
A CRITIQUE OF THE NIGERIAN SOCIAL STUDIES
CURRICULUM FOR THE JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL

— — — — —
Ronke Adeduntan
University of Lagos, Nigeria

Abstract

This paper compared the learning standards of the Nigerian Social Studies Curriculum (NSSC) with the National Council of Social Studies (NCSS) in the United States with a focus on three main levels. Often, considering the many challenges facing Nigeria as a nation in consideration with the purpose for which Social Studies as a subject is meant to solve in the society such as unpatriotic leadership and followership, abuse of human rights, lack of tolerance, cultural prejudice, disorderliness in the public life, the disintegration of the family unit and lack of communal spirit amidst other painful circumstances springing up at intervals. These issues made many to doubt if the Social Studies curriculum is of any quality in standard to contribute to the societal needs as claimed by its proponents in America where it originated from. The researcher thus carried out a qualitative study with a reflective assessment tool on the curriculum and as well used a simple semi-structured interview session to gather data on which the conclusions made were based for this paper. Ten teachers from Education District II were purposively selected for interview in Lagos state. Major questions answered by this study included the

understanding of Social Studies (definition, purpose, comprising discipline and status); the learning standards in NSSC and the application of inquiry arc by teachers as a process of instruction in social studies. The result analysis based on both thematic approach and simple percentage indicated that 90% of the suggested learning standards from NCSS are included in Nigerian Social Studies curriculum with consistency in the curriculum structure of topics using concepts related pattern, with the organisation of topics recurring through sub-theme strands in a cyclical way from Basic 7-9 (JSS 1-JSS3). Although, the result showed that inquiry arc suggested as the process of lesson delivery in the classroom was being used by all the participants interviewed; yet, the questioning is in its traditional way without teachers' utilizing the shift in framing the questions. Thus, this study recommended that there is need for urgent workshop training of teachers' on proper processes of utilizing the inquiry method to empower the students' capacity for decision making and prepare them civic. For civic responsibilities

Keywords: Curriculum standard, National Values Education, Nigeria, Social Studies, Social Studies curriculum

Introduction

The quality of Social Studies as a subject in the secondary school is often challenged when people notice the level of decadence in our society manifesting in corruption, lack of honesty and disorderliness in our public life cum failing leadership and poor sense of followership amidst other myriads of problems that are disintegrating Nigeria, a heterogeneous country. This makes people query if there is any quality being offered by the social studies curriculum since it is a major subject designed to curb the many noticeable in our society today and also to promote unity through understanding how to relate in a plural society. There are others who think the challenge of the curriculum is the lesson procedure adopted by the teachers

which prevent the students from getting the benefits the subject has to offer to the society in practical terms.

Social Studies in Nigeria is a core subject at the Primary and Junior Secondary levels. Its origin into the classroom was linked with the efforts of the Ohio University Projects both in 1958 and 1963 in the Western region of Nigeria, thus, from its inception, social studies was designed to help the students' learn about themselves, societal challenges and the wider communities in which they live (Sofadekan, 2012). Social Studies in Nigeria has been defined in several ways by different authors due to its complex nature, controversial contents and wider scope (Olatunde, 2010; Sofadekan, 2012; & Lintner, 2018). These complexities and controversial nature were due to the interplay of many factors (political, economic, physical, technological, cultural, et c.) making the students to view the reality of events around them and to be well able to make an informed decision due to the multi perspectives they are exposed to in social studies classroom (Olatunde, 2010; Sofadekan, 2012). Clarifying the usefulness of Social Studies, it provides a way of looking at the society in order to understand social problems and thereby helps to seek solution to them (Ogundare, 2003; Olatunde, 2010; Chizoba, 2019). The Social Studies experts differs in their definitions such as Isaiah, (2019) cited Akinola, defined Social Studies as "a tool for acquisition of values, attitudes, skills and knowledge which helps individuals' to be useful to themselves and the society at large". Ogundare cited by Chizoba (2019) defined Social Studies as "a subject that deals with ways of looking at the problems of the environment and how to find solutions to them". However, caution needs to be taken about the definition varieties in Social Studies. It should not be viewed as a major problem because it is not the only subject with lack of single definition from different experts as this same challenge is common with other humanities and social sciences subjects, therefore, having different definitions should not affect the status of Social Studies (Marker & Mehlinger, 1992; Chizoba, 2019). The Nigeria Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) in 1983 defined Social Studies as "common learning of man's interaction with his or her social and

