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Nigeria at Hundred: Teachers' and Students' Perceptions of the Adequacy of Upper Basic Education Social Studies Curriculum as a Tool for National Security

By

Tolulope Victoria Gbadamosi and Idowu Olufemi Yinusa

Abstract

Nigeria today is besieged by an array of social, economic and political problems which has been attributed to citizenry low level of civility. This resulted to security threats in the nation, despite, the inclusion of Social studies in the curriculum. This study investigated the perception of teachers and students on the adequacy of upper basic education social studies curriculum as a tool for national security. Three research questions were answered and three hypotheses tested to guide this study. This study adopted a descriptive survey design. A total of 110 social studies teachers and 300 junior secondary school students were selected using simple random sampling technique from Akinyele and Ibadan North Local Government Areas of Oyo State.

Two instruments tagged "Teachers Questionnaire on Social Studies as a tool for national security (TSNS) ($r=0.71$) and Students Questionnaire on Social Studies as a tool for national security" (SSNS) ($r=0.78$) were used to collect data for the study. The estimated reliability coefficients of the instruments were found to be 0.61 for teachers and 0.68 for students. Data were analysed using simple percentage, mean, standard deviation, and t-test at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that teachers had low perception of upper basic social studies curriculum as a tool for national security while the students had a higher perception of upper basic social studies curriculum as a tool for national security. Also, there was a significant difference between the teachers' and students' perception of the adequacy of upper basic social studies curriculum as a tool for national security. It is recommended, among other things that social studies teachers should be exposed to more knowledge on national security concepts. While seminars and workshops should be organised for Social Studies teachers to enable them use the teaching of Social Studies to achieve national security.

Keywords: Upper Basic Social Studies Curriculum, Social Studies Teachers, Students and National Security.

Introduction

The spate of violence, insecurity and ethnic clashes are already threatening the century old aspirations of the founding fathers of Nigeria in developing a strong, reliable and egalitarian country. The problem of national insecurity is manifested in various challenges facing the nation at hundred. Several efforts have been made by stakeholders in Nigeria to address some of the problems with little or no effect in improving national security (Oladiti 2014; Kupoluyi 2014; Gbadamosi 2013).

However, education is vital for socio-economic and political development. It is an instrument par excellence for national development. It is a potent tool in graduating families out of poverty and promoting social security. Education is the frontier for social justice and the wheels of social mobility and redistribution of societal wealth (National Policy on Education 2004). The Nigeria

system of education is geared towards producing individuals who will not only possess the capability to solve problems but also contribute to the development of the society. This objective can only be achieved if our curriculum is properly designed and implemented.

Social Studies, which is one of the core subjects at the upper basic schools in Nigeria, gained momentum as a school subject from 1977 especially after the introduction of the new National Policy on Education (NPE) popularly known as the 6-3-3-4 system. Social studies, like other subject, has been subjected to various definitions by scholars. For instance, the Committee on Primary School Social Studies Programme (1971) and the Nigerian Educational Research Council (NERC 1983), now Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) defined Social Studies as common learning of human interaction with the social

and physical environment. Explaining further, the Committee states that Social Studies is not only a study, but a way of life; of how human influences, and is being influenced by the physical, social, political, economic, psychological and cultural environments. It is the totality of experience and understanding a child gets having been exposed to a course of study based on human's problems in his or her environment, the factors that are normally responsible in human's interactions with this environment, and the resulting ways of life of human beings.

The subject was adopted in Nigeria as a result of the quest for relevance in the Nigerian education (Jekayinfa et al. 2011). The traditional subjects like geography, history and civics inherited from the colonial education system were criticized for not being relevant both in purpose and content to the immediate needs of the Nigerian child and the society at large. The traditional subjects also encouraged learners to know more about the colonial master's country than about their own environment and the pressing problems in their society (Jekayinfa et al. 2011).

Kolawole (2006) citing Wagner (1958) noted that curriculum is generally considered to be all of the experiences that learners learn under the direction and guidance of the school. Tanner and Tanner (1975) who defined curriculum as the planned and guided learning experiences and intended learning outcomes formulated through the systematic reconstruction of knowledge and experience, under the auspices of the school, for the learners continuous and willful growth in personal-social competence.

