
**EXPLORING GLOBAL SOCIAL STUDIES FOR
ENTHRONING CITIZENSHIP PERSPECTIVES IN
NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND MODERNIZATION
IN NIGERIA'S 21ST CENTURY**

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Abstract

Global Social Studies conjures-up a vital curriculum instrument for raising effective citizens who could constitute the basis for meaningful national development and modernization across the countries of the world. The assets, qualities and curricular paradigm structures intrinsic in global Social Studies imply that the subject area possesses a variety of human resources and capacity-building designs and potentialities which are vital for grooming effective citizens who could constitute the basis for nation-building, national development and modernization across the countries of the globe. Thus a major function of the curriculum design established in global Social Studies among others, is tailored at creating citizens across the globe who could operate beyond the activities of passive individuals to become human assets that are well-informed, responsible and knowledgeable enough to explore and cultivate the ideals and virtues rooted in global Social Studies in the context and quest for transforming education

into a tool and instrument for nation-building, national development and modernization across the globe. This arduous task calls for purposeful commitment and engagement of professionally competent Social Studies teachers that are capable of implementing the “development structures” which bear on “good and effective citizenship”, which could also constitute the basis for nation-building, national development and modernization not only in a democratic Nigeria but also in the other democracies of the world.

Keywords: Global Social Studies, Citizenship perspectives, National development, Modernization, Democratic society, Curriculum paradigm structures.

Introduction

The emergence of the ideals intrinsic in global Social Studies are currently and seriously challenging the traditional versions of the subject in nation-building and development through the curriculum design perspectives established in it. In other words, the ethic in global Social Studies has gone beyond the pronouncement by the Federal Government of Nigeria (2013) through the National Policy on Education that “Nigerian educational programmes shall be effectively tailored at capitalizing on the virtues enshrined in effective citizenship for grooming and producing individuals who could constitute the pillars for achieving national development goals and also for transforming Nigeria into the “Giant Structure” in all ramifications by 2020” (Obanya, 2007; Umar, 2008; Okam, 2012). Although this view is still pertinent and entertained in our present circumstances in this country, it is being challenged and relegated to the background because of the curricular perspectives advocated in the concept of global Social Studies.

Global Social Studies unlike the traditional versions of the subject area, conjures-up the advocacy that it constitutes a way of living which recognizes that our world is an increasingly complex web of connections and interdependencies, a world in which our

choices and actions may have repercussions for people and communities locally, nationally or internationally (Bahai International Community, 1993). It is designed to nurture personal respect and respect for others, where they lives; it encourages individuals to think deeply and critically about what is equitable and just; it is tailored at minimizing harm to our planet. The exploration of global Social Studies themes is meant to help students/learners grow confident and “standing up” for their beliefs and enable them to become more skilled in evaluating the ethic and implications of their decisions.

In the attempt at providing a working definition of “global Social Studies”, Oxfarm (2014) emerged with a number of qualities that are characteristic of a typical individual who is committed to its tenets as follows: (a) possession of an awareness of the wider world and a sense of his own role as a world citizen; (h) entertains respect and values’ diversity; (c) possesses an understanding of how the world works; (d) cherishes outrage at the prevalence of social injustice; (e) commitment to participation in the community at a range of levels, from the local to the global; (f) demonstrates willingness to act to make the world a more equitable and sustainable place; and (g) takes responsibility for his actions.

The very essence of global Social Studies capitalizes and endorses the view that a greater tendency prevails in the need to evolving uniform ways of conducting human affairs (Bloom, 2004; & Suarez-Oroozoo, 2004). This educational movement is tending towards moving human kind to just one single standard and that standard is international; it endorses premium on the development of knowledge economy in which knowledge is highly valued, and propelled by learning institutions, learning societies and learning individuals. The function of global Social Studies is rooted in character and personality building; it bears on the quality and comportment of the mind in which an individual is consummated. The goals are expressed in a variety of forms such as: (a) preparation for lifetime learning; (b) preparation for the world of work; (c) preparation for gaining expertise in a set of generic skills intended to help an individual respond to the demands and challenges of a globalized world and of a knowledge economy. Global Social Studies

is designed to reveal itself as a modernity and life itself and to an individual because ultimately it emancipates humans (Bloom, 2004; Suarez-Oroozoo, 2004). Thus, the curricular paradigm structures that are rooted in global Social Studies are meant to expose and reveal human developmental gaps which have handicapped the traditional Social Studies from meeting the modernization demands necessary for assisting human societies including those of Nigeria, from coping and overcome the challenges needed for meaningful advancement. That is why this paper discussed these challenges within the context of meeting the demands of global citizenship perspectives for national development and modernization in Nigeria.

