
SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL STUDIES AND FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION: NEW CHALLENGES IN TEACHING METHODOLOGIES

Akeem Tunde **ADELEKAN** & Abimbola Fikayo **OLANIRAN**

*Department of Social Studies
Adeyemi Federal University of Education, Ondo*

Abstract

The Nigerian society like other countries has been prone to some social ills such as incidence of unwanted pregnancies, abortion, abandoned babies and child abuse. This situation is due to the low literacy level in the country as a whole and the limited access to information on fertility regulation, family planning with reference to family life education. On the other hand, Social Studies as a school subject is designed to foster in learners better understanding of man's interaction with his physical and social environments. Consequent upon this, Social Studies has therefore been structured and taught over the years to provide learners with the relevant knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that would enable them become functional and active members capable of tackling the problems and challenges in their societies as they arise. This paper therefore discusses on the symbiotic relationship between Social Studies education and family life education. It also x-rays the diverse nature of both Social Studies and family life education and the importance of instructional models that emphasises how to learn than what to learn which can lead to appraise issues and

problems that may affect the learners and his social environments.

Keywords: Symbiotic, Relationship, Social Studies, Family life education, New challenges, Teaching methodologies.

Introduction

There have been varied perceptions about the nature, meaning, scope and objectives of Social Studies. This is not likely to be unconnected with the origin, the way and manner and the period this discipline was introduced into the school curricula. The concern for the teaching of Social Studies originated out of the need to make education relevant to the needs and aspirations of the society and to prepare man for a useful life wherever he finds himself. Social Studies is not only concerned about the development of the cognitive aspect, the subject also intends to inculcate in the learners those values and skills that will enable him to function effectively in his environment. Social Studies therefore deals with the interactions between man and his entire environment, how man influences his environment and how the environment in turn influences man. Meziobi, (2015) observed that Social Studies is a programme of study which a society uses to instill in learners the knowledge and skills, attitudes, and actions it considers important concerning the relationship human being have with each other, their world and themselves. According to Hansen (2020) Social Studies is a subject that studies man in his social, historical, geographical and cultural context. NCSS (2015) opined that Social Studies education is a discipline that has a particular mission which is the task of helping young people to deal with their problems and to manage the physical and social forces of the world which they live.

In his own contribution, Ogundare (2000) observed that Social Studies is a study of problems of survival in an environment and how to find solution to them. From the observation of Makinde (2012) Social Studies is a subject that presents knowledge as a whole in an attempt to study man. These different conceptual perceptions has led to Social Studies being defined variably by the different

authors and scholars of the discipline. However, the kernel of their various definitions surrounds societal issues and problems with man as the central focus. It is this note that this paper examines symbiotic relationship between social studies and family life education and new challenges in teaching methodologies.

What is Family Life Education?

As defined by the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), opined family life education as an educational process designed to assist people in their physical, social, emotional and moral development as they prepare for adulthood, marriage, parenthood, ageing as well as their social relationships in the socio-cultural context of the family and the society. The rationale for the introduction of family life education into Nigerian school curriculum is based on the recognition of the family as a major institution in human society. As a major social unit and the first group an individual has contact with early in life, the family serves as the foundation upon which an individual builds his or her later life experiences. The general understanding therefore, is that a proper socialized and responsible family member will in turn become a responsible citizen of a nation.

Falade (2004) identified some of the purposes of family life education which include; to increase access to improved reproductive health to women for in other to prevent infants and mortality rate in Nigeria; to develop skills for problem solving. This means providing skills and ability to acquire skill to be able to proffer solutions to emerging issues in their daily life and society at large; to develop skills for rational decision making in the family. By developing these skills it would help family and individual to think critically and take a sound and informed decision to develop the nation, among others. Going by the above, population and family life education may be seen as a part of the overall national development efforts of a nation to improve the individual, family and its national quality of life.

Content Theme and Core Messages of POP/FLE

The content of population/family life education is wide and comprehensive. This is because; the content is drawn from wide range of disciplines such as biological sciences, demography, sociology, history, health sciences, and family living etc. This also explains the inter-disciplinary nature of its curriculum contents.

