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CONTENTS

<i>Authors</i>	<i>Articles</i>	<i>Pages</i>
AYENI A. O.	Training and Employment of Technical College Graduates in Oyo State.....	1
ODINKO, MONICA N AND IROEGBU, VICTORIA	Effects of Pre-Primary Education on Cognitive and effective Learning Outcomes among Primary School Children in Nigeria	10
E.A. OKWILAGWE AND F.V. FALAYE	Teachers' Instruction and Evaluation Needs in Imparting Basic Social Studies Knowledge at the Primary School Level: Basic Social Studies Knowledge at the Primary School Level: Implications for Teacher Training	23
ADAMS O. U. ONUKA	A Review of Fund Allocation to the Nigeria Federal University System (1992-2002)	35
J. ABIOLA ADEMOKOYA AND A.M. OYEWUMI	Effects of Hearing Level, Type of School and Gender on Career Choice of Hearing Impaired Adolescents	49
ERWAT, E.A.	Information Acquisition and Management Capacities as Determinants of Administrators' Decision-making Effectiveness in Tertiary Institutions in South Western Nigeria	60
HENRIETTA A. YARQUAH	Assessment as an Important Component of the Teaching and Learning Process: The WAEC (Ghana) Point of View	68
BENSON ADESINA ADEGOKE	Effects of Single-Sex and Co-Educational Schooling on Students' Cognitive Achievement in Integrated Science	76
IKUJUNI, J.A.; ENI-OLORUNDA, J.T. AND DADA, O.C	Distinctive Methodology and Watered-down Approach as Strategies in Language Acquisition of the Educable Mentally Retarded Children	84
IBODE OSA FELIX	Effects of the Use of Video Tape Instruction on Students Achievement in English Language	94
TAJUDEEN AKANJI	Educational Strategies for Mobilizing Youths for Peace in Nigeria	10
PEACE N. IBEAGHA	Coping in Nigerian Demand Homes: The place of Individual Differences, Environmental Factors and Situational Characteristics.....	11
ALIMBA, N. CHINYERE	Managing Group Conflicts in the Educational System	12
IJATUYI, O. A.	Factors Affecting Awareness of Environmental Information and Management of the Physical Environment of Female Inhabitants of Selected Local Government Areas of Ondo State, Nigeria	13
T.W. YOLOYE; UGO VALERIE AIMAKHU AND J.O. ADELEKE	Assessment Strategies for Promoting Higher Order Thinking Skills in Public Secondary Schools.....	14
IFEOMA ISIUGO ABANIHE, IBIENE TANDI LONG JOHN	An Observational Study of Classroom of Science Student Teachers in Port Harcourt, Nigeria.....	15

Teachers' Instruction and Evaluation Needs in Imparting Basic Social Studies Knowledge at the Primary School Level: Implications for Teacher Training

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Abstract

The study sought to establish the instructional and evaluation needs of Social Studies practising teachers in Oyo State, Nigeria. It also investigated whether there were age, sex, teaching experience and professional training differences in the teachers' needs. Two hundred and seventy three teachers (155 males and 118 females) made up the sample. The teachers were randomly selected from the 33 Local Government Areas of Oyo State. A modified version of Moore's instrument: Teachers' Instructional and Evaluation Needs Questionnaire was used to gather data. Data was analysed using percentage, graphs and chi-square. The study findings revealed that many of the teachers perceived a need for a number of the instructional and evaluation statements. Distinct differences exist in instructional and evaluation needs of the teachers based on age, sex and professional training. The implications for Social Studies teacher training and retraining were discussed.

Introduction

Social Studies teachers, more than ever before, are faced with challenges brought about by the contemporary issues in the context of education, as activities involved in teaching and evaluation of students' learning outcomes increasingly become intricate. This is due to the nature of Social Studies, which is in itself complex. It also has to do with the potentials of Social

Studies in facilitating a better understanding of the society by imparting knowledge about the society we live in, developing skills and forming positive attitude and appropriate values necessary for the development of the society (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1985).

