
PREVALENCE OF SOCIAL STUDIES ACTIVITY TEACHING
TECHNIQUES IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KANO STATE

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Abstract

This study investigated the use of social studies activity teaching techniques in secondary schools. Its aim was to find out if substantial numbers of social studies teachers in secondary schools were using activity/ action teaching techniques to teach their students and some of the problems they might have been encountering. The data for the research were generated through a set of questionnaire. A sample of thirty-two (32) social studies teachers were selected randomly from secondary schools in Dala Local Government Area of Kano State. The study established that only 25% of social studies teachers in secondary schools were using activity teaching techniques most frequently during their lessons. This may be as a result of lack of understanding of the use of these techniques, inadequate instructional resources, large class size etc. Therefore, the study recommends that social studies teachers should be enlightened to use activity techniques during teaching – learning process. Moreover, teachers should be supported to be attending workshops, seminars, conferences, induction courses for exposure in social studies teaching techniques.

Introduction

Modern integrated social studies as a school discipline emerged in the USA in 1900-1916. It came into existence because history and geography, the two most common and traditional school offerings in the social area no longer served to explain fully man and his increasing complex world with its constantly broadening horizons. The term social studies was used in “connection with courses and instructions in social area at the elementary and high schools level” (Encyclopedia Americana, 1978 No. 25 P. 286). Comparative Education Study and Adaptation Centre (CESAC, 1980) in Akinola (2011) defines social studies as a field of study that is concerned with the way man lives in and interacts with his/her social and physical environments and how science and technology help him to live well in those environments. In Nigeria experts in social studies have viewed the subject not too differently. For example, Ogundele (cited in Yusuf 2006) defined social studies education “as a complex but organized process through which individual acquire worthy knowledge, attitudes, values, skills and competence that are vital for contribution to the survival and continuity of the society.” Gele and Gele (2014) define social studies as an organized systematic study of people interaction and influence on their environment for positive development of their immediate and general society.

This subject needs special teaching techniques in order to achieve its objectives. Akinola (2015) perceived teaching techniques as specific ways of doing in the classroom. It is about the strategy chosen by the individual teacher in social studies class dispensation.

Nuhu in Kadiri et al (2007) says teaching techniques “are specific activities performed in the classroom by the teacher to achieve the goals of the method. It is the means of implementing a method.” According to the National Teachers Institute (NTI) (1990) in Nuhu (2005) a teaching technique “is the way the teacher specifically organized his teaching.” Therefore, teaching techniques are specific means by which the general objectives are achieved.

Activity teaching techniques are a departure from presentation techniques. Here, the students are active and are encouraged to learn by themselves. The teacher is to arrange the learning situation. These techniques are valuable in the sense that they make learning

more effective and ensure permanency by minimizing teacher influence. The students are encouraged to learn in their own ways (Fagge, 2009). Kupolati (1989) in Kadiri (2004) remarked that this “teaching technique was influenced by the need to facilitate learning in which pupils are involved rather than being passive receivers of information.” Fagge (2009) further added that, the activity techniques encourage the students to learn on their own rather than become passive, it encourages permanency on learning and reduces forgetting to minimum. Examples of activity teaching techniques are inquiry, survey, concept mapping, fieldtrips, opinion polls, model construction, exhibitions, drawings and paintings, guided discovery etc.

Ogundare in Kadiri (2004) opined that social studies teaching in schools should be activity oriented. The main reasons is the fact that the nature, aims and objectives of social studies, calls for students to learn about the relationship of man and his environment, promotes democratic ideas and develop healthy attitude towards self and other members of the community. ASSESP (1994) reported that the effective utilization of this teaching techniques demands student to develop skills of reading and writing. But previous studies such as Ogundare (1984), Garba (1990) and Gambo (1988) in Kadiri (2004) reported that secondary school teachers hardly utilized these teaching techniques even though they claimed to have been using them. This was however attributed to the inadequate training of social studies objectives. It was observed that the activity teaching techniques was based on high level of language development, adequate resource materials and committed teachers.

