

EXAMINING CURRICULUM PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION AS A FACTOR FOR THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

A curriculum entails what should happen in a teaching programme (planning)– about the intention of the teachers and relevant stakeholders (development) and about the way they make this happen (implementation). Taking this as a springboard, this paper looked at curriculum planning, development and implementation as a factor in the teaching and learning of Social Studies education in Nigeria. Three objectives guided this paper. The review was done in line with the objectives, using secondary data in the analysis process. The paper concluded that social studies curriculum planning,

development and implementation are key variables in the teaching-learning process; and that they work *pari pasu* in the attainment of the stated subject objective as enshrined in the national policy on education. Arising from the conclusion, the paper suggested that teachers should be taught and trained on the need to adhere strictly to the social studies curriculum as it is a key factor in the teaching-learning process. Also, relevant authorities should take into cognisance the needs of the society in the formulation and drafting of the social studies curriculum; this will ensure that all aspect that needs revision is captured owing to the tenet of the subject.

Keywords: Curriculum, Planning, Development, Implementation, Social Studies, Teaching and Learning

Introduction

Social Studies is the most inclusive of all school subjects. For example, Stanley and Nelson, cited in Thornton (2004), describe the subject as the science of all human activities throughout time and space. Determining what goes into social studies education necessitates addressing fundamental questions concerning social knowledge, skills, and values, as well as how to organise them in connection to specific subjects and teachers' and students' unique subjectivities. Given this, it's no surprise that since its inception as a school subject in the early twentieth century, social studies have been racked by intellectual conflicts about its purpose, substance, and teaching. Following its effectiveness in fixing societal problems not just in the United Kingdom but also in the United States and Nigeria in the late 1960s, Social Studies was integrated into the official school curriculum. This course of study was first initiated in Britain after the first and second world wars to appease citizens' consciences to respect institutionalised authority, be submissive to their parents, show respect to society's elders, assist in the protection of public property, value fellow citizens' lives, and contribute positively to the society's development (Edinyang and Effiom, 2013). Many people regard the subject as a means of achieving overall human development. The government viewed it as a method for man to fulfil his potential and priorities (Imo, 2017). In many cases, government policies and methods present problems in implementing the Social Studies curriculum (Amaele, 2015). The study was informed by educational stakeholders' ineffective execution of the subject in schools.

The national curriculum conference held in Lagos in 1969 was a major turning point in the history of curriculum planning and development in the subject and general subject curriculum in Nigeria, as well as a historical landmark in the history of education in the

country and Africa at large, to realise this noble goal of the subject. According to Fafunwa (2004:3), "it was the first national initiative to shift the Nigerian educational system's colonial orientation and foster national awareness and self-reliance through the educational process." National unity, citizenship education, national consciousness, nationalism, and national reconstruction are among the national conference's recommendations. These guidelines served as the foundation for stating and achieving social studies education and Nigerian educational goals.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) spelt out the goals of Nigerian education in its policy statement, which encompasses the entirety of educational purposes. This noble ideology was instilled in the planning and development of the social studies curriculum, which helped shape the citizens' minds in the country. Hence the imperative of sound and meticulous curriculum planning and development cannot be over-emphasised. Different dogma was taken into consideration to ensure a viable Social Studies curriculum was conceived and seamlessly implemented in the school system to ensure that its aspirations were achieved within the stated timeframe.

In the view of Edinyang and Effiom (2013), to ensure that the stated aspiration of the relevant authorities in the planning and development of the social studies curriculum is achieved in the school system, there is a need for a guide as to how its implementation would be done in the teaching-learning process to avoid derailing from the objective enshrined in the policy statement of the government. Against this backdrop, there is a need to carry along the school stakeholders – principals, teachers and students, so that its execution and implementation are done properly; thus, avoiding the mishap that may occur when classroom teachers poorly implement a curriculum; the perceptive difference (positive or negative) by students with regards to the curriculum and nonchalant attitude of principals towards the implementation of the statement. In light of this, there is an urgency to make sure that principals, teachers and students are guided as to the need for strict adherence to the tenet of the social studies curriculum. The emphasis of this study is placed on the teaching-learning process and regarding how the planning and development of the social studies curriculum impart the process. Hence, this study is primed to investigate curriculum planning, development and implementation as a factor for the teaching and learning of Social Studies education in Nigeria, employing secondary data for its examination.