The present Basic social studies education curriculum in Nigeria was introduced in 2007 but began its implementation in 2008 with five themes and twelve topics at primary one, six themes and fourteen topics at primary two, eight themes and seventeen topics at primary three, ten themes and twenty-eight topics at primary four, nine themes and twenty-eight topics at primary five, five themes and thirty topics at primary six, six

themes and ten topics at junior secondary one, fourteen themes and thirty-four topics at junior secondary two, and six themes and thirteen topics at junior secondary three. The following themes Family, Culture, leadership and training; storage and water supply; social values; Community; Science, Technology and Society; People and their environment; National Economy; and Citizenship occurred in almost all the class.

Meanwhile, the main purpose of social studies teaching at the upper basic level is to enable students to achieve the following:

- (i) develop the ability to adapt to his or her changing environment;
- (ii) become responsible and disciplined individuals capable and willing to contribute to the development of their societies;
- (iii) inculcates the right types of values;
- (iv) develop sense of comprehension towards other people, their diverse cultures history and those fundamental things that make them human;
- (v) develop the capacity to recognize the many dimensions of being human in different cultural and social contexts
- (vi) develop a sense of solidarity and sharing based on a sense of security in one's own culture (NERDC 2007).

Going by the objectives of upper basic social studies education curriculum, it shows that, citizenship participation can start or be developed in the school through effective teaching of the themes and contents of social studies. Therefore, in this present situation that Nigerian unity and democracy is under threat, education can be used to foster the much needed unity for the survival of the nation. It becomes imperative to investigate into how the upper basic social studies curriculum has been able to train the citizens as it relates to participating toward the development of the Nigeria society.

Security is ambiguous and elastic in its meaning. However, in this paper, to be secured is to feel free from threats, anxiety or

danger. In this sense, Ajibewa (2004) define security to mean a political order both domestic and international, which protects both individuals and states against the immediate threat of physical violence. Security is the main things that hold all sectors of the nation together, be it historical, political, economic, social, religious, educational and cultural (Jekayinfa and Mofoluwawo Oladiran 2010)

National security is a measure taken by a country to ensure survival and safety. National security is a state or condition where most cherished values and beliefs, democratic way of life, institutions of governance and unity, welfare and well-being as a nation and people are permanently protected and continuously enhanced. The threats, vulnerability, or the collapse of the national security in the country normally jeopardizes both the nation and the citizens resulting in a diverstating and colossal consequences (Floyd 2011).

However, national security is at stake when one or more of country's vital interests are threatened. It is instructive to note that for the better part of the fifty-three years of Nigeria independence, the country was under military administration resulting from military takeover of the democratic and constitutional structures of the state. The military takeovers are security breaches resulting from a wide range of treasons, sometimes a culmination of a number of security and political developments. The security, political and sometimes socio-economic developments are security concerns that were not addressed or managed by the existing state structure at that time. Apart from military coups there are other security issues that have challenged, and indeed, rattled the democratic political system (National Security Strategy for the Federal Republic of Nigeria 2011).

Social studies has been introduced into Nigeria school curricular since 1963, but despite it teaching since then, Nigeria as a nation has been battling with a lot of problems such as indiscipline, inter-religious

crisis, as well as, inter and intra-ethnic violence. Other problems are suspicion and distrust among the various groups; Niger Delta crisis, the problem of North- South dichotomy, the problem of the Boko-Haram, religious crisis in Borno and Plateau State which is spreading fast to other Northern states. The challenges also include corruption, loss of value, negative attitudes to national issues, and lack of patriotism, kidnapping and a host of others. Also, riotous behaviour in public places, recklessness in driving, lack of respect for law and order, cheating and exploitation of fellow citizens, lack of right attitude to work, pervasiveness, and lack of commitment to a sound ethical base, pacesetters in cheating, stealing and fraud including the notorious advance fraud called 419 (Gbadamosi 2013; Jekayinfa and Mofoluwawo 2010).