The central goal of social studies is geared toward making the learner aware of and sensitive to his environment. It also influences positively his social, cultural, economic and political values. Through it too, the learners are expected to acquire knowledge and understanding of his environment and voluntarily participate in social and civil responsibilities of his society. The learner can acquire these and more through an effective and efficient teacher. A teacher is considered effective and efficient not only through the mastery of his subject matter alone, but also his ability to impact the knowledge

and skills through relevant teaching methods, techniques and strategies in social studies.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the extent of use of social studies activity teaching techniques by teachers in secondary schools. The objectives of the study were:

1. to find out the proportion of social studies teachers who were using activity teaching techniques in social studies lessons.
2. to find out the proportion of social studies teachers who considered that they have adequate knowledge on the use of activity teaching techniques in their lesson.
3. to identify the problems confronting social studies teachers in the use of activity teaching techniques.

Research Questions

The study was designed to answer the following questions:

- i. What proportion of social studies teachers use activity teaching techniques in their social studies lesson?
- ii. What proportion of social studies teachers consider themselves as having adequate knowledge on the use of activity teaching techniques?
- iii. What are the problems confronting social studies teachers in the use of activity teaching techniques?

Method

The study used descriptive survey method to gather relevant information. A Social Studies Teachers' Teaching Approach Questionnaire (SSTTAQ) was designed, validated by colleagues and trial tested with test- re-test method ($r=0.88$) before it was distributed to elicit responses from social studies teachers. A sample of thirty-two (32) social studies teachers was drawn from the whole population i.e. Social Studies teachers from Dala and Gwale local government areas of Kano state using simple randomly technique based on Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table for sample size

determination. The responses were analyzed with descriptive statistics of frequency and simple percentages.

Findings

Research Question 1: What proportion of social studies teachers use activity teaching techniques in their social studies lessons and which ones do they use?

Table 1: Frequency distribution of social studies teachers' use of activity teaching techniques.

| Responses | Frequency | % |
|-------------------------|-----------|--------|
| Adequately utilized | 08 | 25% |
| Not adequately utilized | 15 | 46.90% |
| When the need arise | 07 | 21.90% |
| No response | 02 | 6.20% |
| Total | 32 | 100% |

From the above assessment of respondents, 25% of the social studies teachers reported themselves as adequately utilizing activity teaching techniques in their lessons while 46.90% did not adequately utilize the techniques. About a quarter, 21.90%, did utilize when the need arose while 6.2% did not even respond to the question. Therefore, we can observe from the above data that majority of the teachers in the study area were not utilizing these type of teaching techniques. These could be as a result of lack of skills for utilization, attitude toward teaching or some teachers were not trained as social studies teachers. The teachers were also requested to mention the type of activity teaching technique that they use in their classrooms. Their responses are presented in table 2.

Table 2: Frequency distribution of activity teaching techniques of the teachers

| Techniques | Frequency | % |
|-----------------------|-----------|--------|
| Inquiry & survey | 08 | 25% |
| Inquiry and fieldtrip | 07 | 21.87% |
| Concept mapping | 06 | 18.75% |
| Model construction | 05 | 15.62% |
| Exhibition | 05 | 15.62% |
| Opinion polls | 01 | 3.12 |
| Drawing and painting | - | - |
| Guided discovery | - | - |
| Total | 32 | 100% |

Table 2 shows the rank order of the use of activity oriented techniques. Inquiry technique slightly came above field trip to top the list. Concept mapping, construction and exhibition followed in that order. Teachers were not using opinion poll and guided discovery. The top ranking techniques have to do with the fact that an individual learns better when he or she is involved in a teaching and learning act. Other reasons may be that activity techniques encourage the students to learn on their own rather than become passive.

iv. Research Question 2: What proportion of social studies teachers considers themselves as having adequate knowledge on the use of activity teaching techniques?

