



An Investigation of Qualified Social Studies Teachers in Post-Primary Schools in Rivers State

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Abstract

The increasing decline in numbers of professional teachers in the field of social studies was a call for concern to expert in this subject area because of its implications on the society. The purpose of this paper was for the investigation of qualified social studies teachers in post-primary schools in Rivers State. The random sampling method was used in selecting thirty (30) teachers of Junior Secondary School (JSSI-III) from fifteen (15) Government secondary schools in Tai, Gokana and Khana Local Government areas of Rivers state. Data for the study were gathered through the use of teacher questionnaires and the results of the data collected were summarized using simple percentages. The findings of the research pointed that there was poor quality of social studies teachers those who studied other subjects other than social studies were drawn into the course because of persistent dearth of social studies teachers. Based on this finding, it was suggested that emphasis on the training of social studies teachers should be intensified. In addition, emphasis should be placed on the production of quality teachers at both Colleges of Education and Universities.

Keywords: Professional Teachers, Social Studies, Qualification, Post-Primary School, Rivers State, Nigeria.

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INTRODUCTION

Social studies is a course that was first introduced into the school curriculum on a pilot study at the comprehensive secondary school Ayetoro in 1963. However, it was later in 1973 that the course was officially introduced into the primary and post primary schools in the then western

state of Nigeria. Later, it spread to Benue, Plateau and Kwara states before it finally got its way into the then East Central State in 1977. In essence, the course as a distinct discipline is still very new in our educational system and it is yet undergoing on number of reforms and adaptation, taking into cognizance the varied local conditions. There are yet, not enough books with relevant information that will facilitate the acquisition of appropriate social studies skills, values and there should be an increase in the number of periods allotted to it in our school systems. A lot of social studies teachers complained that using vernacular in teaching constitutes a major handicap to them.

The dominant local language may not recognize other minor linguistic groups and so classroom communication becomes hampered. Many social studies teachers still take the subject as an agglomeration of the facts from history, geography, civics, government, economics, Bible knowledge, sociology and fine arts. They do not see social studies as a distinct field of study which has its own structure, teaching techniques as well as evaluation strategies. This observation shows that many of the teachers lack the knowledge of the scope and concepts of social studies. They do not know what its importance in the areas of critical thinking, citizenship education and rational decision making are. There has been an age-long conflict between the new course-social studies and the traditional social science disciplines of history, government, geography, sociology, etc. Teachers of these traditional subjects have continued to teach and lay emphasis on their traditional subjects to the neglect of social studies. Engle (1965) explained that Social studies could be seen as a discipline in its own right intermingling knowledge from all social science disciplines and deals directly with social ideas and problems as they occur to the average citizen.

Engle (1965) believed that social studies should be developed as a separate discipline with its own separate structure and should make use of facts, concepts and generalizations acquired from the social science disciplines in order to deal with social issues and problems. Akinyele (1978) in recognition of this state of confusion noted that subject specialists, notably historians and geographers are discontented with the increase and spread of social studies. They consider geography and history as integrating subjects in themselves and therefore highly critical of the claim of social studies to represent a special synthesis. Consequently, most of the teachers of social studies in Nigerian schools are specialist in the related or unrelated subjects and not in social studies itself, a situation that has generated a very deep concern for social studies experts. These informed the decision to carry out the investigation of qualified social studies teachers in post-primary schools in Rivers State.

Significance of the Study

It is obvious that education plays a very important role in the nucleus of any given society. That is why education and moral are inseparable, for it operate like the input and output system of the computer (i.e. garbage-in and garbage-out). This is the very reason the crop of teachers who teach social studies possess concern to experts.

A society is like a mother, no reasonable person would want her own child to develop a questionable character. As the world is tending to a global village, the need to give the right kind of education to the student should be non-negotiable. Therefore, the findings of this work will help in the process of suggesting and recommending appropriate measures in the investigation of qualified social studies teachers in post-primary schools in Rivers state.

Research Question

- To what extent does teachers' qualification influence their attitudes to social studies?

