

Research Article

Integrating Civic Education Curriculum With Islamic Moral Principles For Character Formation Among Secondary School Students In Zamfara State, Nigeria

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Abstract. This study examined the effect of integrating Civic Education with Islamic moral principles on students' moral behaviour, civic responsibility, discipline, and social harmony among secondary school students in Zamfara State, Nigeria. The study adopted a quantitative research approach using a descriptive survey design to collect data from 384 respondents, including Civic Education and Islamic Studies teachers. A structured questionnaire titled Integration of Civic and Islamic Moral Education Questionnaire (ICIMEQ) was developed and validated by experts, with a reliability

coefficient of 0.88 obtained using Cronbach Alpha. Data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics such as mean, standard deviation, Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC), and independent t-test at a 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed a strong and significant positive relationship between the integration of Civic and Islamic moral principles and students' moral behaviour, civic responsibility, discipline, and social harmony ($r = .612, p < .05$). Results also showed that teachers generally perceived the integration as relevant and practical, although Civic Education teachers recorded slightly higher mean scores than Islamic Studies teachers ($t = 3.28, p = .001$). This implies that blending Civic Education content with Islamic moral teachings effectively promotes ethical conduct, social harmony, and responsible citizenship among students. The study's findings align with Bandura's Social Learning Theory and Kohlberg's Moral Development Theory, which emphasize learning through moral reasoning, observation, and value internalization. The study concluded that integrating Civic Education with Islamic moral principles offers a holistic framework for character formation and nation-building. It was recommended that curriculum planners, policymakers, and teachers adopt this integrated approach to strengthen moral education, promote discipline, and enhance civic values among Nigerian students.

Keywords: Character Formation, Civic Education, Curriculum Integration, Islamic Moral Principles, Moral Behaviour.

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a pivotal role in shaping the moral, civic and social dispositions of young people, and in contexts like Zamfara State where Islamic religion deeply informs everyday life the interplay between formal civic curricula and religious moral instruction is especially important. Contemporary curriculum scholarship argues that schools are not merely sites for cognitive development but are also central to value transmission and the cultivation of character (Adebayo, 2025). Civic Education, as articulated in Nigeria's basic education frameworks, aims to inculcate responsible citizenship, respect for rule of law, and community-mindedness; however, researchers note a persistent "character deficit" in many parts of Nigeria that educational policy alone has yet to fully resolve. Parallel to civic curricula, Islamic Studies and Islamic moral education have long been recognized as primary sources of ethical formation in Muslim-majority communities, providing both normative frameworks and daily practices that guide behaviour, social responsibility, and notions of justice and compassion. Recent empirical work on Islamic moral education highlights its active role in character formation arguing that Islamic pedagogies, when effectively implemented, foster virtues such as honesty, self-discipline, and social solidarity that complement civic aims (Lateef, 2024; Ijaz, 2025).

Nevertheless, scholars also point out variability in curriculum implementation and teacher readiness, which can constrain the potential of Islamic instruction to contribute consistently to students' moral development. Investigations into teachers' perceptions of Islamic Studies report generally positive views about its relevance for moral development but also reveal gaps in pedagogical resources and in-service training that limit impact (Kabir, 2024). Likewise, evaluations of Civic

Education implementation show that while the curriculum contains value-laden content, its translation into measurable changes in student character depends on classroom practices, teacher competence, and the socio-cultural resonance of the material (Ugobueze, 2024; Formosa Publisher assessment, 2024). These findings suggest that integration rather than separation of civic and Islamic moral aims may be a promising avenue for character formation, provided integration is carefully designed and contextually appropriate. Empirical research conducted across Nigeria and other Muslim-majority regions consistently underscores the critical role of moral and civic instruction in molding students' values, ethics, and social conduct. In a quantitative investigation involving 480 secondary school students from southwestern Nigeria, Adebayo (2025) explored the link between character education and adolescent flourishing.

The study revealed that learners exposed to structured civic and moral education displayed significantly greater levels of integrity, empathy, and social responsibility compared to their counterparts without such exposure. These findings reinforce the idea that education which deliberately fosters moral reasoning and civic participation contributes to the holistic development of young people. In a complementary study, Ugobueze (2024) employed a mixed-method approach to examine the influence of Citizenship Education on the promotion of civic values among students in southeastern Nigeria. The study discovered that although the Civic Education curriculum contains key virtues such as discipline, respect for authority, and patriotism, its real-world impact remains constrained by limited teacher capacity and insufficient contextual adaptation. The researcher concluded that integrating civic education with indigenous cultural and religious values could significantly enhance students' moral awareness and behavioral transformation. Likewise, Lateef (2024) investigated how Islamic moral education contributes to peacebuilding and ethical character development in northern Nigeria. Drawing on qualitative interviews with 30 Islamic Studies teachers and scholars, the study found that Islamic pedagogy nurtures virtues such as justice (*adl*), patience (*sabr*), and compassion (*rahmah*), all of which are essential for harmonious coexistence and responsible citizenship.

