

**ASSESSMENT OF TEACHERS IMPLEMENTATION OF SOCIAL STUDIES
CURRICULUM CONTENTS IN PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN AGUATA
EDUCATION ZONE: A CATALYST FOR ACHIEVING NATIONAL INTEGRATION
IN NIGERIA**

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ABSTRACT: *The research work deals on the assessment of teachers' implementation of social studies curriculum contents in private secondary schools in Aguata education zone: A catalyst for achieving national integration in Nigeria. A survey design was adopted for the study. The population consists of fifty teachers teaching social studies in junior secondary schools in Aguata education zone. Purposive sampling technique was used to sample forty teachers. The questionnaire was the major instrument for data collection and it was validated by two experts in curriculum and social studies. The mean statistics was used to analyse the data collected. The findings of the study showed that the concepts or topics such as cross cultural studies, inter-tribal marriages, national institutions, national symbols promote national integration. It was also discovered that teachers of social studies face difficulties in relating some of the topics in physical environment, peace education, national values to national integration. The paper also discovered that field trip, discussion and inquiry methods are appropriate for teaching social studies for achievement of national integration but rarely used by teachers, and instructional resources for implementing social studies curriculum content are not adequately provided. The paper concluded that adequate instructional materials, training and retraining of teachers, employment of qualified social studies teachers are necessary conditions for effective implementation of social studies curriculum content for achieving national integration in Nigeria. Conclusion and relevant recommendations were made.*

KEYWORDS: Social studies, Curriculum, National, Integration

INTRODUCTION

Social studies touches every sphere of the society. It deals with the important problems of national integration and ethnic tolerance. According to Okojie (2008) and Mezieobi (2014); the philosophy behind the teaching of social studies in our schools should be seen as one of the main avenues of establishing a strong basis for the production of good and effective citizens and forgoing a cohesive society that will support the notion for nation building within the context of Nigeria.

It is observed that a lot of forces have continued to militate against Nigeria achieving cohesive society and national integration. These factors include ethnicity, multiplicity of languages, religious differences and structural imbalances. Ethnicity is one of the factors that have caused serious embarrassment to national integration in Nigeria. Almost all issues in Nigeria are based on ethnic consideration. In the present regime of General Muhammadu Buhari in Nigeria, all the military service chiefs are northerners and all the sensitive ministerial and executive positions such as minister of justice, education, information, secretary to the federal government, among others are all northerners. These appointments do not reflect the federal character as stipulated in the constitution and it is also a serious threat to national integration.

According to Ureme (2019), the most astounding feature of President Muhammadu Buhari appointment was the slant towards one tribe and religion. He said that no sane Igbo man shall celebrate Buhari for upgrading tribalism to an art to the extent that in a national Security Council meeting, no Igbo man or woman shall be there or trusted. Ureme (2019), observed that the Vice-President Yemi Osibanjo in a recent 2019 Presidential election campaign forage, admonished his kinsmen and women to vote for Buhari because of Yoruba presidency in 2023. He further said that Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu and Minister of Power, Works and Housing, Mr. Babatunde Fashola, stated that a Yoruba man shall succeed Buhari. Religion and ethnicity are two of the most debilitating factors inhibiting national integration and growth of Nigeria.

Throughout the development of Nigeria from a colonial territory to a republic, it has been rare except from small political elites for Nigerians to think of themselves first and foremost as Nigerians rather than as Hausa, Yoruba, Tiv, Igbo and so forth. According to Okafor (2013), the plurality and multiplicity of languages in Nigeria does not normally create a peaceful co-existence and progress of the different peoples. There will always be battles for linguistic parity or dominance in national institution, in law, administration and education; people are intensifying group and linguistic loyalty at the expense of national loyalty.

It must be pointed out that religious differences and intolerance are also serious impediment to national integration in Nigeria. Okwueze (1995:165) observed that: Nigeria is one of the countries where religion has wrecked much havoc on advancement, unity and prosperity of her citizens and the development of the nation as a whole. He noted that between 1980 and 1995 not less than fourteen convulsive religious conflicts have occurred in the country. In each of these religious conflicts, many lives and property were lost. Until religious groups learn to tolerate one another, the dream of achieving national integration shall continue to be an illusion.

