

INTEGRATION OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN TEACHING SOCIAL STUDIES AND CIVIC EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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Abstract

This article explores the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into Social Studies and Civic Education to improve learning experiences and outcomes. By examining current research, the paper identifies several ways AI can benefit these subjects, such as enhancing content delivery, providing personalized learning, creating immersive simulations, and offering adaptive assessments. It also highlights the potential for AI to provide language support, generate data-driven insights, assist teachers, and facilitate global collaboration, thereby motivating both educators and students. The article also discusses the challenges and opportunities of implementing AI, emphasizing the importance of ethical considerations and equitable access. Through a comprehensive analysis of scholarly works and case studies, this paper provides insights into how AI can transform the future of Social Studies and Civic Education.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence, Social Studies and Civic Education, Personalized education, Enriched content.

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Introduction

In today's rapidly changing educational landscape, teachers face the challenge of engaging students in Social Studies and Civic Education. They must navigate complex topics like cultural contexts, historical events, and societal issues. With the rise of digital culture and 21st-century demands, there is a growing need to integrate artificial intelligence (AI) to improve teaching and learning experiences in these subjects.

Social Studies and Civic Education are vital for fostering responsible citizenship, critical thinking, and historical literacy. They equip learners with the 21st-century skills needed to tackle complex challenges and understand the world around them (Berson & Berson, 2009; Sivakumar, 2018). However, traditional teaching methods often struggle to capture students' interest in our interconnected, technology-driven world.

This is where AI can help. Integrating AI offers opportunities to revolutionize Social Studies and Civic Education through personalized learning, immersive simulations, adaptive assessments, and data-driven insights. It also supports teachers and promotes global collaboration, ensuring all students can benefit from the learning process.

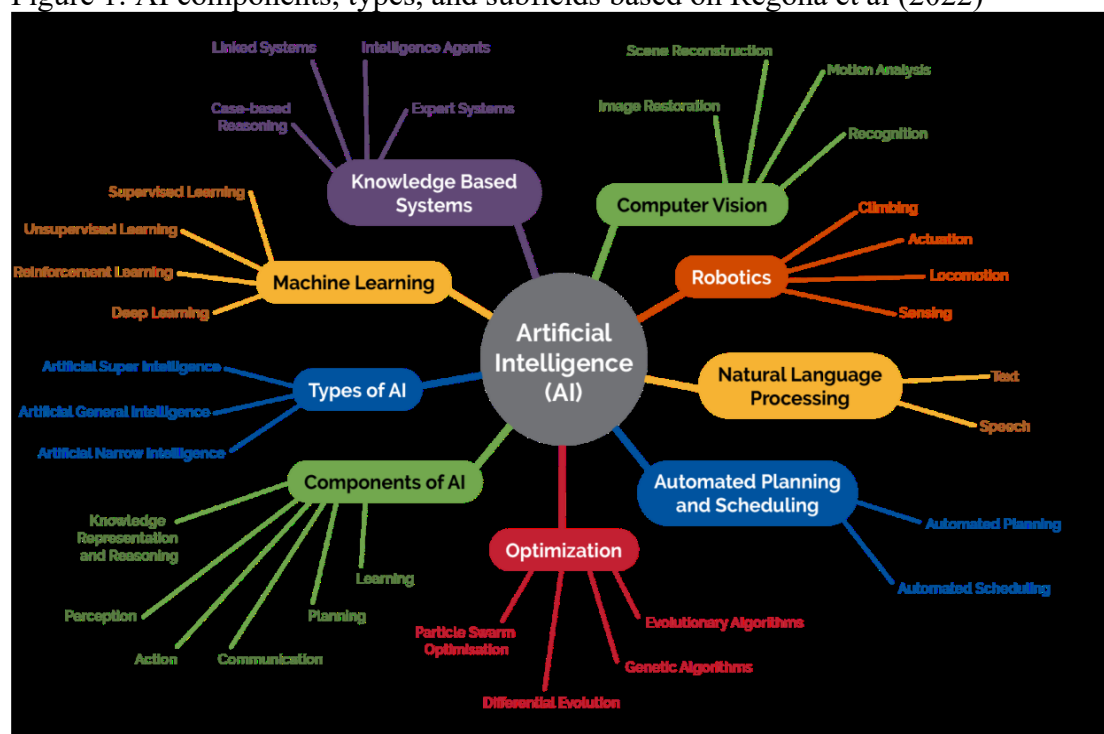
This paper examines the advantages and challenges of using AI in Social Studies and Civic Education. By analyzing current research, we aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of how AI can enhance teaching and learning, fostering effective

