

Effective Utilization of Instructional Materials for Social Studies in Upper Basic Schools in Kwara State

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Instructional materials provide learners with real learning experience. Learners are usually interested in concrete experiences rather than mere talk and chalk mechanism. This study investigated effective utilization of instructional materials in teaching Upper Basic Social Studies in Kwara State, Nigeria. The study adopted the descriptive research design. Purposive sampling technique was employed to sample 235 Social Studies teachers. Data collected were analysed using percentage and means to answer three research questions. The results of the findings showed that many instructional materials were available at different percentage. Social Studies teachers use some instructional materials in the teaching of the subject. Teachers' disposition enhances their use of instructional materials. Based on these findings, it was recommended among others that the school administrators should boost the morale of teachers by providing necessary instructional materials needed to achieve instructional objectives. Teachers should also be resourceful as that could motivate students to learn and perform better in their study.

Keywords: effective utilization, instructional materials, upper basic schools, social studies teachers, instruction

INTRODUCTION

Education is a potent force of making a positive national development. It is of great importance to every nation as it attracts considerable attention of not only the learners but also individuals that are aspiring for continuous education. The professions are similarly built through the training and preparing young ones for different careers in life. Every human society, whether primitive or modern has a way of promoting social solidarity and development through its various social institutions. In Nigeria, education is seen as the vehicle for bringing about the much-needed social solidarity, collective consciousness and national development. This explains why the Federal Government of Nigeria in the National Policy on Education (FGN, 2013) describes education as an instrument per excellence in affecting national development. The argument by the Federal Government was that, for there to be any fundamental change in the social and intellectual outlook of the Nigerian society, such change must be engendered by an education system.

Among the many innovations that characterized the post-independence curriculum was the emphasis on Social Studies education as an integrated subject of learning. In realization of the importance of Social Studies in promoting learning through problem solving, social inquiry and societal sensitivity. Some of the objectives enunciated in the National Policy of Education which speaks directly to Social Studies include the integration of the individual into sound and effective citizen; respect for dignity of labour; the inculcation of national consciousness and national unity; the inculcation of the right types of values and attitudes for survival of the individual; and the acquisition of the appropriate skills and

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abilities for the individuals to live in and contribute to the development of his society. The teaching and learning of Social Studies is one of the means through which these objectives can be realized. As a subject which is seen as a problem-solving education. It addresses real life problems in that its contents are translated into a good understanding of how problems involving human beings and their environment can be resolved meaningfully. Social Studies not only has the greatest potential in contributing significantly towards nation building but its curriculum is systematically arranged such that the internal and external contradictions of our society can be revealed (Jekayinfa, 2001). It is worthy to note here that since social life of people at present can be understood in relation to the past, Social Studies tends to break any inherent barrier in school subjects in order to fully establish its integrative and inter-disciplinary nature as a whole. The fact that the students learn more through activity based lessons with suitable and appropriate instructional materials, Social Studies then becomes the means through which their interests can be satisfied.

The academic performance of students at whatever level of the education structure is largely dependent upon what the teacher possess or do before, during and after the teaching learning situations. Enem (2005) carried out a study on the impact of instructional material utilization and the result shows that students taught with instructional materials performed better in Social Studies than students taught without instructional materials. Schulte (2004) defined dispositions as patterns of behavior exhibited frequently and in the absence of coercion, and constituting a habit of mind under some conscious and voluntary control, and that is intentional and oriented to broad goals. Teachers' disposition also affect students' performance in the sense that some teachers do good things some of the time, and all good teachers do bad things some of the time. The differences among teachers lie not only in the delivery of subject matters but also in the internalization of the learning experiences by their students (Gurney, 2007). This is true because a teacher who is excited about the subject being taught and shows it by facial expression, voice inflection, gesture and general movement is more likely to hold the attention of students than one who does not exhibit these behaviours in them.

