social Studies Education In achieving the SDG 5 - Gender Equality Scale (SSEASDGGE)" which was divided into two sections namely 'Section A' and 'Section B'. Section A consisted of items to elicit information on bio data while section B was structured to provide answers to major research questions on a four-point modified Likert scale. They were able to indicate their extent of agreement with each item in this section by a choice of strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D), and strongly disagree (SD). That is, (SA= Strongly Agree = 4 points, A= Agree = 3 points, D = Disagree = 2 points, SD = Strongly Disagree = 1 point). Scores involved allotting 4,3,2,1 for the responses SA, A,D,SD respectively for items designated as positive (+) and allotting 1,2,3,4 for the responses SD,D,A,SA respectively for items designated as negative (-). Some of the questionnaire items were adapted with some modification from the "Sustainability Knowledge and Attitudes Scale" as developed by Zwickle and Jones (2018).

### 3.6. Validation of the Instrument

The instrument was subjected to the scrutiny of three experts. Two in the field of Social Studies, Department of Social Science Education, and one in Measurement and Evaluation from the Department of Educational Foundations, at Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba, Kogi State, Nigeria. Their suggestions and corrections were properly utilized before it was put to use.

### 3.7. Reliability of the Instrument

The validated instrument was subjected to a pre-testing during the pilot study which was conducted at the Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba. The purpose of the pilot study was to refine test administration procedures and determine the precision of the instrument for data collection and test reliability. It involved 30 undergraduate students currently enrolled in the B.Ed Social Studies Programme who did not form part of the actual sample under study. All measurements were conducted in accordance with standard procedures and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to calculate the reliability to determine the internal consistency. The results yielded an overall reliability of 0.855 which indicated a high internal consistency (Gliem & Gliem, 2003). Also, potential issues with clarity, wording, or cultural relevance, contributing to the reliability of the data were collected. The corrections from the pre-test were properly utilized.

### 3.8. Method of Data Collection

A letter of introduction was drafted and appropriate authorization from the Head of Department; Social Science Education in the selected universities was obtained. Thereafter, the researcher visited the selected universities to collect data for the study, the purpose of the study was explained to the participants and the testing procedure. The researcher administered 267 copies of the research instrument to the participants but retrieved 258 copies after completion. The data collection timeframe lasted between February to March 2024.

### 3.9. Method of Data Analysis

For the purpose of data analysis, descriptive statistics: mean, standard deviation, frequencies and percentage distributions were used to analyze the research questions while the chi-square test of goodness-of-fit was used to test the significant differences of null hypotheses at 0.5 probability level. All statistical analyses were conducted using the IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences v20.0 software (Armonk, NY, USA). Also, the criterion value was determined by the researcher to be 2.50 for the acceptance or rejection of the items. This decision was arrived at considering the fact that the instrument is a 4-point scale. Thus,  $4+3+2+1=10$ . The average mean is therefore 2.5 (10/4). Therefore, items whose mean were less than 2.5 were seen as low impact and items whose mean were 2.5 and above were seen as high impact.

## 4. Results and Discussion Of Findings

### 4.1. Demographic Data

**Table 1** University Distributions

| Institution | N   | %     |
|-------------|-----|-------|
| PAAU        | 179 | 69.4% |
| FUL         | 79  | 30.6% |
| Total       | 258 | 100%  |

**Table 2** Gender Distributions

| Sex    | N   | %     |
|--------|-----|-------|
| Male   | 131 | 50.8% |
| Female | 127 | 49.2% |
| Total  | 258 | 100%  |

Source: Field Data (2024)

The above frequency table presents the gender distribution and distribution based on institution among the sample under study. Out of the 258 students surveyed, 69.4% (n=179) were from Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba, while 30.6% (n=79) were from Federal University, Lokoja. Also, the data indicates that 131 were males, accounting for 50.8% of the total sample, and 127 were females, constituting 49.2% of the total sample. The nearly equal distribution between males and females suggests that the sample is fairly balanced in terms of gender representation, with a slight majority of males in the sample. This balance is beneficial for ensuring that gender-related biases or variations are minimized when analyzing the data.

## 4.2. Results of Findings

### 4.2.1. Research Question 1

Does social studies education incorporate content related to gender equality within the context of the SDG 5 Gender Equality?

