

## **Perception of Teachers on the Challenges to Social Studies Implementation in Enugu State Education Zones.**

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**Abstract:** *The study investigated the perception of teachers on the challenges to social studies implementation in Enugu State education zones. The study was a descriptive survey research design involving three hundred and thirty-nine (339) social studies teachers from the six education zones in Enugu State. There was no sampling because the 339 social studies teachers were considered manageable size. One research question and one hypotheses guided the study. A researcher-designed-questionnaire titled “Challenges to Social Studies Curriculum Implementation Questionnaire” was used for data collection. The research question was answered using mean and standard deviation, while the hypotheses was tested with *t* – test statistics. The findings of the study showed that junior secondary school social studies teachers agreed that problems exist in social studies curriculum implementation, especially with provision of in – service seminars for teachers, uncondusive learning environment, inadequate social studies specialist, lack of motivational incentives for teachers, school location barrier, among others. The findings of the study also showed no significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers in urban and rural secondary schools on their perceived challenges to the implementation of social studies in education zones in Enugu State. Based on the findings of the study, appropriate recommendations were made, among others, that the state government should ensure that educational facilities are provided both in urban and rural schools for a condusive learning environment, and that teachers should be given motivational incentives to boost their commitment and efficiency.*

**Keywords:** *social studies, challenges, implementation, relevance to society, perception of teachers*

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### **I. Introduction**

Education have been seen as an instrument per excellence for social, cultural and economic rebuilding as well as a tool for personal and national development. The success of this education depends largely on the curriculum and the effectiveness of its implementation. Achuonye and Nyenwe (2013) maintained that the essence of having a well-planned educational curriculum is to foster the ideals and values of a society. One of the curriculum programmes in the Nigerian education system that deals with the norms and values of the society is social studies; the curriculum clearly reflects the goals of the society.

One of the philosophies of education as outlined in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013) is the integration of the individual into a sound and effective citizen. The above mentioned philosophy which is among the objectives of social studies curriculum anchors on the learner, the society and knowledge (Azubuike, Ukegbu, Igwe & Obih, 2019). Akubuilu, Ugo, Ugochukwu & Ikehi (2019) had opined that the planning of the curriculum should always reflect the target recipient in order to reach a desired objective

Despite the relevance, values and objectives of social studies in Nigeria, a lot of challenges have been identified to hinder its effective implementation in Nigerian schools. Social studies teachers are faced with lots of instructional challenges which affect proper implementation of the curriculum (Offorma, 2006). The major challenges, among others, include: insufficient qualified social studies teachers, location barriers, uncondusive learning environment, inadequate instructional materials, poor curriculum planning, lack of motivation of teachers and Government failure to update teachers teaching skills (Mezieobi & Onyeanusi, 2012). These challenges seem to be age – long problems that have eaten deep in preventing the effective implementation of the curriculum in Nigeria.

Effective curriculum implementation in especially social studies requires qualified teachers. The teacher is the cardinal pillar for effective implementation. Unfortunately, there seem to be a lot of untrained and non – specialist teachers in social studies classroom (Adengideh, 2009). Recruitment of teachers in Nigeria has been badly bastardized: trained and qualified teachers are left unemployed while laymen are by political considerations being hired into the school system. In line with this view, Musa, Jimba, & Ogundele, (2015)

stated that statistics has also confirmed that a total of 207, 813 unqualified teachers teach in the 36 states of Nigeria with the North – West geo – political zone accounting for 48.8 %, while the North – East has 57.7 %. North central 38 %, South – East 16.7 %, South – South 19.2 % and South West 6.7 %. Under this situation, the effectiveness of teaching and learning could be far-fetched.

Unconducive learning environment is a challenge to curriculum implementation. It is a common understanding that teaching and learning can only be productive if it is conducted in a favourable environment. However, in Nigerian schools, the case seems to be different despite the advocacy of Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) for learner's friendly environment through provision of adequate infrastructure like classroom, functional laboratories, workshops and instructional materials. Musa, Jimba, and Ogundele (2015) noted that school environmental variables lead to high dropout, wastage and internal inefficiencies in Nigerian school system. Onele (2013) discovered in a study that instructional materials for social studies in junior secondary schools in Nigeria are inadequate. Ezeudu (2004) is of the view that no matter how trained and professional a social studies teacher is, teaching in the absence of instructional materials would not enable him/her to put ideas into practice and translate competence into reality. Social studies is resource intensive and a lot of teachers fail to use instructional materials owing to many factors such as lack of teachers commitment to duty, lack of adequate instructional materials and lack of resourcefulness on the part of teachers and students (Bassey, 2002; Anderson, 2011).

