

AN INVESTIGATION ON STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS TEACHING AND LEARNING OF SOCIAL STUDIES IN NIGER STATE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

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Abstract

The study is on assessment of students' attitude towards teaching and learning of social studies in Niger state college of education, Minna, Nigeria. The research has the following objectives; To evaluate the differences between teachers' motivation, library, workload, class-size, non-recruitment of teachers and inadequate social studies text books as factors militating against students' manifestation of positive attitude towards the of Social Studies, and to find out the difference between perception of student on curriculum goals and objectives, content and evaluation which influences their attitudes towards learning of Social Studies. A descriptive research survey was used which involves collecting data from specific group of individuals who were asked to respond to a number of questions under investigation. The method assesses the attitudes of students towards teaching and learning of social studies education in colleges of education with particular focus on Niger state college of education minna. The population for this study is made up of 4,620 social studies students in Niger state college of education. A sample size of 1000 students from all levels were selected The instrument for data collection was modified 4-point Likert scale of questionnaires which consisted of items answered by the respondents on the columns provided. The questionnaire was validated by three social studies professionals in other Colleges of Education. ANOVA was used to test the hypotheses generated for the study at 0.05 level significance. The findings reveal that, there is a significant difference in the perception of students on curriculum objectives content and evaluation which influence students' attitudes towards teaching and learning of social studies.

Keywords:

Curriculum, Social Studies, Teaching, Learning

Introduction

Social Studies as a course, is aimed at fostering unity among different Nigerian ethnic groups. The course is taught at institutions of learning, particularly at Colleges of Education. But the attitudes of students towards learning the course is worrisome. Academic achievements of students at different levels in Nigeria has become a major concern to researchers, educationist, policy makers, parents and the entire public. This could be attributed to the paramount importance attached to education for the development of the Nation. There is general agreement among scholars that, the way and manner in which standard of education has fallen is so alarming (Abdullahi, 2006). Despite all efforts and encouragement in teaching social studies at various levels of education, the students' academic achievements are not encouraging particularly in the recent time. Linda (2005) commented that, incompetence among teachers particularly on the recent curriculum is making them ill-equipped and make them almost at the same level with their students, could be attributed to low academic achievements among social studies students.

Obiora (2008) highlighted that, poor learning environment, overcrowding in the class-room and lack of appropriate teaching method as reasons associated to low performance among students. There are several blames from individuals and groups that, parental factors, and associating with bad peers are the contributing factors to low academic performance among students. (Adebayo, 2002).

Poor attitudes of Teachers towards their job, lack of interest in the teaching, improper guidance of students' attitudes towards academics by the teachers are additional factors on low performance of students. Linda (2005) commented that, teachers' competence has great influence on the performance of students. Ogunranti and Okebukola (2005) are of the opinion that, the lecture methods often used by teachers in social studies is affecting the learning ability of the students, because it is always difficult for the students to comprehend because of their low level of academic capacity. This approach is rendering the students to be listeners, while the teacher does more of the talk, the room for participation is limited with the use of lecture method.

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Statement of the Problem

Several research conducted by scholars in relation to students' attitude towards the study of social studies in colleges of education revealed that male student develops more positive attitude towards the subject than their female counterpart for example Abdullahi, (2006), who carried out a similar research in attitudes of NCE social studies students towards learning of social studies in federal college of education Kano found out that gender was one among several factors on the negative attitudes of females students towards teaching learning of social studies education. Accordingly, male and female in Nigeria have different experience in learning about gender and their roles. These interest on the roles usually turn to determinant factor on their attitudes towards social studies education.

In another research conducted by Adebisi (2006). On the assessment of NCE social studies students in Jigawa college of education on reasons for massive failure, attributed this to such variables such as unconducive environment for learning, inadequate learning materials, overcrowding, government lip service in funding, inadequate computers in the libraries, and unwillingness by social studies teachers to adopt to current techniques in teaching, are all contributing factors for social studies massive failure in examination.

It is on the above basis and many others that the research tend to intensify on the assessment of NCE social studies student's attitudes towards teaching and learning social studies education.

