



Implementation of Social Studies Curriculum in Junior Secondary Schools in Kogi State: Challenges and Prospects

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Abstract: The study evaluated the enactment of the Social Studies curriculum in junior secondary schools within Kogi State, specifically highlighting discrepancies between the intended curriculum and its practical application. Two primary research questions and hypotheses were formulated, adopting a descriptive research methodology with a survey design. The participants comprised male and female educators from public secondary schools in Kogi State. Utilising the Taro Yamene method, a sample of 341 Social Studies teachers was drawn from a total population of 2328. Stratified sampling was used in selecting 114 schools from 58; thereafter, 147 males and 194 females' teachers were randomly selected. A 22-item rating scale was the major data collection tool, segmented into parts A-E. Data analysis, incorporating mean, standard deviation, and the z-test (with a 0.05 significance level). The study identified critical gaps in curriculum implementation. These encompassed inadequate content selection and sequencing, and a neglect of innovative pedagogical techniques. While foundational social studies concepts were emphasised, cultural values and health issues were sidelined. Factors contributing to these discrepancies included teacher apathy, insufficient oversight by educational inspectors, and subpar introductory strategies to engage students. To bridge these gaps, recommendations included optimising content coverage, providing modern instructional tools, enhancing the learning environment, and mitigating teacher and student absenteeism. Furthermore, curriculum revisions to address societal issues and the consistent use of student-centred teaching methods were advocated. Regular principal oversight was emphasised to ensure effective teaching practices.

Keywords: Received, Implementations, Curriculum, Gap, Social studies.

INTRODUCTION

In ancient history, Education has been a veritable tool for national development. Consequently, no nation can afford to play with educating its citizenry if they are to develop socially, economically, politically, technologically and otherwise. The aspiration of every great nation is to therefore, come up with educational policies that will make this development achievable. The Federal Republic of Nigeria, in recognition of the pivotal role education plays as a tool for the development of the individual, society and the nation at large, requires a working curriculum, human and material resources to improve her social organizations and preserve her cultural heritage.

Curriculum is the sum of all learning experience that learners encounter under the direction of the school to achieve intended learning outcome of education. These outcome can be seen in terms of students achievement in the various subjects taught in schools. Received curriculum refers to the foundational type of curriculum that includes the intended goals, objectives, standards, benchmarks, desired student outcomes, content, teaching methods, teacher training, instructional materials, and assessment guidelines for various grade levels and objectives. On the other hand, implemented curriculum pertains to the actual concepts and content that students acquire and retain outside of the classroom. The curriculum received is created by the federal

government, spanning from basic school to postsecondary education. Implemented curriculum, in contrast, pertains to the practical application of the intended curriculum within the classroom setting.

In 1997, the Federal Minister of Education, while visiting schools across the country, declared that the fundamental facilities in schools, including classrooms, laboratories, workshops, sporting facilities, equipment, and libraries, were in a state of complete deterioration (Okoroma, 2006). The majority of schools were found to be in a deplorable physical condition. This event sparked the implementation of the comprehensive and intricate universal basic education reform currently taking place in Nigeria, which is considered one of the most ambitious, radical, far-reaching, and extensive reforms worldwide. This is because it envisioned a comprehensive transformation in the fundamental principles and methodologies of education in Nigeria.

The inclusion of Social Studies in the Nigerian school curriculum aims to rectify various social problems and promote the development of responsible citizens who can contribute to the achievement of the country's national goals and objectives (Gabriel, Gbenga, 1994, as cited in Abdul-kabir, 2014). Social Studies is a discipline that focuses on the examination of human beings in relation to their physical and social surroundings. The introduction of Social Studies aimed to address various national issues such as religious intolerance, indiscipline, cultism, drug abuse, examination malpractices, political thuggery, armed robbery, drug counterfeiting, hostage taking, terrorism, child abuse, and trafficking. Furthermore, it instills moral principles such as patriotism, trustworthiness, honesty, diligence, religious and political tolerance, as well as deference to parents and established authority.

