

*Full Length Research Paper*

## **Perceived Non-Implementation Challenges of Social Studies Curriculum**

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Accepted 23rd, June, 2019.

**This study examined the views of secondary school teachers on where Social Studies actually went wrong considering the challenges being faced by the discipline since it was included in the secondary school curriculum in Nigeria. The study employed a descriptive research design of the survey type with one research question and one research hypothesis. The sample comprised 140 secondary school Social Studies teachers selected through simple random sampling technique from five local government areas in Ekiti State. An instrument titled Social Studies Curriculum Challenges Questionnaire (SSCCQ) was used for the study. The instrument was validated by Social Studies experts and tested for reliability. Data generated were analysed through frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviation while the hypothesis was tested using t-test statistical tool at 0.05 level of significance. The finding of the study revealed that unstable government policy, non-implementation of the senior secondary school curriculum, lack of instructional materials as well as the inadequacy of specialists to handle the subject are some of the challenges facing the subject as viewed by the teachers. Based on the findings, it was recommended that government should implement the senior secondary school Social Studies curriculum without further delay, ensure adequate provision of instructional materials and recruit more Social Studies specialists to teach the subject in schools.**

**Keywords:** Social Studies, teachers, non-implementation, curriculum, challenges.

## INTRODUCTION

The primary purpose of Social Studies is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse democratic society. The subject is meant to develop in learners the right type of values, attitudes and socially acceptable behaviours such as honesty, dedication, hard work, respect for elders, loyalty, and respect for human dignity among others. Social Studies also focuses on the preparation of individuals for active participation in societal activities and therefore accommodates changes in man's realities due to the flexibility of its curriculum. These virtues are essential in making citizens capable of contributing to the building of a free and democratic society. The virtues according to Osalusi (2010) are included in the content of Social Studies and are in line with Nigeria goals and aspirations on education for national development. Tsaku (2016) added that the social studies curriculum should positively influence and modify the learners' behaviour in the direction of acceptable and current socio-political and cultural order.

From inception, the teaching and learning of Social Studies as a discipline has been restricted to the junior secondary schools while non-implementation of the senior secondary school syllabus remains a major

concern to Social Studies teachers. Social Studies curriculum development has been the responsibility of two main bodies, ie Comparative Education Study and Adaptation Centre (CESAC) and National Education Research Council (NERC). Ogundare (2010) affirmed that both the junior and senior secondary school Social Studies curriculum were drafted by CESAC and NERC in 1977. The junior school curriculum was approved same year while implementation started in all schools in Nigeria in 1982 except that of Grade II teachers which were implemented in 1976. Social Studies has since been a core subject in junior secondary school level. However, the Social Studies senior secondary school syllabus which was also presented to the federal government and approved in 1985 has remained unimplemented.

According to Ogundare (2010), the revision of the Social Studies curriculum for the purpose of UBE developed by the NERC in 2006 took cognizance of certain challenges facing the subject like the teaching of many concepts and generalisations in Social science and humanities that make it unwieldy to teach effectively. He further stressed that the civic aspect was not given due attention in Social Studies and that there was a presidential directive that a new civic education curriculum is disarticulated from the subject. This observed inadequacy was

what the UBE social studies tried to redress by confining it to partly social issues and putting civic and political issues in civic education. Social Studies is offered at the primary and junior secondary school levels in Nigeria but not at the senior secondary school level which makes it difficult for proper transferal from the secondary to tertiary institutions.

Observation shows that ineffective implementation and/or non-implementation has been a major problem with government policies in Nigeria as the most innovative programmes and curricula that could enhance national development die at the implementation stage. Idowu (2017) averred that there is inconsistency in government formulated policies which change like wind vane with every successive government in Nigeria. Non-implementation of the curriculum at the senior secondary school level according to Jekayinfa (2011) has not enhanced the full realization of the objectives of Social Studies towards preparing the learners to be humane, rational, skillful in decision making, participating and responsible citizens in a world that is becoming complex and interdependent. Idowu (2017) submitted that social studies curriculum as currently being implemented in the school system has failed to prepare the young learners for citizenship responsibilities within the framework of democratic citizenship education. With the non-

implementation of Social Studies curriculum at the senior secondary school level, the federal government went ahead to prepare and approve civic education syllabus/curriculum which is now being implemented at the junior and senior secondary school levels in Nigeria. Ogunyemi (2011) described the emergence of civic education in the curriculum and its implementation at the senior secondary level as quick fixes of curriculum creation in Nigeria. He stressed that curriculum projects are hardly accompanied by the necessary testing and teacher reorientation and training in Nigeria.

