
TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF BASIC EDUCATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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Abstract

The study aimed at ascertaining the implementation of 21st century basic education social studies curriculum in the Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria from using teachers' perception. The study adopted survey design. Four research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. A sample size of 108 social studies basic education teachers drawn from 18 basic schools in Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja were used for the study. Means and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions while t-test was employed to test the hypotheses. The result of the study showed that the implementation of social studies curriculum in the 21st century is poor in both primary school and junior secondary schools in FCT, Abuja. Hence the study recommended that basic education social studies teachers should be given the opportunity for regular professional training through well planned and co-ordinated workshops to train and retrain social studies teachers to be acquainted with the dynamism of 21st century.

Keyword: Basic Education, social studies, curriculum, 21st century

Introduction

Effective implementation of social studies and functional social studies education leads to functional society. Social studies education is unarguably a child of necessity. Social Studies Education as a school subject originated in America in the 20th century after the Second World War, necessitated by the need to re-establish and promote good human understanding and relationship among the peoples of the world (Fadeiye, 2005). In Nigeria, Social Studies Education came as an answer to specific problems (Fadeiye). In the late 1960s, most Nigerians agreed that the schools must be Nigerian in outlook rather than emphasizing foreign ideas. According to Fafunwa (1974), the colonial system of education alienated Nigerians from their cultural environment. It was thought by Nigerian educators that through Social Studies Education, the love of the country could be kindled in the Nigerian child in such a way that they would develop a strong attachment to their country and to further expose them to the problems in the society and equip them with the necessary skills needed for their survival in their environment (Edinyang, Tandu, & Gimba, 2015).

In agreement with the above assertion Abdu-Raheem (2010), described the subject social studies as a school discipline for the young generations was introduced basically to enable learners adapt to their environment and be able to adjust to the stress of rapidly changing society. Dada, Titus and Adu (2016) viewed social studies as an integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence. This definition by Dada et al informed that the subject social studies is beyond the study of man and his environment.

Hence, in the context this study, it is simply defined as integrated social science aimed to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasonable decisions for public good, as citizens of a culturally diverse and democratic society in an interdependent world.

According to National Policy on Education (FRN, 2008), the objective of social studies curriculum in Nigeria for Basic Education include to: develop the learner's capacity to learn and acquire basic skills including those of listening, reading, writing, speaking, calculation and observation, analysis and inference which are essential to the formation of sound inter-ethnic relationship; socializing and humanizing the individual child to enable him interact freely with children from other ethnic groups; create an awareness and understanding of the evolving social and physical environment; ensure the acquisition of that relevant knowledge which is an essential pre-requisite to personal development as well as to a positive personal contribution to the betterment of mankind and the Nigerian society at large; develop a sympathetic appreciation of the diversity and interdependence of all local communities and the wider national and international community; develop in children a positive attitude to citizenship and a desire in them to make a positive personal contribution to the creation of a united Nigeria, through appreciation of values of honesty, hard work, fairness, justice and togetherness; and to encourage learners to appreciate that all the things they have learnt are inter- related. Through social studies it is possible to present knowledge as a whole instead of as a series of specialized fragments as stated in the objective which says “social studies is taught to develop a sympathetic appreciation of the diversity and interdependence of all local communities and the wider national and international community” (National Council for Social Studies in David, 2004). This is

because the subject studies the need for all and sundry to contribute towards the good of the society they live, to be their brother keeper, respect the rights and personality of others.

Social studies plays important role in Nigeria. Edinyang et al (2015) identified that the social study curriculum complement other social institutions such as family, polity, marriage and religion, in promoting social actions for change in the drive towards national consciousness and integration. Social studies provide ample opportunities for the promotion of the much needed inter- ethnic understanding as it provides pupils with problem solving skills. In social studies, learners learn about the lives of achievers and great men from the different ethnic groups and this serve as models for the younger generation. Social studies helps in the promotion of inter-ethnic understanding amongst the people of Nigeria by emphasising that no man or community is self-sufficient and that for survival of Nigeria as a nation, we have to depend on exchange of goods and services as well as culture, thereby learning directly through peaceful co- existence and understanding among the citizens irrespective of religion or culture (Nwanna-Nzewunwa, 2006). Thus, it is perceived that effective implementation of social studies curriculum in Nigeria education mostly at the basic level will go a long way to ensure unity, peace and good citizenship in Nigeria.