Objectives

To evaluate the differences between teachers' motivation, library, workload, class-size, non-recruitment of teachers and inadequate social studies text books as factors militating against students' manifestation of positive attitude towards the of Social Studies.

To find out the difference between perception of student on curriculum goals and objectives, content and evaluation which influences their attitudes towards learning of Social Studies.

Significant of the Study

Social studies education is not a new course in the school curriculum in Nigeria. In spite of this its importance cannot be over emphasized bearing in mind of its significance to students (learners), teachers, government, school administrators and the nation at large. Findings from this study will be significant to students in understanding the value of studying Social Studies and the application of the knowledge for them to be good citizens. The findings will help teachers in understanding the level of students' perception towards learning of the subject and what can be done to improve the methodology of teaching for better understanding of the Students. It will also help the policy makers towards making the required policies that will make and improve the study of social studies in Nigerian Colleges.

Literature review

There are several definitions of Social Studies, these definitions vary among authors. Linda (2005) described Social Studies as a discipline that focuses on educating individual on his environment and his interaction within the environment. Akinyemi, (2008) commented on social studies as not only study but a way of life. Social studies education by its very inter-disciplinary nature offers a glorious opportunity to be examined, clearly and isolate the need assets and problems of society through proper development, implementation and utilization of the knowledge that social studies education could provide about society.

On the other hand, social studies education also includes some aspects of the interaction between different societies. Ahmed (2010) expressed the view that: Social studies should aim at exposing the child about societies other than his own, and to enable him interact with people from various societies for peaceful coexistence.

Social Studies education as an integrated discipline, includes knowledge, concepts, attitudes and value draws from history, geography, sociology and Anthropology and so on. As a matter of fact, social studies education reflects from Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences.

The meaning, nature and scope of social studies indicates that learning the subject will enable the student examine himself and his own needs, create awareness and understanding of the social and physical environment around him. The study of social studies education gives a student the opportunity to learn how to appropriate his rights, what his duties are in the society in which he lives as well as the general world.

In my own view, social studies education stresses the importance of man as the point of reference. This is with a view to creating a socially conscious man who is not only compassionate but also understands the complexions of his society. That is why social studies is unified and integrated course of study that draws its component units from wide range of areas as they affect individual in the society.

Social Studies' Objectives in Tertiary Institution

The National policy of education (Federal Ministry of Education, 2004) Pinpointed out the roles of Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria, particularly in the areas of producing low and high manpower for National development. According to the minimum standard of National university commission of 1989, social studies' role is mainly to train and develop individual to become productive and add value for the development of the nation. Okobia (2011) outlined the Social Studies' objectives as follows:

1. Acquisition of both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to develop into useful members.
2. The acquisition, development and inculcation of proper value orientation for the survival of individual and the society.
3. The development of the individual's capacities to understand and appreciate the environments.
4. The acquisition of an objective of the local and external environment.

Teaching and Learning of Social Studies

According to Folake, Andrews and Lewis (2004), they say that teaching is a process whereby one meditates between another and substance of this world to facilitates learning. One problem with defining teaching in this general form is that, it makes everybody a teacher, in other words anybody can help another person learn something but, that does not make that person a professional teacher. Teaching in the education context, may involve the activities engaged in by these who belong to that profession.

In social studies instruction, learning is synonymous to teaching in the sense that teaching facilitates learning. All the activities involve in teaching are set up to enable person to learn. It is pertinent to note that, it is only through the disposition of the learner that learning can take place, that is why social studies education has leaner activities like, dramatization, simulation, inquiry, demonstration, role play, discussion, observation and a host of others with a view to inducing learners/students to learn (Obiora, 2008).

This implies that teaching and learning are complimentary to one another (Nadueke, 2002). Social studies education in terms of subject matter alone has always been part and parcel of the school curriculum, since social studies education content is the content of discipline like history, geography, however social studies education as an integrated subject as viewed by (Daramola, 2012) was introduced into Nigeria in the early 1960's. The main methodology of these new social studies education is active inquiry learning.