Significantly, Rice (2004) opined that teachers' variables are the most important teacher-related factor influencing students' performance. Hence, the common saying that good teachers inspire students to learn and develop positive personality through teachers' teaching traits, attributes and characteristics which might have been imitated and internalized. Teachers are touchstone for students throughout their academic journey Pacis and Weegar (2011). They are a reliable and consistent presence in the daily school life of a student. It should be noted that the total experiences acquired by students are functions of the teacher characteristics including gender, qualification, certification, experience, teachers' use of instructional materials and his disposition, is what usually reflects in the teacher effectiveness and by extension, students' academic performance, Stronge (2002); Akbari and Allvar (2010). On pedagogical skills, people agree that good teachers are caring, supportive, concerned about the welfare of students, knowledgeable about their subject matter and are genuinely excited about the work that they do and able to help students learn (Cruickshank, Jenkins & Metcalf, 2003). Teacher's competence, ability, resourcefulness and ingenuity to efficiently utilize the appropriate language, methodology and available instructional materials to bring out the best from learners in terms of academic performance is what a pedagogical skill supposed to produce in a teacher.

Contemporary issues in Nigeria education are quality and functional education that cultivate in learners innovation and creativity. The education system is facing with some challenges which hinder the realization of the educational goals. The quality of the education offered in schools and are associated with some factors. These factors include shortage of well trained teachers, inadequacy of teaching facilities, inadequacy of funds to purchase necessary equipment, poor quality textbooks, overcrowded classrooms, poorly motivated teachers and unequipped of libraries.

This is true because education is a compilation and product of many and different variables and factors but among these factors, teacher stand out as veritable tool in realizing the high standards that are being emphasized in schools. In other words, teachers' pedagogical skills, teachers' dispositions, gender, teachers' reflectivity and the teachers' ability to use instructional materials to teach any subject at whatever level of learning greatly determine the achievement or performance level of students in any subject. Against this background, this study specifically examined utilization of Instructional materials in teaching Social Studies and teacher characteristics in Kwara State, Nigeria. Given the fact that quality of education of a nation is proportional to the effective teaching and learning. A growing body of research which indicates that students' performance is more heavily influenced by teachers' characteristics or quality than the students' prior academic record, students' race or parents' level of educational attainment etc. Thus, Olokooba (2015) in his study of availability and use of computer-based instructional materials by upper basic Social Studies teachers in Ilorin, Kwara State discovered that the computer-based instructional materials were available but were not used for instructional purpose in the schools. Firat (2005) carried out a study on teacher characteristics and their effects on students' attitude. She revealed from her study that the class climate influenced by teacher has a major impact on students' motivation and attitude towards learning.

Aduwa (2006) examined the factors affecting quality of English Language teaching in secondary schools in Nigeria. He found out that English Language teachers do not frequently use modern instructional technologies and variety of teaching techniques in their English Language lessons. Adeyemi (2008) conducted a research on teachers' teaching experience and students' learning outcomes in secondary schools in Ondo State, Nigeria. He asserted that teachers' teaching experience was significant with students' learning outcomes measured by their performance in the Senior Secondary Certificate Examinations. Schools having more teachers with five years and above experience achieved better result than schools having more teachers with less than five years teaching experience.

Despite general agreement about the importance of high quality teachers in relation to students' achievements, researchers have been unable to reach a consensus about what specific qualities and characteristics make a good teacher (Rice, 2003). Again, it is important to emphasize here that the various dispositions that teachers display at work greatly affect the attitude of students towards learning generally and in particular, the learning of Social Studies and their subsequent performance in the subject. However, it seems that most of the studies highlighted above do not seek to capture the attention of learners hence, use of instructional materials become necessary. In addition to this, previous studies tend to focus more on teachers' characteristics and students' performance in subjects like Mathematics, Biology, Economics and Christian Religious Knowledge. While much emphasis has been placed on some specific and common teacher' characteristics like Teacher' experience, certification, race, gender at the expense of other teacher' characteristics such as disposition. Closely related to the above mentioned variables there are little research linking teachers' disposition and use of instructional materials. Against this backdrop, this study was informed by the need to bridge the perceived gap arising from the previous studies, by investigating effective utilization of instructional materials in teaching Upper Basic Social Studies in Kwara State, Nigeria. The following research questions were raised to guide the study.

1. Are instructional materials available for teaching Upper Basic Social Studies?
2. To what extent do Social Studies teachers use instructional materials in teaching Upper Basic Social Studies?
3. To what extent do teachers' disposition influence the use of instructional materials in teaching Upper Basic Social Studies?