The Nigerian government according to the National Policy on Education (2004) is strongly committed to the provision of education to every school age child in the country from the primary to the junior secondary level, and has established policies and activities to achieve this goal. Among these, is the establishment of State Primary Schools' Board (SPEB) in all States of the federation. As a sign of her realization that primary education is a platform on which other segments of Nigeria's educational system is built, the government has re-structured and energized these boards to effectively carry out monitoring and supervisory activities in schools in their domain.

In translating the objectives of social studies into teaching/learning tasks, the teacher then becomes central in achieving the ultimate goal of social studies, more so, with the introduction of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme and the foreign assistance that the government is receiving in terms of funding of the programme. There is need for the social studies teacher to exhibit enhanced effectiveness of instruction in order to avoid wastage. Most of the earlier works in evaluating teachers' instruction and evaluation needs focused on science subjects at the secondary school level, particularly those of Onocha and Okpala (1987) and Okpala and Onocha (1983) that targeted physics teachers in secondary schools nationwide, and primary school science teachers, respectively. Similarly, at the primary school level, Odinko and Osokoya (2004) surveyed the instructional needs of primary school teachers in Nigeria even though their work was not subject specific.

In order to ensure effectiveness in the delivery of primary school education and enhance quality of outputs, it is important to study the basic and important components of the educational process, viz: teaching, learning and evaluation, all of which are very closely linked (Ezeokoli, 2002). The role of primary school teacher particularly, the Social Studies teacher in this delivery process, is of utmost importance to the success of the basic education provision of the government. In the light of the foregoing, these researchers saw the need for finding out what the primary school teachers perceive as their instructional and evaluation needs necessary to facilitate learning of basic social studies content at the primary school level. It is hoped that the information derived from the self-appraisal will be a useful input into teacher preparation and production for the tasks of providing qualitative education for all, most especially at the primary school level.

Objective of the Study

The study investigated the instructional and evaluation needs of Social Studies teachers at the primary school level.

Research Questions

The study sought to provide answers to these questions

1. What are the teachers' instructional and evaluation needs profiles?
2. Are there group differences in the instructional and evaluation needs of the teachers based on their age, gender, teaching experience and professional training?

Methodology

Sample

The subjects were 273 primary school teachers made up of 155 males and 118 females, randomly drawn from the 33 local government areas of Oyo State.

They were aged between 23 and 47 years with a mean age of 39 years and a standard deviation of 3.98. Although the initial sample was 300 subjects, analysis was based on 273 for instructional needs and 257 for evaluation needs because, data cleaning revealed that some subjects did not complete some items and had to be dropped from analysis.

Instrumentation

The study used a valid and reliable instrument – Teacher Instructional and Evaluation Needs Assessment Questionnaire (TIENAQ). The instrument modified after Moore's Assessment Profile (MAP) on "Needs Related to the improvement of Classroom Instruction and Planning", cited and used by Okpala (1987), consisted of 25 items and had two dimensions: the Instructional and Evaluation Needs. The subjects were expected to respond to their level of needs on a four point scale as against three in the original instrument. The original instrument was subjected to intense validity and reliability scrutiny by Moore (1977). Construct validity was established using factor analysis and the estimate of its reliability, which was put at 0.96.

In the Okpala's study, Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha of 0.84 was established. The present study conducted a further validity study of the modified version and obtained psychometric properties of 0.93 and 0.87 Coefficient Alphas for the two dimensions as estimates of construct validity and internal consistency reliabilities respectively.

Procedure of Data Collection

The researchers and one trained assistant administered the instrument to the respondents. They were also collected immediately on completion.

Data Analysis

The data collected were coded and analyzed using descriptive statistics (means, percentages and graphs) to establish the teachers' profiles, while group differences in the needs profiles were established using chi-square. The percentage response of the subjects in each item on the instructional and evaluation needs profiles are plotted on a scale of 2 cm to 5% on the ordinate.

