

**SOCIAL STUDIES PRE- SERVICE TEACHERS AND THEIR LECTURERS  
PERCEPTION OF SOCIAL STUDIES APPS IN TEACHING SOCIAL STUDIES IN THE  
UNIVERSITY OF PORT HARCOURT, NIGERIA**

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**ABSTRACT:** *The aim of this descriptive study is to illustrate how University of Port Harcourt Social Studies Pre-Service teachers and their lecturers perceive the use of SOS App to enhance teaching and learning. The study made use of Social Studies Post National Certificate of Education (NCE), Master of Education (MEd) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Students of the University of Port Harcourt Nigeria. The population of the study consisted of the five PhD students of 2015/2017 set, fifteen MEd students of 2015/2016 and two hundred and three Post NCE students of 2014/2015 set, five Social Studies Lecturers, and five lecturers that also teach Social Studies courses. Simple random sampling technique was used to select a sample of one hundred (101) post NCE students from the population, but the total population of PhD, MEd and lecturers were used. A questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. Information gathered from the field were decoded and tallied, and the frequency counts determined. Percentage scores were computed. Tables were constructed in respect of the demands of the respective research questions. The result of the study indicated the following among other thing; both students and teachers except the Post NCE students are aware of SOS Apps and its importance in enhancing Social Studies content, they have similar challenges of low level of knowledge and skill in technology. The researcher therefore recommended that both Social Studies teachers and preservice teachers should be encouraged to use technology in their classrooms through motivation, constant and consistent training.*

**KEYWORDS:** Social Studies Pre- Service Teachers, Lecturers, Perception, Social Studies Apps, University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Social Studies was introduced into the Nigeria school system because of a lot of reasons but most importantly to achieve one of the national objectives of education; to live in unity and harmony as one indivisible, indissoluble, democratic and sovereign nation founded on the principles of freedom, equity and justices; promoting inter-African solidarity and world peace through understanding as indicated in the National Policy on Education. Social Studies is recognized to be in a better position to achieve this objective because of its integrated nature, that looks at all aspects of the life of the child in the society. As new conceptualizations of learning keep

progressing, teachers are expected to make learning easier and meaningful to learners. New developments of innovative technologies have provided new opportunities for teachers and at the same time placed more pressure on the teachers to learn how to use these new technologies in teaching. (Robinson and Latchem 2010). For teachers to be able to train and prepare learners for real life in our technological and diverse world, teachers must immerse ICT in significant learning environment.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Information and communication technology is a principal operator in our present-day Information Society of which the instantaneous results for educational practice can be observed. Because of this transformation, several authors have discussed the need to shift from the traditional classroom setting to a 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom where learners are considered active participants and where collaboration and sharing information in a resource-rich environment is given priority. To be able to go through this shift and the necessary educational reform required, teachers need skills to be able to transform the learning content, and teaching methodology.

Social Studies students are overburden with pedagogy in which exposure to authentic information is strongly the predominant means to success. Students are often encouraged to emit facts to show academic understanding. Passive learning is still a dominant factor in social studies curriculum despite the great amount of research calling for engaged learning in Social Studies

Social Studies teachers most time are faced with the problem of not having enough time in the timetable to teach the subject to teaching students who are not interested. (Good, Heafner, Rock, O Connor, Passe, Wearing & Sandra 2010) One of the reasons for this low interest in the subject in Nigeria is because Social Studies is not part of senior secondary certificate examination (SSCE) subject and at the same time they face the problem of teaching students who are often more technologically experienced than they are. The increase of digitally knowledgeable students creates challenges for teachers to stay relevant to the ways digital natives learn or may learn best.

Student Teachers are part of the digitally native community, so lecturers in the universities need to facilitate and inspire students learning and creativity using technology. This is very important because these student teachers are the future teachers to our secondary schools.

Social Studies is a diminishing subject and unfortunately a vital component of a well-rounded education to produce a well-educated citizen. This is the eventual goal of teachers and without it we will be deprived of much of the information that is key to our society that helps us function in our society and make our society better for humanity (Rock and Heafner 2014)

Students' perception as well as that of their teachers of any technology application in teaching and learning is very important to examine because these perceptions and the methodology, they choose to implement are pedagogical decisions that lead to the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of instruction and success or failure of student's academic achievement.