Structural imbalance has created an excessively unstable and unbalanced political structure whereby the northern region of Nigeria is twice as big as the East and West put together. Regional boundaries were arbitrarily drawn and in some cases not made to correspond with existing ethnic boundaries. A case in point is the Yoruba who were so divided that some of them live in Nigeria while others in Benin Republic. Till date this structural imbalance has proved very difficult to correct and is responsible for the incessant boundary clashes and politics of ethnic rivalry which militate against national integration.

The curriculum content of social studies is aimed at achieving the objectives of social studies. According to Ezegebe as cited by Okojie (2008:5), the objectives of social studies include: “inculcation of national consciousness and national unity. To create awareness of our evolving social and physical environment as a whole. To help man become good citizen and develop the necessary values and attitudes needed in a democratic society. To expose man to the problem of his society and then lead him to develop appropriate functional approaches to the solutions of such problems”.

Therefore, national consciousness and national integration which are the basic ingredients of national stability are the basic concern of social studies education. However, evidence abounds in literature, Omebe (2014), Okafor (2012), Mbaba and King (2007) that social studies teachers find it difficult to teach social studies for problem solving. This implies that, there could be problem in teaching social studies contents for achievement of national integration. Generally, there are very few teachers who are trained to teach social studies, for this reason, teachers are borrowed from various disciplines to teach the subject. It is believed that any teacher can teach social studies, hence graduate of philosophy, psychology, economics and social work are employed to teach social studies (Okafor, 2009). This does not help the development of social studies because these teachers adopt the methods of teaching philosophy, psychology, economics, geography in teaching social studies. It is important to note that the methods of teaching social studies are different from that of philosophy, psychology, economics and geography.

Following the fact that most teachers are inadequately trained, the choice and use of an effective instructional strategy and materials for achievement of national integration pose a serious problem (Mbaba, 2005 and Omebe, 2009). It has been noted that most of these teachers use traditional methods of teaching i.e. chalk and talk. The recent teaching method adopted to teach social studies is inquiry oriented and this requires careful planning (Okafor, 2006). An untrained social studies teacher does not know this and it poses problem to the achievement of national integration in Nigeria (Iyortsuun, 2000). According to Okafor (2012), some of the teachers who teach social studies, although may be professionally qualified, lack the pedagogical skills, the commitment and practical orientation required for effective teaching. To them, teaching is a last resort and they usually regard it as a ‘transit camp’ where they stay while searching for either ‘better jobs’ or higher education.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What extent does the content of the J.S.S. social studies curriculum emphasize national integration?
2. How difficult is it for teachers to teach the various contents of J.S.S. social studies curriculum relating them to national integration?
3. What teaching methods are appropriate for teaching social studies for achievement of national integration?
4. How frequent do teachers of social studies use field trip. Project method and inquiry method in teaching social studies?

5. How adequate are the instructional resources made available for the implementation of social studies curriculum contents in private secondary

METHODOLOGY

A survey research design was adopted for the study. The population is made up of fifty teachers teaching social studies in junior secondary schools in Aguata Education Zone of Anambra State, Nigeria. There are twenty (20) private secondary schools with fifty teachers teaching social studies in the area. Using purposive sampling technique, forty respondents were sampled for the study.

The instrument for data collection is the questionnaire which has fifteen items designed to elicit information on teachers' implementation of social studies curriculum content for achievement of national integration. The instrument was first validated by an expert in curriculum department of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka and expert in Social Studies at Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe, Anambra State.

The reliability of the research instrument was determined through a measure of internal consistency of the items. The Cronbach Alpha was used to establish the internal consistency of 0.70. This measure is high enough for the instrument to be considered to be reliable. For data analysis, the research questions were analysed using mean. Any mean of 2.5 and above is said to be high and effective and those below 2.5 are said to be low and ineffective.

RESULTS

The following are the results of the data analysis:

Research Question 1: What extent does the contents of the J.S.S. social studies curriculum emphasize national integration?