From observation, other reasons that may be adduced for non-implementation of Social Studies include inadequacy of Social Studies specialists, lack or inadequacy of instructional materials to aid effective teaching and its failure to achieve the objectives of inculcating the right type of values and attitude in learners at the junior school level. Obagah (1993) considered non-availability of material resources as the problem facing the implementation of social studies curriculum at the senior secondary school level. Falade (2012) was of the view that despite the strong emphasis placed on the development of good citizenship by Social Studies, the subject has not fully achieved its goal after many years of introduction. Oluwagbohunmi (2011) submitted that a lack of instructional

materials and the inability of the teachers (especially non-specialists) to employ innovative methods of teaching are some of the challenges facing Social Studies. Jekayinfa (2011) also confirmed that inadequate instructional materials, textbooks, audio and audio-visual materials that can be used to teach the subject at the senior secondary school are some of the challenges being faced by Social Studies. Philip-Ogoh and Okloho (2013) believed that Social Studies goal of inculcating the right type of values and attitude in learners has not been realised.

It is a known fact that non-specialists still teach Social Studies in Nigeria secondary schools, Jekayinfa (2011) found out in a study in Ilorin, that 210 teachers were Social Studies specialists while 236 were non-specialists. This has been one of the teething problems of Social Studies which presupposes that the non-specialists are teaching the subject based on personal and different perspectives. In view of this, the non-specialists are likely to perceive the problems of Social Studies differently.

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

It is a known fact that the teaching and learning of Social Studies is restricted to junior secondary schools in Nigeria. It is assumed that non-implementation of the curriculum at the senior secondary school level could be due to the fact that the

objectives of including it in the junior secondary school curriculum are not being realised. It could also be as a result of the teaching problems, the subject faced at inception and others that emanated later but seem remain unsolved such as inadequate instructional materials, non-specialists handling the subject in schools, its integrated nature that makes it difficult for some teachers to teach effectively. It could also be due to its inability to achieve the purpose of instilling the right type of attitudes and values in learners which seems to be the most important objective expected to be realised through Social Studies in the country where impunity, immorality and social vices rife. What further heightened the question of what went wrong with Social Studies is the fact that Civic Education that is very new in the curriculum is being implemented all through the 6year secondary school program in Nigeria while the responsibility of teaching it still rests on Social Studies teachers. It is therefore deemed necessary to ask the question where did Social Studies go wrong? To determine what the responses would be based on the perspectives of teachers handling the subject in secondary schools.

### **Research Question**

One research question was raised to guide this study:

What are the perceived non-implementation challenges of Social Studies curriculum?

### **Research Hypothesis**

One research hypothesis was raised for the study:

There is no significant difference between specialist and non-specialist teachers' views on non-implementation challenges of the Social Studies curriculum.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted a descriptive research design of the survey type. The population for this study was all Social Studies teachers in Ekiti state. The sample for this study was 140 secondary school Social Studies teachers selected through simple random sampling technique from five local government areas. A self-designed instrument titled Social Studies Curriculum Challenges Questionnaire (SSCCQ) was used for data collection. The instrument was divided into two sections. Section A was based on teachers bio-data which only requested for

area of specialisation while Section B contained 10 items raised on the research question. The instrument was validated by experts in social studies and tested for reliability through re-test method. A reliability coefficient of 0.73 was obtained. The questionnaire items were scored on a two-point scale of Agree and Disagree. Data collected were analyzed using frequency, percentages, means and standard deviation for the research question while the hypothesis was subjected to t-test statistical tool and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

## **RESULTS**

### **Research Question:**

What are the perceived non-implementation challenges of Social Studies curriculum?

Table 1: Social Studies teachers' views on non-implementation challenges of Social Studies curriculum

S/ N	Items	N	Agree		Disagree		Mean	SD
			f	%	f	%		
1	Restriction of social studies to Junior Secondary School level	140	84	60.00	56	40.00	1.60	.493
2	Non-implementation of social studies curriculum at the Senior Secondary School level	140	102	72.86	38	27.14	1.73	.448
3	Unstable government policy	140	110	78.57	30	21.43	1.79	.413
4	Inadequacy of social studies specialists to teach the subject in schools	140	94	67.14	46	32.86	1.67	.473
5	Lack of instructional materials to aid effective teaching	140	102	72.86	38	27.14	1.73	.448
6	Failure of social studies to achieve its objective at the junior secondary school level	140	62	44.29	78	55.71	1.44	.500
7	Social studies' failure to achieve its goal of inculcating the right type of values and attitudes in learners	140	82	58.57	58	41.43	1.59	.496
8	Its integrated nature makes some of its topics difficult for some teachers to teach effectively	140	76	54.29	64	45.71	1.54	.502
9	Emergence of civic education in the curriculum	140	78	55.71	62	44.29	1.56	.500
10	Implementation of civic education at the senior secondary school level	140	86	61.43	54	38.57	1.61	.490

