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**REPOSITIONING THE NEW TEACHER OF SOCIAL  
STUDIES AS PERCEIVED TEACHERS IN UPPER BASIC  
SCHOOLS IN RIVERS STATE**

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***Abstract***

*The work focused on repositioning the new teacher of Social Studies as perceived teachers in Upper Basic schools in Rivers State. A descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The study was carried out on 420 Social Studies teachers in the Upper Basic secondary schools in the three senatorial zones of Rivers State. Five schools were randomly picked from each senatorial zone and 42 teachers were purposefully picked as the sample for the study. A questionnaire titled The New Teacher of Social Studies Discipline and Qualification (TNTOSSDQ) soliciting the teacher's educational background and discipline among other information was drafted. Simple percentage was used to calculate the data collected. The results showed that most of the teachers teaching Social Studies are from other disciplines. Though, some studied education but not in Social Studies. Sequel to the findings it was suggested amongst other things that Social Studies should be strictly taught by teachers trained in Social Studies, which means that The New Teacher of Social Studies should be trained in Social Studies, also the teachers who have been drafted to teach Social Studies due to lack of qualified teachers should accept the challenge by going for further studies to equip themselves, for the task they have been given.*

**Keywords:** The New Teacher, Social Studies, Qualification, Discipline, Vices.

## **Introduction**

Social Studies is one of the subjects taught in schools across the country, it is a subject made compulsory in all primary schools, junior secondary schools and optional in senior secondary schools and higher institutions. It is a subject that is blessed with various definitions. According to Enang, Mboto and Eteng (2005), "Social Studies is the various ways man overcomes the environment be it social or physical, and show how man associate with other people in it." Social Studies originated from Great Britain during the 1820s and quickly moved to the United States of America and the rest of the world, including Africa. One unique thing about Social Studies is that the curriculum is drafted to address the ills of society and because every society is unique, the curriculums are different. For example, in America, there were a series of wars that left them with the feeling of marginalization, racism, distrust, fear and so on, which necessitated the need to draft their curriculum in such a way that everyone would have a sense of belonging and work towards the general good of the country.

Nwaubani, cited in Osakwe (2010) pointed that Social Studies is an important medium for the development of value which is one of the aims of government which is reflected in the national policy of education of the federal government. The author asserts that one vital way of restoring value is through education. He narrowed it to Social Studies pointing that the subject has an obligation by its philosophy, content and methodology to inculcate desirable values and ensure proper character training of Nigerian children. Ezema (2001) also pointed out that social Studies is important to the development of society as it helps students appreciate the diversity and interdependence of members of different communities through the inculcation of values of cooperation, justice, fair play, tolerance, honesty and patience; all of which are considered indispensable for the wellbeing, progress and development of a country.

Nigeria has had her negative share of social problems as a result of events that took place before and after the civil war, which led to the feeling of distrust, fear, disregard for human life, tribalism, religious conflict, insecurity and so on. To arrest these and other problems, the Social Studies curriculum was drafted in a way that the learners will appreciate the diversity and interdependence of members of different communities by inculcating values of cooperation, justice, fair play, tolerance, honesty and patience which are very important for the wellbeing, progress and development of the country. Given the above, Ezema (2001) rightly pointed out that “Social Studies helps students to appreciate the diversity and interdependence of members of different communities through the inculcation of values of cooperation, justice, fair play, tolerance, honesty and patience.”

The introduction of Social Studies as a subject is a welcome development, as it is intended to create empathy among the citizens, and make them understand that we stand to gain more when we stick together as one in unity, love and trust. Unfortunately, the story in real life is different as we are divided along ethnic, religious, political and other lines which are not doing us any good; people do not have values for other people's lives as kidnapping and ritual killings are now the order of the day, cases of armed robbery are on the increase, one cannot take a road trip from the south to the north without one's heart is in his hand for the duration of the journey, for fear of being attacked by deviants. The laudable purpose of the National Youth Service Corps is defeated as graduates are seldom posted to areas outside their zone of origin. The question is why are we still being bedeviled by these vices in our country despite the laudable objectives of Social Studies?

