



Teaching Social Interaction Skills in Social Studies Classroom and Implications for Maintenance of Family Stability

Daniel I. Mezieobi*, Samuel A. Mezieobi and Kelechi C. Meziobi*****

**Department of Social Science Education, University of Nigeria Nsukka*

***Department of Curriculum And Educational Technology, University of
Port Harcourt, Nigeria*

****Department of Social Science Education, Delta State University, Abraka,
Nigeria*

ABSTRACT

This study is a survey which was carried out with 110 sandwich students of university of Nigeria Nsukka. The focus was to ascertain the relevance of social studies programme of Nigerian universities in inculcating social interaction skills for maintaining peace and managing conflicts in the family. Four research questions guided the study. The major findings are that social studies programme inculcates social interaction skills for maintaining family stability. Lecturer dominated instruction was the major implementation strategy. Obstacles to effective teaching of social interaction skills are inadequate use of cooperative learning, limited practical learning experiences, low cooperative work ethics, corruption and general indiscipline amongst some family members. Conclusion and recommendations for viable inculcation of social interaction skills through social studies instruction are articulated.

INTRODUCTION

The family is an important social institution for national development, growth and stability. National development is assured through collaborative contributions of families towards national development. The acquisition of social interactions skills through social studies instruction is a fundamental means of re-positioning members of the various families in Nigeria to embrace peace education, human relations, environmental education, cooperation, diligence, positive values and the need for healthy social relations within and outside the family circle.

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The growing rate of instabilities in the extended and nuclear families in Nigeria, which is principally based on scarce economic resources for meaningful social cooperation amongst close and distant relations, creates room for social conflict and antagonism within the family institution. Against this background Osita-Njoku and Uwaoma (2001) submitted that family problems are universal but differed in magnitude and frequency. They highlighted sources of family problems in Nigeria as lack of proper planning and budgeting. Faulty relationships, unemployment, lack of finances, incompatibility amongst others. In addition, Lawan (2008) is of the view that a democratic stable family is a condition for the promotion of the economic prosperity of its members.

Since the aggregation of families build up the nation, it is instructive that poverty alleviation, socialization, value education, skills acquisition for worthwhile employment as embodiment of social studies education is germane for sensitizing peace education in family. Peaceful homes are crucial to national development. Economic empowered citizens have worth for social living, hard work obedience, tolerance and accommodation of other nationals. Highlighting the essence of peace and economic-strength as a condition for building stable families who maintain social order for political and economic progress of Nigeria. Mezieobi, Fubrara and Mezieobi (2008) observed that vocational education in the indigenous Nigerian society was achieved through accommodative social interaction and that relative social interaction in the families help in promoting affective learning which resulted in respect to constituted authority, elders, family traditions, cooperation, perseverance, bravery, truthfulness, loyalty, obedience, love, mutual harmony and co-existence. It is imperative that cherished societal values and culture is sustained through cooperation of families.

Achieving cohesive family life should be the focus of social studies education. The development of social interaction and improvement of inter personal and group relationship is one of social interaction and improvement of inter personal and group relationship is one of the basic goals of social studies (Joof, 1994). The acquisition of value education, moral development, citizenship education, skills for survival, social interactions skills for cultural inter dependence and accommodation in social studies education in Nigerian universities, is a preparatory means of equipping the learner with life long education for peaceful management of the family. Given the centrality of stability in the family as a condition for achieving effective national development and stability. This study will meaningful investigate the extent social interaction skills are taught in social studies classroom of Nigerian universities as a precursor for the maintenance of family peace, convivial co-existence and interdependence of the Nigerian citizenry.

Ideally, social studies is meant to provide indigenous education that is socially relevant, adequate to meet citizens social needs, achievement of social reformation, cultural revival, moral development, including skills, positive attitudes and socialization for the realization of functional citizens, who are imbued with patriotic feelings and concern for the development of

Nigeria (Mezieobi, 2008). The development of the human resource in various families in Nigeria through social studies instruction is a potential means of equipping the families with skills for survival, tolerance, ethnic accommodation and ability to manage inter-relations. National development is anchored on cohesive social living. Productive thinking and worthwhile contribution towards political, technological, economic advancement is fronted by citizens whose families environment are peaceful in terms of peaceful social intercourse, economic well being, good health and the possession of relevant skills to survive in democratic changing nation. Interestingly, social studies education is an innovative course of instruction geared at focusing education that is reflective of Nigerian's social, political, technological, economic and physical environment (Mezieobi, 2008: 135).