The national curriculum conference of 1969 has been regarded, by Ozoro, (1979) as a landmark in the history of education and marked as great success in the development of social studies education as well. It was at this very conference that social studies education was given a national recognition. The proceeding of the conference developed into what is now known as philosophy for Nigerian education in which social studies education was described as the most important subject in teaching citizenship, and thus, children should learn something about the rights and responsibility of a good citizen.

The rationale for the introduction of social studies is to inculcate the concepts of nationalism and unity. But Dubey and Barth (1980) opined that "the major aim of Social Studies is to integrate diverse cultural groups and to foster unity among different ethnic groups in Nigeria".

Methodology

This part outlined the methodology used in conducting the research.

Research design

The research design for this study is a descriptive research survey which involves collecting data from specific group of individuals who responded to a number of questions under investigation. The method investigates the attitudes of students towards learning of social studies in our Colleges with focus on College of education in Minna.

Population and sample

A population of 4,620 students of Social Studies in Niger state college of education was covered. Sample size of 1000 students from all levels were randomly selected to participate in the study.

Data collection and analysis

The instrument for data collection was modified 4-point Likert scale of questionnaires which consisted of items answered by the respondents on the columns provided. The questionnaire was validated by three social studies professionals in other Colleges of Education. In testing the generated hypothesis, ANOVA was used at 0.05 level significance.

Discussion of Findings

Objective One

Evaluate the differences between teachers’ motivation, library, workload, class-size, non-recruitment of teachers and inadequate social studies text books as factors militating against students’ manifestation of attitudes on teaching and learning of Social Studies as a course.

To achieve the above objective, ANOVA was used as shown in the table below.

Table 1. Comparison of factors militating against students’ manifestation on learning of social studies

	Sum squares	Of df	Mean square	F	S.G
Between	21.255	5	4.251	14.688	
Groups					
Within	1689.846	5838	2		
Groups			87		
Total	1711.101	5843			

*= Significant at P<0.05

Table 1, presented ANOVA result indicating analysis of variations for the data on student’s perception of teacher’s motivation, library, teacher’s workload, class size, Non-recruitment of teachers and inadequate social studies text books. The result yield on t-radio of 14.686 and it is significant at P<0.05. This shows significant difference in the perception of teacher’s motivation, library, teachers’ workload, class size, Non-recruitment of teachers and inadequate social studies textbooks. (F=14.686, df = 5843 P<0.05). To determine the data were subjected to scheffe’s post-hoc test as shown in table 2, below.

Table 2. Scheffe's post-hoc test on multiple comparison result of the perception of students on teachers' motivation (TM), library (LIB), teachers' workload (TWL), class size (CLS) non-recruitment of teachers (NR), and inadequate social studies textbooks (TXB)

95% Confidence

1,2,3,4,5 and 6	Mean difference	Student error	Sig	Lower bound	Upper bound	
1	2	156*	.24	.000	0.7	.24
	3	1056	.24	.373	-.02	.14
	4	108*	.24	.002	.03	.19
	5	108*	.24	.002	.03	.19
	6	182*	.24	.000	.10	.26
2	1	-156*	.024	.000	-.24	-.07
	3	-,100*	.024	.005	-.18	-.02
	4	-,048	.024	.561	-.13	.03
	5	-,048	.024	.561	-.13	.03
	6	.026	.024	.953	-.06	.11
3	1	-,056	.024	.373	-.14	.02
	2	.100*	.024	.005	.02	.18
	4	.051	.024	.489	-.03	.13
	5	.051	.024	.489	-.03	.13
	6	.125*	.024	.000	.04	.21
4	1	-,108*	.024	.002	-,19	-,03
	2	.048	.024	.561	-.03	.13
	3	-,051	.024	.489	-.13	.03
	5	.000	.024	1.000	-.08	.08
	6	.074	.024	.102	.00	.16
5	1	-,108*	.024	.002	-,19	-,03
	2	.048	.024	.561	-.03	.13
	3	-,051	.024	.489	-.13	.03
	4	.000	.024	1.000	-.08	.08
	6	.074	.024	.102	.00	.16
6	1	-,182	.024	.000	-,26	-,10
	2	.026	.024	.953	-,11	.06
	3	-,125*	.024	.000	-,21	-,04
	4	-,077	.024	.102	-,16	.01
	5	-,074	.024	.102	-,16	.01