Basic education in line with new system of education (9-3-4) ranges from primary one to junior secondary school three. It comprise of two components, lower basic and upper basic education. Lower basic education comprises primary one to six. While upper basic education include JSS1 to JSS3. Nzeribe (2004) advised that teaching for molding of character is better and more effective at this level of education as children develop their conducts base on what the learnt at

early stages of their lives. Hence the choice of this level of (basic education) education for its important as a fundamental or foundational stage of formal education in Nigeria. It is believed that effective implementation of social studies in the school will result to the achievement of the objectives of basic education social studies in Nigeria mostly in this 21st century.

21st century is an era characterised with dynamism, innovations and new method of doing things in all facets of endeavours. In line with the above, Iwuagwu et al (2018), reported that The demand of education in the 21st century is complex, some teachers may find it difficult to cope with difficulties occasioned by social change and innovations in teaching and learning associated with this era. This may have impact on the implementation of basic education social studies curriculum. For instance, Dada et al (2018), observed that the key challenge in implementation of basic social studies curriculum is that teachers of social studies find it extremely difficult to apply specific techniques that could help facilitate the realisation of the desired objectives of the subject. Effective impartation of social studies knowledge on students requires a teacher who is grounded with variety of both content knowledge, pedagogical skills and acquainted with contemporary dynamism and trend of event. Hence, Teaching of social studies in schools has been reportedly difficult because of the inability of some institutions or teachers to conceptualise the nature of the subject itself. Besides, Ajiboye (2010) further explained that social studies as a school subject was not clearly understood by countless scholars. He noted that several teachers of the subject are unaware of its contents and methods thereby making them impart the knowledge of the subject inappropriately to the learners. However the above observation may not be universally applicable, hence the study deems it wise to carry

out the study on teachers' perception on the implementation of 21st century basic education social studies curriculum in Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nigeria.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to determine teachers' perception on the implementation of 21st century basic education social studies curriculum in Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Specifically the study intends to:

- Examine the perception of primary school teachers on the implementation of 21st century primary education social studies curriculum in FCT.
- Investigate the perception of male and female primary school teachers on the implementation of 21st century primary education social studies curriculum in FCT.
- Ascertain the perception of junior secondary school teachers on the implementation of 21st century primary education social studies curriculum in FCT.
- Ascertain the perception of male and female junior secondary school teachers on the implementation of 21st century primary education social studies curriculum in Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

Research Questions

1. What is the perception of primary school teachers on the implementation of 21st century primary education social studies curriculum in the FCT?
2. What is the perception of male and female primary school teachers on the implementation of 21st century primary education social studies curriculum in the FCT?
3. What is the perception of junior secondary school teachers on the implementation of 21st century primary education social studies curriculum in the?
4. What is the perception of male and female junior

secondary school teachers on the implementation of 21st century primary education social studies curriculum in Federal Capital Territory?

Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) difference in the perception of male and female primary school teachers on the implementation of 21st century primary education social studies curriculum in FCT.

H₀₂: There is no statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) difference in the perception of male and female junior secondary school teachers on the implementation of 21st century primary education social studies curriculum in FCT.

Methods

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Descriptive survey research design, according to Nworgu (2015), seeks to describe and report characteristics and situations in its natural state. It is used when the aim of a given study is to describe variable or variables in their un-manipulated form. Hence it is ideal for this study since the study tends to empirically determine teachers' perception on the implementation of 21st century basic education social studies curriculum in FCT. The population of the study comprise of all basic education teachers in FCT. The study employed a sample size of 108 public basic school teachers comprising 54 primary school teachers and 54 junior secondary school (JSS) teachers amounting to 108 teachers (58 male and 50 female teachers), drawn across the six area councils in FCT, Abuja, using dual stage sampling techniques.

In the first stage the researcher employed non proportionate random sampling techniques to draw 18 public basic schools: three from each of the six area councils in the FCT.

