

# **EVALUATING SOCIAL COHESION IN NIGERIAN JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND CIVIC EDUCATION TEXTBOOKS: CONTENT ANALYSIS AND TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS**

A Thesis

**Submitted to the Master's Study Program of Education at the Faculty  
of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of**

**Master of Arts (M.A.)**



by:

**BELLO RIDWAN ALABA**

**04212320003**

**UNIVERSITAS ISLAM INTERNASIONAL INDONESIA**

**DEPOK**

**2025**

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## ABSTRACT

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Nigeria's issue of social cohesion intensified with the unification of over 250 ethnic groups, each with distinct languages, religions, and cultural beliefs. Empirical evidence indicates that Nigeria is not a socially cohesive nation, which contributes to its slow development and progress. Education has proven to be a double-edged sword, serving as a potential instrument for social cohesion or social disharmony. Therefore, it is imperative to research social cohesion within the education sector. Consequently, this study aims to evaluate the contents of Nigerian junior high school textbooks and gather teachers' perceptions of the textbooks they use in their classrooms. Specifically, six civic education textbooks and six English studies textbooks have been selected from all six geopolitical zones in Nigeria, implying two textbooks from each zone. Additionally, six junior high school teachers were purposively selected to share their thoughts on the contents of the textbooks. To provide a clear trajectory, three research questions are formulated: (1) How do the textbooks portray social cohesion and inclusivity? (2) To what extent do the textbooks promote the elements of social cohesion? (3) How do the teachers perceive the contents of the textbooks concerning social cohesion? A mixed-method content analysis was employed to answer research questions 1 and 2, whereas a qualitative approach was used for question 3. The significance of this study is substantial. First, it will address an important gap in existing literature regarding social cohesion and education in the Nigerian context by examining selected textbooks. Second, it will encourage Nigerian educational researchers to conduct studies on social cohesion that focus on curriculum, textbooks, and teacher training. Third, it can serve as a springboard for establishing a textbook review agency and guide authors and publishers in selecting inclusive content. Lastly, it will help safeguard students from internalizing anti-social, biased, and stereotypical values, while also facilitating teacher training. The analysis was conducted using an adapted social cohesion analytical framework. A semi-structured interview was conducted with the participants via Google Form and WhatsApp for follow-up questions, where necessary. The author discussed the findings from social identity theoretical perspectives, revealing that the textbooks do not adequately promote social cohesion and inclusivity. They unfairly represent religions, ethnic groups, and gender by adopting a majoritarian approach, creating a 'we vs. them' situation. Illustrations or representations of minority groups are limited, and there are stereotypical portrayals of men, the Yoruba tribe, and Islam. However, there is an effort to promote a united Nigeria with the representation of national images and icons to depict unity. Teachers' interview results show that textbooks take the majoritarian approach, which they submit can be corrected by representing diverse perspectives. Future research studies should be conducted on evaluating a single-subject textbook, selecting from each state and the Federal Capital Territory, as well as class observations. Moreover, all images and texts, such as examples, classwork, and assignments, should be included for analysis. It could also include evaluating the authors' relation to tribes, ethnicity, or religious representations.

*Keywords: English studies and civic education textbooks, curriculum, Nigeria, social cohesion, social identity theory, teachers' perceptions.*

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## ABBREVIATION DIRECTORY

|         |                                                                             |
|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AG      | : <i>Action Group</i>                                                       |
| API     | : <i>Africa Polling Institute</i>                                           |
| CILS4EU | : <i>Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Survey in 4 European Countries</i> |
| EFL     | : <i>English for Foreign Language</i>                                       |
| EU      | : <i>European Union</i>                                                     |
| ICCS    | : <i>International Civic and Citizenship Study</i>                          |
| ICT     | : <i>Information and Communications Technology</i>                          |
| IPOB    | : <i>Indigenous People of Biafra</i>                                        |
| MCAF    | : <i>Multicultural Content Analysis Frame</i>                               |
| MDAF    | : <i>Multicultural Description Analysis Frame</i>                           |
| NAFDAC  | : <i>National Agency for Food and Drugs Administration and Control</i>      |
| NC      | : <i>North Central</i>                                                      |
| NCNC    | : <i>National Council of Nigeria and Cameroons</i>                          |
| NE      | : <i>North East</i>                                                         |
| NPC     | : <i>Northern People's Congress</i>                                         |
| NSC     | : <i>Nigeria Customs Service</i>                                            |
| NSCI    | : <i>Nigeria Social Cohesion Index</i>                                      |
| NYSC    | : <i>National Youth Service Corps</i>                                       |
| OECD    | : <i>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</i>             |
| PCC     | : <i>Perceived Cohesion Scale</i>                                           |
| PWD     | : <i>People with Disabilities</i>                                           |
| SCCS    | : <i>Social Capital and Cohesion Scale</i>                                  |
| SE      | : <i>South East</i>                                                         |
| SIT     | : <i>Social Identity Theory</i>                                             |
| SS      | : <i>South South</i>                                                        |
| SSI     | : <i>Semi-Structured Interview</i>                                          |
| SW      | : <i>South West</i>                                                         |
| TASS    | : <i>The Arnhem School Study</i>                                            |

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter begins with Nigeria's long history of social tension or division to provide readers with the contextual situation in the country, supported by empirical data. It further exposes the study's novelty and provides the rationale for investigating the phenomenon - social cohesion - within the educational setting, particularly in some selected textbooks. This chapter contains four main sections arranged thus: the background of the study, research objectives, research questions, and the significance of the study.

### **1.1. Research Background**

Nigeria's issue of social cohesion predates the 1914 amalgamation. However, it intensified with the unification of over 250 ethnic groups, each with distinct languages, religions, and cultural beliefs. The amalgamation, opposed by some ethnic groups, planted the seeds of hatred, distrust, and fear of domination by the major group, leading to ongoing calls for secession, national restructuring, and effective governance (Africa Polling Institute, 2021). Scholars concur that Nigeria's post-colonial state is at significant risk of social disunity, partly due to the inadequate management of its ethnic diversity (Allen & Nyiayaana, 2023). They argue that sentiments against a united Nigeria always persist, even decades after the civil war. Despite the efforts of the Nigerian government at that time, to foster togetherness by creating a national scheme, the National Youth Service Corp (NYSC) after the civil war, there still exist an unwillingness of the major ethnic and religious groups to work harmoniously towards the country's development (Allen & Nyiayaana, 2023).

Political affiliations and economic situations also intensify Nigeria's social division (Kingsley et al., 2023). During Nigeria's first elections in 1959, political tensions surfaced during the events leading towards actualizing its independence. Establishing political parties along the lines of ethnicity in preparation for the general elections was the foundation for social disunity to elect Nigeria's first president and Prime Minister (Evaristus, 2020). For example, the first three major political parties - National Council of Nigeria and Cameroons (NCNC), Action Group (AG), and Northern People's Congress (NPC) - were formed and led by nationalists from the three dominant ethnic groups in Nigeria - Igbo, Yoruba, and Hausa-Fulani, respectively. Unsurprisingly, the first President

of Nigeria, Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe, was of Igbo origin, while the first and only Prime Minister of Nigeria was Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, was a Hausa man. Both leaders are from Nigeria's major tribes. Further, Igwe (2024) shares that political formations and voting patterns tend to be religious and ethnic-based. Aapenguo (2010, as cited in Igwe, 2024) also argues that ethnic division becomes apparent during elections when political gladiators intend to gain power and control over resources by manipulating voters. This was apparent during the 2023 general elections, as the voting pattern was along ethnicity and religious lines. Therefore, it is unsurprising that the Africa Polling Institute (API) stated in its 2022 Nigeria Social Cohesion Index report that political differences are the number one cause of social unrest in Nigeria (see Africa Polling Institute, 2022). To date, politicians still tread the 'dangerous' ethnic paths during political campaigns and electioneering, which aggravate 'existing tensions and conflicts' (Kingsley et al., 2023, p. 244).

Despite Nigeria's abundant natural, economic, and human resources, ethnic prejudice plays a pivotal role in widening the disparity gap among the populace. According to Kingsley et al. (2023), the uneven distribution of economic resources that lead to wealth creation aggravates "grievances and feelings of marginalization" (p. 244), which leads to ethnic crisis – social division in Nigeria's society. Political actors commonly control economic distributions with policies favoring one group. More so, Ilorah (2009) argues that political favors (contract awards, appointments, etc) are due to ethnicity and preference, which in most situations, benefit certain ethnic groups while they disfavor others. He further stresses that the disfavored group may show their displeasure to such biased acts by causing havoc in society. Buttressing this point, Kingsley et al. (2023) contend that the frustration of being marginalized give rise to insurgencies and militant groups in the Niger Delta (South-southern Nigeria) region - an oil-abundant region. The purported marginalization persists as the main driving force for the agitation towards the actualization of the Biafra country by the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) secessionists in the South-Eastern part of Nigeria.

The education sector suffers greatly from the lopsidedness of political and economic configurations, which results in low quality of education in Nigeria and, by extension, weakened social cohesion. Adequate funding is a crucial component of quality education as it facilitates necessary resources for effective teaching and learning (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, [OECD] 2022). Quality education, in turn, produce students who internalize and promote socially cohesive values. However, in Nigeria, political factors often at times influence the allocation and distribution

of educational resources, creating inequalities in terms of access and content quality. According to Thom-otuya and Inko-tariah (2016), politicizing education and its institutions are major impediments to achieve quality education in Nigeria, promoting inequitable development and social division. By nature, education is a continuous process that involves the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and values of a society to transmit them from one generation to another (Gbadamosi & Ajayi, 2018, UNESCO, 2018). Besides individual empowerment, education is extensively viewed as a vital tool for national development and promoting social cohesion. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2010) avers that education facilitates civic and social engagement, which translates to building a highly cohesive nation. The connection between social cohesion and education enhances the importance of evaluating the contents of instructional materials in their roles in shaping perceptions of students on unity, cultural and identity representations.

Furthermore, education is a vital tool to promote social cohesion as it can potentially inculcate moral and ethical values in individuals who will respect human rights regardless of background, sex, culture, religion, traditions, and customs (Aturupane & Wikramanayake, 2011). To achieve this, Aturupane and Wikramanayake assert that education must reflect civil and ethical attributes in all its components, such as the curriculum, textbooks, teachers' attitudes, and teaching pedagogies. Heyneman (2010, as cited in Aturupane & Wikramanayake, 2011) shares that education can promote social cohesion in four ways

(a) by teaching students the basic principles of what it means to be a good citizen and the consequences of not adhering to those principles; (b) by providing students with an experience consistent with these principles that brings them closer to those of different ethnicities and background; (c) by providing equal opportunities to all students; and (d) by providing students with a common understanding of citizenship, while incorporating the interests of diverse communities.

Heyneman's statements signify the central roles of the school and teachers in fostering socially cohesive values. Schools have long-term and short-term effects because they promote cultural diversity, mutual understanding, and shared values within and outside the classroom (Veerman & Denessen, 2021). In particular, schools, through the curriculum and other relevant materials and activities, equip individuals with invaluable information, skills, values, attitudes, and beliefs to make well-informed and reasonable decisions (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2010).

The educational goals and values of society inform its curriculum. According to Apple and Apple (2004), educational curriculum is the intentional or unintentional manner or means by which knowledge or skills are delivered to and acquired by learners. Offorma (2015) states that the curriculum is the instrument by which schools seek to translate the hopes and aspirations of the society they operate in into concrete realities. Essentially, the curriculum is the core of education and, by large, society. That is the reason why no society can fully develop without education or with a poor quality of education. A low quality of education is a product of many factors; the center of which is the curriculum and the level of its implementation. Okeke and Chukwudebelu (2024) argue that Nigeria's poor quality of education contributes immensely to the persistent inter-ethnic animosities in the country. A compulsory free or affordable quality education will not only improve individuals' social capital but also promote democracy in any society where the citizens will be open-minded, be committed to the progress of the community, and ensure social equity (Dahrendorf, 2003 cited in Beutel, 2012). Beutel (2012) further argues that

Such people will recognize that only democracy can offer them framework conditions for a stable, social, and liberal society. However, they will also learn that a society that is democratic and capable of development is mainly charged with perpetual reform and change of constant conditions. Only these citizens strengthen the society's ability to repel intolerance, racism, xenophobia, and violence (p. 7)

Beutel's statement shows that the quality of education in a country significantly contributes to the level of civil engagement and inclusive worldview about a phenomenon, which are essential to support social cohesive values. Educated persons in society can potentially make the world a better place (Brighouse & Schmidt, 2020). Thus, the more educated people a country produces, the higher the chances of experiencing immense development and peaceful coexistence in such a country.

Although education is generally perceived as a public good (Brighouse & Schmidt, 2020), it can be negatively utilized to cause social disharmony. This can be achieved when a certain cultural, religious belief or gender is stereotypically illustrated or exclusively represented in the curriculum, textbooks, or teachers' attitudes (Aturupane & Wikramanayake, 2011). Textbooks are essential educational components that can potentially promote social cohesion or social division. In most societies, textbooks are viewed as authoritative materials used to build a society's perspectives (Cho & Park, 2016). They are essential components of the curriculum, prepared to disseminate the curriculum's objectives to students, the target groups, and stimulate practicality (Bhandari, 2022). As

the curriculum is designed to achieve the educational goals and aspirations of society, textbooks are produced as the curriculum final product such that the goals and aspirations could be seen manifested by students in their daily activities. Therefore, Agha and Shaihk (2023) assert that students' understanding and interpretations of their worlds are grounded on the manner in which textbooks and teachers present ideas. Both can have lasting effects on how students perceive and interpret social phenomena. Textbooks play significant roles in knowledge transmission, whose contents are determined by subject experts and political interests (Aturupane & Wikramanayake, 2011). According to Setyono and Widodo (2019), appropriate textbooks will promote the societal values in which they are used, where they argue (in their case) that Indonesian Pancasila principles must be reflected in any textbook used in the country.

Print media such as the textbook and newspaper has long traditions of conveying and promoting certain groups or individual's ideologies and perceptions. Rezai-Rashti et al. (2019) argue that one important reason why textbooks are subjected to analysis is their ability to potentially influence students' worldviews on social phenomena. Notably, textbooks have been used to promote wrong and inappropriate depictions of others, an act that will potentially undermine social cohesion (Greaney, 2006). Textbooks are not just educational tools but also channels to convey the traditional, religious, cultural, economic, and political views of the major group while relegating the views of the minority group (Xiang & Yenika-Agbaw, 2021). Moreover, their contents are deliberately chosen to serve the agenda of some people - policymakers and authors (Setyono & Widodo, 2019). To ensure diversity and inclusivity, "it is vitally important that textbooks are examined for sensitivity to different cultures and religions and for the imparting of inappropriate values" (Aturupane & Wikramanayake, 2011, p. 7). This assertion is important considering that textbooks are "hidden-agenda carriers" whose contents can produce distorted information for their users - teachers and students (Setyono & Widodo, 2019; Yonata et al., 2024, p. 400). Therefore, numerous questions need to be asked to know whose and which agenda are carried and whether or not the agenda belie narrative.

Teachers are essential components of any education system as they facilitate knowledge, skills, values, and beliefs in and outside the classroom. Also, they serve as role models or mentors to students. In an effort to fairly judge their students, teachers sometimes unconsciously or accidentally treat them differently, particularly referring to the female gender as secondary or inferior to the male gender (Dasrul et al., 2023). The effect can demoralize the female gender or any other 'ridiculed' group, such as people with

disabilities (PWDs). Novelli and Sayed (2016) argue that teachers' quality has always been investigated through students' learning outcomes, which is related to human capital development for economic growth. However, they share that teachers possess several qualities and discharge multiple roles, including peace-building and promoting social cohesion. Further, they submit that teachers' qualities to promote social cohesion, peace-building, and propagate national consciousness and identity are often overlooked. It is therefore vital to examine their roles in encouraging social cohesion at the micro level of the classroom. Since textbooks are valuable resources from which teachers extract information or lesson content to teach (Agha & Shaikh, 2023), their perceptions of textbooks should be considered concerning not only their academic contents but also the values they promote, especially in a country such as Nigeria, where social cohesion is perceived low. Teachers' perceptions of textbooks are viewpoints that can influence students' self-assessment about themselves or their self-identity (Dasrul et al., 2023).