**Table 3** Mean and Standard deviation scores on the responses of Social Studies students on their knowledge and awareness of gender equality within the context of the SDG 5

| S/N | ITEM DESCRIPTION   | N   | Male MEAN | SD    | RMKS        | N   | Female MEAN | SD RMKS           |
|-----|--|-----|-----------|-------|-------------|-----|-------------|-------------------|
| 1   | I know about the Sustainable Development Goal 5 of Gender equality   | 131 | 3.21      | 0.679 | High Impact | 127 | 3.15        | 0.835 High Impact |
| 2   | I have been taught about gender equality in my Social Studies degree programme   | 131 | 3.12      | 0.620 | High Impact | 127 | 3.11        | 0.681 High Impact |
| 3   | I am familiar with the term 'gender equality'  | 131 | 3.45      | 0.499 | High Impact | 127 | 3.68        | 0.469 High Impact |
| 4   | Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs is a key feature of the Sustainable Development Goal 5 | 131 | 2.99      | 0.718 | High Impact | 127 | 2.82        | 0.895 High Impact |
| 5   | I think it is important for students to be educated about gender equality in the social studies curriculum   | 131 | 3.42      | 0.495 | High Impact | 127 | 3.71        | 0.456 High Impact |
|     | Grand Mean   |     | 3.23      |       |             |     | 3.29        |                   |

Source: Field Data (2024)

Table 3 reveals the mean scores for male and female Social Studies students. The female students possess a moderately higher level of awareness about the SDG 5, they exhibit a relatively better understanding of gender equality, its relevance, and the associated indicators of the SDG 5 than the males. Additionally, there is a strong consensus among respondents regarding the importance of integrating gender equality education into the social studies curriculum. These findings highlight the need for continued educational efforts to enhance awareness and understanding of the SDG 5, especially focusing on gender roles, stereotypes, equality, among students in the broader community.

### 4.2.2. Research Question 2

Does social studies education play a role in shaping the attitudes of students regarding gender roles and equality?

**Table 4** Mean and Standard Deviation scores on the responses of Social Studies students' attitudes regarding gender roles and equality

Source: Field Data (2024)

| S/N | ITEM DESCRIPTION   | N   | Male MEAN | SD    | RMKS        | N   | Female MEAN | SD    | RMKS        |
|-----|--|-----|-----------|-------|-------------|-----|-------------|-------|-------------|
| 6   | I believe that I can take actions to solve global social problems related to gender issues                       | 131 | 3.24      | 0.478 | High Impact | 127 | 3.32        | 0.641 | High Impact |
| 7   | Access to education for females is a universal human right   | 131 | 1.63      | 1.024 | Low Impact  | 127 | 2.27        | 0.583 | Low Impact  |
| 8   | I believe that my social studies education program has equipped me with adequate knowledge about gender equality | 131 | 1.59      | 0.935 | Low Impact  | 127 | 1.76        | 0.626 | Low Impact  |
| 9   | My perceptions of gender stereotypes has changed as a result of my social studies education programme            | 131 | 2.12      | 0.851 | Low Impact  | 127 | 1.69        | 0.782 | Low Impact  |
| 10  | I am willing to participate in community engagement programs that target gender equality.                        | 131 | 3.24      | 0.692 | High Impact | 127 | 3.21        | 0.803 | High Impact |
|     | Grand Mean   |     | 2.36      |       |             |     | 2.45        |       |             |

Table 4 reveals the mean attitude scores for male and female Social Studies students. This table results reveal that the mean response score for females is higher than that for males, suggesting that females, on average, perceive social studies education as playing a slightly more positive role in fostering their confidence, recognition, and willingness in addressing global social problems related to gender issues, stereotypes, and women's rights. While fewer respondents feel somewhat equipped by their social studies education programme, the results suggest a foundational awareness, understanding, and willingness to engage in actions promoting gender equality and addressing related social issues. There is still room for improvement in enhancing their knowledge and perceptions concerning gender equality. The findings indicate the importance of continuous education and community engagement to foster greater awareness, understanding, and proactive involvement in promoting gender equality and combating gender-related stereotypes.

#### 4.2.3. Hypotheses Testing

- H01: Social studies students will not display significant opinion in their knowledge and awareness of gender equality within the context of SDG 5.

