PROPOSAL FOR THE INTEGRATION OF ICT CONCEPTS AND TOOLS INTO NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR COLLEGES OF EDUCATION (NCCE) SOCIAL STUDIES' CURRICULUM

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Abstract

The paper examines the need to integrate ICT concepts and tools into Social Studies' teacher-training curriculum in Nigeria. Poor ICT skills of teachers is one of the major problems confronting the teaching of Social Studies in Nigeria. The paper discovers that the current National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) Social Studies' curriculum does not incorporate basic ICT concepts and tools that could help Social Studies pre-service teachers to acquire necessary ICT knowledge and skills. Hence, Social Studies teachers in Nigerian Basic Schools still make use of traditional teaching methods because they are not trained to adopt modern ICT tools in their classes. The paper emphasizes that, in line with the current digital era, Social Studies teachers should replace their traditional methods with modern instructional strategies and adopt modern ICT tools in their classes. Among others, the paper proposed that the following ICT concepts should be integrated into NCCE

Social Studies curriculum: Importance of ICT in Social Studies Education, ICT tools in teacher education, application of ICT tools in Social Studies methodology, Digital age and development of ICT skills in elementary students. The paper also proposes that ICT tools like google classroom, educational games and puzzles, digital maps and so on should be integrated into NCCE Social Studies curriculum.

Keywords: ICT Concepts, ICT Tools; ICT Skills; Social Studies Curriculum; Teacher-Training; Colleges of Education.

Introduction

There is a widespread use of ICT tools globally and the growth continues rapidly worldwide. In recent years, there has been a growing interest to know how computers and the internet can be best utilized to improve effectiveness and efficiency of education at all levels and in both formal and non-formal settings. Due to the current shift of theories explaining learning processes, ICT has become handmaiden for learning activities (Gaurav, 2018). It is generally perceived that ICT strengthens teachers and learners in making significant contributions to learning and overall development of the human society. Over time, ICT tends to expand access to education and through ICT, learning can occur anytime and anywhere. Online course materials, for example, can be accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week (Jo Shan Fu, 2013). This has grossly sent the traditional chalk and talk method into a systematic extinction because access to information is not only limited to the four walls of the classroom any longer.

However, one of the challenges facing the education sector in developing countries like Nigeria today is poor ICT skills of teachers and learners. Use of computers and the Internet today, is still in its infancy in developing countries, if these are used at all, due to limited infrastructure and the attendant high costs of access (Gaurav, 2018). This has in a great deal impeded the level of educational development and in turn, the society is affected with lack of drives for its growth

and development. However, Watts-Taffe *et al* (2003) in Jo Shan Fu, (2013) found that teachers act as catalysts for the integration of technology through ICT in schools. If the facilities, gadgets, and necessary technological support are available from institutes for the teachers, developing an ICT class will be easier for them.

Social Studies, apart from imparting and instilling knowledge and providing valuable information necessary for life, also productively aims at assisting students to inculcate desirable social habits, attitudes and values needed for the survival of the individual in the society (Adebayo, Obaje & Uzokife, 2015). The under-utilization and non-incorporation of ICT tools and concepts in pedagogical process affect almost all the school subjects with Social Studies in the number. Since Social Studies revolves round the issues and happenings in the society, the goal of the subject will be greatly achieved with the introduction and utilization of ICT tools. None inclusion of ICT into Social Studies NCCE teacher education curriculum in Nigeria is a serious setback to effective teacher training program in Nigeria. This paper therefore emphasises this need and develops a proposal for the integration of ICT into NCCE teacher education curriculum in Nigeria.

Social Studies' Teacher Education Programme in Nigeria

Teacher education refers to the professional training given to prospective teachers in order to equip them with the ethics, knowledge and pedagogical skills required in the teaching profession. Teacher education is meant to equip prospective and practicing teachers with the pedagogical skills, psychological dispositions, ethical and intellectual competence that would enable them to perform efficiently in the teaching profession. According to Ogunyinka, Okeke and Adedoyin (2015) teacher education refers to professional training of teachers towards attainment of attitudes, skills and knowledge considered desirable so as to make them efficient and effective in their work.