Despite having a population of about 35.8 million PWDs in Nigeria, they still encounter challenges across all spheres of life (United Nations, Nigeria, 2023). According to the World Bank Report (2011, cited in Chukwuma & Omokhunu, 2024), 3.6 million PWDs experience 'severe difficulties in functioning' (p. 66). One of the principal setbacks faced by PWDs is social exclusion, perceived as a breach of their fundamental human rights (Chukwuma & Omokhunu, 2024). Whereas, Ogundola and Liebler (2024) believe that negative news depictions of disability is the major impediment for their full inclusion into Nigerian society. Chukwuma and Omokhunu (2024) further aver that cultural belief in Nigerian society perceives disabilities as a curse. Hence, a high degree of discrimination against them, which "has denied these Nigerians their right to dignity and serves as a hindrance to the attainment of their full potential" (Chukwuma & Omokhunu, 2024, p. 66). Ogundola and Liebler (2024) claim that cultural and religious perspectives shape the portrayal of disabilities in Africa. People with disabilities in Nigeria are often given less attention; they are not considered as priorities, therefore, they have limited access to basic services such as education (United Nations, Nigeria, 2023).

Although research on social cohesion in Nigeria is limited (Allen & Nyiayaana, 2023), available studies only focus on policy-making and implementation (Allen & Nyiayaana, 2023; Africa Polling Institute, 2021, 2022), the role of social cohesion in national development (Balogun & Obosi, 2018), the nexus of social structure and education in national unity (Ibrahim & Bello, 2023), and educational policy and national development (Okeke & Chukwudebelu, 2024). Internationally, attention to social cohesion is usually on

reviews (see Delhey et al., 2023; Fonseca et al., 2019) and formulation of country-specific frameworks, as is the case in Myanmar (Peace, 2015). The vast majority of international studies on social cohesion in educational settings focus on the common social cohesion frameworks adapted to educational settings (see Veerman & Denessen, 2021), promoting social cohesion through education (Aturupane & Wikramanayake, 2011; Durrani et al., 2017; Roberts-Schweitzer et al., 2006), and the relationship between education and civic and social engagement (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2010). There are limited studies on the international stage focused on evaluating textbooks for social cohesion or its elements (see Cheng & Beigi, 2012; Cho & Park, 2016; Novelli et al., 2017; Parlindungan et al., 2018; Rezai-Rashti et al., 2019; Roberts-Schweitzer et al., 2006; Rob et al, 2020; Setyono & Widodo, 2019; Xiang & Yenika-Agbaw, 2021; Yonata, 2024).

From the extensive literature search and articles read, no study focuses on evaluating textbooks for social cohesion in Nigeria, despite findings from previous studies showing that textbooks can potentially promote social cohesion or aggravate social tension (Cheng & Beigi, 2012; Roberts-Schweitzer et al., 2006; Rob et al, 2020).

## **1.2. Research Objectives**

Since education has the potential to foster social cohesion (Rob et al., 2020), this paper aims to explore some recommended textbooks across each geopolitical zone in Nigeria to evaluate whether they contain elements to promote social cohesion or not. Specifically, this study will analyze the English language and civic education textbooks used across junior high schools in Nigeria to find the elements or themes of social cohesion. The study aims to:

1. Investigate whether the English Language and Civic Education textbooks used in junior high schools in Nigeria encourage or discourage social cohesion implicitly or explicitly
2. Uncover the extent to which the textbooks promote or discourage social cohesion
3. Explore teachers' perceptions of the roles of textbooks in promoting social cohesion and inclusivity among students.

## **1.3. Research Questions**

For a clear direction, the following research questions are employed:

1. How do the textbooks portray social cohesion and inclusivity?

2. To what extent do the textbooks promote the elements of social cohesion?
3. How do the teachers perceive the textbooks' contents concerning social cohesion?

#### **1.4. Significance of the Study**

Social cohesion is important in any society because it fosters religious tolerance, ethnicity and cultural understanding, and promotes gender parity. In other words, it encourages mutual trust and relationships. Its importance cannot be overstated. Therefore, this section highlights the importance of this study, theoretically and practically.

##### Theoretical Significance

1. This study addresses the important gap in existing literature between social cohesion and education in the Nigerian context by examining selected textbooks.
2. It will call the attentions of Nigerian educational researchers to engage in cutting-edge research concerning social cohesion in educational settings, especially in curriculum, textbooks, and teachers' training.

##### Practical Significance

1. This study's results will provide the basis for textbooks' revisions in Nigeria if necessary.
2. It will inform policy-makers on the need to establish textbooks review agency.
3. It will guide authors and publishers in carefully selecting contents that will promote social cohesion.
4. Importantly, it will safeguard students from internalizing anti-social, biased, and stereotypical values, attributes that are detrimental to the country.
5. It will facilitate and guide teachers' trainings on promoting socially cohesive values.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS**

This section provides a wide range of relevant literature related to the study's topic to pinpoint themes and locate gaps to be addressed in this study. The main phenomenon under study, social cohesion (and/or its related components), has been widely studied, particularly in international contexts. However, the limited studies on social cohesion in Nigeria ignore educational settings, including textbooks and teachers' perceptions. Accordingly, this section focuses on studies conducted on evaluating socially cohesive values in textbooks and those that explored teachers' perceptions on textbooks. The review is arranged in subsections that begins with the conceptual definition of social cohesion. Afterward, sections on social cohesion in Nigeria, social cohesion frameworks, socially cohesive values and textbooks, representations of people with disabilities, and teachers' perceptions on textbooks follow. Finally, the section that discusses the theoretical and analytical frameworks are presented.

#### **2. 1. Conceptual Definition of Social Cohesion**

Although social cohesion is not a novel construct in our world, as it was stated to first surface as early as the 14<sup>th</sup> century (Moustakas, 2023), it gained momentum during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (1897) from the works of Le Bon and Durkheim (Fonseca et al., 2019). It has skyrocketed since the 1990s as there are several research works on social cohesion (Moustakas, 2023). The sub-section will present the various definitions of social cohesion as found and used in the academic world. Afterward, the operational definition as adopted in this study is presented.

Social cohesion is a complex construct which encompasses several elements (Langer et al., 2017). Its complexity and popularity in our sphere charge scholars from different fields to proffer insights into the meaning of social cohesion. There is only a little harmony concerning its definition (Larsen et al., 2020; Fonseca et al., 2019); no generally acceptable one (Allen & Nyiayaana, 2023). To exemplify the ambiguities related to defining social cohesion, in the report on the social cohesion framework in Myanmar, Peace (2015, p. 10) shares that, although similarities exist in Myanmar's ethnic groups' perspectives on social cohesion, "they also exhibit interesting and nuanced variations."

Moustakas (2023) posits that defining social cohesion divides critics into two sides; one side argues that it is implicitly defined, whereas the other side submits that it is broadly defined. Therefore, Moustakas shares that it is important for a researcher to clearly state his operational definition of social cohesion and the rationale for the choice.

Etymologically, social cohesion is derived from the Latin words; social from 'socius' which means ally or associate (Merriam-Webster, n.d.), and cohesion from 'cohaes' which indicates "to cleave or stick together" (Rob et al., 2020., p. 5). Simply, social cohesion can be perceived as the friendly association between an individual or group and another individual or group within a society. Social cohesion is also defined as the glue that holds people or structures together in society (Larsen et al., 2020; Kantzara, 2016). The human being is a social animal who cannot live alone in any society; he needs the support of others as much as others need his. Thus, social cohesion is the principle on which a sacred home for human dignity is created, because it is universal, indivisible, and interdependent. (Nisa Khan, 2016).

The first construct of social cohesion can be attributed to Ibn Haldun's writings during the 14<sup>th</sup> century (Moustakas, 2023). Asabiyyah, which Ibn Haldun perceived as a mixture of group unity and sentience, was believed to significantly benefit any group, community, or sub-group that valued it (Moustakas, 2023). Based on his assertions, the stronger the asabiyyah in a community, the stronger and more unified the community. From this period until the late nineteenth century, social cohesion disappeared in the academic world.

During the late nineteenth century, the works of Le Bron, Emile Durkheim, and George Simmel (see Moustakas, 2023; Fonseca et al., 2019) proliferated the concept of social cohesion. Gustave Le Bon (1841 - 1931) was a French social theorist whose work on the crowd contained to psychological (behaviour) contagion (Fonseca et al., 2019; Parsons, 2024). He submitted that an individual will adopt the behaviour of a crowd (assemblies of people) gathered under certain conditions due to crowd spirit, spread through contagion (Parsons, 2024). Durkheim (1858 - 1917) was a French Sociologist, concerned about the preservation of cultural dignity and harmony during the modern era (Malik & Malik, 2022). In his philosophy, functionalism, he likened society to a human entity with different mutually dependent organs. Durkheim shared that social cohesion is grounded on two forms of solidarity; mechanical and organic. The mechanical solidarity is the homogeneity among members of a community, the organic solidarity focuses on the interdependence of individuals in a capitalist society through divisions of labour (Malik &

Malik, 2022; Moustakas, 2023). Durkheim (1897, cited in Fonseca et al., 2019) submitted that social cohesion exists in a community where there is the hidden absence of social conflict (wealth, ethnicity, race, or gender conflict-based) and the presence of strong social bonds (civic society and responsive democracy). Although Durkheim's focus was on the French society of his day, when the state religion was Christianity, he proposed secular morality, which he believed was an instrumental means to achieve moral integration and social unity for the benefit of all (Barnes, 1977). Georg Simmel (1858 - 1918) was a German Sociologist who believed "That the social is a mode of existence which concretely expresses itself in the reciprocal relations of human beings, and that the unity of a society is a derivative of these relationships and does not precede them" (Abel, 1959, p. 475) This illustrates that society's evolution and cohesion depend on the interactions and relationships between its members. Further, Georg Simmel shared that social cohesion involved interactions within a small group of the same individual, during the preindustrial era, but the advent and proliferation of technology and ICT led to interactions among large groups of people from different backgrounds which brought advantages and disadvantages as they not only increased access to new resources but also increased social conflicts, especially unhealthy interactions (Moustakas, 2023).

During the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, the growing manifestations of social disparity, segregation, and insecurity attracted governmental and non-governmental organizations' attention to the concept of social cohesion (Moustakas, 2023). Prominently, the work of Jane Jenson on social cohesion laid the foundation in public policy studies. She listed five dimensions of social cohesion as "(a) sense of inclusion (b) belonging (c) recognition (d) participation (e) legitimacy" (Moustakas, 2023, p. 1031). This is a modern construct because it took a multidimensional approach to defining social cohesion (Leininger et al., 2021; Moustakas, 2023) and inspired other relevant think tanks to adopt it. In addition, Acket et al. (2011) describe social cohesion as a multidimensional approach defined by multiple facets attributed to groups or societies.

Aturupane and Wikramanayake (2011) share that social cohesion in modern times includes assimilation and accommodation where all sub-groups are fully integrated and accepted to freely practice their cultural and religious beliefs in daily activities without any fear of being victimized. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) describes a cohesive society as that which "works towards the well-being of all its members, fights exclusion and marginalization, creates a sense of belonging, promotes trust, and offers its members the opportunity of upward social mobility" (OECD, 2011).

The Africa Polling Institute (2022, p. 25) opines that the OECD's definition of social cohesion comprises three main components; "fostering cohesion by building networks of relationships, trust, and identity between different groups; fighting discrimination, exclusion, and excessive inequalities; and enabling upward social mobility."

Similarly, the definitions of the European Union (EU) and New Zealand follow a multidimensional approach. In New Zealand, social cohesion encompasses four indicators, which include individual opportunities, family well-being, strong communities, and national identity; and the EU states that its social cohesion objective implies three key elements; reconciliation of a system of organization based on market forces, freedom of opportunity, and enterprise, commitment to values of solidarity, and mutual support (Africa Polling Institute, API, 2022). Fonseca et al. (2019) argue that current definitions do not include the multiplicity of values, customs, and cultures present in our contemporary world, thus they present an updated definition of social cohesion. They define it as "The ongoing process of developing well-being, sense of belonging, and voluntary social participation of the members of society while developing communities that tolerate and promote a multiplicity of values and cultures, and granting at the same time equal rights and opportunities in society" (Fonseca et al., 2019, p. 246).

In contrast, Friedkin (2004) argued that contemporary studies focused on the several-dimensional approaches to social cohesion without emphasis on the problems associated with integrating individual and group levels at which social cohesion is defined. Since the combination of individuals forms groups, he argued that individuals affect the group level or structures or aggregate conditions; hence, "cohesive groups are self-maintaining with respect to the production of strong membership attractions and attachments." (Friedkin, 2004, p. 410). Langer et al. (2017) argue that social cohesion is premised on individuals' shared perceptions which entail the level of inequalities, trust, and identity. They further share that an individual's perceptions concerning his sense of belonging in the group or larger society determine whether or not he will be involved in socially cohesive actions. He will significantly promote socially cohesive values if he feels secure and belongs.

In this study, Fonseca et al.'s (2019) definition of social cohesion will be adopted as its operational definition. The choice of this definition is based on the following (a) it views social cohesion as an ongoing process, an important indicator that aligns with our ever-changing society. Globalization has given rise to multiple interconnectivities, which also come with its pros and cons (such as conflicts and racism). As such, it is vital to

continuously promote socially cohesive values (b) it wisely places social institutions such as the school at the center of achieving social cohesion. Rob et al. (2020) contend that the definition connects the education system, particularly the school with the crucial role of promoting social cohesion. (c) it recognizes multicultural values. Nigeria is a multicultural nation and schools reflect the multiculturalism of the larger society.

Overall, social cohesion connotes various meanings to different scholars and organizations, and its existence could be traced to the 14<sup>th</sup> century. However, for clarity, this study adopts the definition of social cohesion proposed by Fonseca et al. (2019). Their definition views social cohesion as a continuous process, realizable by social institutions such as the school, and conceive multicultural values.

## **2.2. Social Cohesion in Nigeria**

Several studies have been conducted concerning social cohesion in Nigeria to determine its level - low or high - and probable causes of social disharmony. For instance, the 2019 survey on Nigeria's social cohesion conducted by the Africa Polling Institute (API) report that in general, Nigeria 'is not a socially cohesive society' (Africa Polling Institute, 2019, p. 48). The highlight of the survey, which involved over five thousand and nineteen (5,019) interviews, suggests that 57% of the respondents identify as both Nigerian and as a member of an ethnic group, whereas 25% identify with only their ethnic group. This is worrisome as most respondents have a shared loyalty between the Nigerian state and their particular ethnic group, and in most cases, an average Nigerian identifies more with his or her ethnicity than being a Nigerian. Also, the Africa Polling Institute (API) reports that the Nigeria Social Cohesion Index (2021) was 44.2%, below the average threshold of 50%. Thus, Nigeria is not a socially cohesive nation (Africa Polling Institute, 2021). The report indicates that Nigeria was more divided, as opined by 68% of the respondents. The major causes of conflict in Nigeria were differences in ethnicity or tribes, political affiliations, and religion, with 48%, 47%, and 40% respectively, as opined by the respondents. In its latest research, the Africa Polling Institute (2022) reports that the Nigeria Social Cohesion Index (NSCI) was 39.6%, below the 2021 NSCI of 44.2% and the average threshold of 50%. This portrays a significant decline in the socially cohesive attributes across the country and indicates that Nigeria was more divided than it was four years ago, as opined by 66% of the respondents. Similarly to its 2021 report, the major causes of social tension in Nigeria include differences in political party affiliations, ethnicity or tribes, and religion, with 51%, 48%, 45%, 30%, and 25% respectively as opined by the respondents.

Ethnic pluralism is a major threat to Nigeria's social cohesiveness not only because people in positions of authority promote the supremacy of one ethnic or religious group over others, but also because an individual identifies himself first with his tribe before being identified as a Nigerian (Balogun & Obosi, 2018). It implies that an individual only cares about the well-being of his kinsmen; an act that can lead to exclusion, marginalization, and stereotype. Accordingly, Nigeria's internal or social cohesion is significantly poor (Balogun & Obosi, 2018). Realistically, ethnic pluralism in Nigeria is detrimental to national unity and cohesion (Ibrahim & Bello, 2023). Further, the study of Leininger et al. (2021) reports that Nigeria has an overall low social cohesion attributed to social unrest and violent outbreaks. The consistent calls from many ethnic groups for restructuring or total separation into different entities signify the poor level of social cohesiveness in Nigeria (Allen & Nyiayaana, 2023). Ultimately, the statement credited to the current vice president of Nigeria on his arrival from performing lesser hajj (Umrah) in Mecca is a testament to the poor social cohesion in the country. According to Choji (2024), published by Voice of Nigeria (VON), the vice president states, "Our prayer is for peace to prevail in our land. May Allah grant our land peace and social harmony" It is indicative that Nigeria's slow development can be attributed, in part, to the low social cohesiveness across the country. According to Balogun and Obosi (2018), social cohesion is one of the six components a country's development depends. They highlight others as unity, integration, economic well-being, educational growth, and mass participation in governance.

Summarily, empirical studies on social cohesiveness in Nigerian society denote a low index. Major causes of the low cohesive value include social unrest, ethnic pluralism, and the existence of different religions and political parties. These disagreements result in the preference of an average Nigerian to choose his or her tribe, religion, or political party over Nigeria.