Table 1: Mean rating score on social studies curriculum contents that emphasize national integration

S/N	ITEMS	\bar{x}	Remarks
1.	Teaching concepts of cross cultural studies	3.2	Agree
2.	Lesson on inter-tribal marriages	3.3	Agree
3.	Teaching the content of national institutions	3.5	Agree
4.	Contents on national values	3.4	Agree
5.	Content on national symbols	3.2	Agree

The result presented in table one shows that items 1-5 were rated high by the teachers. This is clearly indicated from their respective mean scores of 3.2, 3.3, 3.5, 3.4 and 3.2 which are above the criterion of acceptance fixed at 2.5 and above. It means that the teachers are in agreement that the concepts stated above are contents that emphasize national integration.

Research Question 2: How difficult is it for teachers to teach the various contents of J.S.S. social studies curriculum relating them to national integration?

Table 2: Mean rating score on difficulty faced by teachers in relating social studies curriculum content to national integration

S/N	ITEMS	\bar{x}	Remarks
6.	The social studies teachers face difficulty in relating topics in physical environment of Nigeria to national integration	3.7	Agree
7.	Teachers do not know how to relate some of the content of peace education to national integration.	3.4	Agree
8.	Teachers face the problem on teaching citizenship education for achievement of national integration	2.2	Disagree
9.	Teachers face difficulty in teaching national institutions for achievement of national integration	2.1	Disagree
10.	Teachers face difficulty in relating some aspects of national values content to national integration.	3.2	Agree

The result presented in table two shows that items 6, 7 and 10 were rated high by the teachers. This is clearly indicated from the respective mean scores of 3.7, 3.4 and 3.2 which are above the criterion of acceptance fixed at 2.5 and above. Items 8 and 9 were rated low. This is clearly indicated from the respective mean scores 2.2 and 2.1. It means that teachers of social studies face difficulty in relating the topics in physical environment, some contents of peace education, and some aspects of national values to national integration.

Research Question 3: What teaching methods are appropriate for teaching social studies for achievement of national integration?

Table 3: Mean rating score on teaching methods appropriate for teaching social studies for achievement of national integration

S/N	ITEMS	\bar{x}	Remarks
11.	The use of lecture method	2.4	Disagree
12.	Teachers use of fieldtrip/excursion	3.5	Agree
13.	Inquiry Method	2.8	Agree
14.	Discussion method	2.7	Agree
15.	The use of simulation and game	2.2	Disagree

The result presented in table three shows that items 11, and 15 were rated low by the teachers. This is clearly indicated from the respective mean scores of 2.4 and 2.2 which are below the criterion of acceptance fixed at 2.5 and above. Items 12, 13 and 14 with mean scores of 3.5, 2.8 and 2.7 were rated high. It means that fieldtrip, inquiry method and Discussion methods, were appropriate for teaching social studies for achievement of national integration.

Research Question 4: How frequent do teachers of social studies use field trip, discussion method and inquiry method in teaching social studies?

Table 4: Mean rating score on the frequency of the use of field trip, discussion method and inquiry methods by social studies teachers.

S/N	ITEMS	\bar{x}	Remarks
16.	Social studies students go on field trip once in a term.	2.4	Disagree
17.	Teachers adopt discussion in teaching some social studies topics.	2.2	Disagree
18.	Teachers use inquiry method in teaching some social studies topics	2.4	Disagree

The result presented in the table four shows that items 16, 17 and 18 were rated low by the teachers. This is clearly indicated from the respective mean scores of 2.4, 2.2 and 2.4 which are below the criterion of acceptance fixed at 2.5 and above. It means that field trip, discussion and inquiry methods are good for teaching social studies but rarely used by teachers.

Research Question 5: How adequate are the instructional materials made available for the implementation of social studies curriculum?

Table 5: Mean rating score on adequacy of instructional resources made available for the implementation of social studies curriculum contents in private secondary schools.

