



# CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AT THE JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL: SOCIAL STUDIES PERSPECTIVES

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## ABSTRACT

*Development of curriculum is one of the major debates in the developing countries with particular reference to Nigeria but the detail of how the curriculum will be implemented at school level are often neglected. This paper examined curriculum implementation strategies at the junior secondary school level. The study adopted a descriptive survey design which focused on investigating curriculum implementation strategies at the junior secondary school. The target population for the study comprised all the junior secondary schools in Ankpa Local Government Area, Kogi State and the sample for the study consisted of 120 junior secondary school teachers drawn using purposive sampling technique from the selected junior secondary schools in Ankpa Local Government Area, Kogi State. Researchers' constructed questionnaire titled Curriculum Implementation Strategies at the Junior Secondary School Questionnaire (CISJSSQ) was used to measure teachers' opinion on curriculum implementation strategies at the junior secondary school. The instrument has 15 items on a four-point Likert-scale of strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and strongly disagree (SD). This instrument was validated by three experts in the departments of Social Science Education, and Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counselling Nnamdi Azikiwe University. The researchers distributed and collected the copies of the questionnaire with the help of eight research assistants from the junior secondary schools. The data collected were analyzed using the weighted mean of 2.50 computed as  $4+3+2+1=10/4=2.5$ . Any mean score that is equal to or above 2.50 was considered significant and therefore, accepted while the one that is less than 2.50 was rejected. Findings showed that teachers of social studies are not effective in implementing various curriculum strategies during teaching and learning in junior secondary school, teachers of social studies do not teach appropriate contents in the social studies curriculum during classes and teachers of Social Studies do not employ proper method of teaching social studies and the objectives are not achieved. Based on this, it was recommended that the federal and state ministry of education should encourage the teachers through training and re-training to employ better implementation strategies for social studies curriculum among others.*

**KEYWORDS:** Curriculum implementation, strategies, junior secondary school, social studies and Perspectives

## INTRODUCTION

Curriculum is the life blood of any educational enterprise, the needs for curriculum in all field of studies can never be over emphasized especially in a subject that uses integrated curriculum like social studies. Curriculum is the content and activities which the school employs for the purpose of training the pupils; it is a means of child's adjustment to his environment. As experience is the best teacher, both content and activities are remembered while constructing curriculum in social studies. Tamakloe (1992) quoted Lawton (1978) view curriculum of a school as essentially a selection from a culture of a society. Certain aspects of way of life, certain kinds of knowledge, certain attitudes and values are regarded and so important that their transmission to the next generation is not left to chance in the society but it is entrusted to especially trained professionals. Igwe (2011) conceptualized curriculum in the

following arrangement from the narrowest to the broadest form, to her;

- Curriculum is what examiners require the teacher to emphasis in their teaching.
- Curriculum is what should be in a particular subject.
- Curriculum is the totality of the syllabuses of a school.
- Curriculum is a combination of classroom and out of classroom activities.
- Curriculum is the totality of activities carried out under the auspices of a school, in response to societal demands.
- Curriculum consists of the continuous chain of activities necessary for translating educational goals into concrete activities, materials and observable behavioural change.



Social Studies Education among other school subjects is primarily designed and taught in schools to address issues relating to right type of values, attitudes and behaviour with a view to achieving sustainable development. Obaje (2015) view Social Studies Education is an educative means of imparting the knowledge of social sciences, arts and humanities, physical, pure and natural sciences to learners which its broad knowledge enable social studies students to acquire a better understanding of the concepts, events and materials around their physical environment. Based on this, Social Studies has failed in its loadable objectives at the basic level of education because of the failure in achieving the objectives of proper teaching and learning. The essence of social studies is to study human social, physical, cultural, economic, political and religious environment and of how human being interact with and control the physical and social environment, provides human needs and aspiration and solve human problems in the society (Adebayo, Olatunde and Obaje, 2016). Social Studies curriculum must be evolved on the belief that social studies education should positively influence and modify the learner's behaviour in the direction of acceptable and current socio-cultural order.

Curriculum is the content and activities, which the school employs for training the pupils. It encompasses all the meaningful and desirable activities and experiences in and outside the school. Akinlaye (2003) sees curriculum in relation to this discussion as consisting of all the situations that the school may select and consciously organize for the purpose of developing the personality of its pupils and for making behaviour changes in them.

In the revision of the current re-aligned nine (9) years Basic Education programme, social studies curriculum developed by the NERDC in 2006 is designed to take cognizance of certain challenges facing this area of study as a core subject. Therefore, there is need to redress the observed inadequacy by confirming the teaching of the subject as a discipline that brings the reality of everyday social living to the students with the desire to making them acquire the knowledge, attitudes, values and skills required to be responsible and disciplined members of the society.

