

Evaluation of Social Studies Curriculum on Students' Appreciation of Cultural Diversity

Bulus Mgwaongs Dalyop

(Federal Airport Authority of Nigeria (FAAN), Abuja, Nigeria)

Abstract: This study investigated the impact of the Social Studies curriculum on the affective dispositions of students of Colleges of Education in North-West Zone of Nigeria. The purpose of the study was to determine the level of NCE I and NCE III students' affective dispositions in the area of cultural diversity. One research question and one hypothesis were generated for the study. Survey and causal comparative designs were adopted for the study. A sample of 3970 NCE students were carefully selected through a proportionate stratified sampling technique. A questionnaire tagged Student-Teachers' Affective Disposition Rating Scale (SADRS) was used for the study. Data were collected and analyzed using simple percentage, and t-test statistics. The results indicated that the Social Studies curriculum has a significant impact on the affective disposition of NCE Social Studies students. NCE III Social Studies students exhibited a greater level of moderate to high appreciation of cultural diversity as a result of exposure to the Social Studies curriculum. These findings indicate a need for the inclusion of cultural values that encourage appreciation of cultural diversity into the Social Studies curriculum. Suggestions for further studies were equally highlighted.

Key words: social studies curriculum, appreciation of cultural diversity, affective dispositions, college of education, evaluation

1. Introduction

Although, people try to define culture in different ways, a broader definition is more accurate. Every person belongs to a variety of cultural groups delineated by such features as geography, age, gender, religion, economics, interest or education. In education, if one ignores the cultural differences among students, one is likely to create strife and tension. Conversely, if one chooses to accept and infuse those differences in the teaching and learning situation, affective disposition may be enhanced among the students and can be seen within the classroom interaction. As an important component of the NCE Social Studies curriculum, the affective domain of the subject area provides knowledge and skills through which students can appreciate diversifications in their respective cultures. The Social Studies curriculum advocates learning which is meant to cater for an individual's cultural heritage (Tanner & Tanner, 1980).

Kommers, Janassan and Mayas (1992) while referring to cultural diversity among students in the classroom, emphasize that teaching students from many cultures using the social studies curriculum can be challenging. One

Bulus Mgwaongs Dalyop, Doctor, Federal Airport Authority of Nigeria (FAAN); research areas/interests: curriculum development and attitude dispositions in tertiary institutions. E-mail: damgwaongz@yahoo.co.uk.

of the most enduring successes of the school system is the variety of cultures that meet and co-exist freely. In the classroom and after classes, students of different kinds and cultural backgrounds study together. In this regard, classroom diversity is one of the nation's greatest assets.

The two authors further explain that by teaching students the components of cultural diversity and the value of differences in culture, one would be creating a truly global appreciation of cultural diversities among students, and appreciation of the rest of the world. Some general guidelines to incorporate many cultures in the classroom into successful unified groups focus on exposing students into a wide variety of cultures to be more tolerant of each other's differences, and teaching components of cultural diversity to students, with reference to ethnic nationalities of the students. Other guidelines emphasize discussing differences, the need for open-mindedness in one's culture and being sensitive to the differences — even when speaking with people -of cultural diversities.

The rationale for core curriculum courses in cultural diversity creates the capacity to see human experience from the point of view of others who encounter and interpret the world in significantly different ways. By introducing students to different cultures and examining the concepts of cultural identity and cultural differences, all aimed at developing the students' appreciation of other ways of life and providing a new understanding of their own cultures.

In Nigeria, the culture of the Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa which are regarded as the three prominent ethnic nationalities could be adopted in the teaching of cultural diversity for appreciation by the students. Similarly, there exist some minorities' cultural settings in Nigeria following the six geo-political zones of Nigerian Federation. These aspects of ethnic organization could be reflected in the core curriculum of Social Studies and taught to students. However, the extent to which the social studies curriculum impacts on the appreciation of cultural diversity among students at NCE level leaves much to be desired, hence the need for this study.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The teaching and learning of Social Studies emphasizes the cognitive objectives more than the affective. This might have resulted in some social problems today, especially within the school system. It is the researcher's belief that the affective domain which is characterised with the appreciation of cultural diversity, has not been effectively delivered to students as contained in the Social Studies curriculum. This may in turn hamper the affective dispositions of students, thereby resulting in lots of social vices.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to assess the extent to which the Social Studies curriculum impacts on the affective dispositions of students in Colleges of Education in North West Zone of Nigeria. The affective dispositions involve the manner in which students deal with things emotionally, such as, appreciation of cultural diversity. Of importance here are the effects of current level of affective domain objectives of Social studies curriculum as it impacts on the student-teachers.

1.3 Research Question

This research question is raised to guide the study: What is the level of Social Studies NCE I and NCE III students' affective dispositions in the area of appreciation of cultural diversity?

1.4 Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in mean scores of NCE 1 and NCE III social studies students in appreciation for cultural diversity.

2. Methodology

The study adopted the causal comparative design aimed at determining the impact of social studies curriculum on the affective dispositions of students to cultural diversity in North-West Zone of Nigeria. It was an attempt to identify a causative relationship between an independent variable and a dependent variable. Causal comparative studies attempt to establish cause-effect relationship (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1996; Martella, 1996; Gay, 1996; 1999; 1999).