S/N	ITEMS	\bar{x}	Remarks
19.	There is adequate provision for ICT materials e.g. computer for social studies curriculum implementation.	1.8	Disagree
20.	There is provision for graphic materials for teaching some topics in social studies.	2.3	Disagree
21.	There is provision for bulletin boards for teachers and students	2.4	Disagree
22.	There is provision for models for some topics in social studies	2.2	Disagree
23.	There is provision for audio and audio-visual materials.	2.3	Disagree

The result presented in the table four shows that items 19-23 were rated low by the teachers. This is clearly indicated from the respective mean scores of 1.8, 2.3, 2.4, 2.2 and 2.3 which are below the criterion of acceptance. It means that teachers of social studies are not adequately provided with instructional resources for the implementation of social studies curriculum content in Aguata Education Zone of Anambra State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The result of the analysis of research question one shows that social studies contents lay emphasis on national integration. This finding is in line with Okojie (2008) who observed that the contents and the objectives of social studies include the inculcation of national consciousness

and national integration. According to Mezieobi (2012), a well planned and implemented social studies curriculum content which incorporates cross cultural studies, multi-ethnic education, peace education, global and international education will promote national integration.

The result of the analysis of the research question two shows that teachers find it difficult to relate three out of the five contents of the curriculum to national integration. The content with the highest difficulty is the physical environment of Nigeria. It is necessary to appreciate the hand work of nature in providing Nigeria with variety of features. This gives room for field trips to state tourist attractions/country's variety of natural resources. Therefore, emphasis should be on the need to travel to places of interest and exchange views, ideas and resources emanating from the various features in the country.

The result of the analysis of research question three shows that discussion method, inquiry method and excursion/fieldtrip attracted the highest mean scores for achievement of national integration. The findings are in agreement with Okafor (2006) who calls for the use of inquiry methods excursion/field trips in teaching and learning of social studies in Nigerian schools.

The result of the analysis of research question four shows that field trip, discussion and inquiry methods are good for teaching social studies for achievement of national integration but social studies teachers rarely use it and it attracted the least mean. These findings are in line with Okafor (2012). Mbaba (2007) and King (2007) who observed that social studies teachers find it difficult to teach social studies for problem solving and national integration. Fieldtrips are very important method for inculcating values of national integration as learners see things for themselves. However, fieldtrips are very expensive, time consuming and requires special skills for planning and execution. Following the fact that some teachers who teach social studies are inadequately trained, the use of this teaching strategy poses a problem to them (Mbaba, 2005).

The result of the analysis of research question five shows that the teachers are not adequately provided with instructional resources for the implementation of social studies curriculum contents in private secondary schools in Aguata Education Zone. The finding is in agreement with Omebe (2014), who observed that most private secondary schools have not done much in the provision of teaching materials and the teachers employed to teach social studies do not improvise materials to teach the subject. The effect of teaching social studies without adequate instructional materials has led to poor performance and lack of interest in the subject.

CONCLUSION

The objectives of social studies have implications for national consciousness and integration. The curriculum content/topics of social studies also reflected on the need for national integration. Teachers find it difficult to relate some of the content/topics to national integration. However, teachers agree that field trips/excursion, inquiry method are the most appropriate teaching method for teaching social studies for national integration but it is the least method used by the teachers.

Based on these findings, one can conclude that adequate instructional materials, training and re-training of teachers, employing qualified social studies teachers are necessary conditions for implementation of social studies curriculum content for achievement of national integration.

Recommendations

Based on the issues highlighted above, the following recommendations are made:

1. Teachers of social studies should adopt problem oriented approaches like fieldtrips/excursion method and inquiry method in teaching of social studies, by so doing, the values of national integration will be imbibed by our youths.
2. Professionally trained social studies teachers should be employed by private secondary schools.
3. Authors of social studies textbooks should endeavour to relate aspects of the curriculum dealing with national integration to the appropriate method and materials for teaching it to the students.
4. Teachers should be trained on current social studies methodology.
5. Proprietors of private secondary schools should provide adequate instructional materials for teaching of social studies.
6. Proprietors of private secondary schools should expose their teachers to seminars, workshops on the use of current instructional materials, and methods of teaching social studies.

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