Results

Teachers' Instructional and Evaluation Needs Profiles

Tables 1a & b present the information on Social Studies teachers' instructional and evaluation needs. The needs profiles were captured diagrammatically in figures 1a and b, respectively.

Table I (a & b)

Percentage Responses of the Teachers' Instructional and Evaluation Needs in Imparting Social Studies Knowledge

Item No.	(a) Instructional Needs Statement	Much Help	Mod. Help	Little Help	No Help
1.	Keeping diary of daily record of work	76(29.6)	37(14.4)	34(13.2)	110(42.8)
2.	Keeping detailed scheme of work	74(28.8)	55(21.4)	43(16.7)	85(33.1)
3.	Using information to improve teaching	97(37.7)	64(24.9)	57(22.2)	39(15.2)
4.	Writing instructional objectives in measurable terms	72(28.0)	62(24.1)	48(18.7)	75(29.2)
5.	Determining what to teach	57(22.2)	51(19.8)	61(23.7)	88(34.2)
6.	Developing in pupils skills to appreciate Social Studies	71(27.6)	55(21.4)	63(24.5)	68(26.5)
7.	Organizing/producing resources and materials for effective teaching	97(37.7)	61(23.7)	56(21.6)	43(16.7)
8.	Presenting lessons on pupils' appropriate class level	56(21.8)	49(19.1)	64(24.9)	88(34.2)
9.	Developing daily lesson plan	66(25.7)	32(12.5)	48(18.7)	111(43.2)
10.	Presenting lesson so that pupils discover facts by themselves	56(21.8)	48(18.7)	71(27.6)	82(31.9)
11.	Developing in pupils skills in creative thinking	70(27.2)	50(19.5)	73(28.4)	64(24.9)
12.	Developing in pupils effective study skills	51(19.8)	66(25.7)	84(32.7)	56(21.8)
13.	Developing pupils' ability to master social studies concepts	67(26.1)	61(23.7)	68(26.5)	61(23.7)

14.	Developing pupils' understanding of the interrelationship that exists between social studies and everyday life.	66(25.7)	72(28.0)	66(25.7)	53(20.6)
15.	Overcoming difficulties encountered in undergoing excursions and field trips	93(36.2)	74(28.8)	63(24.5)	27(10.5)
16.	Teaching large classes effectively	97(37.7)	72(28.0)	49(19.1)	39(15.2)
(b) Evaluation Needs Statement					
1.	Developing standardized tests	122(44.7)	79(28.9)	36(13.2)	36(13.2)
2.	Developing marking scheme	76(27.8)	85(31.1)	53(18.7)	61(22.3)
3.	Developing multiple choice (objective) tests	43(15.8)	74(27.1)	72(26.4)	84(30.8)
4.	Developing questionnaire	62(22.7)	83(30.4)	75(27.5)	53(19.4)
5.	Developing observation schedule	61(22.3)	96(35.2)	85(31.1)	31(44.4)
6.	Developing rating scales	61(22.3)	80(29.3)	77(28.2)	55(20.1)
7.	Reporting students' progress	81(29.7)	47(17.2)	56(20.5)	89(32.6)
8.	Interpreting the results of pupils	56(20.5)	55(20.1)	55(20.1)	107(39.2)
9.	Using results to diagnose pupils' problems	76(27.8)	60(22.0)	61(22.3)	76(27.8)

