# Social Studies Education and Women's Property-Inheritance Rights Awareness as Correlates of Gender Equality Among Pre-Service Teachers in Public Colleges of Education in South-East Nigeria

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https://doi.org/10.56201/ijssmr.vol.12no11.2026.pg125.137

***Abstract***
*This study examined the relationships of Social Studies education exposure and awareness of women's property-inheritance rights with gender-equality orientation among pre-service teachers in public Colleges of Education in South-East Nigeria. A quantitative, cross-sectional correlational survey was conducted among a study population of 34,000 NCE and degree-level pre-service teachers in eight public institutions. A sample of 396 individuals was used for the study. The calculation was based on Yamane's (1967) formula at a 5% precision level and selected through stratified random sampling. Data were collected with a researcher-developed*

*questionnaire, which had a Cronbach's alpha of .80. Pearson product–moment correlation and multiple linear regression were used to analyse the survey data; Supreme Court decision in Ukeje v. Ukeje (2014) as well as Section 42 of the Constitution of Nigeria were analysed to address the constitutional and legal question. While findings show that Social Studies education exposure was positively associated with gender-equality orientation, r(394) = .537, p < .001, as was inheritance-rights awareness, r(394) = .547, p < .001. The regression model was significant, F (2, 393) = 126.22, p < .001, and explained 39.1% of the variance in gender-equality orientation.*

***Keywords*****:** *gender equality, inheritance rights, pre-service teachers, Social Studies education*

## Introduction

Gender equality is both a human-rights principle and a condition for inclusive social and economic development. It involves equal dignity, opportunities, protection, voice, and access to resources regardless of gender. Property rights are especially consequential because land, housing, savings, and inherited assets can provide economic security, bargaining power, access to credit, and a foundation for participation in family and community decisions. Where women are excluded from inheritance or receive less secure claims to family property, the effects can extend beyond individual wealth to household welfare, children's opportunities, and women's capacity to leave abusive or exploitative relationships. In Nigeria, formal legal commitments to equality coexist with plural legal and social arrangements. Constitutional equality provisions, statutory rules, customary norms, religious practices, family expectations, and court decisions can shape how inheritance is understood and implemented. The Supreme Court decision in Ukeje v. Ukeje (2014) is widely discussed in relation to the unconstitutionality of excluding a female child from inheritance under an Igbo customary rule. Yet a legal rule does not automatically ensure that all citizens know their rights, can access legal remedies, or challenge practices they regard as socially authoritative. Awareness, interpretation, and willingness to support equal treatment are therefore important educational concerns. Social Studies education is positioned to address these concerns because it examines society, citizenship, culture, institutions, rights, responsibilities, and social change. Properly taught, it can support evidence-based discussion of customary practices, constitutional principles, gender relations, and the responsibilities of citizens and public institutions. However, simply being enrolled in a Social Studies programme may not mean that students have received sustained instruction on women's property rights or developed the ability to distinguish descriptive cultural knowledge from normative endorsement. The relationship between the depth and quality of Social Studies education and students' gender-equality orientations should therefore be investigated rather than assumed. Pre-service teachers are a particularly relevant population. Their beliefs and knowledge may influence future classroom interaction, curriculum interpretation, guidance to learners, and the treatment of gender-related issues in schools. Teacher education that supports accurate rights awareness and reflective discussion can help prospective teachers identify discriminatory assumptions while respecting learners and communities. Conversely, weak understanding may allow stereotypes to be reproduced through classroom examples, informal advice, or silence around unequal treatment. This study examines two related but distinct correlates of gender equality: Social Studies education and awareness of women's property-inheritance rights. Social Studies education is conceptualised not merely as a subject label but as students' exposure to relevant content, participatory pedagogy, and opportunities to reason about citizenship and equality.

Rights awareness includes knowledge of basic principles, recognition of discriminatory inheritance practices, and awareness of where legal information or assistance can be sought. Gender equality is treated as an orientation reflected in support for equal rights, equal treatment, and women's participation in decisions over family property. It is on these premise that this study examines Social Studies education and women's property-inheritance rights awareness as correlates of gender equality among pre-service teachers in public colleges of education in South-East Nigeria

