

**PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL STUDIES
TEACHERS' CURRICULUM
IMPLEMENTATION COMPETENCE AND
ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN TARABA
STATE TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS**

Joel Otitie **OKOGU**, Adeshola Mercy **DADA**
& Maureen **NAHSHON**

*Department of Social Science Education,
Taraba State University, Jalingo*

Abstract

The study examined Professional Social Studies teachers' competent curriculum implementation and students' academic achievement in Taraba State higher education institutions. The challenges of implementing Social Studies curriculum in schools rest on the competencies and skills of the teachers. Effective implementation of the curriculum in schools requires teachers' competencies. Pedagogical Competence is the capacity and ability of a teacher to teach students to specifications in order to achieve quality academic achievement. The purpose of this study is to examine the competencies of Social Studies teachers, the skills and knowledge to implement Social Studies curriculum as it is related to teaching and learning in order to improve students' academic achievement. Three hypotheses were developed to guide the study. The finding of this study will be beneficial to students, parents, professional teachers who are involved in education, and the nation at large. The benefits are the quality of students' academic achievement in schools. The

conceptual framework for this study is anchored on Wolfe (2001) model of competence and academic achievement, who stated that teachers' competencies improve quality academic achievement among students. Correlational descriptive survey design was used for this study. This study used a questionnaire to source for data used for the analysis and a checklist of student academic achievement. The metric used to measure student academic achievement is based on cumulative grade point average as recognized by Taraba State tertiary institutions. The instrument used for the study was validated by two Social Studies experts who read, corrected, and certified it for use for the study, and the reliability was determined by the use of Cronbach Alpha. The Instruments were collected and analyzed by the researchers. Data were analyzed using SPSS. Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient 'r' was used to establish the degree of relationship among the variables. The study concluded that there was a positive, though insignificant, association between Social Studies teachers' competence, abilities, knowledge, and students' academic achievement. The study recommends that professional teachers should be trained to acquire the variables of this study.

Keywords: *Academic achievement, Curriculum, Professional teachers' competencies, Tertiary institutions.*

Introduction

The curriculum of Social Studies is multi-disciplinary in content and nature According to Osakweetal in Nwalado (2018) Social Studies is an interdisciplinary study that examines people and how they interact with their environment. The curriculum of Social Studies is derived principally from the social science courses such as Psychology, sociology, Economics, Political science, Government, and Geography. In addition to humanities such as history, Christian religious studies and the natural sciences such as Chemistry, and Physics.

The required competencies of the teachers in this context are; presentation of subject matter, involvement of students in learning, asking probing questions, students' evaluation, good classroom management, and lesson planning. Other competencies required are writing articles in recognized journals both at the local and international levels, regular attendance of conferences, workshops and seminars, Participation in education exchange programs. Competent teachers should publish in their area of specialization and consistent writing in National University Commission (NUC) recognized journals both at the local and international and as well as interact with seasoned and experienced senior professional colleagues, who are resource persons in other tertiary institutions.

The term competence has been explained by many experts in education. For instance, Olga (2012) sees competence as a combination of knowledge, skills and behavior used to improve performance, or as the state or quality of being adequately qualified and capable of performing a given role. When a teacher is respected as an instructional manager, a compassionate individual, a skilled learner, and a member of their community, competence is achieved. The ability of teachers to teach courses allocated to students' understanding is recognized as a standard criterion for teachers to provide high-quality academic performance. The use of supplementary classroom activities that can raise students' academic achievement at the post-secondary institution level is one of these factors, along with aptitude and competence.

According to Shmelev as cited in Olga (2012), The teaching skills and life-long learning competencies of professional teachers comprise the following: to perform complex pedagogical duties; to be well-spoken, in good mental and physical health, stable and tolerant; to have a propensity to work with the younger generation, good communicative and observational skills, tact, a vivid imagination, and leadership. Ajaja as cited by Patience (2018), Other competencies that are required by the teachers are, classroom management that is free from distractions, professional

development, writing of papers in recognized journals, attendance in workshops, conferences, and extracurricular involvement such as reading and correcting project works, dissertations, thesis, and involvement in students' external examination defenses. In the same vein, Blacker by (2002), Abdulla (2004), as cited in Okogu (2016) explained that implementing Social Studies curriculum involves competencies that are based on teachers' education.

