

## **Curriculum Implementation and Reforms: Teachers views about Nigeria's Senior Secondary Social Studies Curriculum Implementation**

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### **Abstract**

This study is designed to find out the views of Social Studies teachers on the implementation of senior secondary Social Studies curriculum in Nigeria schools. Three research questions were raised, a questionnaire titled; 'Teachers views of the Implementation of Social Studies Senior Secondary Curriculum (TPISSSC)' was used to obtain data from 210 teachers from 12 government secondary schools in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria. The questionnaire had two sections; namely section A and B. Section A collected personal information of the respondents while section B contained item questions. Simple percentage and frequency count were used to answer the research questions, the study revealed the following among other things; the curriculum content is well sequenced, properly integrated and relevant. Majority of them also believe that senior secondary Social Studies curriculum should be implemented, that teachers already have the skills and knowledge to implement the curriculum. The researchers recommended that the government, the examination bodies and school administrators should have a change of attitude towards the implementation of this curriculum and that Social Studies professional organizations should take the lead in sensitizing all that is involved.

**Keywords:** Senior Secondary, Social Studies, Curriculum implementation, Perception, Teachers

## 1. Introduction

The hunt for relevance in the Nigerian Education system led to the endorsement of Social Studies in 1963. At the Conference held at Mombasa Kenya in 1968, it was agreed that one of the reasons for the introduction of Social Studies was that Social Studies is supposed to enable all school-going children in Africa to have an awareness of peoples' synergy with their cultural, social and physical environment, acknowledge home and heritage, establish skills and attitudes expected of citizens and learn how to express ideas in different ways. In this conference, African Social Studies Programme (ASSP) was introduced and was adopted by many African Countries that participated in the conference of which Nigeria was among.

The countries that adopted the African Social Studies programme (ASSP) in the 1968 conference were among other countries the following; Botswana, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe etc. Almost all the member countries offer Social Studies at the secondary level. Nigeria is still among one of the African countries not offering the subject at the senior secondary level since it had been introduced in 1998 by the new edition of the National policy on Education.

It is evident the usefulness of Social Studies to the moral and intellectual advancement of the child as well as providing the child with the necessary skills for nation building. Therefore, the gap will always be in the Nigeria Social Studies curriculum if Social Studies is not offered at the senior secondary level because there will be a difficulty for proper shift from the secondary to the tertiary level of education.

Social Studies syllabus for the senior secondary school was prepared in 1985 by the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council but it was never implemented. In 1998 it was reviewed by the National policy on Education and Social Studies was introduced in the senior secondary school curriculum to be offered as an alternative to either history, geography, government or literature in English (FRN, 1998). But unfortunately, it was immediately changed.

### **1.1 Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study, therefore, was to find out the perception of secondary school Social Studies teachers on the implementation of senior secondary Social Studies curriculum in Nigerian schools.

In this study perception, conception and views are used interchangeably. Conception on teaching and learning according to studies show that it has much influence on teaching and learning. Chandler (2005) for example found out that factors that influence teachers' acceptance or rejection of an idea include perception of relevance and self-interest. Also, Brown (1992) believed, teachers' perception about their subject have great influence on their teaching both positively and negatively. Partaking in this same view, Akinlaye (2002) shared that what teachers believe to be good instructional content to teach and good teaching methods to use in the classroom are immensely influenced by teachers' perception of the subject.

Chiodo and Byford (2004) carried out studies which shows that the teachers are the key to what Social Studies means to students, because teachers' understanding of the subject affect the way they teach and transmit knowledge to students. Todd (2005) revealed that the decisions of what to teach our children under Social Studies education most times shift because of the influence of the perception of the teacher about the subject.

This implies that teachers' curriculum conception will probably influence the way an educational package is delivered to students with the aim of fulfilling individual and societal goals. Teacher's beliefs and conceptions greatly influence their instructional decisions in the classroom and they also hold the key to sound educational system of any nation. As a result of this, teacher's educational standard, their quality and competencies and most importantly their conception about a subject should be of a high priority.

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What are the perceptions of Social Studies teachers on the senior secondary social studies curriculum content and rationale?
2. What are their perceptions on the implementation of the curriculum?
3. What are the envisaged curriculum implementation challenges?

### **2. Research Methodology**

Descriptive survey design was used for this study which sought to ascertain, among other things the views of Social Studies teachers on the implementation of Senior Secondary

school Social Studies curriculum. The population of the study consisted of all the Social Studies teachers in all the secondary schools in Port Harcourt metropolis. Simple random sampling technique was used to select a sample of 10 schools from the population. A questionnaire titled “**Teachers views of Senior Secondary Social Studies Curriculum**” 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 and so on, while section B was designed to determine their perception as well as the perceived challenges. 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. Perceptions of Social Studies teachers on the senior secondary social studies curriculum content and rationale**

SN		SA	A	SD	D
1	<b>What are your views about the SSS Social Studies Curriculum</b>				
A	Sequence of content is appropriate	67%	35%	0%	0%
B	Content is relevant	57%	43%	0%	0%
C	Subjects are well integrated	42%	31%	12%	15%
D	Emerging issues are infused into relevant issues appropriately	23%	32%	24%	21%
E	Content encourages students to contribute to society	27%	43%	9%	21%
F	Content considers Nigerian student society and culture	31%	39%	8%	22%