**Statement of the Problem**

Despite formal commitments to equality and judicial rejection of discriminatory inheritance rules, social norms and uneven access to legal information have continued to influence how women's property rights are understood in Nigeria. One major problem causing women's property disinheritance in South-East Nigeria is the persistence of patriarchal beliefs that regard men as the rightful custodians and inheritors of family property. In South-East, male children are considered the continuation of the family lineage, while daughters are perceived as members of their husbands' families after marriage. Consequently, daughters are denied equal access to inherited land, houses and other family assets. Such discriminatory practices reinforce gender inequality and undermine women's economic independence, despite constitutional protections against sex-based discrimination. Another serious problem is the fear of transferring family property to another lineage: In south-eastern communities, parents and male relatives believe that allowing daughters to inherit ancestral land may eventually transfer family property to another family through marriage. This perception encourages families to reserve landed property for sons while offering daughters limited alternatives, such as marriage expenses or movable possessions. The practice is particularly problematic where land represents family identity, social status, economic security and continuity across generations. Consequently, daughters are excluded from inheritance because they are going to marry and husbands are considered outsiders to their paternal families. Another problem is family intimidation, coercion and denial of access to justice: Women who challenge discriminatory inheritance arrangements may face intimidation, threats, humiliation, family rejection or pressure to abandon their claims. Widows and daughters who lack financial independence may find it difficult to pursue litigation against male relatives. The costs of legal representation, delays in court proceedings and limited access to legal assistance can further discourage affected women from seeking remedies. These practical barriers may enable relatives to retain control over inherited property even where the woman's legal entitlement is recognised.There is also the problem of weak legal awareness and ineffective enforcement of inheritance rights: Limited knowledge of constitutional protections, court judgments and applicable state laws prevent women from recognising or asserting their inheritance rights. Some community members may continue to apply discriminatory customary practices without understanding their legal limitations. Where legal assistance, community education and effective enforcement are inadequate, unlawful disinheritance may persist. This creates a gap between women's legally recognised rights and their actual ownership, control and enjoyment of inherited property in South-East Nigeria. It is on this premise that this study examines Social Studies education and women's property-inheritance rights awareness as correlates of gender equality among pre-service teachers in public colleges of education in South-East Nigeria.

**Objectives of the Study**

The general objective of this study was to examine Social Studies education exposure and awareness of women's property-inheritance rights as correlates of gender-equality orientation among pre-service teachers in public Colleges of Education in South-East Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. determine the relationship between Social Studies education exposure and gender-equality orientation among pre-service teachers in South-East Nigeria.
2. examine the relationship between awareness of women's property-inheritance rights and gender-equality orientation.
3. analyse the constitutional and legal basis for advocating women's property-inheritance rights in South-East Nigeria.
4.

**Research Questions**

Based on the objectives of this study, the following research questions are examined;

1. What is the relationship between Social Studies education exposure and gender-equality orientation among pre-service teachers in South-East Nigeria?
2. What is the relationship between awareness of women's property-inheritance rights and gender-equality orientation?
3. What is the constitutional and legal basis for advocating women's property-inheritance rights in South-East Nigeria?

**Research Hypotheses**

H01: There is no significant relationship between Social Studies education exposure and gender-equality orientation.

H02: There is no significant relationship between awareness of women's property-inheritance rights and gender-equality orientation.

**Significance of the Study**

The study may provide teacher educators with evidence for reviewing Social Studies content and pedagogy; curriculum planners with information about rights-related learning outcomes; and college administrators with a basis for workshops, debates, case-based learning, and community engagement. Civil-society organisations and legal-aid providers may use the findings to design rights-awareness initiatives for young adults. Researchers may benefit from a replicable measurement framework that distinguishes educational exposure, factual awareness, and equality orientation rather than treating them as a single construct.

**Literature Review**

**Conceptualising Gender Equality**

Gender equality refers to equal rights, responsibilities, opportunities, and substantive treatment of people of all genders. It does not require that every person have identical circumstances; rather, gender should not determine whether a person may own property, inherit assets, participate in decisions, or access justice (World Bank, 2024). A useful distinction is between formal equality, equal treatment under written rules, and substantive equality, which asks whether people can actually exercise their rights in real settings (United Nations, 2015; UN Women, 2020). Attitudes may endorse equality in abstract terms while preserving exceptions in family or customary matters. The proposed measure should therefore include specific inheritance

scenarios alongside broader equality statements. Gender-equality orientations are influenced by family socialisation, schooling, peer discussion, religious and cultural interpretation, media, economic circumstances, and exposure to rights-based information. These influences can operate in different directions. Education may encourage critical reflection, but learners may also interpret formal content through existing beliefs. A cross-sectional correlational study cannot isolate all such influences or establish causation; it can estimate whether measured educational exposure and rights awareness covary with equality orientations after selected demographic controls.

