
**ROLES OF SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS TOWARDS
REDUCTION OF MORAL DECADENCE AMONG
ADOLESCENTS**

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Abstract

Social Studies teachers are keys to success and failure of Social Studies objectives in our educational system. One of the objectives of Social Studies teachers is to inculcate desirable behaviours into the students, hence reducing moral decadence among citizens, especially adolescents. Therefore, this study investigates the roles of Social Studies teachers towards reduction of moral decadence among adolescents. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. 50 Social Studies teachers were randomly selected from both public (15) and private (15) junior secondary schools in Ijebu Ode town for the study. Self-developed questionnaire titled: Social Studies Teachers and Reduction of Moral Decadence Among Adolescents (SOSTREMDA) with 0.73 as reliability coefficient was used for data collection. Descriptive statistics of mean and Standard Deviation were used for analysing all the research questions. The findings indicated that Social Studies teachers used problem-solving and activity methods

for the teaching of values and other Social Studies concepts (3.19); they created useful means to develop necessary skills into the students (3.01); and they made use of rewards and punishments to instil desirable attitudes into the students (2.94). It was concluded that Social Studies teachers are doing their best to reduce moral decadence among adolescents. It was recommended among others that stake holders should encourage Social Studies teachers through organizations of workshop and seminars that are of great benefit to teachers.

Keywords: *Social Studies Teachers, Moral Decadence, Adolescent*

Introduction

Our society has witnessed a tremendous deterioration in its moral, social and educational values, especially among the youths. No wonder, Chima (2010) expresses that it is amazing to find out that the youths of these days are morally bankrupt. Morality is collectively upholding of certain beliefs, ideas, values and behaviours, rules and regulations which are considered good, right and acceptable by the society and to which members of the society are bound [Muraino and Ugwumba (2014)]. Gert (2012) in Njoku (2016) posits that the descriptive definition of morality explains moral as set of conduct put forward by any group, including a society. There is an idea that what is moral should have a code of conduct, that is put forward by a society and that it should be accepted as a guide to behaviour by members of that society

Decline in morality is referred to as moral decadence. Odeh (2013) asserts that moral decadence is the failure to uphold sound morality in our society. Muraino and Ugwumba (2014) assert that moral decadence is the process of behaving in away that shows low moral standards. It means gross reduction in the moral values in a particular society. Thus, Njoku (2016) opines that moral decadence appears to be a fall' in the moral standard of the society.

Njoku explains further that, moral decadence is deterioration or a collapse in upholding our societal values, beliefs, norms and ethical standards.

Shittu (2018) states that recent research studies have shown that higher percentage of secondary schools and university students are engaging in various immoral activities such as examination malpractices, violence, cyber crimes, sexual immoralities, stealing, robbery, rituals, e.t.c. and if something is not done to curb these vices, it may adversely degenerate the progress of this country [Adebisi (2013) in Shittu (2018)]. Shittu (2018) opines that, though moral decadence among youths has been majorly blamed on the parents for lack of proper up-bringing of their kids and the media for exposing some critical scenes capable of polluting the innocent minds of the youth. Nigerian government is also to be blamed due to her nonchalant attitudes towards the plights of her citizens, such as inability to provide her youth with employment. Hence, the youth in search of means of livelihood involve in various illegal activities and adolescents, [persons between ages 10 to 19 according to Csrszentmihalyi (2021)] who look up to the youth as their role models follow suit.

National Council for Social Studies (2021) states that the primary purpose of social studies is to help young people make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world. The primary purpose of Social Studies is to help young people make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world (Minnesota Centre for Social Studies education, 2021). Hence, through the teaching of Social Studies, citizens get necessary knowledge and right attitudes to live with one another without fracas which is an evidence of a society devoid of moral decadence.

Buttressing the above submission of Minnesota Centre for Social Studies education (2021), Adediran (2019) explains that Social Studies as a field of study instils in students the necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes and actions that are considered important in the relationship and interaction of man with those

around him on one hand, and the entire environment on the other hand. This shows that Social Studies is about developing acceptable and desirable attitudes in students to live peaceably with others in the society. Social Studies education plays a very vital role in the development of the critical and national thinking ability of the citizens for practical social life, promoting of political literacy and encouraging democratic values and principles in tackling dynamic problems in the society. It also enables citizens to develop positive attitudes towards other people and towards citizenship, and also to contribute their best towards the welfare of the society and nation building (Dasimeokuma, 2017 in Adediran, 2019).