physical environment”. Social Studies thus, is seen not just as a study but as a way of life that involves understanding of how the environment influences man and how man in turn influences the environment (Olatunde, 2010). The NERDC definition of Social Studies was suggested by Olatunde (2010) to be considered as the standard definition for Social Studies in Nigeria. And this is because despite Social Studies experts giving different definitions to the subject, all agreed on what Social Studies as a subject is not; setting boundaries to the subject and reducing the misconception many have about it. Social Studies does not focus on individual’s problem but that of the society generally, it does not concerned itself with the physical world except as it relates to mankind and does not indoctrinate the students’ into any belief but provides the academic platform for the students’ to engage in critical clarification of beliefs in order to hold on to what is considered good for the benefit of all in the society (Marker & Mehlinger, 1992; Olatunde, 2010). This is why Njoku and Kemkamma (2018) concluded that Social Studies fulfills the three dimensional functions of education as suggested by Gert Biesta, namely: qualification (provision of knowledge about the society beyond a single story perspective), socialization (promotes healthy group interactions and behaviours) and subjectification (promotes worthy values for the common good of all but being value-free in its process approach of passing knowledge by allowing deliberation on issues rather than indoctrination). NERDC (2014) stated the followings as the general aims of Social Studies: “to develop Nigerian youth into responsible citizens and to develop the capacity to recognize the many dimensions of being human in the different cultural and social context”. Thus, the curriculum can be said to aimed at citizenship education bringing into consideration the diversity or the plural context of Nigeria as a nation.

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) in the United States, in its view defined Social Studies as “the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence.” It integrates knowledge from economics, history, law, religion, sociology, geography, archaeology, anthropology; political science, natural science and mathematics. The core purposes of

Social Studies is “to help young people make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of culturally diversified, democratic society in an interdependent world” (NCSS, 1994 & 2013). Briefly, the core aim is for civic competence, that is, to enable an average American youth gain understanding that will make him actively engaged in the public life (this requires knowledge, intellectual processes and democratic tendency). NCSS ascertained that civic competency as core aim is more central to social studies than any other school subjects. Isaiah (2019) cited Wronski’s comment that Social Studies though might have some resemblance across countries; it however differs from one country to another.

The Social Studies curriculum was provided by Nigeria Educational Research and Development Centre (NERDC) through the Federal Ministry of Education. The curriculum refers herein to the framework or State official document as an intended curriculum which is provided by the government (Federal Government through the Ministry of Education but could be slightly adapted by the State to accommodate some peculiarities). The Social Studies curriculum at the Junior Secondary School levels (Basic 7-9) contains the listing of topics, performance objectives, contents, teacher and students’ activities as well as teaching aids and evaluation guides to help the teacher in the instructional planning and lesson delivery (NERDC, 2014). The curriculum provides the students’ with the understanding of their society including their socio-cultural heritage. According to NERDC (2014), the new Social Studies curriculum was a theme in the newly created Basic School Levels’ subjects’ merging. The curriculum revision incorporated Social Studies with other relevant subject areas and tagged as National Values Education (NVE) this initially was called Religion and National Value (RNV) but due to much confusion generated and agitation surrounding this merger, Religious studies were disarticulated and the new subject remains as NVE. NERDC grouped related subjects in order to achieve reduction in subjects overload at the primary and secondary levels in line with best global practices and national concerns too. The new NVE subject comprised of Social Studies, Civic Education and

Security Education with the key concepts knitted together to form an integrated thread for the organization of the contents in the new subject for a coherent, whole curriculum. In this new subject arrangement, Social Studies appeared as a “Theme” with sub-themes (Fundamentals of Social Studies Education, Family as a Basic Unit of the Society; Social and Health Issues and Culture and Social Values) as content strands which was further broken down into topics. The grouping of the subjects in the RNV curriculum together as one Examination Paper (Paper II), by National Examinations Council (NECO, 2014) syllabus for Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) is an official proof that the subject is still one irrespective of the themes labeled in the RNV. According to NERDC (2012 & 2014), the general aims and objectives of Social studies in the new NVE are: to develop Nigerian youths into responsible citizens and to develop the capacity to recognize the many dimensions of being human in different cultural and social contexts.

National Council for the Social Studies Curriculum Framework

The National Council of Social Studies (NCSS) is the largest professional association for social studies educators in the world with its mission as to both provide an advocacy and capacity building for high quality social studies through its leadership, services and support to the educators. The council in 1994 first published the National curriculum standards for Social Studies to serve as a framework for teachers, states and other nations too. This framework has been revised from time to time. The NCSS framework has become a conceptual tool for curriculum alignment, development and it provides strong basis for objectives articulation based on current research outcomes and contributions from well experienced practitioners of Social Studies. Thus the framework stands for the best thinking about the required framework form educators to guide in educating the youth towards sound citizenship education (NCSS, 1994; 2013; &2017). The NCSS framework organized contents of the curriculum around ten themes considered essential to learning Social Studies through a multiple approaches

of content selection for teaching and learning. The framework went beyond providing factual knowledge transmission alone to being able to apply knowledge gained in Social Studies into use in the real society while students are to actively engage in the learning processes (NCSS, 2013).

