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TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE RELEVANCE OF  
INTEGRATING SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION  
INTO UPPER BASIC EDUCATION SOCIAL STUDIES  
CURRICULUM IN NIGERIA

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**Abstract**

*Social Studies is currently at the verge of losing its position in the Nigerian secondary educational system despite its laudable objectives. This is as a result of the disarticulation of civics, religion and security issues embedded in the subject. One way to prevent the sliding of the subject into oblivion is to load its curriculum with more contents relevant to solving the country's emerging issues. The study sought to examine teachers' perceptions on the relevance of integrating social entrepreneurship education into upper basic education Social Studies curriculum in Nigeria and how this would enhance the value of Social Studies in Nigeria. It was conducted in Ebonyi LGA, Ebonyi State, Nigeria. Two research questions guided the study. It adopted a descriptive survey design. Data were collected by means of interview guide from a sample of 30 Social Studies teachers. Data collected were analysed using thematic analysis. The result showed that there is need to integrate social entrepreneurship into Social Studies to improve its value, redeem its lost glories and help develop people who will solve social problems. The study*

*recommended that government should integrate social entrepreneurship education into Social Studies curriculum at the upper basic education level in Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** Social Studies, Social entrepreneurship education, Sustainable national development.

### **Introduction**

Societies all over the world are gradually advancing due to innovations and technology. These advancements or transformations according to British Council (2017) result into arrays of social and environmental problems like poverty, global warming, unemployment, marginalization, inequality, poor state of education, poor healthcare and high death rate. Some of these problems have remained persistent and they are inimical to sustainable national development in Nigeria. Nigeria is a plural society that has been bedeviled by so many social problems which are inimical to the sustainable development of the nation and they require social entrepreneurs for them to be tackled as over dependence on the government have not completely solved these problems This was aptly captured by Agbo (2011) who noted that Nigeria provides a fertile ground for social entrepreneurs to thrive due to the poor condition of things in the country. The author also added that social institutions in Nigeria like schools, hospitals, public service providers in Nigeria are performing below average. The above conditions require the interventions of social entrepreneurs to tackle and to achieve sustainable national development. Efforts are being made by governments at all levels to tackle these persistent social problems and enhance sustainable development through education.

Education has been established as a tool for achieving sustainable social change and national development (Federal Republic of Nigeria [FRN], 2014; Koiowu, 2012). Education is the best way to support the development of right types of mindsets as a prerequisite for participation in solving societal problems in countries all over the world including Nigeria. Education system nurture young people into becoming reasonable and contributory members of the society. In Nigeria, one of the school subjects through

which learners are prepared to become problem solvers is Social Studies.

Social Studies is a core subject at the basic education level in Nigeria. This means that at this level, the learners must be exposed to the contents of the subject. Social Studies is not offered at the senior secondary school level but it is a course of study in teacher training institutions in Nigeria like universities and colleges of education. It is an integrated subject that draws its content It is an integrated subject that draws its contents from other subject disciplines mainly the Social Sciences so as to study man in a holistic manner. It is a subject that aims at effective citizenship training. It is a discipline which deals with acquisition of facts, knowledge and concepts, changes in values, interest and attitudes and the development of intellectual and manipulative skills in order to enable learners take rational decisions in problems of the society (Oyekale, 2015). It aims at training effective citizens, developing the spirit of national consciousness and patriotism in learners, exposing learners to the immediate and remote environments, inculcating right types of values and attitudes for effective social living in the learners and development of informed and reasoned critical thinkers. Its position in Nigerian education system places it at a strategic position to inculcate worthwhile values to every learner who passes through it.

Social Studies was introduced in Nigeria to help solve the problems of the Nigerian society through the production of effective contributory citizens. Social entrepreneurship education promotes sustainable development by tackling social and environmental problems for the conduciveness of the present and good of the future generations. Social Studies train social entrepreneurs who are interested in promoting sustainable development. Exposure of learners to the contents of Social Studies which are value- laden and comprehensive to encompass everything happening around man will help them to acquire the ability to venture into SE. The subject also exposes learners to the problems of the environment (Mbanefo, 2009; Mezieobi & Mezieobi, 2012). By this, Social Studies enhances SE by bringing to limelight what the society needs to move forward which is one of the features of a social entrepreneur. The society is dynamic and the problems of man are dynamic too. It is the duty of

Social Studies which is dynamic in nature to expose learners to the ever changing environments of man and its evolving needs.