Students and parents factor is one of the barriers to effective implementation of social studies curriculum (Akpa, 2014). Unfortunately, some parents threaten the teachers for applying some corrective measures on their children either due to truancy or any other form of unhealthy behaviour. Okoro (2012) observed that some parents follow their children to school to fight, insult, humiliate or abuse teachers or school administrators for disciplining their children. These conditions sometimes force teachers to recoil to their shells as they lack what it takes to cope with the unfortunate demands of this age (Akpa, 2014; Nwagbo, 2011).

Motivational incentive is another challenge facing teachers on the job performance. To improve efficiency in social studies classroom, the teacher needs to be motivated. Motivation enhances teachers' effectiveness in discharging their duty, while lack of motivation weakens morale and commitment to duties among teachers (Fredrickson, 2000). In support of this view, Nwagbo (2011) asserted that there is no motivation for teachers. Teachers are in most cases poorly paid, and are made objects of ridicule by some group of the society. In fact, teachers' welfare, salaries and conditions of service are not encouraging (Agwu & Dorgu, 2015). Indisputably, Ozturk and Aykac, 2018, Elejo (2011) and Obilo and Sangoloye (2010) discovered that problems exist in social studies curriculum implementation, especially with provision of in – service seminars for teachers. On the contrary, Obilo and Sangoloye (2010) recognized that most present day teachers are not taking seriously, knowledge upgrading for they have their requisite qualifications at the initial appointment into the teaching profession. This conditions affect teaching and learning of social studies in our schools.

Location is also a key factor in implementation. Equality in development of urban and rural locations is necessary in terms of teachers' effectiveness, learners' interest and achievement in the implementation of social studies curriculum. Arthur (2011) and Omeke (2015) emphasized that location affects teacher effectiveness. In Nigeria, researchers are of the opinion that students from the urban areas receive quality education while those from rural areas are not properly taught (Kanno, 2006, UNESCO 2009, Effiom – Edem, Ntibi and Edoho 2017, Ahmed 2009). An investigation on availability and utilization of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) by Ndubuisi (2016) revealed that ICT resources are lacking in the schools especially in public schools in the rural areas. Endrey in Eyiuche and Ezeoba (2014) found that urban schools enjoyed benefits when it comes to financing, enhanced social and physical environment, and academic support systems in all ramification as compared to those in the rural schools.

### **Statement of the problem**

Nigerian education system is rapidly declining because of the inability to effectively implement the educational curriculum. In spite of the long paper policies on the National Policy on Education, indicating the objectives of the education which appear applauding, yet the reality which is effective implementation is still a challenge. One of the philosophies of education is as stated: "There is need for functional education for the promotion of a progressive, united Nigeria; to this end, school programmes need to be relevant, practical and comprehensive; while interest and ability should determine the individual's direction in education". Unfortunately, the dedication is largely seen on documented papers. There are various concerns regarding the aspect of social studies curriculum pedagogical process. Social studies curriculum is one of the Nigeria's bed rock programmes introduced in quest for relevance to teaching and learning in the Nigerian society. This challenge is manifested most noticeably on shortage of trained teachers; teachers not dully represented during the curriculum process; lack of instructional materials and facilities; teaching appointments politicized, lack of motivational incentives; school location barriers; student/parent factor; and particularly the loss of focus in making learning meaningful. These challenges trigger concern because it could influence among others teachers' effectiveness and commitment to duty; and students' learning outcome. As the situation deepens, the

need to review perception of social studies teachers on the challenges to effective implementation of social studies curriculum in secondary schools in education zones of Enugu State becomes imperative.

### **The objective of the study**

The study specifically investigated:

The perceived challenges to the implementation of social studies in education zones of Enugu State

### **The hypothesis**

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers in urban and rural secondary schools on their perceived challenges to the implementation of social studies in education zones of Enugu State.