**Table 5** Chi-square summary table on participants knowledge of gender equality and empowerment within the context of the SDG 5

| Frequencies | Disagree | Agree | Total | df | $\chi^2$ | P value |
|-------------|----------|-------|-------|----|----------|---------|
| Observed    | 13       | 245   | 258   | 1  | 208.62   | <0.001  |
| Expected    | 129      | 129   | 258   |    |          |         |

Source: Field Data (2024)

Table 5 shows the observed number of participants' opinion regarding their knowledge of gender equality in the context of the SDG 5. In order to determine if knowledge was associated with opinion on gender equality, the chi-square test of goodness-of-fit was conducted and the result showed a statistically significant association ( $\chi^2 = 208.62$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) with participants having a positive opinion being disproportionately larger (94.9%) in number. The hypothesis was therefore rejected. To determine the effect size of the independent variable, contingency coefficient was calculated and the result indicated that knowledge of SDG 5 explained 66% of the variation in the dependent variable.

- H02: Social studies students' will not display significant opinion on their attitudes in relation to gender roles and equality.



**Table 6** Chi-square summary tables on participant's attitudes in relation to gender roles and gender equality

| Frequencies | Disagree | Agree | Total | df | $\chi^2$ | P value |
|-------------|----------|-------|-------|----|----------|---------|
| Observed    | 180      | 78    | 258   | 1  | 40.326   | <0.001  |
| Expected    | 129      | 129   | 258   |    |          |         |

Source: Field Data (2024)

Table 6 reveals the observed number of participants' opinion regarding their attitudes towards gender roles and equality. To assess if attitudes was associated with opinion on gender roles and equality, the chi-square test of goodness-of-fit was conducted and it showed a statistically significant association ( $\chi^2 = 40.326$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Participants holding a negative opinion were notably predominant, comprising 69.7% in total. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. Further analysis to determine the effect size of the independent variable, the contingency coefficient was calculated and the result indicated that attitude towards gender roles and equality accounted for 36% of the variation in the dependent variable.

### *Limitations of the Study*

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study, which includes the following:

- The findings of this study may not be generalizable to other contexts in other countries with different socio-cultural and educational backgrounds due to factors such as cultural norms, educational systems, and socioeconomic conditions which can vary widely between regions or countries, influencing how findings are interpreted and applied.
- The study may not account for all contextual factors that could influence the perception of students on the impact of social studies education in achieving gender equality, such as institution and resource availability. This is because disparities in resources can affect the quality and scope of social studies programmes, influencing their impact on gender equality outcomes which may vary significantly between different types of educational institutions in Nigeria.

## **5. Conclusion and recommendations**

The study discussed the findings of the study on the perception of students on the impact of social studies education in achieving the sustainable development goal 5 in Kogi State, Nigeria. Despite the limitations, social studies education was found to play a significant role in raising awareness and promoting understanding of gender issues and equality among students. However, there is a need for comprehensive reforms in the teacher training and provision of community engagement opportunities to enhance the effectiveness of social studies education in promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls in Kogi state.

### **5.1. Implications of the Study/Contributions to Knowledge**

It is important to acknowledge some of the educational implications and contributions to knowledge of this study, which includes the following:

- The study could inform curriculum developers about the perceived effectiveness of current social studies education in addressing gender equality issues. Insights gained could lead to revisions that better align with SDG 5 objectives, ensuring education that actively promotes gender equality and empowers students to contribute to achieving this goal.
- The study amplifies the voices of undergraduate students, shedding light on their knowledge and attitudes regarding gender equality. This contributes valuable data that enriches the discourse on the role of education in promoting the SDG 5 at the grassroots level.
- This study not only has practical implications for educational practice but also contributes significantly to the knowledge base on how education can drive progress towards gender equality goals at the local level.

### *Recommendations for Stakeholders*

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

- Social Studies teacher education programmes should incorporate additional training modules that emphasize themes and concepts related to gender stereotypes, women’s health, women’s rights and representation beyond gender equality and empowerment etc. Teacher training programmes are effective in equipping educators with the skills and knowledge to integrate SDGs into their teaching methods, thus influencing a new generation of students. This could include techniques such as group projects, collaborative problem-solving activities, and peer teaching methods.
- Social studies teacher training programmes should establish partnerships with local communities and non-governmental organizations to provide pre-service teachers with opportunities for hands-on learning and community engagement in gender advocacy. As students exposed to SDG-focused social studies are more likely to engage their local communities in discussions and initiatives related to the SDGs. This can lead to practical solutions addressing specific development challenges.

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## Compliance with ethical standards

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### *Disclosure of conflict of interest*

On behalf of all authors, the corresponding author states that there is no conflict of interest.

### *Statement of informed consent*

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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