Table 1 shows teachers' perception of non-implementation challenges of Social Studies curriculum. The table revealed that unstable government policy (78.5%), non-implementation of Social Studies curriculum at the senior secondary school level (72.8%), lack of instructional materials to aid effective teaching of the subject (72.8%) and inadequacy of Social Studies specialists to teach the subject in schools (67.1%), implementation of Civic Education at the senior secondary school level (61.4%) and its restriction to junior secondary schools

(60%) among others are the non-implementation challenges of Social Studies curriculum as perceived by teachers teaching the subject in Ekiti state secondary schools. These responses show non implementation challenges of Social Studies as a discipline in the Nigeria secondary school curriculum. However, 55.71% of the teachers disagreed on the fact that Social Studies has not achieved its objectives at the junior secondary school level.

### Research Hypothesis

$H_{01}$  There is no significant difference between the specialist and non-specialist teachers' views on non-implementation

challenges of Social Studies curriculum in Nigeria.

**Table 2:** Specialist and non-specialist teachers' perception of non-implementation challenges of social studies curriculum

Area of Specialisation	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-cal	t-tab	Remark
Specialists	53	13.31	1.619	138	-61.55	1.68	Not Significant
Non-Specialists	87	14.00	1.671				

Table 2 shows that the t-calculated (-61.55) is less than the t-table (1.68) which is an implication that there is no significant difference in the views of specialist and non-specialist Social Studies teachers on non-implementation challenges of Social Studies curriculum. Therefore the null hypothesis is not rejected.

## DISCUSSION

The finding of this study has revealed that unstable government policy, non-implementation of the senior secondary school curriculum, lack of instructional materials as well as inadequacy of specialists to handle the subject are some of the challenges facing the subject. These findings correspond with that of Idowu (2017), Jekayinfa (2011) and Oluwagbohunmi (2011). This is not unexpected because the respondents are the teachers teaching the subject in schools who have the knowledge of the challenges being faced by the subject.

A certain percentage of the teachers disagreed that Social Studies has not achieved the objectives of including it in the curriculum. This implies that the teachers are of the view that Social Studies objectives are being achieved. This finding negates Falade (2012) who maintained that despite strong emphasis placed on development of good citizenship by Social Studies, the subject has not fully achieved its goal after many years of introduction. The finding also disagreed with Jekayinfa (2011) opinion that non-implementation of the curriculum at the senior secondary school level has not enhanced the full realization of the objectives

of Social Studies towards preparing the learners to be humane, rational, skillful in decision making, participating and responsible citizens in a world that is becoming complex and interdependent. This finding may be as a result of the teachers' observation that despite the level of immorality, impunity and social vices experienced by Nigerians, there are people who are still morally upright, honest and will never want to get involved in any socially unacceptable behaviour or any name damaging act. In addition, the teachers may have the notion that Social Studies is not the only discipline expected to inculcate right type of values and attitude in learners. There are other subjects like religious studies and other specific contents like moral education, citizenship education among others that can perform same function.

The only hypothesis tested revealed no significant difference in the views of specialist and non-specialist teachers. This made the hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference between specialist and non-specialist teachers' views on non-implementation challenges of Social Studies curriculum not to be rejected. This finding negates the assumption that the non-specialists are likely to view the problem of Social Studies differently. Non-specialists' perception of the challenges as same with the specialists presupposes that they have taught the subject for several years and they

are not unaware of the problems being faced by the subject.

## CONCLUSION

From the finding of this study, it can be concluded that non-implementation challenges of social studies curriculum were identified as unstable government policy, lack of instructional materials as well as inadequacy of specialists to handle the subject among others.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, it is therefore recommended that:

1. the senior secondary school Social Studies curriculum that was drafted, presented by CESAC and NERC and approved by the federal government in 1985 should be implemented without further delay;
2. there is need for government to recruit Social Studies specialists to teach the subject in all Nigeria secondary schools;
3. government needs to make adequate provision for instructional materials to enhance effective teaching of Social Studies.

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