METHOD

Instrument for this study is a questionnaire. It was a researcher-designed questionnaire titled "Effective Utilization of Instructional Materials in Upper Basic Social Studies Questionnaire (EUMUBSSQ)" was used for data collection. The questionnaire had four sections; A, B, C, and D. Section A of the instrument dealt with teachers' biographical information. Section B of the instrument dealt with availability of instructional materials for teaching Social Studies. Section C of the instrument contained information on usage of instructional materials for teaching Social Studies while Section D elicited on teachers' disposition and use of instructional materials for teaching Social Studies with a weighted 4 Likert scaling of Strongly Agree (SA) – 4, Agree (A) – 3, Disagree (D) – 2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) - 1.

Validity of the instrumentation is the degree to which the instrument measures what is meant to measure. In establishing the face and content validity of the instrument, the draft copy of the instrument was shown to two lecturers in Department of Social Sciences Education, University of Ilorin to ascertain its validity. All corrections and suggestions were strictly adhered to and final copy was used for data collection. The reliability of the instrument was determined through the test-retest method. Teachers who did not participate in the study were involved. This took place within three weeks interval of the first and second administrations of the instrument. The data collected in the two administrations were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation co-efficient formula to ascertain its reliability. It gave 0.76 reliability value which was considered appropriate for this study.

FINDINGS

Research Question 1: *Are instructional materials available for teaching Upper Basic Social Studies in Kwara State?*

Table 1

Availability of instructional materials for teaching upper basic social studies

| S/N | ITEMS | AVAILABLE | % | NOT AVAILABLE | % |
|-----|---------------------------|-----------|------|---------------|------|
| 1 | Social Studies textbooks | 235 | 100 | - | 100 |
| 2 | Magazine-based news/items | 220 | 93.6 | 15 | 6.4 |
| 3 | Charts | 235 | 100 | - | - |
| 4 | Resource persons | 180 | 76.6 | 55 | 23.4 |
| 5 | Maps | 160 | 68.1 | 75 | 31.9 |
| 6 | Pictures | 200 | 85.1 | 35 | 14.9 |
| 7 | Posters | 235 | 100 | - | - |
| 8 | Real objects | 160 | 68.1 | 75 | 31.9 |
| 9 | Mineral materials | - | - | 100 | 100 |
| 10 | Television set | 200 | 85.1 | 35 | 14.9 |
| 11 | Audio tape | 235 | 100 | - | - |
| 12 | Globes | 205 | 87.2 | 30 | 12.8 |
| 13 | Video Tape | 142 | 60.4 | 93 | 39.6 |
| 14 | Computer Systems | 230 | 97.9 | 5 | 2.1 |
| 15 | Models | 172 | 73.2 | 63 | 26.8 |
| 16 | Resource Centre | 186 | 79.1 | 49 | 20.9 |

Results in Table 1 showed Instructional materials in teaching Social Studies that were available and those that are not available for Social Studies in junior secondary schools. It could be seen that many of these instructional materials were available at different percent for teaching Social Studies in junior secondary schools. It is only mineral materials that are not available at all.

Research Question 2: *To what extent do Social Studies teachers use instructional materials to teach Upper Basic Social Studies?*

Table 2

Use of social studies instructional materials

| S/N | ITEMS | USED | % | NOT USED | % |
|-----|---------------------------|------|------|----------|------|
| 1 | Social Studies textbooks | 235 | 100 | - | - |
| 2 | Magazine-based news/items | 220 | 93.6 | 15 | 6.4 |
| 3 | Charts | 235 | 100 | - | - |
| 4 | Resource persons | 142 | 60.4 | 93 | 39.6 |
| 5 | Maps | 150 | 63.8 | 85 | 36.2 |
| 6 | Pictures | 180 | 76.6 | 55 | 23.4 |
| 7 | Posters | 235 | 100 | - | - |
| 8 | Real objects | 160 | 68.1 | 75 | 31.9 |
| 9 | Mineral materials | - | - | 100 | 100 |
| 10 | Television set | 180 | 76.6 | 55 | 23.4 |
| 11 | Audio tape | 235 | 100 | - | - |
| 12 | Globes | 200 | 85.1 | 35 | 14.9 |
| 13 | Video Tape | 142 | 60.4 | 93 | 39.6 |
| 14 | Computer Systems | - | - | 100 | 100 |
| 15 | Models | 180 | 76.6 | 55 | 23.4 |
| 16 | Resource centre | 160 | 68.1 | 75 | 31.9 |

Results shown on table 2 indicated that some Instructional materials in teaching Social Studies are used in the teaching of Social Studies. These include Social Studies textbooks, posters, charts and audio tape which have 100% usage. Magazine-based news/items has 93.6% while other instructional materials have different percent level of usage that are 60% and above. However, mineral materials and computer systems are not used at all by the Social Studies teachers in the selected schools for teaching Social Studies.