Social Studies inculcates right type of values for selfless services, compassion for others, love for one's nation and for other people, self-confidence, empathy, belief in others and appreciation of others and our diversities. The above values are prerequisites for development of SE intentions. Social entrepreneurs are driven by passion for others and love for others. These form the bedrock for nursing the intentions to delve into SE by learners. Social Studies inculcates in learners, right attitude towards the country's development (Esu & Enu, 2010). Social entrepreneurs start with having the right mindset which motivates them into actions to solve social problems. Sustainable development needs critical and analytical thinkers to be achieved. Social entrepreneurs are critical and reflective thinkers, they look around and identify problems and solutions where others see nothing. People who think critically would be able to analyse and understand problems and seek solutions to them (Iyamu, 2016). Social Studies aims at producing critical thinkers. Social Studies is taught using learners-centred approaches that expose learners to individual inquiry into problems to discover them and proffer solutions. This demands higher level of thinking. Social Studies inculcates in learners, skills of problem identification, solving and reflective thinking (Mezieobi & Mezieobi, 2012). The scope of the subject is broad and encompassing hence it develops the intellectual ability of the learners to reason and arrive at independent conclusions.

Exposure to the contents of Social Studies like social groups, roles of people in the family, cooperation and so on enrich people for better interactions. The methods of teaching Social Studies are learner-centred and the teacher is more democratic than autocratic in Social Studies classrooms. These learning methods like group discussions, project work, peer tutoring and simulation/games promote interaction among the learners. These interactions help individuals to build up social capital which is necessary for SE. These network of friends influence attitudes and intentions to venture into social entrepreneurship and they provide help, donations and other forms of supports to social entrepreneurs. Social Studies

educate learners for effective citizenship. By educating learners to become effective, it therefore prepares learners to desire to do something for the good of the society not minding personal gains which is the main feature of SE.

However, Social Studies is challenged in this 21st Century's wave of curriculum reforms in Nigeria. The core areas of Social Studies have been disarticulated like civics, family life education and recent creation of a new subject, religion and national. These demarcations relegate Social Studies to the background coupled with the fact that the subject is only offered at the basic education level and not taken at senior secondary level in Nigeria. The issue then is, can these demarcations help to solve the problems instead of building up Social Studies to realize its objectives which include development of responsible citizens who will solve the problems in man's social and physical environments. One way of helping Social Studies to achieve its mandate is to enrich its contents and methodologies by incorporating emerging societal issues, concerns and technologies.

A lot of studies have documented the use of Social Studies as a curriculum design for teaching of some contents and relevant contemporary issues and innovations. Some of the contents and issues include the use of Social Studies as a curriculum design for family life education (Okam & Ezegebe, 2013), for fighting corruption (Akinola, 2013; Gotep, 2013; Mezieobi, 2014), for teaching civic education (Ezegebe & Okam, 2013). However, not much has been done on Social Studies' relevance to social entrepreneurship education (SEE) as a way of enhancing the value of the subject in Nigeria. Much work has also shown that Social Studies in Nigeria is not performing as expected and it is at the verge of losing its valued position in the Nigerian education system (Ezegebe, Eskay, Anyanwu & Abiogu, 2014; Opoh, 2014).

Social Entrepreneurship (SE) is an aspect of the broader term "Entrepreneurship" which is seen as ability to sense and utilize opportunities to create or to bring something and make profit where others see no opportunities (Azubuike & Ugwoke, 2011; Okpukpara, 2011). SE on its own, according to Johanna and Ignasi (2005), means "a process of involving the innovative use and combination of resources to pursue opportunities to catalyze social change and/

or address social needs”. The above definition shows that a social entrepreneur is an innovative individual who aims at solving the problems of the society. Social entrepreneurs see something wrong and strive to solve them for the good of the society. They are mostly concerned with how the society can develop, its people live better and sustainable development achieved. Hence, Dees (1998) clearly noted that social mission is explicit and central to SE. Also, Austin, Stevenson and Wei-Skillern (2006) submit that SE involves recognizing, evaluating and exploring opportunities that result in social value creation. Creating social values is the sole aim of the social entrepreneur. Social values have little or nothing to do with profits but involves solving the needs of the society (Certo & Miller, 2008). It is therefore the desire to create social values that distinguishes SE from other forms of entrepreneurship like the business or commercial entrepreneurship.