### **2.3. Frameworks of Social Cohesion**

The divergent definitions of social cohesion led to its varying frameworks. Moustakas (2023) shares that social frameworks can be divided into narrower and broader frameworks. However, narrower frameworks are commonly adopted.

For example, the Africa Polling Institute (API) has always expanded its social cohesion framework or indicators. In its maiden edition of the Nigeria Social Cohesion Survey in 2019, the institute used a survey with only five (5) indicators namely: identity,

trust, equity and social justice, participation and patriotism, and self-worth and future expectations (API, 2022). In its second edition (in 2021), four (4) more indicators were included. They are corruption, gender, impunity, and natural resources. In the latest edition in 2022, three (3) more indicators were added; polarization, peace-building, and coping strategy. In total, thirteen (13) indicators or sub-indices were used in 2022 (API, 2022).

Another is that developed by Fonseca et al. (2019). They designed a more complex but narrower framework derived from several works of literature. The updated framework contains three main elements, each different but interconnected with several sub-elements. The framework is presented below.

1. The individual: Self-motivation; Perceptions, norms, and values; and participation and performance.
2. Community: Environment; relationship and ties; and process performance and goal attainment
3. Institutions: Environment (structures, norms, and values); human rights; and conflict management and decision-making.

### **2.3.1. Frameworks of Social Cohesion in Educational Settings**

The focus on promoting social cohesion in educational settings started about two decades ago informed by the belief that it can lead to achieving a socially cohesive society (Veerman & Denessen, 2021). The complexities of social cohesion and education result in the development of various social cohesion frameworks or indicators adapted by researchers to suit their research contexts in schools and classrooms. The variations present a disjointed and vague understanding of social cohesion in educational settings (Veerman & Denessen, 2021).

The non-systematic review by Veerman and Denessen (2021) on five (5) social cohesion frameworks used in educational settings reveals that they all adapted the popular frameworks or dimensions of Schiefer and Van der Noll (2017). The dimensions are social relations, belonging, and orientation towards the common good. The review reports that, while The Perceived Cohesion Scale (PCC) instrument includes only the belonging

dimension and adopts a subjective perspective for use in schools across the United States, The Arnhem School Study (TASS) adopts the social relations and orientation towards the common good dimensions, suitable in an ethnically diverse secondary school. Social entities in the TASS instrument are the classrooms or neighborhoods, especially in the Netherlands.

Others include the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Survey in 4 European Countries (CILS4EU) instrument which embraces the social relations and belonging dimensions and is used in four (4) European countries (Germany, the Netherlands, the UK, and Sweden), the Social Capital and Cohesion Scale (SCCS) includes all three dimensions (social relations, belonging, and orientation towards the common good) to examine social cohesion in Australian secondary school students with a focus on four (4) social entities (family, friends, neighborhood, and the school), and the International Civic and Citizenship Study (ICCS), which also includes all three dimensions and is widely used across Asia, Europe, Oceania, North and South America (Veerman & Denessen, 2021).

In contrast, Cho and Park (2016) developed two analytical frameworks (combined into a single framework) for their study on the analysis of multicultural contents in Korean elementary and secondary social studies, ethics, and Korean language textbooks. The first framework is the Multicultural Content Analysis Frame (MCAF), which was designed to examine the presence or absence and the extent at which multicultural elements are illustrated. The MCAF consists of three (3) categories; identity, diversity and pluralism, and social justice. The second framework is the Multicultural Description Analysis Frame (MDAF), used to understand whose perspectives are represented. It has five (5) categories. They are (1) Balance of material distribution (2) Accuracy and scope of information (3) Distortion and stereotype (4) Balance in perspectives (5) Korean-ethnic centredness. Each category of both frames has sub-components.

Rob et al.'s (2020) study used a sociocultural framework, a framework adapted from Cho and Park (2016); the framework adopted in this study. They argue that school is a sociocultural reproduction site where textbooks are its essential parts. The analytical framework consists of three (3) main thematic categories with several sub-categories. The main categories are identity, diversity and pluralism, and social cohesion. They showcased items to identify in each category. For example, the identity category includes the way self and others construct personal, social, national, and global identities; the diversity and pluralism category includes representation of cultural diversity and balance of material distribution; the social cohesion category includes recognition of and actions towards

building a cohesive society, recognition and actions for assuring human rights, and recognition and actions for equality. All categories include distortion and stereotype.

Summarily, this section shows various social cohesion frameworks that have been adapted in education. This again signifies the popularity of social cohesion in the education sector. However, this study adopts Rob et al.'s (2020) analytical framework, which was originally created by Cho and Park (2016).

## **2.4. Socially Cohesive Values and Textbooks**

Different studies have been conducted on evaluating textbooks for socially cohesive values. Textbooks often present the majoritarian perspective, stereotypically illustrate minority groups, and amplify a patriarchal system (Roberts-Schweitzer et al., 2006). Roberts-Schweitzer et al. (2006) submit that in the analysis of textbooks used in Latin America, black people, being the minority groups, are usually illustrated stereotypically; they are only represented in a slavery-related matter which depicts severe racial discrimination in society. Further, they posit that due to a high level of frustration from the cultural exclusion of minority groups in Sri Lanka, the violent Tamil Tigers movement was birthed.

Religious bias is the main theme found in evaluating textbooks used in Pakistan, India, and Saudi Arabia (Roberts-Schweitzer et al., 2006). Based on the social identity theoretical perspectives, religious bias is expected because each of the countries has a predominant religious beliefs. Therefore, there will be comparisons between the dominant and minority religious beliefs, leading to an ingroup versus outgroup scenario and a stereotypical depiction or total exclusion of minority religious beliefs. Roberts-Schweitzer et al. (2006) report that textbooks in Pakistan were insensitive to religious diversity as the texts emphasized the superiority of Islam over Hinduism. A similar trend was observed in India's textbooks which promoted Hindu as the essence of India's culture while tagging other religious beliefs as 'aliens' (Roberts-Schweitzer et al., 2006, p. 53). They report that in Saudi Arabia's textbooks, all religions except for Islam, the state-practiced religion, are false. They conclude that negative images, racist representation, and identity exclusion of any group within a society can cause extreme reactions such as violence and destruction. Similarly, the analysis of the EFL textbooks – books I, II, and III –, used in Iran by Cheng and Beigi (2012) reveals that the Shiite Islamic traditions are predominantly illustrated non-textually despite having about 3% of Sunni Muslims and other state-recognized non-Muslim faiths. Furthermore, they found that the textbooks portray the dominantly Islamic

belief of a patriarchal system where the male gender (father) is referred to as the family breadwinner and there are no “phrases that referred to the occupation of a mother outside the kitchen boundaries” (Cheng & Beigi, 2012, p. 314).

The concurrent triangulation (mixed method approach) study by Cho and Park (2016) on the analysis of multicultural contents in 52 Korean social studies, ethics, and Korean language textbooks found uneven distributions of the contents which are predominantly Korean-ethnicity centeredness, majoritarianism-based, and Western-centeredness. For instance, the authors found that the diversity existing in the Korean society is not captured as the textbooks described Korea as a single nation where the perspectives of minority groups (based on gender, language, age, race and ethnicity, disability, and multicultural families) are excluded and their representations are limited. Also, they report that not only are the non-Western culture and people minimally illustrated, but also stereotypically depicted as ‘poor, pitiful black people’ (p. 13).

Mustapha's (2014) study on the same subject in seven English textbooks found the overrepresentation of male characters and desirable experiences. He also reported that most male characters are illustrated outside the home – public domain, while the majority of female illustrations are home-based, private domain. Moreover, the study reveals that females' undesirable characters are more illustrated than male's. Conclusively, he submits that although the textbooks render females as invisible and minor characters, their roles are gradually changing in the Nigerian society. Similarly, the study by Zakka et al. (2015) on evaluating gender representation in primaries 5 and 6 mathematics textbooks used in Abuja. They found that the male gender is predominantly represented in both textbooks with 51.58% and 62.44% and 24.82% and 17.26% for female, respectively.

The technical report carried out by Novelli et al. (2017) on curriculum and textbooks for peace-building and social cohesion found that while the pre-1994 curriculum and textbooks as used in Rwanda and South Africa aggravated race, ethnicity, religion, and gender-based disparities, the post-1994 ones do not engage in inequalities. In Rwanda's textbooks, they report no stereotypical illustration against any social group is reported and gender equality is sufficiently promoted. They further posited that although South Africa's textbooks illustrate Black people and women in a variety of roles, there is a bit of racial stereotype towards Black people as they are represented as single parents, living off social grants, or in gang violence. White people are exclusively portrayed as middle-class citizens. They also reveal that the historical contribution and pictorial representation of colored people are removed or excluded.

Investigating the representation of Indonesia cultural diversity in two local English textbooks used by grades seven and eight students using the semiotic approach, Parlindungan et al. (2018) submit that although local cultural artifacts are presented, dominant groups' artifacts are prominent in both textbooks. The authors argue that the textbooks' depictions of characters do not appropriately reflect the Indonesian cultural diversity. They also share that a glimpse of change in gender role appears in the books where the male gender is portrayed as cooking and the female gender is depicted as working. However, the majority of the gender roles reflect the patriarchal system in the Indonesian society, where the man is the provider and leader of the family and the woman is the caregiver. In a similar vein, the study by Setyono and Widodo (2019) focused on investigating how multicultural values are portrayed in EFL textbooks recommended by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture for senior secondary school students. Adopting the critical discourse analysis, they found that four multicultural-related themes emerged, including respecting pluralism, respecting the rights of local people, finding peace with nature and with all forms of life, and appreciating cultural products. However, they share that cultural artefacts or values from Asia and Africa are unfairly illustrated.

In the study of gender representation in Iran textbooks by Rezai-Rashti et al. (2019), they found that the female gender is not only underrepresented but also stereotypically portrayed. They record that the male gender's picture representation outnumbers the female gender with 63% and 64% against 19% and 22% in 2006 and 2016 respectively. Predominantly, the female gender is underrepresented in professional and sociopolitical contexts as they are mainly portrayed in schools and at home (Rezai-Rashti et al., 2019). Further, they argue that the female gender is portrayed as a secondary figure to the male gender, who are portrayed as 'able, strong, athletic, faithful, extroverted, outstanding, brave, kind, truthful, wise, brave, independent, authoritative, and adventurous.' (Rezai-Rashti et al., 2019, p. 64).

Analyzing approaches to social cohesion in Bangladesh textbooks, Rob et al. (2020) found that the majoritarian approach is undertaken in the language, social studies, and history textbooks. Being a Muslim-dominated country, the exclusive paradigm of the Islamic faith is presented, while other religious faiths, including traditional beliefs, are neglected in the texts. Additionally, they found that the perspectives of non-Bengali, non-Muslim, and non-Bengali-speaking minorities are ignored, and the Muslim-Bengali perspectives are amplified. Additionally, they assert that the religious textbooks for each faith not only mainly illustrate its belief but also amplify its superiority over other religious

doctrines. Meanwhile, they posit a mixed representation of the female gender. It is represented in one instance, as a symbolic figure that unifies a nation, and in another, it presents a stereotype against the female gender and magnifies the patriarchal system. They conclude that rather than the textbooks to improve and promote social cohesion, they aggravate social tensions, ethnic and cultural disunity, religious intolerance, and gender inequality.

Similarly, the study of Xiang and Yenika-Agbaw (2021) provides insightful results from their critical content analysis of English for Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks used by the Mongol ethnic group in China. The study adopts Kachru and Nelson's (1996) three-circle model to explore how multiculturalism is represented and understand crucial power in relations in the selected textbooks. The findings reveal the majoritarian approach is spread across all the textbook series. They share that China is the most represented country among the expanding circles with 32.2% (98 frequencies), other countries (15 as listed in the study) in the same category as China appear in about 22.3% (68 frequencies), with Japan (18 times) appearing closest to China. However, they argue that despite the textbooks used in Inner Mongolia by the Mongols in China, the history, economic, political, and cultural relations of the Mongols appear once in all six textbooks analyzed, whereas the Han race appears 174 times in a total of 179 representations among the China race. Similarly, White America (89 times) is dominantly illustrated among the inner circle countries, whereas African America is represented only 5 times.

Gender-wise, the male gender is heavily represented (appears 263 times) as against the female gender, which appears 192 times without any representation for people with disabilities (PWD) (Xiang & Yenika-Agbaw, 2021). The authors conclude that multicultural variables such as race, social class, gender, and PWD are unfairly represented, an act that will misinform the students about China's diversity. Accordingly, young learners may not understand the importance of diversity and possess negative inter-ethnic relationships.

In a similar vein, the study of Yonata et al. (2024) on the content analysis of cultural representations in international high school English textbooks used in Indonesia reports that inner circle countries are dominantly represented in terms of perspectives (thoughts), products, practices, and people. The authors further share that the textbooks position that successful individuals are only from the inner circle countries such as the United States of America and the United Kingdom. They also argue that the cultural representations of the

expanding circle countries are excluded, including Indonesia, where the textbooks are adopted for use. Hence, they suggest the equitable inclusion of the cultural representations of outer circle and extending circle countries, which will provide fair information to users - teachers and students.

Altogether, it is evident from the reviewed literature that textbooks adopt the majoritarian approach. Several studies reveal staggering depictions of major groups such as the male gender, inner countries (the UK, the US, etc.), dominant religion in the context (Shia, in the case of Iran; Hinduism in India; Islam in Saudi Arabia), and tribes. Also, studies show a stereotypical depiction of minority group such as the female gender.

## **2.5. Representations of People with Disabilities (PWDs)**

Seth's (2020) study focused on examining the representations of people with disabilities (PWDs) in selected English textbooks used in Delhi. The author found that just 3% of the chapters in the textbooks illustrate disability, with more attention given to physical and visual disabilities. In the Norwegian context, Jensen et al. (2023) explore representations of people with disabilities in 78 school textbooks across grades 5 – 10. Adopting a mixed-method approach and the cultural intolerance against the extraordinary theory, they found that people with disabilities are textually and visually underrepresented across all the textbooks. Additionally, they report that the textbooks' authors admitted to unconscious omission and conscious omission of PWDs because the national curriculum does not clearly mention them. They concluded that although the inclusion of PWDs is disadvantaged, the fear of negatively illustrating them in textbooks might be the reason for their exclusion by some authors.

In their study on the media portrayal of disability, Ogundola and Liebler (2024, p. 99) analyzed two Nigerian newspapers and identified four emergent frames, including “group-identity, perjorative, supercrip, and misrepresentation frames”. They conclude that the newspapers attached less value to people with disabilities, by inadequately covering their stories and a lack of prudent and sensitive information. In a similar vein, Chukwuma and Omokhunu (2024) analysed how the mass media illustrate people with disabilities. They submit that news on PWDs is often covered in Nigerian mass media during the Paralympics and on disability-related celebration days such as World Mental Health Day, usually under two broad frames: superhero and victim. They concluded that the consequences of such unfair and negative reportage on PWDs include “Hatred and disregard for disabled people, lack of survival means, denial of employment opportunities,

and continued life of squalor due to high poverty rate in the country” (Chukwuma & Omokhunu, 2024, p. 75). In contrast, Adéyemi's (2023) study on examining the representation of people with disabilities (PWDs) in a selected Yoruba literature contends that they are positively illustrated. He concludes “that there is ability in disability if society projects a positive image of those living with a disability” (p. 145).

In general, the reviewed literature in this subsection contends that people with disabilities (PWDs) are poorly represented in textbooks, with negative depictions.

## **2.6. Teachers' Perceptions on Textbooks**

Teachers' perceptions of textbooks are necessary to understand their awareness concerning their contents, whether or not they are appropriate for use by them and their students. Agha and Shaikh (2023) share that most teachers are unaware of the influence their views on the teaching materials they use can have on their students' perspectives.

Bhandari's (2022) study on teachers' perceptions of a grade ten English textbook's academic and physical aspects used in Nepal found that 93.34% of the 15 participants agreed that the content is free from any form of bias. Adopting the survey research design, Bhandari reports that while 60% of the participants agreed that illustrations or pictures presented in the book are relevant and adequate, 93.34% concurred that pictures promote self-learning.

In their study to explore teachers' perceptions of gender in English as Foreign Language textbooks in Indonesia, Dasrul et al. (2023) report that the thirty-four (34) primary and secondary school teacher participants, selected across schools in Jakarta, share that gender is fairly represented. They further highlight that teachers predict students' low motivation and poor academic achievement if the gender they identify with is under-represented or stereotypically illustrated in the textbooks. In contrast, Agha and Shaikh's (2023) study on getting Sindhi teachers' insights on Sindhi language textbooks used in Sindhi, Pakistan reveal that the teachers agree and confirm the discriminatory and underrepresentation of women in the textbooks as well as the gendered roles and gender disparity illustrated in them, which they opine reflect the patriarchal system in Pakistani society. Further, the authors share the teachers' perceptions on the need to revise the textbooks to give more visibility to women without disrupting the existing social values and norms in Pakistani society. The authors argue that limiting women's illustrations to homes and shutting them out of the public sphere could be detrimental to the future of

young girls, particularly in relation to career choices and social participations. In a similar fashion, the study by Mahmood et al. (2024) states that teachers perceive the exclusion of women's roles in the 10th English textbook used in Punjab, Pakistan, and no famous female leader is represented, despite mentioning a few male famous leaders. They attribute the selective representation to the patriarchal system in Punjab. Therefore, they recommend an equal representation of men and women in contents and activities such as sports, politics, science, and other life's domains.

