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Bi-Annual

IJOTRE, Vol. 25 No. 1, 2024

iv

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Bi-Annual

IJOTRE, Vol. 25 No. 1, 2024

# TEACHERS QUALITY AND EFFECTIVENESS IN THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF SOCIAL STUDIES IN DELTA STATE, NIGERIA

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## **Abstract**

*The study examined teacher quality and effectiveness in the teaching and learning of Social Studies in Delta State, Nigeria. The study was guided by two research objectives which are teachers' professional and academic qualifications influence effective teaching of Social Studies in Upper Basic Social Studies in the state. The study employed the descriptive survey research design for the investigation on a sample of ninety-seven randomly selected from amongst Social Studies teachers in the state through balloting procedure in stages. The instrument for data collection was the questionnaire. Finding revealed that most Social Studies teachers possessed the minimum requirements for teaching Social Studies and are professionally qualified and trained for effective teaching of the subject. The study recommends that emphasis should be placed on in-service training for teachers teaching Social Studies at the Basic school level for the subject's objectives to be achieved. It is therefore imperative for these teachers to join the SOSAN in order to get continuous professional development that will enhance their pedagogical skills in the subject.*

**Keywords:** Qualification, Experience, Social Studies, Teaching and Learning

## **Introduction**

Numerous studies like that of Boadu (2013); Mezieobi and Anyanwu (2017), amongst others, have examined the impact of instructors' efficiency in the classroom on students' learning outcomes as determined by their academic achievement, particularly in social studies. Research from these authors indicates that a strong predictor of students' academic success is good instruction. Consequently, learners

with proficient teachers tends to achieve better academically (Mezioebi & Anyanwu, 2017). Poor instructors' performance in completing their teaching tasks, their negative work attitudes, and their poor teaching habits, all of which have resulted in low motivation who have also resulted in poor academic achievement (Boadu, 2013). Additionally, it has been noted that there are insufficient or, when they are, extremely subpar instructional materials in Nigeria's public secondary schools, as well as general infrastructural conditions, teacher resource availability, and other factors that would support successful teaching (Teye, 2015). These current circumstances would undoubtedly have a detrimental impact on the standard of education in public schools, which might result in secondary school students performing poorly academically and having unfavorable attitudes and values.

Improving the caliber of social studies instructors is necessary for efficient social studies instruction and learning. Teacher quality is defined as the attributes of a teacher who possesses every qualification found in academic or professional records, including certification status, educational background, subject-matter expertise, prior teaching experience, and teaching abilities (Adu-Yeboah, 2008). In addition, one of the most significant factors influencing how students develop their attitudes and skills in social studies education is the quality of instructors with regard to meeting lesson objectives at the elementary school level. Consequently, the teacher of social studies with a qualitative background, that is, one with a cognate experience, is a valuable resource and a key player in the successful execution of the Upper basic social studies curriculum in Nigeria (Teye, 2015).

The development of social studies education in Nigeria is essentially based on the upper basic educational level. The young students at that level must be prepared with the necessary knowledge and morals in order to display the attitudes and behaviors necessary for the cohesion of the country. At the Upper Basic level of school, students are encouraged to choose careers in social studies that will mostly benefit them in the future. According to Boadu (2013), the main objectives of teaching social studies are to help students develop a strong social knowledge and to take seriously their obligations as democratic citizens. By arguing, discussing, investigating, writing, assessing, experimenting, and building models, as well as by listening to and reading the material, observing role models, and practicing skills, effective instructors encourage students to learn actively (Adjei, 2013).

Good instructors set high standards for their students' work and showcase examples of the latter's work that satisfies worldwide requirements for emulation. Additionally, they provide students ongoing feedback so they may keep improving as they rework their work in order to meet these requirements (Mezioebi & Anyanwu, 2017). A well-coordinated and motivated classroom setting is created by effective instructors to enable students to work efficiently, thus giving students less barriers and more support for their learning, which by extension include parents and guardians in the educational process thereby forging a strong link between the home and the school (Tamakloe, 2008). The instructors also work together with other educators and administrators to develop a comprehensive curriculum that welcomes

school community input. Effective teaching involves much more than just providing pupils with knowledge.