At the second stage, the researcher employed random sampling techniques to draw six (6) teachers from each of the 18 sampled basic schools which amounted to 108 basic education teachers use for the study. The sampling techniques was deemed appropriate to ensure probability sampling and also to ensure manageable sample size given that it is the method deemed appropriate for data collection for the study.

The instrument for data collection for the study was questionnaire titled: “Social Studies Teachers' Perception Questionnaire (SSTPQ).” developed by the researcher. The SSTPQ was made up of two parts; A and B. Part A sought for demographic information of the basic education teachers, while part B contained 10 items modelled on a four point scale ranging from Highly adequately implemented (HAI) = 4 points, adequately implemented (AI), = 3 points, Moderately implemented (MI) = 2 points to Poorly implemented (PM) = 1 point; to elicit information from basic education teachers on the implementation of basic education curriculum. The instrument was face validated by four experts: two in educational curriculum and a measurement and evaluation expert all from university of Nigeria Nsukka. These experts were requested to look at the instrument in terms of suitability of the instrument and the items in line with the purpose of the study, research questions and null hypotheses. The useful suggestions made by experts were used in the correction and production of the final instrument (SSTPQ). 20 copies of the final instrument were used to collect data from 20 basic education teachers (10 Junior Secondary School teachers and 10 Primary School teachers from Niger state. Data collected were subjected to trial – testing to ascertain the reliability of the instrument using Cronbach Alpha statistical method. The choice of Cronbach Alpha was because the items of the SSTPQ were polytomously scored. The reliability

coefficients of 0.87 was obtained which proves the instrument to be highly reliable. 12 research assistance made of masters students of university of Abuja, were employed and trained for one day on how to collect data from teachers. The research assistance were sent in pairs to each of the sampled basic education schools in the six area councils of FCT upon prior notification of the school in writing. Data collection lasted for one week.

METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

Data collected were analyzed using simple percentage and t-test at 0.05 level of significance. All computations were made using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) to ensure accuracy of result. To answer the research questions, the result was interpreted using limit of real numbers: where a mean score of 1.00 - 1.49 was regarded as Very Poorly implemented (PI); 1.50 – 2.49 as poorly implemented (PI); 2.50 – 3.49 as Moderately implemented (AI) while 3.50 – 4.00 as adequately implemented (HAI). In testing the null hypotheses, the following decision rules were used: (i) When the associated probability value obtained is less than 0.05 (that is, $P < 0.05$) the null hypothesis was rejected and (ii) When the associated probability value obtained is greater than 0.05 (that is, $P > 0.05$) the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Results

Table 1: Teachers' mean rating on the implementation of 21st century primary education social studies curriculum in FCT
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Gender	N	Mean	SD	DEC
Male	26	2.45	0.33	PI
Female	28	2.46	0.35	PI
Overall	54	2.45	0.37	PI

Key: N = Number of respondent; MI = poorly implemented; DEC = Decision

The result of the study as presented in table 1 was used to answer two research questions that guided the study. The result showed that the mean ratings and standard deviations of primary education teachers' on the implementation of 21st century primary education social studies curriculum in FCT by male and female primary school teachers. The result showed that the overall mean rating on the implementation of primary education social studies curriculum by primary teachers in the FCT was 2.45 with standard deviation of 0.37; primary school male teachers rating of the implementation of the primary school social studies curriculum was 2.45 with standard deviation of 0.33; female 2.46 with standard deviation of 0.35. The result of the study showed that **primary education social studies curriculum in the FCT** is poorly implemented as commonly perceived by both male and female primary school teachers. Hence the teachers mean rating of the implementation of the curriculum falls within the range of 1.50-2.49 set as criterion for poorly implemented.