learning processes that cater to individual student needs. Specifically, this article explores key areas where AI can be applied in these subjects.

Furthermore, we will discuss the ethical, privacy, and equity considerations related to using AI in education. Through a critical analysis of literature, case studies, and best practices, this paper highlights AI's potential to transform Social Studies and Civic Education. It shows how AI can empower teachers to become facilitators of learning and prepare students to become informed, engaged, and active participants in society. In the 21st-century globalized knowledge economy, the integration of education and AI is ushering in a new era of transformation. AI is an innovative strategy that uses cutting-edge technologies like machine learning and natural language processing to create intelligent systems (Holmes, Bialik, & Fadel 2019).

AI focuses on creating systems that can perform tasks typically requiring human intelligence, such as understanding natural language, recognizing patterns, learning from data, and solving complex problems quickly. AI is not a single technology but an umbrella term for a range of modeling capabilities, as illustrated in the figure below.

Figure 1: AI components, types, and subfields based on Regona et al (2022)



According to Adams et al (2019) the goal of AI is to develop systems that can mimic or exceed human-level intelligence to automate tasks, improve efficiency, and advance technology across various domains. The current era of digitalization in the modern world, where learning in classrooms is increasingly becoming more technical-based, require this kind of task in instructional processes that helps to make learning worthwhile in line with 21st century learning spaces. Access to this facility would make learners acquire knowledge anywhere and at any time.

The Objectives of Social Studies and Civic Education in Nigeria

Social Studies and Civic Education aims to develop honest, active, informed and critically minded citizens who are willing and able to imbibe a national spirit, value diversity and human rights, uphold democratic principles and practices, and demonstrate a high sense of civic responsibility and care for the environment.

The National Policy on Education (FRN) (2013) and the National Universities Commission (NUC, 2022), provide the framework for the adoption of Social Studies and Civic Education as a core curriculum subject in schools in Nigeria. The idea behind this policy is hinged on the dire need to make education in Nigeria relevant to the realization of national objectives stated as follows:

- (i) The inculcation of national consciousness and unity;
- (ii) The inculcation of right type of values and attitude;
- (iii) The training of the mind in the understanding of the world around; and
- (iv) The acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competencies both mental and physical as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of society.

Drawing from the above national goals, the objectives of Social Studies and Civic Education are highlighted below:

1. The development of National consciousness and commitment as necessary ingredients for nation building.
2. The inculcation of social value and skills for active social life.
3. Creation of awareness about the rights, duties and obligations of citizens.
4. The development of intellectual skills, knowledge and abilities for better understanding of the immediate and remote environment.
5. Developing rational thinking ability for practical social life.
6. Identifying and solving problems using problem solving techniques.
7. Instilling civic dispositions, active and enlightened socio-political participation and working to promote citizenship formation and socio-civic competence of the citizenry.
8. Promoting value awareness and utilization of some values in tackling dynamic problems in the society.

Pedagogy in Social Studies and Civic Education in Nigeria

Social Studies and Civic Education are essential components of the Nigerian educational system. They are designed to develop intelligent, responsible, and self-directing citizens who can contribute meaningfully to the improvement of society (Okam, 2011). Schools serve as a key agency for cultivating positive values in students through effective teaching strategies. While subject matter knowledge is important, good pedagogical skills are crucial and can either enhance or diminish teacher performance.