Since Social Studies aims to cultivate knowledge, skills, and moral attitudes in students, it is crucial to examine how well the Social Studies curriculum is being put into practice in classrooms. This research primarily focuses on demonstrating the efficacy of Social Studies education in addressing the moral quandary in Nigeria. By recognizing this, the study emphasizes the principles of Social Studies and the methods used to teach the topic in the classroom. This initiative has the potential to foster favorable mindsets of unity and collaboration, which are crucial for the establishment of a strong and esteemed nation. By imparting the values of honesty, integrity, diligence, equity, justice, and sportsmanship, individuals can actively contribute to the nation's progress. Furthermore, it will raise awareness among learners about the significance of discipline in maintaining a well-organized society. Hence, it is imperative to rectify the deficiencies in the existing social studies curriculum with regards to lesson organization and execution, subject matter comprehensiveness, and student involvement. The study also examined the factors contributing to the gap and sought solutions to narrow the gaps for the successful implementation of the social studies curriculum in junior secondary schools in Kogi State.

Statement of the Problem

Over the years, there has been a notable disparity between the prescribed curriculum and the content that is effectively delivered in the classroom. The curriculum implementation process guarantees that the classroom teacher possesses a comprehensive understanding of the syllabus, scheme of work, unit plans, lesson plans, and the ability to utilize them with effectiveness and clarity. The procedure guarantees that the classroom instructor employs suitable pedagogical techniques and instructional resources to improve student learning. In addition, the instructor exhibits expertise in creating lesson plans, using techniques to actively involve students, and, most all, possesses a thorough comprehension of the pupils they are instructing. It has also been observed that gaps do exist between a received and implemented curriculum. These can be in areas such as lesson planning and delivery, students engagement, content coverage, proper evaluation of the processes just to mention a few. Speculation are also that these gaps exist due to many factors and activities in the classroom which include overload of curriculum content, examination malpractice, poor funding, inadequate or lack of instructional resources, large class size, students enrolment issues, lack of some physical facilities just to mention but a few. A

popular opinion has it that necessary factors like teachers professional training, proper evaluation, availability and utilization of both instructional and physical facilities are not considered or readily put in place by curriculum planners and educational stakeholders. It is on this premise that the researcher investigated the gaps in the received and the implemented social studies curriculum in terms of lesson planning and delivery, content coverage of the subject and students' engagement. The study also investigated the causes of the gap and find ways to bridge these gaps for effective implementation of the social studies curriculum in junior secondary schools in Kogi State.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study was to examine the implementation of Social Studies curriculum in junior secondary schools in Kogi State. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Determine the gap that exist between the received and the implemented social studies curriculum in terms of lesson planning and lesson delivery in junior secondary schools in Kogi State.
2. Investigate the gap that exist between the received and the implemented social studies curriculum in terms of content coverage in junior secondary schools in Kogi State.

The following research questions guided the work:

1. What are the gaps that exist between the received and the implemented social studies curriculum in terms of lesson planning and lesson delivery in junior secondary schools in Kogi State?
2. What are the gaps that exist between the received and the implemented social studies curriculum in terms of content coverage in junior secondary schools in Kogi State?

The following hypotheses were stated to guide the study

HO₁: There is no significant difference in the mean response of male and female teachers on the gaps that exist between the received and implemented social studies curriculum in terms of lesson planning and delivery in junior secondary schools in Kogi State.

HO₂: There is no significant difference in the mean response of male and female teachers on the gaps that exist between the received and implemented social studies curriculum in terms of content coverage in junior secondary schools in Kogi State.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of curriculum

In order to achieve the objectives of education, it is essential to have a tool that serves as a functional mechanism. The term used to refer to this tool is "curriculum," which includes all the intentionally designed and guided learning experiences and desired learning outcomes that the school creates to support the intellectual, emotional, and physical growth of the student (Aneke, 2016). The curriculum serves as the means through which the society, through educational institutions, imparts knowledge and skills to its members, encompassing both adults and youth. Hence, the caliber of education in any given society is contingent upon the caliber of the society's curriculum.

A curriculum is a comprehensive compilation of courses available in a particular field of specialization. It refers to a collection of courses offered by an educational institution that are necessary to fulfill the requirements of a specific field of study. A curriculum encompasses the instructional methods, learning opportunities, and assessment of learners' performance that aim to achieve and evaluate the desired learning objectives of a particular series of activities. As stated by Morris and Adamson (2010), curriculum refers to a comprehensive and specific instructional plan established by policy-makers. It includes a range of procedural and non-procedural courses that are necessary to fulfill a specific degree. Curriculum information refers

to specific information that is intended to be shared, typically but not exclusively, from one group to another.

