

TEACHERS PERCEPTION ON WAYS OF IMPROVING THE TEACHING OF SOCIAL STUDIES IN ONUEKE EDUCATION ZONE

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ABSTRACT: *This study investigated Teachers perception on ways of improving the teaching of Social Studies in Onueke Education Zone. The purpose of the study was to specifically ascertain teaching techniques that could improve the teaching of Social Studies in Onueke Education Zone, find out if some evaluation techniques could improve the teaching of Social Studies. The design of the study was a descriptive survey research. The population of the study comprised 100 Social Studies teachers in Onueke Education Zone. Two research questions and two hypotheses were designed and tested to guide the study. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled “teachers perception on ways of improving the teaching of Social Studies (TPWITSS) in Onueke Education Zone. Data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation and chi-square (X^2). Findings from the investigation revealed that respondents accepted all items on the questionnaire significantly improve the teaching of Social Studies, evaluation techniques significantly improve the teaching of Social Studies.*

KEYWORD: Teachers, Perception, Teaching, Improving, Social Studies, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Social studies as a discipline is an important subject of study in Nigeria secondary schools. It became one of the core subjects in secondary school programmes (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004). This subject was introduced because of the roles it plays in the society. National Teachers’ Institute (2010:12) defined Social Studies as an area of the curriculum designed specifically for the study of man and how man fits into the society by utilizing the necessary attitudes, values and skills. Gambo and Danladi (2010) stated that Social Studies deals with the study of people in specific places (history); in various groups (sociology); how they organize themselves (politics) and earn a living (Economics) from the above definitions it appears that Social Studies focuses on man, his environment and how man influences and is being influenced by his environment which will make for sustainable development of the society.

The above definitions of Social Studies notwithstanding, seems the subject is faced with the problems of teaching methods, evaluation techniques, teachers qualification among others. NTI, (2011) listed teaching techniques, evaluation techniques among others as some of the problems faced by the teachers of Social Studies. Okoro (2011) asserted that teaching techniques are the operations a teacher performs in order to involve students in activities to help them learn. This represents a combination of certain specific operations such as carefully developed questions, explanations, dramatization, inquiry strategy, brainstorming, field trips, discussion among others. NTI (2008) supported the above assertion by stating that there are various teaching techniques, but teachers of Social Studies often use lecture method. To

confirm this furthermore, Adeyemi (2008) reported that Social Studies teachers mostly use the lecture method for imparting information. Lecture method is about the oldest method of instruction in Nigerian schools. This method is traced back to the middle ages when it was the popular mode of teaching by Jewish teachers (Mkpa, 2009). According to Fadeyiye (2005) lecture method is based on the assumption that a teacher is an embodiment of knowledge, expositor and drill master (Igba, 2008), while the students are ignorant and receptive, a storehouse of facts that can be retrieved when a student is called up (Igba, 2008). This method does not make room for asking and answering questions, hence the method may be referred to as chalk and talk method of instruction. Ikwumelu (2003) further stated that in lecture method, students are required to be fast writers and conversant with correct spellings in order to cope with note taking during a lecture. The implication of the above assertion is that lecture method does not give attention to individual differences. There is no inbuilt mechanism to measure the level of students' interest and appreciation of lecture method.

In order to improve the teaching techniques in the teaching of Social Studies in secondary schools, teachers should use eclectic approach, that is, they should combine different techniques because one single method would discourage and not stimulate students interest to study Social Studies (NTI, 2011). Utulu (2011) stated that teaching techniques in Social Studies require that the teacher be the guide and classroom needs to be flexible with various resource persons brought in the classroom, team teaching should also be encouraged. The implication of the above statement is that the techniques employed by most teachers of Social Studies are far from what is expected of them. This may not make for improvement in the teaching of Social Studies, and this poses a lot of problems in Social Studies teaching.

The problem of ineffective teaching technique may be linked with evaluation techniques. Mezieobi (2012) stated that evaluation is a systematic process of determining the extent to which instructional objectives are achieved by pupils. He went further to state that evaluation technique is the technique adopted by teachers with the view to improving the teaching of a subject.