## **II. Methodology**

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. This design is appropriate for this study because it sought the views of teachers on the challenges to the implementation of social studies in education zones of Enugu State education zones. Engwa and Ozofor (2015) asserted that descriptive survey is used to present a situation at defined period of time and can either require the participation of the whole population or just a sample of the population. Questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. The study was carried out in junior secondary schools in Enugu State education zones namely: Enugu, Udi, Agbani, Agwu, Nsukka and Obollo – Afor. The researcher chose Enugu State because it is among the states in Nigeria where social studies is taught. It is an outstanding state in the eastern part of Nigeria housing people from different cultural backgrounds. Since social studies is a study of man and his environment, ineffective implementation of social studies in Enugu State would have adverse effect on the future of greater Nigerians. The population of the study consisted of all 339 social studies teachers in the six education zones. They are distributed as follows: Enugu 84, Udi 47, Agbani 41, Agwu 22, Nsukka 86 and Obollo – Afor 59. Because of the manageable size, all the 339 social studies teachers were used for the study. From the population, 209 teachers were from urban location while 130 teachers formed the rural location. Social studies teachers were used because they are directly involved in the implementation of social studies curriculum in schools. They are in the best position to respond to issues concerning social studies implementation in the zones. The instrument used for the study was the researchers' designed questionnaire titled "Perceived Challenges to the Implementation of Social Studies Questionnaire" (PCISSQ). The instrument was made up of 10 items. It was structured in line with the research question. The responses were rated on four point Likert –type scale with 4 points strongly agree (SA), 3 points for agree (A), 2 points for disagree (D) and 1 point for strongly disagree (SD). The instrument was face validated by two experts in curriculum and instruction, from University of Nigeria Nsukka and one expert in measurement and evaluation from Godfrey Okoye University Enugu. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained by trial test using twenty (20) social studies teachers from 10 public secondary schools in Awka education zone of Anambra state. Twenty (20) copies of the instrument was administered on twenty (20) social studies teachers randomly selected from urban and rural schools. This served as a similar population of the study. The instrument was administered and data was analyzed using Cronbach Alpha. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.81. This obtained value attested high reliability of the instrument.

The study was carried out by the researchers with the help of three research assistants who administered 339 copies of the questionnaire with a successful return for analysis. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. Any item with a mean rating of 2.50 and above was considered agreed while a mean rating of below 2.50 was considered disagreed. The t – test analysis was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 significance level. The t – test was considered appropriate because of its capacity to handle both small and large numbers. If the calculated value of significance is less than 0.05, then the mean difference is significant and null hypotheses were accepted as stated.

## **III. Findings**

The findings of the study were obtained from the research questions answered and presented in tables 1 – 2.

**Research Question 1:** What are the perceived challenges to the implementation of social studies in education zones of Enugu State?

**Table no 1:** Mean Ratings and standard deviation of the teachers on the challenges to the implementation of social studies in education zones of Enugu State.

S/N	Item statements	Urban			Rural			Overall		
		Mean	SD	Dec	Mean	SD	Dec	Mean	SD	Dec
1	School location affects social studies implementation	3.00	0.86	A	3.11	0.82	A	3.06	0.96	A
2	There are inadequate instructional materials for proper implementation of social studies	3.22	0.97	A	3.12	1.10	A	3.17	1.04	A
3	Government failure to organize regular workshop/seminars to update teacher' competence and skills in the use of modern instructional materials	3.54	0.76	A	3.65	0.60	A	3.60	0.68	A
4	Lack of involvement of teachers in initial planning of the curriculum	3.25	0.95	A	3.09	1.07	A	3.17	1.01	A
5	Teaching and learning take place in an unconducive learning environment that lacks infrastructure	2.59	1.15	A	3.12	1.08	A	2.86	1.12	A
6	Teaching appointments mostly politicized	3.19	0.91	A	3.06	0.95	A	3.13	0.93	A
7	Teachers' salaries and remunerations are being delayed by the government	2.45	0.97	D	2.49	1.03	D	2.47	0.95	D
8	Teachers are not well placed in terms of salary structure affecting motivation to job satisfaction	3.27	1.16	A	3.01	1.51	A	3.14	1.34	A
9	Parents failure to provide necessary materials like textbooks to their children	3.23	0.88	A	3.06	0.97	A	3.15	0.93	A
10	Insufficient social studies teachers to teach the subject	2.91	1.05	A	2.84	1.08	A	2.88	1.07	A
<b>Grand Mean and Standard Deviation</b>		<b>3.06</b>	<b>0.96</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>3.05</b>	<b>1.02</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>3.06</b>	<b>0.96</b>	<b>A</b>

Table no 1 presents the mean ratings and standard deviation of teachers in urban and rural schools on their perceived challenges to the implementation of social studies in education zones of Enugu State. Teachers in urban schools had grand mean ratings of 3.08 with standard deviation of 0.91. This was considered to be agreement. Teachers in rural schools had grand mean ratings of 3.05 with standard deviation of 1.02, which was also considered as agree. The overall mean rating was 3.06 with standard deviation of 0.96. This result implies that teachers in urban and rural secondary schools agreed that the above issues are challenges to the implementation of social studies in education zones of Enugu State.

