

TEACHERS' CHARACTERISTICS AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM IN JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN AKWA IBOM STATE

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ABSTRACT

The study examined teachers' characteristics and the implementation of social studies curriculum in Junior Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State. The population of this study consisted of all the 225 teachers teaching social studies in the 334 Junior Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State. The study adopted Expost-Facto research design while simple random sampling technique was used in selecting the respondents. The instrument for data collection which was tagged "Teachers' Characteristics and Implementation of Social Studies Curriculum Questionnaire (TCISSCQ) was administered to the respondents and used for the study. The instrument was validated by two educational evaluators in the faculty of education. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics was used to test the hypotheses. From the results of the data analysis, it was observed that there is significant difference in the implementation of junior secondary Social Studies curriculum among teachers based on academic qualifications and there is significant difference in the implementation of junior secondary Social Studies curriculum among teachers based on teaching experience. In conclusion, teachers in Akwa Ibom State actively involve themselves in the implementation of junior secondary Social Studies curriculum. It was therefore recommended that academic qualification of teachers should be given serious consideration any time recruitment of Social Studies teachers is being conducted by any recruitment body.

INTRODUCTION

~~———— Social Studies is one of the courses offered at the Junior Secondary School level in Nigeria.~~
The aim is to expose students to experiences that will prepare them for higher education and useful living within the society. Secondary school education is received after primary education and before the tertiary stage. It is a very important part of a child's life experience. According to Adesope, (2000), the relevance of secondary school education is to provide all primary school leavers with the opportunity for education at a higher level, irrespective of sex, social status, religious or ethnic background. Secondary education also seeks to cater for the differences in talents, opportunities and future role. To achieve these aims, secondary education is divided into two stages: Junior Secondary

School stage and Senior Secondary School stage; each with duration of three years. According to National Policy on Education (2004), Junior Secondary School shall be both pre-vocational and academic. Students who complete Junior Secondary School shall be streamed into the Senior Secondary School, the Technical College, an out-of-school vocational training center and an apprenticeship scheme.

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS, 1991) opined that Social Studies should involve “the acquisition of essential knowledge of history and Social Sciences with emphasis on gathering information from a variety of discipline and experiences along with thinking, decision making, communication, social interaction, and civil participation. This means that Social Studies as a course of study should expose students to the general way of life in the society. Teachers are the pivot for effective implementation of the social studies curriculum. For proper implementation of the social studies curriculum, the importance of qualified teacher cannot be overemphasized. Asiabaka, (2002) stated that the success of any intergrated education programme is determined by the objectives of the programme, availability of equipment and teachers. Nolam et.al further stressed that exception of well-defined objectives, the most important factor is availability of qualified teachers. No curriculum can be effective without a good teacher because it is the responsibility of the teacher to offset deficiencies in curriculum in text books and equipment. This study is, therefore, an attempt to fill the existing gap in implementation of Social Studies curriculum in junior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Statement of the Problem

Social Studies is taught in such a way as to integrate various subject matter to the knowledge of the students in a coordinated manner so as to reflect the nation’s history, its political leadership and stability. It is a major concern that the emergence of social studies into secondary school curriculum in 1982 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 schools. Essential factors have been advanced as affecting proper adaptibility of social studies at the Junior Secondary School level. When students perform poorly in social studies examinations, they are blamed for their intellectual inability and poor attitude toward the subject while little or no blame is attributed to teachers’ characteristics.

Therefore, this study is an attempt to fill the existing gap in implementation of Social Studies curriculum in junior secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. Its major focus is on 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 main purpose of the study was to examine teachers’ characteristics and the implementation of social studies curriculum in Junior Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study is designed to:

1. Determine the influence of academic qualifications of teachers on the implementation of Social Studies curriculum in JSS in Akwa Ibom State.
2. Determine the influence of teaching experience of teachers on the implementation of Social Studies curriculum in JSS in Akwa Ibom State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. In what way does a teacher's academic qualification influence the implementation of Social Studies curriculum in Junior Secondary School in Akwa Iboms State?
2. To what extent does teacher's teaching experience influence the implementation of Social Studies curriculum in Junior Secondary School in Akwa Ibom State?