The major consequences of this insecurity in Nigeria include loss of life and property, breakdown of law and order, shortage of fund allocated to the educational sector and loss of economic activities. For instance, for the past five years, the Islamist sect called Boko-haram has been known to target public places like schools, banks, markets burning them down (Olusegun and Anofi (2014); Kupoluyi (2014).

Since Social Studies is society bound, this requires that its curriculum should reflects the problems, yearnings and aspirations of a given society. It was observed that, the nature of the problems and aspiration of the society as always determined the nature of social studies curriculum and of course, determines the purpose which the curriculum is out to serve. Probably, that is why Adeyemi and Oyetade (2010) opined that social studies curriculum put the problems of society into consideration. Nigeria for instance, has her problems which are not necessarily identical with the problems of other societies. It is essential therefore, that social studies curriculum of Nigeria should take into consideration the peculiar problems of Nigeria among which is the problem of citizenship apathy and national insecurity

which have become an issues of national concern irrespective of cultural background.

The future molders and future leaders of a nation are her teachers and students (young ones) respectively. It is highly important to observe, study, and analyze their perceptions of societal issues. First, teachers are conductors of knowledge (information) and the quality of knowledge is at their disposal for dissemination. Perception also goes a long way to influence individual attitudes, values and beliefs. If an issue is perceived as sensitive, such perception fertilizes individual values, attitudes and beliefs. As with the perception of the teachers, so do the perceptions of students have several implications for the society as it transmits from one generation to another. Rice (2010) also noted that, experience of teachers is very important in achieving the goal of an educational programme. The impact of experience is strongest during the first few years of teaching; after that, marginal returns diminish. Also, there were divergent reports in favour of both sexes. Hence, there is the need for further research on effects of gender on teachers and students perception on adequacy of upper basic Social Studies curriculum as a tool for citizenship participation and national security in Nigeria. Against this background, it becomes pertinent to investigate the perception of teachers' and students' on the adequacy of upper basic Social Studies curriculum as a tool for citizenship participation and national security in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Nigeria has been consistently under siege of security threats such as distrust, political thuggery, ethnicity, unemployment, terrorism among others. In an attempt to provide adequate security, the Nigerian government provided 9-year basic education and re-aligned Social studies to meet these challenges. However, since the inception of basic education curriculum, there are few or no empirical studies on adequacy of basic education curriculum. Hence, this study

investigated the perception of teachers and students on the adequacy of upper basic Social studies curriculum as a tool for national security in Nigeria.

Research Questions

In addressing the problem stated above, answers were sought to the following questions;

- (1) What are the teachers' perceptions of the adequacy of Upper Basic Social Studies Curriculum as a tool for national security?
- (2) What are the students' perceptions of the adequacy of Upper Basic Social Studies Curriculum as a tool for national security?

Hypotheses

Ho₁: There is no significant difference between the perception of teachers and students on the adequacy of Upper Basic Social Studies Curriculum as a tool for national security.

Ho₂: There is no significant difference between the perception of male and female teachers' on the adequacy of Upper Basic Social Studies Curriculum as a tool for national security.

Ho₃: There is no significant difference between the perception of male and female students' on the adequacy of Upper Basic Social Studies Curriculum as a tool for national security.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive research design. The population consisted of Social Studies teachers and students at the junior secondary schools in Oyo state. The researcher recognizes that there are thirty-three local government areas in Oyo state with certain number of upper basic schools in each of them. Akinyele and Ibadan North Local Government area of Oyo state were selected using simple random sampling technique through balloting for the study.

Also, purposive sampling technique was employed by restricting the sampled population to teachers handling social studies at junior secondary school 3 and their students, in the public and private junior secondary schools in Akinyele and Ibadan North local Government area of Oyo state.