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Attitude

Teachers play an important role in the trajectory of students throughout the formal schooling experience (Baker, Grant & Morlock, 2008). The traditional social studies of the early 20th century were conceived as basically a mere collection of the subjects of the social sciences. Scholars in Social Sciences therefore saw social studies basically as the same as the social sciences. However, the subject has undergone tremendous changes in scope and structure in recent years. A brief reference to the various definitions of the subject will throw more light on its meaning. Ogundele (1978) described social studies as "a discipline that enables man to know his environment, both immediate and distant and how best he can make use of it". Social studies are the study of man as a member of a social group, it deals with the way the human society developed and organized. It deals with the totality of man (the physical and social environment). However, in Nigeria, the Nigerian Education Research and Development Council organized a seminar at Jos in April 19, 1978, on the classification of meaningful ideas and concepts of social studies. At that conference, Akintola (1978) spelt out what definition the Nigerian Education Research Council Committee on primary school social studies programme has for social studies. He saw social studies as those common learning of man's interaction with his social and physical environment. It is not only a study, but a way of life, how man influence and how he is influenced by his physical, social, political, economic psychological and cultural environment.

Asagwara (1998) stated that "among the situational factors affecting the child's adjustment and progress within the school setting, probably none is as important as the teacher - pupil relationship." Beginning from the child's entrance to school, the teacher continues to have significant influence on the child's development throughout the school years. He confirms the fact that the kind of teacher a child has will determine in great measure whether his school experiences will foster his overall development or will increase his difficulties and frustrations. The facilitating teacher helps the child to overcome handicaps and make the most of her talents and interests, while a teacher who is ill-suited in working with children generally or with a particular child or group of children may have serious and sometimes disastrous consequences, hence the needs for qualified social studies teachers as he/she may be able to motivate, impact in the student positive self-esteem and good social outcome.

According to Fan and Williams (2010), motivation may play a role in the teacher student relationships and academic outcome. Motivational theorists suggest that students' perception of their relationship with their teacher is essential in motivating student to perform well. Positive teacher-student relationship enable students to feel safe and secure in their learning environments and provide scaffolding for important social and academic skill (O'Connor, Dearing & Collins, 2011). Also, the support of positive teacher-student relationships for self-esteem and related social outcome affect the students during schooling as well as in their future educational outcome (Orth et al., 2012; Emilly, 2017). Teachers who are business-like help children to make greater social, emotional and academic progress. The dynamics of teacher expectation has been described as self-fulfilling prophecy, a phenomenon which was first introduced into

psychological studies by Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968). According to them, expectations affect perception and interpretation. Teachers' expectations cause them to become alert to what they expect and less likely to notice what they do not expect. They also cause teachers to interpret what they see so that it is consistent with their expectations. Thus, when a teacher believes that a child is bright he therefore behaves in an encouraging manner towards the child. Good and Brophy (1980) have presented the following model to describe how this kind of self-fulfilling prophecy may affect classroom behaviour and achievements from particular students, as follows:

- The teacher expects specific behaviour and achievements from particular students;
- Because of these expectations, the teacher behaves differently towards different students;
- This treatment by the teacher tells each student what behaviour and achievement the teacher expects from him can affect his self-concept achievement, motivation and the level of aspiration;
- If this teacher is consistent overtime and if the student does not actively resist or change in some ways, it will shape his or her achievement and behaviour. High expectation students will be led to achieve a high level, but the achievement of low expectation students will decline;
- With time, the student's achievement and behaviour will conform more closely to what was originally expected from him or her.

They also stated ways in which teachers communicated low self- defeating expectations of students:

- Waiting less time for low achieving students to answer. Teachers have been observed to have provided more time for high achieving students to respond than for low-achieving students;
- Teachers have been found to respond to low achieving students' incorrect answer by giving them the answers or calling on another student to answer the question;
- Criticizing low achieving students more frequently, than high achieving students;
- Praising high achieving students frequently than less achieving students;
- Paying less attention to low achieving students, smiling less, and maintaining less eye contact;
- Calling on high achieving students often;
- Demanding less from low achieving students.

