

Assessment of Kwara State Social Studies Teachers of the Adequacy of Upper Basic Social Studies Curriculum Content for Sustainable Development in Nigeria

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to find out the adequacy of upper basic Social Studies curriculum content for sustainable development in Nigeria as assessed by Social Studies teachers. 306 Social Studies teachers (109 male and 197 female teachers) from 341 upper basic schools in Kwara State participated in the study. A researcher-designed questionnaire was used to collect data that were analysed using descriptive statistics and chi-square. The results showed that the content of upper basic Social Studies was not adequate, as assessed by teachers. It was also revealed that teachers' assessment was significantly influenced by teaching experience, qualification and school type. However, the research showed that gender did not significantly influence Social Studies teachers' assessment. Based on the findings, it was suggested that upper basic Social Studies curriculum should be reviewed and taught so as to ensure sustainable development in Nigeria.

Key words

Assessment, Adequacy, Social Studies, Curriculum, Upper basic.

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Introduction

In Nigeria, the federal government has identified education as a tool for national development, and this is why education has become the concern of government and private individuals. Education is regarded as the vehicle for sustainable socio-economic development. Thus, nations are reforming and strengthening their educational systems to meet their aspirations, as well as International Development Goals (IDGs). Education clearly denotes intrinsic worthwhile activities. It is a process of being initiated into knowledge and understanding which, in turn, regulates the recipients' attitudes, emotions, wants and actions. Jaiyeoba (2007) perceived education as a priority sector in every well-meaning society and as a major force in economic, intellectual, social and cultural empowerment. The value of education in bringing about character and attitudinal change ranks as important as its ability to change and reshape human potentials for desired development. The National Policy on Education (FRN 2004) spelt out some aims and objectives of education that may help individuals develop physically and socially and enable them to contribute to national development. These objectives include:

1. The inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society.
2. The acquisition of appropriate mental and physical skills, abilities and competence, as equipment for individuals to live and contribute to the development of society.

These characteristics of the national objectives are fully reflected in the Social Studies objectives. Social Studies, apart from imparting knowledge and providing valuable information necessary in life, also aim at helping students inculcate desirable social habits, attitudes and values needed for the survival of the individual in society.

The role of Social Studies in the socio-political and economic advancement of any society makes them relevant as a subject in the school curriculum since education is the major instrument to sustain and transform a society. According to Mezieobi, Fabara and Mezieobi (2008), Social Studies constitute an integrated field which probes man's symbolic relationship with the environment, endows one with reflective or contemplative capacities, intellectual, affective, social and work skills to enable individuals to understand their world and challenges and to

rationally solve or cope with those challenges for an effective life in society. Since the focal point of any form of education is the curriculum, the Social Studies curriculum should be organized to reflect the demands of contemporary times by being open-ended, flexible and dynamic so as to incorporate all relevant topics and thus achieve the laudable objectives of education in general and those of Social Studies in particular.

One of the challenges facing Social Studies as a subject is the inability to foster sustainable development. Sustainable development is one of the crying demands of every society. It is not surprising that in 1980, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature published a world conservation strategy that included one of the first references to sustainable development as a global priority. In 1992, the UN Conference on Environment and Development published the Earth Charter, which outlines the building of a just, sustainable, and peaceful global society in the 21st century. The action plan Agenda 21 for sustainable development identified information, integration, and participation as key building blocks to help countries achieve development that recognizes these interdependent pillars. It emphasizes the point that in sustainable development, everyone is a user and provider of information. In addition, it brings to the fore the need to change from old sector-centered ways of doing business to new approaches that involve cross-sectorial co-ordination and the integration of environmental and social concerns into all development processes. Furthermore, Agenda 21 highlights the idea that broad public participation in decision-making is a fundamental prerequisite for sustainable development (Will, 2007).