**Women's Property-Inheritance Rights in Nigeria**

Property-inheritance rights concern the rules and practices through which a person may receive assets after the death of a family member. The issues include eligibility to inherit, the share received, the security of title, control over inherited assets, and access to remedies where claims are disputed. In a plural legal environment, people may encounter statutory law, customary rules, religious norms, family arrangements, and informal dispute resolution. Their practical experience depends not only on the rule itself but also on awareness, documentation, affordability of legal services, social pressure, and confidence in institutions. The Nigerian Constitution provides a broad framework for equality and non-discrimination, while judicial decisions have addressed gender discrimination in inheritance. In Ukeje v. Ukeje (2014), the Supreme Court held that a customary rule denying a female child inheritance on the basis of sex was inconsistent with constitutional protections. The decision is important for legal literacy, but this article does not assume that every pre-service teacher knows the case or can accurately explain its implications. The questionnaire should ask about knowledge in plain language and avoid requiring respondents to be legal specialists. (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999). Rights awareness is more than having heard the phrase 'women's rights.' It includes knowing that sex alone should not be used to disqualify a daughter from inheritance, recognising common discriminatory claims, understanding that legal advice may be sought, and distinguishing a family's assertion of custom from the enforceability of a rule. Awareness should not be equated with personal endorsement: a respondent may know the legal principle yet disagree with it, or may support equality while lacking factual knowledge. Measuring knowledge and attitudes separately is essential to avoid inflated correlations caused by overlapping items.

**Social Studies Education and Citizenship Learning**

Social Studies education integrates knowledge about people, institutions, environments, history, economics, culture, and civic life. Its civic function includes helping learners understand rights and responsibilities, assess public issues, reason from evidence, and participate constructively in a diverse society. Gender equality and property inheritance can be taught through constitutional literacy, case studies, structured controversy, classroom debate, community inquiry, and analysis of how institutions respond to discrimination. Effective instruction should invite critical examination of evidence and competing claims while maintaining respect for learners' backgrounds. For this study, Social Studies education should be operationalised as the extent of exposure to relevant content and learning processes, rather than only the respondent's department or course registration. Indicators may include coverage of citizenship and human rights, classroom discussion of gender discrimination, use of Nigerian legal or civic examples, participatory methods, and opportunities to evaluate social practices using constitutional and ethical principles. This operational definition is appropriate for a correlational study but should

not be interpreted as a direct measure of teaching quality unless supported by classroom observation or curriculum audits.

## Theoretical Framework

The following theoretical frameworks are explored in this study:

### Social Cognitive Theory

Social cognitive theory, developed by Bandura (1986), proposes reciprocal relationships among personal factors, behaviour and the social environment. Applied to this study, pre-service teachers' equality orientations may be shaped by observed models, classroom dialogue, peer norms and experiences of civic participation. Teacher educators who model fair treatment and facilitate evidence-based discussion may contribute to students' understanding of equality. At the same time, students' pre-existing beliefs may influence how they interpret instruction. This reciprocal view supports examining associations without claiming that education alone determines attitudes.

### Human Rights-Based Approach

The human-rights-based approach frames equality as a matter of dignity, non-discrimination, participation, accountability, and access to remedies. It provides a normative lens for examining whether prospective teachers recognise women as equal rights-holders in property matters. In the study, this approach informs the content domain of the awareness scale and helps distinguish awareness of legal entitlements from beliefs that rights should depend on gender, marital status, or family preference.

## Method

### Research Design

This study was a quantitative correlational survey design. The use of this design was considered suitable for the study because the study sought to examine relationships among naturally occurring variables without manipulations.

### Study Setting

The study was conducted in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The eight institutions identified in the manuscript were: College of Education, Arochukwu, Abia State; Federal College of Education, Ofeme-Ohuhu, Abia State; Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe, Anambra State; Federal College of Education (Technical), Umunze, Anambra State; Ebonyi State College of Education (Technical), Ikwo, Ebonyi State; Federal College of Education (Technical), Isu, Ebonyi State; Enugu State College of Education (Technical), Enugu State; and Imo State College of Education (Technical), Ihitte-Uboma, Imo State. The institutional names and locations should be checked against the actual sampling frame used during data collection. The institutional names and locations were cross-checked against the National Commission for Colleges of Education's (NCCE, n.d.) published accredited-colleges listing.