A curriculum is designed with the target population in mind to accomplish successful learning via appropriate methods or processes. The curriculum is an intentionally and systematically planned body of knowledge, skills, and attitudes organised into subjects and taught to students in schools (Akubuilu et al., 2019). The curriculum of any subject, according to the writers, is one of the most important implementation activities in the teaching process. The process of curriculum designers and developers enforcing defined rules, such as the teacher's discharge of instruction in the classroom, is known as curriculum implementation (Mkandawire, 2013). Years of exposure, experience and expertise are factors in a teacher's ability to provide instruction in the classroom. Teacher professional and academic credentials are two important principles that cannot be differentiated to evaluate the efficacy of teachers in implementing curricula for national growth (Nwaubani et al., 2016). Okam (2012) emphasized in the admonition that only professionally competent instructors of social studies can effectively teach the subject in congruence with the planning and development of the curriculum. To effectively carry out this study, the following objectives were stated

- To examine curriculum planning as it affects social studies instruction and learning
- To investigate curriculum development as it affects the teaching-learning process of social studies in schools
- To examine the implementation process as a factor in the teaching-learning process of the subject

Social Studies Curriculum

A curriculum is a collection of courses in a specific area of expertise. It is a set of courses available by an educational institute that is requisite to complete an area of specialism. A curriculum is also the combination of instructional practices, learning experiences, and learners' presentation valuation intended to bring out and assess the target learning outcomes of a specific sequence. According to Morris and Adamson (2010), a curriculum is a detailed plan for the instruction set by policy-makers. It comprises a variety of procedural and non-procedural courses that are essential to complete a particular degree. Curriculum information is mainly detailed information planned for diffusion, usually from one group to another. Curriculum theorists are experts in a certain technique of specific skill - understanding that is "applied" in habits that enable the teacher to teach and the students to learn at various stages and ages. Curriculum knowledge is always stated in two ways: in terms of its relationship to credible punitive sources and its relationship to a diverse population of students. All curricula are created with the learners' existing knowledge in mind and are tailored to a specific set of students (Scott, 2014). Scott opined that individuals, their conduct, development, relationships, assets they use, the different underpinnings they have and their ability to move on with their lives are all investigated in this subject.

Zarrillo (2013) characterised social studies as the inquiry of persons. This implies that social studies aim to assist students in absorbing information and becoming familiar with learning techniques, as well as becoming valuable inhabitants. In this way, the subject Curriculum can be defined as an educational curriculum concerned with the development of social interactions and societal activity. Adesina (2011), in his perception, noted that the subject was initiated in the United States of America for public competence and social responsibility. Nigeria plans to teach citizenship education principles to build disciplined adults capable of upholding high standards of passion, and moral decency, amongst others, in all endeavours that promote national progress. For the subject to achieve its goals, the educational programme must be well-organised and closely linked to resolving national challenges.

Social Studies Curriculum Planning and Development

The Social Studies syllabus has a holistic meaning encompassing not only subjects but also the connections between subjects to be taught to students, teaching methods to be employed by the teachers and all aspects of schooling that define the learner's experience. It also entails a prescribed range of courses or a specific learning programme across different levels and years (Akubuilu et al., 2019). Therefore, Curricular planning and development is the process of looking at the standards in social studies as a subject and developing a workable strategy to break down these standards so they can be taught to students according to grade level, subjects taught and available supplies in the school system. For this to be efficiently undertaken, there is a need for well-coordinated curriculum planning to meet its intended objectives.

Curriculum planning entails the procedure concerned with choosing what to study, why, and how to classify the instruction and learning procedure, taking into account presented curriculum necessities and the resources on hand; taking cognisance of the fact that it is a vital aspect of the instruction learning process. A well-thought-out curriculum tends to be grasped by learners with ease. Social Studies curriculum planning at the general level results in the definition of a broad curriculum framework, as well as a syllabus for the subject to be employed as a reference by individual schools. At the school, developing social studies curriculum entails creating the course and evaluation plans for the subjects. In the classroom, it involves creating more concrete proposals for learning units, individual lessons, and lesson sequences that will rekindle students' interest in the subject, creating a solid social studies curriculum. Curriculum development is the multi-step process of creating and improving a course taught at a school or university (Skyepack, 2021). Social Studies curriculum

development is the process by which an instructor of the subject or institution creates or adopts the procedures laid down in the planning stage for a course. Implicit here is that curriculum development is a crucial stage as it is more of a guide as to how the objective of the course in question would be achieved. The imperative of social studies curriculum development is that it takes care of the big-picture strategy required to teach a course at whatever level of education successfully.

Social Studies Curriculum Implementation in Schools

Resources from Social Studies connote all things in schools that may be used to help and facilitate teaching or learning. They include human, financial and physical resources. Individuals involved in any school activities, regardless of their placement level, make up the human resources of a secondary school, much like any other formal organisation of any type and size. Academic and non-academic staff and students are critical in achieving the school's aims and objectives. This implies that people are so important that no school or organisation could attain the best possible results without them. This depends on how well the personnel is handled in relation to other resources in the manufacturing process. In their explanations of social system theory, Ititim and Gbiji (2017) emphasised that human resource in the teaching and learning of Social Studies is the management of people, work, and their relationships inside the school system. The goal of such management, in essence, may not be far-fetched if it is to bring together and develop into an effective organisation for their well-being to contribute successfully to the school's success.