Furthermore, one of the viable means of reducing the societal problem via academics is the reconstruction of the school curriculum. Curriculum construction, facts, information, ideas and even generalizations and other units of data do not themselves constitute the content and learning experiences to be taught, but values by which positive effects, ideals, attitudes and values are to be developed, acquired, and internalized by learners. This curriculum orientation will offer meaning, purpose, significance and relevance to the instructional strategies (Akinlaye, 1999).

Interactions and encounters have tendency of posing numerous issues and problems, one wonder whether the teachers are not effectively teaching, using effective materials or some important content to be taught are missing from the curriculum. Curriculum implementation is one of the various process, tricky

tasks involve in the whole process of curriculum development. Linda and Cronin-Jone (1991) observed that belief about how students learn a teacher's role in the classroom, and the ability levels of students in a particular age group, and the relative importance of content topics. Both teachers believed that the most important students' outcome is factual knowledge, that middle- grade students learn through repeated drill and practice, and that middle school students require a great deal of direction. The teachers' beliefs differed in other areas, including beliefs about a teacher's role in the classroom and beliefs regarding the curriculum and its content topics. Although certain components of both teachers' belief structures enhanced the success of curriculum implementation, overall, their existing belief structures were incongruent with the underlying philosophy of the intended curriculum, thus hampering successful implementation.

Pratt (1994) opined that implementation requires restructuring and replacement. It requires adjusting personal habits, ways of behaving, program emphases, learning spaces and existing curricular and schedules. It means getting educators to shift from the current program to the new program, modification that can be met with great resistance. Therefore, successful implementation of curriculum results from careful planning because planning process addresses needs and resources requisite for carrying out intended actions. It involves establishing and determining how to administer policy that will govern the plan actions of the new ideas or materials which are put in practice and how these ideas and practices are been maintained.

Furthermore, individual various funding agencies want evidence as to the effectiveness of programs. They wish to assess teacher's availability and qualification, content, materials and teaching methods, they wish to know what students are learning, what skills can demonstrate and if the curriculum innovation is not actually initiated by the teacher, them it must at list be understood, supported and internalized by them. The idea of "school-based curriculum development" is recognition that change is move likely if implementation is conducted by the teachers who are most involved in and affected by the innovation (Holt, 1987, Walker 1988, in Pratt 1994).

Teachers have also been asked about reasons for not implementing curriculum changes. The main reasons given by two hundred teachers surveyed by Dow, Whitehead, and Wright (1984) in Pratt (1994) were that the curriculum contained an unrealistic amount of materials to be covered, had two few suggestions for students assessment, and came with insufficient support materials; teachers had been given too little opportunity to make input into guideline, study it or discuss it with other teachers prior to implementation; there was little support or communication from the central office, and principals were not knowledgeable, supportive or clear about their roles in implementation.

Bruce and Beverley (2002) opined that training consists of four main components: developing knowledge, through



exploring theory to understand the concepts behind a skill or strategy; the demonstration or modeling of skill; the practice of skill and peer coaching. Therefore, for teachers to become effective learners, they need specific attitudes and skills, including persistence, understanding of the transfer of training, understanding of the need for theory and the ability to use peers productively. Based on the above, incorporation of time for teachers to plan for implementation and provision of technical support were significant for promoting program implementation in the program. John and Diane (2003) observed from their founding that drawn on school development, educational change, and educational literature can develop three constructs that could form the heart of theory of implementation, namely, Profile of Implementation, Capacity to Innovate, and Outside Support.

Teaching strategies are the umbrella terms, in fact an overall large, scale teaching plan or framework that encapsulates both teaching methods and teaching techniques in social studies. These teaching methods and strategies are sometime not effectively utilized. John (2007) observed that problem-based learning, critical thinking, evidence-based practice, and student-centered teaching strategies have replaced traditional terminology typically linked with education and practice. However, it appears that not all centers of education have embraced the need to change to new methods of teaching and continue to teach as they were taught.

Pratt (1994) observed that enough information has been collected from studies of successful and unsuccessful implementation, that teachers can begin to build a set of guidelines. Thus:

- Establishing a climate of trust
- Implementing changes that meet a recognized need
- Consult widely
- Establishing clear goals and limited scope
- Develop an ethos of collegiality
- Use personal contact.
- Provide systematic in-service training
- Provide time and resources
- Do not try to change everyone and
- Do not despair

## PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to examine curriculum implementation strategies at the junior secondary school: Social Studies perspectives. Specifically, the objectives of the study are to:

1. Asses the implementation strategies adopted by the teachers of Social Studies during teaching and learning.
2. Examine whether or not the Social Studies content in the curriculum are appropriately taught in social studies classes
3. Examine whether or not the teaching method employed in teaching Social Studies are properly used and the objective achieved.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What nature of the implementation strategies do teachers of Social Studies adopt during teaching and learning in junior secondary school?
2. Do teachers of social studies teach appropriate content in the Social Studies curriculum during classes?
3. Do teachers of social studies employ proper method of teaching Social Studies and the objective achieved?