The general purpose of classroom instruction is to help learners achieve a set of intended learning outcome (Ikwumelu, 2003). NTI (2008) listed various evaluation techniques such as check-list, project, quiz, questioning, teacher made test among others as some of the evaluation techniques that would improve the teaching of Social Studies. Makinde (2011) observed that essay test permits testees to express their responses in their own words and in the ways they deem fit. Gambo and Danladi (2010) further supported the above statement by stating that this strategy is fraught with high degree of subjectivity, hence they have low scorer reliability and this negates the aim of this strategy in teaching. The implication of the above statement is that evaluation techniques appear to focus only on the cognitive area without any on the affective and psychomotor areas of knowledge. Poor use of evaluation and teaching techniques could lead to non improvement of the teaching of Social Studies. The assumption that the teacher is an embodiment of knowledge while the students are ignorant and receptive affects the teaching of Social Studies. The problem of this study is what would be the desirable ways of teaching Social Studies in secondary schools? The finding of this study is significant because it would provide insights into the type of evaluation and teaching techniques to be used by teachers in the teaching of Social Studies in secondary schools. The result of the study would also help curriculum planers to ensure that the curriculum contains experiences which would lead to the development of appropriate teaching techniques that would make for individual differences among the learners of Social Studies.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to find out teachers perception on ways of improving the teaching of Social Studies in secondary schools in Onueke Education Zone. The study specifically aimed at:

- (1) Ascertaining teaching techniques that could improve the teaching of Social Studies in secondary schools in Onueke Education Zone.
- (2) Finding out if some evaluation techniques could improve the teaching of Social Studies in secondary schools in Onueke Education Zone.

Research Questions

Two research questions were designed to guide the study:

- (1) What teaching techniques in the opinion of Social Studies teachers could improve the teaching of Social Studies in secondary schools in Ebonyi State?
- (2) What evaluation techniques in the opinion of Social Studies teachers could improve the teaching of Social Studies in secondary schools in Ebonyi State?

Hypotheses:

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

- (1) Teaching techniques do not significantly improve the teaching of Social Studies.
- (2) Evaluation techniques do not significantly improve the teaching of Social Studies.

METHODOLOGY

The design of the study was a descriptive survey. It is a design that sought information from many people without manipulation of any variable (Ali, 1996). The area of the study is Onueke Education Zone. Onueke Education Zone comprises Ezza South; Ezza North, Ikwo and Ishielu Local Government Areas. The population of the study comprised 100 Social Studies teachers in Onueke Education Zone. In order words, the whole population was used for the study. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled teachers perception on ways of improving the teaching of Social Studies (TPWITSS) in Onueke Education Zone. The face validation of the instrument was first carried out by presenting the draft to three senior lecturers in the Department of Arts and Social Science Education, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. These lecturers vetted each item in terms of sentence structure and adequacy of the instruments. On the basis of their comments and suggestions, the instruments were modified to suit the study. To determine the reliability of the instrument, a trail testing was carried out using 27 respondents who were not included in the study. The instrument was assessed for reliability using the Cronbach Alpha. Hence, the test yielded 0.78 indicating high reliability for the study. Research questions were answered on individual item basis using mean and standard deviation for research questions 1-2 while hypotheses 1-2 were tested at an alpha level of 0.05 using chi-square (χ^2).

Table 1: Mean value of teaching techniques in the teaching of Social Studies

Item No	Item Focus	\bar{X}	Standard deviation	Decision
1	Dramatization does not improve the teaching.	9.4	1.17	Agree
2	Explanations do not improve the teaching.	7.6	1.17	Agree
3	Brainstorming does not improve the teaching.	9.6	1.18	Agree
4	Inquiry does not improve the teaching.	8.5	1.14	Agree
5	Field-trips do not improve the teaching.	12.6	1.14	Agree
6	Role-play does not improve the teaching.	9.4	1.17	Agree
7	Assignment does not improve the teaching.	12.2	1.16	Agree
8	Demonstration does not improve the teaching	11.6	1.17	Agree
9	Simulation does not improve the teaching.	7.9	1.06	Agree
10	Lecture does not improve the teaching.	7.3	1.14	Agree
11	Note-taking does not improve the teaching.	9.2	1.06	Agree
12	Project does not improve the teaching.	8.5	1.17	Agree

The grand mean for table 1 = 9.48

Table 1 above shows that the respondents agree that all the items significantly improve the teaching of Social Studies.

