

INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY ISSUES OF SOCIAL STUDIES IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Social Studies as a discipline assists students to develop the capacity to acquire knowledge, attitudes, values, skills, logical thinking and sound rational judgment needed to fit into the society. In spite of this importance of Social Studies, unfortunately, it has not reached its desired level in Nigeria. The paper observed that there are still many issues and problems militating against the instructional delivery in Social Studies especially at the junior secondary schools in Nigeria such as issues and problems of curriculum review, poor teaching methods, shortage of experts in Social Studies, inadequate instructional materials and a host of others.. The paper suggests that the use of new techniques of teaching such as inquiry method, cooperative learning which promote effective teaching should be employed in the delivery of instruction in Social Studies. Also, adequate and relevant instructional materials should be used by the teacher to teach Social Studies while more professionally trained Social Studies teachers who have better understanding of concepts in Social Studies should be employed to teach Social Studies.

Keywords: Teaching and learning, Social Studies, Junior secondary school, Issues, Problems.

Introduction

The subject of Social Studies has consistently held a significant position within the educational framework of Nigeria throughout the course of several years. The subject has been acknowledged as a powerful tool for delivering impactful civic education in Nigeria. The educational programme provides students with the necessary abilities in critical thinking and problem solving, as well as fostering desired attitudes and values. These competencies empower students to effectively address and resolve challenges and dilemmas that may develop within their socio-economic and political spheres. The significance of Social Studies in Nigerian schools, particularly at the junior secondary school level, has grown significantly over time, establishing itself as a prominent academic discipline within the Nigerian educational system (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004). In a similar vein, Amano (2009) documented that the introduction of Social Studies into secondary schools in Nigeria was initiated by the faculty of Comprehensive High School, Ayetoro in 1965. This endeavour was facilitated by the Ford Foundation (Ohio Project), the Comparative Education and Adaptation Centre (CESAC), and the Ayetoro Experiment, which garnered national recognition. Consequently, Social Studies has gained significance as a subject within the junior secondary school curriculum in contemporary Nigeria. Furthermore, Mezieobi (2007) asserted that the primary objective of Social Studies education in junior secondary schools is to provide students with the knowledge, attitudes, values, and skills necessary for effective adaptation in Nigerian society.

Sebiomo (2007) conceptualised Social Studies as a comprehensive field of study that focuses on the multifaceted nature of human beings and their interactions with the environment. This discipline aims to understand how individuals are influenced by their surroundings and how they might address social issues to improve their quality of life. This subject aims to instill fundamental information, attitudes, values, and skills in individuals with the intention of improving society. Social Studies is an academic discipline that places significant focus on the

transformation of individuals' knowledge, attitudes, values, abilities, cognitive processes, and social interactions in order to promote societal progress (Mezieobi, 2008). According to Ezeudu (2013), it is of significant importance to note that Social Studies encompasses a comprehensive range of human issues. Social Studies is an educational discipline designed to cultivate problem-solving abilities in students, enabling them to acquire pertinent knowledge, attitudes, values, and skills necessary for fostering harmonious coexistence within Nigerian society. According to Adeyemi (2013), the objectives of education, which can be facilitated by the study of Social Studies, encompass the cultivation of contemporary democratic principles such as integrity, cooperation, tolerance, and fairness. These characteristics are deemed crucial for the progress and advancement of a nation, particularly in the context of Nigeria.

Akinbote (2006) emphasised that Social Studies derives its concepts and generalisations from other social sciences and associated subjects, rather than being confined to a single discipline. The curricular framework for Social Studies is designed with a thematic structure, wherein topics are presented in a concentric and spiral manner to enhance the effectiveness of instructional delivery. The field of Social Studies encompasses the process of imparting knowledge, shaping character, and enhancing students' social attitudes and behaviours. Similarly, Anise (2009) underscored the notion that the principles and approaches of Social Studies are shaped by fundamental educational philosophies such as functionalism, pragmatism, experimentalism, and progressiveness within the societal context. The selection of methods in the field of Social Studies is based on guiding principles that prioritise educational objectives such as validity, relevance, variety, and applicability. Despite the aforementioned notable characteristics of the subject, its instructional delivery is not devoid of certain challenges and difficulties. This article investigates the developing issues and challenges that impact the delivery of teaching in Social Studies, particularly in lower secondary schools in Nigeria.

Challenges related to instructional delivery in the field of Social Studies in Nigeria

The Acceptability of Social Studies in Academic Discourse: A Critical Examination One crucial concern that impacts the instructional delivery in the field of Social Studies is the level of preparedness exhibited by individuals and organisations in embracing Social Studies as a powerful tool for personal development and the advancement of the nation. There exists a segment of individuals that hold a hostile viewpoint on the intended objectives of Social Studies, since they perceive that the beneficial values and competencies imparted through Social Studies education are in direct opposition to the prevailing adverse social, economic, and political climate. This particular group of individuals persistently maintain their self-centered, prejudiced, and exploitative inclinations, which hinder the progress of the community (Nwazuoke, 2017).