The researcher thinks that the teachers who are saddled with the responsibility to teach Social Studies are not living up to expectations, because no matter how wonderful a curriculum maybe if it is not executed properly it will end up as just a piece of paper. Consequently, Ezegebe (2003) and Obasi (2009) pointed that “the teacher is the starting point of the learning process, the facilitator of learning skills, the assessor of learning efficiency and indeed the central learning element in the entire educational programme. So,

if there is any blame, we should start with the teachers”. Inyang in his study of some schools in Yola South Local Government Area of Adamawa State discovered an acute shortage of Social Studies teachers, he attributed this to the government’s unpreparedness in introducing the subject in Nigeria. From the study of Inyang the writer thinks that society is bedeviled today by vices because the impact of Social Studies is not felt as we do not have qualified teachers to teach the subject. This work is a study on government schools in the three senatorial zones in Rivers State.

### **Purpose of Study**

This study aimed at repositioning the new Social Studies teacher as perceived by teachers in Upper Basic schools in River State. The specific objectives are to:

- i. investigate if the teachers teaching Social Studies are trained to teach the subject, with regards to their academic discipline;
- ii. determine how the qualification of the teacher of Social Studies would enhance or retard the effective delivery of Social Studies lessons amongst learners.

### **Research Questions**

The following questions were answered in this study:

- i. How does the teacher’s training in Social Studies reposition him/her for effective teaching delivery or outcome?
- ii. Can the Social Studies teacher’s educational qualification be a significant factor in effective Teaching delivery of Social Studies?

### **Methods**

Descriptive survey was used for this work. This is because of the size of the population. The population of the study comprises the 420 teachers of Social Studies in the Upper Basic secondary schools in the three senatorial zones of Rivers State. The samples are the 42 teachers of Social Studies purposefully selected from 15

government secondary schools randomly selected from the three senatorial zones in Rivers State. Five schools were selected randomly from each zone. The research instrument is a questionnaire titled The New Teacher of Social Studies Discipline and Qualification (TNTOSSDQ) that was given to the 42 teachers of Social Studies intended to get their profile. It solicited for the schools they attended, their discipline and qualification obtained. This will help in revealing if the teachers are qualified to teach Social Studies. It also solicited the name of the school they are teaching and how long they have taught the subject. This is intended to find out how wrong or right the teaching of Social Studies had been going on. The questionnaires were personally administered to the teachers by the researcher who guided them. Percentage was used to calculate the data obtained.

## Results

**Table 1: Teachers that studied Social Studies and others who did not study Social Studies**

SN	Teacher's discipline	No	Percentage
1	Ph.D	1	2
2	M.Ed.	1	2
3	B.Ed.	4	10
4	Dip Ed	1	2
5	N.C.E	4	10
6	Others	31	74
7	Total	42	100

Table 1 shows the teachers that are trained in Social Studies and those not trained in Social Studies. From the figures, only one teacher has a doctorate in Social Studies, one has a master's degree in Social Studies, four has a bachelor's degree in Social Studies, one has a diploma in Social Studies and four have NCE in Social Studies. While the remaining teachers, though educated, are from other disciplines. Table 1 shows that only 11 of the 42 teachers that are teaching Social Studies are trained to teach the subject, though some of them studied education but not Social Studies,

and that is a big difference because someone that graduated in sociology under social sciences and someone that graduated as a Social Studies student under education is not the same. The difference is that the person that graduated under education is taught how to teach the subject with the various methods to get to the students.

**Table 2: Teacher's Educational Qualification**

<b>S/N</b>	<b>Teacher's Qualification</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1	Ph.D	1	1
2	M.Sc/M.Ed.	8	19
3	B.Sc/B.Ed.	18	42.8
4	Dip/Dip/ed	7	16.7
5	N.C.E	8	19
<b>6</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2 shows the academic qualification of the sampled teachers which revealed that the 42 teachers are educated as amongst them are NCE holders, Diploma, B.Sc/B.Ed, M.Sc/M.Ed holders and a PhD holder.