Analyzing teachers' perceptions on the international English textbooks used in Indonesia, Yonata et al.'s (2024) study highlights teachers' awareness concerning the dominant illustrations of inner circle countries with limited portrayals of outer circle and expanding circle countries. Thus, they are compelled to provide supplementary materials to balance the cultural representation gaps. While the authors attest that gaining insights into different cultural entities drive the students to be more tolerant, confident, motivated, however, they recommend a feedback window should be made available so that users can provide useful information. When textbook authors give room for feedback, unbalanced representations can be prevented in the textbooks as teachers and students will point out deficiencies found in them.

All in all, teachers' perceptions of their textbooks show mixed results, particularly in relation to gender representation. Yet, most studies report that teachers perceived the predominant approach-based illustrations across their textbooks.

## **2.7. Theoretical Framework**

The framework adopted in this study, through which the phenomenon under study is observed, is the social identity theory (SIT).

### **2.7.1 Social Identity Theory**

The social identity theory (SIT) proposed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in the 1970s posits that individuals classify themselves and others into several social categories such as gender, religious affiliations, social class, and ethnicities (Ashforth & Fred, 1989). The social identity theory (SIT) was developed following a series of minimal group experiments, where Tajfel assigned participants to two groups. He instructed participants to award points to an anonymous member of each group (Evans et al., 2024). Tajfel found that participants unfairly awarded more points to members of their group (ingroup) and fewer points to members of the other group (out-group).

The primary aim of SIT is to uncover why individuals adopt the behaviors or attitudes of the social groups with which they identify, rather than their personal beliefs (Lange et al., 2012). Thus, they think as ‘we’ rather than ‘I.’ Three important processes are involved in the SIT: self-categorization, self-identification, and self-comparison (Ashforth & Fred, 1989; Stets & Burke, 2000). However, according to Lange et al. (2012), these processes are referred to as social categorization, social comparison, and social identification. Essentially, social and self can be used interchangeably. Bizumic et al. (2017) note that SIT suggests humans seek to understand their environment to determine their place or position within it. Once they comprehend their position in the environment—across various sub-groups such as ethnicity, religion, gender, political affiliation, occupation, and economic status—they categorize themselves and begin comparisons, which set the stage for a ‘we’ versus ‘them’ orientation.

Lange et al. (2012) submit that “Social categorization is the process through which separate individuals are clustered into groups” (p. 381). The self-categorization process involves classifying the self (individual or people) in relation to other social classes, groups, or categories (Stets & Burke, 2000). It is the way individuals respond to complex social situations. Whitaker (2020) further explicates that the social categorization involves how an individual (group of individuals) labels other groups according to his or her group’s norms. Based on SIT, social classification or categorization implies two characteristics. First, it systematically defines others, and second, it enables individuals to situate themselves in the social environment (Ashforth & Fred, 1989).

An Individual’s purview or knowledge about his or her belongingness to a social group or human aggregate is called the social identification process (Ashforth & Fred, 1989; Stets & Burke, 2000). Social identification is the awareness that an individual or people is included in certain social categories and excluded in others (Lange et al., 2012). An individual’s identity is formed via the process of self-categorization (Stets & Burke, 2000). It implies that when an individual is associated with a social group, it will impact his self-perception and self-esteem. For instance, associating negative attributes to a social group an individual identifies with will lower his self-esteem and vice-versa. The overall effect informs the intergroup relationships in society. That is, it can induce social cohesion if each social category perceives other groups in positive orientations and causes social conflict or aggravates social disharmony when they negatively perceive one another.

The self-comparison occurs when individuals identified as members of a category or group are labeled as in-groups because they share similar attributes, while others are

labeled as out-groups. Social comparison is the process of attaching meanings and values to peculiar group features (Lange et al., 2012). Accordingly, social comparison often involves comparing groups to determine their social status and values (Lange et al., 2012). The values attached to a certain social group inform the way and manner they are perceived in society. The values or status attached to the female gender in a patriarchal system informs the professions or careers they are deemed fit to pursue. Similarly, stereotypes and racial abuses are the results of values attached to the victim group - outgroups - "to deprive its [outgroup] members of resources that could possibly improve their social position" (Whitaker, 2020, p. 693).

In the practical sense, no person is in isolation; he belongs or identifies with either one group (groups) or another. In the Nigerian context, people classify themselves on many fronts. For example, an individual can identify as a Muslim (religious group), a Yoruba (an ethnic group), a Southerner (regional group), and a member of a political party A, whereas another person can be identified as a Christian, a Yoruba, and a Southerner who belongs to political party B. Crisis may erupt based on their differences (in this case, religion and political party) when a person not only magnifies and glorifies his group, but also denigrates and displays prejudiced attitudes toward the other group. As mentioned in the Africa Polling Institute (API) reports that the main causes of low social cohesion index in Nigeria are due to differences in ethnicity, religion, and political affiliations. It is common knowledge that most Nigerians embody the attitude of 'my group first' and not Nigeria first, a point highlighted by Balogun and Obosi (2018). Therefore, the theory is not only relevant to the Nigerian society, but also this study. Similarly, Igwe (2024) submits that the way people think as a member of an ethnic group influences their actions and inactions toward another ethnic group. Harwood (2020) shares that members of a group will settle for a lesser reward than they should actually earn (so long it is higher than those of the other group) to maintain superiority over members of the outgroups. This aligns perfectly with occurrences in the Nigerian society. It is almost impossible for a member of an ethnic group (say Yoruba) to criticize the incumbent president, also a Yoruba man when he errs. The same goes for other ethnicity, religious beliefs, and political affiliations. Members of these affiliations would prefer to maintain their superiority over the outgroups even if their leaders perform far below expectations or the economic is in a bad state (as the case of a political leader). Therefore, there are high chances of religious favoritism, ethnic tensions and mistrust, corruption, and conflicts.

The relevance of the SIT to this study is based on the fact that it provides a comprehensive exploration of group (self) categorization and comparison which leads to in-group and out-groups. The self-comparison usually results in a selective purview where the in-group is judged positively and the out-group, negatively (Stets & Burke, 2000), leading to prejudice and discrimination towards the outgroup (Harwood, 2020). More so, SIT helps to tackle “intergroup conflict, identity-based validation, and affiliation” (Raskovic & Takacs-Haynes, 2000 cited in Igwe, 2024, p. 5). This forms the basis of segregation, stereotyping, and marginalization. Considering Nigeria with large diverse groups and a low social cohesion index, adopting this theory will provide the lens through which the groups can be studied or examined in the selected textbooks.

Textbooks are a form of media (print media), which can be scrutinized using the social identity theory (SIT). Harwood (2020) submits that media ownership (authors in the case of textbooks) play significant roles in the portrayal of groups. He asserts that marginalized groups are usually underrepresented or stereotypically represented in media except when the ownership is from the minority group. Similarly, Harwood shares that people prefer contents that feature their ingroup to enhance their identity self-esteem.

Briefly, social identity theory (SIT) assumes that individuals classify themselves to groups they identify with, then compare their groups with other groups. These processes manifest into a ‘we’ versus ‘them’ instance or in-group vs. out-group. Conflicts erupt from the negative depiction of one group (usually, the out-group) by the other group (the in-group).

#### **2.7.1.1. Social Identity in Education**

The relevance of the social identity theory (SIT) has extended its applications beyond the field of psychology, particularly the social psychology field. SIT has gained wide coverage in education. Therefore, this section presents educational research studies that adopted SIT, as a standalone theory or part of a mix of theories.

In the study of Bizumic et al. (2009) focused on exploring the roles of social (school) identification on individual (students and teachers) wellbeing (positive and negative) and also its mediating influence on the relationship between organizational functioning (such as the school climate) and individual wellbeing in two Australian High schools. Using two different questionnaires for teachers and students, they report that while social identification (being identified as a member of the school) significantly correlated only to job involvement, self-esteem, and depression among the teacher participants, it was

significantly correlated to all measured variables (self-esteem, stress, anxiety, depression, aggression, and victimization) among the student participants. Further, they found that the social identification mediated fully on the relationship between the school climate and negative well-being variables and a partial mediation for positive wellbeing outcomes. They concluded that the social identification was a ‘significant predictor’ of individual well beings (p. 189).

Another study that adopted the social identity theory was the work of Bliuc et al. (2011), aimed to investigate the role of university students’ social identity in relation to their approaches to learning (deep and surface approaches) and academic achievement in Romania, two structural equation models were constructed. Adopting a mix of the social identity theory and student learning research framework, they found that social identity is positively correlated or associated with deep approaches to learning, which in turn predict academic achievement. In contrast, they report that social identity is negatively associated with surface approaches to learning, non-significantly - a weak negative predictor for academic achievement. Bliuc and colleagues conclude that although social identity plays an important role in predicting the students’ academic achievement (in their context), deep approaches to learning exert the greater influence in predicting the students’ academic performance.

Whitaker’s (2020) study explicates, using the social categorization and social comparison sub-components of the social identity theory (SIT), how and why White urban teachers struggle to embrace students’ cultural diversities in their classes, leading to a biased and stereotypical dealings with members of the social outgroup (usually, kids of color from low economic backgrounds). Whitaker shares that new urban teachers always have preconceived notions about their students, especially those considered members of the outgroups, and compel them to learn in their ways, rather than co-constructing knowledge. Whereas, they co-construct knowledge with students that share a closely-aligned social identity with them. He suggests that pre-service teachers should be trained to know themselves, their students, and the teaching practice to effectively implement “pedagog[y]ies through which they can effectively educate all students, regardless of cultural or social background” (Whitaker, 2020, p. 702).

### **2.7.2. Analytical Framework**

Several social cohesion frameworks have been adapted from sociology and policy-making fields. This study views the school as a sociocultural site accommodating diverse students from various sociocultural groups. Each group has its peculiar customs, beliefs,

and traditions, and students are believed to exhibit or display different beliefs and traditions. Thus, schools are representatives of the larger Nigerian society. Textbooks, the documents for analysis in this study, are perceived as sociocultural antiques intentionally designed to promote some traditions and beliefs. Therefore, the study will adopt a sociocultural analytical framework to investigate whether or not the textbooks fairly promote social cohesion.

The adopted analytical framework comprises three (3) categories; identity, diversity and pluralism, and socially cohesive values, and about sixteen (16) sub-categories and several items to identify each component. The ‘identity’ category consists of four (4) subcomponents, including individual, group, national, and global identities. One of the items to identify under the identity category is ‘who is/are identified and how are identities constructed?’ This signifies the rationale for including this category as it explains the tendency of textbooks to represent some identities and neglect others, or stereotypically present some identities. The ‘diversity and pluralism’ category has six (6) subcomponents. They are cultural, religious, ethnic, linguistic, gender, and attitude and perspectives toward diversity. Items to identify under this category include representation of cultural diversity, approval and tolerance for other cultures and religious beliefs, and distortions and stereotypes. Cho and Park (2016) submit that the approval of diverse values (cultural, religious, or otherwise) and the disapproval of dominant attitudes over other values are the essentials of what the desirable attitudes towards varied values in a diverse society entail.

The last category, ‘the socially cohesive values category,’ consists of six (6) subcategories: interdependence among cultural groups, sense of social justice, respect for human rights, equality, minority, and discrimination.

**Table 2.1**

*The Social Cohesion Analytical Framework*

| Thematic Category | Subcomponents                                                                                 | Items to Identify                                                                                                |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Identity          | (a) Individual identity<br>(b) Group identity<br>(c) National identity<br>(d) Global identity | (a) Who is who and how are personal, social, national, and global identities constructed by the self and others? |

|                          |                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                      |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
|                          |                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | (b) Distortions and stereotypes      |
|                          |                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | (c) Balance of material distribution |
| Diversity and Pluralism  | (a) Cultural<br>(b) Religious<br>(c) Ethnic<br>(d) Linguistic<br>(e) Gender<br>(f) Attitude and perspectives toward diverse cultures | (a) Representation of cultural diversity<br>(b) Interests in other cultures<br>(c) Approval and tolerance for other cultures and religious beliefs<br>(d) Recognition of multicultural situations in Nigeria<br>(e) Approval of values of cultural diversity<br>(f) Desirable perspectives on culture<br>(g) Criticism of inappropriate perspectives toward culture<br>(h) Distortions and stereotypes<br>(i) Balance of material distribution |                                      |
| Socially Cohesive Values | (a) Interdependence among cultural groups                                                                                            | (a) Recognition of and actions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                      |

- |                              |                                                                                    |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (b) Sense of social justice  | towards                                                                            |
| (c) Respect for human rights | building a cohesive society                                                        |
| (d) Equality                 |                                                                                    |
| (e) Minority                 | (b) Recognition and actions for assuring human rights                              |
| (f) Discrimination           | Recognition and actions for equality                                               |
|                              | (c) Types and present conditions of minority                                       |
|                              | (d) Relationship between/among majority and minority groups                        |
|                              | (e) Recognition of and actions for integrating minority groups into larger society |
|                              | (f) Concept of discrimination                                                      |
|                              | (g) Present conditions and examples of discrimination                              |
|                              | (h) Efforts for improvement                                                        |

- (i) Distortions and stereotypes
- (j) Balance of material distribution

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Adapted from Rob et al. (2020)

Further, in the items to identify section of the analytical framework, Cho and Park (2016) share that the “balance of material distribution” will examine the main characters and their groups (majoritarian or minoritarian) and the balance between them, whereas the “stereotypes and distortion” will explore the prejudiced, negative, and stereotypical illustrations or images of a culture or group.

Additionally, Kress and van Leeuwen’s (2006 as cited in Parlindungan et al., 2018) analytical perspectives will be adopted for the analysis of characters and images in the textbooks for socially cohesive values. They include ‘focalization, affect, pathos, ambience, and graduation’ (Parlindungan et al., 2018, p. 292). Focalization involves identifying the perspectives of any group or groups being presented, while the ‘Affect and Pathos’ relate to the emotional tones presented and their impacts on users. Ambience focuses on the color, design, and layout of the characters and images, whereas graduation examines the emphasis given to some contents (Parlindungan et al., 2018).

## **CHAPTER III**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

In this chapter, the author provides a nuanced or comprehensive explanation of the research, beginning with the philosophical underpinnings of the study, the research approach, and the research design. Further, this rationale and methods of data collection are presented, followed by the extensive elucidation of data analysis techniques.

#### **3.1. Research Approach and Research Design**

Creswell and Poth (2018) assert that researchers consciously or unconsciously always bring particular beliefs and philosophical orientations to their studies. They further reiterate that one of the contributing factors in choosing a certain philosophical underpinning is the types of problems a researcher wants to study. In this study, the pragmatic philosophical paradigm is incorporated, as it enables the use of multiple methods necessary to answer the research questions (Dawadi et al., 2021). They further aver that the pragmatic philosophical underpinning integrates the objectivity of positivism and the subjectivity of interpretivism. Similarly, Shannon-Baker (2016) argues that pragmatists “maintain both subjectivity in their own reflections on research and objectivity in data collection and analysis” (p. 322). Therefore, the author is convinced that adopting a pragmatic worldview is necessary for both objective and subjective analyses of the textbooks.

Common with the pragmatic paradigm is the mixed-method approach. Consequently, the mixed-method approach is adopted in this study. Several benefits accompany the choice of using the mixed-method approach; the most relevant is the opportunity to combine quantitative and qualitative designs. According to Dawadi et al. (2021), the combination “offers the possibility of combining two sets of strengths while compensating at the same time for the weaknesses of each method” (p. 28). Specifically, the convergent parallel mixed-method approach is used because it provides the full comprehension of each of the quantitative and qualitative result (Dawadi et al., 2021). This offers the opportunity to understand the frequency of each variable as well as the manner by which each variable is depicted.

### **3.2. Methods of Data Collection and Data Analysis**

In this study, two methods of data collection are employed: document studies and interviews. Document studies or analyses systematically evaluate printed and/or electronic documents such as advertisements, background papers, books and brochures, journals and diaries, and event programs (Bowen, 2009). Documents in this study refer to the selected books (English Studies and Civic Education) from which relevant textual and visual data will be extracted to answer the main questions. Although document studies often complement other research designs such as case studies or ethnography, they can also be used as a standalone research design (Bowen, 2009; Morgan, 2022). As such, it is used as a separate design to answer the study's main research questions in this study. Several research studies have also employed document studies as a sole research design (see Cheng & Beigi, 2012; Rob et al., 2020). Since this study focuses on dissecting how the selected textbooks portray groups, ethnicity, and religious beliefs, the document study is suitable as it often “focuses exclusively on how texts portray different groups of people (Morgan, 2022, p. 67).”