Standards refers to what someone should be able to know and able to do to be considered competent in a particular domain, according to Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2013). It is also same with content standards when examined in detail. Using learning standards is stated to be more accurate than using learning expectations when referring to the educational outcomes in the school system (OECD, 2013). The learning standards also known as the educational measures, benchmark or educational standards are learning goals designed for the curriculum as what the students should be able to know and be able to do at specified grade levels (OECD, 2013; Common Core, 2020). The learning standards also suggest how students will learn, that is the processes of achieving the desirable goals set. The Common Core Initiatives (2020) described it as the basis for curriculum and instruction but which does not give prescription for any particular type or design of curriculum, the focus of the learning standards therefore is to prepare the students' ready for a life in the college, career and competitiveness in the job market while the NCSS C3 framework added that it is preparation for civic, college and career (NCSS, 2013; OECD, 2013). The OECD (2013) explained the learning standards as "what is most worthy, desirable to achieve, or what counts as quality or good practice". The learning standards therefore can be used as a tool for decision making either on the valued domain of education and or performance dimension of learning.

The OECD (2013) citing Kleinhenz, et al (2007) stated that there are three components to a full definition of standards with each applicable to different question types. There are content standards (what should be known and be able to do), assessment standards (how to assess what students know and are able to do) and performance standards (how well should a student perform to be considered good or satisfactory). The learning standard therefore

is not limited to what to be known alone but also the how to know and attitudes or feelings to being able to know and do. In OECD conclusion therefore, the learning standards define what every student in a particular country is expected to know and be able to do which is established through the curricular frameworks. They are ways of expressing the selected learning goals and the contents of which is usually not exhaustive, that is, the contents chosen to achieve the standards allow for adaptability of what could be taught. The NCSS (1994, 2013) stated that framework provided learning standards to serve as principles for content selection and organization for a defensible and valid curriculum in Social Studies, which will enable both teachers and policy makers design and develop curriculum that will make students become informed and active in their own society. The standards given can therefore be used to review and evaluate current state curriculum guidelines, provide ideas for instruction and assessment amongst other purposes (NCSS, 2013; OECD, 2013 & Common Core, 2020). There are ten themes recommended by the NCSS curriculum standards for a good and wider coverage of issues Social Studies curriculum.

Curriculum Organization and Structure in Social Studies
Curriculum structure refers to the description of the organization of the series of the intended learning outcomes. A particular curriculum seeks to achieve (Posner & Stroke, 1974). Analyzing the curriculum structure can be done both on the micro elements (individual learnings) and macro elements (a lesson, course or a whole program using the program's document such as syllabus, curriculum guide, et c.). Curriculum structure also stands for the relationship between curriculum elements in terms of sequencing the contents of the curriculum, which could be done either vertically or horizontally using several principles such as from familiar-to-remote, concrete-to-abstract, et cetera. Sequencing or structure of the curriculum depends on the types of criteria used which could be either consideration for the subject matter or the learners' nature, or both. Using the subject matter involves the three dimensions: world phenomenon (objects, events and people), knowledge

selection about the world phenomenon (concepts) and the process of producing the knowledge (e.g. inquiry). Using the learners' nature brings to bear the age, interest, how knowledge outcome is to be used by learners' and so on. The researches on educational psychology have connected both the learner and subject matter as being related. According to Posner and Stroke (1974), a good sequencing will make use of both criteria in its curriculum structure. That is, there must be verifiable evidence on the world related contents to be taught to learners, concepts used must be logically consistent while the process of getting knowledge information must be clearly specified to enable the learners gather information on their own with sequencing of knowledge based on well researched theory of what works and the utilization of the knowledge being defined on how learners' are to use the knowledge for example to make informed decisions and become active members of the society. In conclusion, Alsubaie (2016) citing the "Guide to Curriculum Development" stated that curriculum is a process that can be adapted to meet the needs of the students' which becomes effective once the teachers' and the society at large accept it because there is no curriculum without criticism and no curriculum can be judged to be perfect.

Critiquing the Curriculum: Any benefits?

Critiquing according to Kirksey (2019) is a type of academic work that briefly summarizes and evaluates critically a work or concept. The purpose of which can be to create knowledge in the area being studied as well as to showcase strength and limitations in the work being studied. In the view of Boswell and Cannon (2009), a critique is not a negative process because it is a shift from criticism rather; critique is a careful examination of a research process, dealing with analysis, assessment, review and judgment passing of work or situation in a positive approach. The Collins English Dictionary defined a critique as "a written examination and judgment of a situation or a person's ideas".

