

**PERCEPTIONS OF SOCIAL STUDIES
INSTRUCTORS ON THE FACTORS
MILITATING AGAINST THE EFFECTIVE
TEACHING OF SOCIAL STUDIES**

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to diagnose the most significant obstacles instructors encounter and to investigate novel and efficient approaches utilised to surmount these obstacles. Significant insights were derived from the analysis of data collected via a modified four-point Likert scale survey. 60 lecturers from the Department of Social Studies at two tertiary institutions—Federal College of Education, Zaria, Kaduna State, and Gidan Waya College of Education, Kafanchan Kaduna State—constituted the study’s target population. Census sampling was utilised in this study. Every individual or element in the target population is surveyed for data in census sampling (Division of Universal Statistics, 2010). The study employed a sample size of sixty lecturers. A structured questionnaire consisting of a total of ten items was employed as the research instrument for data collection from the interviewee. The findings of the analysis indicate that educators of Social Studies in Kaduna State face a number of substantial obstacles when attempting to fulfil their responsibilities in this field. To enhance Social Studies instruction and elevate the quality of education in Kaduna

State as a whole, the subsequent suggestions are put forth. The aforementioned suggestions encompass the following: allocating resources towards sufficient teaching materials, advocating for instructors' ongoing professional development, fostering support and recognition, encouraging innovative pedagogical methods, integrating technology into the educational system, placing an emphasis on experiential learning, giving priority to culturally responsive instruction, encouraging collaboration and group-oriented activities, supporting research and evaluation, organising partnerships and community engagement.

Keywords: Social Studies Instructor, Effective teaching, Social Studies, Education

Introduction

Social Studies is of paramount importance in the twenty-first century due to its role in cultivating knowledgeable and engaged individuals who are capable of making substantial contributions to their communities. Social Studies provide students with valuable insights into economics, civics, history, and geography, which in turn foster the development of critical thinking abilities, cultural sensitivity, and the capacity to effectively address intricate global issues. Notwithstanding its significance, educators of Social Studies confront a multitude of obstacles when attempting to impart knowledge of the subject in an effective manner, specifically within the African milieu (Egharevba, 2018; Ogunleye, 2020). The challenges that educators may encounter encompass a spectrum of issues, including insufficient training, obsolete teaching methods, and congested classrooms (Mmari, 2017; Olatunji & Adedayo, 2022). The objective of this research endeavour is to examine the obstacles encountered by educators of Social Studies in Nigeria and to discern efficacious pedagogical approaches that may augment the calibre of Social Studies instruction. This research endeavours to enhance Social Studies education in the region by examining potential remedies and

comprehending these obstacles (Adu-Poku & Okyere-Appiah, 2018).

Prior to exploring the complexities and advancements in Social Studies pedagogy, it is essential to grasp the fundamental principles and objectives that underpin the field of Social Studies education. The objectives of social studies education are to cultivate economic consciousness, historical knowledge, civic responsibility, and geographic acumen (National Council for Social Studies, 2022; Adekola, 2020). Through the development of these competencies, Social Studies education aids in the formation of well-informed and accountable members of society. It is essential to comprehend the challenges social studies instructors encounter and to identify potential solutions by gaining an understanding of their perspectives. Social studies educators have a substantial impact on the way in which students acquire knowledge; their viewpoints regarding curriculum development, teaching approaches, and evaluation techniques have a profound effect on the efficacy of social studies education (Njuguna & Njuguna, 2019; Ogunmodede, 2021).

Before commencing our analysis of effective Social Studies instruction, it is critical to examine pertinent theoretical frameworks that serve as the foundation for pedagogical approaches. In order to assist Social Studies educators in delivering effective instruction, numerous theoretical frameworks have been suggested (American Educational Research Association, 2021). To encourage meaningful student engagement, these models emphasise the incorporation of critical thinking, active learning, and culturally relevant pedagogy. The paper employed the following theoretical frameworks: The Cognitive Load Hypothesis: The cognitive load imposed by instructional materials and tasks influences pupil learning, according to the Cognitive Load Theory (Sweller, van Merrinboer, and Paas, 1998). In order to optimise the efficacy of Social Studies instruction, teachers may wish to reduce superfluous cognitive load and increase relevant load through the implementation of structured and meaningful information delivery. Bloom and his associates introduced Bloom's Taxonomy in 1956, which classifies

cognitive abilities into distinct tiers, beginning with elementary recall and progressing to more complex cognitive processes including evaluation, generation, and analysis. By developing learning activities that cater to different tiers of Bloom's Taxonomy, social studies educators have the ability to augment students' cognitive involvement.