Research Hypotheses

The Research hypotheses stated for this study were:

1. There is no significant difference in the implementation of junior secondary Social Studies curriculum among teachers based on academic qualifications.
2. There is no significant difference in the implementation of junior secondary Social Studies curriculum among teachers based on teaching experience.

Literature Review

Academic qualification of teachers and implementation of social studies curriculum

According to Nwosu (2002), a qualified teacher is one who meets the standards and training for a position, who creates effective relationship and understanding between himself and other members of the school system. Also, a qualified teacher is an agent of curriculum implementation. Yet some teachers according to Achilike (1987) in Nwosu (2002) find it difficult to distinguish a physical quantity from its units of measure. This implies that such teachers may not teach well. 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, 1998). No effective learning can take place without adequate knowledge of concept utilization.

An indepth study on professional non graduate (NCE) teachers was compared with graduate teachers having professional qualification, the result was not significant. This means that teachers in those two groups did not differ significantly in their attitude because of qualification. Okafor (2000) assert that teachers' qualification influence their perceptive attitude towards instructional difficulties in Social Studies and this 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. Nwosu (2000) said that there is an improvement on social studies teachers' level of mastery.

Teaching experience of teachers and implementation of social studies curriculum

The issue of academic competence of social studies teachers is very crucial in the sense that they can apply it directly or correctly in teaching the subject. According to Seweje (2001), an experienced teacher is a professional teacher who combines subject matter expertise with sound pedagogy. An experienced teacher is child-centered using discovery method of instruction in ensuring full participation of students. Of course, this will build up interaction and high perspective achievement on both teachers and students. The perspective nature of the experienced teacher has a high contrast to beginner teacher who is qualified but without professional experience. Adell (2004) in his study on Social Studies, stated that he has found no meaningful difference between the opinions of the experienced and less experienced teachers towards the teaching of Social Studies in the Junior Secondary Schools in Rivers State. This may be because most of the less experienced teachers must have been given an edge and adequate background to enable them cope with the handling of social studies curriculum.

Findings in Adeyemo, (2002) research reads teachers' attitude towards instruction in some Secondary Schools in Nigeria. His result shows that the duration of the teaching experiences of teachers have no reasonable influence on their attitude in respect to the instructions of the lessons. This may be due to lack of re-training and exposure to new method of instruction that would have ushered them on the threshold of the new approach of teaching the lesson. This may be advanced further, because a teacher according to Wilson and Morreira (2006) stated that good teaching method exposes learners to good knowledge of the subject matter, skills, information, ideas and principles of learning. To achieve this, a teacher must be well engrossed into mastering of the subject content of Social Studies to enhance teaching and learning.

In spite of the several methods of teaching, the teachers' methods largely depend on the understanding of the subject matter. This is the crux and a very important aspect of the pedagogy. The positive and perspective nature of the contents by the teachers determines the mode of instruction to the learner. This at times makes use of the lengthy years of mastery in the field or discipline such as Social Studies. This could be interpreted further to mean that a teacher can only teach to his students that which he has acquired through experience or in the course of his training. In a similar research of teachers' characteristics and other correlates of teachers' effectiveness in Rivers State Junior Secondary Schools, ISD (2002) is of the opinion that longevity of teachers is more impactful than experienced teachers in their attitude towards the teaching of Social Studies. He further reported that the efficiency of the teacher is a function of his level of training, experience and perspectives towards his career.

METHOD

Research Design

This study adopted an ex-post facto research design because the phenomena under study had already occurred. Accordingly, the researcher had no direct control over the variables. The researcher could not manipulate the variables but obtained data on already existing variables to study their influence on one another.

Area of the Study

The study area is Akwa Ibom State which is one of the thirty six (36) states of Federal Republic of Nigeria. The proximity of the study area to the researcher informed the researcher's use of Akwa Ibom State for the study.

Population

All the 225 teachers teaching social studies in the 334 Junior Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State constituted the population of this study.

Sample and Sampling Technique

Simple random sampling technique was used to select 180 social studies teachers for the study. The teachers were selected using a non-proportionate stratified sampling technique of which 60 respondents were obtained from each of the three senatorial districts of the state.