A Critical Analysis of the Social Studies Curriculum The regular assessment and revision of the Social Studies Curriculum by authorised entities like the Comparative Education Study and Adaptation Centre (CESAC) and the Nigeria Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) is essential for ensuring the efficient delivery of instruction in the field of Social Studies. The Social Studies curriculum has undergone multiple reviews in order to address the requirements of the populace. This assessment will persist as the requirements of individuals are inherently changing. Hence, it is imperative to reconsider the curriculum of Social Studies in order to bring about a transformative shift from the existing conceptions of the discipline. According to Castella (2001), it is imperative for Social Studies to incorporate novel concepts by utilising contemporary global ideas and information retrieval tools. Curriculum designers are required to undertake a restructuring of the Social Studies curriculum in order to incorporate a global perspective and value system that fosters international peace and harmony. Hence, it is crucial to arrange the content of the Social Studies curriculum in accordance with developing concerns, including peace education, security education, and environmental education.

Teaching Methods: The matter of teaching methods is identified as a growing concern within the realm of Social Studies education. The effective implementation of teaching strategies necessary for achieving Social Studies goals necessitates thorough teacher preparation, encompassing the incorporation of contemporary and practical approaches to teaching Social Studies (Kanno, 2014). This has emerged as a concern due to the lack of democratic and dynamic teaching approaches employed by numerous Social Studies educators. Over the course of time, a consistent teaching approach, particularly the lecture technique, has been employed. The democratisation of teaching methods entails the utilisation of several instructional approaches within the realm of Social Studies education. This initiative is expected to enhance students' engagement and comprehension. Similarly, the implementation of a democratised teaching approach has the potential to significantly enhance the effectiveness of instructional delivery in the field of Social Studies education inside Nigeria. Social Studies educators should familiarise themselves with various instructional strategies and tactics, including questioning techniques, brainstorming techniques, and simulation approaches, when delivering Social Studies instruction within classroom environments (Maduewesi, 2011).

The most recent advancements in societal progress: This essay aims to elucidate the complex challenges inherent in the pedagogy of Social Studies. According to Orakwue (2010), it is imperative for Social Studies teachers to possess a comprehensive understanding of contemporary societal advancements. The topic at hand is to the adverse impact of many forms of media, such as social media, the internet, satellite television, home video, and others, on children. The aforementioned forces are introducing novel values that are detrimentally impacting societal structures. It is imperative for Social Studies educators to acknowledge this phenomenon and devise novel pedagogical approaches aimed at mitigating its adverse consequences.

Challenges Encountered in the Instructional Delivery of Social Studies in Junior Secondary Schools in Nigeria

There are several challenges encountered in the instructional delivery of Social Studies in Nigeria, which include:

The Insufficiency of Social Studies Specialists: One significant issue that hampers the efficient delivery of instruction in Social Studies at Junior Secondary Schools in Nigeria is the scarcity of qualified professionals in the field of Social Studies. The insufficient quantity of competent Social Studies educators who can adequately fulfil the needs of both students and society poses a challenge to the efficient provision of instruction in Social Studies within junior secondary schools in Nigeria. However, according to Obiadi (2001), there exists a sufficient number of professionals in the field of Social Studies. However, the current instructors of the subject lack sufficient knowledge and understanding of the new integrated Social Studies approach.

Inadequate Pedagogical Approach: The instruction of Social Studies has encountered a substandard pedagogical approach. The instructional delivery in the Social Studies classroom is intended to be innovative, aiming to expose learners to the exploration of logical ideas and the development of critical thinking skills. According to Ukadike and Iyamu (2007), there is a prevailing belief that Social Studies teachers have not effectively included students in active learning participation within the classroom, resulting in subpar academic performance in the subject. Similarly, Achime (2004) expressed disapproval of Social Studies educators who heavily rely on expository teaching methods rather than utilising the inquiry approach. This approach encourages students to develop investigative skills and enhance their critical thinking abilities in order to address social issues. This reliance on expository teaching methods hinders the effectiveness of Social Studies instruction. Significantly, Obuh (2007), Nworgu (2007), and Ibiam (2007) have noted that certain experts in the field of Social Studies lack the necessary proficiency and abilities in effectively utilising Information Communication Technology (ICTs). This poses a significant

obstacle to the effective delivery of instruction in Social Studies at the junior secondary school level.

Insufficient Provision of Instructional Materials: The scarcity of instructional materials poses a significant obstacle to the effective delivery of Social Studies courses. The insufficiency of instructional resources, including maps, globes, charts, images, film strips, slides, and pertinent textbooks, is a significant obstacle for Social Studies educators, as a majority of schools lack adequate provisions of such instructional materials. In such a scenario, the act of teaching hinders the acquisition of knowledge and restricts the development of pupils' skills. Similarly, the lack of access to school resources and equipment, such as Social Studies resource centres or workshops, poses a hindrance to the effective instruction of Social Studies. The insufficiency of government funding in the education sector has implications on the availability and quality of teaching materials in schools, as highlighted by Esu and Inyang-Abia (2004).