Austin, Stevenson and Wei-Skillern (2006) articulated that SE include innovative social value creation activities that can occur within and across the non-profit, business or government sectors. The above shows that SE include activities of individuals, governments, business organizations, social activists and non-governmental organizations can be categorized as SE so long as they are targeted at solving persistent social problems which existing social institutions have not been able to solve, whether they make profits or not. Thus, Agbo (2011) sees SE to involve practical, innovative and sustainable approaches to benefit society in general with emphasis on the poor or marginalized. To Agbo (2011), a social entrepreneur recognizes a social problem and uses entrepreneurial principles to organize, create and manage a venture to bring about social change. Social entrepreneurs possess the following skills-innovative/creative, empathy, compassionate, able to manage, supportive among others. The development of social entrepreneurship intentions or mindset require the right attitude or predisposition and skills hence the need for social entrepreneurship education (SEE).

Social entrepreneurship education means the training to prepare people to become responsible and entrepreneurial so as to venture into social enterprises and help create values for the society.

To develop individuals who will take up risks and venture into utilizing opportunities to solve problems in the society, there is need to prepare people especially young learners by exposing them to real life social issues and values through effective teaching and learning. This is why the British Council (2017) noted that the right environment and support can help to develop the skills and knowledge needed by a social entrepreneur can motivate others to come up. One way of providing this support is through social entrepreneurship education. Scholars have documented the efficacy of social entrepreneurship education on attitudes and intentions to delve into social ventures and solve societal problems (Adelekan, Williamson & Atiku, 2018; Li & Yuan, 2019).

In Nigeria, the 9- years basic education curriculum aimed at training of learners to acquire skills that will enable them to realize their full potentials and as such, learners are to be trained for further educational advancements or for trades and craftsmanship so that those who have academic interest will continue and those who have vocational interest will be equipped with vocational skills to become gainfully employed. The training of learners to become solvers of social problems when they move out of the schools and become meaningfully engaged is also very important. Social Studies is one of the compulsory subjects at the upper basic education level in Nigeria which can be used to promote SSE. This is because one of the objectives of Social Studies is to enable young people face and find solutions to the problems of the society (Yazici, Uslu & Arik 2016). Solving societal problems is what SSE also seeks to achieve. However, the concept of social entrepreneurship is still new to Social Studies at the upper basic education level in Nigeria. The teaching of social entrepreneurship contents to learners from early stage will help to develop them and equip them for problem solving and also present Social Studies to be more important in the society than a mere elementary subject for learners at the lower level of learning. This study therefore aims at ascertaining teachers' perceptions on the relevance of integrating social entrepreneurship education into upper basic education Social Studies curriculum in Nigeria on enhancing the value of Social Studies.

Social Studies in Nigeria is sliding into oblivion despite its laudable objectives and its long years of implementation. The existence of the subject is being threatened into extinction as seen in the periodic replacement and disarticulation of core areas from the subject. This probably as a result of the perception of the public on the subject not living up to its expectations as the rate of crime, moral decadence, social and political instability increases. This increasing rate of social and environmental issues actually makes people to doubt the relevance of the subject in Nigeria. In light of the above, it is very important load the subject with more contents especially those that have relevance to solving the evolving problems in the contemporary Nigerian society. This is not only important for producing selfless problem solving citizens but also vital in redeeming the status of Social Studies. This study therefore seeks to find the perception of teachers on the relevance of integrating social entrepreneurship education into upper basic education Social Studies.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The general purpose of the study is to find out teachers' perception on the relevance of integrating social entrepreneurship education into upper basic education Social Studies. Specifically, the study seeks to find out:

1. the perception of Social Studies teachers on the relevance of integrating social entrepreneurship education into upper basic education Social Studies
2. how the integration of social entrepreneurship education into Social Studies can enhance the status of Social Studies in Nigeria?

### **Research Questions**

1. Why is it important to integrate social entrepreneurship education into upper basic education Social Studies curriculum?
2. How can the integration of social entrepreneurship education into Social Studies enhance the status of Social Studies in Nigeria?



### **Methods**

The design of the study was a descriptive survey which aims at finding out information on a particular issue and presenting such information as reported. The rationale for choosing this method is that the study was aimed at ascertaining teachers' perceptions on the relevance of integrating social entrepreneurship education into upper basic education Social Studies curriculum in Nigeria on enhancing the value of Social Studies. The study was carried out in Ebonyi LGA, Ebonyi State, Nigeria and the population of the study consists of all the upper basic education teachers in the local government area. Simple random sampling technique was used to draw 30 Social Studies teachers from the 18 public secondary schools in Ebonyi LGA. An interview guide was used for data collection. The instrument comprises of questions eliciting responses from the respondents on their views on why it is important to introduce SSE into Social Studies and how it can help enhance the status of the subject. The instrument was face validated by three experts, two in Social Studies and one in curriculum studies. The interview sessions were recorded and each lasted for about 10- 20minutes. Data were analysed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis involves arranging interview contents according to recurring themes that emerged from the responses of the participants.