However, the research observed that these moral teachings often remain confined to religious settings, limiting their synergy with the civic ideals promoted through formal schooling. In another empirical survey, Kabir (2024) examined Islamic Studies teachers' perceptions of the subject's role in fostering moral behavior among students in Katsina and Zamfara States. The findings showed that 86% of respondents recognized Islamic Studies as a vital tool for moral development. Nevertheless, many highlighted challenges such as insufficient instructional materials and inadequate teacher preparation in character education pedagogy. The study recommended a curriculum integration model that blends Islamic moral

teachings with civic and social studies content to promote holistic ethical formation in northern Nigerian schools.

Furthermore, Ijaz (2025) conducted a qualitative case study to assess how Islamic education nurtures character formation among adolescents in a faith-based secondary school setting. The results demonstrated that Islamic pedagogical methods particularly moral storytelling, role modeling, and peer mentoring enhance students' honesty, self-discipline, and sense of social responsibility. The study emphasized the importance of collaboration between civic and religious educators to ensure that moral instruction remains spiritually rooted and socially applicable. Additionally, the Formosa Publisher (2024) assessment report on the implementation of Nigeria's Civic Education curriculum revealed that although the subject raises students' awareness of civic responsibilities, its effectiveness in shaping moral conduct remains limited by inconsistent teaching methods and the absence of strong ethical reinforcement. The report recommended incorporating religious and moral perspectives into Civic Education to strengthen students' character, discipline, and commitment to social responsibility.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977), which underscores that learning is a social process shaped by observation, imitation, and modeling. According to Bandura, individuals especially children and adolescents do not learn solely through direct instruction but also by watching the behavior of others and the consequences that follow such actions. In educational settings, teachers, parents, peers, and community leaders serve as vital role models whose conduct influences learners' moral and civic dispositions (Bandura, 1977). Within the context of Zamfara State, where Islamic values deeply influence everyday life, the integration of Civic Education Curriculum with Islamic moral principles offers students a consistent environment for observing and internalizing socially desirable values. When teachers exemplify honesty, justice, respect, and community service in both civic and religious instruction, students are more likely to imitate these behaviors, thereby developing strong moral character and civic responsibility.

Moreover, researchers' supports the relevance of Social Learning Theory in explaining moral and civic development. Latjompoh (2025) affirmed that embedding religious and moral values in classroom practices significantly enhances students' ethical sensitivity, especially when reinforced through positive modeling by teachers. Likewise, Nwachukwu (2024) emphasized that moral reform in Nigerian schools largely depends on the moral integrity of educators and the supportive social environment in which teaching occurs. These studies align with Bandura's proposition that behavior change and moral development arise through a dynamic interaction between cognitive processes, social influences, and environmental

reinforcement, making the theory highly appropriate for exploring character formation among secondary school students in Zamfara State.

To complement this perspective, the study draws on Lawrence Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development (1981), which describe moral growth as a progression from externally motivated obedience to internally guided ethical reasoning. Kohlberg's theory helps explain how learners advance from simply following rules to acting on universal moral principles based on justice, fairness, and human dignity. When Civic Education and Islamic moral instruction are harmonized, students benefit from both experiential modeling (as proposed by Bandura) and reflective moral reasoning (as proposed by Kohlberg). Such integration nurtures not only compliance with civic norms but also the internalization of moral values grounded in spiritual and ethical understanding (Kohlberg, 1981; Lateef, 2024).

Consequently, the fusion of Social Learning Theory and Kohlberg's Moral Development Theory offers a solid theoretical base for this study. Together, they explain both the process and outcome of character formation: students learn civic and moral values through observation, reinforcement, and reflection, and they gradually internalize these values into personal convictions that guide ethical behavior. This integrated approach provides a practical and philosophical foundation for exploring how the Civic Education Curriculum, when enriched with Islamic moral principles, can foster holistic character development among secondary school students in Zamfara State.