They further stated that the criteria for accessing Social Studies teachers' implementation are performance criterion, knowledge criterion, and product criterion; while Fuller (2009) explains that the implementation curriculum involves the length of training, in-service training, teachers' experience, the acquisition of skill for asking probing questions, explanatory wise, and power coupled with effective teaching in normal classroom situation. Mezieobi in Jerome et al (2017) noted that Social Studies practitioners are expected to exhibit certain competencies. These competencies are effective use of innovative pedagogies and training, meaningful organization of contents to stimulate learner's appreciation of societal problems, values for peaceful co-existence, skills for survival contribution to the stability of the nation through productive contributions towards the growth and development of the Nigeria's economy. These conditions call for enhanced social studies teacher quality. This statement indicates that implementation of curriculum in Nigerian tertiary institutions have a lot of indices for students' academic achievement. Other components of teachers' indices of curriculum implementation in schools are: teachers and students' evaluation, accurate selection and innovation of instructional materials, the use of the most suitable teaching methods based on some factors to be considered before choosing a method of teaching as well as the presentation of topics clearly and explicitly to understanding of the students. These indices depend largely on the healthy teaching and learning environment of the institutions. Therefore, the issue of environment is vital in teaching and learning. Environmental education in this context is learning to understand, appreciate value, in order to sustain the environment system in its totality.

Akinladeetal cited by Akinola D et al(2017) posits that Social Studies curriculum is concerned with what is planned, programme selected, provided and guided by the culture, experiences and knowledge of the society, for the individual learners in the nation's schools. That environment is the experience and knowledge concerning the surroundings which is imparted on students to enable them to develop appropriate attitude towards learning for the development of appropriate behavior towards academic achievement. This stresses the socio-cultural, economic, and political dimensions of the environment. Therefore the environment is seen in the light of fundamental in solving education problems and acting or behaving in ways that are more rational in life.

It is a process in which the total school curriculum is given new prominence and vigor, in bringing new relevance to learning. The environment of Social Studies curriculum can be stated as follows: the generation and dissemination of experience and knowledge to students, development of knowledge base on awareness that lead to cultivation of responsible attitude and value to learning, gaining varieties of experiences, acquiring basic understanding, learning habits, and accepting corrections as a platform that will enhance academic achievement.

Similarly, in addition to teaching and learning environment, the American Psychological Association (2014) opined that classroom environment includes the ability of the teacher to maintain healthy learning classroom situations that are relatively free from students' behavioral problems. This implies that before the teacher implements the curriculum effectively, he/she requires the competencies of maintaining classroom situation that is free from students' distractions. The relationship that exists between implementation of Social Studies curriculum by the teachers and students' understanding enhance academic achievement. This statement is credited to education stakeholders when they stressed that there is the need to look at the relationship that exists between curriculum implementation and students' academic achievement in Taraba state tertiary institutions. In the light of

this, the study explores the connections between the successful implementation of the Social Studies curriculum and students' academic achievement in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

The model below explains the relationship among the independent, moderating and dependent variables of the study; the model is adopted from Wolfe (2001) that propounded that for quality academic achievement to be enhanced in schools, requires the competencies of teachers.

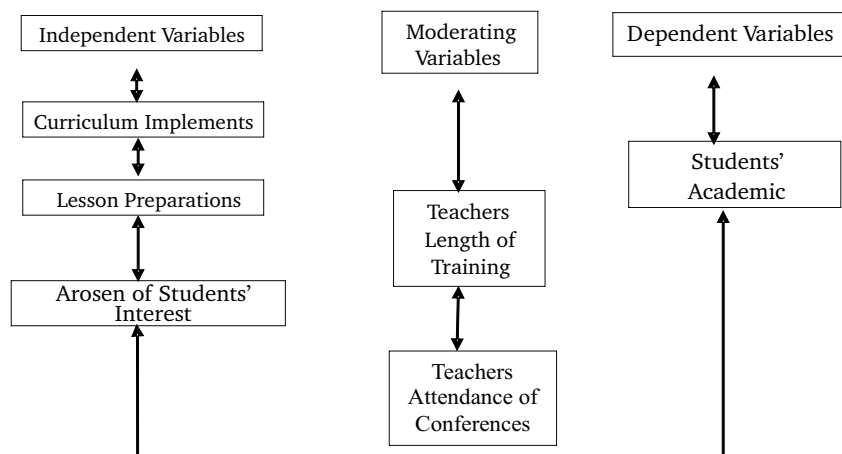


Figure 1: Brain Matters Translating Research into Classroom practices
Source: Wolfe, (2001)