Insufficient allocation of financial resources towards education represents a significant obstacle that hinders the effective instruction of Social Studies. Teaching Social Studies effectively might be challenging in the absence of sufficient funding within the education system (Afe, 2013). The insufficiency of financial resources allocated to school presents numerous obstacles to the instruction of Social Studies. Similarly, there exists a deficiency of incentives and inadequate compensation to effectively encourage teachers of Social Studies. The presence of teachers is crucial for the effective delivery of Social Studies teaching, and the inadequate compensation they receive has impeded the instructional process in Junior Secondary Schools in Nigeria.

The inadequate training background of certain Social Studies teachers significantly hinders the effective delivery of instruction in the field. This issue arises from the fact that a number of Social Studies teachers in junior secondary schools lack sufficient training to acquire the necessary skills, qualities, and comprehensive understanding of the subject matter, as well as the

ability to effectively impart this knowledge to their students. The presence of adequately trained Social Studies educators is a crucial prerequisite for the effective delivery of instruction. The issue of Social Studies teaching is closely tied to the requirement for highly skilled and capable educators, as highlighted by Mezieobi and Osakwe (2003). The presence of a large number of students in a classroom setting presents a significant challenge to the effective delivery of instruction in the field of Social Studies. This issue poses a significant challenge to the management and control of the classroom. Educators experience significant levels of stress when instructing sizable groups of students. According to Adeyemi (2008), there exists a negative correlation between class size and the quality of teaching and learning, indicating that as class size increases, the quality of teaching and learning tends to decrease. The instructional delivery in Social Studies, particularly at the junior high school level, is significantly impacted by the presence of a large class size. The implications encompass a range of factors, including inadequate classroom management, ineffective student discipline, heightened burden on teachers, escalated occurrence of disruptive student behaviour, diminished teacher productivity, decreased student attentiveness in larger class sizes, occasional noise disturbances within the classroom, and the potential for students to exhibit antisocial behaviour due to the teacher's inability to effectively manage the class.

Conclusion

The discipline of Social Studies imparts to students essential knowledge, attitudes, values, and abilities that are necessary for addressing and resolving issues within society. The objective of Social Studies is to facilitate the development of young individuals' ability to make informed and rational decisions that benefit the members of a modern society. Regrettably, the field of Social Studies in Nigeria has not yet attained its anticipated level. Currently, the delivery of instruction in Social Studies, particularly in lower secondary schools in Nigeria, is confronted with several challenges. These challenges include the reluctance of individuals

and groups to acknowledge Social Studies as a valuable tool for personal development and national progress, periodic revisions of the Social Studies curriculum by authorised bodies, ineffective teaching methods, a shortage of adequately trained Social Studies teachers, a lack of instructional materials, insufficient funding, and various other issues. The present challenges and obstacles impeding the effective delivery of Social Studies instruction, specifically in lower secondary schools in Nigeria, can be effectively tackled by implementing the recommendations proposed in this study. By doing so, the delivery of Social Studies instruction can be elevated to a higher level, aligning with international standards and global best practises.

Way Forward

It is suggested that the instructional delivery of Social Studies, particularly at lower Secondary Schools in Nigeria, incorporates modern teaching strategies such as the inquiry method and cooperative learning. These approaches have been shown to boost effective teaching and foster creativity among students. An immediate and imperative need exists for a comprehensive evaluation of the Social Studies curriculum by specialists in the field, as well as other relevant stakeholders within the education sector. This evaluation is necessary in order to align the curriculum with worldwide standards and address the significant challenges currently faced in the implementation of Social Studies instruction at the junior secondary school level. Social Studies educators ought to be acquainted with contemporary educational reforms, novel pedagogical techniques, and global exemplars of best practises. This can be achieved by actively participating in conferences, seminars, and workshops, so enabling them to effectively incorporate the acquired information and skills into the teaching and learning milieu. The acquisition of Information Communication Technology capabilities by Social Studies teachers is essential in order to effectively deliver education in the subject.

Furthermore, it is imperative to engage Social Studies instructors who possess advanced professional training. These educators would be equipped to impart the necessary knowledge, attitudes, values, and skills to junior secondary school pupils, enabling them to contribute effectively towards the progress of Nigeria. The provision of appropriate and pertinent educational resources by the government is crucial in ensuring effective instructional delivery in the field of Social Studies inside schools. Sufficient financial resources in the form of incentives and remuneration should be allocated within the education system to effectively encourage instructors and enhance the delivery of instruction in the field of Social Studies. It is recommended that the government increase the recruitment of Social Studies specialists for the instruction of Social Studies at the lower secondary school level. This measure aims to decrease the student-to-teacher ratio in classrooms, thereby enabling teachers to properly manage the class and provide individualised attention to pupils as required.

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