Thakerss (2010) states that teacher in any educational process occupies a key position. He is the key to success and failure of entire educational process. Educational aims are achieved by teacher's human touch and effective interaction with the students. In order to enhance the achievement of Social Studies objectives, Fageyinbo (2005) states that a good Social Studies teacher must possess adequate knowledge of the learners, must be a good communicator (that is, he must have communication skills, such as speaking, listening and writing), must have the ability to recognize individual difference, must have superb methods and techniques of teaching, systematic and methodological in his presentation and evaluative procedure, must have the ability to motivate and energise learners to positive behavior that is, to be role models. Jagannath (2021) in support of the above also states that Social Science teachers must be able to transmit knowledge, to provide guidance, select and organize materials for teaching to enhance lifelong learning, imparting training for citizenship and promotion of national integration and international understanding.

Considering the above expectations from Social Studies teachers, there is no doubt that Social Studies teachers have a lot to do in bringing up students that will fit into the society, especially when there is an observation of a decline in morality among the youths, especially the adolescents in Junior Secondary Schools. Social Studies teachers are not expected to see themselves like

other teachers in the schools. The duties of Social Studies teachers go beyond teaching in classrooms like other subject teachers. Social Studies teachers should see themselves as ‘World Changers’. The roles of Social Studies teachers go beyond inculcating acceptable knowledge, butto also ensure the development of desirable attitudes and useful skills in the students, which will make the students, live acceptably in the society, hence reduction and eradication of moral decadence and vices in the society; and this will surely bring about great development in the society.

Some parents and stakeholders in the society and schools think that it is the duty of Guidance Counselors only to instill desirable and acceptable attitudes to the students through their counseling sessions with the students. It has been imperative for Social Studies teachers to also have counseling sessions with their students as suggested by Jagannath (2021). They have to engage extra efforts to make sure that moral decadence among their students are drastically reduced. Social Studies teachers with their wealth of knowledge about the objectives of Social Studies and as a unique discipline, which exposes students to necessary values that will help them live effectively in the society should commit extra effort towards the development of these desirable values in the students through their methods of teaching and application of desirable contents in the hidden curriculum. Therefore, the need for the assessment of the roles of Social Studies teachers towards reduction of moral decadence among adolescents.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose is to assess the roles of Social Studies teacher towards the reduction of moral decadence among Junior Secondary School students in Ogun State, Nigeria.

The specific purposes are:

- i. To examine the methods and strategies been used by Social Studies teachers to inculcate acceptable knowledge to the students in Social Studies classroom in order to reduce moral decadence among adolescents?

- ii. To examine how social studies teachers effectively instill necessary social skills into the students in order to reduce moral decadence?
- iii. To examine how Social Studies teachers, impart desirable attitudes into the students in order to reduce moral decadence?

Research Questions

- i. What are the methods and strategies used by Social Studies teachers to inculcate acceptable knowledge to the students in Social Studies classroom in order to reduce moral decadence among adolescents?
- ii. What are the extra efforts being made by Social Studies teachers to instill necessary social skills into the students in order to reduce moral decadence among adolescents?
- iii. How do Social Studies teachers impart desirable attitudes into the students in order to reduce moral decadence among them?

Methods

The research design adopted for the study is descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprises all Social Studies teachers in both public and private Junior Secondary Schools in Ijebu Ode, Ogun State, Nigeria. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 15 public and 15 private Junior Secondary schools in Ijebu Ode. Junior Secondary schools were selected because the students in this level of education were adolescents and that was the level of education where we have Social Studies teachers, as Senior Secondary Schools do not offer Social Studies as a subject. 30 Social Studies teachers were randomly selected from the 15 public junior secondary schools, while 20 Social Studies were selected from the 20 private junior secondary schools in the town.

The research instrument used to obtain data for the study was self-developed questionnaire tagged, Social Studies Teachers and Reduction of Moral Decadence among Adolescents

(SOSTREMDA). The questionnaire requests responses on a four (4) – point scale format. The responses rating scales are Strongly Agree (SA), scored 4, Agree (A), scored 3, Disagree (D), scored 2, and Strongly Disagree (SD), scored 1. The questionnaire was divided into two sections, A and B. Section A focused on demographic characteristics of the respondents, while section B examined items developed to get answers to the research questions. The instrument was subjected to face and contents validity by given to lecturers in the department of Sociological Studies, Tai Solarin University of Education, and necessary contributions and corrections were effected.

Reliability of the instrument was ensured by administering copies of it to a sample of 20 Social Studies teachers in another local government different from the study sample area. The purpose is to determine the stability and consistency of the instruments. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to determine the level of reliability coefficient. The reliability coefficient yielded 0.73. The researcher and her research assistants administered the questionnaire to the respondents. Data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the methods and strategies use by Social Studies teachers to inculcate acceptable knowledge to the students in Social Studies classroom in order to reduce moral decadence among adolescents?