**Hypothesis:** There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers in urban and rural secondary schools on their perceived challenges to the implementation of social studies in education zones of Enugu State.

**Table no 2: shows t – test Analyses of Responses of teachers in Urban and Rural Secondary Schools on the perceived challenges to the implementation of social studies in education zones of Enugu State.**

Location	N	Mean	SD	t- cal	Df	Sig.	Dec.
Urban	209	3.081	0.916	2.601	337	1.63	NS
Rural	130	3.055	1.021				

Table no 2 shows that the t – value for the difference in mean ratings of teachers in urban and rural secondary schools on their perceived challenges to the implementation of social studies in education zones of Enugu State is 2.601 at 0.05 level of significance and 337 degree of freedom This is not significant at 1.63 level of significance, since it is higher than the significant level of 0.05 set for the study. Therefore, the null hypothesis is not rejected as stated. Hence, there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers in urban and rural secondary schools on their perceived challenges to the implementation of social studies in education zones of Enugu State.

#### **IV. Discussion of Findings**

Results from table 1 showed that teachers in urban and rural secondary schools are to a great extent faced with challenges in the course of implementing social studies curriculum. These challenges include: school location barrier, inadequate instructional materials, government failure to update teachers' skills through workshops/seminars, unconducive learning environment, teaching appointments mostly politicized, teachers not being well placed in terms of salary structure, parents' failure to provide textbooks and insufficient social studies teachers. Furthermore, t – test analysis showed that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of teachers in urban and rural secondary school on their perceived challenges to the implementation of social studies education zones of Enugu State.

The finding on perceived challenges to the effective implementation agreed with the work of Ozturk and Aykac (2018) who found that problems exist in social studies curriculum implementation, especially with provision of in – service seminars for teachers, among others. This finding also agreed with the work of Eleojo (2011) and Obilo and Sangoloye (2010) who all agreed that government is not taking care of the teachers as required. Contrary to the findings, Obilo and Sangoloye (2010) recognized that most present day teachers are not taking seriously knowledge upgrading for they have their requisite qualifications at the initial appointment into the teaching profession. The findings also supported Nwagbo (2011) who identified that teachers lack motivational incentives. The findings of Artur, 2011, Omeke, 2015, Eyiuch & Ezeoba were also in agreement with the findings of this study that location affects teacher's effectiveness. Their findings indicated that schools in urban location enjoyed benefits when it comes to financing, enhanced social and physical environment, academic support systems in all ramification as compared to those in the rural schools. The findings of this study also confirmed the assertion of Adengideh (2009), that untrained and non – specialist teachers are flooded in social studies classroom. For majority of these findings to reflect real challenges the need to give urgent attention to social studies curriculum implementation becomes imperative.

#### **V. Conclusion and Recommendation**

Curriculum implementation is a task that requires a lot of efforts. It is the teacher who gets the work load of implementation, making the him/her inseparable from curriculum. An effectively qualified social studies teacher should be one who is skillful and resourceful. This teacher has the capability to understand proper approaches, techniques and methods suitable for the dissemination of information. This teacher attends seminars, workshops and conferences to upgrade and acquire more knowledge. It is the teacher who is satisfied on the job performance.

It is important to note that the challenges of the teacher in the process of curriculum implementation cannot be overemphasized. The findings of this study in one way or the other showed defectiveness towards implementation of social studies curriculum. Critical challenges relating to social studies implementation include inadequate instructional materials, government failure to update teachers' skills through workshops/seminars, unconducive learning environment, teachers' lack of motivational incentives and other confirmed implementation barriers.

The role of social studies education in the realization of national objectives requires that its curriculum be effectively implemented. Social studies has the ability to bring constructive and transformative change,

making Nigeria move with the current trend of time. It also helps to promote self – reliance, skillfulness and sustenance and the growth of the nation; thereby, making Nigeria a better place to live. All these may not be attained if social studies curriculum is still faced with lots of challenges in the pedagogical processes. This study hopes to reawaken the need to revitalize the original intention of introducing social studies curriculum in Nigerian education system, mostly the quest for relevance in Nigerian education and society. This is because a nation that is lagging behind in promoting social studies curriculum holistically would find it difficult in a competitive and fast transforming world of today.

The study recommends that the ministry of education should ensure that fresh teaching appointments should not be politicized, but should be given by merit. This is to ensure that the right teachers are in the classroom and properly placed in terms of salary scale. The study presents the need to motivate teachers through remuneration and incentives for efficiency and qualitative service delivery. More so, the state government should make certain that educational facilities are provided both in urban and rural schools for a conducive learning environment.

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