### Study Population and Sampling

The reported study population was 34,000 pre-service NCE teachers and B.Ed. undergraduates enrolled in eight public Colleges of Education in South-East Nigeria. The sample comprised 396 participants. The sample size was calculated using Yamane's (1967) formula, $n = N/[1 + N(e^2)]$, where N = 34,000 and e = .05; the resulting estimate (395.35) was rounded up to 396.

Participants were selected using stratified random sampling. The manuscript should provide the population figure for each institution and explain the strata, allocation procedure, and random-selection process to make the sampling procedure reproducible.

**Instrumentation**

Data were collected using a researcher-developed instrument titled Social Studies Education, Property-Inheritance Rights Awareness and Gender Equality Questionnaire (SSE-PIRAGEQ). The questionnaire was designed in four sections: A, demographic information; B, Social Studies education exposure; C, awareness of women's property-inheritance rights; and D, gender-equality orientation.

**Reliability of the Instrument**

The reliability of the research instrument was examined through a pilot study involving pre-service teachers from a public institution outside the institutions selected for the main study. Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach, 1951). The instrument yielded a coefficient of .80, indicating acceptable internal consistency for the overall scale.

**Method of Data Analysis**

Data collected for the study were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics, comprising frequency counts, percentages, means and standard deviations, were used to analyse the demographic characteristics of the respondents and address the research questions. Frequencies and percentages were used to present respondents' demographic information and responses to questionnaire items, while mean scores and standard deviations were used to determine the levels of Social Studies education exposure, awareness of women's property-inheritance rights, and gender-equality orientation among pre-service teachers.

For the interpretation of responses to the questionnaire items, a decision criterion of 3.00 was adopted for a five-point rating scale. Items with mean scores of 3.00 and above were regarded as accepted or indicating a high level of agreement, while items with mean scores below 3.00 were regarded as indicating disagreement or a low level of agreement.

**Inferential Analysis and Decision Rules**

Pearson product–moment correlation was used to test the relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable. Specifically, it was employed to determine the relationship between Social Studies education exposure and gender-equality orientation, as well as the relationship between awareness of women's property-inheritance rights and gender-equality orientation among pre-service teachers in public Colleges of Education in South-East Nigeria.

Multiple linear regression analysis was also employed to establish the combined and relative contributions of Social Studies education exposure and awareness of women's property-inheritance rights to gender-equality orientation. Gender-equality orientation constituted the dependent variable, while Social Studies education exposure and awareness of women's property-inheritance rights constituted the independent variables. The regression model was expressed as follows:

$$\boldsymbol{Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \varepsilon}$$

Where:

$\boldsymbol{Y}$ = Gender-equality orientation.

$\boldsymbol{\beta_0}$ = Regression constant.

$\beta_1$ = Regression coefficient for Social Studies education exposure.
$\beta_2$ = Regression coefficient for awareness of women's property-inheritance rights.
$X_1$ = Social Studies education exposure.
$X_2$ = Awareness of women's property-inheritance rights.
$\varepsilon$ = Error term.

The regression analysis was used to determine the extent to which the two independent variables jointly explained variations in gender-equality orientation and the individual contribution of each predictor to the outcome variable. The coefficient of determination ($R^2$) was used to establish the proportion of variance in gender-equality orientation explained by the independent variables, while the F-statistic was used to determine the overall significance of the regression model. The individual contributions of the predictors were examined using their respective regression coefficients and t-statistics. All hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance. A null hypothesis was rejected where the calculated p-value was less than 0.05, indicating a statistically significant relationship. Where the p-value was greater than or equal to 0.05, the null hypothesis was not rejected. All statistical analyses were conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

**Documentary Analysis of the Constitutional and Legal Framework**

The constitutional and legal basis for advocating women's property-inheritance rights in South-East Nigeria was examined through documentary analysis of relevant constitutional provisions, judicial decisions and established legal principles governing gender equality and inheritance rights in Nigeria. Particular attention was given to the provisions of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended), especially Section 42, which prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sex, among other grounds. The analysis also considered the Supreme Court decision in Ukeje v. Ukeje (2014), which established that a customary inheritance rule that discriminates against a female child on the basis of sex is inconsistent with the constitutional guarantee against discrimination. This documentary analysis focused on the implications of constitutional equality, non-discrimination and judicial protection for women's entitlement to inherit family property. It also examined the relationship between customary inheritance practices and constitutional provisions, particularly where traditional practices deny women equal access to inherited property. The findings from the documentary analysis provided the legal and constitutional foundation for understanding women's property-inheritance rights and the relevance of Social Studies education in promoting gender equality, human rights awareness and social justice among pre-service teachers.