In collecting the data for the study, three hundred (300) junior secondary school three (3) pupils and one hundred and ten (110) social studies teachers from forty-eight (48) private and sixty-two (62) public junior secondary schools were selected using simple random sampling technique from the two local government areas selected for the study. The instruments were Teachers Questionnaire on Social Studies as a tool for national security (TSNS) ($r=0.71$) and Students Questionnaire on Social Studies as a tool for national security (SSNS) ($r=0.78$) designed to gather information about Social Studies teachers and students perception of the upper basic social studies curriculum as a tool for national security with respect to its philosophy aims, content, teaching strategies, instructional materials for teaching and students evaluation.

The content validity of the instrument was established by four experts in Social Studies in Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan. To determine the reliability of the instrument a pilot testing was carried out. The questionnaire was administered to twenty students from a school and twenty Social Studies teachers from twenty (20) Schools who were not involved in the main study.

Their responses were scored and data collected were analysed to obtain the reliability coefficient using cronbach Alpha techniques. The reliability coefficient was found to be 0.68 for the students' and 0.61 for the teachers. The data collected was analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentages, means, standard deviation and inferential statistics- of t-test at 0.05 level of significance.

The number of subjects giving each kind of response was calculated and numerical grades assigned to each point on the scale were assigned for example: 'to a Large Extent (4), Just Adequate (3), 'marginally (2) and Not At All (1)'. The mean and standard deviation for each statement on the questionnaire and for the given classes of respondents were calculated. With regards to the positively worded items on the questionnaire, the higher the mean rating, especially from 2.5 the greater the degree of agreement with the statement. For the negatively worded items, the interpretation is reversed. The lower the mean, the greater the degree of agreement. To determine the acceptable level in research questions the midpoint of the likert scale of the instrument was taken as 2.5. The hypotheses were tested using t-test.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the social studies teachers' perceptions on the adequacy of Upper Basic Social Studies curriculum as a tool for national security?

Table 1: Table showing the perception of social studies teachers on the adequacy of upper basic social studies as a tool for National Security

S/N	Items: To what extent does the contents of upper basic social studies curriculum makes pupils to:	To a large extent (%)	Just Adequate (%)	Marginally (%)	Not At all (%)	Mean	S.D	Perception
1.	Free from gender domination and discrimination	35 (31.8)	47 (42.7)	25 (22.7)	3 (2.7)	3.04	0.81	High
2.	Free from religion domination and discrimination	16 (14.5)	33 (30)	53 (48.2)	8 (7.3)	2.52	0.83	High
3.	Free from environmental destruction and resources scarcity	24 (21.8)	48 (43.6)	30 (27.3)	8 (7.3)	2.8	0.86	High
4.	Protection from illegal incursions and resources exploitation	7 (6.4)	20 (18.2)	51 (46.4)	32 (29.1)	2.02	0.85	Low
5.	Protection from inter and intra ethnics violence	8 (8.2)	21 (19.1)	47 (42.7)	33 (30)	2.05	0.9	Low
6.	Free from political and electioneering conflicts	16 (14.5)	36 (32.7)	35 (31.8)	23 (20.9)	2.31	0.98	Low
7.	Protection from boundary disputes	9 (8.2)	25 (22.7)	41 (37.3)	35 (31.8)	2.07	0.93	Low
8.	Free from unemployment	3 (2.7)	26 (23.6)	42 (38.2)	39 (35.5)	1.93	0.83	Low
9.	Protection from communicable and non-communicable diseases	10 (9.1)	35 (31.8)	37 (33.6)	28 (25.5)	2.25	0.94	Low

From table 1, the overall weighted mean of the Teachers' perception on the adequacy of the Upper Basic Social Studies Curriculum as a tool for national security is 2.33 which shows a low level of perception.

Research Question 2: What are the students' perceptions on the adequacy of Upper Basic Social Studies curriculum as a tool for national security?