The purpose of curriculum critiquing according to the University of Puget Sound (2019), is considered as an important part of the educational program that involves the analysis of how

well a curriculum fulfills the ideals and goals of education as articulated by the program standards. In the view of Milcrez (2016), the curriculum critique is also an assessment of the curriculum involving “the process of collecting information for use in evaluation to highlight the curriculum expectations and teachers’ motivation to meet the identified needs of students amidst other purposes. Rodolphe (2007) stated that critiquing is also a disciplined, systematic method that is useful in studying a written or oral discourse. Basically, it is clear that critiquing is not to find fault or targeted at making negative assertion but has academic benefits as a philosophical method of reasoning, helps to add up to knowledge by promoting the art and science of any profession because the outcome when applied promotes the profession and no doubt, critiquing showed the strength and limitations of any work to push for excellence in practice (Rodolphe, 2007; Coughlan, et al., 2007; & Laurie, et al., 2019).

The Puget Sound University (2019) described tools for curriculum critiquing and assessment as including performance-based strategies or reflective or a combination of various strategies. Performance-based strategy revolves round the SMART analysis of the working of the curriculum document such as measuring how simple and clear the curriculum objectives are, are the objectives measurable, achievable and relevant to the students’ and societal needs? And how timely are the curriculum contents and objectives to identified needs? Using critiquing as analysis method in research work includes the process of using checklist and analytical reading of the article with attention paid to major questions to be answered by the researcher (Boswell & Cannon, 2009; Kirksey, 2019).

Curriculum Process and the Inquiry Arc

Isaiah (2019) stated that there are three components to curriculum process covering the teaching methods, instructional materials and the evaluation techniques. This study concerned itself with the teaching methods aspect of the curriculum process. Thus, it is a methodology of a given area of thought or discipline and it is scientific because it helps students’ to prove facts, challenge a

thought line and be more critical in thinking. The NCSS introduced the inquiry arc under the C3 framework for learning of Social Studies in the classroom as a way of engaging the students to own the knowledge, enhance their active participation in learning, and aimed at improving social studies standards. The basic idea is the use of the inquiry arc whereby teachers' ask students compelling questions; allowing the students' to investigate the questions, find answers to them using cross disciplinary skills and knowledge, producing evidence for their answers and then communicate their responses with informed actions they can take based on evident answers found (Grant, 2013; NCSS, 2015; Miller, 2019). The inquiry process is based on teacher's expertise to help focus the class on central elements of the topic using questioning as a frame for the way students' learn contents. Simply put, inquiry arc is using questioning to guide instructions. Inquiry process is part of the curriculum standards and structure and it concerned with information gathering, discovering and verification of knowledge.

The C3 framework with its inquiry arc uses four dimensions of planning the inquiry process during teaching which is considered more robust than teaching based only on lecture method (traditional didactic method) that made the students' passive in the class (Sofadekan, 2012). Questions are used to spark up curiosity, guide instructions, promote deep investigations, and acquire rigorous contents and application of knowledge to a real world situation. The types of questioning that works effectively under the C3 framework according to the Washington State Council for the Social Studies (WSCSS, 2016) are both the compelling questions and the supporting questions. Isaiah (2019) proposed that innovative teaching methods will impact more on students' learning due to being more interactive, keeping learners active and generating best outcomes in learning. The C3 framework strengthens instruction with process of gathering knowledge by discovering or verifying knowledge, it is therefore a method of social studies that is scientific because it "supports students' to develop capacity to know, analyze, explain and argue about interdisciplinary challenges in our society" (Swan, 2013; NCSS, 2013; Miller, 2019). However, the WSCSS (2016) expressed clearly that the C3 with

its inquiry arc is NOT a new standard but an approach to teaching social studies but an approach that guides how to investigate which represents an instructional shift on how teachers' craft or ask their questions. Two types of questions required are the "compelling" and "supportive" questions. These questions help to weave skills into the contents in a more meaningful way and promote civic-life readiness in students' (Lee and C3 Teachers', 2016). Compelling questions concern with addressing issues and problems that cut across knowledge boundaries in Social Studies for students' to argue and interpret situations well (e.g. Is Nigeria democracy truly constitutional?, Are there challenges to living a quality life with a large family size?). Supportive questions add understanding to the subject under investigation by a compelling question. The process may require definition, describing and stating features those of which there is a general agreement to within the disciplines (e.g. what are characteristics of a constitutional democracy?, state the effects of large family size on quality of life for its members).

This paper generally was aimed at comparing the curriculum standards and processes of Nigeria Social Studies Curriculum (NSSC) with the suggested standard framework by the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) in the United States to establish the quality of Social Studies in Nigeria. Specifically, the study objectives are to:

- 1) Analyze what Social Studies is in its new National Values Education (NVE) designation;
- 2) Find out the learning standards in the Nigerian Social Studies curriculum (NSSC);
- 3) Describe how learning standards are organized or structured in the NSSC for Basic 7-9;
- 4) Investigate teachers' understanding of the inquiry arc as knowledge application process in NSSC.

The following research questions guided this study in establishing facts surrounding the quality of Social Studies curriculum:

- 1) What constitute Social Studies in the new National Values Education designation?