Table 1: Methods and strategies use by Social Studies teachers to inculcate acceptable knowledge to the students in Social Studies classroom, in order to reduce moral decadence among adolescents

S/ N	Items	SA (%)	A (%)	SD (%)	D (%)	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Using of simulation method for teaching concepts and principles that are not easily observable such as theoretical concepts of values in Social Studies	24 (48%)	21 (42%)	4 (8%)	1 (2%)	3.5667	.50401	Agreed
2	Using of Programmed Instruction technique to teach concepts like climates in Social Studies because it involves audiovisual aids and many other life-like activities to supplement textbook instructions and to increase the effectiveness of presentation and mastery of subject matter	19 (38)	21 (42%)	5 (10%)	5 (10%)	3.1667	.59209	Agreed
3	Using of inquiry strategy to allow student to think and discover learning by themselves, hence, increases students' enthusiasm at examining issues logically	25 (25)	15 (30)	4 (8)	6 (10)	3.2667	.82768	Agreed
4	Using of Resource Person technique to teach positive role acquisition to the students	12 (24)	18 (36)	8 (16)	12 (24)	3.4234	.79148	Agreed
5	Using of discussion technique for students to contribute positively and learn good things from one another in the class	24 (48)	21 (42)	1 (2)	4 (8)	3.2000	.84690	Agreed
6	Giving home works that involves investigation so as to engage students in fact finding process	12 (24%)	18 (36%)	12 (24%)	8 (16%)	2.9667	.99943	Agreed
7	Use of play way, role play and drama methods to teach social Studies concepts such as values so that students learn by doing and they do not forget	24 (48)	21 (42)	4 (8)	1 (2)	3.3667	.66868	Agreed
8	Teaching of Social Studies contents with great passion	20 (40)	22 (44)	8 (16)	-	3.2667	.52083	Agreed
9	Teaching of values in Social Studies concepts using field trip technique	18 (36)	19 (38)	10 (20)	3 (6)	2.8667	.93710	Agreed

Note: The determinant value is 2.5

- Decision Rule:** (i) If the grand mean was greater than 2.5, it is agreement.
(ii) If grand mean was lesser than 2.5, it is disagreement.

Any mean score of 2.5 and above was accepted, while any one below 2.5 was rejected.

The grand mean is determined by adding all the means together and divide it by 9.

$$\frac{3.6+3.1+3.3+3.4+3.2+2.57+3.37+3.27+2.87}{9} = \frac{16.6}{9} = 3.187$$

Table 1 shows that respondents agree on all items as shown by percentages and mean values that are higher than 2.5. However, a Grand mean of 3.187 is an indication that many Social Studies teachers who responded to the instrument used activity and problem solving methods to teach Social studies concepts to the adolescents in Junior Secondary Schools in Ijebu-Ode.

Research Question 2: How do Social Studies teachers effectively instill necessary social skills into the students in order to reduce moral decadence?

Table 2: How Social Studies teachers effectively instill necessary social skills into the students in order to reduce moral decadence

SN	Items	SA (%)	A (%)	SD (%)	D (%)	Mean	SD	Remark
1	I ensure that students respect elders and assist their junior in schools and at homes	23 (46)	10 (20)	5 (10)	12 (4)	3.2667	.98027	Agreed
2	While teaching, I emphasize how to develop listening skills so as to understand one another very well	16 (32)	20 (40)	4 (8)	10 (20)	3.1333	1.10589	Agreed
3	While interacting with the students, I emphasize development of speaking skills in order to consider what they want to say before saying it, so as not to say unacceptable words in the society.	24 (48)	21 (42)	4 (8)	1 (2)	2.8667	.89955	Agreed
4	While teaching I emphasize development of thinking skills in students in order to consider what they want to do or say critically and logically before embarking on it.	20 (40)	22 (44)	8 (16)	-	2.8000	.71438	Agreed
5	I use real life experience as examples to the students in order to emulate.	25 (50)	25 (50)	-	-	2.9667	.85029	Agreed
Grand Mean						3.008	0.925023	

The grand mean is determined by adding all the means together and divide it by 5.

$$\frac{3.3+3.13+2.87+2.8+2.97}{5} = \frac{15.04}{5} = 3.008$$

In table 2, a grand mean of 3.008 shows that Social Studies teachers ensure that students respect elders and assist their junior ones in schools and at home.

Research Question 3: How do Social Studies teachers impart desirable attitudes into the students in order to reduce moral decadence among them?