The textual and visual data or linear and non-linear contents as used by Cheng and Beigi (2012) from these documents will be analyzed using content analysis. According to them, linear contents are narrative texts while non-linear contents are illustrations such as pictures and diagrams. Content analysis scrutinizes, reduces, and interrogates texts via pre-existing categories or emergent themes to generate or test theories (Cohen et al., 2007). The choice and suitability of content analysis for this study bank on investigating texts about social realities (social cohesion, in this case), which Krippendorff (2019) positions as a contributing factor to the success of doing content analysis. Although content analysis usually involves quantitative or qualitative approaches (Cohen et al., 2007), both approaches are adopted in this research study. The quantitative approach is applied to figure out the numerical representations of each variable (such as identity, gender, ethnicity, and religions), except the socially cohesive values. The social cohesive values are evaluated for their presence or absence in the quantitative approach. Afterward, the qualitative content analysis gives the researcher subjective interpretations of texts (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) derived from the close reading of texts. It contextualizes them in a new narrative (Rob et al., 2020).

Interview is the other method the study employs to ensure triangulation or polyangulation, as used by Mertler (2019), and answer a research question. Interviews

involve the researcher and interviewer asking specific questions from the interviewee—the participant—which are then recorded (Creswell, 2012). Interviews are subjective as they allow participants to discuss their interpretations of their worlds and phenomena based on their viewpoints (Cohen et al., 2007). The semi-structured interview will be conducted to elicit responses from teachers concerning perceptions on textbooks in promoting socially cohesive values.

The rationale for the semi-structured interview (SSI) is that it allows for flexibility (e.g., follow-up questions), and versatility or adaptability (Kallio et al., 2016; Ruslin et al., 2022), two important factors in getting in-depth information on the study's main theme (e.g., social cohesion). Another cogent reason for choosing SSI is that the study of social cohesion is novel among teachers in Nigeria, thus they require maximum trajectory to provide enriching and beneficial responses (Adams, 2015), which is one of the suitability of SSI (Kallio et al., 2016). According to Kallio et al. (2016), SSI is appropriate for obtaining participants' perceptions on the issue. The study will adopt Creswell's (2012) nine (9) steps in conducting interviews to obtain robust data from the interviews. The steps include identifying and selecting the interviewees, determining the interview type to use, choosing a quiet place for the interview session, obtaining interviewees' informed consent, recording the questions and responses, taking brief notes of participants' responses, using probes for additional information, and show appreciations to the interviewees when the interview session ends.

The research is situated in the original socio-cultural and religious backgrounds of the research site - Nigeria. Accordingly, its analysis is aware of these backgrounds concerning the textbooks' illustrations, including characters' names, religions, regions, ethnicity, and dress codes or attire. It also considers social representation or codes of men and women.

The analysis of all English studies textbooks focuses only on comprehension passages (short and long), pictures, dramas, and poems, while that of all civic education textbooks focuses on every part, including pictures, illustrations, and sentences. However, the analysis excludes exercise and assignments. Participants' responses are coded manually with the Microsoft Word application. Saldaña (2013) argues that manual coding should be considered for a small-scale dataset. All participants' responses are transferred from an Excel sheet into an MS Word document for coding. The responses are carefully and thoroughly read to grasp relevant points, statements, or phrases in answering the research question. Each participant's responses are coded separately by highlighting relevant

statements with the red color. Afterward, common themes across all participants' responses are matched.

### **3.3. Research Subjects**

The research subjects are junior secondary school teachers teaching English studies and Civic Education. Six (6) teachers are selected, one from each geopolitical zone across the country, except from the South-South geopolitical region. The purposive sampling is used for the selection because it offers opportunities to get in-depth information on the subject matter or understand the central phenomenon (Creswell, 2012). Cohen et al. (2007) share that it is only logical to choose participants whom the researcher thinks will provide enriching information about the phenomenon under study. Also, using purposive sampling will allow the research to cover all the geopolitical zones in Nigeria, including the minority groups. This is called a 'boosted sample' (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 115) as the voices or opinions of teachers from minority groups will be heard.

English language is the official language in Nigeria, spoken in all government offices, schools, and other official settings. In schools, public or private, the English studies is taught at least four periods per week, while civic education is taught three times. Each period lasts for 40 minutes, except for Friday when a period lasts for 35 minutes. Before 2013, civic education was not included in the curriculum but rather social studies which included some elements of civic education (see Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004). Civic education was (re)introduced into the curriculum in 2013 due to the "non-tolerant attitudes and antisocial behaviour observed in Nigerian youths" (Adeyemi, 2018, p. 465), which indicates the need to re-orientate the youths towards embracing tolerance, peaceful coexistence, unity, and inclusivity. Although civic education is taught as a standalone subject, it is one of the component subjects under the umbrella of Religious and National Values (RNV) at the junior secondary school level in Nigeria (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013; Gbadamosi & Ajayi, 2018). Other subjects include social studies, security education, Islamic studies, and Christian Religious Studies (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). Generally, the RNV curriculum was developed to instill the right attitudes and values in learners to become self-reliant and beneficial to society (Gbadamosi & Ajayi, 2018), whereas civic education is intended to cultivate democratic principles in students (Adeyemi, 2018).

The reason for choosing English Language and Civic Education textbooks as documents of analysis is that they are both compulsory subjects in Nigeria (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013) and can also act as cultural artifacts (see Rob et al., 2020;

Parlindungan et al., 2018; Yonata et al. 2024). Yonata et al. (2024) position that one of the rationales that necessitate the analysis of language textbooks is due to their attributes for being cultural artifacts that are grounded in the social construction of knowledge. English studies textbooks encompass several comprehension passages and illustrations, written to inform students of various local and global issues; contain themes or topics on grammar and its structure, oral or spoken English (the proper articulation of words), letter writing, and figures of speech. On the other hand, civic education contains topics about acceptable civic, social, and moral values in society. It is vital to analyze them for their roles in promoting socially cohesive values or social disharmony. Nigeria operates a decentralized educational system, thereby empowering each state to determine the best textbooks for its citizens. Hence, except for states where the government produced and shared textbooks for students, other textbooks in this study are selected from the government-recognized list of textbooks commonly used and available, usually produced by private authors and publishers. All textbooks are written in English language and are in digital form (PDF).

From previous available studies conducted on investigating teachers' perceptions of textbooks (see Dasrul et al. 2022; Yonata et al. 2024), this study adapts its criteria for selecting the participants. For instance, Dasrul et al.'s (2022) teacher participants have teaching experience ranging from 1 to 15 years. Whereas, in Yonata et al.'s (2024) study, teacher participants have a minimum of three years using the analyzed textbooks, with teaching experience that ranges between 5 and 20 years.

**Table 3.1**

*Teachers' Demography*

| No | Names | Gender | State   | Edu.<br>Qual. | Teaching<br>Subject | Teaching<br>Exp.<br>(years) | Religion     | Tribe &<br>Spoken<br>Language |
|----|-------|--------|---------|---------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------|
| 1  | T_NE  | M      | Adamawa | BA            | Civic<br>Education  | 5                           | Islam        | Hausa                         |
| 2  | T2_NC | F      | Kwara   | BA            | English<br>Studies  | 6 – 10                      | Islam        | Yoruba                        |
| 3  | T_SW  | F      | Oyo     | BA            | English<br>Studies  | + 20                        | Islam        | Yoruba                        |
| 4  | T_SE  | F      | Imo     | BA            | English<br>Studies  | 5                           | Christianity | Igbo                          |

|   |       |   |         |    |                 |        |              |       |
|---|-------|---|---------|----|-----------------|--------|--------------|-------|
| 5 | T_NW  | F | Kaduna  | BA | Civic Education | 5      | Christianity | Hausa |
| 6 | T1_NC | M | Plateau | BA | Civic Education | 6 – 10 | Islam        | Hausa |

NOTE: BA means Bachelors; F means Female; M means Male

Therefore, the criteria for selecting teacher participants in this study include (a) He/she must have a minimum of 5 years of teaching experience in junior secondary school. (b) He/she must have taught in the same geopolitical zone in the last 5 years, at least. Based on these criteria, it is assumed that the participants will have adequate knowledge to provide detailed responses to the interview questions.

Participants include four female and two male teachers, representing five of the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria. Two participants are from the North Central zone, representing two different states. The author was unable to find any participants from the South-South region. Their teaching subjects are equally divided between English studies and civic education, with three teachers for each. It is noteworthy to state that originally, eight (8) participants filled out the written interview. However, only six (6) participants are selected, according to the relevance of their answers to the research question and the spread across the geopolitical zones.

**Table 3.2**

*Textbooks and Their Code Names*

| S/No | Region        | Subjects                                       |               |        |                                        |                       |        |
|------|---------------|------------------------------------------------|---------------|--------|----------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------|
|      |               | Civic Education                                |               | Codes  | English Language                       |                       | Codes  |
| 1.   | North Central | National Values for Junior Secondary Schools 2 | Values Junior | Civ_NC | Intensive English for Junior Schools 2 | English for Secondary | Eng_NC |

|    |             |                                                                                                  |                      |        |                                                                                       |        |
|----|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| 2. | North East  | Basic Education for Junior Secondary Schools 2                                                   | Civic for            | Civ_NE | New Concept English for Junior Secondary Schools 2                                    | Eng_NE |
| 3. | North West  | Civic Education for Junior Secondary Schools 2.                                                  | Education for Junior | Civ_NW | New English Studies for Junior Secondary Schools 2 (Kano State Government)            | Eng_NW |
| 4. | South East  | Civic Education for Junior Secondary Schools 2 (with Security Education) UBE Edition.            | Education for Junior | Civ_SE | Excellence in English for Junior Secondary Students. Book 2                           | Eng_SE |
| 5. | South South | Religion and National Values: New Civic Education for Nigerian Junior Secondary Schools. Book 2. | and                  | Civ_SS | New Oxford English Secondary Course                                                   | Eng_SS |
| 6. | South West  | Civic Security Education (Property of Oyo State Government)                                      | and                  | Civ_SW | New English Studies for Junior Secondary Schools 2 (Property of Oyo State Government) | Eng_SW |

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NOTE: Civ. means Civic; Eng. indicates English

### 3.4. Research Instruments

Based on extensive reviews of previous studies, a set of coding or counting rubrics has been designed for analysis. They are enumerated as follows:

#### Coding Rubrics

1. All pictures, images, drawings, and illustrations representing gender, ethnicity, religious affiliations, and identity are considered for coding and counting.
2. Any variable, such as gender, ethnicity, identity, and religion, that appears multiple times in the same passage, dialogue, or subheading is counted and coded just once to avoid redundancy or duplication.
3. An image, drawing, or character may be coded or counted under multiple categories. For example, images representing three men from the main ethnic groups in Nigeria will be coded under 'Gender' and 'Ethnicity.'
4. National identity refers to the following: Nigeria, Nigerians, Nigerian national Symbols (such as the flag, coat of arms, etc.), the Nigerian constitution, National agencies, the Naira currency, any Nigerian city or state, etc.
5. Nigerians' names or characters (icons) are not coded or counted under the National Identity subcategory. They are coded or counted under different subcategories, such as gender, religious beliefs, or ethnicity. However, if the gender, ethnicity, and religious beliefs of any Nigerian name cannot be unraveled in a passage that does not contain another Nigerian identity, it will be coded or counted under the national identity
6. Other names, symbols, identities, agencies, and images related to other countries are coded or counted under the Global identity. Examples include Africa, the United Kingdom, the United States, the United Nations, and others.
7. In a passage where foreign characters are presented alongside a country, they are coded or counted only under the Gender subcategory. If not, they will be coded under the Global identity and Gender subcategories.
8. An image, drawing, illustration, or picture will be counted based on the exact number of characters it contains. Each character will be counted individually. For example, an image featuring five characters—three men and two women—will be counted accordingly.
9. An image where the exact number of the gender, ethnicity, or identity is difficult to observe will not be counted or coded. However, if the identity, gender, religion, or ethnicity of the main figure is clear, only the main figure(s) will be considered

for coding or counting. For example, an image of a teacher (the main figure) teaching in a classroom of many students.

10. Pronouns relating to names or characters are only considered when they serve as identifiers to names whose genders are not known in a passage. For example, Osaze, an adolescent, promises his parents never to drink alcohol.
11. In a passage or dialogue, characters such as parents, fathers, mothers, uncles, aunts, or others are considered for coding or counting under the Gender category.
12. For the socially cohesive values category, the presence or absence of related topics (such as human rights, democracy, and the rule of law) will be considered in each textbook and qualitatively explained.
13. Characters in passages or dialogues, accompanied by images or drawings of the named characters, will be considered for coding or counting under other categories, such as religious or ethnic.
14. Religious coding or counting only considers images, symbols, or characters that are explicitly referring to belief. Examples include Mosque, Imam, Quran, Allah, Muezzin, etc. for Islam, Bible, Church, Pastor, etc. for Christianity.

Although there are studies conducted on teachers' perceptions of gender representations (see Agha & Shaikh, 2023; Dasrul et al., 2022; Mahmood et al., 2024) and cultural representations (see Yonata et al., 2024) in textbooks, none specifically encompasses all socially cohesive values in a single study. Therefore, it is necessary to formulate interview questions for this study. This study follows the five steps highlighted in the review study of Kallio et al. (2016) on designing semi-structured interview questions. They include (1) identifying the suitability of SSI for the study, (2) retrieving and using relevant literature, (3) formulating a preliminary semi-structured guide, list of questions, (4) pilot testing the list of questions (5) presenting the complete semi-structured guide. For the pilot testing, the research will conduct expert assessment and field testing. Expert assessment involves critiquing the research instruments by an expert outside the research team, while field testing is presenting the list of questions to potential participants in an interview form (Kallio et al., 2016). Find the semi-structured interview guide at the appendices (see Appendix 1).

After I obtained approval from my supervisors for the research instrument, I prepared the interview questions (see Appendix for interview questions), adapted from Yonata et al. (2024). The interview questions, prepared in a Google Form file, consist of four main questions and participants' demography, such as name, state or region, years of

teaching experience, and teaching subject. Having obtained their consent (see Appendix for the consent form's sample) to participate in the study, the link to the prepared question is shared with each participant through his or her WhatsApp page.

Due to network connection uncertainties, time difference, and participants' time constraints, the written interview was conducted. This enables participants to respond at their convenience time or hour. Thus, it is an asynchronous interview. The study still maintains the semi-structured interview as further questions are posed to the participants through their WhatsApp page, where necessary. All participants' responses are then copied and pasted into an MS Word file in preparation for the thematic analysis.

### **3.5. Research Ethics**

Ethics should be the main consideration throughout the research process (Creswell, 2012). Accordingly, educational research ethics is placed at the heart of this study. Specifically, this study adopts the eight (8) ethical principles that are enumerated by Strike (2006), which are more suitably adapted to educational research. He shares, among others, that the researcher must get participants' informed consent, provide anonymity and confidentiality for participants, avoid participants' deceptions, respect the policies and guidelines of the research sites, and ensure their rights to withdraw at any research stage. In line with the aforementioned principles, the researcher will present each participant with a consent form for their informed consent since the study's participants are secondary school teachers, who are already adults and autonomous. Additionally, to ensure confidentiality, participants' names and schools will be replaced with pseudonyms. For instance, T\_SW denotes "participant from South West," and T\_NE denotes "participant from North West." In the case of the North Central with two participants, numbers 1 and 2 are added to avoid confusion – T1\_NC and T2\_NC.

### **3.6. Positionality**

Researchers need to state their positionality as they cannot be excluded from the social world in which they live or the social phenomenon they study (Darwin Holmes, 2020). He, therefore, submits that the reflexive approach should be used to inform the researcher's positionality. Accordingly, this subsection informs the readers about the researcher's positionality concerning this study.

The researcher brings his professional and personal perspectives into the study for being a teacher for about fifteen years in Nigeria. As a Yoruba man from the South West

geopolitical zone, my teaching experience has been predominantly in my region and the North Central (particularly in the Yoruba-speaking dominant state), albeit to diverse students – Muslims, Christians, Igbo, Hausa, Yoruba, Male, and Female. Those years of experience provided me a first-hand experience of how students' values, civic awareness, and identities can be shaped or formed by the contents of textbooks and teachers' delivery of the contents. Therefore, the author is determined to conduct this study – evaluating social cohesion in English and Civic Education textbooks. The author is fully aware of the bias that might creep into the study, however as a researcher, all necessary efforts are made to reduce the bias. The efforts include triangulation by gathering teachers' perceptions, the use of an adapted analytical framework, and the design of coding rubrics, inspired from the extensive literature reviewed.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents and expounds the results of this research study. It is sectioned into four (4) subsections, including an introduction, information on data collection and analysis, a presentation of research results, and a discussion of the results. The study employs a mixed-methods approach for robust data collection. Three research questions are designed, namely: (1) How do the textbooks portray social cohesion and inclusivity? (2) To what extent do the textbooks promote the elements of social cohesion? (3) How do the teachers perceive the textbooks' contents concerning social cohesion?