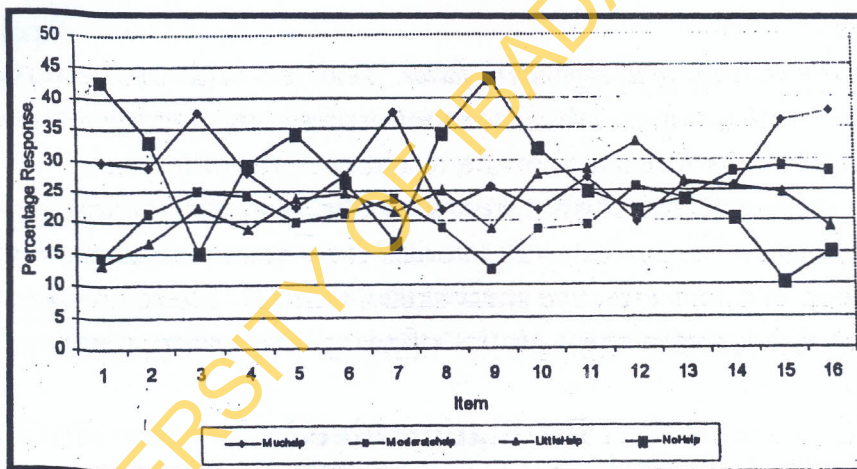


Fig 1: Instructional Needs Profiles of Social Studies Teachers

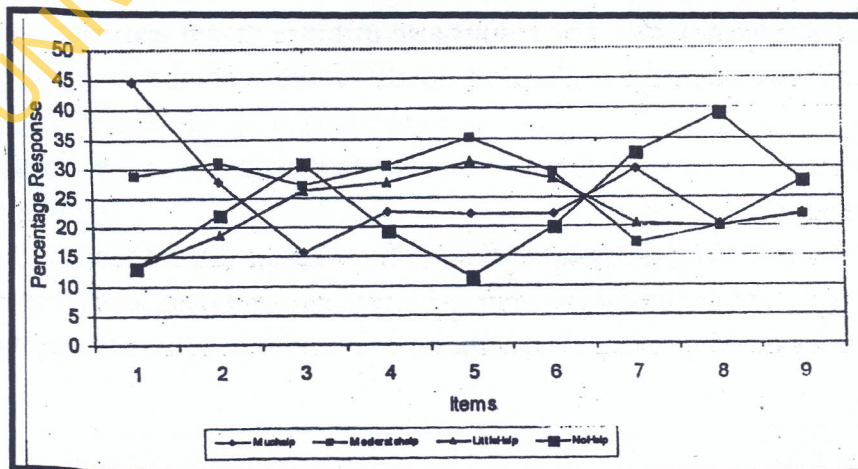


Fig 2: Evaluation Needs Profiles of Social Studies Teachers

Group Differences in Instructional Needs

- (i) *Age as a grouping factor:* The teachers were grouped into 3, viz: those below 30 years formed group A, those between 31 and 45 years formed group B and those above 45 years formed group C. Except for item 4 which showed that there was significant age difference in the ability of the teachers to write instructional objectives in measurable terms, all other items did not show any significant difference.
- (ii) *Sex as a grouping factor:* Male teachers formed one group and female teachers formed another group. The results showed that the teachers differ by sex in the way they use information to improve their teaching (item 3) and present lessons on appropriate class levels of their pupils (item 8). They however, did not differ significantly on the other items.
- (iii) *Teaching experience as a grouping factor:* Teachers with below 10 years teaching experience formed group A, those with between 11 and 20 years formed group B and those above 20 years formed group C. There was no significant group difference in the instructional needs of the teachers by their level of experience.
- (iv) *Professional training as a grouping factor:* Teachers with professional training formed one group and those without professional training formed another group. Results indicate that the teachers differ in instructional needs by the professional training they received, as indicated by the way they organize and produce resources and materials for effective teaching (item 7) and develop in pupils effective study skills (item 12). There was no significant difference between these groups of teachers on other items.

Group Differences in Evaluation Needs

- (i) *Age as a grouping factor:* There was no significant group difference in the teachers' evaluation needs by their age.
- (ii) *Sex as a grouping factor:* The results also indicate that there was no significant sex difference in the evaluation needs of the teachers.
- (iii) *Teaching experience as a grouping factor:* There was no significant group difference in the evaluation needs of the teachers by their teaching experience.
- (iv) *Professional training as a grouping factor:* The teachers differed in their evaluation needs by the professional training they had received, as indicated by the way they develop evaluation schedules (item 5), but not on the other items.