Ideals in Global Social Studies as Instruments for National Development and Modernization in Nigeria

The triumph of global Social Studies hinges on the increasing evidence which indicates that global education makes learning more relevant and effective for greater numbers of persons (Park, Goodwin & Lee, 2001; McCarry, 2002). It creates avenues for greater congruency between students' and learners' success performances on the one hand and their cultural backgrounds and such educational experiences as tasks, interests, efforts, academic achievements and feelings of personal efficiency or social accountability on the other hand. Gay (2007) reflects that as the challenge of diversified education increases in response to meeting the multidimensional needs of students and learners, the quest for global Social Studies ideals grow exponentially. He submits that global Social Studies may be the solution to problems and challenges that currently appear unsolvable including: closing the achievement gap genuinely not leaving any students behind academically; revitalizing faith and trust in the promises of democracy, equity and justice; building education systems that reflect the diverse cultural, ethnic, racial and social contributions that forge society; and providing better opportunities for all cadres of students and learners (Osier & Starkey, 2003).

Gay (2007) advanced that global Social Studies is integral to

improving the academic success of all cadres of students and preparing all youths for democratic functions in pluralistic societies. He expatiated that, students, the world over, need to understand how multi-ethnic issues shape the social, political, economic and cultural fabrics of the geopolitical regions of the world as well as how such issues fundamentally influence their personal lives. Lambert (2003) conceptualizes “global Social Studies” in terms of curriculum content structures that would respond to the needs of global education and which should seek to inculcate the traits required of social dimensions designed to bring positive changes in the lives of the world’s citizens. He visualizes “world citizenship” in terms of educational exigencies which are disclosed in a number of perspectives, namely: (a) endorsement that the masses of the people across the globe should be uplifted through access to education at all levels; (b) subscription to empowering the masses as agents of positive charge for the emergence of societies where democracy and human rights reign supreme; this implies a people-oriented approach to decision and policy making in education; (c) subscription to the capacity enhancement of individuals in the world at various level-personal, social and institutional; (d) commitment to the raising of awareness and self-esteem among the peoples of the world; (e) endorsement of the need for knowing about the rest of the world: this network would imply borrowing wisely from external influences and capturing the best of thoughts. Actions, inventions and knowledge for improved humanistic endorsement of emphasis on not how knowledgeable but how “knowable” an individual is and where the emphasis has shifted from having the “productive citizen” to the “creative citizen” (Newton, 2002).

The greatest challenge facing the Nigerian community in terms of the foregoing contexts is the problem of mobilizing individuals for the release of the enormous financial, technical, human and moral resource requirements for implementing the issues at stake in global Social Studies (Obanya, 2007). These resources will be “freed up” only as the Nigerian peoples develop a profound sense of responsibility not only for the well-being of Nigeria but for the entire human family as demanded in global Social Studies.

Global Social Studies Examined as a Human Resource Design for Overcoming Challenges of National Development and Modernization in Nigeria

Global Social Studies examined as a human resource design constitutes a brain-child of 21st century progressivists (Bloom, 2004; Suarez-Oroozoo, 2004; Ornstein, 2007; Tanner & Tanner, 2008). Its emphasis is rooted on problem-solving and sound reasoning which bear on the production of good citizens in a given geopolitical setting. Suarez-Oroozoo (2004) advances that; global Social Studies are integral to improving and preparing all cadres of individuals for democratic functions in a pluralistic society. He expatiated that individuals need to understand how multi-ethnic issues shape the social, political, economic and cultural fabrics of geopolitical regions of the world as well as how these issues fundamentally influence their personal lives. Obanya (2007) conceptualizes global Social Studies in terms of curriculum content structures that would respond to the needs of education and which should seek to inculcate the traits required of social forces designed to bring positive changes to the lives of peoples generally. The progressivists generally visualize global Social Studies in terms of educational exigencies which are displayed in a number of perspectives.

Obanya (2007) reflects that global Social Studies endorses that if the masses of the people in the country should be uplifted through education at all levels, then it should be broadened. This implies improved and expanded facilities for both in-school and out-of-school learning; most importantly, it means the instituting of learning everywhere and across the country (Okam & Danladi, 2011; Okam & Jamilu, 2012). It necessarily subscribes to empowering the masses as agents of positive change for the emergence of communities and societies where democracy and human rights reign supreme; this line of thought implies a people-oriented approach to decision and policy making in education (Newton, 2002; Osier & Starkey, 2003).