Challenges in Current Teaching Methods

A major challenge to the effective implementation of Social Studies and Civic Education in Nigerian schools is the use of flawed pedagogical approaches. According to Ireyefoju and Mezieobi (2007), ineffective teaching methods and a lack of instructional resources are significant issues in citizenship education.

As a result, students often find the subject unexciting and fail to see its relevance to their daily lives (Schug, Todd & Beery, 1982; Shaughnessy & Haladyna, 1985). Students complain that the course is boring when the content is uninteresting and teachers do not use engaging, activity-oriented methods to make the subject compelling. Shaughnessy and Haladyna (1985) concluded that the teacher is key to a student's experience of Social Studies.

Instruction is often dominated by lectures, textbooks, or worksheets. Siler (1998) noted that teachers tend to use only one teaching style, which limits students' exposure to a variety of techniques. Ellis, Fouts, and Glenn (1992) also found that teachers often rely solely on text, lecturing, worksheets, and traditional tests. Mensah (2020) pointed out that the lecture-based approach is teacher-centered, making students passive listeners. This method primarily develops students' listening skills and their ability to take notes, but it encourages rote learning (memorization and recall of facts) rather than the rigorous use of cognitive abilities to solve real-world problems.

The Need for Learner-Centered Strategies

Teaching strategies should be highly learner-centered to encourage student participation, stimulate interest, and provide realistic learning experiences. When teachers use a variety of methods, students become more interested in the topic (Bonwell & Eisen, 1991; Chiodo & Byford, 2006; Byford & Russell, 2006). Tamakloe (1991) argues that teachers must be proficient in a variety of teaching methods in addition to having strong subject knowledge. This is because no single teaching method can effectively suit all learning situations, topics, and content (Sivakumar, 2018).

While the lecture method can be useful, it often fails to achieve optimal student participation and learning on its own. Walker (2006) suggests that visual-oriented technological resources can help students better absorb information. In this context, incorporating AI technologies offers a powerful opportunity to transform Social Studies and Civic Education instruction. AI can provide enriched content delivery, personalized learning experiences, immersive simulations, and adaptive assessment tools. It also supports teachers by facilitating the use of other teaching methods such as discussion, role-playing, projects, inquiry-based learning, field trips, and problem-solving approaches. These diverse strategies ensure that all students can benefit from the instructional process.

Objectives of the paper

For the purpose of providing direction for this article the following set of objectives is thereby considered.

1. To examine the justification for the incorporation of AI in the teaching and learning of Social Studies and Civic Education.
2. To examine the challenges confronting the utilization of AI in teaching and learning of Social Studies and Civic Education.
3. To proffer suggestions on the effective ways of utilizing AI in Social Studies and Civic Education instruction.

Significance of Artificial Intelligence in Social Studies and Civic Education Instruction

The evolution of education has mirrored technological advancements, transitioning from "Education 1.0" to the present-day "Education 4.0". With "Education 1.0," the teacher was the primary source of knowledge, with minimal use of technology. This evolved into "Education 2.0," which incorporated essential principles of Web 2.0, such as using podcasts and blogs to augment traditional approaches. The "Education 3.0" era saw a further shift, with rich, cross-cultural, and cross-institutional learning opportunities where students became creators of shared knowledge, and social networking played a vital role. We are now approaching "Education 4.0," which integrates the technological advancements of the fourth industrial revolution, such as artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, and the internet, with traditional learning methods. This creates a freer, more open, and personalized system centered on the learner, preparing students for the future.

This technological progression aligns with the 21st-century focus on technology and civic engagement. Haste (2009) suggests that technology in the classroom allows for a "bottom-up" arrangement, enabling learners to become "agents" of knowledge rather than just "recipients." As technology advances, education inevitably follows.

