
DEMOCRACY IN TROUBLE; CAN SOCIAL STUDIES
SAFE IT? ILORIN EMIRATE SOCIAL STUDIES
TEACHERS' PERCEPTION

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Abstract

The study investigated Ilorin emirate teachers' perception of the use of Social Studies addressing the troubles of democracy. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. One hundred and eighteen Social Studies teachers were randomly selected in Ilorin Metropolis. A validated and reliably ($r = 0.78$) tested research instrument titled 'Questionnaire on Teachers' Perception of the use of Social Studies in addressing the Problems of Democracy' (QTPUSSPD) was used for data gathering. One research question was raised and three research hypotheses were formulated. Frequency count, percentage and mean were used to answer the research question while formulated hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using inferential statistics of independent samples t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The findings of the study revealed that teachers' perception of the use of Social Studies in addressing the troubles in democracy was positive.

Gender ($t = -1.255$; $df = 116$; $P > 0.05$), school type ($t = -1.337$; $df = 116$; $P > 0.05$) and qualification ($F_{(3; 114)} = 1.050$; $P > 0.05$) did not account for any significant difference in teachers' perception of the use of Social Studies in addressing the troubles in democracy. Based on the findings, it was recommended that current challenges of democracy in Nigeria should be included in social studies curriculum so that the future leaders who are still in school now can be taught how these challenges can be addressed democratically.

Keywords: Democracy, Social Studies, Teachers' perception

Introduction

Across the globe, many countries want to be seen as being democratic. It is a political arrangement that builds or consolidates an egalitarian society with the full participation of all the adult citizens in a free and fair periodic election, with at least two political parties (Odisu, 2015). Democracy has been described as the government of the people in which laws supreme, rulers and subjects' alike being subject to it. Democracy, adequately understood, is a theory that sets some basic principles according to which a good government, whatever its form, must be run (Oluwole, 2003). Such principles include those of justice, equity, freedom, liberty, accountability, openness and transparency in government (Adagbabiri, 2015). Apart from being a subject of global concern, the concept of democracy, in its modern understanding, is the government of the people by the people and for the people. It is particularly sensitive to the current socio-economic and political circumstances of nations striving for international identity and development posture as well as liberality and good governance (Kwasau, 2013).

As an over-flogged concept, the idea as enunciated by the ancient Greeks means "demos Cratos" which is literally translated into "people's power or rule" (Sarabjit, 2002). That goes to show that democracy has its root in Greek where individuals in a poll have an opportunity of taken part in decision-making. This position

explains democracy as a universal principle of governance that upholds high moral imperatives, accord the citizenry the right to participate in decision-making that adheres to their collective will and interest (Ntalaja, 2000). The concept can therefore, be regarded as a governmental system that involves the widest spectrum of participation, either through elections or through the administration of the accepted policies. It is a government founded on the principle of rule of law which is against arbitrariness, highhandedness, dictatorship and also antithesis to the military regime (Kwasau, 2013).

Contrary to popular participation, democracy in the African context means the ability of few people to effectively take control of the powers and authorities of governance with or without the choice of those they represent. In order for democracy to be meaningful, it must be characterized or underlined by the principles of openness, representation, accountability, transparency and the defense, protection and preservation of individual and group rights (Vanhanem 1990).

If an individual go by St. Augustine's definition – government that Nigeria ever had could qualify as “Mafua Government”. The word “Mafua” within the paper's context means government infested with power drunken, self-seeking, ideology-barren, orientation fewer operatives; usually selected by their kind and of course scarcely ever elected by the people. Even in the guise of multi-party election, those to rule are clearly predetermined and chosen even before elections take place (Ogundiya, 2010). Democracy in Nigeria is lamed and in terms of its conceptual outcome has failed to meet the expectations of the people. Furthermore, Nigeria's democracy (if it could be so described) has tended to promote inequality rather than equity.