Table 2: Table showing the perception of pupils on the adequacy of upper basic social studies as a tool for National Security

S/N	Items: To what extent does the contents of upper basic social studies curriculum makes students to:	To a large extent (%)	Just Adequate (%)	Marginally (%)	Not at all (%)	Mean	S.D	Perception
1.	Free from gender domination and discrimination	119 (39.7)	84 (28)	67 (22.3)	30 (10)	2.99	1.01	High
2.	Free from religion domination and discrimination	119 (39.7)	73 (24.3)	71 (23.7)	37 (12.3)	2.91	0.95	High
3.	Free from environmental destruction and resources scarcity	115 (38.3)	90 (30)	55 (18.3)	40 (13.3)	2.93	1.06	High
4.	Protection from illegal incursions and resources exploitation	107 (35.7)	80 (26.7)	64 (21.3)	49 (16.3)	2.82	1.09	High
5.	Protection from inter and intra ethnics violence	100 (33.3)	87 (29)	68 (22.7)	45 (15)	2.47	1.11	Low
6.	Free from political and electioneering conflicts	103 (34.3)	79 (26.3)	68 (22.7)	50 (16.6)	2.78	1.09	High
7.	Protection from boundary disputes	103 (34.3)	83 (27.7)	64 (21.3)	50 (16.6)	2.80	1.09	High
8.	Free from unemployment	93 (31)	62 (20.7)	92 (30.7)	53 (17.7)	2.52	1.10	High
9.	Protection from communicable and non-communicable diseases	120 (40)	63 (21)	77 (25.7)	40 (13.3)	2.87	1.08	High

The overall weighted mean of the Junior Secondary School Pupils' perception on the adequacy of the Upper Basic Social Studies Curriculum as a tool for national security is 2.79 which shows a high level of perception.

H01: There is no significant difference between the perception of teachers' and students' on the adequacy of Upper Basic Social Studies Curriculum as a tool for national security.

Table 3: Table showing perception of Teachers and students on the adequacy of Upper Basic Social Studies Curriculum as a tool for citizenship participation

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Dev.	Crit-t	Cal-t	DF	P	Remark
Teachers	110	21.16	3.611	1.960	32.233	408	0.000	Sig.
Students	300	25.53	5.897					

*significant at $P < 0.05$

Table 3 shows that there is a significant difference between the perception of teachers' and students' on the adequacy of upper basic social studies curriculum as a tool for national security, since calculated T-value (32.233) is greater than tabulated T-value at 5% level of significance, 408 degree of

freedom (1.960); the null hypothesis (H_0) is therefore rejected.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between the perception of male and female teachers' on the adequacy of upper basic Social Studies curriculum as a tool for national security.

Table 4: Table showing perception of Male and female social studies Teachers on the adequacy of upper basic social studies curriculum as a tool for National security

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Dev.	Crit-t	Cal-t	DF	P	Remark
Male	46	21.74	3.330	1.980	0.427	108	0.515	n.s
Female	64	20.75	3.771					

Table 4 showed that there is no significant difference between the perception of male and female teachers' on the adequacy of Upper Basic Social Studies curriculum as a tool for national security, since calculated T-value (0.427) is lesser than tabulated T-value at 5% level of significance, 108 degree of

freedom (1.980). Thus, the null hypothesis (H_0) is therefore not rejected.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference between male and female students' perceptions on the adequacy of upper basic Social Studies curriculum as a tool for national security.

Table 5: Table showing perception of male and female junior secondary school students on the adequacy of upper basic social studies curriculum as a tool for national security

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Dev.	Crit-t	Cal-t	DF	P	Remark
Male	142	25.20	6.064	1.960	0.001	298	0.975	n.s
Female	158	25.70	6.043					

Table 5 showed that there is no significant difference between male and female students' perceptions on the adequacy of Upper Basic Social Studies curriculum as a tool for national security, since calculated T-value (0.001) is lesser than tabulated T-value at 5% level of significance 298 degree of

freedom (1.960). Thus, the null hypothesis (H_0) is therefore not rejected.