Instrumentation

The main instrument used for this research was researcher-developed questionnaire, tagged "Teachers' Characteristics and Implementation of Social Studies Curriculum Questionnaire (TCISSCQ)". This instrument was made up of two sections (sections A and B). Section A was designed to measure the personal data, (that is teachers characteristics) of the respondents while section B measured implementation of Social Studies Curriculum.

Validation of the Instrument

To ensure the validity of the instrument the researcher made sure that all variables of the research objectives were measured in the questionnaire. Those variables were academic qualification and teaching experience.

Reliability of the Instrument

Test-retest reliability study was used to test the reliability of the instrument. The reliability coefficient obtained here was used to determine the level of reliability of instrument which was administered to 20 teachers who did form part of the main work.

Administration of Instrument

To administer the instrument, the researcher visited each of the chosen schools. On reaching the school, the researcher obtained permission from the school authorities who organized the teachers for sampling and administration of the instrument. On the average, the researcher was supposed to cover three schools in a day and this took three weeks to administer the instrument in all the schools selected. In this way, all copies of questionnaire administered were retrieved. The questionnaire was scored in conference by the researcher.

Data Analyses and Result

Research Question One

In what way does a teacher’s academic qualification influence the implementation of Social Studies curriculum in Junior Secondary School in Akwa Iboms State? In order to answer the research question, descriptive statistical analysis was performed on the data collected (see Table 1)

Table 1

Descriptive analysis of the influence of teacher’s academic qualification on the implementation of Social Studies curriculum in Junior Secondary School in Akwa Ibom State.

Academic Qualification	N	\bar{X}
Low	54	57.56*
Average	102	67.53
High	24	84.25**
Total	180	66.77

** The highest mean score

* The least mean score

The results in table 1 presents the descriptive analysis of the influence of teacher’s academic qualification on the implementation of Social Studies curriculum in Junior Secondary School in Akwa Ibom State. From the result of the analysis it was observed that teachers with high level of academic qualification (84.25) had the highest mean value with respect to implementation of Social Studies curriculum in Junior Secondary School in Akwa Ibom State. This was seconded by those with average level of academic qualification (67.53), while the least were teachers with low level of academic qualification (57.56). The result therefore means that the way in which teacher’s academic qualification influences the implementation of Social Studies curriculum in Junior Secondary School in Akwa Ibom State is remarkably high.

Research Question Two

To what extent does teacher’s teaching experience influence the implementation of Social Studies curriculum in Junior Secondary School in Akwa Ibom State? In order to answer the research question, descriptive statistical analysis was performed on the data collected (see Table 2)

Table 2

Descriptive analysis of the influence of teacher’s teaching experience on the implementation of social studies curriculum in Junior Secondary School in Akwa Ibom State.

Teaching Experiences	N	\bar{X}
Short	72	58.83*
Middle	66	66.64
Long	42	80.57**
Total	180	66.77

** The highest mean score

* The least mean score

The result in Table 2 presents the descriptive analysis of the extent in which teacher’s teaching experience influences the implementation of social studies curriculum in Junior Secondary School in

Akwa Ibom State. From the result of the analysis it was observed that teachers with long years of teaching experiences (80.57) had the highest mean value with respect to implementation of social studies curriculum in Junior Secondary School in Akwa Ibom State. This was seconded by those with middle years of teaching experiences (66.64), while the group with the least mean level (58.83) were teachers with short years of teaching experiences. The result therefore means that the extent in which teacher's teaching experience influences implementation of social studies curriculum in Junior Secondary School in Akwa Ibom State is remarkably high.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis One

The null hypothesis states that there is no significant difference in the implementation of junior secondary Social Studies curriculum among teachers based on academic qualifications.

In order to test the hypothesis, two variables were identified as follows:-

1. Academic qualification as the independent variable
2. Implementation of junior secondary Social Studies curriculum as the dependent variable.

One-way analysis of variance was used to analyze the data in order to determine the difference in the implementation of junior secondary Social Studies curriculum by the teachers (see Table 3).

Table 3

One-way analysis of variance of the difference in the implementation of junior secondary Social Studies curriculum among teachers based on academic qualifications.