Teacher education in Nigeria started with the coming of the missionaries. The first teacher training institution was introduced in Abeokuta, Western Nigeria in 1859 by the Church Missionary

Society (CMS); the Hope-Waddel Training Institute was established at Calabar in 1895; the Baptist Mission founded the Baptist Training College, Ogbomoso in 1897. Many other teacher training institutions were introduced in the early 20th century and during the colonial era. Some of the defects of the existing teacher training institution during the colonial era led to the emergence of Advanced Teachers Colleges which later metamorphosed into Colleges of Education in the 1960s. In 1958, Social Studies was taught in some Teacher Training Colleges in Western Region of Nigeria. The term Social Studies as a school subject in Nigeria, was first used in 1958 by educators of the Ohio University Project which sought to introduce the teaching of Social Studies in Teachers' Colleges in the former western region of Nigeria (Adewuya, 2010). There was greater concern for the training of Social Studies teachers after the subject was introduced at Ayetoro Comprehensive High School, Egbado in 1963.

Iyewarum (1984) in Awopetu (2001) pointed out that attempt at promoting Social Studies education in Nigeria was made through the Northern Nigeria Teacher Education Project which was sponsored by the Northern Nigerian Institute of Education, Ahmadu Bello University and the United States Agency of International Development from 1964-1969. There was a book published as regards the project titled "Social Studies Handbook for Teachers: Geography and History Methods for Primary Schools".

Social Studies' teacher-training programme expanded in the 1980s as a result of greater awareness and introduction of Social Studies in many Nigerian primary and secondary schools. Some Nigerian universities, colleges of education and the National Teachers Institute (NTI) provided facilities for the training of Social Studies teachers. Teacher education programme in Social Studies continued to grow in the 1990s. Today, all conventional public universities and colleges of education have facilities for the training of social studies teachers in Nigeria.

National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) Social Studies Curriculum

The Nigerian Colleges of Education have, over the years, fulfilled the mission of producing well-motivated teachers of world-class quality with high personal and professional discipline, integrity and competence for expanding the Basic education sector (Federal Ministry of Education, 2019). The teaching function of colleges of education in Nigeria has contributed immensely to national development particularly in the development of middle-level manpower for the nation's primary and junior secondary schools (Oga & Okpaga, 2018). Nigerian colleges of education have produced a large number of non-graduate professional (NCE) teachers that teach the Basic classes which are the primary and junior secondary schools.

The training of Social Studies teachers is not exempted from this unanimous task of the colleges of education. Social Studies teachers-in-training are taught to be well grounded and sharpened to be able to meet the demand of pupils in the classroom. Subjects/courses are taught from the basics to the advanced. From the Foundations of Social Studies to other relevant topical and emerging issues in the society.

The National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) has two curriculum designs for the training of Social Studies teachers; they are: Single major and double major curriculum. Single major curriculum allows NCE Social Studies students to combine Social Studies with other subjects like English, History, Hausa, Igbo, Cristian Religious Studies, Islamic Religious Studies, Economics and Political Science. Double major curriculum only permits students to study Social Studies, it does not allow students to combine social studies with any other subject. Most Colleges of Education (COE) in Nigeria run the Single major curriculum which allows NCE students to combine Social Studies with other subjects. The Single Major is preferred to Double Major because it has greater career and academic prospects for NCE Social Studies students. The objectives of the single major NCCE Social Studies curriculum are to: produce professionally and academically competent NCE Social Studies

teachers for Junior Secondary Schools; prepare teachers who will be able to inculcate in their pupils, rational adjustment to their physical and social environment through acquisition of knowledge, attitudes, values, appreciations and skills necessary for developing social and civic responsibilities; and produce learners who are capable of benefiting from further education in Social Studies and other related areas.