Generally, the key issues or core messages covered by family life education include the following; Family size and family welfare; Delayed marriage; Responsible parenthood and family membership; Population change and resource development; Population-related beliefs and values; Gender issues; Sexually Transmitted Diseases/ AIDS, and Primary Health Care Concept; Teenage Pregnancy/ Delinquency; and Crime

Relationship between Social Studies and Family Life Education

The educational needs of the individuals is to equip him with certain basic skills that will enable him function in his own environment as he has to develop certain attitudes and values that will help him get along with other members of his immediate on distant environment. The aims and objectives of Social Studies are better understood with the background aims of education in Nigeria which according to the National Policy on Education (2013) are; inculcation of the right types of values and attitudes for the survival of individual, the inculcation of national conscienceless and national, unity, training of the mind in understanding of the world around, and the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competences both mental and physical as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society. Since the goal of Social Studies is to equip man with the information, skills, and values that will help him to live meaningful and comfortable in his environment.

All these objectives are required in life problem solving. Family life education on the other hand, grows out of concern over the increasing family instability and disintegration which can be linked to the changing family structures and composition, and which have severe consequences on the members of the family Yisa (1989). It is

thus an educational process designed to help the youths in their physical, social, emotional and moral development as they grow up and prepare to face the challenges of life. Family life education is related to Social Studies because one of the major concerns of Social Studies education is man's interaction within his environment both social and physical environment. It therefore becomes imperative that the basic education curriculum in Social Studies apart from taking into consideration societal needs, has also incorporated other contemporary issues of local and global concern such as environmental issues, drug abuse and family life education to mention a few. This is the ultimate reason why aspects of family life education are fully integrated and taught in Social Studies.

Teaching Methods and Strategies for Teaching Social Studies?

Until very recently, teachers were only teaching their students the hard facts of knowledge. This has led to the adoption of rote system in learning method so as to enable the learners to recall what they were taught. In order to meet up with the recent socio-political and economic changes in the world which has also brought about changes in educational goals. It therefore becomes imperative to move away from the old method of direct teaching as in the lecture method, note-copying and dictations to constructive instructional models where learners are actively involved in the teaching-learning process and are required to produce and use knowledge.

Today, one of the problems facing the teaching profession is the new approaches or methods of teaching. Current literature is replete with some new ways of handling our classrooms. According to (Dinkal, 2003) teaching methods can be regarded as the sum total of all the principles of good teaching that are known to have been proved from psychological, biological and educational research. Methods of teaching therefore consist of a simple or complex set of procedure used in learning process. Those sets of procedure are governed by some agreed rules. It is important to note that teaching and learning are inter related.

Social Studies and family life education is different from the

traditional disciplines like English, Language, Mathematics, Geography, etc. which aim to present a body of factual information and methodologies. The main aim of Social Studies/family life education is “to enable students to explore personal values, attitudes, and beliefs and develop their ability to choose freely from a rational course of action (NERDC, 1993). The learner-centred model has its implications for both the teacher and the learner in terms of the advantages and the limitations inherent in it. It is activity-centered for the learner who is exposed to some experiences which he processed through reflection, critical thinking, comparing and contrasting and sometimes making generalisations which may help him arrive at the right conclusions.

It should be noted that Social Studies/family life education is intended to provide learners with the capacity for critical thinking and analytical skills necessary to enable them choose from a set of alternative solutions with regard to social and family related issues. Since the Social Studies/family life education goals go beyond mere transmission of knowledge to the development of investigative and problem solving skills. This therefore has a direct bearing on the choice of methodologies and techniques that emphasize how to learn than what to learn. To develop these skills such methods which will enable the learners develop a critical and analytical mind based on reasoned judgements should be adopted, these methods and techniques include;

Inquiry Method: This method is a way of finding out about something. The method involves a process of investigating and solving a problem by learners. It enables the learners to combine the search for knowledge in a systematic and logical fashion. The teacher acts as a guide, he does not provide the answer. With the minimum guidance from the teacher, the learners try to get answer to a recognized problem through the following steps:

- (i) Defining the problem.
- (ii) Formulating the hypotheses.
- (iii) Data collection.
- (iv) Data analysis.
- (v) Generalization.

All these procedures and activities are meant to develop in the learners, skills of observation, exploration and questioning in learners, it also develop the ability for reflective and critical thinking in the learners. This method is an appropriate method for the teaching and learning Social Studies and family life education. It is a process rather than content oriented. This makes it imperative for the learners to strengthen his problem solving skills as he is required to have an indepth knowledge of Social Studies and family life education related issues.