Sustainable development is a process of achieving sustainability in any activity that uses resources and where immediate and intergenerational replication is demanded. Sustainable development coincides with further economic growth and human development in the developed economy (and society), to find the means of continual development beyond economic development (Soubbotina, 2004). As such, sustainable development is the organizing principle to sustain finite resources necessary to provide for the needs of future generations of life on the planet (Alelaimet, &Taha 2013). It is a process that envisions a desirable future state for human societies in which living conditions and resource-

use continue to meet human needs without undermining the integrity, stability and beauty of natural biotic systems. Sustainable development ties together the concern for the carrying capacity of natural systems with the social, political, and economic challenges faced by humanity (Lynn & Eda, 2014). There is an additional focus on the present generations' responsibility to regenerate, maintain and improve planetary resources for use by future generations.

Smith and Rees (1998) asserted that sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It contains two keys within it:

- the concept of 'need' in particular, the essential needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and
- the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs.

Sustainability will not occur unless it is implemented at local level. Few scholars contest the role of Social Studies as a subject in the educational system to direct nations and communities in order to achieve sustainability goals in the short and long run, using a standard curriculum (Will, 2007).

Jarolimek (1977) highlighted some of the desirable attributes and attitudes expected from Social Studies students. According to him, they include self-realization by providing experience that fosters maximum growth of individual personalities; the development of human relationships, interdependence, cooperation, and the impact of culture on ways of thinking, behaving and acting. Other basic desirable attitudes are economic efficiency and the development of concepts, skills and attitudes related to man's use of limited resources. Most of these attributes and attitudes are incorporated in the Social Studies curriculum at basic level.

Studies by Olivers (1977), Olawepo (1987), Onyejekwe (1996), Anise (1999) and Jekayinfa (2009) have been in the areas of the organization of Social Studies curriculum contents at the primary and junior secondary school levels. Based on them, there is a need for teachers to assess the Social Studies curriculum content so as to actualise sustainable

development. Hence, this study investigated Kwara State Social Studies teachers' assessment of adequacy of upper basic Social Studies curriculum content for sustainable development.

Research Questions

1. How adequate is upper basic Social Studies curriculum content as assessed by Social Studies teachers?
2. Is there any significant influence of gender on Social Studies teachers' assessment of adequacy of upper basic Social Studies Curriculum content for sustainable development?
3. Is there any significant influence of school type on Social Studies teachers' assessment of adequacy of upper basic Social Studies curriculum content for sustainable development?
4. Is there any significant influence of teaching experience on Social Studies teachers' assessment of adequacy of upper basic Social Studies curriculum content for sustainable development?
5. Is there any significant influence of educational qualification on Social Studies teachers' assessment of adequacy of upper basic Social Studies curriculum content for sustainable development?

Research Hypotheses

H₁: There is no significant influence of gender on Social Studies teachers' assessment of the adequacy of upper basic Social Studies curriculum content for sustainable development.

H₂: There is no significant influence of school type on Social Studies teachers' assessment of adequacy of upper basic Social Studies curriculum content for sustainable development.

H₃: There is no significant influence of teaching experience on Social Studies teachers' assessment of adequacy of upper basic Social Studies curriculum content for sustainable development.

H₄: There is no significant influence of educational qualification on Social Studies teachers' assessment of adequacy of upper basic Social Studies curriculum content for sustainable development.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. 306 Social Studies teachers were randomly selected from 341 selected upper basic schools in Kwara State. 109 teachers were male while 197 teachers were female. A researcher-designed questionnaire titled “Teachers’ Assessment of Social Studies Curriculum Content for Sustainable Development Questionnaire” (TASSCCSDQ) was used to obtain the data for this study. The questionnaire contained 21 topics of upper basic Social Studies curriculum. A 2 point-Likert type scale of Adequate (2-points) and Inadequate (1-point) was used to elicit the needed data from the respondents. The instrument was given to some selected upper basic Social Studies teachers to ascertain the topics in the questionnaire. Afterwards, expert judgment from the Educational Research Measurement and Evaluation Unit of the Department of Social Sciences Education, University of Ilorin, was used to validate the instrument. To trial test the instrument, the instrument was administered to 20 upper basic Social Studies teachers who were not part of the sample. Cronbach Alfa was used to test the reliability of the instrument and its coefficient stood at 0.78. Descriptive statistics was used to answer the research questions while independent t-test and one-way Analysis of Variance were used to test the stated hypotheses.