Discussion

It is evident from the outcome of the finding on research question 1, as shown by the result on table 1 that social studies teachers have a

low perception on the adequacy of upper basic social studies curriculum as a tool for national security with their valid mean scores for two items on table 1 out of the nine items and overall weighted mean (2.33). They recorded highest mean score in their perception of the adequacy of the social studies curriculum as helping students to be free from gender domination and discrimination. This may be as a result of what they observed from the students' behaviour that the teaching of social studies have made them to be free from gender domination and discrimination in the classroom or outside the classroom. Whereas they recorded low perception on the adequacy of upper basic social studies curriculum to help students to be free from unemployment. This result corroborates the submission of Adeyemi and Oyetade (2010) that social studies should be restructured to be effective in fulfilling its mandate to assure national security. On the other hand, this result negates the findings of Jekayinfa (2010) that teachers have high level of perception of social studies curriculum for security education and could actively affect the state of national security in Nigeria.

Moreso, as shown by the result of research question 2, students have a relatively high level of perception of adequacy of upper basic social studies curriculum as a tool for national security. This is shown in their valid mean score for eight items out of the nine items and their weighted Mean of 2.79. The students recorded the highest mean score in their perception of the adequacy of upper basic social studies curriculum as helping them to be free from gender domination and discrimination and this tally with the teachers' perception also. While they recorded least mean score at item number 16, that is in their perception on the adequacy of upper basic social studies curriculum as protecting them from inter and intra ethnics violence, this might be as a result of the fact that, there are still elements of ethnicity in the classroom and their communities in general.

The result further showed a significant difference between teachers' and students'

perception on the adequacy of upper basic social studies curriculum as a tool for national security. This could be due to the fact that the teachers' are more experience than the students and are all familiar with the present situation in the country than the students'. This result negates the finding of Buckman (2011) that teachers and students have the same level of perception of the occurrence of school bullying. On the contrary, Social Studies students perceived to a high extent that the upper basic social studies curriculum is adequate for national security while the teachers perceived it to a low extent as adequate for national security. In other words, the findings revealed that students did not perceive the curriculum in the same ways as the teachers. Though the findings of the two groups seemed to be contradictory, the fact remains that the need for a conceptual clarification of the nature and purpose of Social Studies is highly crucial to its successful teaching.

On the issues of teachers gender, there is no significant difference between the perception of male and females social studies teachers' on the adequacy of upper basic social studies curriculum as a tool for national security. This result is in line with Olalekan (2013) who found that there is no difference in the feedback obtained from a stimulus given to male and female, so far that both male and female social studies teachers undergoes the same training.

The study also found out that, there is no significant difference between the male and female students' perception on the adequacy of upper basic social studies curriculum as a tool for national security. This could have been influenced by the fact that the students were taught in the same classroom by the same teacher, under the same condition.

Conclusion

Findings from the study show that social studies teachers' viewed the upper basic social studies curriculum as very weak to effect a positive change in national security, that is the upper basic social studies was seen by the social studies teachers as performing

passive roles in effecting those outcomes of national security. It can also be concluded that, the current upper basic social studies curriculum has not really made the students to be protected or free from illegal incursions and resources exploitation, boundary disputes and unemployment. This implies that students are not fully armed with substantial knowledge on how to be free from such. Thus, there is still more ground to be covered by the social studies teachers both in teaching the junior secondary school students and encouraging them to keep abreast of social happenings.

Recommendations

Based on the finding of this study the following recommendations are made:

- (1) Social studies teachers' should be exposed to more knowledge on national security, its problems and how it can be effectively tackled. This is a clarion call on Social Studies Association of Nigeria (SOSAN). The teachers would in turn transit the knowledge acquired adequately to their students' in social studies. This is based on the unparallel position of the subject in equipping its recipients with knowledge, skills and attitudes to be able to overcome the security challenges in the country, which would indirectly benefit the society.
- (2) Likewise, there is the need to build the capacity of teacher training institutions to good governance, human rights, gender and youth development, empowerment, National security and the positive role of media in promoting these concepts with the hope of producing a core of teachers capable of teaching these values to school students in conflict areas.
- (3) The Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) should review the social studies curriculum to be up to date with

social issues and happening in the country, since social studies deals with current issues in the society.

- (4) The government should address the state of insecurity in the country, most especially the Boko Haram insurgency, since all the sector of the country is interrelated and interdependence. Likewise, it must be noted that no meaningful learning can take place in an atmosphere that is devour of peace and security.

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