The curriculum content for single major programme is highlighted In Tables 1-3.

Table 1: Part One (1) NCE Single Major Courses

	First Semester			Second Semester	
S/N.	Course Code	Course Title	S/No	Course Code	Course Title
1.	SOS 111	Foundations of Social Studies	1	SOS 121	Introduction to NERDC National Curriculum in Social Studies
2.	SOS 112	Man and His Social Environment	2.	SOS 122	Nigeria as a Nation
3.	SOS 113	Man and His Physical Environment	3.	SOS 124	Man and Economic Activities

Table 2: Part Two (2) NCE Courses

	First Semester			Second Semester	
S/N.	Course Code	Course Title	S/No	Course Code	Course Title
1.	SOS 211	Nigerian Political Life	1.	SOS 221	Issues and Problems of National Development and Modernization
			2.	SOS 222	Citizenship Education
			3.	SOS 223	Social Studies and Social change in Nigeria

Table 3: Part Three (3) NCE Courses

	First Semester			Second Semester	
S/N.	Course Code	Course Title	S/N.	Course Code	Course Title
1	EDU 311	Teaching Practice	1.	SOS 321	Population and Family Life Education
			2.	SOS 323	Social Institutions

An overview of the above NCCE Social Studies curriculum reveals that it is deficient of methodology courses that can help student-teachers to acquire pedagogical skills required for efficient performance as Social Studies teachers after graduation. Courses on Social Studies teaching methods are completely missing in the curriculum. Apart from this, ICT concepts and tools that could help student-teachers to acquire some basic ICT knowledge and skills are not incorporated into the curriculum.

Although the curriculum provided for some General Special Elective (GSE) courses for Social Studies students like *Media and Information Literacy I, II, III and IV; Introduction to Computer Studies I, II and III; and Science and Technology in Society,* however, these courses are not appropriate for the development of ICT skills in Social Studies education. GSE courses are not adequate for effective training and development of modern ICT skills in Social Studies teachers. For instance, GSE courses do not attract grade points that could engender serious and effective learning of ICT concepts and development of ICT skills respectively. This may partly account for poor ICT knowledge and skills of pre-service Social Studies teachers. Amosun, Falade and Falade (2015) investigated ICT knowledge and attitudes of pre-service Social Studies teachers in South-west, Nigeria and discovered that pre-service Social Studies teachers in South-west, Nigeria had poor knowledge of ICT concepts. They concluded that non-inclusion of ICT concepts in NCE Social Studies teacher education programme in Nigeria is detrimental to ICT knowledge and skills of Social Studies Basic education teachers. This implies that there is an urgent need for the revision and inclusion of ICT concepts and tools in the NCCE Social Studies curriculum.

Plausible ICT Concepts and Tools to be integrated into Social Studies NCCE Curriculum

Globally, there has been rapid growth and jet move from the usual traditional and conventional approach of information and communication to a more sophisticated and enhanced means of communication. This is often referred to as the Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). Uses of ICTs in education are widespread and are continually growing worldwide (Sharma, Dahiya and Verma, 2016) and the global education system is not left behind in the revolution. Educational systems around the world are under increasing pressure to use the new information and communication technologies (ICTs) to impart students the knowledge and skills they need in the 21st century (UNESCO, 2002 in Angadi, 2015).

It is widely believed that the world's knowledge and information base doubles itself every 2-3 years. This necessitates the need for the incorporation of ICT concepts and tools in Teacher Education and particularly Social Studies NCCE curriculum. Training teachers in using ICT is more critical than merely acquiring a large number of computers or devices. Teachers have to be trained in order to aid the learning process, make the process real, achievable, challenging, yet exciting and interesting. Some ICT concepts that can improve the ICT knowledge, attitude and skills of pre-service Social Studies teachers, if integrated into NCCE Social Studies curriculum, are: Meaning and history of ICT invention, role and importance of ICT in Social Studies Education, ICT tools in teacher education, application of ICT tools in Social Studies methodology, challenges of ICT in developing nations, Digital age and development of ICT skills in elementary students.

