

A Descriptive Survey on Use of Various Teaching Methods in Social Studies at Basic Education Level in Enugu State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated the extent of application of various instructional methods in Social Studies at the basic education level in Enugu State, Nigeria. Questionnaire was used for data collection from 40 Social Studies teachers drawn from primary and junior secondary schools in the study area. The study was guided by two research questions. Data collected was analyzed using mean, frequency and percentage. Results revealed that lecture method was used more than other methods in Social Studies instructional delivery, and such reasons as lack of skills among the teachers, time factor, poor funding amongst others were contributory factors. Based on the findings, it was recommended that only professionals should be employed to teach Social Studies; Social Studies teachers' competencies should be enhanced through organizing workshops and seminars for them; and adequate funds should be provided for schools to finance various out-of-school methods of teaching Social Studies like fieldtrips/excursions.

Keywords: Social Studies, Basic Education, Instructional Methods, Social Studies Teachers

INTRODUCTION

Education is a means of achieving both individual and national development. It is the most vital investment any nation can make for sustainable development. It is possible that the provision of quality education at the basic education level might be the surest way of contributing to the achievement of a nation's development goals. In fact, basic education level is the foundation level and a determinant of the degree of success of any education system (Federal Republic of Nigeria [FRN], 2004). The Nigeria's Federal Ministry of Education [FME] (2002) defined basic education as the foundation of sustainable life-long learning. Basic education in Nigeria spans from primary to junior secondary schools and for a period of 9 years (i.e. 6 years for primary and 3 years for junior secondary education) (FRN, 2004). Education at the primary level strengthens the learners to climb the educational ladder to the apex of academic excellence if a good foundation is laid at this level (Etor, Mbon & Ekanem, 2013). The junior secondary school provides opportunity for primary school leavers to be prepared for additional 3 years in order to gain more knowledge to further pursue education or enter a vocation.

Teaching at the basic education level include a wide range of compulsory fundamental subjects such as Social Studies to children who are not grown to take decisions for themselves for their development. Social Studies is a programme of study which a society uses to instill in students the knowledge, skills, attitudes and actions it considers important concerning the relationships human beings have with each other, their world and themselves (Kissock in Nwoji, 2006). Social Studies is an integrative field of study which probes man's symbiotic relationships with his environments, endows man with the reflective or contemplative capacities, intellectual, affective, social and work skills to enable him understand his world and its problems, and to rationally solve or cope with them for effective living in the society (Mezieobi, Fubara & Mezieobi, 2008, p.2). Social Studies is an activity packed subject in that it involves students exploring and making meaning out of their environment. These activities are carried out by the learners in exploring knowledge. The teaching and learning of Social Studies is not meant to be teacher-centered if its goals must be realized. Onuoha and Okam (2011) clearly noted that Social Studies teachers should involve learners in the teaching-learning process if the learning and behavioural objectives are to be achieved.

The goals of Social Studies at the basic education level in Nigeria are in consonance with the nations' education goals which include; the inculcation of national consciousness and national unity; the inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society; the training of the mind in the understanding of the world around ;and the acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competencies as equipment for an individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society (FRN, 2004). In addition, the FME (2007) enumerated the following as the goals of Social Studies in Nigeria at the primary school as to: develop the ability to adapt to his or her changing environment; become responsible and disciplined individuals capable and willing to contribute to the development of their societies; inculcate right types of values; develop a sense of comprehension towards other people, their diverse cultures, history and those fundamental things that make them human; develop the capacity to recognize the many dimensions of being human in different cultural and social contexts; develop a sense of solidarity and sharing, based on a sense of security in one's own identity (FME, 2007).

In this line of thought, the National Teachers' Institute (2007) noted that this subject has been implemented for years without success in terms of in achievement of some of its objectives.

In addition, Oyetade and Oladiran (2012) noted that there is clear manifestation of the dysfunctionality of Social Studies in Nigeria observable in the form of corruption, indiscipline, and disrespect for elders amongst others. This may be due to deficiency from the way the subject is taught (Ogheneakoke, 2010). Non utilization of the various teaching methods in Social Studies delivery can make its teaching and learning ineffective. It seems that many Social Studies teachers in Nigeria depend much on the lecture method of teaching. Mezieobi, Fubara and Mezieobi in Onyilofor(2013) and Ogundare in Onuoha and Okam (2011) documented that many Social Studies teachers largely use the lecture method.