### **Results**

All the respondents agreed that it is very important to integrate social entrepreneurship education into Social Studies. It was obvious from the respondents that Social Studies is a better option for the integration of SSE at the upper basic education level as it deals with social issues and training of problem solvers. The respondents indicated that it is important because it will help learners to acquire knowledge, skills, right attitudes and values necessary to become social entrepreneurs and solve problems in the society. A participant noted "because the society is interested in entrepreneurship education to curb unemployment, we have very many young persons who delve into illegal acts to make money yet they do not help the society and we have so many rich people who do not help the government to solve problems". The participants expressed that Social Studies

practitioners should work hard to enhance the status of social Studies in Nigeria. They also noted that emphasizing on values like love, patriotism, unity and cooperation, empathy and skills, self-confidence, curiosity, inquisitiveness are ways of promoting Social Studies status and at the same time developing social entrepreneurship abilities and intentions in learners and that effective teaching of Social Studies will help in solving social problems in Nigeria. The participants all pointed out that achieving sustainable national development is one of the key reasons why social entrepreneurship education should be included in Social Studies in Nigeria.

On how this can enhance the status of Social Studies in Nigeria, the respondents all agree with the fact that adding relevant contents to Social Studies will go a long way in making the subject worthwhile. They mentioned that social entrepreneurship education in Social Studies will help equip learners the ability to use values acquired in Social Studies to help solve social problems. The participants also noted that this will help to present Social Studies as a problem solving discipline which it claims to be and make it appear functional to the members of the society who see the subject as an elementary subject for citizenship learning. All the participants noted that this will help to catch them young at their age as they all will compulsorily take the contents of the course

### **Discussions**

The study found out that Social Studies is a better option for integration of SSE. This corroborates the view of Adediran and Onifade (2014) that it is a better option to integrate SSE into Social Studies curriculum because both are interwoven, seek to develop man and solve social problems. It was uncovered that finding that social entrepreneurship education in Social Studies will inculcate in learners needed knowledge, skills, right attitudes and values necessary to venture into social entrepreneurship and help solve Nigeria's social and developmental problems. This is in line with the observation of Akinola (2013) that government efforts have yielded no results and Social Studies option should be employed to solve corruption as a social problem in Nigeria. This is so because

the subject trains good citizens who are critical and problem solvers. The assertions of Mezieobi (2010) and Mezieobi (2012) that Social Studies will help solve Nigeria's problems if properly implemented supports the above. It is also in consonance with the notion of Mezieobi and Mezieobi (2012) that functional Social Studies curriculum is a tool for solving social problems in Nigeria. It was observed that many of the participants mentioned proper teaching of values and relating them to solving social problems at the same time as key to developing the minds of young people towards thinking of delving into becoming social entrepreneurs in the future to help solve social problems.

The study revealed that the introduction of SSE into Social Studies at the upper basic education level will help to project the image of the subject. This is in consonance with the views of Adediran and Onifade (2014) that integrating SSE into Social Studies curriculum will make the subject more viable and innovative in nature.

### **Conclusion**

The study has shown that it is very important to use Social Studies in exploring social entrepreneurship education. This is because Social Studies helps in preparing learners to find out the problems of the society, develop the intentions and think out of the box to solve societal problems for sustainable national development. There is therefore the need to promote effective teaching of Social Studies at the basic education level in Nigeria where every child has the opportunity to learn the contents because learning at this stage is a springboard for all other learnings in life. This effective teaching can be achieved through the teaching of Social Studies by qualified or trained Social Studies experts who will utilize appropriate materials and methods to teach Social Studies for the development of effective citizens.

### **Recommendations**

The study recommends that curriculum planners, government and Social Studies practitioners should revisit the curriculum at the upper basic education level to add social entrepreneurship education into

Social Studies curriculum just like citizenship education, values and just like entrepreneurship is a key issue in vocational studies. This is because Nigeria needs not only to have rich people but also those who will be willing to help the government solve persistent social problems with their resources. Social Studies teachers should be encouraged through sponsorships to attend workshops so as to be updated on how to effectively teach using learner centred methods and relevant materials in order to enable learners develop critical and independent abilities needed to take social problems as problems worth solving. Since the subject is very important for developing social entrepreneurs who will help to solve the nation's problems, government should include Social Studies into senior secondary school level so as to bridge the gap created by the subject not being offered at the senior secondary school level.

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