The mean different is significant at the 0.05 level 1,2,3,4,5, and 6 represent teachers' motivation (TM), library (LIB) teachers worked (TWL), class size (CLS) non-recruitment of teachers (NR) and inadequate social studies textbooks (TXB). Scheffe's analysis on table 4.3b indicated that the observed significant different was between TM and TXB, TM and LIB. However, TM and TXB contribution more with the highest mean different of 0.182 and highest upper boundary at 0.26 at 95% confidence level. Hence, there is significant difference in the perception of students on teacher's motivation, library, teacher's workload, class sizes non-recruitment of teachers and inadequate social studies textbooks. Therefore, hypothesis three was rejected. This can further be illustrated by means plot; TM, LIB, TWL, CLS, NK and TXB which is 3.73, 3.56, 3.61 and 3.53, respectively, as shown on figure 1. Mean plot of teachers' motivation (TM), Library (LIB), teachers' workload (TWL), class size (CLS), non-recruitment of teachers (NR) and inadequate social studies textbooks (TXB).

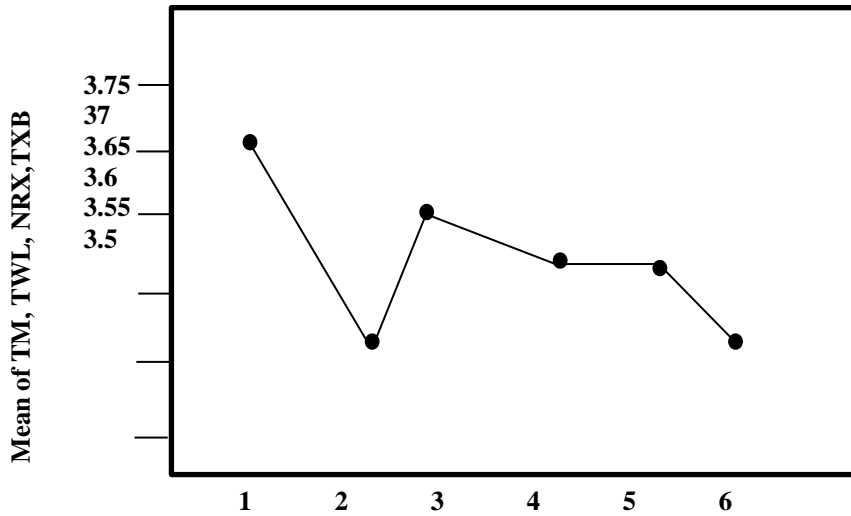


Figure 1. Mean plot on multiple comparison

Objective Two

Find out the difference between perception of student on curriculum goals and objectives, content and evaluation which influences their attitudes towards learning of Social Studies.

To measure research question four analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used and the results is presented in table below.

Table 3. ANOVA on Students' perception on curriculum $P < 0.05$

SUM OF MEAN					
	Squares	Df	Square	F	Sig.
Between	11206.051	2	5603.026	701.37	.000
Group				3	
Within	23270.949	2913	7.989		
Group					
Total	34477.000	2915			

Table 3 presents ANOVA results which show the analysis of variations for the data on the perception of students on curriculum objectives content and evaluation which influence student's attitudes towards teaching and learning of social studies education. The result yielded an F-ratio of 701.373 and it is significant difference in the perception of students on curriculum objectives attitudes towards teaching and learning of social studies education ($F=701.373$, $df = 2915$ $P < 0.05$). to determine the main sources of different the data were subjected to scheff's post hoc test as shown in the table 4.4b.