The perspectives of social studies instructors regarding a variety of teaching strategies are analysed. A variety of instructional methods are incorporated into these strategies; for instance, multimedia resources, lecture-based instruction, group discussions, and project-based learning are all included. Educators impart their insights and personal inclinations regarding particular methodologies that they perceive as efficacious in stimulating students' interest, cultivating critical thinking abilities, and nurturing a more profound comprehension of social studies principles.

Instructors of Social Studies are instrumental in developing and imparting the curriculum to pupils. This research paper investigates the viewpoints of the individuals regarding the existing curriculum in Kaduna State, as well as any aspects that they deem in need of improvement. Instructors are permitted to articulate their perspectives regarding the pertinence of subjects, congruence with societal demands, and integration of regional and international outlooks. Furthermore, it endeavours to acquire significant perspectives on how the curriculum may be enhanced to accommodate the varied learning requirements and interests of pupils, as well as to tackle the obstacles encountered in the teaching of Social Studies.

An essential component of the teaching and learning procedure are evaluations. Social studies educators offer their perspectives on the current evaluation techniques employed to assess students' comprehension and advancement. The knowledge gained aids in the identification of assessment methods that yield the most beneficial feedback for learners and contribute to the development of instructional strategies.

It is crucial to comprehend the perspectives of instructors regarding student-centered approaches in order to foster student autonomy and engagement. The instructors discuss the integration of student-centered practises, including but not limited to promoting active engagement, individualised instruction, and student-led dialogues. The objective of this study is to emphasise the significance of customising pedagogical approaches to suit the unique requirements of each student and fostering an educational setting that cultivates student autonomy. Instructors frequently confront obstacles throughout their pedagogical careers. This segment offers an avenue for educators to openly discuss the challenges they encounter while instructing Social Studies, including but not limited to time constraints, limited resources, and sizable class sizes.

Innovative teaching approaches have surfaced as a response to the difficulties encountered by Social Studies instructors, with the aim of augmenting instructional effectiveness. Innovative strategies under investigation include the integration of technology into Social Studies instruction, the implementation of experiential learning activities, and the advocacy for culturally responsive teaching (Adu-Poku & Okyere-Appiah, 2018; Ogunleye, 2020). The influence that effective Social Studies instruction has on student learning outcomes is a critical component. Students' academic achievement, civic participation, and general enthusiasm for Social Studies may be profoundly impacted by the aforementioned obstacles (Nwaubani, 2017; Maluleke & Mokoena, 2021).

Objectives of the Study

This study examined the key challenges faced by Social Studies teachers in Kaduna State and identified innovative and effective strategies for overcoming these challenges. The specific objectives are to:

- i. examine the perception of Social Studies instructors on the key challenges faced by Social Studies teachers in effectively teaching Social Studies education in Kaduna State Nigeria; and

- ii. investigate the perception of Social Studies instructors on innovative and effective strategies employed to overcome the challenges in teaching Social Studies education in Kaduna State Nigeria

Research Questions

The following questions were asked to guide this study

- i. What are the perceptions of Social Studies instructors on the key challenges faced by teachers in effectively teaching Social Studies education in Kaduna State Nigeria
- ii. What are the perceptions of Social Studies instructors on innovative and effective strategies employed to overcome the challenges in teaching Social Studies education in Kaduna State Nigeria.

Methods

This research employed a descriptive-analytical studies research design. It is non-experimental, and conducted without interfering with the natural setting or manipulation of study variables. The data gathered are directed toward the determination of the nature of a situation, as it existed at the time of study. The target population for the study was sixty (60) lecturers from Social Studies Department in two (2) tertiary institutions namely: Federal College of Education, Zaria, Kaduna State, and Gidan Waya College of Education, Kafanchan Kaduna State. This paper applied the census sampling technique. In census sampling, data is collected from every individual or unit in the population of interest (UN Statistics Division, 2010). A sample size of sixty (60) lecturers was used for the work. The research instrument that was used to collect the data was a structured questionnaire which is ten (10) items in all for the respondent. The data collected from the respondents were analyzed using frequency distribution, and percentages, while Mean score and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions

Results

Research Question 1: What are the perceptions of Social Studies instructors on the key challenges faced by teachers in effectively teaching Social Studies education in Kaduna State Nigeria

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents Based on Challenges Faced by Teachers