Table 2: Mean value of evaluation techniques in the teaching of Social Studies

Item No	Item Focus	\bar{X}	Standard deviation	Decision
13	Essay test does not improve the teaching.	10.1	1.16	Agree
14	Multiple-Choice does not improve the teaching	9.8	1.17	Agree
15	Quizzes do not improve the teaching.	4.4	1.18	Disagree
16	Questioning does not improve the teaching.	8.5	1.14	Agree
17	Standardized tests do not improve the teaching.	9.6	1.15	Agree
18	Teacher-made test does not improve the teaching	9.6	1.12	Agree
19	Socio-metric device does not improve the teaching	4.3	1.15	Disagree
20	Rating scale does not improve teaching.	11.5	1.15	Agree
21	Check-list does not improve the teaching.	11.4	1.13	Agree
22	Anecdotal records do not improve the teaching.	7.6	1.12	Agree

Table 2 above shows that the respondents tend to disagree that items 15 and 19 do not significantly improve the teaching of Social Studies while their responses to items 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21 and 22 showed that those items significantly improve the teaching Social Studies.

Hypothesis 1: Teaching techniques do not significantly improve the teaching of Social Studies

Table 3: Chi-square (χ^2) for teaching techniques in the teaching of Social Studies

Item No	Variable	SA	A	D	SD	Total
1	Dramatization	21(45)	29(45)	60(45)	70(45)	180
2	Explanations	24	36	50	70	180
3	Brainstorming	21	34	55	70	180
4	Inquiry	23	33	50	74	180
5	Field-trip	20	22	40	98	180
6	Role-play	22	30	50	78	180
7	Assignment	20	26	40	94	180
8	Demonstration	24	20	42	94	180
9	Simulation	25	38	40	77	180
10	Lecture	28	40	41	71	180
11	Note-taking	20	30	58	72	180
12	Project	23	33	50	74	180
	Total	271	371	576	942	2160

X^2 Calculated = 541.436

X^2 Critical value = 43.77

The obtained χ^2 calculated is 541.436 while the χ^2 critical value is 43.77. Since the χ^2 calculated is greater than the χ^2 critical value the null hypothesis is therefore rejected. It means that teaching techniques significantly improve the teaching of Social Studies.

Hypothesis 2

H₀₂: Evaluation techniques do not significantly improve the teaching of Social Studies

Table 4: Chi-square (χ^2) table for evaluation techniques in the teaching of Social Studies

Item No	Variable	SA	A	D	SD	Total
13	Essay	19(45)	31(45)	50(45)	80(45)	180
14	Multiple-choice	21	30	49	80	180
15	Quizzes	22	26	50	82	180
16	Questioning	23	33	50	74	180
17	Standardized test	20	27	60	73	180
18	Teacher-made test	21	29	60	70	180
19	Socio-metric device	40	25	50	65	180
20	Rating scale	18	26	49	87	180
21	Check-list	21	27	40	92	180
22	Anecdotal record	24	36	50	70	180
	Total	229	290	508	773	1800

X^2 Calculated = 435.7

X^2 Critical value = 40.11

The obtained χ^2 calculated is 435.7 while the χ^2 critical value is 40.11. Since the χ^2 calculated is greater than the χ^2 critical value, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected. It means that evaluation techniques significantly improve the teaching of Social Studies.

Summary of Findings

- i. The investigation established that teaching techniques significantly improve the teaching of Social Studies.
- ii. It was also discovered that evaluation techniques significantly improve the teaching of Social Studies.

DISCUSSION

Result of data analysis in table 1 shows that teaching techniques significantly improve the teaching of Social Studies. The grand mean in table 1 is 9.48 which is greater than 2.50. Hypothesis 1 in table 5, the chi-square (χ^2) calculated is 541.436 while the chi-square (χ^2) critical value is 43.77, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that teaching techniques significantly improve the teaching of Social Studies.