Teachers also have a lot to learn in order to do this technical and professional task of teaching effectively; thus, social studies instructors help students to make sense of the complicated world we live in and get them ready for responsible and informed citizenship. For the advantage of the students, qualified social studies instructors must be available at all levels of the educational hierarchy to avoid divergent perspectives existing on the precise meaning of Social Studies. It has been challenging to define the subject and find limits for its breadth since different academics have defined it in their own perception and purview over the years (Ayaaba, 2011). These many interpretations emphasize that social studies addresses today's most important societal concerns, difficulties, and challenges. Through social studies, students acquire the values, attitudes, and abilities necessary to become productive citizens who are aware of and sensitive to the issues facing their nation. It is necessary for Social Studies teachers in the educational system to continuously develop both professionally and non-professionally due to the curriculum's rotating and ever-expanding nature in terms of content enrichment, integration with current emerging issues, information communication and technologies, and pedagogies (Teye, 2015). These kind of teachers possess the ability to promote the subject matter and raise students' examination scores in the process.

Similarly, characteristics linked to instructors' efficacy have been found in recent analyses of the factors influencing students' results. It is not unexpected that this element exists because one of the main purposes of schools is to create environments in which students can learn. Teachers who are able to effectively manage these relationships are likely to be more effective than those who do not. In the light of this, Blankstein (2012) has said that test results and grades may not always accurately reflect the caliber of a teacher's instruction. According to Joshua's (2011) study, Nigerian instructors oppose the use of student accomplishment scores as a measure of an instructor's performance, competency, or efficacy. This finding lends credence to the aforementioned viewpoint.

Researchers have looked for more equitable methods of assessing teachers' effectiveness because academic achievement of pupils is not the sole factor that predicts their success. The efficacy of instructors has been assessed using input from peers, administrators, students, and the teachers themselves. Education experts are particularly concerned about students' ability to assess their professors' efficiency. Nonetheless, research has demonstrated that student evaluations are useful markers of a teacher's efficacy (Imhanlahini & Aguele, 2006). Although studies have been done to support students' assessments of their instructors' efficacy, Sawyer (2015) cautioned that student ratings should never be the only indicator of a teacher's success; rather, they should be one part of a whole evaluation system. The school administrators' assessment has also been employed to appraise teachers' efficacy.

According to Wiswall (2013), a teacher's efficacy is determined by how well their students learn, which is usually gauged by their performance on standardized

tests. According to Strong's (2012) research, students who get instruction from highly successful instructors are more likely to go to college, make more money, reside in affluent areas, and save more savings for their retirement. According to him, these students were less likely to become parents when they were still in their teens. He also claimed that a highly effective teacher has the power to greatly improve the lives of their students, so it is critical that researchers and decision-makers accurately identify the elements that go into making an effective teacher. According to Mezieobi (2012), research has shown conflicting findings about the connections between particular teacher attributes and students accomplishment.

According to Schult and Trivitt as cited by Sibiri and Bugwie (2022), a teacher's efficacy is determined by their educational background, expertise in the field of social studies, behavior, and access to learning opportunities. According to the aforementioned, a teacher's capacity to implement instructional methodologies, make use of the right teaching materials, and cover the curriculum is the first step toward being an effective teacher. A teacher needs more than just academic subject matter knowledge to be a good educator. One needs to engage with others and assist them in grasping other perspectives on things and the world. Students are motivated to study and receive excellent grades when a competent instructor engages them with a positive attitude and prepares the class with a well-organized lesson delivery strategy.

Having a teaching credential is one of the qualities that make a teacher effective. The majority of a teacher's academic credentials consist of pertinent degrees or certificates. The height of a teacher's efforts toward formal educational advancement is considered the teacher's qualification (Adjei, 2016). Some people use the terms "teacher qualification" and "quality of teacher" interchangeably. Relevant degree or diploma certifications are included in this category. However, a profession is only an occupation that calls for specialized knowledge or training. One is equipped with values, measures, and judgments that are frequently founded on good logic, objectivity, and widely recognized principles (Okobia, 2015).

In a research, Akinola (2014) discovered a close association between high school Social Studies accomplishment and teacher qualification. She also found some evidence of a relationship between lower grade student achievement and the certification status of instructors. In the meantime, data from a study of first-graders (Akpochofo, 2014) indicated that pupils who received instruction from properly qualified teachers improved their reading comprehension more significantly. According to Adjei (2013), there is a positive correlation between teacher practice and student accomplishment and professional development of educators. The credentials of the instructor have a significant impact on the academic success of the students. Students are more likely to perform well when their teachers hold teaching certifications, and the opposite is true when they do not. To increase both the efficacy of the instructor and the academic achievement of the pupils, it is imperative that everybody who finds themselves in a classroom have a bachelor in education.