To answer questions 1 and 2, the contents of twelve (12) textbooks—six from English studies and six from Civic Education—selected from the six (6) geopolitical zones in Nigeria are analyzed using an adapted analytical framework consisting of three categories: Identity, Diversity and Pluralism, and Socially Cohesive Values. The identity category has four subcategories, but only the national and global identities are used in this study. For the diversity and pluralism category, three relevant subcategories of gender, ethnicity, and religion are adopted. Minority, respect for human rights, discrimination, equality, and a sense of social justice are all considered under the socially cohesive values category.

All textbooks are written in English and are in digital form (PDF). Additionally, all images, drawings, and texts are examined in civic education textbooks, whereas only images and passages such as poems, folktales, dialogues, etc, are evaluated in English studies textbooks. Specifically, images and texts related to Nigeria or its agencies are coded and counted under the national identity subcategory. Other materials are categorized under global identity. The pictures and characters of Nigerians are classified and coded by gender and ethnicity, while foreign characters such as Abraham Lincoln and Mandela are only classified by gender. Coding and counting in the religion subcategory are based strictly on religious-related terms such as Quran, Bible, Imam, Pastor, Pope, etc. For example, all images on page 9 in Civ\_SS are coded under gender and ethnicity, while those of Mandela and the Pope on page 10 are classified by gender and global identity. Quantitatively, the socially cohesive values subcategory is not counted. Topics related to the subcategory are only confirmed and coded as 'Present' or 'Absent.' Therefore, the subcategory is qualitatively explained.

The content analysis was conducted manually by the researcher twice to ensure the consistency and robustness of the results. The manual analysis involves counting and coding relevant characters, texts, and images, and recording the results in an MS Word document. The results of the content analysis are presented according to the three main categories of the analytical framework.

For the third question, six (6) teachers were interviewed for their perceptions of the textbook they use regarding social cohesion. The written interview was conducted via WhatsApp, having gotten their consent. The interview questions are prepared in a Google Form file and shared with each participant. Follow-up questions are posed to participants, where necessary, through WhatsApp. All responses are then transferred into an MS Word document in preparation for thematic analysis. All participants are selected by purposive sampling. All results are interpreted using the lens of the social identity theory (SIT).

#### 4.1. Results

##### Quantitative Results

**Table 4.1**

*Overall Frequencies of Each Category in English Studies and Civic Education Textbooks*

| Textbooks       | Identity |        | Diversity and Pluralism |                                          |                                               |
|-----------------|----------|--------|-------------------------|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
|                 | National | Global | Gender                  | Ethnicity                                | Religion                                      |
| Civic Education | 189      | 94     | M = 137<br>F = 29       | I = 7<br>H = 10<br>Y = 14<br>Others = 3  | Islam = 12<br>Christianity = 10<br>Others = 3 |
| English Studies | 92       | 187    | M = 361<br>F = 185      | I = 86<br>H = 38<br>Y = 77               | Islam = 12<br>Christianity = 6<br>Others = 1  |
| Total           | 281      | 281    | M = 498<br>F = 214      | I = 93<br>H = 48<br>Y = 91<br>Others = 3 | Islam = 24<br>Christianity = 16<br>Others = 4 |

Keys: M = Male; F = Female; I = Igbo; H = Hausa; Y = Yoruba

## **Identity**

The identity category includes national, global, group, and individual subcategories. However, the analysis only focused on the national identity and global identity subcategories. During the examination of all textbooks, national and global identities emerged with mixed results. Overall, the representation and promotion of national identity dominate in Civic Education textbooks, appearing 189 times (66.8%) compared to global identity's 94 occurrences (33.2%). For depictions in the national category, civic education textbooks from the northern regions exhibit the highest and equal frequencies ( $f = 36$ ). The Civ\_SE has the lowest representation of national identity ( $f = 20$ ). Among the civic education textbooks, Civ\_NE has the highest frequency of global identity ( $f = 31$ ), followed by Civ\_SW with a frequency of 21. Civ\_SE and Civ\_SS show the lowest illustrations of global identity, with five (5) and eight (8) occurrences, respectively. Another intriguing finding is the depiction of identity by country. The UK appears most frequently with 42 mentions, followed by the US with a frequency of 16. Others include Africa ( $f = 11$ ), Europe ( $f = 9$ ), Asia ( $f = 3$ ), and Others ( $f = 12$ ). See Appendix 4 for the overview of the result. See Appendix 3 for the exact depiction of global identity in the Civic education textbooks.

In contrast, the frequencies of overall representation of national identity and global identity in the English studies textbooks are 92 (32.9%) and 187 (6.71%), respectively. This indicates a lower depiction of the national identity subcategory. Eng\_NE has the highest frequency for national identity ( $f = 27$ ), while Eng\_SW has the lowest frequency ( $f = 7$ ). Eng\_NC has the highest portrayal of global identity with a frequency of 83, followed by Eng\_NE ( $f = 34$ ), Eng\_NW ( $f = 28$ ), and Eng\_SW ( $f = 23$ ). Eng\_SE and Eng\_SS show the lowest portrayal of global identity, with frequencies of 9 and 10, respectively. Africa has the highest depiction with 51 appearances, while the UK has the lowest ( $f = 13$ ). Other regions include the USA ( $f = 26$ ), Asia ( $f = 25$ ), Europe ( $f = 18$ ), and others ( $f = 49$ ). See Appendix 4 for the exact depiction of global identity in the English studies textbooks.

## **Diversity and Pluralism**

The textbooks' analysis centered on three main subcategories: gender, religious representation, and ethnicity. For gender representation, the illustrations of male figures are predominant in all the textbooks. The overall frequency of gender representation in civic

education textbooks is 137 (82.5%) and 29 (17.5%) for male and female figures, respectively. Among all the civic education textbooks, the Civ\_NW textbook has the least representation of the female gender ( $f = 2$ ), with a frequency of 13 for the male gender ( $f = 13$ ). The Civ\_NE textbook has the best male-to-female frequency ratio, with 38 males for every 17 females. A similar trend was found in the English studies textbooks, with a frequency of 361 (66.1%) for male figures compared to 185 (33.9%) for female figures. Eng\_SS has the least male and female frequency and/or percentage ratio, with 63 (76.8%) and 19 (23.2%), respectively. Whereas the Eng\_SE textbook presents gender representation in the best frequency and/or percentage ratio, 52 (53.6%) for males and 45 (46.4%) for females. Overall, the gender frequencies found across all the textbooks are 498 (70.1%) for males and 212 (29.9%) for females. Broadly, these findings mirror and accentuate the patriarchal system existing in Nigerian society.

The frequency of the religion subcategory in all the analyzed textbooks skews towards Islam and Christianity, albeit with a minor illustration of other religious beliefs. Overall, the representation of Islam predominates in civic education textbooks, with a frequency of 12 (50%) compared to Christianity, 10 (41.6%). Others include Catholic and Traditionalist faiths, with one (1) depiction each. Islam and Christianity are equally represented in the Civ\_NE and Civ\_NW textbooks. This is interesting as both states are Muslim majority. However, there is no representation of any religious beliefs in the Civ\_NC and the Civ\_SS textbooks.

The same was found across the analyzed English studies textbooks. The overall frequencies of religious representations are 12 (63.2%), 6 (31.6%), and 1 (5.2%) for Islam, Christianity, and Catholicism, respectively. The Eng\_NW and the Eng\_SE textbooks only portray the Islamic religion. They do not portray any Christianity-related characters. However, there are equal portrayals of Islam and Christianity in Eng\_SS, Eng\_NC, and Eng\_NE textbooks. The Eng\_SW textbook does not portray any religion. Summarily, the total frequency for each religion includes 24 (55.8%), 16 (37.2%), and 3 (7%) for Islam, Christianity, and others (Catholicism and Traditionalist).

Among the over two hundred and fifty (250) ethnic groups in Nigeria, the portrayals of the major tribes, Igbo, Hausa, and Yoruba, dominate across all the textbooks. In the Civic Education textbooks, the overall frequencies of ethnic groups found are 14 (41.2%), 10 (29.4%), 7 (20.6%), and 3 (8.8%) for the Yoruba, Hausa, Igbo, and minority tribes, respectively. While the depictions of the major ethnic groups are unbalanced, only

the Civ\_NW and the Civ\_SS depict the minority groups. The English textbooks' portrayal of ethnicity is higher, with a total frequency of two hundred and three (203). The three major ethnic groups are predominantly represented in the following frequencies: 86(42.4%) for Igbo, 77(37.9%) for Yoruba, and 38(18.7%) for Hausa. The minority groups are only depicted twice (1%).

From the results, particularly in the English textbooks, it is observed that the major tribe in states where the government produces and distributes textbooks is predominantly depicted. For instance, the Hausa and Yoruba tribes dominate in the English textbooks produced and distributed for use by each respective state, Kano and Oyo states. The frequency of each tribe in the Eng\_NW textbooks is as follows: Hausa, 16 (55.2%), Yoruba, 10 (34.5%), and Igbo, 3 (10.3%). The same is found in the Eng\_SW textbook as follows: Yoruba, 12 (60%), Igbo, 6(30%), and Hausa, 2 (10%). Overall, the frequencies of depicted tribes are 93 (39.2%), 91 (38.4%), 48 (20.3%), and 5 (2.1%) for Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa, and minority tribes. See Appendix 2 for the general overview of quantitative results of all categories.

Summarily, the quantitative result under this category reflects a patriarchal system in Nigerian society, with staggering illustrations of male figures or characters. Also, the majoritarian approach is adopted, resulting in dominant depictions of the Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa tribes. The two major religious faiths, Islam and Christianity, are also predominantly presented in the textbooks.

### **Socially Cohesive Values**

This category is represented in all civic education textbooks and only four (4) English studies textbooks. Only Eng\_NE and Eng\_SS textbooks exclude topics that fall under this theme.

### **Qualitative Results**

Although the quantitative results reveal the variables (such as gender, identity, ethnicity, and others) with higher frequencies, they do not provide extensive explanations of the content attached to each variable. Further examination of the quantitative results and contents indicates some interesting findings, relating to the research questions: (1) How do the textbooks portray social cohesion and inclusivity? (2) To what extent do the textbooks promote the elements of social cohesion? Qualitative findings are presented in this section.

## Identity

This section focuses on whose identity is represented and how it is portrayed. The subcategories under this theme include individual, group, national, and global identities.

National identity was consistently promoted throughout the textbooks, both in visual and textual references. As found and presented in the quantitative results, national identity appears more frequently in Civic Education textbooks than in English studies textbooks, which can be attributed to the main objectives of civic education. Most references to national identity eschew calls for separation and intensify the promotion of Nigeria as a unitary entity. There is neither an ethnic group, particularly among the major tribes, that is overly depicted nor any that is stereotypically portrayed when presenting issues related to Nigeria. For instance, in the Civ\_NE textbook, there is an image with the caption: “Members of various ethnic groups in Nigeria depicted as lifting up Nigeria together” (see Page 24).

Additionally, when depicting individuals of integrity, most illustrations feature national icons from diverse ethnic groups to promote national identity, except on one occasion when images of Mandela and the Pope are included. References can be found in Civ\_SS (see Pages 8 & 9), Civ\_NE (see Page 6), Civ\_NC (see Pages 6 & 7), and Civ\_SW (see Pages 20, 21, and 23). Additionally, several national symbols and artifacts are presented to showcase the national identity. The Nigerian map is presented in Civ\_SE (see Pages 26 and 29) and Eng\_SE (Page 15); the images of the Presidential Seal and the Nigerian flag are in Civ\_NW (see Pages 14–18), Civ\_SE (see Page 40), and Civ\_NC (see Page 23).

To promote and instill patriotism, the Civ\_SS textbook presents a paragraph that reads, “Nigerian Army troops to foreign peacekeeping are known for showing great courage and determination while on the battlefield. Also, the Nigerian junior national team, the Eaglets, always show great courage and determination while wearing the green-white-green jersey on the field of soccer.” (Page 26). A similar passage is presented in the Eng\_NC textbook, where the patriotic display of the Falconets (Nigeria's women's football team) is showcased (see Pages 300–301). Most of the English studies textbooks present passages or Nigerian folktales to promote national identity. For example, Eng\_SW presents a passage centered on celebrating Nigerian Independence Day (Page 164) and Nigerian folktales (Page 44), while Eng\_NC presents passages on excursions to various tourist destinations in Nigeria (see Pages 91–92, 204).

As highlighted in the quantitative results of the global identity, the UK has the highest frequency throughout the civic education textbooks, followed by the US and Africa. Close examinations of the textbooks reveal that topics related to the concepts of constitution, federation, and democracy are present, with the UK and the US featuring numerous illustrations. Considering that Nigeria was a British colony is the primary reason for the dominant representation of the United Kingdom, particularly in constitution-related topics (see Civ\_SW, pages 1–15; Civ\_NE, pages 62–67; and Civ\_NW, pages 60–64). The textbooks without constitution-related topics have fewer representations of the British or the UK.

The US is consistently portrayed in themes such as federation and democracy, the same attributes shared by Nigeria. The Civ\_NW and Civ\_NC textbooks listed the USA alongside Nigeria as examples of countries where the three levels of government exist. In the Civ\_NW textbook, an excerpt reads: “Nigeria and the United States of America are good examples of where three levels of government exist.” (Page 11). In the same textbook, the US is listed among countries that practice democracy (Page 42). Other references pointing to the illustration of the US are found under democracy, particularly in its definition, referencing former US President Abraham Lincoln in Civ\_NC (see Pages 55 and 67) and types of election (indirect election) in Civ\_SE (see Page 92) textbooks.

The overwhelming depiction of the African identity in the global identity subcategory across all English textbooks can be attributed to promoting the African heritage, culture, issues, and potential, many of which are shared by Nigeria. Several passages are presented to showcase the rich tradition, folktales, challenges, and history of the African continent. For instance, the Eng\_SW (see Pages 170, 168, and 6) and the Eng\_NC (Pages 230, 210, 289, and 311) share passages that highlight Africa’s potential, the stereotypical behavior towards the continent, and issues bedeviling Africa. An excerpt from the Eng\_NC textbook reads: “If we can deliver the World Cup, we [Africa] will have finally dismissed the idea created by the apartheid that there are greater and lesser human beings. We will be ready to take our place in the world” (Page 210). African cultures are presented in the Eng\_NW (see pages 31 and 43), Eng\_SS (see pages 111 and 127), and Eng\_NE (see pages 29 and 113), while Africa’s challenges are featured in Eng\_SW (see page 6), Eng\_NC (see pages 289 and 311), and Eng\_NE (see pages 15 and 104).

Furthermore, the illustrations of the US and the UK are usually related to inventions (see Eng\_SE, page 58; Eng\_NC, page 96) and expert opinions (Eng\_NC, page

365; Eng\_NW, pages 200 and 113), and as civilized nations (Eng\_NW, page 118; Eng\_SE, page 200). These are indications of the countries' status as powerful and highly intellectual communities, as perceived in Nigerian society.

Overall, the findings under the identity theme contribute to answering RQ1 by showing that the Nigerian national identity is consistently illustrated across all the textbooks, textually and visually, to forge a sense of belonging, social cohesion, and inclusivity. It also portrays global identity by presenting global icons' illustrations to foster a sense of global inclusivity.

### **Diversity and Pluralism**

This section presents the study's findings related to the second category of the analytical framework, Diversity and Pluralism. The section focuses on how the analyzed textbooks represent, illustrate, and acknowledge each subcategory (gender, religion, and ethnicity) under this theme or category.

The textbooks' portrayal of gender representation shows both improvement and setbacks. Inasmuch as the female gender is fairly represented, it is still underrepresented compared with the male gender. Importantly, illustrations of the female gender are not restricted to their matrimonial homes. For instance, the Civ\_NE illustrates a woman as the principal or headmistress of a school (Page 2), a staff of the Nigerian court (Page 30), as officials of the Nigeria Customs Service (NSC), National Agency for Food and Drugs Administration and Control, NAFDAC, and the Independent National Electoral Commission (Pages 37, 38, and 43), and among protesters, exercising their civic rights (Page 21). A similar reference is observed in the Eng\_SE, where women are illustrated among the protesters against bullying (Page 95).

