

**PROBLEMS MILITATING AGAINST THE TEACHING
OF SOCIAL STUDIES IN NIGERIA:
EMPIRICAL PERSPECTIVE**

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Abstract

The study examined the problems militating against the teaching of Social Studies in Nigerian schools. In conducting this study, three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. The survey research designs were adopted. The population of the study is 133 Social Studies teachers. A questionnaire is the main Instrument for Data collection. The mean and standard deviation were used to answer research questions while Hypotheses were tested using a t-test. It was revealed that a lack of qualified teachers, methods and materials constitute problems in teaching Social Studies. It was recommended among others that only qualified teachers should be employed to teach social studies and seminars should be organized for teachers.

Keywords: Social Studies, Teachers, Teaching methods, Instructional materials.

Introduction

The quality of education indeed depends on the quality of instruction. However, the key to success in curriculum development apart from the instruction relies on training (Institution for Curriculum Development and Research, 2019). Teaching is effective to the extent that the teacher acts in ways that are favourable to the development of basic skills, understanding, attitude, and personal adjustment to the people (Peterson, 2020). The teaching and learning process is the most important activity for students and teachers in the school. Teaching helps the learners to have mental development and behavioural change. Teaching and learning activities are carried out by teachers and students. In this, teachers play an important role in accomplishing the process of making students active learners (Ronald & David, 2001).

Social Studies is generally defined as the study of man and his environment. Based on this conception, many people see the subject as very simple and that anyone can teach it. But Osakwe and Itedjere (2005) saw the subject as an integrated and interdisciplinary field of study whose ultimate aim is to produce civically competent people. In other words, the production of social human beings. The five cordial goals of education as stipulated in the National Policy on Education (2013) as amended include a just and egalitarian society, a united, strong and self-reliant nation, a great and dynamic economy and a land bright and full of opportunities for all citizens.

The above objectives cannot be achieved without a well-articulated process of teaching Social Studies which can lead to the achievement of a society that is free from social vices. However, Ohome (2016), opined that most people see Social Studies as a duplication of the social sciences, while others perceive it as the jack of all trades and master of none. Consequently, it has been observed that most of the teachers who teach Social Studies in Nigerian schools are not specialists in Social Studies. There is a general belief that everybody can teach Social Studies. This belief according to Ogheneakoke (2014) is erroneous. He stressed that the basis is erroneous because every subject has its peculiarities in its methodology. The teaching of Social Studies requires a problem-

solving approach which also needs some technical skills a teacher must possess. Mezeiobi (2013) stated that the methods used in teaching the subject are inappropriate. He stressed that most Social Studies teachers are still teaching Social Studies with the traditional methods. Thomas and Olugbenga (2012) opined that teachers with professional training backgrounds in a particular subject demonstrate more in-depth knowledge of the subject than non-specialists. In other words, teachers who have a training background seem to be more competent.

Peter (2020) states that Social Studies classes are known to be boring and meaningless by many students, especially junior secondary school students. It increasing state standards have gradually destroyed many teachers' faith that creative practices can be used due to the pressure to "get through" the material. Grooming responsible and reserved citizens is paramount in any governmental system; it is essential to a democracy. Now the real challenges lie with the amount of material to be taught and the tedious task it is to convince the secondary school students, especially the junior ones, and policy makers, that Social Studies as a subject is vital in their world. Nigeria is a society that comprises people of different social classes, religions, races and ethnic groups. There are comparatively two hundred and fifty different languages and over four hundred dialects. Nigerians desire to be one unified nation, with a single goal and with a people who share common goals. Since Nigeria achieved independence in 1960, successive governments have sought to inflict this single identity through education, and specifically social studies.

The efforts of educationalists who desired and tried to introduce the teaching of Social Studies into schools in Nigeria in the early days catalyzed the introduction of Social Studies into the school curriculum immediately after independence. Its penetration into the school curriculum at this time could not last long because there were no schools in which the subject could be taught but it was re-introduced in 1963 to assist learners to learn about themselves, societal problems and the wider communities in which they live. Social Studies, with its unified approach to learning, was seen as

being equal to cutting across artificial subject divisions and presenting knowledge as an integrated whole (Nwalado & Obro, 2010). In this range of vision, the fact that Social Studies in Nigerian deals with an interplay of various factors – political, economic, cultural, physical, and technological - the learner develops a different view of reality that helps him or her to make well thought-out reasoned and rational suggestions equipped towards societal development. Nigeria as a nation came into existence from different socio-cultural entities. As a result of our differences, it has not been an easy task to build a sense of common unity, national pride and single purpose because the spirit of unity, and oneness at the national level is very weak when compared with the moral sense of belonging (Ahmad, 2013). Therefore, to bring this goal of building a united, viable and prosperous Nigeria into existence, the school curriculum became the base on which national unity was to be established and fostered.