Results

Research Question: How adequate is upper basic Social Studies curriculum content as assessed by Social Studies teachers

Table 1. Table showing teachers’ assessment of adequacy of upper basic Social Studies curriculum content for sustainable development

S/N	TOPICS	ADEQUATE	INADEQUATE
1.	Social environment	80(26.1%)	226(73.9%)
2.	Physical environment	75(24.5%)	231(75.5%)
3.	Institutions	59(19.3%)	247(80.7%)
4.	Civil rights and responsibilities	68(22.5%)	238(77.7%)

5.	Culture and identity	75(24.5%)	231(75.5%)
6.	Nigerian cultural patterns	110(35.9%)	196(64.1%)
7.	Common heritage and national symbols	154(50.3%)	152(49.7%)
8.	Educational institutions	62(20.3%)	244(79.7%)
9.	Leadership and followership	62(20.3%)	244(79.7%)
10.	Development and growth	104(33.9%)	202(66.1%)
11.	Social changes over time (between 1861 and 1960)	109(35.6%)	197(64.4%)
12.	Science and technology	100(32.7%)	206(67.3%)
13.	National economic life	62(20.3%)	244(79.7%)
14.	Origin of man	62(20.3%)	244(79.7%)
15.	Society and community	95(31.1%)	211(68.9%)
16.	Socialization	62(20.3%)	244(79.7%)
17.	Lack of co-operation and its effects	53(17.3%)	253(82.7%)
18.	The world and its peoples	68(22.2%)	238(77.7%)
	Weighted Average	81(26.5%)	225(73.5%)

Weighted average in Table 1 briefly showed that 81 (26.5%) Social Studies teachers indicate that Social Studies curriculum contents are adequate, while 225 (73.5%) indicated that they are not adequate.

Ho 1: There is no significant influence of gender on Social Studies teachers' assessment of Upper Basic Social Studies Curriculum Content.

Table 2. Chi-square analysis on influence of Gender on Social Studies Teachers assessment of adequate of Social Studies curriculum contents

Gender		Adequate	Not Adequate	Total	df	χ^2	Sig.
Male	Count	47	62	109			
	Expected	51.3	57.7				
Female	Count	97	100	197	2	1.05	.339
	Expected	92.7	104.3				
Total	Count	144	162	306			
	Expected	144.0	162.0	306.0			

Table 2 indicates χ^2 value of 1.05 which is not significant at 0.05 alpha level. Since the calculated significant value 0.339 is greater than 0.05 alpha level ($0.339 > 0.05$), hypothesis one is not rejected.

Ho 2: There is no significant influence of school type on Social Studies teachers' assessment of Upper Basic Social Studies Curriculum Content.

Table 3. Chi-square analysis of influence of school type on Social Studies teachers' assessment of the adequacy of Social Studies curriculum contents

School Type		Adequate	Not Adequate	Total	df	χ^2	Sig.
Public	Count	80	76	156			
	Expected	91.8	64.2	156.0			
Private	Count	100	50	150	1	7.47	.004
	Expected	88.2	61.8	150.0			
Total	Count	180	126	306			
	Expected	180.0	126.0	306.0			

Results in Table 3 show for χ^2 the value of 7.47, which is significant at 0.05 alpha level. Since P-value (0.004) is less than 0.05 alpha level ($0.004 < 0.05$), hypothesis two is rejected. This implies that school type significantly influence Social Studies curriculum content.

Ho 3: There is no significant influence of teaching experience on Social Studies teachers' assessment of adequacy of Upper Basic Social Studies curriculum content for sustainable development.

Table 4 Chi-square analysis of the influence of teaching experience on Social Studies teachers' assessment of adequacy of Social Studies curriculum contents

Teaching experiences		Adequate	Not Adequate	Total	df	χ^2	Sig.
Experience	Count	128	64	192			
	Expected	102.9	89.1	192.0			
Less experience	Count	36	78	114	1	35.4	.000
	Expected	61.1	52.9	114.0			
Total	Count	164	142	306			
	Expected	164.0	142.0	306.0			

As shown in table 4, χ^2 value is 35.4 while p-value is .000 at alpha level of 0.05. On this basis the null hypothesis 3 is not rejected since $0.000 < 0.05$.