Additionally, while the female gender is represented as a role model for the youths (Page 21) and depicted as one of the persons with integrity (late Prof. Dora Akunyili, Page 20) in Civ\_SW, Eng\_NC presents a passage to promote the Falconets' (The Nigerian Female Junior Soccer Team) act of patriotism. An excerpt from the passage reads: "The girls who represented the country in that competition first believed in themselves and then, driven by a passion to bring glory to their fatherland, mustered the courage they needed to excel..." (Pages 300 – 301). The Eng\_SW textbook also presents a short passage that focuses on gender issues and gender inequality, citing the problems encountered by women in (Afghanistan) society (Pages 38 - 39).

Furthermore, in terms of numbers, the female gender is generally less represented in both positive and negative illustrations. For instance, only one (1) female alongside four (4) males is illustrated in the Civ\_SS when discussing people with integrity (Pages 8 and 9). The same trend is observed in the Civ\_SW, where two (2) females are portrayed under the theme: “Right Attitude to Work” against three male figures (Pages 19 - 23). It is only the Eng\_SE that represents the female gender (2) more than the male (1) when presenting successful entrepreneurs (Page 127). However, except for a few instances where the female gender is negatively portrayed as prostitutes (see Civ\_NE on Page 12), all other negative illustrations or criminal-related illustrations are male-dominated. The stories of Umar Abdulmutolib, Tafa Balogun, and Maurice Iwu, portraying negative behaviours in Civ\_SW (Pages 25, 32, and 47), and the illustrations of a person in the criminal box during a court-hearing session, in police detention, a criminal facing the firing squad, a drug trafficker, and political thugs on Pages 23, 37, 35, 38, and 52, respectively in Civ\_NW are all male figures. Similar illustrations are found in Civ\_SE, where the male gender is depicted as armed robbers (Pages 12 and 24), an undisciplined person (Page 18), a criminal (Page 67), a drug trafficker (Page 70), an electoral thug (Page 101), and disabled beggars (Page 106), and in some English studies textbooks - A passage presents a boy as the thief both in Eng\_SW (Page 78 – 79) and Eng\_NW (Pages 6 - 7) textbooks; men are portrayed as armed robbers (Eng\_NC, Page 89 – 90).

Religious diversity and inclusion are presented in most of the textbooks, but in differing representations. For instance, while the Civ\_SE presents the pictures of an Imam, a Pastor, and a traditionalist (Page 48), Eng\_SW uses Muslim and Christian-named characters (such as Mrs. Ali, Mr. Azeez, Peter, and Deborah), depicting Islam and Christianity in a passage (Page 48). A similar instance is found in the Eng\_SE, where a picture contains a Hijab-wearing student with her non-hijab-wearing friend (Page 53) to promote religious tolerance. However, some textbooks give stereotypical and unbalanced illustrations. Although the Civ\_SW portrays characters of the main religious faith in Nigeria (Islam and Christianity) to explain negative behaviors and election malpractices (Pages 25, 32, and 47), Muslim characters’ pictures (Umar Abdulmutolib and Tafa Balogun) are more emphasized, and well displayed; whereas the Christian character is not (see Page 47). Also, Civ\_SS presents the Pope (the Christian religious leader) as the only religious figure under the theme of “People with Integrity” (Page 10). Further, in the Eng\_NC, a beggar character is depicted as a Muslim (Pages 236 – 238). The above illustrations portray stereotypical depictions of the Muslim people.

Ethnic representations are captured in the textbooks, although they focus on the major groups, Hausa-Fulani, Igbo, and Yoruba. Expectedly, the illustrations of these groups are not balanced. The Civ\_NC presents Nigerians, representing all major ethnicities, with integrity, but more emphasis is placed on those of the Yoruba tribe, as three pictures of Yoruba men are displayed (Pages 7 & 8). A similar representation is observed in Eng\_SW, where the Yoruba tribe is heavily represented (see Pages 44, 63, and 172 on Osa, Oro Festival, and Eyo Festival, respectively), even though the Igbo and Hausa cultural displays are also presented (Page 54).

Further, the Eng\_SE and Eng\_NC textbooks provide fewer accounts of the Hausa tribe. In the former, the Yoruba tribe is more emphasized under the festival theme (Page 32), while only persons of Igbo origin are presented under the theme 'Nigeria's Nightingales' (Pages 103 & 104). In the latter, while the Igbo tribe is dominantly represented as most passages contain Igbo characters (Pages 45 – 46, 51, 65 – 66, 89, 144 – 145, 289 – 291, 296), there is only a passage portraying the Yoruba ethnicity (Page 372 – 373) and none for the Hausa tribe. Even though the Eng\_SS textbook also underrepresents the Hausa tribe, it presents a passage that encompasses all the major ethnicities to promote inclusion. In the passage titled, "How We Spent the Holiday," there is a mix of Igbo, Hausa, and Yoruba characters. They are all portrayed as family members. For example, Dara (a Yoruba name) visited his uncle, Mr. Danladi (a Hausa name) in Kaduna, while Emeka (an Igbo name) visited his brother, Bala (a Hausa name) (Page 8). In the Eng\_NW, although the Igbo and Yoruba characters are illustrated, the Hausa characters dominate (Pages 38 - 39 & 133 - 134). However, the representation of the Yoruba character is stereotypical because it is labeled as a thief in the passage presented (Pages 6 - 7). It is also noteworthy to report that only Eng\_NE represented the minority group (see page 114).

In summary, the findings under this theme illustrate a varying degree of representations of gender, religion, and ethnicity. Although the female gender is portrayed in various official working capacities and partaking in civil responsibilities, it is still underrepresented across all the books. Unsurprisingly, representations of the male gender dominate across all illustrations, including all criminal-related activities. Moreover, the majoritarian approach is taken when depicting ethnicity. Only the major triad of ethnicity, Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba, are illustrated with very limited depiction of the minority group. However, there is a negative stereotypical depiction of a Yoruba character and a Muslim character. Although there are efforts to promote religious tolerance and inclusivity, there appears to be a biased depiction of the Muslim faith. Therefore, this finding relates to

answering RQ1 by revealing the inclusivity of gender, ethnicity, and religion representations.

### **Socially Cohesive Values**

This section presents the result under this theme, which consists of various subcategories, including respect for human rights, equality, sense of social justice, minority, and discrimination. Therefore, the focus of this section is to indicate whether or not each of the subcategories are depicted, and the manner of their depictions.

Unsurprisingly, all the civic education textbooks present passages on human rights and the rule of law - two main themes in its curriculum. The books present how human rights can be protected and/or encouraged both in cognitive and psychomotor approaches. For example, the Civ\_SS (Page 47) states that lobbying, strike actions, dialogue, and legal actions are means to ensure that the rights of citizens are not trampled upon by the state. Also, the Civ\_NW (Pages 39 and 40), Civ\_SS (Page 44), and Civ\_NE (Yobe, Pages 39 and 40) submit that groups such as the civil societies, students' unions, ethnic unions, and legal aid councils assist in ensuring justice prevails. However, while listing ethnic groups that are fighting for human rights, the Civ\_NW surprisingly lists only groups from Southern Nigeria, suggesting a regional bias in the depiction of civic engagement. More instances of topics on protecting human rights and the rule of law are also found in the Civ\_SE (Pages 56 - 62) and Civ\_SW (Page 3).

Fewer presentations of human rights are found in English studies textbooks. It was only the Eng\_SW (Page 55) and Eng\_NW (Page 49) textbooks that presented passages on human rights to educate the readers. The presentation and information on human rights and the rule of law, as portrayed by the textbooks, will adequately equip users on the importance of ensuring that human rights are implemented such that every member of society can feel a sense of belonging and safety.

Further, to promote the fight against discrimination and ensure equality regardless of (dis)ability, color, or status, the Eng\_SE textbook presents a passage on the Paralympic, the Olympic version of the disabled (Page 47). Similarly, Eng\_NC and Civ\_SE present a passage on racial discrimination (Pages 26 & 27) and a picture depicting protesters against the discrimination of HIV/AIDS patients (page 72), respectively. These representations are vital messages to inform readers of embracing diversity in our society, regardless of status or condition.

Summarily, topics related to human rights and the rules of law are tremendously presented, particularly across Civic Education textbooks. However, few presentations of human rights and the rule of law-related topics, and the small representations of underrepresented groups, such as people with disabilities, are worrisome. This might indicate that the marginalized groups are insignificant in Nigerian society. This finding is particularly related to RQ 2 by providing representations of the element of social cohesion.

### **Teachers' Perceptions on Textbooks**

This section presents the written interview's result conducted to answer the third research question: How do the teachers perceive the textbooks' contents concerning social cohesion? The semi-structured written interview was conducted with six (6) purposively selected teachers from different geopolitical zones in Nigeria through a survey created with Google Forms and shared with participants via WhatsApp. Where necessary, follow-up questions are raised to participants via their WhatsApp pages. The findings are presented according to emergent themes.

### **Representation of Diverse Experience**

The findings highlight teachers' awareness of their textbooks. The majority of the teachers display their knowledge of social cohesion and the roles of textbooks in promoting it. They all agreed that textbooks can promote social cohesion and inclusivity by illustrating diverse groups and their experiences. T\_SW submits that "by sharing stories of people from different backgrounds, using examples that illustrate diverse experiences," (6/18/2025; 17:49:40) textbooks can ensure social cohesion and inclusivity. Similarly, T\_NE argues that textbooks can only promote social cohesion and inclusivity when they "involve telling real-life experiences that represent all parts of Nigeria" (6/18/2025; 9:56:22), whereas T1\_NC submits that it is "when all religions and ethnicities are duly represented ... properly and fairly". Another participant, T\_NW, shares that including topics such as 'federation' in the textbook will facilitate students' understanding of a united Nigeria, "even though they come from different backgrounds, tribes, religions..." (6/19/2025; 20:01:39). T\_SE also shares that textbooks can play vital role in ensuring social cohesion and inclusivity "by reflecting diverse perspectives, cultures, and histories, fostering empathy and understanding among students."

### **Majoritarian Approach**

Another major finding is the illustration of dominant groups. Almost all participants responded that the three major ethnic groups, Igbo, Hausa, and Yoruba, as well as the dominant religious beliefs, such as Islam and Christianity, are commonly represented in their textbooks. Only a few mentioned the illustration of the traditional religion. They also confirm the representation of males and females.

The T\_NE responds that major groups are overwhelmingly depicted, whereas minority groups and females are limitedly represented. In his words, he shares that “major groups such as the Christians, Muslims, and the major ethnic groups (Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo) have mostly been dominant as existing textbooks are full of them...” All other participants also confirm the dominant representations of major ethnic groups and religious beliefs (Christianity and Islam). Similarly, T\_NW contends that in the textbook she teaches with “the religious [faiths] often mention [are] Christianity and Islam, talking of ethnicity it's Hausa, follow by Yoruba and Igbo respectively.” However, the dominant groups are also unfairly portrayed. For instance, T\_SW reports that the Yoruba tribe is more represented than other tribes. She says, “...Yoruba tribe is more represented in the textbook we use here.” Also, participants T\_SE and T2\_NC have similar perceptions. T\_SE shares that “Yoruba names and settings are mostly used in comprehension in English textbook, especially in the eastern part of Nigeria,” whereas T2\_NC states that the Yoruba and Igbo tribes are commonly portrayed, with less portrayal of the Hausa tribe.

Furthermore, follow-up questions were asked regarding gender portrayal, revealing mixed responses from T\_NE, T\_SW, T\_NW, and T2\_NC participants. Among these four participants, only T\_SW asserts that the female gender is illustrated more than the male gender. In contrast, others report the opposite. According to T\_NW and T2\_NC, they stated that both genders are equally represented, but T2\_NC further shares that the female gender is “most times [depicted] as a subordinate to the male gender.” Similarly, T\_NE noted that women not only have fewer portrayals than men, but they are also depicted as men’s assistants.

Overall, teachers report that textbooks take the majoritarian approach by either exclusively depicting major groups or underrepresenting minority groups. Moreover, they shared that women are presented as secondary figures to men.

## 4.2. Discussions

This section presents the study's main findings related to the research questions, examined through the lens of Social Identity Theory (SIT). Additionally, relevant literature is integrated to contextualize the findings. Relying on the quantitative and qualitative findings, the discussion analyses how Nigerian junior secondary school textbooks promote social cohesion and inclusivity, and uncovers the extent to which they promote socially cohesive values.

RQ1: How do the textbooks portray social cohesion and inclusivity?

Overall, the analyses of textbooks revealed the portrayal of social cohesion and inclusivity by promoting national identity in the forms of national symbols, national icons, and narrations, especially in civic education textbooks. These depictions provide a glimpse of a sense of belonging by all, regardless of ethnicity or religion, a united Nigeria. However, the dominant approach is commonly found across all textbooks in relation to gender, ethnicity, and religious representations. Minority groups are either excluded or minutely illustrated. For example, there are only three (3) illustrations of minority religious faiths, just five (5) occurrences of the minority tribes, fewer illustrations of female figures or characters, and one (1) mention of people with disabilities across all textbooks. Undoubtedly, the diversity present in Nigerian society is not adequately reflected in the textbooks' illustrations and narratives. Moreover, even though gender diversity is considerably recognized, the exclusive depiction of male figures in criminal-related illustrations is defective. Similarly, despite having illustrations than Christianity, Islam is rarely depicted positively.

From the perspectives of Social Identity Theory (SIT), the textbooks buttress the dominance of major groups and their importance in the national sphere, while minority groups are perceived as less important in society. This results in the formation of 'national' ingroups (majority groups) and outgroups (minority groups) or a 'we' versus 'them' situation. As highlighted by Stets and Burke (2000), the dominant groups will be positively illustrated, while the marginalized group will attract a negative portrayal. This occurrence is found in Civ\_NE and Civ\_SS, where only individuals from the dominant groups are illustrated as having integrity. Consequently, students from minority groups will possess low self-perception and self-esteem. A 'we' versus 'them' situation, as observed in the textbooks, is not healthy and favorable for a country as conflict-volatile as Nigeria, with a low social cohesion index. It is also unsurprising that religion and ethnicity are recurring

main factors that result in Nigeria's low social cohesion index, according to the Africa Polling Institute's Nigeria Social Cohesion Index for the years 2021 and 2022.

Furthermore, instead of pursuing a common goal - the growth and development of the country (Nigeria) – the two-dimensional portrayal of ingroup (we) versus outgroup (them) will rather slow down progress. This is due to the absence of unity of purpose. According to Lange et al. (2012), the intergroup relationship often results in a value-attached and status-determining situation, causing prejudiced dealings with the outgroup, a presumably less valued and low-status group (Whitaker, 2020). A minority group whose identity is missing or that which is stereotypically depicted in the textbooks will feel less Nigerian and skew toward the progress of his or her group, religion, gender, or ethnicity, and the downfall of the Nigerian entity. Roberts-Schweitzer et al. (2006) argue that group exclusion and stereotypical depictions in textbooks lead to extreme reactions in a state. Hence, Nigeria is not an exception to such extreme reactions. Therefore, the majoritarian approach adopted in the analyzed textbooks will rather intensify social disharmony instead of promoting social cohesion.

This result corresponds with many relevant studies on textbook analysis, most of which reported the underrepresentation or exclusion of minority groups and the overrepresentation of dominant groups (Cheng & Beigi, 2012; Cho & Park, 2016; Mustapha, 2014; Parlindungan et al., 2018; Rezai-Rashti et al., 2019; Rob et al., 2020; Xiang & Yenika-Agbaw, 2021; Yonata et al., 2024; Zakka et al., 2015). On the other hand, the tremendous depiction of male figures in crime-related scenes across all textbooks is synonymous with the stereotypical portrayal of the male gender. This result contradicts Rezai-Rashti et al.'s (2019) finding, which reported a stereotypical depiction of the female gender. They share that the female gender is represented as a subordinate to the male gender.

RQ2: To what extent do the textbooks promote the elements of social cohesion?

Topics related to human rights, democracy, and the rule of law are adequately presented across all the civic education textbooks, with only four English studies textbooks presenting illustrations or passages that fall under the socially cohesive values category. Hence, there are limited presentations of socially cohesive elements in English studies textbooks.

Educating students on the benefits of ensuring human rights and the ways and their roles in achieving them is commendable. This is an important step in promoting socially

cohesive values at an early stage of students' school life. These textual and visual illustrations of socially cohesive values are not only preached but also displayed for implementation. For instance, images of protesters and students rally are found in Civ\_SE (page 72) and Civ\_NW (page 40). Similarly, pictures of voters exercising democratic rights are displayed in Civ\_SE (page 91) and Civ\_NE (page 43). Beutel (2012) submits that promoting democratic values such as "tolerance, empathy, experiencing self-effectiveness, change of perception, constructive ways of dealing with conflicts, the ability to judge ethically, and a sense of fairness" and competence should start early in learners' school life (p. 9). When students imbibe these values at an early stage, they tend to fairly deal with others. Thus, they tend to promote social cohesion.