Teachers should not assume that the provision of learning facilities and conditions without the appropriate orientation of the child's mind will result in good academic performance by the child. Constant counseling of the school child in an effort to realign his motive expectation, values and interest to academic success would rather enable him to appropriately utilize the facilities and conditions available to the school to achieve better academic performance. This is the crucial task before all educators.

Rogers and Coulson (1969) has the opinion that: the facilitation of significant learning rest upon certain attitudinal qualities which exist in the personal relationship between the facilitators and the learners. The teacher attitudinal qualities have effect on his performance in the classrooms. He interprets the curriculum the way he perceives it. Writing on "teacher interacting style" Gammage (1971) pointed out that the interaction of the teachers and children is

one of the most important aspect of education processes and possibly one of the most neglected. Certain characteristics distinguish the good teachers from the bad ones in any school, it is not difficult to distinguish and identify the good teachers. Social studies is a course of study which requires a special breed of teachers. “Special” in the sense that, as a course of study that hinges on man’s interaction with his environment, any of its good teachers must radiate those qualities that show the fellow as a responsible person and a good family person as well. This is very important, because as a social studies teacher, he handles the academic nature of the subject as well showing good example of a devoted teacher whose students should emulate.

METHODOLOGY

Design of Study

This is a survey research to determine the investigation of qualified social studies teachers in post-primary schools in Rivers State

Area of Study

The study was carried out in Rivers State with emphasis on government secondary schools in Gokana, Khana, and Tai local government areas. There were all together fifteen government secondary schools chosen in the area.

The Population for the Study

The target population that was involved in this study were teachers in junior secondary (JSS1-III), schools in Tai, Gokana and Khana local government areas of Rivers State numbering thirty (30) respondents.

Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample of fifteen secondary schools was selected in Tai, Gokana and Khana local government areas of Rivers State all in Ogoni land. The selection of the schools was based on the following criteria:

- The schools offer social studies at the junior secondary level;
- All the teachers teach the subject at the junior secondary school level;
- The schools have been registering students for junior secondary certificate examination in social studies for at least eight years.

The random sampling method was used in the selection of thirty (30) junior secondary school (JSSI- III) social studies teachers out of the total population of seventy five (75) teachers from fifteen (15) secondary schools in Tai, Gokana and Khana local government areas of Rivers State. The simple random method that was employed was the common hat- draw method, whereby the names of all the individuals were put inside a container for thorough shuffling, until the number of teachers required was obtained. One social studies teacher from each of the fifteen schools

were randomly selected using the common hat-draw method where the number in the school was more than one.

Validation of Instrument

The draft items on the teacher questionnaires were vetted and reviewed by experts in the field in the following areas:

- Scope of coverage;
- Content relevance;
- Ambiguity and vagueness

A pilot study was also carried out involving 2 social studies teachers of Government Secondary School, Kpite, in Tai Local Government Area. The teachers were randomly selected. The test instruments were on the investigation of qualified social studies teachers. The data were on positive response of agreed and strongly agreed only. The data for this pilot study were collected two times through the use of test-retest method for an interval of two weeks. The scores were converted to percentage for each respondent. The percentage score was analyzed using spearman rank correlation coefficient for the test of the reliability of the instrument. $R_h = 0.9$ for the test of reliability of the instrument for the teachers and $R_h = 0.89$ for the test of the reliability of the instrument for the teacher.

RESULTS

Analysis of research question

Table 1: Frequency and percentage distribution of Teachers Qualifications and Experiences

Unit of Measures	Question No.	Teachers' Responses		
		Concepts Tested	Frequency of Response	Percentage Response
Highest Qualification of teachers	1	Ph. D	2	07%
		M. Ed	6	20%
		B. Ed	10	33%
		N. C. E.	12	40%
General Teaching Experience	2	1-2 years	2	07%
		3-4 years	4	13%
		5-6 years	5	17%
		7-8 years	2	07%
		9-10 years	3	10%
		11-12 years	2	07%
		13 and above	12	40%
Experience in Teaching Social Studies	3	Under 1 year	2	07%
		1-2 years	3	10%
		3-4 years	4	13%
		5-6 years	5	17%
		7-8 years	2	07%
		9-12 years	6	20%
		13 and above	8	27%