- 2) What are the learning standards in Nigeria Social Studies curriculum (NSSC)?
- 3) How are learning standards organized or structured in NSSC of Basic 7-9?
- 4) To what extent do the teachers' understand the inquiry arc as a knowledge application process in implementing the NSSC?

Method

This study adopted a descriptive phenomenological design to explain and describe the characteristics of the documents being examined, that is, what is already in existence in Social Studies curriculum and also allowed for use of small sample size of about five (5) to twenty-five (25) participants in the study (Sofadekan, 2012; Measuringu, 2015; Rosenthal, 2018). The study adopted a qualitative approach for in-depth understanding of the questions raised and to make meaning of the non-numerical data. The data collection techniques used included interviews (semi-structured) non-participant observation (review of official curriculum document) and website materials (Krauss, 2005; Saven-Baden & Major, 2013). The data analysis was done following a thematic coding that was extracted from the texts reviewed in this study. The findings were reported using matrix designed and rich, narrative written format under discussion while a simple percentage format was used to present teachers' opinion from the interview segment. The population study group was based in Lagos state using the Education District II with sample from the Ketu Area. A simple random sampling was used in selection of the school sections under the District while non-probability technique was adopted to select respondents based on purposive type of non-probability comprising of two (2) Social Studies teachers each from five (5) public junior secondary schools in the studied area due to their proximity to each other and common exposure to workshop trainings and common quality principles in education adopted by the District Quality Assurance Office. A total number of ten (10) teachers were interviewed on how teachers use questioning method in the class with a formal approval sought from the participants,

after clear explanations was given on the purpose of the study and the assurance of their anonymity.

The reliability of the data collected was based on the qualification of the researchers and validity of the source of documents used in the study including the framework supporting the analysis (Coughlan, 2007). The accuracy of the research method is based on following critiquing processes suggested by Boswell and Cannons (2009) and descriptions or quotes from participants to validate the trustworthiness of the study, stated Rosenthal (2018).

Results

Research Question 1: What constitute Social Studies in the new National Values Education designation?

NSSC official definition of Social Studies is described “as common learning of man’s interaction with his or her social and physical environment” according to (Olatunde, 2010). NERDC (2014) stated the followings as the general aims of Social Studies: “to develop Nigerian youth into responsible citizens and to develop the capacity to recognize the many dimensions of being human in different cultural and social context”. Thus, the curriculum can be said to aim at citizenship education bringing into consideration the diversity or the plural context of Nigeria as a nation. The subject is basically made of integrated knowledge from social sciences, humanities and sciences as related to helping in understanding man and solving his problems. The status of Social Studies in Nigeria is presented as a core subject wrapped up in National Values Education with themes including Social Studies, Civic Education and Security Education. However, the NECO (2012) BECE syllabus with the examination paper grouping, put the subjects as one referred to as Paper II under RNV.

Research Question 2: What are the learning standards in Nigeria Social Studies curriculum (NSSC)?

Table 1: Comparison of NSSC with NCSS Standards

NCSS Standards (10 THEMES)	NSSC Using JS1 Curriculum
1 Culture	Meaning and characteristics of culture
2 Time, Continuity and Change	History of Nigeria Social Studies Education
3 People, Places and Environment	Primary Social Group (Family)
4 Individuals, Development and Identity	Consequences of large and small family size
5 Individuals, Groups and Institutions	Road Safety Club
6 Power, Authority and Governance	Agents of Socialization
7 Production, Distribution and Consumption	-----
8 Science, Technology and Society	Common Social Problems in the society
9 Global Connection	Social Problems (HIV/AIDS, Corruption)
10 Civic Ideals and Practices	Ways of solving common social problems, Our roles in promoting safety in our community

Research Question 3: How are learning standards organized or structured in NSSC of Basic 7-9?

Table 2: Topic Listing in NSSC

JS1 Topics	JS3Topics	JS3Topics
1. History of Nigerian	1. aiy □ on an i□ ing	1. ontents of soia sties
soia sties eafion	togeter as one faiy	oes of e □ tenefaiy
faiy as a riary	enera□ □ eti □ es of	e □ ers in i□
soia gro□	soia sties	e □ eoent
onseenes of arge	oses of arriage	.Han traffi □ ing
an safaiy si□	ainess in arriage	re □ enting an
eaning an □	□ ositi □ e gro□□ ea □ ior	traffi □ ing
arateristic of fte	□ eaning an □	□ Harf titiona □
□ iarties an □	onseenes of rg a □ se	raties
ifferenes aong ftes	an arf □□ stanēs	□ rooting eaef □
in Nigeria	□ angers of rg	i □ ing in or □oiety
□ gents an roesses of	traffi □ ing	□ oia □nfts
soiaia tion	□ ays of isoraging	□ nanaging an reso □ ing
□ oa safety as	rg a □ se	□ nfts
agents of soiaia tion		□ ontrolling fts □n or □
□ oon soia ro □ es		soiety
□ ays of so □ ing oon		1 □ re □ □ e □nting rg
soia ro □ es		traffi □ ing
1 □ rooting safety in or □		
soiety		

List of topics and the sequencing pattern in the NSSC. These are the concepts underlying the curriculum reflected by the topics.