The Role of AI in Social Studies and Civic Education

AI is arguably the most impactful technology of our time, and there is growing interest in its application in education. Within this context, Social Studies and Civic Education is a key field for examination as it aims to impart the necessary knowledge, skills, and perspectives for students to understand and navigate complex social, cultural, and historical phenomena (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Wineburg & Grossman, 2000). The integration of AI technologies offers significant potential for transforming instruction in these subjects by providing personalized learning experiences, adaptive assessments, immersive simulations, and advanced data analysis tools (Cheung et al., 2021; König et al., 2018).

The integration of AI in Social Studies and Civic Education can address longstanding challenges, such as engaging diverse student populations, fostering critical thinking skills, and promoting historical and cultural understanding (Banks, 2008; Hess & McAvoy, 2015). However, it also raises important questions about equity, privacy, and the role of educators in technology-mediated learning environments (Means et al., 2019; Selwyn, 2016).

The Value of AI in Social Studies and Civic Education

AI holds significant value in Social Studies and Civic Education for several key reasons:

Enhancing Learning and Engagement personalized learning: AI algorithms can analyze students' learning patterns and preferences to provide personalized recommendations and adaptive learning experiences (Chandra, 2019). This customization caters to individual student needs, leading to better engagement and understanding of concepts.

AI-based content creation allows teachers to produce interactive and immersive learning materials, such as images, videos, and sound, that are more dynamic than conventional resources. Additionally, AI-powered tools like chatbots and virtual tutors can supplement traditional teaching methods by offering immediate feedback and facilitating discussions (Luckin et al., 2018).

Technologies such as virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) can create immersive learning experiences, allowing students to explore historical events and engage with primary sources in a more engaging and memorable way (Gadelha et al., 2017).

Fostering 21st-Century Skills. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL): For Gen Z students, who are digital natives, integrating AI can help teachers foster critical SEL skills. According to the World Economic Forum (2016), these proficiencies are categorized into Foundational Literacies, Competencies (critical thinking, creativity, collaboration), and Character Traits (leadership, adaptability, persistence). AI-driven strategies can create a conducive learning environment to promote these attributes.

Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving: AI can process vast amounts of data to identify trends and patterns relevant to Social Studies and Civic Education topics. Teachers can use this analyzed data to enhance curriculum development, identify areas for improvement, and tailor instruction to address student needs effectively (Du Boulay, 2020).

Cultural Sensitivity: AI can help educators incorporate diverse perspectives and cultural representations into the curriculum by providing access to a wide range of resources and viewpoints. This promotes cultural sensitivity, fosters empathy, and encourages critical thinking about global issues and diverse societies (Olga et al., 2019).

Streamlining Administrative Tasks. Automated Grading and Feedback: AI can streamline administrative tasks and grading processes, allowing teachers to focus more on teaching and student support. Automated grading systems can provide immediate feedback to students on their progress and areas for improvement (Klinkenberg et al., 2018).

Preparing for the Future. AI Literacy: As AI continues to shape various aspects of society, it's essential for students to develop AI literacy and digital skills. Integrating AI into Social Studies and Civic Education prepares students for the rapidly evolving

technological landscape and equips them with the knowledge needed for success in the modern world (Touhidi et al., 2021).

Challenges of Integrating AI in Social Studies and Civic Education

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into Social Studies and Civic Education presents a complex set of challenges that must be carefully addressed to ensure its responsible and effective use. While AI offers potential economic benefits and new ways to gather and analyze data, it also raises significant ethical, pedagogical, and practical concerns.

A primary challenge is the ethical considerations surrounding data privacy, algorithmic bias, and the responsible use of AI tools. AI systems can now monitor students' emotions and concentration in real-time, collect information from social media and student portfolios, and generate new content. This creates a need for robust data privacy and security measures to protect sensitive student information. As noted by Kim (2021), the collection and storage of student data pose significant security risks that must be managed.

