



## **Teachers Use of Social Studies Methods in Gombe Local Government Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

The burden of preparing the 21st century citizen depends to a larger extent on teachers. The teacher has the important task of not only enriching the citizen with requisite knowledge and skills but also to equip him with good attitudes, morals and character. Social Studies have been identified as one of the school subjects that can bring about the desired change in character, especially where this subject is taught by effective teachers, who have good mastery of their subject matter and can vary their methods of teaching to suit appropriate lesson topics. Teachers' mastery and skillful application of methods in the teaching-learning process goes a long way in bringing the desired change in the learner's behavior. It is in this vein, that this study explored social studies teachers used of methods at the basic/primary education level. All the 46 Social Studies teachers in Gombe Local Government Area of Nigeria were observed in two lessons per week, for five weeks. The teaching method they used during each lesson was appropriately ticked on a Social Studies Method Observation Checklist (SSMOC), which had 15 items. Two research questions guided the study. Data were analyzed using frequencies, percentages and ranks. Findings revealed that lecture, demonstration and discussion methods were the top three most frequently used methods, while simulation, project and construction methods were the bottom three methods less frequently used BY teachers.

**Key Words:** Teachers, social studies, methods.

## Introduction

The 21st century is witnessing innovations and transformation in virtually all spheres of human endeavor. There are wide range of knowledge, skills and attitudes that are expected to be acquired by the 21s' century citizens. Acquisition of such vast array of knowledge and skills are important, equally important is the acquisition of good attitudes. Social Studies have been recognized by the Nigerian school curriculum as a vital instrument for inculcating good attitudes in learners, especially those at the Primary or Basic Education level of the education system. This explains why Social Studies is a core Basic Education course in Nigeria, whether taught in public or private schools. Unfortunately studies have indicated that private schools have consistently out-performed public schools in Social Studies learning achievement (National Teachers' Institute, 2010). This is worrisome because less privileged children whose parents cannot afford the high cost of private schools are left with no alternative to good education as enjoyed in private schools.

Attitude is considered pivotal to human survival, according to Kassin (2009), attitude means those positive qualities that make somebody interesting or attractive. In this study attitude refers to the totality of good morals that make an individual receptive to other people's feelings and where necessary offer a useful assistance that can help redeem the situation. The 21st century Nigeria has witnessed disorder, chaos, lawlessness, mayhem its citizens must be adequately prepared to face the challenges of rising terrorism, insurgency, drug abuse, corruption, ethnic crisis, religious crisis, human trafficking as well. If the teaching of Social Studies can help reposition the attitudes of Nigerians, all Social Studies teaching must exploit all possible avenues to ensure effective teaching of the subject.

Social studies is the study of man in his physical and social environment (Ololobou 2010). This means it is concern with reciprocal relationship between man and various aspects of his environment. The general purpose of social studies education is to help learners develop the ability to adapt to the ever-changing environment, where they live in. With these objectives in mind, Social Studies was formally introduced into the Nigerian school curriculum as one of the major innovations of the 1969 curriculum conference and is expected to be taught at all levels including the primary education level.

The primary school Social Studies curriculum have been revised four times since 1971. The aim of teaching social studies at the primary school level according to the Social Studies curriculum 2007, revised 2009 are to enable the learner to:

- a) Develop the ability to adapt to his or her changing environment.
- b) Became responsible and disciplined individual capable and willing to contribute to the development of their societies.
- c) Inculcate the right types of values.
- d) Develop a sense of comprehension towards other people, their diverse cultures, history and those fundamental things that make them human.
- e) Develop the capacity to recognize the many dimensions of being human in different cultural and social contexts.
- f) Develop a sense of solidarity and sharing, based on a sense of security in one's own identity, (Federal Ministry of Education, 2007).