The inability of the teachers to use the required competencies, skills and knowledge effectively for the purpose of teaching to specifications has been a hindrance to the implementation of Social Studies curriculum which in turn cannot enhance quality academic achievement in schools. Mezeiobietal cited in Akubuilu, etal (2019) posit that Social Studies curriculum addresses economic, political, psychological, physical technological and educational matters that are relevant to the cultural and moral ways of life of the students for national development. Its content is organized around social and environmental issues that are affecting man's existence in their various environments for sustainable development. The teachers' main job in schools is to implement curriculum that enhances academic achievement but

the content of Social Studies curriculum has not been effectively implemented. This is because teachers from other subject areas such as history, psychology, who are teaching Social Studies addresses it from their own perception of their subject areas. For this reason, teachers who are Social Studies specialists should be allowed to implement Social Studies curriculum in schools

Objectives of the Study

The objective of this study is to examine the relationship between professional Social Studies teachers' competencies in curriculum implementation and students' quality academic achievement in Nigerian tertiary institutions. Therefore, the specific objectives are to examine the extent to which:

- i. professional competencies of Social Studies teachers enhance students' academic achievement.
- ii. teachers' abilities in classroom enhance the implementation of the school curriculum for students' quality academic achievement.
- iii. teachers' knowledge of the subject matter enhances students' quality academic achievement.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are raised to guide this study:

- i. There is no significant relationship between Professional Social Studies teachers' competencies and students' academic achievement in Nigerian tertiary institutions.
- ii. There is no significant relationship between the extent of teachers' ability in teaching students and academic achievement.
- iii. There is no significant relationship between teachers' knowledge of the subject and students' academic achievement.

Methods

This study used the descriptive survey design. Descriptive survey is a non-experimental design that involves the use of a questionnaire

to collect accurate data about variables. The focus of the study is restricted to Social Studies teachers and students in Taraba state tertiary institutions. The population of the study comprises of 51 teachers and 60 students from the three selected tertiary institutions offering Social Studies in Taraba State. 10 teachers were purposely picked from Taraba State University, 11 were selected from Peacock College of Education and 30 from the college of education Zing. 20 students were randomly selected from each of the schools making a total of 60 students. Thus, the sample size for this study is one hundred and eleven (111). This study used the entire population due to the nature of the size.

The researchers used a self-constructed questionnaire titled “Social Studies Curriculum Implementation and Quality Academic Achievement (SSCIQAA)” and a checklist on students’ academic achievement as the instrument for the study. The first section of the questionnaire consists of the respondent’s biodata. 15 likert scale research questions in the second part were raised measuring teachers’ Competence, abilities and knowledge. The question items were given out and collected by the researchers themselves to the Social Studies teachers to respond after permission were obtained and granted by the various heads of departments of each school. Their responses were collected after seven working days to allow the teachers to study the question items, for suitable responses. Cronbach Alpha was used to establish the reliability of the instrument. Two Social Studies experts were given the question items which were read, corrected and certified to establish the validity of the instrument.

The researcher used the Taraba State tertiary institutions’ approved cumulative grade point average as the benchmark for students’ academic achievement

70 – 100	4.50 – 5.00	1st Class Division
60 – 69	3.50 – 4.49	2nd Class Upper Division
50 – 60	2.40 – 3.49	2nd Class Lower Division
45 – 49	1.50 – 2.39	3rd Class Division
0 – 44	0.1 – 1.49	Pass Division

Source: TSU/R/SEN/ED/15

The data gathered was presented for analysis and interpretation. Social Studies teachers' curriculum implementation competencies, abilities and knowledge are independent variables (x) and academic achievement is the dependent variable (y). The data analysis was enhanced by the use of the statistical package for Social Science (SPSS). The table below shows the details.

Results

The following is a detailed presentation, analysis, and interpretation of the data gathered. The stated hypotheses were put to test using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) to identify the significance as well as the strength of the relationship between the dependent and independent variables of the study.

Hypothesis one: There is no significant relationship between Social Studies teachers' competencies and students' academic achievement in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

Table 1: Test of significance between teachers' competency and students' academic achievement

Scale		Academic Achievement
Teachers' Competency	Correlation Coefficient (r)	.023
	P Value	.874
	N	51

Correlation is significant at 0.05 level of significance (2 tailed)N – Number of Teachers

Table 1 shows that the Pearson Product Moment Correlation of teachers' competency and students' academic achievement is obtained at 0.23 which was found that, there is positive relationship between teachers' competency and academic achievement of students of Nigerian tertiary institutions. Hence, the P value = 0.874 implies that the relationship is not significant. However, the null hypothesis is retained.

Hypotheses two: There is no significant relationship between the extent of teachers’ ability in teaching the students and their academic achievement.