Curriculum Gap

Gaps are not merely absences, but rather they present a genuine challenge. It appears as though we are positioned on one bank of a river, with a clear view of the opposite bank. The task at hand simply involves constructing a bridge. We need to go through the stream for a short while and establish a solid foundation, after which the structure will emerge. Subsequently, students can effortlessly cross the bridge to the opposite side, enabling our educators and educational institutions to seamlessly fulfill their aspirations of serving as a conduit to a superior existence for each student.

Curriculum gap refers to the systematic assessment and analysis of the curriculum's material in relation to the specific skills and information that students are anticipated to acquire upon completing their education. Curriculum gap analysis enables educators to pinpoint areas where students may lack crucial knowledge and abilities, facilitating the implementation of interventions to ensure equal opportunities for all students to achieve success. This blog post will delineate the sequential procedures entailed in conducting a curricular gap analysis and provide guidance on addressing identified gaps.

Curriculum planning requires a meticulously designed curriculum that is suitable and adaptable to the needs of all learners. Inspectors will assess the extent to which the curriculum adequately caters to the requirements of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), as part of the curriculum review process. This will entail examining the extent to which the curriculum is entirely inclusive and facilitates optimal advancement for all pupils.

Received Curriculum

The received curriculum, often referred to as the intended curriculum, is established by the educational organizational structure at the macro level in numerous countries worldwide (van den Akker, 2010). The curriculum generally includes the goals and expected results set by the creators of the curriculum policy, as well as the textbooks, official syllabi, or curriculum standards established by a specific country or organization (Kuiper, Folmer, & Ottevanger, 2013; NRC, 2004; van den Akker, 2003).

The education obtained can be categorized into two distinct classifications: the ideal curriculum and the official curriculum. The ideal curriculum, known as the ideological domain, includes the initial thoughts and ideas proposed by the curriculum developers (Thijs & van den Akker, 2009; van den Akker, 2003). The viewpoint of external experts in the topic, who are not affiliated with the educational system, is considered (van den Akker, 2003). The official curriculum is formulated by the documentation or transformation of the creators' ideas into instructional resources. The curriculum is influenced by the creators' principles as much as the prescribed curriculum. The curriculum obtained should align with the curriculum implemented to successfully achieve the curriculum's goals through the curriculum gained.

Implemented Curriculum

The adopted curriculum pertains to the precise educational activities that take place within schools. It encompasses the engagement between students and professors, as well as among students themselves. Put simply, it refers to the tangible implementation of the curriculum that is effectively taught and provided. Also known as the 'curriculum in action' or the 'taught curriculum'. The implemented curriculum at the school level consists of materials, instructional approaches, and time allocations. Its purpose is to guide instructors on how to effectively execute the acquired curriculum. Thijs and van den Akker (2009) and van den Akker (2003) propose two interpretations of the implemented curriculum. The first component is the perceived curriculum, which refers to how the teachers, who play a crucial role, interpret and comprehend the

curriculum. The perceived curriculum refers to the teacher's overall approach to teaching, including their philosophy, lesson plans, schemes of work, and their interpretation of what should be taught in the classroom (Van den Akker, 2003). The instructional method is often known as the operational curriculum (Kuiper, Folmer & Ottevanger, 2013; van den Akker, 2003). It considers the teachers' aptitude in understanding the developers' ideas and putting them into practice, as well as their capacity to impact the learner's mentality.

The execution of a curriculum can provide challenges as it may stray from the intended course of action and expose shortcomings that lead to a mismatch between the aspirations of the curriculum creators and the actual instructional methods employed in the classroom (Thijs & van den Akker, 2009; van den Akker, 2003). Curriculum developers have confidence that their curriculum, which they perceive as being of superior quality, will be comprehended and implemented in accordance with their original vision. This notion neglects to recognize the participation of other individuals in the process of implementing the curriculum.