Joof (1994) in a study in Sokoto on effect of teaching and learning of social studies on the development of social interaction skill at the secondary school level yielded a low significance. In others words, teachers are to improve on the social interaction skills of young learners. Robertson (1997) said that the teaching of values to learners through social studies instruction acquaints the learner with experiences; knowledge, attitude, skill; actions and rationale decision that will enable them contribute positively to societal growth.

Obemeata (1983) and Obebe (2005) condemned the extensive use of expository method in social studies classroom as it inhibits creativity, in put and participation of the learners; they maintained that it equally affects the inculcation of desirable values attitudes and skill which is the central focus of social studies education. Regurgitation of facts provides little experience for fact finding and vitiates the inquiry orientation of the learner. Practical learning experiences is one of the ways of integrating social interaction skills. Practical learning engagement is lasting and meaningful. It improves rational decision making skill, as well as appreciation of cultural diversities, norms, needs and aspiration of different ethnic groups in Nigeria.

Social interaction skills can be improved through discussions, use of field trips, cooperative learning, and use of resource person, exposure to differed learning experiences, meet the people interactive studies, extensive use of the internet, involvement of the learner in classroom participation as well as decision making. Others are inculcation of collaborative group work attitude, studies to be focused on contemporary issues, making the social studies curriculum pragmatic on social realities reflective of the needs and aspiration of the people.

Mezieobi (1993), Ezeudu (2003) and Mezieobi and Meziobi (2008) reported that social studies education is environmental focused and provides the learner with skills for social living in their families and wider society.

Olurankinse (2007) opined that many Nigerian families economic stand is lamentably poor that economic empowerment is a means of building stability of the family for future. The family is further plagued with social problems occasioned by the cultural practices of people in the society, poor value education, achievement of positive values without commitment, disobedience,

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drug addition, fraudulent life styles amongst others (Laurer, 1992, Mkpa, 1996, Umeh & Anyakaoha 2007). The rising level of social deviants in the family circle especially amongst the youth is debasing the moral foundations and social stability of the family (Okparigbo, 2000, Nwabuisi, 2000 & Bulues 2002). The implication is that the family health and social environment is threatened by negative social vices, that future dependable family social living in Nigeria, demand moral regeneration through knowledge, skills, values and positive attitudes offered by social studies education in Nigeria universities.

Statement of the problem

Social studies education is value laden and emphasizes instruction on cooperative family social living. The economic down turn in Nigeria has affected social relations in the extended and nuclear families, meaning that Nigeria family are conspicuously plagued with social crisis. This study is determined to investigate the extent social interaction skills are inculcated in the learner as precondition for managing peaceful relations in the family and what are the obstacles against effective teaching of social interaction skills?

Research questions

Four research questions were posed to guide the study

1. To what extent do the social studies curricular emphasized social interactions skills?
2. What is the method used in teaching social interaction skills?
3. To what extend does social studies instruction help the learner in maintaining peace in the family?
4. What are the obstacles against affective teaching of social interaction skills?

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The study was carried out in university of Nigeria Nsukka in Enugu State. The population of the study comprised all social studies students in the sandwich programme 2008 contact session. They were used because of their long exposure to social studies programme of the university. There was no sampling as 120 students in the 4th year and 5th year (final year students) were used for the study. The only instrument for study was a structured questionnaire designed by the researcher. The validity of the instrument was determined by two experts in social studies education and one in measurement and evaluation. Test-retest method was used in determining the reliability of the instrument, the result showed a positive reliability of 0.69 which was suitable for the study.

A modified four point Likert-type scale of strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree was the adopted response format. The questionnaires were personally administered and collected by the researcher. The respondents were guided by the researcher, who also collected back the responses of the students duly completed, this practice ensured 100% retrieval of questionnaires. 10 questionnaires were discarded because of ambiguities and errors by respondents.

Data Analysis

The research questions were answered through frequencies and percentages. Responses below 40% were not accepted. The results were presented in line with the research questions used for the study.

RESULTS

Research question one

To what extent do the social studies curricula emphasize social interaction skills.

Table 1: Showing the extent social interaction skills are injected in the Learner in a Social Studies Classroom.

