
TEACHERS' CHARACTERISTICS AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM IN RIVERS STATE OF NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study examined teachers' characteristics and the implementation of Junior Secondary School social studies curriculum in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria. Two specific objectives, two research questions were raised and two null hypotheses formulated to guide the study. Ex-post facto research design was used for the study. The population of the study comprised of 300 teachers teaching social studies in the 244 Junior Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State. The population was divided into three educational zones such as East, West and Central. A stratified Random sampling technique was then used in selecting 65 teachers from the central and 60 from each of the Western and Eastern educational zones. This gave a sample size of 185 respondents. The main instrument used for this research was a research questionnaire. This instrument was made of two sections (sections A and B). The instrument was given to two research experts for face validation; my supervisor and a lecturer in test and measurement. Cronbach's Alpha technique was used in determining the reliability of the instrument and a reliability coefficient of .87 was obtained. The collected data were analyzed with the use of appropriate statistical techniques such as independent t-test analysis and one-way analysis. The calculated values were tested for significance at 0.05 level. The findings of the study revealed that the age of the teacher is an essential factor in the implementation of the Junior Secondary School Social Studies Curriculum in Akwa Ibom State. Academic qualifications of Social Studies teachers have remarkable influence on the implementation of Social Studies Curriculum in Akwa Ibom State. Therefore, it was recommended among others that in any Social Studies teachers' recruitment exercise, experienced teachers should be considered first before inexperienced teachers. This is because they perform better than less experienced teachers using their wealth of experience.

KEY WORDS: Teachers characteristics, age, academic qualification, Social Studies, Curriculum

INTRODUCTION

Social Studies is one of the courses offered at the Junior Secondary School level in Nigeria. At this level the students are exposed to experiences that will prepare them for higher education and also useful living within the society. The secondary education level is a very important part of a child's life experience. This is the education received after primary education

and before the tertiary stage. According to the National Policy on Education (2004), social studies as a course was meant to inculcate in the students the spirit of service to the fatherland, unity, dignity in labour, among other things. Social studies also take into consideration the five main national goals of Nigeria, which have been endorsed as the necessary foundation for the National Policy on Education. The goals include:

- (a) A free and democratic society
- (b) A just and egalitarian society
- (c) A united, strong and self-reliant nation
- (d) A great and dynamic economy
- (e) A land full of bright opportunities for all citizens

The National Policy on Education listed Social Studies and citizenship Education as core subjects. An understanding of Social Studies is important to prepare students to be active, productive, and participatory citizens. Citizenship is the core goal of Social studies education even right from the primary school level. Citizenship education, centered in the disciplines of social studies, helps create caring and concerned citizens. The role of good citizens in the home, the classroom and school, and the community encourages students to be good decision-makers (ISD, 2002). Granted that Social studies forms a significant foundation for the Social Science, the method of teaching Social Studies show that the teaching and learning of the subject is still in its traditional method (Merryfield and Mutebi, 2000; Busar, 2002; Onyesom, 2000). This has serious implications for pupils' performance and even boomerang effect on their interaction with society. A strategy for the success of implementation of social studies curriculum is the availability of teachers. Various authors (Nwaokolo 2009; Adigun, 2001) have reported unavailability of qualified teachers as a bane to implementation strategies. The implication of this is that qualified teachers availability will lead to the success of implementation of curriculum.

The emphasis on basic resources is paramount to the teaching of social studies. Social Studies seem very abstract if practical tools are not part of the teaching exercise. What this suggests is that resources such as maps, poster video tapes and compact disk showing real life situations are paramount for effective social studies teaching. These resources complement the teaching exercise that is carried out by the teacher.

Statement of the Problem

Social studies according to National Council for the Social Studies is the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence. The implication of this assertion is that social studies is taught in such a way as to bring various subjects together to the knowledge of the students in a coordinated manner as to reflect the nation's history, its political leadership and stability. It is a thing of concern that since the introduction of social studies into our school curriculum in 1982, it has posed considerable challenges to the teachers not only in the breadth of the subject coverage but also in the methodology of teaching. This is more so in Akwa Ibom State Junior secondary school.