Several studies have documented that the best teaching method is a combination of both the conventional and learner-centered methods (Sawant & Rizvi, 2015; Ganyaupfu, 2013; Weimer, 2013; Oyibe & Nnamani, 2014; Adediran, Orukotan, & Adeyanju, 2015). Learner-centered methods are means of facilitating learning with the learners being active participants in the learning environment as opposed to passivity of learners in teacher-centered methods. In this methods, teachers consider the learners` needs and interests and inspire them to contribute to the classroom activities (Al Murshidi, 2014). The learner-centered methods are said to be more efficient than teacher-centered methods in terms of their ability to improve interest, learning and retention (Al Murshidi, 2012; Hadjerrouit, 2015). Since Social Studies teachers rarely adopt the various learner-centered methods in their classes, Social Studies may not make meaning to young people as they may not be fully interacting with their environments. Young people need to explore their environment and develop problem solving skills and reflective ability in other to contribute maximally to the growth and development of the society. In the school setting, the best way to give learners this opportunity is through active involvement of learners in the teaching and learning process. Therefore, the main purpose of this study was to find out the extent to which Social Studies teachers in Enugu State of Nigeria use various instructional methods in the teaching of Social Studies.

Research Questions

1. To what extent are the various teaching methods applied in the teaching of Social Studies?

RESEARCH QUESTION 1

To what extent are the various teaching methods applied in the teaching of Social Studies?

Table 2: Mean responses of teachers on the extent of application of various instructional methods in the teaching of Social Studies

No.	Q	Items	HE(%)	ME(%)	LE(%)	NAA(%)	N	\bar{X}	Decision
1		Lecture method(talking and chalking)	21(52.5)	11(27.5)	5(12.5)	3(7.5)	40	3.3	Highly used
2		Field trips and excursions	6(15)	7(17.5)	16(40)	11(27.5)	40	2.2	Rarely used
3		Dramatization	6(15)	8(20)	15(37.5)	11(27.5)	40	2.2	Rarely used
4		Games and simulation	4(10)	14(35)	8(20)	14(35)	40	2.2	Rarely used

2. What are the reasons for teachers` non utilization of various instructional methods in the teaching of Social Studies?

METHOD AND MATERIALS

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population of the study was 40 Social Studies teachers drawn from primary and junior secondary schools in Nkanu West LGA of Enugu State, Nigeria. There was no sampling due to the fact that the population was small. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire titled “extent of application of various instructional methods in Social Studies Education at the basic education level”. It is a 17 item questionnaire made up of two sections based on the purposes of the study. The instrument was made up of two sections, A and B. Section A was on determining the extent to which various learner-centered methods are being utilized while section B was on the reasons for non-utilization of the various methods. The instrument was validity by experts and the reliability index of the instrument was determined by Cronbach’s alpha and found to be 0.72. Questionnaires were administered to the respondents and collected at the spot. Data were analyzed using mean, frequency and percentage. Any item with a mean score of 2.50 and above and a percentage score of 50 and above was considered being used to a high extent and accepted as a reason for not utilizing the various methods while those with mean scores below 2.50 were considered as being rarely used and not accepted as a reason for the under-utilization of the various methods.

RESULTS

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Sex	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Female respondents	27	67.5
Male respondents	13	32.5

Results in Table 1 shows that the percentage of female respondents (67) is above 50% and that of male respondents is below 50% (32.5). This shows that there are more females in the population of Social Studies teachers than males.