S/N		SA	A	D	SD
1.	The curriculum of social studies programme in the university is designed to equip the learner with social interaction skills	60 (54.5%)	30 (27.2%)	10 (9.1%)	10 (9.1%)
2.	Social interaction skills is mainly focused on human relations	45 (40.9%)	50 (45.4%)	6 (5.4%)	9 (8.1%)
3.	Issues about the family is principally the content of instruction	43 (39.01%)	41 (37.3%)	10 (9.1%)	16 (14.5%)
4.	Students' are equipped with social skill to manage conflicts in the family	30 (27.2%)	60 (54.5%)	16 (14.5%)	4 (3.6%)
5.	Students' are equipped with social skills to manage conflicts in the family	70 (63.6 %)	40 (36.4%)	- (0%)	- (0%)
6.	Social interaction skills for family economic survival are taught	33 (30%)	50 (45.5%)	17 (15.5%)	10 (9.1%)

Result showed that 81.7% of the respondents affirmed that social studies programme in the university equipped the learner with social interaction skills; only 18.3% of the respondents are opposed to this view. 85.4% of the respondents agreed that social interaction skills taught in social studies is focused on human relations, only 14.6% of the respondents disagreed. 76.3% of the respondents confirmed that issues about the family are centrally taught in social studies instruction, while 23.7% disconfirms this. 18.1% of the respondents disagreed that students are not equipped with social skills to manage conflict in the family, while 81.9% are positive. There was no

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opposed view that social studies promote cultural interdependence, 100% confirmed that social studies curriculum in the university promotes cultural interdependence. 75.5% agreed that social studies curriculum emphasize skills for economic growth of families, while 24.5% disagreed. The generated data showed that social studies programme of Nigerian universities equip the learners with social interaction skills.

Research Questions Two

What are the methods used in teaching social interaction skills?

Table 2: Showing methods used in teaching social interaction skills.

S/N	Item description	SA	A	D	SD
7	Teaching is mainly lecturer dominated instruction	35 (31.8%)	36 (50.9%)	19 (17.3%)	- (0%)
8	Resource persons are often used for instruction	5 (4.5%)	5 (4.5%)	30 (27.2%)	70 (63.6%)
9	Group learning is often encouraged	10 (9.1%)	70 (63.6%)	18 (16.4%)	12 (10.9%)
10	Varieties of learning opportunities are employed	25 (22.7%)	25 (22.7%)	30 (27.3%)	30 (27.3%)
11	Field trip is often used	10 (9.1%)	19 (17.3%)	36 (32.7%)	45 (40.9%)
12	Method of teaching encourage shared problem solving attitude	12 (10.1%)	68 (61%)	16 (14.5%)	14 (12.7%)
13	Lecturers scarcely use community resources	35 (31.8%)	46 (41.8%)	10 (9.1%)	19 (17.3%)

Information form generated data showed that teaching is lecturer dominated; this was supported by 82.7% of the respondents, while 17.3% disagreed. Only 10% of the respondents agreed that resource person were used, while 90% opposed this. 45.4% of the respondents accepted that varieties of learning opportunities are used in teaching social interaction skills, while 54.6% are opposed to this view. The difference is not statistically significant. 73.6% of the respondents disconfirmed that field trip is often used in teaching, while 26.4% accepted. 72.7% of the respondents confirmed that method of teaching encouraged shared problem solving attitude, 27.3% disagreed. 73.6% of the respondents confirmed that lecturers do not extensively use community resources, while 26.4% disagreed. The findings of the study showed that teaching is lecturer dominated; resource persons, field trips and community resources are not effectively utilized. Groups learning are encouraged, varieties of learning opportunities are employed and method of teaching by lectures encouraged shared problem solving attitude.

Research Question Three

To what extent does social studies instruction help the learner in maintaining peace in the family?

Table 3: Showing the extent of social studies programme in inculcating social interaction skill for maintenance of peace in the family.

S/N	Item description	SA	A	D	SD
14	Learners are equipped with the skills of identifying problems in the family	30 (27.3%)	60 (54.5%)	15 (13.6%)	5 (4.5%)
15	Acquired social interaction skills is adequate to improve relationship in the family	20 (18.2%)	50 (45.4%)	20 (18.2%)	20 (18.2%)
16	The skill of accommodation is enhanced	21 (19%)	59 (53.6%)	17 (15.4%)	13 (11.8%)
17	Skill for family problem resolution is acquired by learners	18 (16.4%)	60 (54.5%)	16 (14.5%)	16 (14.5%)
18	Learners are equipped with adequate social interaction skills to participate effectively in the affairs of the society	110 (100%)	- (0%)	- (0%)	- (0%)

About 19% of the respondents agreed that social studies programme equip learners with skills to identify problems in the family problems in the family, 18.2% gave negative response. About 36% of the respondents disagreed that acquired social interaction skills is not adequate to improve relationship in the family, 63.6% of respondents accepted. More than 72% confirmed that social studies instruction enhanced accommodation while 27.4% disagreed. 29% disagreed that skill for family problem resolution cannot be achieved through social studies instructions, while 71% gave positive response to the issue. 100% accepted that social studies instruction equips the learners with the social interactions skills to participate effectively in the affairs of the society. It is established that social studies instruction is fundamental in equipping the learner with social interactions skills adequate to maintain peace in the family.