### **Discussions**

The results showed that the teachers who are teaching Social Studies are few compared to the many from other disciplines, drafted to teach the subject. Out of the 42 sampled teachers, only 11 are trained to teach Social Studies while 31 are from other disciplines. This corroborates Inyang's (2012) findings when he carried out a similar study in Yola South Local Government Area of Adamawa State. He discovered an acute shortage of Social Studies teachers. Out of the 100 respondents interviewed 79 agreed that Social Studies is being taught by teachers borrowed from other disciplines. The teachers may be putting in their best and may mean well, but it does not get the job done. A Social Studies teacher that is not trained to teach the subject will not do well as he does not have what it takes to deliver sound teaching, also a student however

bright will not do well in Social Studies is taught by a teacher from another discipline. This reveals why students are not imbibing the teaching of Social Studies, which is intended to create empathy in the students, and in the long run will prepare them for peaceful co-existence. The objective of a subject that is being taught by strangers will not be achieved because they are not grounded in it; how can the Social Studies objective be achieved when out of the 42 teachers only 11 are qualified to teach it. Something needs to be done.

Results further showed the academic qualification of the sampled teachers which revealed that the teachers are educated with NCE holders, Diploma, B Sc/B.Ed, M.Sc/M.Ed holders and a Ph.D holder. This affirms Asiyai's (2013) submissions that the new Social Studies teacher needs requisite academic qualifications, skills, knowledge, information, values, attitude, and continuous professional development. While Asiyai (2013) observed that a knowledge-based economy or nation is in urgent need of the right type of education to make the recipients globally competitive. Thus, the Social Studies teacher needs requisite academic qualifications, skills, knowledge, information, values, attitude, continuous professional development to provide relevant and appropriate instruction for the socio-political and socio-economic transformation of the citizenry. Pete and Alisa (2015) stated that our schools could do better, our students could learn more, our teachers could teach more effectively, our students' achievement rates could be higher, our achievement gap could be closed. Not only could these things occur but they are possible.

## **Conclusion**

The teacher is the center for the learning activity. As Anderson cited in Okpobiri (2004) pointed that 'teacher's qualification and student's performance go together.' Social Studies is the foundation for stability, it is an important subject that needs to be handled by teachers trained in Social Studies. It is said that what is worth doing is worth doing well. Nigeria needs to be peaceful, devoid of insecurity, bad governance and all the vices the country is experiencing, and Social Studies is the panacea to these problems.

From the results obtained, most of the teachers teaching Social Studies are not trained to teach the subject. This explains why Nigeria is going through the experience she is going through. Social Studies is intended to groom students into law-abiding and peace-loving citizens who love and regard people, irrespective of their religious or ethnic affiliation. The curriculum is okay but something needs to be done about the teachers. For if things continue with the way things are, peace and stability will be elusive. As the researcher said, let the right thing be done and this nation shall be the giant of Africa she claims to be.

### **Recommendations**

Social Studies should be allotted to teachers who are trained in Social Studies. This will go a long way in achieving the aims and objectives of Social Studies. The New Teacher of Social Studies should be trained in Social Studies, to take off teaching Social Studies on a sound footing. The government should declare a state of emergency in Social Studies. The government can start by making teaching the subject attractive through incentives to teachers who are teaching the subject; that are trained in Social Studies. Also, the training schools should be equipped and handled by seasoned professionals in Social Studies. Offering scholarships to those who are studying Social Studies in the training institutions is also recommended.

The New Teacher of Social Studies should realize that the world is dynamic so he/she should continue to improve on themselves by digging into the internet, going for seminars and workshops and other means of acquiring knowledge that will help him teach the subject very well as Rafe cited in Ken and Lou (2015) pointed that “Properly conceived teaching is an art.” The teachers who have been saddled with the lofty responsibility of teaching Social Studies, which they are not qualified to teach, should accept the challenge by improving themselves. This they can do by going for further studies. In this present day, we have schools online which they can take advantage of if their schedule is tight. The teachers who have gone through training to teach Social Studies, should not be



comfortable with the achievement so far gained but should strive to improve themselves continually. This can be achieved by going for further studies, attending workshops and seminars to hear from other experienced scholars and gaining from their knowledge.

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