Table 3: Breakdown of sub-themes according to classes

Subs	s s s s s s	s Ss	s Ss	s Ss
s s s s s s s s s s	bs s ss us s s	s s s	s s	s s
s s s s s s s s s s	s	s s	s	s s
	ss	ss		s
s us s us s s s s s	Ss s ss s ss	s		
s s s us s	s			ss
		ss		s
	ss	s		
s us s s s s s s s s s s s	ss	ss		
s s s s s s s s s s s s s	s	s		ss
				s
	ss	s		
	ss	s ss ss		
	s	ss		

The NSSC used a thematic strand to present and pull all the topics together in a vertical structure going from simple-to-complex organization of the curriculum; thus, indicating the combined use of subject matter and learners' consideration in structuring the curriculum contents. This is clearly presented above.

Research Question 4: To what extent do the teachers' understand the inquiry arc as knowledge application process in implementing the NSSC?

Semi-structured Interview Questions asked are:

- 1) How often do you make use of questioning during the teaching of Social Studies?
- 2) At what point do you make use of questioning in your teaching procedure?
- 3) If you are to teach "Family and Consequences of large or small family size" as an example of primary social group, state two questions you would ask the students' (Note: JS1 students).

Results

- 1) The participants (10) gave 100% affirmative use of questioning (very often).
- 2) Participants varied on their responses but all (100%) agreed on using questioning either at beginning of the teaching as a form of introduction, step-by-step as teaching progresses to ensure students are listening and also to assess the students after teaching.
- 3) 80% of the teachers' presented supportive questions. Examples include:

Teacher A: what makes up a large family? Teacher B: mention advantages of large family size. Teacher C: How many children are in your family? Teacher D: Do you have cousins living in your house?

20% of the teachers' gave compelling questions. Examples are: Teacher K: what family size do you desire to have and why? Teacher J: Why does large family size fail often?

Discussions

An investigation and understanding of the definitions, purpose, subject or disciplinary make up of social studies in NSSC and its careful comparison with the NCSS indicated that both curriculum frameworks agreed on the definitions, purpose and disciplines that make Social Studies though stated in different ways (Olatunde, 2010; NCSS, 2013). However, the status of Social Studies being agreed on as a core subject has a distorted presentation in Nigeria. This is due to the splitting of Social Studies into three themes in a new curriculum named as Nation Values Education thus confusing the public more about what Social Studies is and how it is to be taught by teachers. A clear understanding of the scope covered by the NSSC showed that Njoku and Kemkamma (2018) assertion that Social Studies meets the functions of education and the school system suggested by Giert Biesta framework is found truthful.

The topics presented in NSSC using the JS1 curriculum for example indicated that the topics are not restricted to a single theme. There is overlapping of themes running through a specific concept but the researcher used the cited topics to indicate the coverage of the themes the NCSS suggested as ideal for Social Studies curriculum. Thus, nine (9) out of the ten (10) themes could be seen to have been covered by the NSSC indicating a ninety percentage (90%) of the themes. And this reflected all through the JS1-3 of the NSSC in topic listings which was presented through strands (NERDC, 2014; NCSS, 2013).

The NSSC plans supported the learning at different stages of students' development and the adaptability of the curriculum to meet the students' needs. (Posner & Strike, 1974; Alsubaie, 2016). This includes the depth and breadth (vertical and horizontal structure) of the curriculum in line with the designed sub-themes. The depth or the horizontal structure in sequencing the curriculum flows through the specific grade level and development of contents cut across too indicating a deep spread of the themes, topics

properly aligned, removing repetition and boredom from the curriculum while adequately considering the learners' characteristics (age, interest, psychology of learning, et cetera). The NSSC structure as adopted by NERDC (2014) followed the curriculum elements structuring suggested by Posner and Strike (1974) about what makes good curriculum structuring criteria.

The NCSS suggested C3 framework with its attendant inquiry method clearly debunked the unclear idea that Social Studies lack a specific mode of teaching by Santos when responding to Cassutto (2017) on issues of challenges facing social studies education. Although the inquiry method is not new as stated by WSCSS (2016) as confirmed by part a & b responses to research question four (4) results showing that all the teachers used inquiry method in their teaching. However, 80% of the teachers' failed to utilize compelling questions during their lesson but maintain more of supportive questions due to their poor understanding of this process as a shift on how to ask questions that spark curiosity and deep thinking requiring multiple disciplinary knowledge to produce convincing response.