Ann (2017) maintained that the best indicators of students' success in social

studies were, by far, teacher preparation and certification requirements. Nevertheless, there has been conflicting evidence about the effects of higher teaching degrees, topic specialties, and certification on good and efficient instruction. According to Okobia (2015), experience and education may not be the best indicators of a teacher's subject understanding because it is challenging to evaluate content knowledge directly. On the other hand, an increasing number of research indicates that instructor, subject expertise and student learning may be related. The important distinction between pedagogical content knowledge, which is explicitly relevant to teaching a particular topic, and general content knowledge about a subject should be recognized. Both can be related to student results on their own (Kenna & Poole, 2017).

The notion of successful teaching has evolved throughout time, as has the process of assessing and evaluating teachers' efficacy in the pedagogical process. This is partly because state and federal governments are paying more attention to classroom and school-level responsibility for student learning. (Barth, 2013). Sibiri and Bugwie (2022), noted that "a significant underlying issue with teacher evaluation relates to lack of agreement about what constitutes good or effective teaching" in their consideration of research-based indicators of successful teaching. According to Muijs as cited by Sibiri and Bugwie (2022), value-added models, which quantify each teacher's contribution to the academic progress of their students, and classroom observations, which compare teaching practices to a standard of effective teaching, are two frequently employed techniques for assessing the efficacy of teachers.

One wonders if the high failure rates and low student quality are not an indication of the teaching ineffectiveness in the schools in light of the noted decline in secondary school students' academic achievement, attitude, and values in public secondary schools. Put differently, the generally acknowledged decline in the quality of education in Nigeria and the reported low student performance may be caused by instructors' ineffectiveness in the pedagogical process (Afe, 2012). Since it assesses a range of factors including topic understanding, effective communication, lesson planning, and presentation, teaching effectiveness has been recognized as a multidimensional concept (Onyeachu, 2013).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Many people are concerned about the issue of pupils' low academic performance in social studies. A portion of this subpar performance can be ascribed to student characteristics and occasionally the efficacy of the teachers' instruction. On the other hand, the way that instructors carry out their responsibilities determines the caliber of education. Academic achievement of pupils in both internal and external exams have been utilized over time to evaluate the quality of instructors and instruction. Previous studies' findings indicated that social studies has not being taught well in Upper Basic schools. This ineffectiveness may be attributed to a number of variables, including inadequate and untrained social studies instructors,

inadequate instructional aids, inadequate infrastructure, and unsuitable methodological utilization.

It has also been discovered that an issue exists with instructors' insufficient preparation for teaching social studies in order to effectively accomplish its goals. Researchers casually observed that some teachers, who are primarily B.Ed., Diploma, and NCE holders and teach Social Studies at that level, do not appear to apply the necessary professionalism and skills for effective teaching of the subject in a few chosen Upper Basic schools in the area under review. For example, when it comes to teaching the topic, these teachers lack particular interactive tactics or abilities like thought shower, think-pair-share, and critical thinking. Social Studies is important because it helps students become more familiar with their physical and social surroundings, improve their social skills and interactions, and think critically and relatively. However, most students have a nonchalant attitude toward the subject, which may be the result of teachers who are not very good at teaching it. This study aims to address this issue by looking at how well teachers in Delta State teach the subject.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

- i. To what extent does Upper Basic Social Studies teachers' professional experience influence effective teaching of Social Studies in Delta State, Nigeria?
- ii. To what extent does teachers' academic and professional qualifications influence effective teaching of Social Studies in Upper Basic Social Studies in Delta State, Nigeria?

### **Methodology**

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The design was adopted to provide empirical evidence about how Social Studies teachers' quality ensures effective teaching of the subject in Upper Basic schools. The population for the study consisted Nine Hundred and Six (906) Social Studies teachers in Upper Basic schools in Delta State. This number represent those with Social Studies qualification and not those drafted from other field to teach the subject. The sample size of the study was Ninety-Seven (97), which is 10% of the total population of Social Studies Teachers in the state randomly selected for the investigation. It is made up of both male and female Social Studies teachers. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire that elicits information from teachers on the variables of the study. Data generated were analyzed using percentage

### **Results**

**Research Question 1:** To what extent do Basic school teachers' teaching and professional experience influence effective teaching of Social Studies? Result is illustrated in table 1

**Table 1: Teaching and Professional Experience**

| Variable                                    | Responses  | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------------------------------|------------|-----------|------------|
| Professionally trained                      | Yes        | 80        | 82.5       |
|                                             | No         | 17        | 17.5       |
| Years of teaching experience                | 1-5years   | 45        | 46.4       |
|                                             | 6-10years  | 36        | 37.1       |
|                                             | 11-15years | 10        | 10.3       |
|                                             | 16-20years | 6         | 6.2        |
| In-service training experience overtime     | Yes        | 87        | 89.7       |
|                                             | No         | 10        | 10.3       |
| Do you teach other subjects in the school   | Yes        | 65        | 67         |
|                                             | No         | 32        | 33         |
| Is the subject challenging to teach for you | Yes        | 0         | 0          |
|                                             | No         | 97        | 100        |