Research Question 3: *Does teachers' disposition influence their use of instructional materials in teaching Upper Basic Social Studies?*

Table 3

Mean and standard deviation on teachers' disposition on their use of social studies instructional materials

| S/ N | STATEMENTS | NO | Mean | Std. Deviation | Rank |
|---------|---|-----|------|-------------------|------------------|
| 1. | The competency and morality of my students are my focus in the use of Social Studies instructional materials. | 235 | 2.28 | 0.89 | 6 th |
| 2. | I do not compromise classroom management techniques while using Social Studies instructional materials. | 235 | 2.41 | 0.86 | 5 th |
| 3. | Habit of mind and ways of behaving of my students are very important to me while using instructional materials. | 235 | 1.46 | 0.78 | 10 th |
| 4. | Sensitivities to student differences is my priority while using Social Studies instructional materials. | 235 | 3.34 | 0.90 | 1 st |
| 5. | I do have a high expectation for my students while using instructional materials. | 235 | 1.69 | 0.02 | 8 th |
| 6. | I do relate with my students effectively and academically to ensure they excel through using instructional materials. | 235 | 3.10 | 0.95 | 3 rd |
| 7. | I instill in my students knowledge and skills needed to live a happy and healthy life through effective use of instructional materials. | 235 | 1.60 | 0.8609 | 9 th |
| 8. | I encourage creativity in my class to ensure success of my students through effective use of Social Studies instructional materials. | 235 | 2.90 | 0.01 | 4 th |
| 9. | I do appreciate positive manner of students on the teaching and learning of Social Studies with instructional materials. | 235 | 3.29 | 0.88 | 2 nd |
| 10. | I do show care, love and passion to my students through using Social Studies instructional materials. | 235 | 2.05 | 0.80 | 7 th |

Results in table 3 showed the results of ranked means on each statement on teachers' disposition on the use of instructional materials. Statement 4, 9, 6, and 8 which were ranked 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th respectively are teachers' disposition that influence their use of instructional materials. However, least of all the statements was statement 3.

CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTIONS

It was concluded from this study that many instructional materials were available at different percentages for teaching Social Studies. Social Studies teachers use some instructional materials in the teaching of Social Studies. Teachers' disposition influences their use of Instructional materials in teaching Social Studies as it enhances their use of Social Studies instructional materials.

Findings of this study revealed that many instructional materials were available at different percent for teaching Social Studies in the schools. The result of the findings showed on table 8 of this study indicated that Instructional materials in teaching Social Studies are available at different percentages except mineral materials which were not available at all. This finding is consistent with finding of Adekeye (2008) who examined Availability and Utilization of Materials for Teaching Junior Secondary School Social Studies in Kwara State. He found out that many instructional materials were available for teaching Social Studies in the schools. It also agreed with Yusuf (2007) who conducted a study on availability and use of community materials for teaching junior secondary Social Studies in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State, Nigeria. Her finding showed that many instructional materials were available for teaching Social Studies in junior secondary schools.

The findings of this study also showed that Social Studies teachers use some instructional materials for teaching Social Studies. This finding agreed with Adekeye (2008) and Yusuf (2007) on Social Studies

teachers' use of instructional materials for teaching Social Studies. However, the finding is inconsistent with finding of Olokooba (2015) who discovered that computer-based instructional materials were not used by the upper basic Social Studies teachers in schools for instructional purpose.

This study also revealed that teachers' disposition influences their use of Social Studies instructional materials. This is consistent with the findings of Enem (2005) and Gurney (2007) that teachers' disposition affect students' performance and a teacher who is excited about the subject being taught and shows it by facial expression, voice inflection, gesture and general movement hold more attention of students than one who does not exhibit these behaviours in the classroom.

Based on the findings of this study, it is therefore suggested that the school administrators should boost the morale of teachers by providing necessary instructional materials needed to achieve their aims and objectives. Government should also put in place adequate facilities and equipment which will make learning encouraging, and enabling environment should be provided for both teachers and learners. Teacher should also be resourceful since that could motivate students to learn and perform better academically.

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