Conclusion

The researcher investigations clearly showed that having several definitions of the subject is not typical of Social Studies alone and cannot reduce the status or worthwhileness of the subject. Although many authors give diverse definitions based on perspectives of what Social Studies covers, there is clear agreement on what it is not. The purpose is similar to that of the NCSS and aimed at the societal needs by empowering the students to take informed decisions and be active in the society. The NSSC wrapped the aim up in citizenship education while the NCSS termed the aim as civic competency. Also, the listing of the topics alongside the basic themes of NSSC showed that the curriculum is of high quality meeting ninety percentage (90%) of the NCSS suggested standards for a good Social Studies curriculum worldwide which other nations also subscribed to. This clearly proved that public comments on whether Social Studies curriculum offers any quality is a fallacy based on unfounded facts. The variants seen between the NSSC and NCSS

standards also proved Isaiah (2019) right that Social Studies contents may differ from one country to another to reflect the unique needs of each nation and the state it is designed to work for. Furthermore, Alsubaie (2016) statement that there is no curriculum without criticism and no curriculum that can be judged as perfect is another proof of variations that existed between the NSSC and the NCSS framework. The complexity, wider scope and use of different terminologies for curriculum standards do not make NSSC inferior. Social Studies in Nigeria still fulfills the Giert Biesta's three basic functions of education (Njoku & Kemkamma, 2018). The critiquing exercise furthermore, revealed that the contents structuring of the NSSC can be adjudged to be rich, deep to engage students', presented a consistent, logical flow of topics across grades (JS1-3) and provided multiple experiences with consideration for the nature of the subject matter and the learners' by the curriculum developers. However, the use of inquiry process through questioning to develop students' critical thinking and ability to apply the knowledge to authentic (real-life) situations has not been well understood by the teachers and the process poorly implemented too even though questioning as inquiry method is not a new method as emphasized by the Washington State for the Social Studies. Teachers' of Social Studies in the observed locality (Education District II) are yet to shift their traditional method of questioning, to proper utilization of inquiry method due to the poor skill in inquiry method reflected by low levels of questioning used in the classroom rather than the compelling questions. Although the researcher agreed that teachers' are faced with challenges during instructional delivery of Social Studies, these challenges do not mean that Social Studies has an unclear mode of teaching.

Recommendations

The NERDC should reverse urgently the subject title of National Values Education (NVE) back to its original title as Social Studies because the themes (Social Studies, Civic Education and Security Education) in the curriculum are all within the scope of Social Studies.

There should be more awareness to the public by the national body of Social Studies association in Nigeria to promote good understanding and appreciation of the subject using possible, available and other frontiers within the body's reach (newspaper column, Television and Radio broadcast, lobbying the legislators, et c.

There should be retraining workshops for social studies teachers' on how to use properly the inquiry process as a method of teaching to achieve the critical thinking and knowledge application efforts that Social Studies is meant to fulfill.

References

- Alsubaie, M. A. (2016). Curriculum development: Teacher involvement in curriculum development. In *Journal of Education and Practice*, 7(9): 106-107. Retrieved March, 2020 from <https://files.eric.ed.gov>
- Boswell, C. & Cannon, S. (2009). Chapter 13 critique process. In C. Boswell & S. Cannon (Eds.), *Introduction to nursing research: Incorporating evidence-based practice*: 291-316. Retrieved from http://samples.jbpub.com/9780763794675/Critique_Process.pdf
- Cassutto, G. (2017). The challenges of social studies today. Retrieved April, 2020 from <https://theeducatorsroom.com>> chall...
- Chizoba, C. (2019). History of Social Studies in Nigeria. Retrieved March, 2020 from <https://www.academia.edu/27820186/history>
- Collins English Dictionary (n.d.). Critique definition and meaning. Retrieved October, 2019 from <https://www.collinsdictionary.com>
- Common Core (2020). What are educational standards? Common core state standards initiative. Retrieved February, 2020 from <https://www.corestandards.org>> faq> what...
- Coughlan, M.S.; Cronin, P. & Ryan, F. (2007). Step-by-step guide to critiquing research. Part 1: quantitative research. *British Journal of Nursing*, 16(11): 658-663.