5	Debate	5(12.5)	6(15)	18(45)	11(27.5)	40	2.1	Rarely used
6	Inquiry method	7(17.5)	5(12.5)	10(25)	18(45)	40	2.0	Rarely used
7	Panel Discussion	7(17.5)	9(22.5)	17(42.5)	7(17.5)	40	2.4	Rarely used
8	Cooperative learning method	8(20)	10(25)	13(32.5)	9(22.5)	40	2.4	Rarely used
9	Peer tutoring method	10(25)	4(10)	12(30)	14(35)	40	2.3	Rarely used

HE=High extent; ME=Moderate Extent; LE= Less Extent; NAA=Not At All; N=Total Number of Respondents,

Results in Table 2 show that Social Studies teachers in Nkanu West LGA of Enugu State mainly depend on the lecture method. The respondents identified that item 1 is being used to a high extent compared to items 2,3,4,5,6,7,8 and 9 which

are being rarely used. Item 1 has a mean of 3.3 and a percentage score of 52.5 which is above the bench marks of 2.50 and 50%.

RESEARCH QUESTION 2

What are the reasons for teachers` non utilization of various instructional methods in the teaching of Social Studies?

Table 3: Mean responses of teachers on the reasons for non application of various instructional methods in Social Studies.

No.	Items	GE (%)	ME(%)	LE (%)	NAA (%)	N	\bar{X}	Decision
1	Taking students to the community wastes time	8 (20)	12(30)	6(15)	14 (35)	40	2.45	Rejected
2	Using more than one method wastes time	4 (10)	4(10)	14(35)	18(45)	40	1.9	Rejected
3	Teachers save time by making lesson one way directional	5 (12.5)	7(17.5)	11(27.5)	17(42.5)	40	2.0	Rejected
4	Most teachers are not competent in combining various methods in the teaching of Social Studies	13 (32.5)	7(17.5)	10(25)	10(25)	40	2.9	Accepted
5	Parents are not usually willing to release their children for out of school methods of teaching Social Studies	15(37.5)	8(20)	6(15)	11(27.5)	40	2.7	Accepted
6	Using various teaching methods involves a lot of money	13(32.5)	10(25)	9(22.5)	8(20)	40	2.7	Accepted
7	No knowledge of the methods by teachers	16(40)	5(12.5)	8(20)	11(27.5)	40	2.7	Accepted
8	Teachers` lack of commitment	15(37.5)	7(17.5)	9(22.5)	9(22.5)	40	3.1	Accepted

The results of data analysis in Table 3 show that items 1, 2 and 3 were seen by the respondents as not being the reasons for the non-application of various instructional methods in Social Studies in that their mean scores are below 2.50 and 50% . Items 4, 5,6 ,7 and 8 were accepted as reasons for the non-application of various teaching methods in Social Studies in that they had mean scores of 2.5 and above and percentage scores of 50 and above.

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to find out the extent of application of various instructional methods in Social Studies Education at

the basic education level in Enugu State, Nigeria. The study found that most of the Social Studies teachers depend on the lecture method of teaching for classroom implementation of Social Studies curriculum. This finding agrees with the findings of Ezeobi and Umonu(2013), Rakum (2014), and Okobia (2016) which showed that Social Studies teachers rely heavily on the lecture method and other methods if at all used, are used at a lesser extent.

The study also identified reasons for the non utilization of various methods in the teaching of Social Studies to include-inadequate knowledge of how to apply the methods, lack of funds, lack of commitment on the part of teachers and parents` unwillingness to release their children for various out-of-

school methods of teaching and learning Social Studies. This is in line with the finding of Ede and Otete (2006) that Social Studies teachers are found to be generally incompetent in the use of inquiry method. However, the respondents rejected that time constraints is a factor for using only lecture method. This is in consonance with the finding of Adediran, Orukotan and Adeyanju (2015) that time allocated does not encourage the use of various methods of teaching. This could be because any competent or skilled teacher should be able to manage the allotted time for teaching and thus be able to combine various methods.

LIMITATIONS

The study was carried out only in Nkanu West Local Government of Enugu State out of the 17 Local Government Areas in the State. The results of this finding therefore cannot be fully generalized to Social Studies teachers in other Local Government Areas of the state.

CONCLUSION

Lecture method is a widely used approach in the teaching of Social Studies at the basic education level in the study area. The findings of the study revealed that various learner-centered methods are under-utilized in the teaching and learning of Social Studies at the basic education level in the study area. The study therefore recommended the following: employing only professionals to teach Social Studies; the training and retraining of Social Studies teachers on the use of various innovations in teaching methods.

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