Table II
Differences in Instructional Needs of Teachers by Age of Respondents

Var.	Age	Much Help	Little Help	Total	X2
4	A	3	9	12	22.22*
	B	119	98	217	
	C	12	16	28	
	Total	124	123	257	

*Significant at $P < 0.05$ (Non-directional)

Table III
Differences in Instructional Needs of Teachers by Sex

Var.	Sex	Much Help	Little Help	Total	X2
3	M	92	51	143	8.61*
	F	69	45	114	
	Total	161	96	257	
8	M	61	82	143	12.39*
	F	44	70	114	
	Total	105	152	257	

*Significant at $P < 0.05$ (Non-directional)

Table IV
Differences in Instructional Needs of Teachers by Qualification of Respondents

Var.	Teaching Qualification	Much Help	Little Help	Total	X2
7	Professional	147	84	231	
	Non-Professional	11	14	25	
	Total	158	98	256	
12	Professional	111	120	231	9.16*
	Non-Professional	6	19	25	
	Total	117	139	256	

*Significant at $P > 0.05$ (Non-directional)

Table V
Differences in Evaluation Needs of Teachers by Teaching Qualification

Var.	Teaching Qualification	Much Help	Little Help	Total	X2
5	Professional	149	99	248	7.44*
	Non-Professional	8	17	25	
	Total	157	116	273	

*Significant at $P > 0.05$ (Non-directional)

Discussion

The findings from the study reveal that the teachers perceive dire needs for help in some areas of instruction and evaluation practices. More than 20% of the teachers indicated they need “much” to “moderate” help, in instructional aspects such as in keeping detailed schemes of work (item 2), writing instructional objectives in measurable terms (item 4), using information to improve teaching (item 3), developing in pupils skills to appreciate social studies (item 6), organizing/producing resources and materials for effective teaching (item 7), developing pupils’ ability to master social studies concepts (item 1.3), developing pupils’ understanding of the interrelation that exists between social studies and every day life (item 15) and teaching large classes effectively (item 16).

Similarly, more than 20% of these teachers revealed that they needed “much help” in keeping diary of daily records of work (item 1), determining what to teach (item 5), presenting lessons on pupils’ appropriate class level (item 8), developing daily lesson plan (item 9), presenting lessons so that pupils discover facts by themselves (item 10) and developing in pupils skills in creative thinking (item 11).

The findings with respect to the evaluation needs of the teachers as presented in the need profiles reveal that over 20% of the teachers need “moderate” to “much” help in developing multiple choice (objective) tests and reporting students’ progress respectively.

These findings are indicative of the fact that some teachers in the Oyo State primary school system are still not fully prepared to meet the challenges of teaching Social Studies in the state. These teachers’ perception of the inadequacy of their professional training in meeting the challenges of discharging their duties could form clogs in the wheel of progress of the successful implementation of the UBE programme in the state. If the situation is not checked, it could as well thwart the current efforts of the State government at re-organizing the schools in the State to improve on the standard they had once assumed before the take-over of schools by government. To ameliorate the situation in which these teachers find themselves, and thus improve the effectiveness of instruction at the primary level, there is an urgent need by the Oyo State’s policy makers in the Ministry of Education, and trainers of teachers at all levels of the education system to adopt measures that could improve the teachers on the job. Specifically, Oyo State Ministry of Education or SPEB could link up with the Institute of Education, University of Ibadan to run short term courses that focus on the identified areas of teachers’ need such as developing lesson plan, writing instructional objectives in behavioural terms in order to make assessment of pupils’ learning possible. Another area of focus during the short courses/workshops should be identified

and using teaching methodologies that are appropriate to facilitate learning of social studies. Methods that encourage discovery of facts and development of critical thinking in pupils are critical to improving pupils' learning outcomes. Such methods should equally be interactive, collaborative and participatory.