Table 2: Teachers' mean rating on the implementation of 21st century Junior Secondary Education social studies curriculum in the FCT

Gender	N	Mean	SD	DEC
Male	24	2.20	0.35	PI
Female	30	2.19	0.34	PI
Overall	54	2.20	0.34	PI

Key: N = Number of respondent; MI = Poorly implemented; DEC = Decision

The result of the study as presented in table 2 was used to answer two research questions that guided the study. The result showed the mean ratings and standard deviations of primary education teachers' on the implementation of primary

education social studies curriculum by male and female primary school teachers. The result showed that the overall mean rating on the implementation of primary education social studies curriculum by primary teachers in FCT was 2.20 with standard deviation of 0.34. Junior Secondary School male teachers rating on the implementation of the Junior Secondary School Social Studies Curriculum was 2.1 with standard deviation of 0.35; female 2.19 with standard deviation of 0.34. The result of the study showed the Junior Secondary School Social Studies curriculum in FCT is poorly implemented as commonly perceived, as both male and female Junior Secondary School teachers were in agreement. Thus, the teachers mean rating of the implementation of the curriculum falls within the range of 1.50-2.49 set as criterion for poorly implemented

Table 3: T-Test analysis of the significant difference in the perception of male and female primary school teachers on the implementation of primary education social studies curriculum in the FCT.

Gender	N	Mean	SD	Df	t- cal	Sign	Dec
Male	26	2.45	0.33	52	-0.09	0.93	Not Significant (Accept H ₀)
Female	28	2.46	0.35	52			

The findings of the study as presented in table 3 showed the t-test analysis of the significant difference. There is no statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) difference in the perception of male and female primary school teachers on the implementation of social studies curriculum in Primary Schools.

Results showed that a t-value of -0.09 with a degree of freedom of 52 and a significant value of 0.93 were obtained. Since the significant value of 0.93 is greater than 0.05 set as

level of significance. This means that the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in **the perception of male and female** primary school teachers on the implementation of primary education social studies curriculum in the FCT is accepted.

Table 4: T-Test analysis of the significant difference in the perception of male and female primary school teachers on the implementation of 21st century primary education social studies curriculum in the FCT.

Gender	N	Mean	SD	Df	t- cal	Sign	Dec
Male	24	2.20	0.35	52	-0.089	0.93	Not Significant (Accept H ₀)
Female	30	2.19	0.34	52			

The finding of the study as presented in table 3 showed that there is no statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) difference in the perception of male and female Junior Secondary School teachers on the implementation of Junior Secondary Education social studies curriculum in the FCT.

Result showed that a t-value of -0.089 with a degree of freedom of 52 and a significant value of 0.093 were obtained. Since the significant value of 0.093 is greater than 0.05 set as level of significance, this means that the null hypothesis, that there is no significant it difference in the perception of male and female Junior Secondary School teachers on the implementation of Junior Secondary Education social studies curriculum in the FCT is therefore accepted.

Discussion

The findings of the study have shown that there is urgent need for proactive action to boost the curriculum implementation skills of social studies teachers of basic education. The implementation of social studies curriculum at basic education level is poor. The findings of the study is in support

of the findings of Dada et al (2018), who observed that the key challenge in implementation of basic social studies curriculum is that teachers of social studies find it extremely difficult to apply specific techniques that could help facilitate the realisation of the desired objectives of the subject.

Also judging from the observations made from the study, not minding that slight difference was observed in the perception of male and female teachers both in primary and in Junior Secondary Schools, the difference statistically was not significant. This buttresses the fact that there is consistency in the perception of male and female primary school teachers and that of secondary school social studies teachers on the poor implementation of social studies curriculum of basic education in the FCT, Abuja. Thus, poor implementation of social studies curriculum may be as a result of certain factors such as:

- Poor emphasis on Teacher education curriculum for social studies teacher.
- Laissez-faire attitude of teachers towards appreciating the dynamism of 21st century social studies curriculum as a major challenge on the implementation of basic social studies curriculum.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In general, the study revealed that the basic education curriculum in the FCT is poorly implemented both in primary education and Junior Secondary School. These results suggest an urgent need for teacher education and other stake holders in education to be more pro-active in improving the implementation of basic education social studies curriculum.

In this respect it is recommended that:

- Basic education social studies teachers should be given the opportunity for regular professional development through well planned and co-ordinated workshops to train and retrain social studies teachers

- to be acquainted with the dynamism of 21st century.
- Basic education teacher should be trained on modern and improved methods of teaching social studies.
 - The current system of incentives for basic education teachers should be reviewed upwards so as to encourage and motivate the teachers to give in their best for effective teaching of the learners.

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