Research questions four

What are the obstacles against effective teaching of social interaction skills?

About 45% of the respondents agreed that non exposure to varieties of learning opportunities is an obstacle, 54.6% disagreed. 72.4% confirmed that cooperative learning is not adequately encouraged in teaching social studies, while 27.6% responded negatively. 100% disagreed that cooperative work ethnic is high, in which case it is low. 81.7% accepted that limited learning experience is an obstacle in injecting social interaction skill, 18.3%

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responded contrarily. 36.4% agreed that teaching method is not creative, while 63.6% disagreed. 18.2% disallowed that corrupt practices in the society is not an obstacle, while 81.8% responded positively.

Table 4: Showing Obstacles to Effective Teaching of Social Interaction Skills.

S/N	Item description	SA	A	D	SD
19.	Non exposure to varieties of learning opportunities	25 22.7%	25 22.7%	25 22.7%	35 31.8%
20	Cooperative leaning is not adequately encouraged	30 27.2%	50 45.4%	20 18.2%	- 0%
21	There is limited practical learning experiences	30 27.2%	60 54.5%	20 18.2%	- 0%
22	Cooperative work ethnics is high	- 0%	- 0%	20 18.2%	90 81.8%
23	Teaching method is not creative	- 0%	40 36.4%	40 36.4%	30 27.2%
24	The acquisition of negative values by the members of the society is an obstacle	60 54.5%	30 27.2%	20 18.2%	- 0%
25	The moral tone of members of the family is fast declining	70 63.6%	20 18.2%	- 0%	20 18.2%

About 82% accepted that moral tone of the members of the family is declining as 18.2% disagreed. Based on information from the study, obstacles to integrating social interaction skills in the learner is inadequate use of cooperative learning, limited practical learning experiences, low cooperative work ethnics, corrupt practices in the society and general declining moral tone of the family members.

DISCUSSION

This study established that social studies programme of Nigerian universities equip learners with social interaction skills to maintain family relationship and control conflict. This study disconfirms Joof's work in (1994) which established that junior secondary school social studies programme did not improve social interaction skills of learners. Robertson (1997) postulation that value education provided in social studies improves learners' knowledge experience and social skills for effective social living is in line with the findings of this study.

This study proves that method of instruction was mainly lecturer dominated instruction. This is in consonance with Obemeata (1983) and (Obebe 2005) whose studies condemned extensive use of expository method in teaching social studies which inhibits creativity. However, this study

proves that the instructional strategies of teaching social studies in Nigerian universities improved social interaction skills of learner, despite the use of expository method.

Findings of the study further confirm that social studies programmes equips the learner with social studies in Nigeria universities improved social interaction skills of learners, despite the use of expository method.

Findings of the study further confirm that social studies programme equips the learner with social interaction skill to maintain peace in the family. This is line with Joof (1994), Ezeudu (2003) Mezieobi, Fubara and Mezieobi (2008) who asserted that social studies education is environmental focused and relevant in addressing societal challenges, progress and problems. It was found that some of the main obstacles to effective teaching of social interaction skills in social studies are inadequate use of cooperative learning, limited practical learning experiences, low cooperative work ethics, corrupt practices in the society and general declining moral values of the Nigeria families. Against corruption and general indiscipline pervading and affecting the moral behaviour of families is evident in the works of Laurer (1992), Mkpa (1996), Umeh and Anyakoha (2007), Okparigbo(2000) Nwabuisi(2000) and Bulus (2002).

Implication of the Study

Social studies is vital in x-raying family issue and equipping the learner with functional skills to maintain peace in the family. It is instructive that social interaction skills of learners should be enhanced through diverse learning approaches and collaborative learning. Lecturer dominated instruction should be played down to accommodate innovative use of resource persons, field trips, extensive use of community resources and most essentially the effective implementation of social studies programme in Nigerian universities calls for use of professionally train social studies lecturers imbued with the philosophies, objectives and pedagogies as to enhance the breadth of social interaction skill gained by learners.

CONCLUSION

Social studies programme of Nigerian universities is adequate in inculcating social interaction skills suitable for maintaining peace and management of conflicts in the family. However, there is need for diverse learning approaches so as to further improve the inculcation of social interaction skills in the learner. Corruption, debasing moral values and economic hardship has affected the stability of various Nigerian families.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Diversified approaches should be employed in teaching social studies.
2. Lecturers are to be exposed to the pedagogies of implementing social studies.
3. Cooperative and collaborative learning is strategic in teaching social interaction skills.
4. The inculcation of shared problem solving attitude reinforce interaction amongst learners.
5. Social studies instructions should expose learners to practical learning experiences.
6. Teaching should attract in put from learners experiences and reflections.

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