Ho 4: There is no significant influence of educational qualification on teachers' assessment of Upper Basic Social Studies Curriculum Content

Table 4 Chi-square analysis of the influence of educational qualification on Social Studies teachers' assessment of adequacy of Social Studies curriculum contents

Educational Qualifications		Adequate	Not Adequate	Total	df	χ^2	Sig.
M.Ed	Count	9	21	30			
	Expected	17.4	12.6	30.0			
B.Ed/ B.Sc/ BA(Ed)	Count	118	20	138			
	Expected	79.8	58.6	138.0			
NCE	Count	18	60	78	3	92.01	.000
	Expected	45.1	32.9	78.0			
B.Sc/ HND	Count	32	28	60			
	Expected	34.7	25.3	60.0			
TOTAL	Count	177	129	306			
	Expected	177.0	129.0	306.0			

Table 5 shows χ^2 value of 92.01 with a P-value of 0.000 at alpha level 0.05. On this basis, the null hypothesis 4 is rejected ($0.000 < 0.05$). Thus, Social Studies teachers' educational qualifications significantly influence their assessment of the adequacy of Upper Basic Social Studies curriculum contents.

Summary of the findings

Findings from the study revealed that Social Studies teachers' assessment of the adequacy of the upper basic Social Studies curriculum is as follows:

1. Not adequate
2. Male and female social studies teachers do not differ in their assessment of the adequacy of upper basic Social Studies curriculum content for sustainable development.
3. Public and private school social studies teachers differ significantly in their assessment of the adequacy of upper basic Social Studies curriculum content for sustainable development.
4. Experienced and less experienced social studies teachers do not differ significantly in their assessment of the adequacy of upper basic Social Studies curriculum content for sustainable development.
5. Social Studies teachers' educational qualifications influence their assessment of the adequacy of upper basic Social Studies curriculum content for sustainable development.

Discussion

Social Studies education has gained recognition and is a core subject especially at the basic level of Nigerian education. The core status given to it is not unconnected with its relevance to Nigerian unity and sustainable development. According to Iyewarun (1985), Social Studies education programmes have been developed to influence a child's intellectual, social and personal understanding and behaviour. This is because the curriculum is expected to inculcate desirable social understanding and action in citizens. Social Studies should emphasize more the non-cognitive fields and the socialization of Nigerian children into true citizens.

The findings in this study indicated that Social Studies teachers perceived that Social Studies content was not adequate in actualizing sustainable development. There was no significant influence of gender on teachers' assessment of upper basic Social Studies curriculum content for sustainable development, and there was significant influence of school type on teachers' assessment of upper basic Social Studies curriculum content for sustainable development. The finding also showed that there was significant influence of teaching experience on teachers' assessment of upper basic Social Studies curriculum content for sustainable development and that there was significant influence of the educational qualification on teachers' assessment of upper basic Social Studies curriculum content for sustainable development.

The perceived inadequacy of Social Studies content for sustainable development is in consonance with the findings of Orimoloye (1983), Olawepo (1986) and Jekayinfa (2009), which recorded that all sampled teachers positively endorsed the Social Studies contents, but found them inadequate in varying degrees.

The finding that teachers, regardless of gender, perceived Social Studies at upper basic level as inadequate is in line with the aim of Social Studies as documented in Jekayinfa (2009), who noted that Social Studies as they are taught may not enhance sustainable development. The finding that school type has significant influence on the assessment of Social Studies as being inadequate may be due to the fact that private schools and public schools have different levels of supervision.

The differences in experienced and less experienced teachers' assessment of the adequacy of Social Studies may be attributed to the fact that Social Studies teachers viewed the field differently.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings in the study, it can be concluded that Social Studies contents are not adequate to bring about sustainable development. In light of this conclusion, the following recommendations were made:

- Upper basic Social Studies curriculum should be reviewed and taught to ensure sustainable development in Nigeria. If the well-intended lofty goals of Social Studies education must be accomplished, what Social Studies connote needs to be properly

comprehended by students. The curriculum contents must not only mirror social trends, events, realities and continuous change; they must also stay in tune with emergent ideas inside and outside the country.

- Only qualified teachers should be employed as teachers for the upper basic Social Studies curriculum. Allowing anyone to teach Social Studies will not lead to the achievement of the subject's objectives.

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