Arguably once Nigeria's most serene city, Yobe State now synonymous with senseless violence, largely occasioned by misgivings and primordial sentiments and prejudices among inhabitants. Predictably, the mixtures of ethnicity and faith have taken the strife to unimaginable, deadly heights. Neighbours who had lived in harmony for decades have turned on one another with murderous fervour. That has led to the loss of thousands of

lives. Numerous buildings and other valuables have been razed. Many scholars and writers such as Onwudiwe, Olaopa, and Akinyemi have described the Nigerian political scene in varied uncomplimentary manner. Such derogatory descriptions, to some extent, reflect the nature of the Nigerian State. Odion-Akhaine et al. (2007) described the “Nigerian political turf” as bizarre. Kesselman (1996) wrote: “Nigeria today remains essentially an unfinished state characterized by instability and uncertainties”. Ameh (2007) likens the Nigerian State to a diabetic patient whose excess sugar in the blood stream served no positive purpose. According to him: Nigerians are definitely suffering in the midst of plenty, or how do you describe perennial fuel scarcity in a country that is the sixth largest exporter of crude oil; lack of potable water in a country with thousands of kilometers of coastline (when landlocked and arid countries have gone beyond this primordial human need). To Uhunmwangho and Epelle (2009), “Nigeria is a truculent African tragedy”. Sklar (2006) saws Nigeria as a country where dysfunctional politics have drained its potentials for greatness and ability.

Adagbabiri (2015) identified military coup, election malpractices, bad governance, majority tyranny over minority right, political party indiscipline, abuse of power and constitutional breaches as the major challenges of democracy in Nigeria. Similarly, Odisu (2015) also pinpointed the problems of democracy in Nigeria. These problems include corruption, insecurity, poor justice delivery, high cost of governance, cross carpeting and impeachment as well as poor supply of electricity and petroleum products. Furthermore, Adekola (2010) also identified the following as the problem of democracy: lack of large scale free, fair and credible election; lack of freedom of speech and publication; refusal to accept defeat in elections by political gladiators; corruption and attitude of political office holders to corner the wealth of the nation; inobservance of rule of law; and long military rule. In addressing these problems of democracy in Nigeria, Oko (2010) asserted the following as the way forward: Promoting good governance, effective leadership, establishing accountability, allowing transparency, treating

opposition and critics with respect as well as revamping public institutions.

The teachers' gender, teaching experience and the type of school are also variables of interest in this study. The gender of the teachers, the years the teachers have spent in teaching and the types of school (either public school or private school) are all important variables that can influence teachers' perception (Yusuf, Bello & Obafemi, 2016). These variables will be considered to determine their influence on teachers' perception of the use Social Studies in addressing the problems of democracy.

A number of studies (Odock, 2006; Euginia, 2013; Ogundiya & Baba, 2007; Oko, 2010; Ogundiya, 2010; Uhunmwuango & Epelle, 2009; Odisu, 2015; Egharevba, 2005) have been conducted on the challenges of democracy but none of these studies investigated the teachers' perception of the use of Social Studies in addressing the problems of democracy, hence, this study.

Across the globe, many countries, including Nigeria, want to be seen as being democratic. However, democracy in Nigeria is faced with many challenges which include corruption, insecurity, lack of free, fair and credible election, lack of freedom of speech and publication, inobservance of rule of law, refusal to accept defeat in elections by political gladiators, poor justice delivery among others. A number of solutions to these challenges of democracy have been suggested by Scholars and one of the solutions is the use of education by using Social Studies to address these challenges. Hence, it become imperative to investigate teachers' perception of the use of Social Studies in address the problems of democracy.

Research Question

1. What is teachers' perception of the use of Social Studies in addressing the troubles in democracy?

Hypotheses

- H₀1: There is no significance difference in teachers' perception of the use of Social Studies in addressing the troubles in democracy based on gender.

- H₀2: There is no significance difference in teachers' perception of the use of Social Studies in addressing the troubles in democracy based on school-type.
- H₀3: There is no significance difference in teachers' perception of the use of Social Studies in addressing the troubles in democracy based on qualification.
- H₀4: There is no significance difference in teachers' perception of the use of Social Studies in addressing the troubles in democracy based on experience.

Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of this study comprised of all Social Studies teachers in Ilorin Metropolis. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 118 Social Studies teachers. A researchers-designed questionnaire was used for data gathering. The questionnaire is titled 'Questionnaire on Teachers' Perception of the use of Social Studies in addressing the Problem of Democracy' (QTPUSSPD). QTPUSSPD has two sections. Section A seeks the demographic data of the respondents like gender, school type, qualification and experience. Section B contains 10 items measuring teachers' perception of the use of Social Studies in addressing the problem of democracy. The questionnaire has a four likert scale of strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The research instrument was validated by Social Studies lecturers (experts) in the Department of Social Sciences Education, University of Ilorin. To test the research instrument for reliability, the questionnaire was administered to 25 Social Studies teachers who were not part of the sample, but within the same research area. The reliability was tested using Cronbach alpha and the coefficient was 0.78. The administration and retrieval of questionnaires were carried out with the support of trained research assistants. The data gathering lasted for 3 weeks. Descriptive statistics (frequency count, percentage and mean) were used to answer raised research question while inferential statistics of independent sample t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used to test the formulated hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question: What is teachers' perception of the use of social studies in addressing the troubles in democracy?

Table 1: Table showing teachers' perception of the use of Social Studies in addressing the troubles in democracy

| S/N | Items | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Mean |
|-----|---|----------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------|------|
| 1 | Social Studies helps someone to know his/her rights | 68 (57.6) | 35 (29.7) | 14 (11.9) | 1(.8) | 3.44 |
| 2 | Social Studies teaches individual to perform their responsibility to the society | 57 (48.3) | 43 (36.4) | 15 (12.7) | 3(2.5) | 3.31 |
| 3 | Social Studies advocates against vandalism | 59 (50.0) | 37 (31.4) | 17 (14.4) | 5(4.2) | 3.27 |
| 4 | Social Studies encourages the exercise of franchise | 60 (50.8) | 43 (36.4) | 12 (10.2) | 3(2.5) | 3.36 |
| 5 | Social Studies fosters peaceful coexistence | 56 (47.5) | 35 (29.7) | 24 (20.3) | 3(2.5) | 3.22 |
| 6 | Social Studies advocates the respect for other people's lives | 63 (53.4) | 38 (32.2) | 16 (13.6) | 1(.8) | 3.38 |
| 7 | Social Studies promotes the involvements of citizens in the governance of the country | 55 (46.6) | 41 (34.7) | 19 (16.1) | 3(2.5) | 3.25 |
| 8 | Social Studies encourages freedom of speech | 59 (50.0) | 37 (31.4) | 17 (14.4) | 5(4.2) | 3.27 |
| 9 | Social Studies advocates against insurgencies | 59 (50.0) | 41 (34.7) | 15 (12.7) | 3(2.5) | 3.32 |
| 10 | Social Studies encourages the adherence to the dictate of the constitution | 66 (55.9) | 39 (33.1) | 10 (8.5) | 3(2.5) | 3.42 |
| | Weighted Mean | | | | | 3.32 |

Table 1 shows the teachers' perception of the use of Social Studies in addressing the troubles in democracy. The respondents agreed with the following statements: Social Studies helps someone to know his/her rights (Mean = 3.44), Social Studies teaches individual to perform their responsibility to the society (Mean = 3.31), Social Studies advocates against vandalism (Mean = 3.27), Social Studies encourages the exercise of franchise (Mean = 3.36), Social Studies fosters peaceful coexistence (Mean = 3.22), Social studies advocates the respect for other people's lives (Mean = 3.38), Social Studies promotes the involvements of citizens in the governance of the country (Mean = 3.25), Social Studies encourages freedom of speech (Mean = 3.27), Social Studies advocates against insurgencies (Mean = 3.32), Social Studies encourages the adherence to the dictate of the constitution (Mean = 3.42). The weighted mean is 3.32 which is a numeric indicator that teachers' perception of the use of Social Studies in addressing the troubles in democracy was positive.

Research Hypothesis One: There is no significance difference in teachers' perception of the use of Social Studies in addressing the troubles in democracy based on gender.

Table 2: Table showing the difference in teachers' perception of the use of Social Studies in addressing the troubles in democracy based on gender

| Gender | n | Mean | Std. Deviation | T | df | Sig. | Remark |
|--------|----|-------|----------------|--------|-----|------|-----------------|
| Male | 47 | 34.26 | 8.007 | -1.255 | 116 | .212 | Not Significant |
| Female | 71 | 32.58 | 6.456 | | | | |

Table 2 shows the difference in teachers' perception of the use of Social Studies in addressing the troubles in democracy based on gender. There was no significant difference in teachers' perception of the use of Social Studies in addressing the troubles in democracy based on gender ($t = -1.255$; $df = 116$; $P > 0.05$). The hypothesis

is therefore not rejected in the light of the result since the significant value is greater than 0.05.