Global Social Studies is designed to subscribe to capacity enhancement of individuals in the country at various levels: personal, social and institutional. Lambert (2003) endorses that

this frame of thought would mean raising the quality of all the structures that engender the process of education: all the agencies of education, management capacities of the ministries of education, educational institutions, education sector personnel and teaching-learning facilities. Obanya (2007) considers that this is a critical area in democratic leadership agenda, as broadened access would not yield the desired results if we neglect quality, relevance and efficiency issues.

Global Social Studies would require the raising of the level of awareness and self-esteem amongst the peoples of Nigeria. Obanya (2007) reflects that this development would require the educational system that puts acculturation before enculturation. This development, according to Obanya (2007), means that education in Nigeria must return to its basic tenets of “know thy-self first and thoroughly” and use this knowledge as a lead-way to learning about others in our various societies: it also implies Nigerians appreciating other peoples of the world through the right type of Nigerian exposure in the democratic citizenship context (Okam & Jamilu, 2012). Global Social Studies would involve knowing about the rest of the world, among other things. This task would entail what Obanya (2007) reflects as revitalized education; this network would imply borrowing wisely from external influences and capturing the best of thoughts, actions, inventions and knowledge for improved humanistic learning (Newton, 2002; Fleckmore, 2002). The enthronement of global Social Studies in Nigeria implies among others, that we must necessarily take account of the demands of the knowledge society of the twenty-first century.

Exploring Global Social Studies Perspectives in Addressing Challenges which Militate Against National Development and Modernization in Nigeria

The foregoing challenges imply that our commitment to the tasks involved in exploring global Social Studies in fostering and propagating national development and modernization in Nigeria demands, among other pre-requisites, the improvement in all aspects of the quality of education in this country. These challenges entail

that the processes of education in Nigeria will have to operate at a more satisfactory level than what obtains at the moment. The attainment of a reinvigorated education for visionary Nigeria, according to Obanya (2004), calls for “ensuring excellence of all, so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy and essential life skills”. Obanya (2004) reflects more on this challenge in ensuring the achievement of this excellence in quality as a commitment to the task of reinvigorating education for visionary Nigeria that this is a tall order demand since we are yet to begin the cultivation of a culture of excellence in this country; it is also a developmental challenge. The world is asking for nothing short of excellence, and if Nigeria is to really belong to the global community, excellence is one of the membership cards.

Thus, if we are to explore and employ education, particularly global Social Studies versions, in order to maximize the dividends derivable from citizenship as a socio-political construct in this country, the foregoing reflections of Obanya (2004) call for very concerted efforts for Nigeria to overcome the educational and developmental deficits it has carried into this 21st century. We are reminded that this century is that of the Africa Union (AU) and the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), in both of which Nigeria is a major player. Unfortunately, according to Obanya (2004), Nigeria is trailing behind a good number of African countries (most of who are operating on a poorer resource base) in terms of the key indices of human development.

Nigeria has to work hard to change its global fortunes in a positive direction by embracing the values and virtues intrinsic to global Social Studies. This reinvigorated education process, among other things, calls for a paradigm shift from narrow specializations to broad-based knowledge and from specifics to generic skills. (Obanya, 2004). This is the very essence of global Social Studies. It endorses a greater tendency to evolving uniform ways of conducting human affairs. This trend in education is tending towards moving humankind to just one single standard and that standard is international. This cadre of education endorses premium on the development of knowledge economy in which knowledge is

highly valued, and propelled by learning institutions, learning societies and learning individuals. Global Social Studies lays emphasis on a lot more than success in tests and examinations. It is no longer a case of going for professional studies so that one could easily find a job after graduation. The function of this education is rooted in character and personality building. This thought pattern bears on the quality and comportment of the mind in which an individual is consummated. The goals of global Social Studies are expressed in a variety of forms such as: (a) preparation for lifetime learning; (b) preparation for the world of work; (c) preparation for gaining expertise in a set of generic skills intended to help an individual respond to the demands of a globalized world and of a knowledge economy. It is designed to reveal itself as a necessity of life to an individual because ultimately it emancipates humans (Bloom, 2004; Suarez-Oroozoo, 2004). It displays education as a tool for pooling societies out of poverty, providing requisite information to all cadres of leadership and for promoting health and social growth, particularly for women.