To ensure the attainment of the above stated objectives, the curriculum recommended, among others, methods for teaching Social Studies at the Primary/Basic Education level. No Social Studies curriculum can be successfully implemented without using the appropriate method of teaching. Method is an important aspect in curriculum implementation, it is the general way the teacher organizes his lesson (Rakum, 2013). As soon as curriculum content is made available for implementation, one of the most important steps to be taken by the teacher is the selection of relevant teaching methods, that he will use in the course of implementation. Inability of the teacher to identify relevant teaching method signifies a dangerous gap which may put his lesson and the entire education system in jeopardy, such a scenario should be avoided.

Pre-service teachers are trained in teacher training institutions and the curriculum for such training usually includes studies in Educational Foundations, Teaching Practice, at least one Teaching Subject and and more importantly methods of teaching. It is, therefore, not expected of a trained teacher to be found wanting in the choice and use of appropriate teaching methods. The teacher must use his initiatives to vary his teaching methods to suit different lesson topics, "teachers have a 'make or break' role in curriculum..."(p.14) (Kelly, 2009:14). Social Studies teachers must, therefore, put in all efforts to make their lesson successful, especially at the primary/basic education level. Basic education in Nigeria, is a 9 year program, comprising 6 years of primary education and 3 years of Junior Secondary School education. There are curricula for each subject taught at the two levels. All social studies teachers are expected to have received the correct training while in college, the methods suggested for teaching social studies as contained in the curriculum are not at variance with what teacher in college during pre-service training. If what is alleged here is true, then all social studies teachers should be able to use the relevant method for each topic they teach. On the contrary the National Teachers Institute (2010) and Federal Ministry of Education (2009) have expressed dissatisfaction with the level of teacher's use of teaching methods at the primary school level. This expression of dissatisfaction with what obtains in an education system is upsetting. A situation where teachers seem not to be using appropriate teaching method is unacceptable. It signifies an anomaly and discrepancy, between curricular provision and actual practice. This gap if not properly addressed may result in poor lesson delivery, meaning school leavers may not be internationally competitive, the Nigerian work force may lack good attitude and morals, with concomitant effect on the country's international image. Worst still the preponderance of social ills may rise to unmanageable level. It is in this vein that this study investigated social studies teachers' use of teaching method.

The purpose of this study was therefore to determine social studies teachers' use of teaching methods. Specifically the study sought to;

- 1) Investigate the extent to which primary six social studies teachers vary their teaching methods from one lesson to another, within the range of possible methods suggested by the curriculum.
- 2) To rank social studies methods according to the frequency with which they are used by teachers.

## **Method**

### **Participants**

All the 46 primary six Social Studies teachers in Gombe Local Government Area were studied. Out of this 19 were female and 27 were male.

### **Research Design**

The study adopted an observational survey design. The two variables of interest are Social Studies teachers and Social Studies methods of teaching.

### **Measures**

The instrument for data collection was Teachers' Use of Social Studies Method Observation Checklist (SSMOC). It is a 15 item observation checklist, adopted from Gurin (1994) with modifications. With an internal consistency of 0.76, Gurin's Social Studies Teachers' Use of Methods Checklist (SSTUMC) was validated by three experts in Social Studies, Curriculum Studies and Test and Measurement,. Gurin's SSTUMC was used to measure Social Studies teachers' use of five methods (inquiry, lectures, discussion, dramatization and role-play). To suit this study it was modified to include 15 methods (lecture, demonstration, story-telling, discovery, project, simulation, problem-solving, role-play, dramatization, inquiry, field-trip, construction, activity, play and questioning methods).

### **Procedure**

The researcher and 10 trained research assistants, who were third year students in a College of Education, observed all the 46 social studies teachers while they were teaching, in two lessons per week, for five weeks, they ticked the appropriate method used by the teacher in each lesson. Data was analyzed using frequency counts, percentage and ranking.

## **Results**

The results of the study were obtained from data generated by the SSMOC and reported in Table 1 and 2.

### **Research Question 1:**

To what extent do primary six social studies teachers change their teaching methods from one lesson to another, within the range of possible methods suggested by the currilum?