**Source: Field Survey (2024)**

Result showed from the study that examination of Social Studies instructors' professional experiences and methods of instruction, eighteen respondents, or 82.5 percent, had professional training, while only 17.5% did not. Comparably, an examination of the respondents' teaching experiences showed that the majority (46.4%) had taught for one to five years, followed by 37.1% who had taught for six to ten years, 10.3% who had taught for eleven to fifteen years, and 6.2% who had taught for sixteen to twenty years. Table 1 also showed that 10.3% of respondents had never taken a social studies in-service training course, compared to 89.7% of respondents who had. Sixty-seven percent of the respondents said they have taught other social studies-related courses. One hundred percent of the respondents said that social studies is not a difficult subject to teach.

**Research Question 2:** To what extent does teachers' academic and professional qualification influence effective teaching of Social Studies at the Basic level? Result is illustrated in table 2

**Table 2: Teacher Academic and Professional Qualification in the subject**

| S/N | Item                                                                                                                         | SA | A  | D | SD |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|---|----|
| 1   | To effectively teach social studies at the elementary school level, one must hold a professional certificate in the subject. | 80 | 10 | 5 | 2  |
| 2   | The attainment of Social Studies goals is closely linked to the qualifications of educators.                                 | 60 | 30 | 7 | -  |

| S/N | Item                                                                                                                                | SA | A  | D  | SD |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|----|
| 3   | When a trained social studies teacher teaches social studies, the learning objectives are more likely to be met.                    | 97 | -  | -  | -  |
| 4   | The goals of the Social Studies curriculum are likely to be easily met by a teacher with greater qualifications.                    | 40 | 50 | -  | 7  |
| 5   | For social studies teachers to teach social studies effectively, they may need to hold any professional certification in the field. | 48 | 40 | 2  | 7  |
| 6   | To effectively teach social studies, one does not require a degree in the subject.                                                  | -  | 20 | 20 | 57 |
| 7   | Teaching social studies well shouldn't depend just on specialized knowledge in the subject.                                         | 40 | 46 | 4  | 7  |

From the responses of participants, it was revealed that teachers' professional and academic qualification is vital for the pedagogical process to be seamless as reflected in the agreement of the statements that elicit response from the teachers sampled for the investigation.

### Discussion of Findings

According to the survey, most of the instructors had been in the field for a long time, which demonstrated that they had the necessary experience to carry out their jobs well. Teachers with six years or more of service reported a more substantial feeling regarding the inter-personal relationship with high professional teaching qualities than teachers with five years or fewer experience, according to research by Adjei (2016) among senior high school teachers in Ghana. The survey also showed that most of the respondents had greater experience instructing in the relevant field, indicating that they are knowledgeable about how to teach the topic to affect students' learning. This viewpoint backs up Akpochafo's (2014) assertion that an instructor with less years of expertise is less successful than one with many. This is also consistent with Ann (2017)'s assertion that, under normal circumstances, teachers' experiences managing various difficult situations in the classroom and at school will help them to cultivate positive attitudes toward successfully completing tasks that have been assigned to them. However, a few of the instructors are not familiar with Social Studies, which make it difficult for them to teach the subject effectively. Also, the study revealed that teachers with adequate qualification tends to be grounded to impact the tenet of the subject as noted by Ann (2017) where she opined that a well-

qualified teachers is better placed and adequately equipped to impart knowledge in the learner since he or she is astute in the subject area.

### **Conclusion**

According to the study's findings, majority of social studies instructors in Nigeria's basic schools met the minimum standards for teaching the subject, and they also had the professional training and qualifications needed to do so. In order to give lessons effectively, the teachers also have the necessary experience.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the study suggests that in order to meet the goals of the subject, more attention should be paid to in-service training for instructors of social studies at the basic school level. Therefore, in order for these educators to get ongoing professional development, they must become members of the Social Studies Association of Nigeria. The association will provide instructors with access to networking opportunities and keep them informed about the newest advancements and methods in social studies education. Also, the study recommended that a strategy for fostering teachers' ongoing professional development for better and more successful instruction is in-service training. Thus, the absence of any kind of in-service training for Social Studies instructors may impede their ability to teach effectively, particularly for those who have not made Social Studies their primary area of concentration.

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