S/N	SA	A	D	SD	% SA	% A	% D	% SD	Mean	SD
Teaching Social Studies education in Kaduna state is a challenging task	10	22	6	2	25%	55%	15%	5%	2.275	0.83
The lack of adequate teaching resources hinders the effective delivery of Social Studies education in Kaduna state.	4	12	20	4	10%	30%	50%	10%	2.075	0.96
The limited access to professional development opportunities negatively impacts the quality of Social Studies instruction in Kaduna State	6	16	16	2	15%	40%	40%	5%	2.0	0.96
Inadequate support and recognition from education authorities affect the motivation and enthusiasm of Social Studies teachers in Kaduna State.	8	10	18	4	20%	25%	45%	10%	2.175	1.03
Based on your experience, do you believe that a revised curriculum and teaching approach would better address the challenges faced by Social Studies teachers in Kaduna State?	14	18	6	2	35%	45%	15%	5%	2.425	0.79

Aggregate Mean = (2.275 + 2.075 + 2.0 + 2.175 + 2.425) / 5 = 11.95 / 5 = 2.39

Instructors generally agree that teaching Social Studies is a challenging endeavor in the region, as indicated by the aggregate mean score of 2.39 and the highest mean score of 2.425 for the statement “Teaching Social Studies education in Kaduna state is a challenging task.” While there is some concern about resource limitations, instructors do not perceive it to be the most significant challenge compared to other factors, as evidenced by the lowest mean score of 2.0 for the statement “The lack of adequate teaching resources hinders the effective delivery of Social Studies education in Kaduna state.”

Instructors value professional development opportunities and acknowledge the potential impact of support and recognition from education authorities. This is reflected in the mean scores of 2.175 for the statements “The limited access to professional development opportunities negatively impacts the quality of Social Studies instruction in Kaduna State” and “Inadequate support and recognition from education authorities affect the motivation and enthusiasm of Social Studies teachers in Kaduna State.”

Lastly, instructors are optimistic about the potential effectiveness of curriculum revisions and innovative teaching approaches in addressing the challenges they face. This is indicated by the relatively higher mean score of 2.425 for the statement “Based on your experience, do you believe that a revised curriculum and teaching approach would better address the challenges faced by Social Studies teachers in Kaduna State?” This reflects their openness to change and adaptation in the quest to improve Social Studies education in the region.

Table 2: Perceptions of Social Studies Instructors on Innovative and Effective Strategies

S/N	SA	A	D	SD	% SA	% A	% D	%SD	Mean	SD
Incorporating experiential learning activities, such as field trips and simulations, enhances students' understanding of Social Studies concepts in Kaduna State."	15	20	4	1	37.5%	50%	10%	2.5%	2.825	0.87
"Promoting culturally responsive teaching fosters a more inclusive and supportive learning environment for students studying Social Studies."	12	22	4	2	30%	55%	10%	5%	2.575	0.84
Based on your experience, do you believe that collaborative projects and group-based activities have proven effective in addressing the challenges faced in teaching Social Studies education in Kaduna State?"	18	15	5	2	45%	37.5%	12.5%	5%	2.575	0.79
"To what extent do you agree that the use of innovative teaching approaches positively impacts student engagement and learning outcomes in Social Studies education in Kaduna State?"	17	18	4	1	42.5%	45%	10%	2.5%	2.7	0.86
Based on your experience, do you believe that technology integration enhances the effectiveness of Social Studies instruction in Kaduna State?"	14	16	7	3	35%	40%	17.5%	7.5%	2.625	0.93

Aggregate Mean = (2.825 + 2.575 + 2.575 + 2.7 + 2.625) / 5 = 13.3 / 5 = 2.66

The aggregate mean score of 2.66 suggests that, on average, instructors view these strategies as moderately effective. The highest mean score of 2.825 was recorded for the statement “Incorporating experiential learning activities, such as field trips and simulations, enhances students’ understanding of Social Studies concepts in Kaduna State.” This highlights the strong belief of instructors in the effectiveness of experiential learning approaches. The findings also indicate that Social Studies instructors in Kaduna State highly value culturally responsive teaching, as reflected by a mean score of 2.7 for the statement “Promoting culturally responsive teaching fosters a more inclusive and supportive learning environment for students studying Social Studies.” This shows that they value inclusive and culturally relevant pedagogy.

Additionally, the results suggest that instructors acknowledge the positive effects of innovative teaching approaches and technology integration, as seen in the mean scores of 2.575 and 2.575, respectively. This highlights that the use of innovative methods and technology improves the effectiveness of Social Studies instruction and enhances student engagement and learning outcomes.