Role-Play: Role play is an instructional technique relevant to Social Studies and family life education. It is rather a specialized form of acting. It is an activity in which players put themselves in place of others in order to act out their roles or imitate them. It is also a popular tool for portraying a social situation, and usually a spontaneous unrehearsed play. In this technique, there is usually no prepared script to be memorized. The teacher must plan ahead, identify a problem, planning a role-play involves selection of a problem or issue of interest and pupils simply act the roles intended to portray the play. Pupils are allowed to select the roles they would like to play. Roles must not be forced on any participant. It is important to discuss the role-play after presentation. This is done by asking relevant questions in order to highlight the key learning role. The technique is used to develop positive attitudes towards social issue and modifying the behaviour of learners. It is also used to prepare students develop their imaginative skills. These will help them to express their feelings towards various issues.

Dramatization Method: This method is employed by the teacher to carry out activities in the class. This develops in the learners the following skills, memorization, imaginative thinking and put into drama what they are intended to learn. It also provides ample opportunities for independent work, analysis, interpretation of fact and logical thinking. In adopting this method, the teacher on his part:

- (a) identify a problem or issue or be dramatized;
- (b) give the learners free hand of choice to identify parts they wish to dramatize;

- (c) give them time to think themselves into the role they wish to act for memorization and rehearsals;
- (d) follow up activities;
- (e) evaluate their performance and ensure that the learning objective is achieved.

Discussion Method

This method is a method in which the learners are adequately engaged in intellectual brainstorming. It requires team work among the learners under the supervision of the teacher. The aim of the discussion method is to come up with a solution from within group, usually, the teacher who by his/her nature a member of the group, guides the group or class discussion and acts as a resource person; providing expert advice when needed. This method is desirable for Social Studies and family life education because apart from developing in the learner the necessary skills required. It brings out the reality of situations as they touch on societal problems, attitude and values from which he is required to make informed decisions. In adopting this method, it gives room for self expression and sharpens critical thinking of the learners. In the views of Carin and Sund (2019) asserted discussion method provides unlimited opportunities for class room intervention. This leading method can be used in the following forms, whole class discussion, small group discussion, debate, panels and forum.

Problem Solving Method: This method is aimed at proffering solutions to the problem situation in the classroom. It is a method that motivates the learners to learn through trial and error. Basically, this method employs the scientific approach to learning and teaching, and is used to foster learners' creativity and develop their imaginative skills. This approach is quite similar to the project approach but differs in the sense that while the project approach demands a practical accomplishment in a real situation, the problem-solving approach emphasizes a mental conclusion. In other words, whereas, in the project approach the activity, both mental and physical leads to the practical accomplishment of task, but in the problem solving approach, the activities lead to a mental solution. The problem-

solving approach is very relevant in the teaching of social studies and family life education because it helps the development of reasoning power. The teacher can raise a problem by asking such questions as: Why were the Europeans able to colonize the Africans? How has the African Union improved humanity in Africa? What are the problems facing the African Union today? Attempts by the students at finding answers to these questions go a long way in developing their thinking faculty.

Conclusion

This paper has tried to look at the cognitive, affective and skills outcomes of Social Studies and family life education which has shown some measures of importance of affective objectives in the choice of instructional devices. In the affective dimension, Social Studies/family life education is expected to achieve internalization of knowledge on the part of the learners. Social Studies/family life education is different from traditional disciplines which aim to present a body of factual information and methodologies. The main aim of Social Studies/family life education is to enable learners to explore personal values, attitudes, skills and knowledge and develop their ability. It is against this backdrop that a number of innovative methods and techniques have been identified to make the teaching of Social Studies and family life more rewarding. These instructional devices are desirable for Social Studies and family life education because apart from developing in the learner the necessary skills required. It will also bring out the reality of situation as they touch on societal problems.

Suggestions

Teachers should therefore be encouraged to go for in-service training. This will brighten up their ideas which will enable them to know more about the recent development in their areas of disciplines and enable them to acquire more knowledge and latest techniques in teaching. Also, Family life education as a programme should be promoted at all aspect of educational system to develop skills, values, attitude and moral uprightness to uphold the family and society at

large. Furthermore, emphasise should be laid on practical rather than theorizing, and both the learners and teachers should be motivated to learn. Lastly, government and policy makers should develop a curriculum that will harmonized good teaching techniques or strategies for the discipline.

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