Curriculum Implementation

The curriculum is enacted through a methodical progression of educational experiences, bolstered by instruments for efficient implementation, and carried out in the classroom during teacher-student interactions. Curriculum implementation involves the active engagement of students with the curriculum materials, guided by the teacher, with the aim of acquiring specific knowledge, attitudes, abilities, and skills. The study conducted by Mkpa and Izuagba in 2009 was cited by Obilo and Saugoleye in 2015. Curriculum implementation involves the active engagement of the learner, who is the specific target of the program, in order to acquire the essential skills, attitudes, and abilities through interaction with the provided information and materials. Curriculum implementation refers to the actions performed by individuals who are in charge of providing and distributing materials that aid in accomplishing educational goals. The materials encompass many items such as textbooks, instructional materials, and desks. This is because in order to effectively implement the curriculum contents at any stage of the educational system, it is necessary to provide supplementary materials that will complement the teacher's classroom activities. These materials are essential for the successful implementation of educational programs at the classroom level. Mkpa and Izuagba (2009) cited in Obilo and Saugoleye (2015). The user states that curriculum implementation involves the learner actively participating in scheduled learning opportunities. This planning includes selecting the proper instructional materials to be used at different levels, in accordance with societal needs. "Need" refers to the discrepancy between what currently exists and what should exist. Consequently, the desires of society are formulated and encoded into the curriculum, which is then entrusted to the implementer (the teacher) for the purpose of imparting and instilling these ideas in the learners.

The knowledge of the curriculum is always specified in two ways:

- a) It's relation to punitive sources
- b) The relationship it has with a wide range of students. Curricula are intentionally constructed with consideration for learners' existing knowledge and are tailored for specific groups of learners (Scott, 2014).

Significance of Social Studies Curriculum in Students' life

The aims of the Social Studies educational plan in Nigeria aim to develop a strong and balanced personality as a foundation for efficient social education, directed towards the promotion of responsible, intelligent, and self-governing citizens. Sociological inquiries enhance the core.

The following are some of the significance of Social Studies Curriculum:

- a) Provides sociological and societal consistency and accountability;
- b) It makes learning continuum from childhood to adulthood;
- c) Emphasizes the individual's practical implementation of learning ideas that are explicit, quantifiable, and attainable;

- d) Offers a comprehensive plan for learning at specific age levels, ensuring that students study all the material in the course.
- e) The Social Studies curriculum offers guidance to educators, furnishing students with materials and instructional resources that are concise, captivating, and relevant.

Significance of Social Studies in the school educational plan for national development

- a) Augments Students' Social Awareness: The diverse disciplines encompassed under the Social Studies curriculum enable students to acquire knowledge, observe, and comprehend human conduct, policies, ethics, and the interconnectedness of individuals from diverse backgrounds. This fosters the pupils' development of a broader perspective on the global population and the human condition.
- b) Social Studies fosters the development of advanced cognitive talents such as application, comprehension, analysis, synthesis, and creativity in students, hence enhancing their capacity for serious thought.

Gaps between the Received Curriculum and Implemented Curriculum

The perceived gaps between the received curriculum and implemented curriculum can be in the form of:

Gap in Lesson Planning and Delivery

The lesson plan is the most granular and precise level of instructional plans. It is obtained through the examination of the structure of the scheme of work / unit plan. Therefore, by subdividing the unit plan into smaller themes and sub-topics, we obtain the lesson topics, which may be utilized for lesson planning (Okai, 2010). A lesson plan can be defined as a well structured collection of subject content and learning activities that the teacher will impart to the students, including specific instructions on how the instruction will be conducted throughout a lesson.

Causes of the Gap between the Received and the Implemented Curriculum

Ineffective Teachers

Teachers are the primary individuals responsible for carrying out their duties within the curriculum for their students. Typically, they choose the content they want to teach their pupils and consider how it will impact the overall teaching process. Consequently, their curriculum is designed to be flexible, allowing teachers to choose what they choose to teach and what is truly necessary to teach. Teachers play a crucial role in the implementation stage of the curricular process. Teachers foster learning by presenting information in innovative and influential ways. Whole-group instruction, individualized attention, experiential education, and a global perspective are effective strategies that enable teachers to achieve success in the curricular process.

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

The data were evaluated using measures such as the mean, standard deviation, and z-test. The data were presented in accordance with the sequential arrangement of the study questions and hypotheses.