Educational Exigencies of Global Social Studies Perspectives Examined in the Context of National Development and Modernization in Nigeria

The curriculum content that would respond to the needs of global Social Studies education should seek to inculcate the traits required of social forces designed to bring positive changes to the lives of the world's people: some of the educational exigencies involved are summarized thus:

Firstly, if the masses of the peoples across the globe should be uplifted, access to education at all levels (and in all forms) should be broadened (Obanya, 2007). Secondly, global Social Studies necessarily subscribes to empowering the masses as agents of positive change for the emergence of societies where democracy and human rights reign supreme; this line of thought implies a people-oriented approach to decision and policy making in education. Thirdly, global Social Studies is designed to subscribe to capacity enhancement of individuals in the world at various levels-

personal, social and institutional. This frame of thought would mean raising the quality of all the structures that engender the process of education- all the agencies of education, management capacities of the ministries of education, educational institutions, education sector personnel and teaching- learning facilities. Fourthly, global Social Studies would require the raising of the level of awareness and self-esteem among the peoples of the world. Obanya (2007) reflects that this development, for us in Nigeria, would require an educational system that puts acculturation before enculturation. Fifthly, global Social Studies would involve “knowing about the rest of the world”, among other things. Sixthly, the enthronement of global Social Studies in this country implies, among others, that we must necessarily take account of the demands of the knowledge society of the present century (21st century), where the emphasis is no longer on how knowledgeable but how “knowable” (Obanya, 2007).

Curriculum Dimensions and Implications of Exploring Global Social Studies Perspectives in Coping with Challenges of National Development and Modernity in Nigeria

Evidence increasingly indicates that global Social Studies make learning more relevant and effective for great numbers of persons (Park, Goodwin & Lee, 2001; McCarry, 2002). It creates avenues for greater congruency between students’ and learners’ success performances on the one hand and their cultural backgrounds and such education experiences as tasks, interests, effort, academic achievement and feelings of personal efficiency or social accountability on the other hand. Gay (2007) reflects that as the challenge for diversified education increases in response to meeting the multidimensional needs of students and learners, the quest for global Social Studies grows exponentially. He submits that it may be the solution to problems that currently appear unsolvable: closing the achievement gap genuinely not leaving any students behind academically; revitalizing faith and trust in the promises of democracy, equality and justice; building education systems that

reflect the diverse cultural, ethnic, racial and social contributions that forge society; and providing better opportunities for all cadres of students and learners; global Social Studies is, therefore, very crucial; it must necessarily be tailored at providing students from all cadres and groups with the education they deserve.

On the basis of the foregoing theoretical framework, Obanya (2007) submits that Social Studies is characterized by a variety of goals expressed in a number of peps or forms- all geared to the production of the creative citizen in a given democratic framework. Some of these forms of peps bear on the following: preparation for lifetime learning; preparation for the world of work; preparation for making continuous on-the-job learning possible and easier and preparation for a formal tertiary education. Thus Obanya (2007) endorses that the educated citizen of today require a set of generic skills intended to enable him respond to the demands of a globalised world and of a knowledge economy. He endorses that these generic skills can be inculcated through virtually any subject discipline; the generic skills, according to him, constitute what are considered as “new constructs and new concepts” in global education; and they include: “analytical power”, “team spirit,” “problem-solving skills”, “information technology assets”, “communication power” and “versatility”. It is considered that candid and meaningful exploration of the assets and merits of these generic skills could constitute the basis for creating and enthroning creative citizens through re-invigorated education for visionary Nigeria in the 21st century. The implications of exploring global Social Studies in the task of enabling individuals or students cope and respond effectively to citizenship demands and challenges though commitment to these generic skills in a given democracy, such as Nigeria, are briefly examined. Thus, “analytical power” calls for advanced capacity for logical reasoning on the part of an individual. This skill is centered on an individual’s ability to establish meaningful relationships between a variety of “knowledge forms and structures”, “societal issues and concerns”, “life situations”, “social aspirations”, and “problem-situations, etc”.

“Team spirit” demands from an individual a practical display of a number of social skills such as: (a) the ability to cooperate harmoniously with others on small and large group projects;

(b) the ability to contribute meaningfully to group activities in a wide variety of forms; (c) the ability to supply leadership when, and if necessary and appropriately; (d) the ability to relate to others and to get out of one's shell while remaining oneself. "Problem solving skills" are designed to engage an individual in "reflective thinking"; it is conceptualized as an instrument for visualizing and perceiving the idea of "unification" as a valid reflection of the nature and the totality of knowledge. Dewey (1952) expatiates further that "reflective thinking" implies "problem solving" and this constitutes the key to intelligent action, as opposed to impulsive or routine action.