In addition, integration of ICT tools into the Social Studies NCCE curriculum will help pre-service teachers to develop ICT knowledge and skills that can help them to use ICT tools and pedagogical strategies when they become teachers. Though the most common ICT tools which encapsulate other tools are the Computer system and Personal Mobile devices such as the Tablet, iPad, etc. However, there are a wider range of ICT applications and tools which aids the teaching and learning of Social Studies. These applications and tools include:

Google Classroom. Google Classroom is a virtual classroom that makes learning easy and very interesting. Pre-service Social Studies teachers should develop proper knowledge and skill of using Google Classroom. If teachers are able to integrate educational applications or websites; create interactive assignments and incorporate slideshow, small game or an entertaining YouTube video full of information kids learn better and enjoy their learning experiences (Jindal, 2021). This allows grading to be done easily and accurately hence giving more time for the teacher to focus more on other things that improves the learning experience.

Google Maps. Google Maps is an ICT tool or application that allows learners to have concrete and concise information and knowledge about the world landmarks and places around the world. With Google Maps, kids can learn to easily find and locate the distance between two places and look at 360-degree images of places. This can help pupils to become familiar with multiple locations across the world (Jindal, 2021). Adequate knowledge and skill on the use of google maps by pre-service Social Studies teachers will stimulate them to apply the tool when they become teachers.

Educational Games and Puzzles. Social Studies teacher education programme should be concerned with training teachers to be able to develop and make use of educational games and puzzles. For the younger students, learning is not meant to be too strict and serious. Learning social studies concepts should be appealing and inviting to pupils so that they are interested and eager to learn. Educational games have inherent potential to arouse and sustain interest in learning, excite learners, generate new ideas in learners, teach difficult science related concepts, develop critical thinking, remove fatigue, foster social interaction, recall information easily and generally help learners with low achievement potential (Samuel and Iliyasu, 2020). Social studies teachers should be trained to develop the skills of using different types of puzzle and video games like wooden puzzles, Jigsaw puzzles, Crossword puzzles, Logic Puzzles (Word puzzles or Mechanical puzzles), Pattern puzzles (which can be colors, shapes, numbers, letters or any combination of them), Riddles and Brain Teasers, Mazes and Picture puzzles (Bower, 2006).

Microsoft PowerPoint. Pre-service Social Studies teachers should develop the knowledge and skill of using Microsoft PowerPoint tools. This tool can be used by Basic Education Social Studies teachers to create exciting and educative slideshows that help to translate the regular notes into interesting visuals. A presentation that is rich in multimedia gives the teacher the opportunity to spice up presentations in various ways that promote added interest and engagement for students (Poole, 2010). With PowerPoint, a teacher can create very detailed educational presentations. It is very possible to create slideshows with minimal details such as dates, names, locations, and events. This way, kids can learn facts easily and for longer durations (Jindal, 2021).

Animated Videos. Incorporating animated videos and cartoons into the Social Studies NCCE curriculum would be of great importance and usefulness. When visual is combined with audio during the learning process, it makes learning long and lasting. According to Nuni, Indoshi, Rabari & Kangahi, (2019), showing a video does a number of things to help the instruction of class: reinforces the concept, helps visual learners, and gives students a break from listening to the teacher talk. On the other hand, Videos and 3D animations support concretization of abstract concepts, increase students' engagement in the tasks, enhance motivation, and improve spatial visualization ability (Cakiroglu & Yilmaz, 2017). Furthermore, animated videos assist students to understand the teacher and learn with the help of text, graphics, animation, audio and video that are able to increase the motivation of students and make the learning process more interesting (Ismail, Irwan, Othman, Amiruddin, & Ariffin, 2017).