Findings from table 1 show that respondents in items 1 agree that dramatization significantly improve the teaching of Social Studies. This is in line with Ikwumelu (2003) who stated that dramatization helps to sharpen the pupils power of observation, giving purpose to research activities and providing experiences in democratic living. They went further to state that it helps in creating and maintaining interest, thereby motivating learning and affording an excellent opportunity for the teacher to observe the behaviour of children. This will be useful to the slow-learner and students with speech defects since it will enable the students to learn with ease and to accomplish much without strain because it stimulates interest and provides variety in classroom and this improves the teaching of Social Studies.

Findings from table 1 show that respondents agree that item 3 significantly improves the teaching of Social Studies. Kisson (1987) observed that brainstorming encourages everyone to take part in classroom activities since the rules protect the individual from criticism, laughter or ridicule. This also builds confidence in the students since their views are recognized and noted. Having built the confidence, the students are encouraged to be open-minded, imaginative, speculative, reveal the intellectual and emotional dimensions of the participant ideas, hence the objectives of Social studies, and this improves the teaching and learning of Social Studies.

Findings from table 1 show that respondents on item 4 agree that inquiry technique improves the teaching of Social Studies. Abdullahi (2000) noted that inquiry technique helps the students to learn and think for themselves, encourages students to take rational decisions by seeing the two sides of the coin. This will develop in students those attitudes and skills that will enable them to be independent problem solvers. This shows that students may learn to think for themselves and take rational decisions, which is one of the goals of Social Studies education. This will help to improve the teaching and learning of Social Studies.

Findings from table 1 show that respondents in item 9 agree that simulation improve the teaching of social studies. NTI (2002) observed that simulation encourages active

participation of all the students in the classroom activities. It will be noticed that some students who rarely speak in the class become very vocal when games are applied in the classroom and this improves the teaching of Social Studies.

Result of data analysis in table 2 shows that evaluation techniques significantly improve the teaching of Social Studies. This means that evaluation techniques contribute to the effective teaching and learning of Social studies. This is evident from the grand mean for all the items in table 2 which is 8.68. This is greater than 2.50. Hypothesis 2 result in table 6 shows that χ^2 calculated is 435.7 while the χ^2 critical value is 40.11. Since the χ^2 calculated is greater than the χ^2 critical value, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected. This implies that evaluation techniques improve the teachers of Social Studies. This is a further confirmation of what Kazi (1990) posited that standardized tests is highly reliable and valid therefore it is very useful in measuring objectively the progress or achievements of the students in Social Studies teaching and learning exercise.

Findings of results analyses in table 2 show that respondents agree that socio-metric device improve the teaching of Social Studies. In line with this NTI, (2000) stated that socio-metric technique enables the social studies teacher to find out progress in social relations and changes in social structure of a particular group of people. This document maintains that since human behaviours change often, that shows how leadership roles shift amongst students, the nature and level of tolerance that exist in the group, the extent to which certain students, such as the slow-learners are being accepted in the group, so this improves the teaching of Social Studies.

Findings of result analysis in table 2 show that respondents agree that item 21-check-list significantly improve the teaching of Social Studies. This is in agreement with Dubey (1980) who maintained that checklist technique is used in evaluating the presence or absence of certain attitudes. He further maintained that a check-list may focus on such concepts as honesty, cleanliness, justice, co-operation, oneness and patriotism which are the goals of Social Studies education which improve the teaching of the subject.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings of this study, the researchers made the following recommendations.

1. Students and teachers should be encouraged to improvise some instructional materials to ensure their availability in secondary schools for use in the teaching and learning of Social Studies.
2. There is need for Ebonyi State Government through the Ministry of Education and Secondary Education Board to formulate a policy that will ensure availability of qualified Social Studies teachers in the Secondary School System; while the existing teachers could be upgraded through in- service training, workshops, seminars and regular instructional supervision.

CONCLUSION

From the discussion of the major findings of the study it is concluded that:

- i. There are not much significant differences in the opinion of teachers on the use of instructional materials for the effective teaching and learning of Social Studies.
- ii. There are not much significant differences in the perception of teachers on the use of teaching techniques to improve teaching and learning of Social Studies.

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