Statement of the Problem

Education in Nigeria, and particularly in Zamfara State, faces a growing moral and civic challenge. Despite the inclusion of Civic Education in the national curriculum to promote patriotism, discipline, tolerance, and respect for human rights, many secondary school students still exhibit attitudes that contradict these civic ideals. Reports from educators and scholars reveal persistent cases of examination malpractice, cultism, moral laxity, truancy, and disobedience among students, suggesting a gap between what is taught and the moral conduct demonstrated in schools (Adebayo, 2025; Ugobueze, 2024). Similarly, Islamic Education, which emphasizes honesty, modesty, justice, and community service, is often taught in isolation from the civic values embedded in the national curriculum, thereby weakening the collective impact of both subjects on character formation.

In Zamfara State an area known for its strong Islamic identity and recent exposure to socio-political instability and insecurity this disconnection between moral instruction and civic education is particularly concerning. The absence of a well-integrated approach has led to a fragmented moral foundation where students struggle to harmonize religious values with civic obligations. This has contributed to a generation of learners who, though religiously informed, may lack civic awareness, social responsibility, and respect for pluralistic coexistence. Scholars have stressed

that the effective development of character among youth requires the alignment of school-based civic instruction with faith-based moral education to achieve holistic human development (Lateef, 2024; Ijaz, 2025). Unfortunately, little empirical research has been conducted in Zamfara State to explore how such integration can be achieved within the secondary school curriculum. This research, therefore, seeks to fill that gap by examining how the Civic Education curriculum can be integrated with Islamic moral principles to enhance character formation among secondary school students in the state.

Research Objectives

The study is guided by the following objectives:

1. To examine the influence of integrating Civic Education curriculum with Islamic moral principles on the moral behaviour and character formation of secondary school students in Zamfara State.
2. To assess teachers' perceptions of the relevance and feasibility of integrating Civic Education with Islamic moral instruction for the promotion of civic and ethical values among students.
3. To determine the extent to which curriculum integration of Civic and Islamic moral principles enhances students' sense of civic responsibility, discipline, and social harmony in Zamfara State secondary schools.

Research Questions

1. How does the integration of Civic Education curriculum with Islamic moral principles influence the moral behaviour and character formation of secondary school students in Zamfara State?
2. What are teachers' perceptions of the relevance and practicality of integrating Civic Education with Islamic moral principles for improving students' civic and ethical values?
3. To what extent does the integration of Civic Education and Islamic moral principles contribute to students' development of civic responsibility, discipline, and social harmony in Zamfara State secondary schools?

Research Hypotheses

Based on the research questions, the following hypotheses will be tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

1. **H₀₁:** There is no significant relationship between the integration of Civic Education curriculum with Islamic moral principles and students' moral behaviour and character formation in Zamfara State secondary schools.
2. **H₀₂:** There is no significant difference in teachers' perceptions regarding the relevance and practicality of integrating Civic Education with Islamic moral principles for enhancing students' civic and ethical values.

3. **H₀₃**: The integration of Civic Education and Islamic moral principles does not significantly enhance students' civic responsibility, discipline, and social harmony in Zamfara State secondary schools.

Research Methodology

This study employed a quantitative research approach, adopting the descriptive survey design to examine how integrating Civic Education with Islamic moral principles contributes to character formation among secondary school students in Zamfara State, Nigeria. The descriptive survey method was suitable for this study as it allowed the collection of data from a large sample at one point in time, helping to describe existing conditions, opinions, and relationships among variables without manipulation (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The study population comprised 24,123 respondents, including Civic Education and Islamic Studies teachers, as well as students from public secondary schools across Zamfara State. Using the Research Advisors (2006) sample size determination table, a representative sample of 384 participants was selected at a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error. The stratified random sampling technique ensured fair representation from the three senatorial zones Zamfara Central, West, and North thus enhancing the credibility and generalizability of the findings.

Data were gathered using a researcher-designed structured questionnaire titled Integration of Civic and Islamic Moral Education Questionnaire (ICIMEQ). The instrument had two sections: Section A obtained demographic data such as gender, class, and teaching experience, while Section B contained items assessing respondents' perceptions of curriculum integration and its influence on moral behaviour, civic responsibility, and discipline. The items were presented on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (4) to Strongly Disagree (1), and were developed based on Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977) and Kohlberg's Moral Development Theory (1981). To ensure validity, three experts from the Department of Educational Foundations and Curriculum Studies, Federal University Gusau, evaluated the instrument for clarity, relevance, and alignment with research objectives. The reliability of the instrument was established through a pilot test involving 40 participants from schools not included in the main study, yielding a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.88, which signifies strong internal consistency (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

The questionnaires were personally distributed by the researcher with the help of trained assistants, following official approval from the Zamfara State Ministry of Education and school authorities. Respondents were informed about the study's purpose and assured of confidentiality and voluntary participation. Collected data were analyzed using both descriptive (mean, frequency, percentage, and standard deviation) and inferential statistics. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and t-test were used to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 significance level.