A number of factors have been advanced as affecting proper implementation of social studies at the junior secondary school level. They include the teachers, the societies, government, infrastructure and instructional strategy employed by the teacher among others. When students perform poorly in social studies examinations, they are blamed for their intellectual inability and

poor attitude toward the subject. Little blame, if any, is attributed to teachers' (factors) characteristics. This study is, therefore, an attempt to fill the social studies implementation gap existing in junior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. This study particularly investigated teachers' characteristics and the issues related to the teaching and learning of social studies in Junior Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The study investigated teachers' characteristics and the implementation of Junior Secondary School social studies curriculum in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria. Specifically, the study aims at the following objectives:

1. To determine the influence of age of teachers on the implementation of social studies in JSS in Akwa Ibom State.
2. To determine the influence of academic qualifications of teachers on the implementation of social studies curriculum in JSS in Akwa Ibom State.

Research Questions

Two research questions were formulated as follows:

1. What influence has age on the implementation of social studies curriculum in Junior Secondary School in Akwa Ibom State?
2. How does academic qualification influence the implementation of social studies curriculum in Junior Secondary School in Akwa Ibom State?

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the implementation of the junior secondary social studies curriculum among teachers divided into groups based on age.
2. There is no significant difference in the implementation of the junior secondary social studies curriculum among teachers divided into groups based on academic qualifications.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Content of Social Studies

According to Hanson (1966), the role of education is to produce a nation that will be both modern and free. He said that in modernizing a nation, education should provide economic growth. This means that it must produce skilled manpower and growth in knowledge for research leading to productivity in the economy. These roles of education already outlined are so complex that the strategies to make the changes occur must be planned, designed and must be delivered. This is known as curriculum content. Objectives of education vary from society to society based on the problems and needs of the particular society. Therefore education has the primary tasks of:

- (a) Preserving and transmitting the cultural heritage to the young
- (b) Transforming the cultural heritage
- (c) Developing the individual

Going by this conception, Gbamanja (2007) observed that content consists of subject matter drawn on the basis of problems thus cutting across traditional subjects in the hope of achieving some kind of unity normally referred to as integration. In support of this, Gbamanja (2007) identified the learner, the society and subject matter as sources of curriculum content. This means that the social studies curriculum content must address social demand functions and action oriented learning of the people (learners). Appraisal of Social Studies in Junior Secondary

School in Akwa Ibom State makes it reasonable to examine these sources of the social studies content, which would hopefully improve learners' interests in the subject.

Proponents of the concept of this tripartite curriculum sources include Taba (2005) and Tyler (2009). In their contributions, Tanner and Tanner (2005) said that the survival of a society depends upon how that society addresses contemporary problems such as population growth and migration ethnic relation, fund, poverty, crime unemployment and drug abuse etc. This is important because the survival and prosperity of any nation depends squarely upon that society's capability in applying its problems, as all these constitute the content of the social studies curriculum (Gbamanja 2007).

Age of Teachers And Implementation Of Social Studies Curriculum

The definition of age is purely chronology (Laslett 2004; Costa and McCrac 2004). For practical purposes, the ages of 60 or 65 have been commonly adopted as the beginning of old age, although definitions vary across countries, culture and tribe. While chronological age cannot be the sole variables to be considered when examining the ageing process. It has a use when differences in ageing across societies are being examined. An encumbered and arduous lifestyle inevitably affects teachers' as the following example suggests.

If a teacher aged 50 has spent the whole of his/her life in teaching, his teaching experiences will be different from that of a teacher who is aged 30 with different teaching experience. Kalache (1991) show that in Nigeria, local researchers define old age at 50 years. Even in developed countries, there is considerable heterogeneity of attitudes and experiences among older teachers and their teaching than their younger colleagues. In this contribution Nydegger (2005) observed that in every society the ability to function is crucial as older teachers may be feeble. And feebleness is not valued in any society especially in teaching profession. It is also known that overall attitudes toward older teachers as a whole in performance are more negative than those of younger teachers as a whole in performance (Kirchner and Dunnette 2004, Tuckman and Lorge, 2002).

Freeman (2001) investigated the relationship between age and intelligence and found that decreased mental deterioration and decrease in I.Q, appear to occur with advancing age. It has however, to be noted that there is a considerable degree of unreliability in the testing of such children and that intellectual poverty in the home probably accompanies a low level of parental intelligence. Jensen (1982) in his study of genetics and education found that academic success correlated with age but the correlation was not significant. His findings suggest that age cannot be taken as a determinant of academic success. Since younger people can at times perform better academically than older students in some subject areas, whereas in some subject areas, the reverse may be the case. Observation reveals that only few studies have attempted to relate age to academic achievement. It is the concern of this research to probe into the correlation among the age of teachers and schools success especially in the area of Social Studies.