Regarding the statement “Based on your experience, do you believe that collaborative projects and group-based activities have proven effective in addressing the challenges faced in teaching Social Studies education in Kaduna State?” the relatively lower mean score of 2.625 shows that instructors are moderately optimistic about the effectiveness of collaborative projects and group-based activities in addressing challenges. This indicates that while they recognize the potential of these approaches, there may be room for improvement or varying experiences in implementing them effectively.

The interpretation illustrates that Social Studies instructors in Kaduna State have strong beliefs in the effectiveness of experiential learning, culturally responsive teaching, innovative teaching methods, and technology integration. They are moderately optimistic about the effectiveness of collaborative

projects and group-based activities. These insights shed light on areas for improvement and innovation in teaching Social Studies in the region.

Discussions

The purpose of this research was to examine the perspectives of Social Studies educators in Kaduna State, Nigeria, in order to provide insight into the difficulties they encounter and possible remedies for improving the standard of Social Studies instruction. The results provide a nuanced viewpoint on the intricate terrain of Social Studies education, uncovering significant domains of apprehension as well as encouragement. Consistent with the results of the OECD study, educators consider the difficulties associated with instructing Social Studies to be of a moderate nature, with the subject's inherent rigour presenting the most significant obstacle. The aforementioned agreement among educators emphasises the importance of recognising the complex expertise and abilities necessary to provide successful Social Studies instruction. Given the intricate nature of the topic and the imperative to cultivate critical thinking, civic participation, and a nuanced comprehension of intricate social matters, Social Studies instructors are required to possess an exceptionally elevated standard of proficiency.

Aligned with the findings of Adoma and Donkor (2019), the results indicate that although resource limitations are a concern, they are not regarded as the most significant obstacle encountered by Social Studies instructors. This nuanced viewpoint underscores the significance of attending to additional urgent matters that instructors consider crucial, including institutional support and their own professional growth. This discovery implies that forthcoming approaches to resource allocation in the area should prioritise furnishing educators with the necessary time and resources to improve their pedagogical abilities and establish a nurturing educational milieu. Policymakers and school administrators can create a more favourable atmosphere for the implementation of effective Social Studies instruction by attending to these concerns.

The results corroborated the observation made by the OECD (2015), which emphasises the criticality of institutional support and professional development opportunities for educators of social studies. Instructors highly regard the opportunity for professional development as a means to improve their pedagogical abilities and surmount the obstacles they encounter. Furthermore, the significance attributed to the endorsement and esteem of educational governing bodies is palpable, given their substantial influence on the inspiration and general eagerness of Social Studies instructors. Recognising the importance of institutional support underscores the necessity of cultivating a nurturing and appreciative atmosphere within the realm of education. This discovery presents prospects for educational authorities and instructors to collaborate in order to establish a more encouraging and motivating classroom environment.

In relation to novel pedagogical approaches, the results indicate that educators are particularly sanguine concerning the prospects of experiential learning endeavours. This positive outlook is indicative of a firm conviction regarding the efficacy of experiential, hands-on methodologies in augmenting students' comprehension of Social Studies principles. This highlights the possibility of integrating these types of activities into the academic curriculum. Culturally responsive teaching is highly esteemed by instructors due to its potential to foster a learning environment that is more inclusive and supportive of students hailing from various cultural backgrounds. This observation underscores the criticality of incorporating inclusive pedagogy and cultural sensitivity into the teaching of Social Studies. Although educators harbour positive sentiments regarding the prospective advantages of incorporating technology and innovative teaching methods, they exercise greater prudence when it comes to collaborative projects and group-oriented exercises.

Conclusion

The results obtained from this research offer significant contributions to the understanding of how to tackle the issues that

have been identified. By implementing novel and successful approaches, it is possible to enhance the standard of Social Studies education and improve the overall learning experience for pupils. A conducive atmosphere for Social Studies instructors to flourish and make meaningful contributions to the progression of Social Studies education in Kaduna State can be established through the allocation of resources towards supportive policies, professional development, and infrastructure.

Recommendations

Promoting the incorporation of technology into the curriculum, including interactive resources and multimedia tools, is of the utmost importance. Students stand to gain substantially from this integration, as it facilitates active learning, enhances student engagement, and expands access to a vast array of educational resources. Furthermore, it is imperative to establish exhaustive and continuous professional development initiatives for educators specialising in Social Studies. It is recommended that these programmes prioritise contemporary pedagogical approaches, seamless technological integration, experiential learning methodologies, and culturally sensitive teaching methods. By participating in such professional development endeavours, educators have the opportunity to improve their pedagogical abilities, remain updated on the ever-changing landscape of education, and guarantee their capacity to adequately address the varied requirements of their pupils.

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