**Table2.Perceptions on the implementation of senior secondary social studies curriculum**

SN		SA	A	SD	D
2	<b>What are your views about the implementation of SSS Social Studies Curriculum</b>				
A	The introduction is long overdue	93%	7%	0%	0%
B	Teachers need to update their skills and knowledge to be able to implement SS Social Studies curriculum	61%	32%	0%	7%
C	I prefer the teaching of Social Studies in senior secondary to civic education	57%	36%	2%	6%
D	Social Studies adequately prepares students for a future career	49%	37%	3%	5%
E	Few students will offer Social Studies at senior secondary level	10%	23%	36%	31%

**Table3. The envisaged senior secondary Social Studies curriculum implementation challenges**

SN		SA	A	SD	D
3	<b>What are the envisaged challenges of the Implementation?</b>				
A	Large class size	11%	28%	29%	32%
B	Lack of teaching resources	33%	22%	25%	20%
C	Short class period	42%	29%	16%	13%
D	Many students will prefer other subjects to Social Studies	15%	17%	38%	30%
E	Teachers are not well equipped for senior secondary Social Studies curriculum implementation	9%	7%	43%	41%

**Table 4. Are there themes/ topics you think should be included in the curriculum? YES / No. If YES to question 4, please list the topics**

SN	YES	NO
1	91%	9%

**Topics listed are**

1. Security Education
2. Climate Change
3. Peace Education
4. Population Education
5. Patriotism and Nationalism
6. Human Trafficking
7. Moral Education
8. Socio-Political Challenges

**3. Results and Findings**

Descriptive statistics reveals the following; Table 1 above indicates that all the sampled teachers agreed that the content sequencing of the senior secondary Social Studies curriculum is appropriate and that the content is relevant. But there are differences in their degree of agreement, 67% of the teachers strongly believe that the sequencing is appropriate and 33% just agreed while 57% also strongly agreed that content is relevant and 43% just agreed.

On the issues of whether the subjects that make up the Social Studies are well integrated and if emerging issues are well infused, 73% of them agreed that the integration is good while 27% do not believe that the subjects are properly integrated. Emerging issues are properly infused according to 55% of the sampled population while 45% believed otherwise.

The last two items sort to get their views on whether the content will help students contribute to the society and if content considers Nigerian society and culture. Majority of them (70%) believes that content will be able to equip the students with the required skills

to contribute to the development of the society and also 70% of them agreed that the content took into consideration the Nigeria's society and culture.

Table 2 above sort the opinions of teachers on the implementation of the curriculum. All the sampled teachers said it is long overdue. When asked if they believe that teachers need to update their skills to be able to implement the curriculum, majority of them (93%) affirmed that the teachers are capable of implementing the curriculum, only 7% of them believe that they need some sort of training. On their opinion about the third item, 92% said they will prefer to teach Social Studies to Civic Education in Senior Secondary. Majority of the teachers also believe that senior secondary Social Studies will adequately prepare students for future career and civic life and they also believe that a good number of students will offer Social Studies at senior secondary level.

Table 3 shows the views of the teachers on the envisaged curriculum implementation challenges. On the issue of large class size posing a challenge, 40% of them believe it will be a problem while 60% of them believe it will not be a challenge. When asked if non availability of teaching resources, low teaching staff and short class periods will be a challenge, 55% of them thinks there is enough available resources and teaching staff and 45% of them thinks otherwise. 72% of the teachers think short class periods for Social Studies will be a challenge.

The challenge of not having enough students to teach because students will prefer history, government, civic education to Social Studies was not the opinion of many, 68% of them disagreed while 32% agreed. 84% of the teachers believe that teachers are well equipped for the implementation of the curriculum while 16% is of the opinion that this might be a challenge.

The teachers listed the following themes and topics when asked if they think there are more topics and themes to be added to the curriculum, 91% of them said YES while 9% said NO. The following are the topics they suggested;

Security Education, Climate Change, Peace Education, Population Education, Patriotism and Nationalism, Human Trafficking, Moral Education, Socio-Political Challenges in Nigeria.

The results reveal the following;majority of the teachers believe that the curriculum content is well sequenced, properly integrated and relevant. Majority of them also believe that senior secondary Social Studies curriculum should be implemented, teachers already have the skills and knowledge to implement the curriculum, many Social Studies teachers will prefer to teach Social Studies at senior secondary to civic education and many students will like to offer Social Studies at senior secondary. Majority of the teachers are of the opinion that though there will be challenges, they will not be overwhelming

#### **4. Conclusions and Recommendations**

It is obvious that the non-implementation of senior secondary Social studies curriculum will continue to affect the full realization of the goals and objectives of Social Studies in Nigeria because there will always be a gap that needs to be closed. The study revealed among other things that it is the opinion of many that senior secondary Social Studies curriculum already prepared and approved since 1985 should be reviewed and implemented.

Studies on perception about teaching showed that it has much influence on teaching and learning and two important factors that affect perception is relevance and self-interest. This means that since Social Studies teacher's perception of this curriculum implementation is positive, they are aware of the relevance and they are interested in the implementation.

For the implementation of this curriculum to be achieved, there must be a change of attitude from the examination bodies, the school administrators and the government. Social Studies association of Nigeria (SOSAN) and other Social Studies professional organizations should take the lead in the sensitization of all that is involved. This could be in the form of seminars, workshops and symposiums.

#### **5. Further Research**

This study has been able to explore only the Social Studies teachers perceptions of senior secondary Social Studies curriculum implementation in Port Harcourt Metropolis. The

limited nature of this study meant that further research would be needed to explore the perceptions of other teachers that are not Social Studies professionals but teach Social Studies. And also, this study can be replicated in other local governments or states of Nigeria.

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