The aim of causal comparative research is to determine the cause of existing differences among groups. Causal-comparative research involves comparing two groups in order to explain existing differences between them on some variable or variables of interest. Thus, there was also no manipulation of independent variable (Awotunde & Ugodunlunwa, 2004).

The population of the study were the NCE I and NCE III students in six conventional Colleges of Education in the North-West zone of Nigeria, selected through a simple random sampling technique. The distribution of the sample of Social Studies NCE I was 2,120 students; the number of NCE III was 1,843 students.

The choice of NCE I and NCE III was to determine the extent to which social studies curriculum could influence their affective appreciation of cultural diversity.

3. Instrumentation

One instrument was used for the purpose of data collection in this study. For the Student-Teachers' appreciation of cultural diversity, 10 items were generated based on the content of Social Studies curriculum, as it relates to cultural diversity of students. Part A of the instrument provided background information on name of institution, department, and class level. Part B of the instrument was made up of the questions related to the Students' Appreciation for Cultural Diversity Rating Scale (SACDRS). The data gathered from the SACDRS instrument after administration to the respondents was subjected to answering of the research question and hypothesis using simple percentage and t-test for independent samples.

4. Results

4.1 Research Question

What is the level of Social Studies NCE I and NCE III students affective dispositions in the area of appreciation of cultural diversity?

Table 1 Level of Appreciation of Cultural Diversity Dispositions of NCE I and NCE III Students

Level of Appreciation For Cultural Diversity		Level of Study				Total	
Level	Range of Scores	NCE I		NCE III		N	%
		N	%	N	%		
Low	10-29	928	43.8	733	39.8	1661	41.9
Moderate	30-39	1157	54.6	1078	58.6	2235	56.4
High	40-50	35	1.7	30	1.6	65	1.6
Total		2120	100	1841	100	3961	100

Table 1 indicated students' appreciation for level of cultural diversity of social studies. Nine hundred and twenty-eight representing (43.8%) NCE I students and seven hundred and thirty-three representing (39.8%) NCE III students have low level of appreciation of diversity of social studies. One thousand, one hundred and fifty-seven (54.6%) of NCE I students and one thousand, and seventy-eight (58.6%) of NCE III students have moderate level of cultural diversity while thirty-five (1.7%) NCE I students and thirty (1.6%) NCE III students have high level of appreciation for cultural diversity of social studies. The general findings from the result show that majority (56.3%) NCE I students have moderate to high appreciation of cultural diversity dispositions while majority of NCE III students too but with higher percentage have moderate (60.2%) to high level of appreciation of cultural diversity dispositions.

4.2 Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the appreciation for cultural diversity dispositions mean scores of NCE I and NCE III social studies students.

**Table 2 Result of t- test Analysis of Difference in Appreciation for Cultural Diversity Dispositions Mean Scores
of NCE I and NCE III Students**

Group	N	Mean	sd	df	t-cal	p-value
NCE I	2120	30.16	4.50	3959	-3.93	.000
NCE III	1841	30.71	4.17			

P < .05

Table 2 is another facet supporting the previous table. For degree of freedom 3959 and level of significance at 0.05, with P-value .000, the calculated t-test statistics is -3.93 — which is significant beyond 0.05 level. Hypothesis one was therefore rejected in favour of NCE III students. The general findings from the result show that NCE III students have higher appreciation for cultural diversity dispositions mean score than the NCE I students.

4.3 Major Findings

From the results of data analyzed the following can be summarized about the study:

- (1) In general, Social Studies curriculum has significance impact on affective disposition of NCE Social Studies students.
- (2) Both NCE I and III Social Studies students exhibit moderate to high appreciation of cultural diversities.

4.4 Discussion of Findings

The data collected in respect of this study are discussed based on the research question and hypothesis postulated for the study. Specifically, the research question sought to determine the level of Social Studies NCE I and NCE III students' affective dispositions in the area of appreciation of cultural diversity as they impact on the social studies curriculum.

The result indicated that the Social Studies curriculum has a significant impact on the students' appreciation of cultural diversities of their fellow-students and people around them. Although the two groups generally showed moderate to high level of appreciation of cultural diversities among students and even the environment in which they live and study, the affective disposition was more among the NCEIII students. The test of hypothesis showed that this difference is quite significant. This finding synchronizes with the understanding of the cultural diversities of Nigeria which recognizes the fact that there are different ethnic nationalities in the country with different

cultural organizations. Students' high response to appreciation of cultural diversity could be in order since almost all Nigerians belong to one culture or the other and know that just like their own culture, other peoples' cultures exist.

This finding has corroborated the review of Kommers et al. (1992) which asserts that cultural diversity among students in the classroom can be quite challenging. One of the most enduring successes of the school system is the variety of cultures that meet and co-exist freely. In classroom and outside classroom, students of different kind and cultural backgrounds study together. If one ignores the cultural differences among students, one is likely to create strife and tension. Conversely, if one chooses to accept and infuse difference in the teaching and learning situation; affective disposition may be enhanced among students and even within the classroom interaction.

The authors concluded that, by teaching students the components of cultural diversity, value of differences in culture, and one would be creating a truly global appreciation of cultural diversities among students and the rest of the world.

5. Conclusion

It is concluded that, considering the high appreciation of cultural diversity among the NCE students, the Social Studies curriculum should be enriched in order to include more on the cultural norms of major ethnic groups and their cultural organization. This would enable the students appreciate more of the culture of other people and the need for oneness of the Nigerian nation.

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