Table 4. Scheffe's post hoc test on curriculum objectives, content and evaluation
 95% Confidence

Internal						
(1) 1, (J)	1, Difference	Std. Error	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
2 < 3	2 < 3	(I-J)				
1	2	-2.455*	.128	.000	2.14	2.77
	3	-2.347*	.128	.000	-2.66	-2.03
2	1	-2.555*	.128	.000	-2.77	-2.14
	3	-4.801*	.128	.000	-5.12	-4.49
3	1	2.347*	.128	.000	-2.03	2.66
	2	4.801*	.128	.000	4.49	5.12

The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level. 1, 2 and 3 represent curriculum objectives, content and evaluation. Scheffe's analysis on table 4.4b indicated that the observed significant difference was between curriculum objectives, content and evaluation. However, evaluation and content contributed more with highest mean difference of 4.801 and highest upper boundary of 5.12 at 95 confidence level. Hence, there is significant difference in the perception of students on curriculum objectives, content and evaluation. Therefore, hypothesis four was rejected. This can further be illustrated by means plot of objectives, content and evaluation which is 19.54, 17.08 and 21.88 respectively as shown in figure 2.

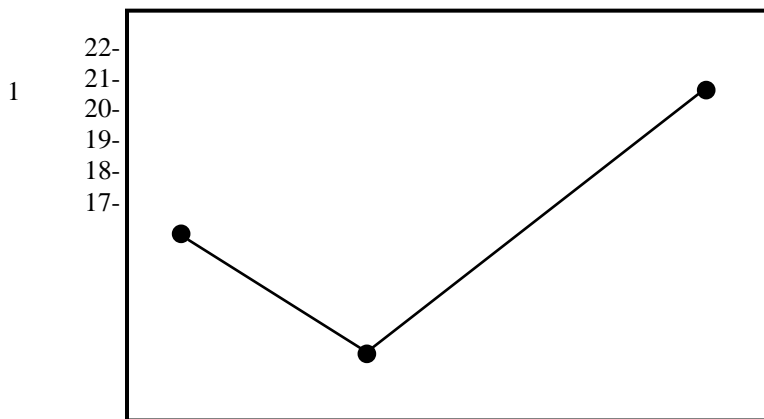


Figure 2. Mean plot of students' perception on curriculum objectives, content and evaluation

The result according to Objective one indicates that there is a significant motivation, library, and teachers' workload, class size, non-recruitment of teachers and inadequate social studies textbooks as factors militating against students' interest. The observed significant difference was between teachers' motivation and textbooks, teachers' motivation and library. However, teachers' motivation and textbooks contributed more with a mean difference of 0.182 and highest upper boundary of 0.26 at 95% confidence level. This finding agrees with the earlier finding of some research who reported that lack of motivation and instructional material affects students' achievement in academics and attitudes to learning social studies education inclusive.

The result from Objective two shows the analysis of variations for the data on the perception of students' curriculum objectives, content and evaluation which influence students' attitudes towards teaching and learning of social studies education. The result yields an F-ratio of 701.373, and it is significant at $P < 0.05$. This indicates that there is a significant difference in the perception of students on curriculum objectives, content and evaluation which influence students' perception on learning of social studies in the college.

The finding of this study is in agreement with Okobia (2011) who reported that, mastery of pedagogy is significant in the teaching and learning of any subject. There is strong relationship between teachers' knowledge of what to teach and the content to be taught.

Conclusion

Teachers' have a vital role in the designing and implementation of curriculum in the school setting. This has been emphasized by researchers and expert in curriculum around the world. Armstrong (1989) stated that a curriculum may have no value or can be termed to be a document if the goals and contents are not understood by the teacher. Therefore, teacher's perception determines the successful implementation of what is in the curriculum. From the finding of this research it can be concluded that the attitudes of teachers in teaching and learning of social studies is positive, in addition, certain factors can influence the attitudes of students towards learning a particular area of study.

Recommendations

Teachers should be encouraged to use different methods in teaching social studies, as against the commonly method of lecture and note taking. There should be regular training for social studies teachers, and adequate teachers should be recruited to cater for the population of students in the study area. There should be regular review on the curriculum of social studies so as to reflect the current issues and contemporary problems, with the aim of finding solutions.

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