Social Studies is a unique and important subject in Nigeria's educational system. It is a mandatory subject for all Nigerian students in primary school and junior secondary school and an elective subject at the senior secondary school level. Since the present time when the subject was re-introduced into the school curriculum till now, its impact has been limited. For example, ethnic loyalty rather than national loyalty continues to improve; the spirit of unity at the national level is very weak when compared with the ethnic sense of belonging. Accordingly, after independence, the level of social development in the southern part of the country was to a large extent higher than in the northern part. The effect of this is the constant social clash between the people in the North and those in the South. In the process, national boundaries inflicted by colonial masters have resulted in political tensions with separate nations being forced to work together within administrative units. People who had never for once been politically or socially bound to each other, with different histories, cultures, languages, beliefs and social structures have no other choice but to find a way of living and working together.

As mentioned above, Nigeria remains a society that comprises

different social classes of people, religions, and races with each ethnic group challenging succeeding government one-nation aspirations despite the introduction of Social Studies into the school curriculum. Over the years, a series of plans have been developed by different administrations to foster the dreamed goal of national unity. All these plans to foster national unity did not achieve the desired goals completely. This fueled the desire to research the reason Social Studies has not been as effective as it should have been, and what teachers think about its effectiveness. This was what prompted the researcher to embark on this investigation by examining the problems militating against social Studies teaching using Nigeria as a case study.

Presently, junior secondary school students' interest and academic achievement in social studies is declining. Lemchi (2001) noted that some students are losing interest in the subject. Attitudes associated with Social Studies appear to affect students' performance in the subject. Also, many Social Studies teachers teach Social Studies without instructional materials and facilities (Mberengwa 2004). The quality of teachers and classroom facilities are grossly inadequate and obsolete. Adu, Akinloye and Olaoye (2014) also indicated that a serious disconnection exists between Social Studies training in secondary schools and the needs of the labour market, as students who do not proceed to higher education are incompetent in the field of work. Where students consistently perform poorly, the implication is that adequate teaching and learning have not taken place in schools. Therefore, the problem of this study is to examine the problems of teaching and learning of Social Studies.

Objectives of the Study

The study is aimed at ascertaining the problems militating against the teaching of Social Studies using Nigeria as a case study. Specifically, the study is aimed at:

- i. assessing if the lack of qualified teachers is a problem militating against the teaching of Social Studies;

- ii. examining if lack of teaching method is a problem militating against the teaching of Social Studies; and
- iii. investigating if lack of Instructional materials is a problem militating against the teaching of Social Studies.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

- i. Lack of qualified teachers is not a problem militating against the teaching of Social Studies.
- ii. Lack of teaching methods is not a problem militating against the teaching of Social Studies.
- iii. Lack of Instructional materials is not a problem militating against the teaching of Social Studies.

Methods

The survey research designs were adopted. The population of the study is 248 Social Studies teachers. The study sample comprised 133 teachers. This was achieved through a simple random sampling technique of the balloting method. The study instrument was the questionnaire. This instrument was divided into two sections: A-B. Section A sought biographic information of the teachers, and Section B has 18 structured items on a 4-point rating scale, ranging from Strongly Agreed (SA) 4 points, Agreed (A) 3 points, Disagreed (D) 2 points and Strongly Disagreed (SD) 1 point. The mean and standard deviation were used to answer research questions while hypotheses were tested using a t-test.

Results

Hypothesis 1: Lack of qualified teachers is not a problem militating against Social Studies teaching.