## METHODOLOGY

The study is a survey design focused on investigating curriculum implementation strategies at the junior secondary school: Social Studies perspectives. The target population for the study comprised of all the basic schools in Ankpa Local Government Area, Kogi State and the sample for the study comprised of 120 junior secondary school teachers. These teachers were drawn using purposive sampling technique from the selected junior secondary schools in Ankpa Local Government Area, Kogi State. The researchers constructed questionnaire titled curriculum implementation strategies at the junior secondary school: Social Studies perspectives (CISJSSSSP) to measure teachers' opinion on curriculum implementation strategies at the junior secondary school: Social Studies perspectives. The instrument has 15 items of a four-point scale of strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (SD) strongly disagree (D). This instrument was validated by experts in the field of Social Studies, test and measurement. The researchers distributed and collected the copies of the questionnaire with the help of eight research assistants from the junior secondary schools. The data collected were analysed using the weighted mean of 2.5 computed as  $4+3+2+1=10/4=2.5$ . Any mean score that is equal to or above 2.5 is considered significant and therefore, accepted while the one that is less than 2.5 is rejected.

## RESULTS

### Research Question one

What nature of the implementation strategies do teachers of Social Studies adopt during teaching and learning in junior secondary schools?



**Table 1: Nature of the implementation strategies**

S/N	Statements/Items	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	$\bar{X}$ Mean	Remark
1	Teachers of social studies do not implement the curriculum well	35 29%	66 55%	9 8%	10 8%	3.1	Agree
2	Some teachers that teach social studies in my school are not social studies specialist	59 49%	44 37%	11 9%	6 5%	3.3	Agree
3	Many of the social studies teachers in my school do not use instructional materials	33 28%	50 42%	25 21%	12 9%	2.9	Agree
4	Social studies teacher in my school select topic during teaching.	65 54%	42 35%	5 4%	8 7%	3.4	Agree
5	Some of the social studies teachers do come to class regularly	71 59%	31 26%	2 2%	16 13%	3.3	Agree
<b>Weighted Average</b>						<b>3.2</b>	

Source: Field Survey 2017

Table 1. Item 1 84% of the respondents agree that Teachers of Social Studies do not implement the curriculum well while 14% disagree to the statement. Item 2, the respondents agreed to the statement that some teacher that teaches social studies in their school are not social studies specialist with a mean score of 3.3. The table reveals on Item 3, that with a mean score of 2.9 the respondents agree that many of the social studies teachers in their school do not use instructional materials. Furthermore, on item 4, 54% of the respondents strongly agree, 35% agree to the statement that social studies teacher in their school select topic during teaching. Also, on item 5 with a mean

of 3.3 which is above the calculated mean of 2.50 the respondents agree that some of the social studies teachers do come to class regularly. Based on the above result, it can be inferred that teachers of social studies are not effective in implementing various curriculum strategies during teaching and learning in junior secondary schools.

**Research Question two:**

Do teachers of social studies teach appropriate content in the Social Studies curriculum during classes?

**Table.2: Appropriate teaching of social studies content**

S/N	Statements/Items	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	$\bar{X}$ Mean	Remark
6	Some Social Studies teachers teaches appropriately in my school.	48 40%	21 18%	29 24%	22 14%	2.8	Agree
7	Some of the social studies teachers do not display appropriate knowledge of the subject matter	41 34%	23 19%	38 32%	18 15%	2.7	Agree
8	Social studies teachers teach the content in the curriculum effectively as required	29 24%	15 13%	44 37%	32 26%	2.3	Disagree
9	Some social studies teachers do not demonstrate good examples during teaching	41 34%	23 19%	42 35%	14 12%	2.8	Agree
10	Social studies teachers lack good text book for proper teaching.	54 45%	50 42%	10 8%	6 5%	3.3	Agree
<b>Weighted Average</b>						<b>2.8</b>	

Source: Field Survey 2018

From table 2 with a weighted mean of 2.8 from item 6, which is above the calculated mean of 2.5 the respondents, agree that some Social Studies teachers teaches appropriately in their

school. Item 7 with a weighted mean of 2.7 indicates that some of the social studies teachers do not display appropriate knowledge of the subject matter. Though on item 8 with a mean



of 2.3 the respondents disagree to the statement that Social Studies teachers teach the content in the curriculum effectively as required. The table reveals on Item 9, with a mean score of 2.8 the respondents agree that some social studies teachers do not demonstrate good examples during teaching and the last item 10 with a weighted mean of 3.3 indicates that social studies teachers lack good text book for proper teaching. Based on the

above result, it can be inferred that teachers of social studies do not teach appropriate content in the social studies curriculum during classes.