Table 3: Ways Social Studies teachers impart desirable attitudes into the students

S/ N	Items	SA (%)	A (%)	SD (%)	D (%)	Mean	SD	Remark
1	The use of reinforcement to impart desirable behaviour into students	19 (38)	24(48)	3(6)	4(7)	3.066 7	.90719	Agreed
2	The use of praise of students who conform with the desired attitudes in order for others to learn the positive behaviour from them.	21 (42)	18 (3)	5 (10)	6 (12)	3.000 0	1.0504 5	Agreed
3	The use of punishment on erring students to serve as deterrent to others.	16 (32)	20 (40)	4 (8)	10 (20)	2.633 3	.88992	Agreed
4	Calling out and disgracing erring students during assembly for others to learn.	24 (48)	21 (42)	4 (8)	1 (2)	2.700 0	.74971	Agreed
5	Reporting erring students to their parents for further punishment	24 (48)	21 (42)	4 (8)	1 (2)	2.966 7	.99943	Agreed
6	Giving of rewards in form of gifts to obedient students.	20 (40)	22 (44)	8 (16)	-	3.066 7	1.1724 8	Agreed
7	Organisation of counselling sessions to the students	16 (32)	20 (40)	4 (8)	10 (20)	2.633 3	.88992	Agreed
8	Organisation of seminars	12 (24%)	18 (36%)	12 (24%)	8 (16%)	2.966 7	.99943	Agreed
9	Invitation of Resource Persons to speak to the students	12 (24)	18 (36)	8 (16)	12 (24)	3.423 4	.79148	Agreed
	Grand Mean					2.939 3	0.9615 3	

The grand mean is determined by adding all the means together and divide it by 9.

$$\frac{3.07+3.0+2.6+2.7+2.97+3.07+2.63+2.97+3.42}{9} = \frac{26.454}{9} = 2.94$$

Table 3 shows a grand mean of 2.94. It is revealed that Social Studies teachers use reinforcement to impart desirable behaviours

into students, praise students who conform with the desired attitudes, punish erring students to serve as deterrent to others, report erring students to their parents and give gifts to students who act in acceptable ways, organize counseling sessions with the students and sometimes invite Resource Persons to address the students.

Discussions

The result shows that Social Studies teachers give students home works that will make the students engage in inquiry in order to learn more; use role play, and dramatization to teach; they teach with passion, use real life experience to teach the students and sometimes use fieldtrip to teach in order to enhance learning and make learning remain permanent in the students' memory. This result is in support of the submission of STEMmates (2021), which submits that activity-based learning such discussion, dramatization, simulation, inquiry e.t.c. enhance learning by doing, encourages students to actively participate in their own learning experience through practical activities such as problem-solving and independent investigation, explore, experiment and learn independently. Activity based method of teaching also enhances the development of critical analysis and creativity skills. These skills help the students to think critically before embarking on any action, hence help them to have such values like self-control, discipline and integrity which will help them not to indulge in any negative behaviour.

The result also buttresses the opinion of Prodiggi (2016) that problem solving method helps the students to address real-life issues that require real-life solutions. Problem solving method encourages the students to discuss about their ideas and issues of life; and challenge each other in a constructive manner. The implication of this to the study is that the use of problem solving method by Social Studies teachers encourages students to brainstorm and deliberate together, hence discovering and promoting values that will enhance the reduction of immorality among adolescents in Secondary Schools.

Furthermore, it was discovered that Social Studies teachers also emphasized development of listening, speaking and thinking skills while interacting with the students. As stated by Responsive Classroom (2019), having successful communication skills leads to better social relationships, and the implication of the result to the study is that the development of necessary skills into the students, especially skills of thinking, listening, speaking and critical analysis helps the students in reaching logical conclusion for necessary decisions. Development of these skills will help adolescents to think and consider different issues carefully before speaking or acting on them, hence helping them not to act negatively but positively, therefore, reducing moral decadence among students.

More so, the result shows more effective ways to teach and manage students in order to develop positive attitudes in them. The result emphasizes the opinion of Craig (2021), who suggests techniques such as positive reinforcement as a way of developing desirable attitudes in students. Smith (2017) adds that the reason positive reinforcement is important in the classroom is that it can be used to effectively change student behavior to positive one and it can also help in sustaining the desirable behavior in the students, hence, movement towards reduction of moral decadence.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study reveals that Social Studies teachers have taken major roles towards development of good measure of discipline in the students. Also, they have really contributed towards inculcating positive attitudes, acceptable knowledge and necessary skills through commitment of extra efforts of counseling, organizing seminars, invitation of Resource Persons to speak to the students and the use of learners-centred methods of teaching in and outside classrooms. These show that Social Studies teachers have really contributed to reduction of moral decadence among adolescents in junior secondary schools.

Recommendations

Based on findings of the study, it is revealed that Social Studies teachers committed great efforts towards the reduction of moral decadence among adolescents; nevertheless it is recommended that there should be solid cooperation between parents, teachers and the school management in order to curb negative attitudes among students so as to reduce moral decadence; government and school administrators should provide necessary tools, materials and instructional aids for the teaching and learning of Social Studies contents in schools. More so, contributions and innovations from students should be encouraged and supported by the teachers and parents; by doing this, students will be inspired to speak out and open up issues of life that are bothering them, hence, parents and teachers can know how and when to help them. Finally, parents and should properly monitor the children in junior secondary schools. Monitoring of adolescents should not be left for teachers only.

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