Academic Qualification of Teachers and Implementation of Social Studies Curriculum

The problem associated with concept teaching has been attributed to teachers' lack of knowledge and skills required to put the concept to the understanding of the students. This has resulted to poor level of performance of social studies teachers (Nwosu, 2008). The worry here is that no effective learning can take place without adequate knowledge of concept utilization. According to Nwosu (2002), a qualified teacher is one who is worth his salt, create effective relationship and understanding between himself and other members of the school system. Besides a qualified teacher is an agent of curriculum implementation. Yet some teachers

according to Nwosu (2002) find it difficult to distinguish a physical quality from its units of measure. This implies that such teachers may not teach well.

Furthermore, an in-depth study on professional non graduate (NCE) teachers when compared with graduate teachers having professional qualification showed the result not being significant. This means that teachers in those two groups did not differ significantly in their attitude because of qualification. That teachers' qualification which influence their perceptive attitude towards instructional difficulties in social studies could probably be due to the fact that professional teachers have had the basic training for the teaching profession. They view the instructional strategies of approaching any difficult topics differently from graduate teachers who have had no formal training for the teaching job.

Methods

Design of the Study

This study adopts on Ex-post facto design. In ex-post-facto research design, the researcher cannot manipulate or assign subjects or treatment because the independent variables have already occurred so to speak.

Area of the Study

This area of the study is Akwa Ibom State.

Population

All the 300 teachers teaching social studies in the 244 Junior Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State constituted the population of this study.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The population was divided into three educational zones such as East, West and Central. A stratified Random sampling technique was then used in selecting 65 teachers from the central and 60 from each of the Western and Eastern educational zones. This gave a sample size of 185 respondents

Instrumentation

The main instrument used for this research is a research questionnaire. This instrument was made of two sections (sections A and B). Section A was designed to measure the personal data (i.e. teachers' characteristics) of the respondents while section B was measuring social studies implementation preference scale (SSIPS).

Validation of the Research Instrument

To ensure the validity of the instrument the researcher made sure that all variables of the research objectives were measured in the questionnaire. This measurement was supervised and guided by the research supervisor and experts in test and measurement.

Reliability of the Research Instruments

The test-retest reliability study was used in this research. The reliability co-efficient obtained here was used to determine the level of reliability of instrument.

Statistical Treatment of Data

The collected data were analyzed with the use of appropriate statistical techniques such as independent t-test analysis and one-way analysis. The calculated values were tested for significance at 0.05 level.

Presentation of the Results of the Data Analysis

Hypothesis One

The null hypothesis states that there is no significant difference in the implementation of the junior secondary social studies curriculum among teachers divided into groups based on age. In order to test the hypothesis, two variables were identified as follows;

- (1) Age of the Teacher as the independent variable
- (2) Implementation of Junior Secondary School Social Studies Curriculum as the dependent variable

Both variables were subjected to analysis of variance-(see table 1)

Table 1

Analysis of variance of the influence of age of the teachers on the implementation of the junior secondary school social studies curriculum

Group	N	X	SD	
Less than 26 years	24	54.2500	9.23250	
26 - 35 years	62	68.0806	5.13527	
36 – 45 years	48	72.5000	3.78125	
46 – 55 years	38	87.4737	3.18558	
above 55years	13	80.1538	4.66987	
Total	185	74.0811	11.71532	

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F
Between group	20375.521	4	5093.880	187.956*
Within group (Error)	4878.263	180	27.956	
Total	25253.784		184*	

*Significant at 0.05 level; df= 4& 180; critical F value = 2.37.