Research Hypothesis Two: There is no significance difference in teachers' perception of the use of Social Studies in addressing the troubles in democracy based on school-type.

Table 3: Table showing the difference in teachers' perception of the use of Social Studies in addressing the troubles in democracy based on school-type

| School type | n | Mean | Std. Deviation | T | df | Sig. | Remark |
|-------------|----|-------|----------------|--------|-----|------|-----------------|
| Private | 66 | 32.47 | 6.547 | -1.337 | 116 | .184 | Not Significant |
| Public | 52 | 34.23 | 7.758 | | | | |

Table 3 shows the difference in teachers' perception of the use of Social Studies in addressing the troubles in democracy based on school type. There was no significant difference in teachers' perception of the use of social studies in addressing the troubles in democracy based on school type ($t = -1.337$; $df = 116$; $P > 0.05$). The hypothesis is therefore not rejected in the light of the result since the significant value is greater than 0.05.

Research Hypothesis Three: There is no significance difference in teachers' perception of the use of social studies in addressing the troubles in democracy based on experience.

Table 4: Table showing the difference in teachers' perception of the use of Social Studies in addressing the troubles in democracy based on experience.

| Source | Type III Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|-----|----------------|----------|------|
| Corrected Model | 159.886 ^a | 3 | 53.295 | 1.050 | .373 |
| Intercept | 109016.164 | 1 | 109016.164 | 2147.921 | .000 |
| Experience | 159.886 | 3 | 53.295 | 1.050 | .373 |
| Error | 5785.987 | 114 | 50.754 | | |
| Total | 136369.000 | 118 | | | |
| Corrected Total | 5945.873 | 117 | | | |

Table 4 shows the difference in teachers' perception of the use of Social Studies in addressing the troubles in democracy based on experience. There was no significant difference in teachers' perception of the use of Social Studies in addressing the troubles in democracy based on experience ($F_{(3; 114)} = 1.050$; $P > 0.05$). The hypothesis is therefore not rejected in the light of the result since the significant value is greater than 0.05.

Discussion

The finding of the study revealed that teachers' perception of the use of Social Studies in addressing the troubles in democracy was positive. The positive perception of the teachers may be owing to the fact that Social Studies as a subject, taught at primary and junior secondary schools in Nigeria, has a number of contents that are relevant to addressing the problems of democracy. Since the subject contains meaningful topics, the teachers may tend to have a positive perception towards the use of social studies in addressing the problems. This findings is in corroborated those of Uche (1980), Okobiah(1984) and Adeyoyin (1983) whose studies revealed that the introduction and teaching of Social Studies in Nigerian schools has helped to foster spirit of national consciousness, unity in diversity, national tolerance and respect

for other amongst learners, which why the teachers perceptions was positive.

Another finding of the study unfolded that there was no significant difference in teachers' perception of the use of Social Studies in addressing the problems of democracy based on gender. This finding is in tandem with the finding of Fakomogbon (2000) and Obafemi (2018) who discovered that gender is not an important factor that influences teachers' perception.

Furthermore, the findings of the study disclosed that there was no significant difference in teachers' perception of the use of Social Studies in addressing the problem of democracy based on school type. This finding also corroborated the finding of Eyiuche, Chinyere and Dorothy (2013) which unfolded that school type did not influence teachers' perception.

Finally, the finding also revealed that there was no significant difference in teachers' perception of the use of social studies in addressing the problem of democracy based on experience. This finding negated the assertion and finding of Ogbe and Omenka (2017) and obafemi (2018) that years of teaching experience did not influence teachers' perception.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that Social Studies can be used to address the challenges democracy is facing.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, it can be recommended that:

- i. the current challenges of democracy in Nigeria should be included in social studies curriculum so that the future leaders who are still in school now can be taught how these challenges can be addressed democratically.
- ii. Also, Social Studies should also be made a compulsory subject to be taught in senior classes of secondary school.

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