- Fowowe, (2018). Interpretation and implementation of NERDC curriculum: The role of teachers' and schools. Retrieved April, 2020 from <https://creativemindeduco.com>
- Grant, S.G. (2013). From inquiry arc to instructional practice: The potential of the C3 framework. In *Social Education*, 77(6):322-326. Retrieved October, 2019 from <https://www.socialstudies.org>
- Isaiah, O. (2019). History of Social Studies in Nigeria. Retrieved April, 2020 from <https://www.academia.edu?31704312>
- Kirksey, S. (2019). What is the importance of a critique paper? Quora. Retrieved April, 2020 from <https://www.quora.com/what-is-the-importance-of-a-critique-paper>
- Kleinhenz, B. & Ingvarson, L. (2007). Standards for teaching: Theoretical underpinnings and applications. New Zealand Teachers Council.
- Krauss, S. (2005). Research paradigm and meaning making: A primer. In *The Qualitative Report*, 10(4): 758-770. ISSN 1052-0147
- Lee, J. & C3 Teachers (2016). Building powerful inquiries in the K-12 Social Studies and ELA classroom. Retrieved April, 2020 from <https://C3teachers.org>
- Lintner, T. (2018). The controversy over controversy in the social studies classroom. In *SERATE Journal*, 27(1): 14-21. Retrieved January, 2020 from <https://files.eric.ed.gov>.
- Marker, G. & Mehlinger, H. (1992). Social Studies. In *Handbook of Research on Curriculum*, Vol.2. Jackson, P.W. (Ed.). A Project of the American Educational Research Association, 830-851
- Milcrez, (2016). Assessing the curriculum. Retrieved August, 2019 from <https://www.slideshare.net/milcrez>
- Miller, A. (2019). Inquiry-based tasks in Social Studies. Retrieved February, 2020 from <https://edutopia.org/article/inquiry...>
- National Council for the Social Studies (1994). Expectations of excellence: Curriculum standards for Social studies.

Washington, D.C. Retrieved June, 2019 from <https://www.socialstudies.org>

National Council for the Social Studies (2010). A framework for teaching, learning and assessment. Retrieved February, 2020 from <https://www.socialstudies.org/standards/introduction> ISBN 978-8-0-87986-105-6, Silver Spring, Maryland

National Council for the Social Studies (2013). Social studies for the next generation: Purposes, practices and implications of the college, career and civic life (C3) framework for social studies state standards. Silver Spring, MD: NCSS. Retrieved March, 2019 from <https://www.socialstudies.org>

National Curriculum for the Social Studies (2018). National curriculum standards for social studies: Introduction. Retrieved October, 2019 from <https://www.socialstudies.org/standards>

National Educational Research and Development Council (2012). Religion and national values curriculum for JS1-3. In Federal Ministry of Education 9-year Basic Education Curriculum. NERDC Printing Press, Yaba, Lagos.

National Examination Council (2014). Basic Education Certificate Examination Syllabus (2nd Ed.). for candidates in Upper Basic Education (JSS 1-3). Published by NECO, Minna, Niger State, Nigeria

Njoku C. & Kemkamma, L. (2018). Social studies in Nigeria through the lens of Biesta's three functions of education. In *European Scientific Journal*, 14(7): 249-267. Retrieved February, 2020 from [https://ejournal.org>article>view doi.org./10.19044/esj.2018.v14n7p249](https://ejournal.org>article>view%20doi.org/10.19044/esj.2018.v14n7p249)

Ogundare, S.F. (2003). *Fundamentals of teaching Social Studies*. Oyo, Nigeria, Immaculate-city Publishers

Olatunde, F. (2010). *Primary school social studies curriculum and methods: PED 261*. Published by National Open University of Nigeria. ISBN: 978-058-243-6. Retrieved March, 2020 from <https://nou.edu.ng>

- Organization for Economic Co-operation Development Education Working Paper No 99 (2013). Learning standards, teaching standards and standards for school principals: A comparative study. Retrieved February, 2020 from <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5k3tsjqtp90v-en>.
- Oxford English Dictionary (2005). Meaning of critique. Oxford University Press. Retrieved online October, 2019 from <https://www.oxforddictionary.org>
- Posner, G. J. & Stroke, K. A. (1974). An analysis of curriculum structure: Conference paper. In American Educational Research Association, Annual Meeting Chicago, Illinois; 1-31. Retrieved March, 2020 from <https://files.eric.ed.gov>
- Rodolphe, G. (2007). The honor of thinking critique, theory, philosophy: quotes. Retrieved April, 2020 from <https://www.wikipedia.org>
- Rosenthal, G. (2018). Social interpretive research. An introduction. Gotteingen: Universitätsverlag Gotteingen. Doi.;10.17875/gup2018-1103.
- Savin-Baden, M. & Major, C. (2013). Qualitative research: The essential guide to theory and practice. London: Routledge.
- Sofadekan, A. O. (2012). Social Studies education in Nigeria: The challenge of building a nation. Retrieved February, 2020 from <https://bura.brunel.ac.uk>
- Swan, K. (2013). C3 framework for Social Studies Standards. Retrieved April, 2020 from <https://uknowledge.uky.edu>
- The Measuringu (2015). 5 types of qualitative method. Retrieved October 2019, from <https://measuringu.com>> qual-meth...
- University of Puget Sound (2019). Curriculum assessment. Retrieved August, 2019 from <https://www.pugetsound.edu>
- Washington State Council for the Social Studies (2016). C3 Framework. Retrieved February, 2020 from <https://wscss.org/c3framework>