**Research Question Three**

Do teachers of Social Studies employ proper method of teaching Social Studies and the objective achieved?

**Table 3: method of teaching social studies and achieving objective**

S/N	Statements/Items	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	$\bar{X}$ Mean	Remark
11	Some of the methods use in teaching social studies are not appropriate	43 36%	60 50%	10 8%	7 6%	3.2	Agree
12	I cannot develop interest in solving social problem in the environment because various methods of social studies knowledge are not used	56 47%	50 42%	11 9%	3 2%	3.3	Agree
13	The various methods of teaching social studies without discussion methods are not appropriate	61 51%	41 34%	12 10%	6 5%	3.3	Agree
14	Inquiring method can help to achieve social studies objectives	46 38%	48 40%	21 18%	5 4%	3.1	Agree
15	Proper methods of teaching can help to achieve adequate result in social studies	34 28%	55 46%	29 24%	2 2%	3.0	Agree
Weighted mean						3.2	

**Source:** Field Survey 2018

Table 3 shows that on item 11 the respondents agree to the statement that some of the methods use in teaching Social Studies are not appropriate with a mean score of 3.2. On item 12, 89% of the respondents agree that they cannot develop interest in solving social problem in the environment because various methods of social studies knowledge are not use while 11% disagree to the statement. Item 13, 51% of the respondents strongly agree, 34% agree to the statement that the various method of teaching social studies without discussion methods are not appropriate while 10% disagree and 5% strongly disagree to the statement. On item 15, 78 respondents strongly agree and agree that proper methods of teaching can help to achieve adequate result in Social Studies with a mean score of 3.0. Therefore, it can be inferred that teachers of Social Studies do not employ proper methods of teaching Social Studies and the objectives are not achieved.

**RESULT OF THE FINDINGS**

1. Teachers of Social Studies are not effective in implementing various curriculum strategies during teaching and learning in junior secondary schools.

- 2. Teachers of Social Studies do not teach appropriate content in the social studies curriculum during classes.
- 3. Teachers of Social Studies do not employ proper method of teaching social studies and the objectives are not achieved.

**DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS**

Findings from research question one show that teachers of Social Studies are not effective in implementing various curriculum strategies during teaching and learning in junior secondary schools. In view of this, Pratt (1994) affirmed that successful implementation of curricular results from careful planning; planning processes address needs and resources requisite for carrying out intended actions. It involves establishing and determining how to administer policy that will govern the planned action, planning take place prior to program creation and delivery. Ololobou (1999) observed that crucial issues teachers have to consider in the proper implementation is lack of professional teachers in a specified field of study, instructional materials whether traditional or modern which are facilities or teaching pillars without which effective teaching be thwarted as well as teaching strategies which refers to particular



plans for achieving the objectives of teaching are not effectively use.

Findings from research question two show that teachers of social studies do not teach appropriate content in the Social Studies curriculum during classes. In view of his finding, Henry (1992) in Pratt (1994) commented that teachers are the integral part of the thinking that drives program creation and implementation. Teachers are aware of the assumptions behind the process and make the process of curriculum development and implementation even more effective. Based on this fact, any institution of learning that lack qualified teachers cannot implement programme effectively and efficiently since teachers are the life blood of any implementation strategies. To support this, Oriaifor et'al (2005) opined that the fundamental curricular question that is at the root of any curriculum content is what educational experiences can be provided that are likely to lead to the attainment of set educational purposes for the school.

Findings from research question three show that teachers of Social Studies do not employ proper method of teaching social studies and the objectives are not achieved. This finding corroborated the idea of Mezieobi et al (2008) when they affirmed that any meaningful act of teaching is geared at achieving defined behavioural objectives in the selection of teaching method. Furthermore, Pratt (1994) observed that successful implementation is a process that should encourage those involved to be creative since the implementation depends on one general approach to curriculum and curriculum development. Ornstein and Hunkins (1998) sum it up that after implementation, there is need for evaluation and evaluation involves determining standards for Judging quality and deciding whether those standards should be relative or absolute, collecting relevant information and applying the standards to determine quality curriculum implementation.

### Recommendations

1. The federal and state ministry of education should encourage the teacher through training and re-training to employ better implementation strategies for social studies curriculum.
2. The government should employ qualify teachers to teach appropriate content in the social studies curriculum.
3. Teachers should use appropriate teaching methods in social studies so as to achieve the objective intended to achieve.

### CONCLUSION

This fight against educational improvement through proper implementation in all aspect of education sectors must continue, since it is beginning to become clear that in order to succeed, implementation must be a process not of command but of negotiation.

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