Table 2: Test of significance between teachers’ abilities and students’ academic achievement

Scale	Academic Achievement
Teachers’ Abilities	Correlation Coefficient (r) .026
	P Value .855
	N 51

Correlation is significant at 0.05 level of significance (2 tailed)N – Number of Teachers

Table 2 shows positive correlation of 0.26 between teachers’ abilities and students’ academic achievement at 0.05 level of significant. Where $r = 0.26$, $P > 0.855$ at 51 number of teachers. This implies a positive but not significant relationship between teachers’ abilities and students’ academic achievement, therefore the null hypothesis is retained and the alternative is rejected.

Hypothesis three: There is no significant relationship between teachers’ knowledge of the subject and students’ academic achievement.

Table 3: Test of significance between teachers’ knowledge and students’ academic achievement

Scale	Academic Achievement
Teachers’ Knowledge	Correlation Coefficient (r) .020
	P Value .890
	N 51

Correlation is significant at 0.05 level of significance (2 tailed)N – Number of Teachers

From table 3, the Pearson Product Moment correlation of teachers' knowledge and students' academic achievement was found to be moderately positive $r=0.020$ at 0.05 level of significance and is insignificant since the p value is greater than the significant value at 0.05. Therefore the null hypothesis is accepted which implies that teachers' knowledge of the subject matter and students' academic achievement is positive but not significantly in relationship.

Discussions

The findings of this study revealed that Social Studies teachers' competency has a weak but positive relationship with academic achievement of students in Nigerian tertiary institutions at $r = 0.023$. This is in line with the findings of Sultan and Shafi (2014) which indicated that the perceived teachers' competence has effect on students' achievement. Their findings revealed that students' achievement regressed upon perceived teachers' competence. It means that perceived teachers' competence has positive impact on the students' achievement. In Addition, Obot (2022) posited in his findings that teachers' competence in subject matter must go beyond mere knowledge of the subject matter. The teachers' competence in subject matter should involve his skill to develop learning interest among the learners. However, In Nigerian Tertiary institutions, teachers' understanding of teaching skills is closely related to their capacity to handle challenging student circumstances.

The second hypothesis found that there is positive but not significantly a relationship between the extent of teachers' abilities in teaching the students and their academic achievement. This view is in line with the findings of Abiodun, Ogundeji and Asanre (2020) who posited that teachers' skills of commitment, motivation and communication when taking together, have significantly predict students' achievement in mathematics. In addition, their findings revealed that teachers' communication skills alone will significantly predict students' achievement in mathematics. In the same vein, the result of the findings revealed

that teachers' motivation alone will significantly predict students' achievement in mathematics.

However, hypothesis three showed that the result of the relationship between teacher's knowledge of the subject matter and students' academic achievement is positively in relationship with teachers' knowledge and students' academic achievement; however the relationship is not significant. This is inline with the findings of Amie-Ogan and Friday (2020) which revealed that to a very high extent teachers' subject content knowledge influence students' academic achievement in public senior secondary schools in IkotEkpene. It therefore means that a competent teacher is expected to possess the rudimental knowledge and skills of the subject and be able to communicate these knowledge and skills effectively to students' understanding of the subject matter. They should also be able to make decisions and organize subject areas with societal dynamism. Omoogun, et al in Amie-Ogan and Etuk (2020) noted that effective teaching demands that teacher should have sound knowledge of all that the students should know together with the capability to relate subject content, methods of teaching as well as sequence, and the tempo of works in specification to the individual needs of the students. They strongly asserted that a teacher of a given subject requires specific skills and competencies that are peculiar to that subject area.

Conclusion

The correlational analysis in the table above shows that there is positive relationship between the competencies, abilities and knowledge of Social Studies teachers and students' academic achievement in Taraba state tertiary institutions. Students with high academic achievement is as a result of high level of teachers' skills, abilities and good knowledge of subject matter while students' with low academic achievement might be as a result of the low level of teachers' abilities, competence and knowledge.

Recommendations

For the purpose of enhancing teachers' competence, the government should plan and offer chances for training of Social Studies teachers through seminars, workshops, and conferences. For potential Social Studies teachers to be as effective as possible, teacher training institutes should help them develop a greater sense of professional competence. To maintain teachers at their peak achievement levels for optimal teacher competence and productivity, the ministry of education, principals, and other stakeholders should provide constant monitoring and supervision of teachers. In order to instill the proper perspective towards the subject, the Social Studies curriculum needs to be revised to make it more receptive and interesting to students.

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