**Results**

**Table 1** *Descriptive Statistics for the Principal Study Variables*

| Variable | M | SD | Minimum | Maximum | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Social Studies education exposure | 3.50 | 0.61 | 1.41 | 5.00 | Above criterion |
| Property-inheritance rights awareness | 3.39 | 0.67 | 1.40 | 5.00 | Above criterion |
| Gender-equality orientation | 3.58 | 0.65 | 1.67 | 5.00 | Above criterion |

The figures in Table 1 indicate that Social Studies education exposure had a mean of 3.50 (SD = 0.61). Property-inheritance rights awareness had a mean of 3.39 (SD = 0.67), while gender-equality orientation had a mean of 3.58 (SD = 0.65). All three means exceeded the stated

decision criterion of 3.00.

**Test of Hypothesis 1**

H01: There is no significant relationship between Social Studies education exposure and gender-equality orientation.

**Table 2** *Pearson Correlation Between Social Studies Education Exposure and Gender-Equality Orientation*

| Variable | N | r | P | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Social Studies education exposure and gender-equality orientation | 396 | .537 | < .001 | Reject H01 |

Table 2 indicates a statistically significant, positive association between Social Studies education exposure and gender-equality orientation, $r(394) = .537$, $p < .001$. Respondents reporting greater exposure to relevant Social Studies learning experiences also tended to report stronger gender-equality orientations. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected. Because the study is cross-sectional and correlational, the result should be interpreted as an association rather than evidence of a causal effect.

**Test of Hypothesis 2**

H02: There is no significant relationship between awareness of women's property-inheritance rights and gender-equality orientation.

**Table 3**

*Pearson Correlation Between Inheritance-Rights Awareness and Gender-Equality Orientation*

| Variable | N | r | P | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Property-inheritance rights awareness and gender-equality orientation | 396 | .547 | < .001 | Reject H02 |

Table 3 indicates a statistically significant, positive association between awareness of women's property-inheritance rights and gender-equality orientation, $r(394) = .547$, $p < .001$. Respondents with greater reported awareness of inheritance rights also tended to express stronger support for gender equality. The null hypothesis is rejected. This result does not demonstrate that rights awareness causes a change in gender-equality orientation.

**Multiple Regression Analysis**

Multiple linear regression was used to examine the joint and unique associations of the two predictors with gender-equality orientation.

**Table 4** *Regression ANOVA for Gender-Equality Orientation*

| source | Sum of square | df | Mean square | F | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Regression | 64.304 | 2 | 32.152 | 126.22 | < .001 |
| Residual | 100.111 | 393 | 0.255 | — | — |
| Total | 164.415 | 395 | — | — | — |

The regression ANOVA indicates that the predictor set was statistically significant, $F(2, 393) = 126.22$, $p < .001$. Based on the sums of squares reported in Table 4, the model explained approximately 39.1% of the variance in gender-equality orientation ($R^2 = .391$)

**Table 5** *Multiple Regression Coefficients Predicting Gender-Equality Orientation*

| predictor | B | SE B | β | t | 95% CI for B | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Constant | 1.069 | 0.161 | — | 6.62 | [0.752, 1.386] | < .001 |
| Social Studies education exposure | 0.372 | 0.048 | .350 | 7.70 | [0.277, 0.467] | < .001 |
| Property-inheritance rights awareness | 0.356 | 0.044 | .371 | 8.16 | [0.270, 0.442] | < .001 |

The table shows that Social Studies education exposure was positively associated with gender-equality orientation after accounting for rights awareness (B = 0.372, β = .350, t = 7.70, p < .001). Inheritance-rights awareness was also positively associated with gender-equality orientation after accounting for Social Studies education exposure (B = 0.356, β = .371, t = 8.16, p < .001). The standardised coefficient for rights awareness was numerically slightly larger than that for Social Studies education exposure; however, no formal test comparing the two coefficients is reported. The regression equation based on the unstandardised coefficients is: Gender-equality orientation = 1.069 + 0.372(Social Studies education exposure) + 0.356(Inheritance-rights awareness).

**Documentary Analysis of the Constitutional and Legal Framework**

The third research question concerns the constitutional and legal basis for advocating women's property-inheritance rights in South-East Nigeria. The legal significance of Section 42, as presented in the Constitution, is that a person's sex should not be used as a basis for discriminatory treatment. In the inheritance context, this principle challenges customary rules or family arrangements that exclude a daughter solely because she is female. The decision in Ukeje v. Ukeje (2014) reinforces this position by holding that a customary rule denying a female child inheritance on the basis of sex is inconsistent with constitutional protections.