Number of social studies teachers teaching J.S I to J. S. III classes.	4	J. S. I	8	27%
		J. S. II	10	33%
		J. S. III	12	40%
Number of social studies period per week	5	15 – 18	7	23%
		19 – 22	5	17%
		23 – 26	6	20%
		27 – 30	12	40%
Periods spent on practical work per week	6	0 – 1	22	73%
		2 – 3	8	27%
Where did you learn social studies	7	Secondary school	3	10%
		TTC	10	33%
		COE	12	40%
		University etc	5	17%
How many years did you spend in learning social studies	8	1-2 years	0	0%
		3-4 years	7	23%
		5-6 years	12	40%
		6-7 years	6	20%
		Above 7 years	5	17%

Information in Table 1 revealed that 60% of social studies teachers are graduates while 40% of them are N.C.E. holders. Again, 40% of the teachers teaching social studies have general teaching experience of over 13 years where as only 27% of these teachers have teaching experience in social studies of over 13 years. Furthermore, 60% of the teachers teaching social studies teach the subject in JS 1 and JS II while 40% of them teach social studies in JS III.

This table showed that those who studied (specialized) other subjects other than social studies were drawn to teach the subject because of persistent dearth of Social Studies Teachers. They were not given the right orientation and right concepts of social studies and they found it strange and difficult to grasp the real meaning of the course and even could not teach it effectively.

DISCUSSIONS

These findings revealed that most of the teachers who taught social studies were not social studies specialists and so their teaching and learning activities were dull and uninteresting. Also, some of the teachers contacted through the questionnaire also complained that they lacked the knowledge, structure and concepts of social studies as they were borrowed to teach the subject. This was confirmed by majority of the students and principals through the answer supplied by them in the questionnaires. It has been asserted earlier on that qualified teachers under normal circumstances should be able to play the various roles expected of them within and outside the

four walls of the classroom. In addition to being academically sound, teachers are expected to exhibit certain qualities that would enhance the teaching/learning situation.

Social studies is a course of study which requires a special breed of teachers in the sense that as a course of study that hinges on man's interaction with his environment any of its good teachers must radiate those qualities that show the fellow as a responsible person and a good family person as well. This is very important because a social studies teacher do not only handles the academic nature of the subject, but also has to show an example of a responsible person who students should emulate.

Supporting this view, Asagwara (1998) stated that "among the situational factors affecting the child's adjustment and progress within the school setting probably none is as important as the teacher pupil relationship". This confirms the fact that the kind of teacher a child has will determine in great measure whether his or her school experience will foster his or her overall development or increase his difficulties and frustration.

The attitude of the social studies teachers observed above could be responsible for the low enrolment of social studies in secondary and tertiary institutions. It could even scare away the males from the subject as it tends to impose discipline on them as against the lassies-fair attitude to studies that many students expected to enjoy these days.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion therefore, there has been an age-long conflict between the new course—social studies and the traditional social science disciplines of history, government, geography and Sociology. Teachers of these traditional subjects have continue to teach and lay emphasis on these traditional subjects to the neglect of social studies. The factors discovered during the research showed that there were few social studies experts in our schools hence many of them lacked the knowledge of the scope, content, concept and structure of social studies.

Recommendations

Social studies teachers should be encouraged to diversify their teaching methods and materials thereby reducing monotony and making the learning of the subject more lively and interesting. This is capable of eliciting desirable attitudes from social studies students towards the subject.

Government at various levels should introduced incentive measures including scholarship, bursary, cash award and instant employment opportunities upon graduation to teachers/students who choose to study social studies up to tertiary institutions.

Concrete steps should be taken to encourage the study of social studies in our secondary schools by way of adequate provision of appropriate instructional materials for the teaching of social studies in our junior and senior secondary schools. This would give the subject a human face, pulling it out of realm of abstraction to the attractive realm of reality thereby making it attractive to students.

The joint admissions and matriculation board should recognize and include social studies as one of the subjects to be taken by prospective undergraduates applying of places in the social science faculty of our universities.

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