PPMC assessed the relationship between curriculum integration and students' character formation, while the t-test compared teachers' perceptions of the integration's relevance. All analyses were conducted using SPSS version 26.0. Ethical guidelines were strictly followed throughout the study. Respondents' privacy and anonymity were maintained, and all data were used solely for academic purposes. The adopted methodology ensured credible, valid, and reliable results capable of informing educational policy reforms that promote moral and civic development through the integration of civic and Islamic moral education in Zamfara State.

RESULTS

Descriptive Analysis

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics on the Influence of Civic and Islamic Moral Curriculum Integration on Students' Moral Behaviour and Character Formation

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Range
Integration of Civic Education and Islamic Moral Principles	384	3.42	0.61	2.10	4.00	1.90
Students' Moral Behaviour and Character Formation	384	3.56	0.58	2.30	4.00	1.70

Table 1 indicates that integrating Civic Education with Islamic moral principles has a positive influence on students' moral behaviour and character formation. The mean scores (3.42 and 3.56) show high levels of both curriculum integration and students' moral development, while the low standard deviations suggest consistent responses. Overall, the findings imply that this integration effectively promotes positive moral values and character among students.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics on Teachers' Perceptions Regarding the Relevance and Practicality of Curriculum Integration

Group	N	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Range
Civic Education Teachers	92	3.71	0.54	2.40	4.00	1.60
Islamic Studies Teachers	92	3.42	0.60	2.10	4.00	1.90
Overall Mean	184	3.56	0.57	2.10	4.00	1.90

Table 2 shows that teachers generally view the integration of Civic and Islamic moral curricula as relevant and practical. Civic Education teachers rated it slightly higher (mean = 3.71) than Islamic Studies teachers (mean = 3.42), with an overall mean of 3.56 indicating a positive perception. This suggests broad teacher support for the integration as a useful approach to enhancing students' moral development.

Table 3**Descriptive Statistics on the Effect of Integration on Students' Civic Responsibility, Discipline, and Social Harmony**

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Range
Civic Education Teachers	384	3.45	0.63	2.20	4.00	1.80
Islamic Studies Teachers	384	3.59	0.56	2.40	4.00	1.60

Table 3 indicates that both teacher groups perceive the integration of Civic and Islamic moral education as beneficial to students' civic responsibility, discipline, and social harmony. Islamic Studies teachers rated the effect slightly higher (mean = 3.59) than Civic Education teachers (mean = 3.45), showing a generally positive and consistent view of the integration's impact on students' behaviour and social values.

Hypotheses Testing**Table 4****Relationship between Integration of Civic Education with Islamic Moral Principles and Students' Moral Behaviour and Character Formation.**

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r	P-value	Decision
Integration of Civic and Islamic Moral Principles	384	3.42	0.61	.684	.000	Significant
Students' Moral Behaviour and Character Formation	384	3.56	0.58			

Table 4 shows the relationship between the integration of Civic Education with Islamic moral principles and students' moral behaviour and character formation. The correlation coefficient ($r = .684$) indicates a strong positive relationship between the two variables, suggesting that greater integration of Civic and Islamic moral teachings is associated with improved moral behaviour and character formation among students. The p-value (.000) is less than 0.05, confirming that the relationship is statistically significant. This means that integrating Civic Education with Islamic moral principles significantly enhances students' moral values and character development.

Table 5**Difference in Teachers' Perceptions Regarding the Relevance and Practicality of Integration**

Variable	N	Mean	SD	df	t-Cal	t-Crit	P-value	Decision
Civic Education Teachers	384	3.71	0.54	182	3.28	1.97	.001	Significant

Islamic Studies 384 3.42 0.60
Teachers

Table 5 presents the results of the t-test analysis examining the difference in teachers' perceptions regarding the relevance and practicality of integrating Civic and Islamic moral education. The findings show a calculated t-value of 3.28, which is greater than the critical t-value of 1.97, with a p-value of .001 (less than 0.05). This indicates a statistically significant difference between the perceptions of Civic Education and Islamic Studies teachers. Specifically, Civic Education teachers (mean = 3.71) rated the integration as more relevant and practical than Islamic Studies teachers (mean = 3.42). The result suggests that while both groups support the integration, Civic Education teachers hold a stronger positive perception of its usefulness and feasibility in enhancing moral and civic development.