The teacher is an important human resource in curriculum implementation (Adeoye, 2006). Aliyu (2009) explains that when curriculum planners have put in their best to present a curriculum for use in schools when facilities and other materials needed have been provided, the resource person who would ensure that the curriculum objectives are realised is the classroom teacher. Although there are other personnel whose works are quite as important as the teacher (for example, the school councillor), it is the teacher who is solely responsible for the execution of curriculum objectives and content, especially in the programme of studies component of the curriculum. Among the important functions of instructors in the curriculum execution process are amongst others, the following:

- Taking the curriculum planners' syllabus and breaking it down into small chunks;
- Selecting appropriate learning objectives;
- Evaluating students' performance in the programme;
- Communicating students' performance to parents and reflecting this in planning classroom activities;
- Recognise the complex nature of school children's development and reflect this in planning classroom activities.

The Goals of Social Studies Education in Nigeria

One of the main functions of the subject is to educate learners to live a responsible life now and in the future in their communities. According to the National Teachers Institute (NTI), the role of social studies in the development of Nigeria is as follows:

- Inculcate accountability to others
- Respect for the value and dignity of others
- Creation of tolerance
- Growing awareness
- The internalisation of national consciousness and national unity

Challenges facing Social Studies Curriculum

Some of the issues affecting the delivery of the social studies curriculum for effective teaching and learning include, amongst others, the following:

Lack of awareness of the subject and inappropriate framework - Adeyemi (2015) believes that educators should recognise fundamentally that it is a field of research that draws material primarily from the social sciences and other sources. Akpabio (2017) expressed concern about the state of social studies in the curriculum, especially how social studies were ignored, not controlled or supervised and left at the mercy of social studies students and teachers. The inappropriate framework of social studies in different schools has hindered efficient teaching. Akpabio (2017) claim that social studies help mould and form man's behaviour.

Lack of teaching resources - one of the problems that restrict the teaching and learning of social studies in schools in Nigeria is the lack of teaching resources. Banks (2015) posits that teaching social studies involves technical devices such as computers, the internet, and ICT. Akpabio (2017) concludes that the absence of tools such as computers, globes, and funds, hinders the teaching and learning of social studies.

Issues of Training - Lack of training in the area of seminars, workshops, and conferences for teachers of social studies impart on their ability to observe and adhere strictly to the dictates of the curriculum, thus hampering the teaching-learning process in the short and long run.

Problems of evaluation and assessment - the inappropriate framework of the curriculum for social studies presents a major challenge to the delivery of material for the national advancement of social studies. These two variables – evaluation and assessment are not being done to ascertain the workability of particular strategies employed for their implementation in the school regarding teachers' teaching methods and students' level of comprehension.

The curriculum collectively defines the resources available for teaching, learning, and evaluation for a given course of study. A curriculum is a form of learning designed and directed by the school, whether done in groups or independently, within or outside the school. In the primary and junior secondary school curriculum, social studies are one of the subjects that can assist students in achieving spiritual, societal, and educational goals. Students are integrated into citizenship education through social studies, which equips them with the understanding, skills, and attitudes necessary to become capable and responsible citizens ready to contribute to society and demonstrate moral and civic excellence (NCSS, 2004).

Social studies have been included as a discipline in schools across the country in pursuit of identity in education and culture. This explains why the subject has been given an important position in Nigerian basic education as a subject, beginning at the primary level and progressing to the junior secondary level (Awhen et al., 2014). The social studies curriculum has been designed to provide students with the skills they need to be prepared for and stay safe in their environment (NERDC, 2013). The FRN (2013), in her National Policy Education (NPE), stipulated the overall objectives of the subject curriculum as developing the capacity to change the environment; being accountable, and disciplining citizens who are able and eager to add to national development; inculcating the right form of values; creating a sense of understanding. Social studies as an implemented program is central to a vast range of educational courses for learners focused on social sciences (Godfrey, 2009). It considers the political, economic, physical, psychological, and technical value of an individual's moral and cultural way of life to the nation's development. Its contents are grouped around environmental and social issues that affect residents' lives, their ability to operate, and the environment's ability to support sustainable development. The curriculum for the subject is

one of those programmes that deserves national attention, especially in the sense of curriculum planning.

Conclusion

The study looked at curriculum planning, development, and implementation as a determinant in Nigeria's social studies education teaching and learning. The study is theoretical research that uses secondary data and is led by three objectives: planning, development, and implementation of social studies curriculum as a factor in the teaching-learning process. In light of this, the paper concluded, based on a thorough review of secondary data, that social studies curriculum planning, development, and implementation are key variables in the teaching-learning process and that they work in tandem to achieve the subject's stated goals as enshrined in the national policy on education.

Suggestion

Arising from the conclusion, the paper suggested that teachers should be taught and trained on the need to adhere strictly to the subject curriculum as it is a vital variable in the teaching-learning process. Also, relevant authorities should consider the desires of society in the formulation and drafting of the subject curriculum. It will ensure that all aspect that needs revision is captured owing to the tenet of the subject.

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