"Creativity" demands from an individual a display of the ability to go beyond the well-trodden path in thinking as well as in action. It calls for a display of the capacity in using the spirit in inquiry and problem solving, including the zeal to learn on a continuous basis to evolve novel solutions to problems. While "lifelong learning skills" call for an internalization of a variety of skills on the part of an individual. These include: (a) skills required in enabling him to be so oriented as to capitalize on other education forces which exist in the society for his own progress; (b) skills required in enabling him come into contact with a wide variety of realistic learning experiences and maximize the dividends that are accruable; (c) skills required in helping him control his own learning; (d) skills required in helping him break down the dichotomy between work and play; (e) skills required in enabling him realize and release the potentials he possesses. The acquisition of the foregoing life long learning skills, are usually enhanced through a possession of solid foundation in literacy, numeric and life-skills (Obanya, 2007).

"Information Technology asset" (IT) constitutes a discipline in its own right; its skills could be required as a tool in order to lend support to other disciplines and life activities. "Communication power" demands the acquisition by an individual, of the necessary skills required in using appropriate language forms and non-verbal forms of language in specific situations in order to achieve specific objectives. In addition, communication power could be rendered in the form of symbolic displays of people, persons and whole societies; these displays often disclose immense value-dimensions and

underpinnings. “Versatility” demands that individuals should broaden their horizons in terms of domains of knowledge and experience. Individuals should endeavour to be meaningfully exposed to different fields of learning; some of these subject disciplines and fields include: the arts, humanities, natural and social sciences, languages, technical and commercial subjects. A number of subjects which derive from these domains of learning are constituted into the various disciplines.

Conclusion

Our education must, of necessity, be re-explored and reinvigorated in order to provide a highly enhanced meaning to the generality of the Nigeria populace. This directive and position is to be accepted if democracy must be sustained in Nigeria for the socio-political and socio-economic development of individuals and groups who are domiciled in her. A revitalized and reinvigorated education must be capitalized upon as a necessary curriculum instrument for developing and building effective citizens who would constitute the basis for establishing a sustainable democracy for visionary Nigeria. However, in the circumstance of Nigeria’s development in the 21st century, we need to re-explore and expand further avenues and covet new approaches and horizon in enlarged and reinvigorated educational designs through the exploration and employment of global Social Studies perspectives in order to cope with the challenges intrinsic in a modern democratic society. There is a need for committing education to the liberation of the capacities of every individual for a purpose of advancing the course of individual autonomy. We need to advance the course of a reinvigorated education through global Social Studies perspectives and tailor it to the service of the democratic ideal. We also need to aspire for productivity, quality and excellence.

Suggestions

If functional and qualitative explorations of the curriculum paradigm structure intrinsic in global Social Studies are to be capitalized upon in our quest for transforming education for national development and modernization in Nigeria, the following

recommendations are posited in respect of professional teachers who are to execute the tasks-skills involved. Professional practitioners of global Social Studies have to display cognizance of the view that the “skills” orientation of the subject must imply, among others, “process skills”, “problem-solving skills” creative skills”, “analytical skills” and “reflective skills”; all these must be rooted in active participation of learners in the teaching-learning process to enable them acquire the “social character” intrinsic in the subject in the task of liberating their capacities for autonomy and for embracing the ideals in global citizenship.

Professional practitioners should have to advance the course of a re-invigorated Social Studies education in order to serve the democratic ideal; this call for infusing a variety of generic skills into the curriculum paradigm structures in global Social Studies in order to open up the dividends and assets of democracy so as to enable the Nigerian populace to become “bonafide” beneficiaries. Professional practitioners must recognize that the pedagogical designs in global Social Studies are to be capitalized upon for functional use of subject matter from the social sciences and other areas of relevant and disciplined thoughts interactively for coping, addressing and solving problems (ethical, spiritual, religious, moral and social) which arise in the process of decision-making as practiced by individuals and citizens in social-democratic frameworks embracing humanity in total terms.

Professional practitioners must be committed to the need for curriculum integration; this design has to be reconciled with the adoption of new instructional strategies, new methods and devices including the use of materials and resources for confronting the challenges posed in global Social Studies education, and a variety of developmental goals which bog human societies in the framework of classroom settings and situations. Practitioners have to display the ability of coping with a rational utilization of knowledge forms from a variety of subjects and disciplines including the social sciences and a host of paradigm pedagogical procedures and practices for seriously examining and dabbling into values and engaging in valuation devices in the task of improving the life of individuals and citizens and the Nigerian society at large.

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