Groups	N	\bar{X}	SD
LOW	54	57.56	3.20
AVERAGE	102	67.53	6.02
HIGH	24	84.25	4.65
Total	180	66.77	9.65

Source of Variance	SS	Df	Ms	F
Between group	11976.96	2	5988.48	
Within group	4699.25	177	26.55	225.56*
Total	16676.20	179		

*significant at 0.05 level; df = 2 & 177, Critical F-value = 2.99

Table 3 shows that the calculated F-value of (225.56) was obtained after testing for significance at 0.05 alpha level with 2 & 177 degrees of freedom. The calculated F-value (225.56) was greater than the table F-value (2.99). Hence, the result was significant, and this means that there is significant difference in the implementation of junior secondary social studies curriculum among teachers based on academic qualifications.

Hypothesis Two

The null hypothesis states that there is no significant difference in the implementation of junior secondary Social Studies curriculum among teachers based on teaching experience.

In order to test the hypothesis, two variables were identified as follows:-

1. Teaching experience as the independent variable
2. Implementation of junior secondary Social Studies curriculum as the dependent variable.

One-way analysis of variance was used to analyze the data in order to determine the difference in the implementation of junior secondary Social Studies curriculum by the teachers (see Table 4).

TABLE 4

One-way analysis of variance of the difference in the implementation of junior secondary Social Studies curriculum among teachers based on teaching experience.

Teaching Experience		N	\bar{X}	SD
SHORT		72	58.83	4.48
MIDDLE		66	66.64	4.41
LONG		42	80.57	5.95
Total		180	66.77	9.65
Source of variance	SS	Df	Ms	F
Between group	12536.64	2	6268.32	
Within group	4139.56	177	23.39	268.02*
Total	16676.20	179		

*significant at 0.05 level; df = 2 & 177, Critical F-value = 2.99

Table 4 Shows that the calculated F-value of (268.02) was obtained after testing for significance at 0.05 alpha level with 2 and 177 degrees of freedom. The calculated F-value (268.02) was greater than the table F-value (2.99), hence, the result was significant, and this means that there is significant difference in the implementation of junior secondary Social Studies curriculum among teachers based on teaching experience.

Discussion of Findings

The result of the data analysis in Table 3 was significant due to the fact that the calculated F-value (225.56) was greater than the table F-value (2.99) at 0.05 level with 2 and 177 degree of freedom. The result implies that there is significant difference in the implementation of junior secondary Social Studies curriculum among teachers based on academic qualifications. The result therefore was in agreement with the research findings of Nwosu (2002), who stated that a qualified teacher is one who meets the standards and training for a position, who creates effective relationship and understanding between himself and other members of the school system and that a qualified teacher is an agent of curriculum implementation. The result of the findings, was also in agreement with the findings of Okafor (2000), who assert that teachers' qualification influence their perceptive attitude towards instructional difficulties in Social Studies and this could probably be due to the fact that professional teachers have had the basic training for the teaching profession. The significance of the result caused the null hypotheses to be rejected while the alternative one was accepted.

The result of the data analysis in table 4 was significant due to the fact that the calculated F-value (268.02) was greater than the table F-value (2.99) at 0.05 level with 2 and 177 degree of freedom. The result implies that there is significant difference in the implementation of junior secondary Social Studies curriculum among teachers based on teaching experience. The result therefore was in agreement with the research findings of Seweje (1996), who stated that an experienced teacher is a professional teacher who combines subject matter expertise with sound pedagogy. Also, he said an experienced teacher is child-centered using discovery method of instruction in ensuring full participation of students. Of course, this will build up interaction and high perspective achievement on both teachers and students. The significance of the result caused the null hypotheses to be rejected while the alternative one was accepted.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the research work, the following conclusions are deemed necessary: Teachers in Akwa Ibom State actively involve themselves in the implementation of junior secondary Social Studies curriculum. There is significant difference in the implementation of junior secondary Social Studies curriculum among teachers based on academic qualifications and there is significant difference in the implementation of junior secondary Social Studies curriculum among teachers based on teaching experience.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the research, the following recommendations are deemed necessary:

- (1) For effectively 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.
- (2) 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.
- (3) Social studies professional teachers should be recruited to teach the subject in the Junior Secondary Schools. Such teachers do not only know the philosophy and the methodology of Social Studies, they also know how to successfully present the subject.

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