The study findings also indicated that significant differences exist in some aspects of instructional and evaluation needs of the teachers based on age, sex and professional training. The age difference observed in the study in stating instructional objectives in terms of performance seems to indicate that the young or old teachers respectively (chronological age) need less pedagogic training than teachers of middle age. For the young practising teachers, it is possible that being relatively fresh from teacher training institutions, they are better able to recall and use their acquired knowledge to state instructional objectives in measurable terms than teachers of middle age. The quality of training which middle-aged teachers are exposed to could also explain why they felt that they needed more help than young teachers in stating instructional objectives in behavioural terms. In an attempt to satisfy governments' directive on enhanced teacher qualification at the primary school level, majority of teachers of this age cohort resorted to acquiring such qualifications through part-time programme run at study centres. The quality of graduates produced at most of these centres has seriously come under recent attack in the educational arena in Nigeria.

On the other hand, that the old practising teachers seemed to need less help in stating behavioural objectives, is a finding that stem from a product of time. It would seem that with time older teachers would have become more aware and improved on the job thereby needing little help in writing instructional objectives in behavioural terms. The import of this finding lies in seeing the proper statement of behavioural objectives as road maps to guide the teacher to pace teaching and evaluate pupils' learning. Not stating them out well at the beginning of a lesson would most likely result in the teacher not being able to identify whether these objectives are being achieved or not.

The sex difference observed in the study is indicative of the fact that male and female teachers have unique sex role underpinning that enable them to use information to improve their teaching differently, and present lessons to appropriate levels of their pupils. Studies have shown that female teachers are better at handling children of younger ages than their male counterparts (Ezewu, 1982 and Akinbote, 1997). The findings in this study with respect to sex as a distinguishing factor in teacher needs contradicts the Okpala and Onocha (1983); and Osokoya and Odinko (2004) studies that found no such sex differences in the instructional needs of the teacher.

There is also the finding that professionally trained teachers require much help in the organisation, production and application of teaching resources, developing in pupils effective study skills; and development of evaluation instruments for assessing pupils. That practising teachers who are professionally trained need much help in executing some basic aspects of instructional practices in social studies would seem to stem from their awareness of the importance of these teacher functions in the instructional process. This finding is supported by previous studies which had focused on other school objectives. For instance, Okpala and Onocha (1983) revealed that teachers of primary science need some degree of help in writing objectives in terms of performance; organize science materials and resources for more effective instructions. The findings of Osokoya and Odinko (2004) are equally not different from the findings in this study. The situation is equally true of secondary school teachers in science subjects (Okpala and Onocha, 1987), and among junior secondary school teachers (Mefun, 2004).

On the foreign scene, the works of Sayfarth (1987), Kleinle (1988) and Moore (1977b) cited in Okpala and Onocha (1987) all point to the fact that teachers at both primary and secondary school levels lack the capability for executing effective instructional and evaluation practices without the intervention of their employers, through the organization of workshops, short term courses and the likes.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Evidence from this study has revealed that practising Social Studies teachers to a great extent perceived that they exhibit some professional incompetences in some instructional and evaluation practices. These teachers have distinct instructional and evaluation needs based on age, sex and professional training. The study has thus confirmed some beliefs usually held among school managers that professionalising teaching will go a long way in enhancing teachers' teaching skills.

There is no doubt that the educational system in Nigeria needs high quality teachers in its employment. In the light of the findings and discussion in this study, these recommendations are made with the hope that if implemented, they would boost the teaching and learning of social studies at the primary school level.

First, part of the educational implications of this study is the need to plan and organize on-the-job training and retraining for practising Social Studies teachers in order to address the areas of needs indicated especially among the professionally trained, the young and old and those imposed on them by gender role or stereotyping. In-service training would only be worth the while, if

conscious efforts are made at the planning stage to assess the needs of the teachers and to plan accordingly for their training and re-training so as to meet these needs with a view to conserving funds, avoiding duplication and achieving greater programme expectations.

Second, the employment of teachers into the profession at the lower level should be strictly guided by the level of professional training and not by nepotism, ethnicism and tribal sentiments.

Third, most importantly, those institutions and departments entrusted with the task of preparing teachers, should see the findings in this study as an eye opener that should generate a total overhauling and re-organization of teacher training structures to remove all flaws and weaknesses that may exist.

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