Benefits of Integrating ICT Concepts and Tools into Social Studies NCCE Curriculum

Some of the benefits that would be enjoyed if ICT concepts and tools are incorporated in Social Studies NCCE Curriculum include:

Providing a creative learning environment for Social Studies teachers and students: Incorporating ICT concepts

and tools into the Social Studies NCCE curriculum will help to equip relevant skills in Social Studies teachers and enable them to provide a creative learning environment for their students. At the primary level, young minds are enlightened to accept new ideas, show creativity, develop critical thinking and above all, enable them to absorb surrounding information for informed decision-making at any later stage in life (Sharma, Dahiya & Verma, 2016). If ICT tools are carefully deployed into the teaching and learning process, it would greatly facilitate creativity in the learners.

Enhanced cognitive and critical thinking of teachers and learners: According to Sharma, Dahiya and Verma, (2016), ICT, if used creatively, can make a big difference in the way teachers teach and students learn and can help students acquire necessary and applicable 21st century skills like digital literacy, innovative thinking, creativity, sound reasoning and effective communication. Every child possesses an ability to think and come up with great concepts and ideas however, when there is an enabling environment where the child gets exposed, cognitive ability is enhanced. A longer exposure in an ICT environment fosters students' higher critical thinking skills (Jo Shan Fu, 2013).

Promotion of learning culture at school: In recent times, students tend to lose interest in learning because they do not find learning engaging and interesting. Hence learning is not brought to them in a real-life experience. However, when Social Studies teachers acquire relevant ICT skills and adopt ICT tools, learning becomes interactive, engaging and interesting without losing focus of the pedagogical process. ICT-enhanced learning promotes increased learner engagement (Gaurav, 2018).

Improved integrated learning and evaluation: With the world turning into digital space, learning cannot be effective with the traditional chalk and talk method alone. There is a need for blended learning with the deployment of ICT. ICT changes the traditional teacher-centered approach, and requires teachers to be more creative in customizing and adapting their own material (Jo Shan Fu, 2013). Also, evaluation becomes more concrete, concise

and accurate when ICT tools are effectively utilized. ICT makes it possible for teachers to engage their students in self-paced, self-directed problem-based or constructivist learning experiences; and also test students' learning in new, interactive, and engaging ways that may better evaluate and assess their understanding of the content. (Angadi, 2015) and unlike static, text or print-based education, ICT-enhanced learning recognizes the presence of different learning pathways to explore and discover rather than merely listen and remember. (Gaurav, 2018).

Promoting collaborative learning in a distance-learning environment: Learning is no longer limited to the four walls of the classroom. Hence there is need for a learning system and structure that encourages collaborative learning whereby students can learn on their own in collaboration with other students through a chain of technological means however under the virtual supervision of their teachers. Students do not only acquire knowledge together, but also share diverse learning experiences from one another in order to express themselves and reflect on their learning (Jo Shan Fu, 2013). This could only be possible with the inclusion of ICT concepts and tools in teacher education curriculum and development of ICT knowledge and skills by Social Studies teachers.

Conclusion

Teaching Social Studies in this modern age requires efficient application of ICT tools. Appropriate use of ICT tools by Social Studies teachers makes learning interactive, engaging and interesting. It fosters innovative thinking, creativity, sound reasoning and effective communication. Unfortunately, most Social Studies teachers are not trained to develop ICT skills that could enable them to adopt ICT tools in their classes. The paper revealed that ICT concepts and tools are not integrated into the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) Social Studies' curriculum in Nigeria. Hence Social Studies Basic Education teachers are not equipped to adopt modern ICT tools and pedagogical strategies. Integration of ICT concepts and tools into Social Studies teacher-training curriculum is an urgent task that must be done.

Suggestions

From all indications, it is imperative and pivotal for all involved in the curriculum planning process to look into the possibilities of adapting ICT tools and concepts into the effective teaching and learning process of the Social Studies curriculum in order to make learning real, appealing and meeting the demands of the learner. This will in a great deal help the learners to relate well with situations around them in relation to topical issues in Social Studies. Hence achieving the goals of Social Studies.

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