While an amount of research described teachers' perceptions towards several technological tools, such as learning management systems, digital learning environments blogs, etc., studies concerning teachers' perceptions of the use of SOS Apps are limited.

Therefore, the major purpose of this study, as based on a survey research method, was to examine how student teachers and their lecturers' in the University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria perceive the use of Social Studies Apps in the teaching and learning of Social Studies content. The following Research questions guided the study:

1. What is the awareness level of Social Studies student teachers and lecturers of SOS Apps?
2. What are the perceptions of SOS student teachers and lecturers towards the use of SOS Apps.?
3. What are their perceptions towards SOS Apps in enhancing Instruction content?
4. Are the challenges they face the same?

## METHODOLOGY

Descriptive survey design was used for this study which sought to ascertain, among others, the perception of SOS App usage from both lecturers and preservice teachers of the University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. The population of the study consisted of the five PhD students, of 2015/2017 set, fifteen MEd students of 2015/2016 and two hundred and three Post NCE students of 2014/2015 set, five Social Studies lecturers, and five lecturers that teach social studies courses. Simple random sampling technique was used to select a sample of one hundred post NCE students from the population, but the total population of PhD, MEd and Lecturers were used. A questionnaire titled "**Students and lecturers' perception of Social Studies Apps in Teaching and Learning of Social Studies Content**" was used to collect data for the study. It was designed by the researcher. It had two sections, A and B. Section A was designed to cover demographic variables such as: age, sex, educational qualification, marital status etc, while section B was designed to determine the SOS App perception as well as awareness level of both lecturers and students. The researcher validated the questionnaire using face and content validity. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was applied to determine the measure of accurate consistency. This gave a coefficient of 0.78. Information gathered from the field were decoded and tallied, and the frequency counts determined. Percentage scores were computed. Tables were constructed in respect of the demands of the respective research questions. Details of these analyses are presented below.

**Table 1. Awareness Level of Lecturers and Students**

Item	Lecturers	Students		
		PhD	MED	NCE
Do you know the meaning of Social Studies Apps? (SOS Apps)	Yes: 8 =80% No: 2 =20%	Yes: 4 =80% No: 1 =20%	Yes: 11= 69% No: 5 = 31%	Yes:23 = 23% No: 78 = 77%

	0	1	2	3	4
Which of these SOS Apps are you familiar with? (Please tick) <b>15 Apps Listed</b>	PhD: 0%  MED: 0%  NCE: 28%	PhD: 40%  MED: 33%  NCE: 19%	PhD: 40%  MED: 33%  NCE: 49%	PhD: 20%  MED: 20%  NCE: 4%	PhD: 0%  MED: 14%  NCE: 0%

**Table 2. Lecturer's perception of SOS App Usage and its enhancement in instruction content and the challenges.**

S/ N	Items	Not at all	Just a little	Most Time	All the Time
1	How much do you encourage technology in your classroom	7(70%)	2(20%)	1(10%)	0(0%)
2	How would you rank the importance of technology use in the classroom	1(10%)	4(40%)	3(30%)	2(20%)
3	Do you think SOS Apps enhances instruction content	0(0%)	2(20%)	5(50%)	3(30%)
4	How would you rank the usefulness of SOS Apps?	0(0%)	1(10%)	1(10%)	8(80%)
5	How important is Social Studies Education	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	10(100%)
		<b>Belief and Practic es</b>	<b>Trust Traditi onal Appro aches</b>	<b>Low level of knowl edge and skill in techno logy</b>	<b>Financial Exposure</b>
6	What are your challenges when it comes to using SOS Apps in teaching SOS content?	0(0%)	0(0%)	7(70%)	3(30%)

**Table 3. Student's perception of SOS App Usage and its enhancement in instruction content and the challenges.**

S/ N	Items	Not at all	Just a little	Most Time	All the Time
1	How much do you use technology for academic purposes	0(0%)	37(31%)	71(58%)	13(11%)
2	How would you rank the importance of technology use in teaching and learning	0(0%)	24(20%)	33(27%)	64(53%)
3	How important is Social Studies Education	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	100(100%)
4	Do you think SOS Apps enhances instruction content	1(1%)	19(16%)	29(24%)	72(59%)
5	How would you rank the usefulness of SOS Apps?	3(2%)	21(17%)	29(24%)	68(56%)
		Beliefs and Practices	Trust Traditional Approaches	Low level of knowledge and skill in technolog y	Financial Exposure
6	What do you think are the challenges faced by students in using SOS Apps for academics?	3(2%)	4(3%)	51(42%)	63(52%)

## RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Descriptive statistics indicate the following; Table 1 above shows that many of the lecturers and students awareness level of SOS App is high, 80% of the lecturers know what SOS App is while 20% does not know. When it comes to students, 80% of the PhD students know what SOS App is, 69% of the MEd students knows, but for the post NCE students the awareness is low, 77% of them does not know the meaning of SOS App.

Table 2 showed the lecturer's SOS App usage in the classroom, their belief of SOS App content enhancement and their challenges. 70% of the lecturers do not encourage technology use in their classrooms while 30% encourages it a little, 50% of them do not agree that technology use in their classrooms is important while 50% said it is important. When asked if SOS App enhances Social Studies content delivery, 80% of agreed it does and 20% do not believe it does. On the issue of the usefulness of SOS App, 90% of them agreed it is useful, while only 10% does not see its usefulness. The challenges they faced was mainly because of their low level of knowledge and skill in technology (70%) and 30% has financial constraints as their major challenge.

Table 3 indicates students' responses on SOS App usage for academics, importance of technology, importance of Social Studies education, the usefulness of SOS App and whether it enhances Social Studies content delivery, and their challenges. All the students agree that they use technology for their academic work. 38% of them use it a little, 58% use it most times and 11% of them uses it all the time. All of them agreed that technology is important, though 20% of them do not believe it is very important to them. Social Studies is very important to all of them. When asked if SOS App enhances content delivery, 1% do not believe it does, 16% of them believes it does a little, 24% of them believes it enhances instructions most times and 59% said all the time. Item 5 requested them to rank the usefulness of SOS App, 2% of them said it is of no use to them, 18% said it is a little useful, 24% said it is useful most times while 56% said it is useful all the time. Item 7 indicates that 2% of the students have the challenge of belief and practice, 3% of them still believe in traditional practices, 42% of them have low level of skills and knowledge in technology while 52% of them face the challenge of finance.

The results of the survey questionnaire revealed the following; many surveyed Social Studies lecturers and students are aware of SOS App except the NCE students that have low level of awareness. They also know the importance of Social Studies education and the usefulness of SOS App. Although they have positive perception of the usefulness of SOS App, a very small number of the lecturers encourage the use of technology in their classrooms but on the other hand a good number of the students use technology for their academic work. There is a clear picture that their beliefs and perceptions are not in agreement with their technology use.

The results also show that the lecturers know that SOS App enhances content delivery but are still reluctant to incorporate it in their classroom, this might be as result of their low level of knowledge and skill in technology as revealed by the results.

## CONCLUSION

Despite the numerous benefits of technology to education especially to Social Studies instruction, higher education teachers are still reluctant to embrace technology and incorporate it into their classroom teaching and learning process. As Social Studies educators we must fulfil the essence of Social Studies; the education of children and young adults for citizenship.

Technology gives us the opportunity of learning Social Studies skills and content in ways very different in the traditional classroom. The social studies teacher in today's classroom can use technology to extend learning opportunities for his students. As Social Studies educators one of our roles is to model appropriate uses of technology for the preservice teachers.

Social Studies educators should effectively take full advantage of technology by introducing students to activities in which skills and content are taught more actively and meaningfully.

For technology to effectively impact pedagogical competence and content knowledge in social studies, the teachers must be the focus. As such, both professional development and research efforts must be at the forefront. (Cogan, Grossman & Lei (2000). The use of technology in the Social Studies classroom successfully involves a constant and consistent training program. This should begin as part of a preservice training program and continue throughout a teacher's instructional career. This is because, the technology classes and training provided to students at the undergraduate preservice level may not be applicable by the time they graduate and take their first teaching position. (Ehman, & Glenn 1991).

## Further Research

It should be noted that this study has only been able to outline the Social Studies App perceptions of pre-service teachers and their lecturers in the University of Port Harcourt. The limited nature of this study meant that further research would be needed to explore the perceptions in other Nigeria Universities.

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