Research Question one: What discrepancies exist between the social studies curriculum that is received and the one that is actually implemented in terms of lesson preparation and delivery in junior secondary schools in Kogi State?

The Table above shows Male teachers’ response on the gaps that exist between the received and implemented social studies curriculum in terms of lesson planning and delivery in junior secondary schools in Kogi State

S/N	ITEM Gaps that exist between the received and implemented social studies curriculum in terms of lesson planning and delivery in junior secondary schools in Kogi State	RESPONSE				Total No. of Respondents	Mean \bar{x}	Std. dev. σ	Decision
		4	3	2	1				
1	Selection and sequence of instructional content is not comprehensive	40	67	38	2	147	3.00	0.77	Agree
2	Instructional materials selected are not most appropriate	33	74	34	6	147	2.91	0.78	Agree
3	Innovative methods of teaching social studies are not readily utilized	37	70	36	4	147	2.95	0.78	Agree
4	Introduction of the lessons is not able to make learners to be physical, mental and emotional ready	31	72	39	5	147	2.88	0.77	Agree
5	Evaluation questions are not properly targeted to attain the lessons objectives	45	62	31	9	147	2.97	0.87	Agree
GRAND TOTAL							2.94	0.80	

Standard reference mean $\bar{x} = 2.50$

Table 4.1 shows that mean values of 3.00, 2.91, 2.95, 2.88 and 2.97 respectively which are greater than the standard reference mean of 2.50, indicates that the male teachers were of the view that the gaps that exist between the received and implemented social studies curriculum, in terms of lesson planning and delivery, include incomprehensive selection and sequencing of instructional content, inappropriate selection of instructional materials, lack of utilization of innovative methods of teaching social studies to induce learners to be physically, mentally and emotionally ready to learn and use of evaluation questions that do not enhance the achievement of classroom lesson objectives. Small values of standard deviations such as 0.77, 0.78, 0.78, 0.77 and 0.87 respectively, indicates that the male teachers were homogeneous in their response.

Table 4.2: Female teachers’ response on the gaps that exist between the received and implemented social studies curriculum in terms of lesson planning and delivery in junior secondary schools in Kogi State

S/N	ITEM Gaps that exist between the received and implemented social studies curriculum in terms of lesson planning and delivery in Junior secondary schools in Kogi State	RESPONSE				Total No. of Respondents	Mean \bar{x}	Std. dev. σ	Decision
		4	3	2	1				
1	Selection and sequence of instructional content is not comprehensive	51	85	56	2	194	2.95	0.77	Agree
2	Instructional materials selected are not most appropriate	53	87	50	4	194	2.97	0.78	Agree
3	Innovative methods of teaching social studies are not readily utilized	55	77	59	3	194	2.95	0.80	Agree

4	Introduction of the lessons is not able to make learners to be physical, mental and emotional ready	62	51	74	7	194	2.87	0.91	Agree
5	Evaluation questions are not properly targeted to attain the lessons objectives	36	63	81	14	194	2.62	0.87	Agree
GRAND TOTAL							2.87	0.83	

Standard reference mean $\bar{x} = 2.50$

Table 4.2 shows that mean values of 2.95, 2.97, 2.95, 2.89 and 2.62 respectively which are greater than the standard reference mean of 2.50, indicates that the female teachers were of the view that the gaps that exist between the received and implemented social studies curriculum, in terms of lesson planning and delivery, include incomprehensive selection and sequencing of instructional content, inappropriate selection of instructional materials, lack of utilization of innovative methods of teaching social studies to induce learners to be physically, mentally and emotionally ready to learn and use of evaluation questions that do not enhance the achievement of classroom lesson objectives. Small values of standard deviations such as 0.77, 0.78, 0.80, 0.91 and 0.87 respectively, indicates that the female teachers were homogeneous in their response.

Research Question two: What are the gaps that exist between the received and implemented social studies curriculum in terms of content coverage in junior secondary schools in Kogi State?