**Discussion**

**Social Studies Education Exposure and Gender-Equality Orientation**

The positive relationship as shown in the data analysis about this heading suggests that pre-service teachers who report greater exposure to Social Studies content and learning processes also show stronger support for gender equality. This is consistent with the study's conceptual position that Social Studies can provide opportunities to examine the relationship between culture, institutions, rights and social change. Case-based learning, structured classroom discussion and evidence-based evaluation of customary practices may help prospective teachers distinguish knowledge of a cultural practice from acceptance of discriminatory treatment.

This finding is also compatible with Social Cognitive Theory, which emphasises reciprocal interaction among personal factors, behaviour and the social environment (Bandura, 1986). In Social Studies education, classroom modelling, peer dialogue and the practices demonstrated by the teacher may influence how students understand fairness and equal participation. Also students with stronger pre-existing equality beliefs may also be more attentive to, or more receptive to, rights-related teaching.

**Inheritance-Rights Awareness and Gender-Equality Orientation**

The association between inheritance-rights awareness and gender-equality orientation indicates that factual understanding of women's entitlement to equal treatment in inheritance coexist with

stronger support for gender equality. The study identifies a gap between formal legal protections and the practical ability of women to recognise and assert their rights. Rights awareness is therefore important not only as knowledge of legal terminology but also as the ability to recognise sex-based exclusion, identify sources of legal information, and understand that customary assertions do not automatically override constitutional protections.
This finding is interpreted through a human-rights-based approach, which places dignity, non-discrimination, participation, accountability and access to remedies at the centre of equality. The Supreme Court decision in Ukeje v. Ukeje (2014) supports this legal context because it addressed the exclusion of a female child from inheritance under an Igbo customary rule.

**Constitutional and Legal Basis for Women's Inheritance Rights**

The continual denial of women from family property-inheritance within South-Eastern Nigeria is not only gender inequality issue but also a crime. The Nigerian Constitution, Section 42 of 1999 Constitution as amended states that no one should be discriminated on the ground of sex or gender. Also, the Supreme Court decision in Ukeje v. Ukeje (2014) supports this legal context because it addressed the exclusion of a female child from inheritance under an Igbo customary rule. These legal contexts are proofing that women have inalienable rights to inherit family properties in South-East Nigeria just as the men counterparts.

**Conclusion**

Based on the findings, the study concludes that gender equality in inheritance cannot be advanced solely through the existence of formal legal guarantees. It also requires adequate knowledge of rights, the ability to identify discriminatory practices, supportive educational experiences and practical access to institutions capable of protecting those rights. Social Studies education is relevant to this process because it provides a curricular space for examining citizenship, constitutional principles, human rights, culture, social institutions and social change. Section 42 of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) establishes a constitutional framework against discrimination, while Ukeje v. Ukeje (2014) is an important judicial authority against excluding a female child from inheritance solely on the basis of sex under an Igbo customary rule. However, the gap between formal rights and their enjoyment makes rights education and community engagement important. Adequate exposure of students to constitutional issues regarding non-discrimination of individuals on the grounds of sex or gender through Social Studies education can help students to challenge stereotype beliefs, cultural bias, and religious indoctrination antithetical to human rights principles.

**Recommendations**

**Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:**

- The study points to the value of making human rights, constitutional equality, gender

relations and property rights visible within Social Studies teacher education. These themes can be addressed through case studies, structured debates, role-play, scenario analysis, community inquiry and guided examination of court decisions. Learning activities should enable students to distinguish between describing a customary practice and endorsing it, and to assess social practices against constitutional and ethical principles. Teaching should remain respectful of learners' backgrounds while making clear that cultural familiarity does not, by itself, settle questions of legality or equality.

- Teachers have a responsibility to model equitable participation and avoid reinforcing gender stereotypes through classroom examples, learning materials or assessment practices. Colleges may strengthen pre-service teachers' understanding through seminars, legal-literacy sessions, invited discussions with legal practitioners and partnerships with legal-aid organisations. Such programmes should explain both the substance of inheritance rights and the practical channels through which individuals may obtain reliable legal information or assistance.
- Social Studies curriculum planners should strengthen the treatment of constitutional rights, gender equality, inheritance rights and non-discrimination in relevant teacher-education courses

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