The above table 1 presents the calculated F- value as 187.956. This value was tested for significance by comparing it with the critical F- value (2.37) at 0.05 level with 4 & 180 degree of freedom. The result of the analysis proved that age of the teachers has significant influence on the implementation of the junior secondary social studies curriculum in Akwa Ibom State. Based on the significance of the result, Post-Hoc test was employed in order to reveal the independent groups between which the significant difference lied. From the analysis, it was revealed that the significant difference lied among all other independent groups except between 36 – 45 year and above 55 year. The result also revealed that the least significant difference (LSD) lied between the age range of 46- 53years and ages below 26 years (33.2237). It is also worthy of note that the social studies teachers whose age falls under the age range of 46-33years had the highest mean score of 86.4266. This was seconded by those in the age range of 36-45year (78.4020). The third one was those with the age range of 55years (77.3319). The fourth one was those in age range of 26-35years (66.7765) while those with the least mean score fall under the ages below 26years (50.3515).

Hypothesis Two

The null hypothesis states that there is no significant difference in the implementation of the junior secondary social studies curriculum among teachers divided into groups based on academic qualification. In order to test the hypothesis, two variables were identified as follows:-

- (1) Academic qualification as the independent variable
- (2) Implementation of Junior Secondary School Social Studies Curriculum as the dependent variable.

Both variables were subjected to analysis of variance, (see table 2)

Table 2

Analysis of variance of the influence of academic qualification of social studies teachers on the implementation of Junior Secondary School Social Studies Curriculum in Akwa Ibom State

Group	N	X	SD
Low	18	53.3333	9.73774
Average	117	72.1624	8.09849
High	50	86.0400	3.79021
Total	185	74.0811	11.71532

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F
Between group	5329.949	2	7664.975	140.573*
Within group (Error)	9923.835	182	54.527	
Total	25253.784	184		

***Significant at 0.05 Level; df= 2&182; critical F-value =3.00**

The above table 2 presents the calculated F-value as 140.573. This value was tested for significance by comparing it with the critical F-value (3.00) at 0.05 level with 2 & 182 degree of freedom. The result of the analysis proved that academic qualification of the teachers has significant influence on the implementation of the junior secondary social studies curriculum in Akwa Ibom State. Based on the significance of the result, Post-Hoc test was employed in order to reveal the independent groups between which the significant difference lied. From the analysis, it was revealed that the significant difference lied among all the independent groups, i.e between high and average, high and low, and between average and low educational levels. The result also revealed that, the least significant difference (LSD) lied between average and high academic qualifications (13.8776), while the highest significant difference lied between low and high academic qualifications (32.7067). It was also worthy of note that the social studies teachers whose academic qualification falls under high level had the highest mean score of (86.0400). This was seconded by those with average academic qualification of (72.1624), while those with the least mean score falls under low level of educational qualification (53.3333).

Discussion of Findings

The result of the data analysis in table 1 was significant due to the data that the obtained F-value (187.956) was greater than the critical F-value (2.37) at 0.05 levels with 4 & 180 degree of freedom. The result here revealed that age of the social studies teachers significantly

influences the implementation of the Junior Secondary School social studies Curriculum. This agrees with the earlier study by Nydegger (2005) who observes that the ability to function is crucial and that older teachers are feeble.

The result of the data analysis in table 2 was significant due to the fact that the obtained F-value (140.573) was greater than the critical F-value (3.00) at 0.05 levels with 2 & 182 degree of freedom. The result showed that there is a significant influence of academic qualification of the social studies teachers on the implementation of the Junior Secondary School Social studies curriculum in Akwa Ibom State. It is noted that the more qualified a teacher is, the more knowledge and skill, he will acquire. This will go a long way to influence his teaching. This finding is consistent with the research by Essien (2005) on the influence of teachers' qualification on their attitude towards instructional difficulties.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that the age of the teacher is an essential factor in the implementation of the Junior Secondary School Social Studies Curriculum in Akwa Ibom State. Academic qualifications of Social Studies teachers have remarkable influence on the implementation of Social Studies Curriculum in Akwa Ibom State.

Recommendations

The following recommendations, based on the result of this study, are put forward.

- 1. Since it has been found out that older teachers are feeble and exhibit lower performance than the younger teachers in the implementation of the Junior Secondary School Social Studies curriculum, the elder teachers should be retired and the younger ones recruited.**

For successful implementation of Social Studies Curriculum in Junior Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State, academic qualification of teachers should be given serious consideration any time recruitment of Social Studies teachers is being conducted by any recruitment body. In any Social Studies teachers' recruitment exercise, experienced teachers should be considered first before inexperienced teachers. This is because they perform better than less experienced teachers using their wealth of experience.

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