In addition, AI systems may perpetuate or amplify existing biases found in historical data, a concern highlighted by Lee (2024). Without careful oversight, AI could generate false information or misrepresent historical events, leading students to inaccurate conclusions. This algorithmic bias can undermine the educational goals of Social Studies and Civic Education, which depend on a nuanced and accurate understanding of the past and present.

Another major challenge is ensuring equitable access to AI technologies and the digital literacy skills required to use them. Johnson (2022) observed that a lack of access to AI tools and training can worsen educational inequalities, leaving many students unable to benefit from these new learning solutions. Schools often lack the necessary infrastructure and resources to provide students with the in-depth knowledge needed to effectively use AI in the classroom. This creates a significant gap between students who have access to these tools and those who do not.

Integrating AI also presents several pedagogical hurdles. A key issue is curriculum alignment: ensuring that AI tools are effectively integrated into existing curricula and align with learning objectives. Additionally, as Garcia (2023) emphasized, many educators lack the necessary knowledge and training to effectively use AI in their classrooms. Without comprehensive professional development, teachers may struggle to implement these tools, limiting their potential impact.

Effective AI integration requires significant investment in infrastructure and ongoing support, as noted by Wang (2021). Educational institutions must allocate resources for technology, maintenance, and training. However, the cost of AI-capable devices and software can be prohibitive, a point raised by Taylor (2023), which can prevent many schools from adopting these initiatives.

Furthermore, there is a notable lack of research on the effectiveness of AI in Social Studies and Civic Education, particularly in contexts like Nigeria. Chen (2022) highlighted the absence of empirical studies on AI's impact on teaching and learning

in this field. More research is needed to identify problem areas, mitigate risks, and understand the full potential of AI-driven solutions.

The integration of AI can also have significant social and cultural implications. Nguyen (2022) stressed the importance of cultural sensitivity, urging educators to ensure that AI-driven content reflects diverse perspectives and experiences. Resistance to change from educators and other stakeholders, as acknowledged by Martinez (2024), can also hinder successful implementation. Overcoming this resistance requires strong leadership and strategic planning to build awareness and acceptance.

Suggestions

To effectively and efficiently integrate AI into Social Studies and Civic Education, consider these suggestions:

1. Educational institutions should prioritize investing in the necessary AI infrastructure, including hardware, software, and training programs, to ensure a smooth and effective implementation of AI technologies in the classroom.
2. Develop comprehensive professional development programs to train both students and teachers on how to use AI tools for Social Studies instruction. These programs should emphasize hands-on training and ongoing support.
3. AI technologies should be integrated across the Social Studies curriculum at all levels. This will provide students with diverse learning experiences and opportunities for interdisciplinary exploration.
4. Educators and policymakers must address the ethical and privacy considerations that come with using AI in education. This includes data privacy, algorithmic bias, and the responsible use of student data. To ensure accountability and transparency, it's crucial to establish clear regulatory and legal frameworks for AI in education that align with data protection laws.
5. Stakeholders in Social Studies education should collaborate and share best practices for integrating AI into instructional practices. This will foster a community of practice that supports ongoing innovation and improvement.
6. Ongoing research and evaluation of AI applications in Social Studies education are essential. This will help us understand their impact on student learning outcomes, inform evidence-based practices, and identify areas for improvement.
7. Efforts should be made to ensure equitable access to AI technologies and resources for all students. This means actively addressing disparities in technology access and digital literacy skills among diverse student populations.
8. Engage educators, parents, students, and community members in discussions about the role of AI in Social Studies education. This promotes transparency, accountability, and shared decision-making.

Conclusion

Integrating AI technologies has immense potential to transform Social Studies education. AI can enhance learning experiences, boost student engagement, and foster a deeper understanding of complex social, cultural, and historical topics. Through

personalized learning, adaptive assessments, rich content delivery, and global collaboration, AI has the power to revolutionize how Social Studies is taught and learned. Therefore, prioritizing the application of AI in instructional delivery is crucial, given the opportunities it presents for students, teachers, and society as a whole.

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