Despite the extensive presentations of topics relating to human rights, democracy, and the rule of law in the civic education textbooks, they fail to include the voices of marginalized groups, especially people with disabilities. None of the textbooks listed people with disabilities among the groups that protect human rights. For instance, groups such as ethnic groups, civil society, trade unions, students' unions, and legal aid councils are mentioned among groups that protect human rights and the rule of law (see Civ\_NW, p. 39 & 40; Civ\_NW, p. 40; Civ\_SS, p. 48). The limited illustrations of people with disabilities conform to studies on media representation of PDWs. Most studies report an underrepresentation of PDWs in textbooks and mass media (Chukwuma and Omokhunu, 2024; Jensen, 2023; Ogundola and Liebler, 2024; Seth, 2020). However, it is noteworthy to mention that the female gender is not excluded in images depicting civic engagement. Essentially, women's associations or groups are listed among pressure groups that ensure human rights are not trampled upon (see Civ\_NW, p. 47 and Civ\_NC, p. 44). These few illustrations point out the fact that the female gender's role is gradually changing. Undoubtedly, this will positively increase the girl child's self-esteem.

Moreover, the only portrayal of PWDs is on Paralympics, which aligns with Chukwuma and Omokhunu's (2024) claims that mass media, including textbooks, occasionally represent PWDs on special events such as the Paralympics. This, as stated by Jensen et al. (2023), could be a means to avoid negative stereotypes against them because they are always framed inappropriately (Ogundola & Liebler, 2024). Yet, a population of about 35.8 million people deserves more recognition. This low depiction could send a bad signal to students with disabilities that they are not valued or welcome in the Nigerian society, and misinform students without disabilities.

The limited representation of human rights and democratic values-related topics in English studies textbooks is disturbing because English is not only a compulsory teaching subject but also a daily taught subject in Nigerian high schools. This shows that socially cohesive values are not considered vital in English studies textbooks, whereas Beutel (2012) argues that politics and democratic principles should be taught in multiple subjects at the secondary school level.

Considering the mixed presentations of the elements of social cohesion across all analyzed textbooks, it is obvious that those elements are inadequately presented and illustrated. Although it could be argued that all civic education textbooks present topics that are related to promoting socially cohesive or democratic values, visual illustrations are still limited. Moreover, the voices of the marginalized groups are curtailed and confined. Consequently, the values cannot be ascertained to be equally accessible by all identities and groups.

Interpreting this through the lens of Social Identity Theory (SIT) reveals an ‘othering’ situation of ‘we’ versus ‘them’. This highlights the value assigned to different groups or identities, particularly people with disabilities, whose representations are limited and who face insufficient efforts for integration into the broader society, unlike the female gender. This finding aligns with Cho and Park’s (2016) study, which reported that multicultural content ‘was not very well reflected and was concentrated on certain elements per subjects and per schools’ (p. 14). They also noted that elements such as ‘minority’ and ‘discrimination’ are rare or scarce. Consequently, the contents of the textbooks do not reflect the diversity present in Nigerian society.

Incorporating the findings from this study into the broader context of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is germane to explore their conformity with relevant goals, especially Goals 4, 5, and 16. Goal 4 focuses on inclusive and equitable quality education, where no one is left behind. Unfortunately, narratives of minority groups are either limited or missing in the textbooks. Therefore, it is safe to say that the textbooks do not promote inclusivity. Also, although improvement could be noticed in the representation of females, which conforms to SDG 5, calling for gender equality at all levels, however, disparity persists as the male gender is highly represented across the textbooks. Additionally, the textbooks insufficiently present elements of socially cohesive values, including a sense of social, equality, and discrimination, in line with SDG 16 (promote peace and provide access to justice for all), because people with disabilities are only featured once throughout the textbooks. It is evident that the findings contrast the Sustainable Development Goals

(SDGs). However, it is important to state that the findings do not represent Nigeria's efforts toward achieving the SDGs.

RQ 3: How do teachers perceive the content of the textbooks regarding social cohesion?

Findings show that teachers perceive their textbooks to highly represent major groups and label women as subordinate figures to men. They also shared that textbooks can only promote social cohesion and inclusivity when they include all voices, regardless of ethnicity, religious beliefs, gender, or status.

Results of teachers' perceptions of their textbooks align with the results of the textbooks' content analysis in this study, which revealed high representation of major ethnic groups, Igbo, Hausa, and Yoruba, and major religious beliefs, Islam and Christianity, and limited representations of minority groups. This further strengthens the study's results and reflects the situations in Nigerian society. Through the lens of the social identity theory (SIT), it suggests that teachers perceive textbooks to be reinforcing the dominance of major groups and the exclusion of minority groups, leading to in-groups against out-groups, or a 'we' versus 'them' situation. All teacher participants are from the major religious beliefs (Christianity and Islam) and tribes (Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba) and are favored by the textbooks' representations. Based on the social identity theory (SIT), teacher participants will experience a high self-esteem, favor students from majority groups, and disregard those from minority groups. However, they perceive and report the unfair illustration of the minority groups. Their perceptions are not beclouded by their cultural or religious identities. Therefore, it contrasts with the SIT.

It is a good thing that teachers are aware that textbooks can potentially promote social cohesion or intensify social disharmony. Consequently, as textbook users, they can remedy the flaws by presenting balanced and inclusive views during their teaching activities. Essentially, some teachers stated that they correct the anomalies where necessary. For instance, T1\_NC shares that whenever he comes across a negative portrayal during class activities, he would "try to correct the impression and provide the accurate information." (6/21/2025; 0:39:53). Similarly, T\_NE states that, "by providing my own insight in discussions, presenting alternative and inclusive points of view," he hopes to correct the defective illustrations. This is vital because, as agents of change, teachers can ensure objective presentations of the unbalanced illustrations. On the other hand, precautions must be taken to prevent a highly skewed and biased presentation by teachers when trying to correct textbooks' unbalanced and negative representations. T\_SE cites that Yoruba characters and settings dominate the textbook commonly used in South-Eastern

Nigeria, an Igbo-dominated region. Therefore, she would substitute the Yoruba characters with Igbo characters. She said that “I, most times, change names to the names and settings related to their ethnicity or tribe so they won't be confused about it.”

This result is consistent with the study of Yonata et al. (2024), who shared that teachers perceived the dominant representations of inner countries and limited illustrations of outer and expanding circles. Similarly, Agha and Shaikh (2023) and Mahmood et al. (2024) noted that teachers confirmed the majoritarian approach in their textbooks, with the underrepresentation of the female gender. However, the finding contradicts Bhandiri et al (2023), who stated that most of the teachers agreed that the contents of the textbooks used in Nepal are unbiased. Teachers' perceptions have practical consequences in classrooms, as some of them shared that they offer inclusive perceptions instead of the imbalanced views presented by the textbooks. Such selective or exclusive representations of one group may weaken the social bond of students from the marginalized group. Therefore, they feel excluded and non-Nigerian. Thus, significant progress and development cannot be achieved with these highly skewed representations. Hence, there is an urgent need for the review of the textbooks for a more inclusive approach.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section presents the conclusion, suggestions, and limitations of the study. The conclusion briefly summarizes the major findings and discussions of the study, followed by the study's limitations. After that, suggestions are provided.

#### 5.1. Conclusion

Nigeria's issue of social cohesion is evident in various social vices, such as secessionist agitation, religious intolerance, and ethnic tensions throughout the nation. Despite Nigeria's low social cohesion index, most studies in the Nigerian context neglect the examination of social cohesion in educational settings, including school textbooks. Therefore, this study aims to evaluate junior secondary school English studies and Civic Education textbooks selected across Nigeria's six (6) geopolitical zones to analyze their contributions to promoting social cohesion, using an adapted analytical framework, and adopting the mixed-method approach. Additionally, teachers' perceptions of the textbooks are also explored. The findings are discussed through the lens of the social identity theory (SIT).

The study's findings reveal that many of the textbooks do not sufficiently promote social cohesion as they unfairly represent minority ethnic groups, display stereotypes against gender, especially males, and extensively represent the Islam and Christianity faiths. Most of them portray a majoritarian approach. Additionally, there is a limited depiction of marginalized groups, such as people with disabilities, which may imply that they are less valued in Nigerian society. Teachers also perceive that the majoritarian approach is taken by textbooks by the high illustration of dominant groups. They also share that presenting diverse experience is a means by which textbooks can ensure social cohesion and inclusivity. From a social identity theoretical perspective, these findings may indicate a 'we-vs-them' situation, where marginalized groups are excluded from the assumed national in-group. These findings contribute to the growing body of literature advocating for an inclusive curriculum in pluralistic societies, including Nigeria, where no child is left behind.

## **5.2. Limitations**

The study has several limitations despite its contributions. Nigeria is a federation with thirty-six (36) states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Therefore, selecting twelve (12) textbooks from just six (6) states (each representing one geopolitical zone) may not adequately reflect the range of textbooks used nationwide. Furthermore, the exclusive analysis of passages in English studies textbooks may not sufficiently capture their depictions. Additionally, since some states recommend more than one English studies and Civic Education textbook, the researcher selects the ones that are readily available from the list. Consequently, the results may not represent the actual occurrences in those states. They cannot provide a complete picture of the zones each state represents in promoting or discouraging social cohesion and inclusivity.

## **5.3. Suggestions and Recommendations**

From the study's findings, it is evident that the study can be improved. Improvements can be made in multiple sections, including interviewing, the number of teacher participants, the number of analyzed textbooks, and the reliability test.

Although the main research questions are sufficiently answered through the analysis of textbooks, conducting written interviews with six teachers cannot provide a detailed account of their perceptions of the textbooks. Conducting oral interviews with more teachers, at least twelve, with each representing one textbook (civic education or English studies) from each region, will yield a more comprehensive response. Furthermore, additional textbooks should be analyzed. Subsequent studies should ensure that commonly recommended and utilized textbooks from all 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) are reviewed. This could potentially involve analyzing a single-subject textbook, such as English studies nationwide, or several subject textbooks, including English studies, civic education, basic science and technology (BST), Yoruba studies, and physical health and education (PHE) textbooks. Moreover, all images and texts, such as examples, classwork, and assignments, should be included for analysis. For a single-subject textbook analysis, a comparative study between the North and South, or between subjects A and B in a multiple-subject textbook analysis, would be fascinating.

Furthermore, involving class observations will provide firsthand experience of how the textbooks' contents are implemented by teachers and received by students. Employing an inter-coder reliability test will increase the study's reliability.

The textbooks must provide a fair and non-stereotypical depiction of any religion, gender, or ethnicity. Consequently, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. Professional training for authors and publishers.
2. Revision of the textbooks to capture diversity and inclusivity
3. The government should set up a regulatory body to evaluate textbooks' contents before publishing.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1

#### Research Instrument

##### Teachers' Demographic Information

| S/N | Name | Educational Level | State/Region | Subject Taught | Teaching experience (Years) |
|-----|------|-------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------------------|
|     |      |                   |              |                |                             |

**Introduction:** This study aims to investigate whether Nigerian junior secondary school English Language and Civic Education textbooks promote social cohesion. Thus, the objective of this written interview is to gather your perceptions on the textbooks you use for teaching your students. Specifically, this interview seeks to answer the question: How do teachers perceive the content of textbooks in relation to social cohesion?

Note: Social Cohesion is the process by which all members of society, regardless of gender, religious beliefs, tribe, or identity, have equal rights and opportunities.

#### Questions

1. How do you think textbooks can ensure social cohesion and inclusivity?

In the textbook you are using:

2. What religious beliefs, ethnicity, and gender are commonly represented?
3. Do you think religious beliefs, ethnicities, and gender are fairly represented?  
If not, what would you suggest to address the unbalanced representation?
4. Do you observe any negative portrayal of religious belief, ethnicity, or gender? If yes, what have you done to correct the portrayal?

Adapted from Yonata et al., 2024

## Appendix 2

### Quantitative Results of Textbooks content Analysis

| Textbooks | Identity |        |                  | Diversity<br>and Pluralism                          |                                                                     | Socially<br>cohesive<br>values |
|-----------|----------|--------|------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
|           | National | Global | Gender           | Ethnicity                                           | Religion                                                            |                                |
| Civ_NE    | 36       | 31     | M = 38<br>F = 17 | Igbo = 3<br>Hausa = 4<br>Yoruba = 3<br>Minority = 0 | Christianity = 3<br>Islam = 3<br>Catholicism = 0<br>Traditional = 0 | Present                        |
| Civ_NW    | 36       | 18     | M = 13<br>F = 2  | Igbo = 0<br>Hausa = 0<br>Yoruba = 1<br>Minority = 2 | Christianity = 3<br>Islam = 3<br>Catholicism = 0<br>Traditional = 0 | Present                        |
| Civ_NC    | 36       | 11     | M = 17<br>F = 2  | Igbo = 0<br>Hausa = 1<br>Yoruba = 3<br>Minority = 0 | None                                                                | Present                        |
| Civ_SW    | 35       | 21     | M = 35<br>F = 4  | Igbo = 3<br>Hausa = 3<br>Yoruba = 5<br>Minority = 0 | Christianity = 3<br>Islam = 4<br>Catholicism = 0<br>Traditional = 0 | Present                        |
| Civ_SE    | 20       | 5      | M = 22<br>F = 3  | Igbo = 1<br>Hausa = 1<br>Yoruba = 1                 | Christianity = 1<br>Islam = 2<br>Catholicism = 0<br>Traditional = 1 | Present                        |

|        |    |    |                   |                                                      |                                                  |         |
|--------|----|----|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Civ_SS | 26 | 8  | M = 12<br>F = 1   | Igbo = 1<br>Hausa = 1<br>Yoruba = 1                  | None                                             | Present |
| Eng_NE | 27 | 34 | M = 62<br>F = 40  | Igbo = 16<br>Hausa = 3<br>Yoruba = 2<br>Minority = 2 | Christianity = 1<br>Islam = 2<br>Catholicism = 0 | Absent  |
| Eng_NW | 14 | 28 | M = 49<br>F = 20  | Igbo = 16<br>Hausa = 3<br>Yoruba = 2<br>Minority = 2 | Islam = 4<br>Christianity = 0                    | Present |
| Eng_NC | 19 | 83 | M = 109<br>F = 46 | Igbo = 41<br>Hausa = 6<br>Yoruba = 18                | Islam = 3<br>Christianity = 3                    | Present |
| Eng_SW | 7  | 23 | M = 26<br>F = 15  | Igbo = 6<br>Hausa = 2<br>Yoruba = 12                 | None                                             | Present |
| Eng_SE | 15 | 9  | M = 52<br>F = 45  | Igbo = 11<br>Hausa = 2<br>Yoruba = 10                | Islam = 2<br>Christianity = 0                    | Present |
| Eng_SS | 10 | 10 | M = 63<br>F = 19  | Igbo = 9<br>Hausa = 9<br>Yoruba = 25                 | Islam = 2<br>Christianity = 2                    | Absent  |

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Keys: SS = South South; SE = South East; SW = South West; NW = North West; NE = North East; NC = North Central; M = Male; F = Female

### Appendix 3

*Frequencies per Countries and Continents under the Global Identity across Civic Education Textbooks*

|         | USA | UK | Africa | Europe | Asia | Others | Total |
|---------|-----|----|--------|--------|------|--------|-------|
| CvEd_NC | 4   | 1  | 0      | 3      | 2    | 1      | 11    |
| CvEd_NE | 1   | 21 | 4      | 2      | 0    | 3      | 31    |
| CvEd_NW | 5   | 8  | 0      | 1      | 1    | 3      | 18    |
| CvEd_SE | 3   | 0  | 1      | 0      | 0    | 1      | 5     |
| CvEd_SS | 0   | 1  | 3      | 2      | 0    | 2      | 8     |
| CvEd_SW | 3   | 12 | 3      | 1      | 0    | 2      | 21    |
| Total   | 16  | 42 | 11     | 9      | 3    | 12     | 94    |

#### Appendix 4

*Frequencies per Countries and Continents under the Global Identity across English Language Textbooks*

|        | USA | UK | Africa | Europe | Asia | Others | Total |
|--------|-----|----|--------|--------|------|--------|-------|
| Eng_NC | 10  | 3  | 27     | 10     | 14   | 19     | 83    |
| Eng_NE | 6   | 3  | 8      | 3      | 4    | 10     | 34    |
| Eng_NW | 3   | 3  | 6      | 0      | 3    | 13     | 28    |
| Eng_SE | 3   | 1  | 0      | 0      | 1    | 4      | 9     |
| Eng_SS | 2   | 1  | 3      | 4      | 0    | 0      | 10    |
| Eng_SW | 2   | 2  | 7      | 2      | 5    | 5      | 23    |
| Total  | 26  | 13 | 51     | 18     | 25   | 49     | 187   |