Table 3: Frequency distribution of respondents' knowledge on the use of activity teaching techniques in their lesson.

| Responses | Frequency | % |
|---|-----------|--------|
| Adequate skills for utilization | 10 | 31.25% |
| Fair skills learned through | 08 | 25.00% |
| Workshop/seminar | 09 | 28.12% |
| Low skills learned during in-service training | 05 | 15.63% |
| Inadequate skills for utilization | | |
| Total | 32 | 100% |

From table 3 above 31.25% social studies teachers in the study area have adequate knowledge and skills for the use of these teaching techniques either through universities or colleges studies. Others have fair or low knowledge gained through workshops/seminar and during in-service training. A little percentage, 15.63%, has inadequate knowledge and skills to use the techniques during lesson, possibly because they were not trained in social studies.

Research Question 3: What are the problems confronting social studies teachers in the use of activity teaching techniques?

Table 4: Frequency distribution table on the problems faced by social studies in the use of activity teaching techniques.

| Responses | Frequency | % |
|------------------------------------|-----------|--------|
| Inadequate instructional resources | 09 | 28.12% |
| Large class size | 08 | 25.00% |
| Academic work load | 10 | 31.25% |
| Inadequate support from authority | 05 | 15.63% |
| Total | 32 | 100% |

From Table 4 above, on the problems confronting social studies teachers in the use of activity teaching techniques, the responses displayed that 28.12% believed that the problem was inadequate instructional resources, 25.00% were of the opinion that large classes size was the main problem. Also 31.25% were of the opinion that academic workload was too much on social studies teachers, maybe as a results of shortage of qualified social studies teachers. Lastly 15.63% believed that inadequate support from authorities like ministry of education, educational resource centres, Parent Teachers Association etc was their problem.

Discussion

The aim of this study was to investigate the extent of use of social studies activity teaching techniques in secondary schools. As evident in this paper, most of the social studies teachers do not adequately utilize activity teaching techniques. Those who claimed to utilize the techniques were more concerned with inquiry, fieldtrip and concept mapping whereas other important techniques like opinion poll, guided discovery, drawing and painting etc. were not utilized by teachers in the study area. Also teachers claimed to have adequate skills for utilization either through workshops, seminars, or in-service training but further studies will reveal whether the assertion is true or not. Furthermore, the research shows that teachers were confronting problems like inadequate instructional resources, large class size, academic workload, inadequate support from the authorities etc. These are the same with the views of Oguazor and Nwaham (2008) where they mentioned problems facing secondary education in Nigeria to include “inadequate teaching staff, poor planning, inadequate resources, infrastructure financial support etc. Furthermore, social studies was introduced in Nigerian schools when there was a dearth of professionally qualified social studies teachers or practitioners. The consequences is that, those who found themselves in social studies classrooms, particularly at tertiary educational level, were trained in traditional subjects disciplines or fields of study such as history, geography, political science, economics, etc. (Mezieobi and Essien, 2016) in Mezieobi, Ken A and Mezieobi, Sam A (2016). This also reflected in the junior secondary school

education because most of the teachers were not trained by qualified social studies teachers.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The use of activity teaching techniques in social studies is known to help and encourage students to be participating in the classroom processes and improve their rationale thinking. Beside it plays a role in training their mind to always think critically from alternatives. Accordingly, this paper has examined the extent to which teachers used activity techniques during lesson, extent of utilization and some of the problems confronted. It was found that majority of the teachers did not adequately utilize activity teaching techniques during their lessons, and those that use the technique utilize inquiry, survey and field trips most frequently, apparently from the skills they learned from previous workshops and seminars. Therefore the paper recommends that:

- a) Social studies teachers need to improve and utilize more varieties of activity teaching techniques to achieve the aimed of the subject.
- b) There is need for authorities to provide all necessary resources for teaching learning of social studies.
- c) Social studies subject should be handled by qualified personnel and teachers need to undergo training, workshops and seminars from time to time.

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