Table 1: t-test analysis of the influence of lack of qualified teachers and the teaching of Social Studies

Variables	Mean	SD	N	df	Std. Error	t-cal.	t-crit.
Lack of Qualified Teachers	2.80	3.00	133	131	2.02	2.06	1.96
Social Studies Teaching Problems	1.20	2.30	133				

Table 1 shows the t-test analysis of the extent to which lack of qualified teachers has constituted a problem in the teaching of social Studies in schools. From the above table, it can be observed that the mean, standard deviation and total number of students who agreed that lack of qualified teachers is a teaching problem is 2.80, and 3.00 respectively while those who objected are 1.20 and 2.30 respectively. It can also be obtained that the t-calculated is 2.06 while the t-critical is 1.96 at a 0.05 level of significance. Since the t-critical is lesser than the t-calculated, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis. It can be asserted therefore that lack of qualified teachers constitutes a problem in the teaching of social Studies in Nigerian schools.

Hypothesis 2: Lack of teaching method is not a problem militating against the teaching of Social Studies.

Table 2: t-test Analysis of the influence of Lack of instructional Methods and the Teaching of Social Studies

Variables	Mean	SD	N	df	Std. Error	t-cal.	t-crit.
Lack of Teaching Methods	2.45	3.62	133	131	2.02	3.26	1.96
Social Studies Teaching Problems	1.45	2.42	133				

Table 2 shows the t-test analysis of lack of instructional methods as a problem in the teaching of Social Studies in schools. From the above table, it can be observed that the mean, standard deviation and total number of students who agreed that lack of qualified

teachers is a teaching problem is 2.45, and 3.62 respectively, while those who objected are 1.45, and 2.42 respectively. It can also be obtained that the t-calculated is 3.26 while the t-crit is 1.96 at a 0.05 level of significance. Since the t-crit. is lesser than the t-calculated, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis. It can be asserted therefore that lack of instructional methods of teachers constitutes a problem in the teaching of Social Studies in Nigerian schools.

Hypothesis 3: Lack of teaching instructional material is not a problem militating against Social Studies teaching.

Table 3: t-test Analysis of Instructional Materials as a Problem in Social Studies Teaching

Variables	Mean	SD	N	df	Std. Error	t-cal.	t-crit.
Lack of Instructional Materials	2.45	3.62	133	131	2.02	3.26	1.96
Social Studies Teaching Problems	1.54	2.42	133				

Table 3 shows the t-test analysis of lack of instructional materials as a problem in the teaching of Social Studies in schools. From the above table, it can be observed that the mean, standard deviation and total number of students who agreed that lack of instructional materials usage of teachers is a teaching problem are 2.45, and 3.62 respectively while those who objected are 1.54, and 2.42 respectively. It can also be obtained that the t-cal is 3.26 while the t-crit is 1.45 at a 0.05 level of significance. Since the t-crit is lesser than the t-cal, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis. It can be asserted therefore that lack of instructional materials for teachers constitutes a problem in the teaching of Social Studies.

Discussions

The result of hypothesis one revealed that lack of qualified teachers is a problem militating against the effective teaching of Social

Studies. This suggests that lack of qualified teachers has and still constitutes a problem in the effective teaching of social Studies in schools. This finding concurs with Adengideh (2009), Atanda and Jaiyeoba (2011), Mezeiobi (2013), Peter (2020), and Ugo, Aisha and Nnam, who observed that lack of qualified teachers is a problem militating against the effective teaching of Social Studies.

The result of hypothesis two revealed that lack of instructional methods is a problem militating against the effective teaching of social Studies in Nigerian schools. The study findings concur with those of Khan, Muhammad, Ahmed, Saeed and Aman (2012), Meziobi, Oyeoku and Ezegbe (2014), Obro (2022), and Obro (2023)

The result of hypothesis three revealed that lack of instructional materials is a problem militating against the effective teaching of Social Studies in schools. Afolabi and Adeleke (2010) cited the lack, insufficiency, and underutilization of instructional materials due to teachers' inadequate understanding as factors that contribute to the usage of the lecture method by social studies teachers. This finding is in agreement with Abdu-Raheem (2016) and Okechukwu, Ikewete, and Chukwu (2020).

Conclusion

In the light of findings, it has been detected that Social Studies teachers allege problems resulting from lack of physical conditions and course hours, unqualified Social Studies teachers, lack of teaching methods and lack of usage of instructional materials by Social Studies teachers.

Recommendations

Having reached similar studies, the study concludes that most teachers have similar problems. When considering findings from this study and those of former researchers, the study suggests that qualified Social studies teachers should be made to teach the subject, innovative and activity-based methods should be employed in teaching Social Studies, Social Studies teachers should utilize instructional materials in teaching the subject.

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