Table 4.3: Maleteacher’s response on the gaps that exist between the received and implemented social studies curriculum in terms of content coverage in junior secondary schools in Kogi State

S/N	ITEM Gaps that exist between the received and implemented social studies curriculum in terms of content coverage in junior secondary schools in Kogi State	RESPONSE				Total No. of Respondents	Mean \bar{x}	Std. dev. \bar{D}	Decision
		4	3	2	1				
1	Fundamentals of Social studies	33	76	34	4	147	2.94	0.75	Agree
2	The family as the basic unit of society	47	61	37	2	147	3.04	0.80	Agree
3	Culture and social values	1	50	88	8	147	2.30	0.58	Disagree
4	Social and health issues	6	44	92	5	147	2.35	0.61	Disagree
GRAND TOTAL							2.66	0.70	

Standard reference mean $\bar{x} = 2.50$

Table 4.3 shows that mean values of 2.94 and 3.04 respectively, which are greater than the standard reference mean of 2.50 indicates that the male teachers were of the view that the following received Social Studies Curriculum: fundamentals of social studies and the family as the basic unit of society respectively, were adequately covered in junior secondary schools in Kogi State. However, mean values of 2.30 and 2.35 respectively, which are less than the standard reference mean of 2.50 indicates that the male teachers were of the view that the following received Social Studies Curriculum: culture and social values, social and health issues, respectively were not adequately covered in junior secondary schools in Kogi State. Small values of standard deviations obtained, that is; 0.75, 0.80, 0.58 and 0.61 respectively indicates that the male teachers were homogeneous in their response.

Table 4.4: Female teacher’s response on the gaps that exist between the received and implemented social studies curriculum in terms of content coverage in junior secondary schools in Kogi State

S/N	ITEM Gaps that exist between the received and implemented social studies curriculum in terms of content coverage in junior secondary schools in Kogi State	RESPONSE				Total No. of Respondents	Mean \bar{x}	Std. dev. σ	Decision
		4	3	2	1				
1	Fundamentals of Social studies	64	79	43	8	194	3.03	0.85	Agree
2	The family as the basic unit of society	62	77	45	10	194	3.00	0.87	Agree
3	Culture and social values	2	86	100	6	194	2.43	0.57	Disagree
4	Social and health issues	4	73	104	13	194	2.35	0.64	Disagree
GRAND TOTAL							2.70	0.73	

Standard reference mean $\bar{x} = 2.50$

Table 4.4 shows that mean values of 3.03 and 3.00 respectively, which are greater than the standard reference mean of 2.50 indicates that the female teachers were of the view that the following received Social Studies Curriculum: fundamentals of social studies and the family as the basic unit of society respectively, were adequately covered in junior secondary schools in Kogi State. However, mean values of 2.43 and 2.35 respectively, which are less than the standard reference mean of 2.50 indicates that the female teachers were of the view that the following received Social Studies Curriculum: culture and social values, social and health issues, respectively were not adequately covered in junior secondary schools in Kogi State. Small values of standard deviations obtained, that is; 0.85, 0.87, 0.57 and 0.64 respectively indicates that the female teachers were homogeneous in their response.

CONCLUSIONS

This study carried out an examination of the implemented Social Studies curriculum in Junior secondary schools in Kogi State. From the results obtained, there is no significant difference in the responses of male and female teachers. Hence, teachers agreed that gaps exist between the received and implemented social studies curriculum in terms of lesson planning/delivery and content coverage but their exist gaps between the received and implemented social studies curriculum in the aspect of students engagement. It was gathered that students are not adequately engaged for the implementation of the received social studies curriculum. It was also concluded that lack of modern facilities for online and classroom instructions and poor participation of students in classroom instructions are causes of the gap that that exist between the received and implemented Social Studies curriculum in junior secondary schools in Kogi State. Furthermore, strategies to bridge the gap that exist between the received and implemented social studies curriculum include; provision of adequate professional development for, proper time management by teachers, effective lesson planning and delivery, provision of modern instructional materials, provision of physical facilities and proper and regular supervision.

Recommendations

The following recommendation are made based on the findings of the study:

- 1) Curriculum planners should include relevant topics to the already existing ones. Topics that will encourage students to shun violence and vices which are predominantly observed among youths in the society.
- 2) Social studies teachers should always utilize students-entered methods for the implementation of Social studies Curriculum.

- 3) Principals in all junior secondary schools should embark on regular supervision of delivery of Social Studies instructions in the classroom to ensure that the appropriate methods and materials are used by the teachers.

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