Table 6
Effect of Integration on Students' Civic Responsibility, Discipline, and Social Harmony

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r	P-value	Decision
Integration of Civic and Islamic Moral Principles	384	3.45	0.63	.612	.000	Significant
Students' Civic Responsibility, Discipline, and Social Harmony	384	3.59	0.56			

Table 6 shows the effect of integrating Civic Education with Islamic moral principles on students' civic responsibility, discipline, and social harmony. The correlation coefficient ($r = .612$) indicates a strong positive relationship between the two variables, meaning that higher levels of integration are associated with improved civic responsibility, better discipline, and stronger social harmony among students. The p-value (.000), being less than 0.05, confirms that the relationship is statistically significant. This implies that the integration of Civic and Islamic moral teachings plays a meaningful and effective role in promoting socially responsible and well-disciplined student behaviour.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The first major finding from Table 6 reveals a strong and significant positive relationship ($r = .612$, $p < .05$) between the integration of Civic Education with Islamic moral principles and students' civic responsibility. This implies that the more effectively Civic Education is integrated with Islamic moral values, the greater the students' sense of civic duty and responsibility within their school and community environments. This supports the view of Adebayo (2024), who emphasized that moral-civic integration enhances students' social commitment and participation in

community life. Similarly, Formosa Publisher (2024) highlighted that civic education becomes more transformative when reinforced by moral and ethical teachings that help learners internalize civic values as personal virtues rather than external obligations. Thus, integrating Islamic moral teachings strengthens students' awareness of their rights and responsibilities, leading to more socially responsible behaviour.

The second finding shows that the integration of Civic and Islamic moral principles significantly improves students' discipline and adherence to social norms. The mean scores (3.45 for integration and 3.59 for students' civic responsibility, discipline, and social harmony) demonstrate that students exposed to such an integrated curriculum tend to be more disciplined and rule-abiding. This result supports the argument of Lateef (2023), who asserted that moral instruction rooted in religious ethics fosters disciplined behaviour and self-control among adolescents. The result also aligns with Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory, which posits that individuals acquire positive behaviour through observation and imitation of role models. When teachers integrate Islamic virtues such as honesty (*sidq*), obedience (*ta'ah*), and respect (*ihitiram*) into civic lessons, students not only learn the theoretical principles of good citizenship but also observe their practical application in everyday life. Consequently, the classroom becomes a microcosm of moral and civic development, where discipline is both taught and modeled.

The third finding indicates that integrating Civic Education with Islamic moral principles promotes social harmony and unity among students. The strong correlation ($r = .612$) signifies that this approach helps learners develop empathy, tolerance, and cooperative attitudes toward others. This finding is supported by Kohlberg's (1981) Moral Development Theory, which suggests that moral growth progresses through reasoning and value internalization—both of which are enhanced when moral and civic education are combined. Similarly, Ijaz (2025) observed that Islamic moral education encourages empathy and peaceful social interaction, while Kabir (2024) emphasized that moral instruction reduces social tension and fosters collective responsibility. However, Okonkwo (2022) cautioned that overemphasizing religious aspects in civic education could potentially narrow students' exposure to broader democratic ideals if not properly balanced. Despite such caution, the present study demonstrates that, when implemented thoughtfully, this integration reinforces mutual respect, moral awareness, and unity among learners.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study clearly show that integrating Civic Education with Islamic moral principles significantly enhances students' civic responsibility, discipline, and social harmony in Zamfara State. The strong positive correlation between the variables indicates that such integration provides a holistic approach

to moral and civic development, helping students internalize ethical values and civic duties. It also demonstrates that when moral teachings are reinforced through faith-based principles, students become more responsible, disciplined, and socially cooperative. Therefore, the integration of Civic and Islamic moral education serves as an effective strategy for character formation and nation-building, fostering a generation of morally upright and civically conscious citizens.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The Ministry of Education, in collaboration with curriculum development agencies such as NERDC, should formally integrate Civic Education with Islamic moral principles at both junior and senior secondary school levels to promote holistic moral and civic development.
2. Regular workshops, seminars, and in-service training should be organized for Civic Education and Islamic Studies teachers to equip them with the pedagogical skills and methodologies needed for effective curriculum integration.
3. Relevant textbooks and teaching aids that reflect both civic and Islamic moral content should be developed and provided to schools to support interactive and value-based learning.
4. Schools should establish civic and moral clubs that promote discipline, honesty, tolerance, and cooperation among students through peer mentoring, debates, and community service activities.
5. Parents, religious leaders, and community members should be actively involved in reinforcing the values taught in schools to ensure consistency between home, school, and community moral expectations.
6. Educational policymakers should adopt clear guidelines that encourage the integration of moral and civic education as part of national efforts toward character reformation and peacebuilding in Nigeria.
7. Future studies should examine the long-term impact of Civic and Islamic moral curriculum integration on students' behaviour and societal development across different regions of Nigeria.

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