Method	Frequency of Use	Percentage
Activity	18	3.91
Construction	04	0.87
Demonstration	91	19.78
Discussion	41	8.91
Dramatization	26	5.65
Field trip	08	1.74
Inquiry	04	0.87
Lecture	149	32.39
Play way	25	5.43
Problem solving	18	3.91
Project	00	0.00
Questioning	14	3.04
Role-play	20	4.35
Simulation	02	0.43
Story telling	40	8.70
TOTAL	460	100

Table 1 Frequency and Percentages of Social Studies Teachers Use of Methods

Table 1: Shows that primary six social studies teachers do not change their teaching methods often. The result shows that teachers concentrated on the use of lecture, demonstration, discussion and story-telling, while the use of simulation, construction and inquiry methods were minimal, project method was not used throughout the period of observation.

### Research Question 2

Where would each method rank when arranged according to the frequency with which they are used by teachers.

Method	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Lecture	149	32.39	1 <sup>st</sup>
Demonstration	91	19.78	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Discussion	41	8.91	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Story telling	40	8.70	4 <sup>th</sup>
Dramatization	26	5.65	5 <sup>th</sup>
Play	25	5.43	6 <sup>th</sup>
Role play	20	4.35	7 <sup>th</sup>
Problem solving	18	3.91	8 <sup>th</sup>
Activity	18	3.91	8 <sup>th</sup>
Questioning	14	3.04	10 <sup>th</sup>
Field trip	8	1.74	11 <sup>th</sup>
Inquiry	4	0.87	12 <sup>th</sup>
Construction	4	0.87	12 <sup>th</sup>
Simulation	2	0.43	14 <sup>th</sup>
Project	0	0.00	15 <sup>th</sup>
Total	460	100	

Table 2 Ranks of Social Studies Methods According to Frequency of Used

Table 2 shows that lecture, demonstration, discussion and storytelling methods were the top three in rank. While project, inquiry, construction and simulation comes at the rear occupying twelve fourteenth and fifteenth ranks.

### Discussion

The findings of this study as presented in Table 1 and 2 were anticipated, they agreed with the findings of Gurin (1994), Ikoro and Nwangbo (2011) Braimoh, Owolabi and Braimoh (2012) who in their respective studies discovered that teachers use lecture and demonstration method more often than other methods. Teachers' inability to vary their methods of teaching can be attributed to several factors, such as class size, inadequate instructional materials or poor lesson preparation. This finding supports the theory that ill prepared teachers often resort to use of teacher centered methods, such as lecture and storytelling, (Afangideh, 2009).Lecture method seem to be dominant (ranking first with 149 frequency) this is not the best for an education system where teachers are expected to vary their teaching methods.

The population of the study would have included all social studies teachers in Gombe State while the observation period would have been the entire school term,

instead of five weeks. This was not possible due inadequate funds and the fact that, the observation period dove-tailed into the research assistants" second semester in college. However subsequent attempt will address these lapses. This study supports the theory that in curriculum implementation differences between theory (planned) and practice (actual implementation) may occur.

### **Conclusion**

The findings from this study serve as the basis for making the following conclusion.

- 1) Teachers seem not to vary their teaching methods within the range of possible methods suggested by the curriculum.
- 2) Teachers tend to use methods that do not require strenuous planning especially those that require use of instructional materials.
- 3) Effective methods that are learner centered and have potentials for greater learning achievement of pupils are not used often.

Based on the findings of this study the following recommendation is made;

- 1) For effective preparation of 21st century citizens all teachers are required to vary their teaching methods to suit their lesson topics.
- 2) Head teachers should supervise lessons as often as they can, to ensure and emphasize the use of learner centered methods of teaching.
- 3) The Local Government Education Authority should commission experts to give a workshop on use of teaching methods, with a view to build teachers' capacity to vary their teaching methods.
- 4) The Local Government Education Authority and any other responsible agency should provide all the instructional resources for teaching social studies as recommended in the social studies curriculum.

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