



**NIGERIAN
SOCIAL SCIENCE
EDUCATION REVIEW
(NSSER)**

VOL. 7 NO 1, October, 2023

ISSN: 2251-1288

**Official Journal of the
Department of Social
Science Education
University of Nigeria,
Nsukka**

SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION AND GOOD GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA: INSTRUCTIONAL ROLES, CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

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Abstract

The current pervasive social crises in Nigeria, has made the promotion of good governance through social studies, at all levels of the education system imperative. This paper argues that the instructional roles of Social Studies in promoting good governance education can be achieved through effective teaching of related contents, use of innovative instructional methods, qualitative development of social studies professionals, the use of Information Communication Technologies, use of resource persons, organization of conferences, workshops and seminars, and deepening of political literacy education among others. The challenges identified by the paper include; inadequate funding of research and teaching, limited utilization of innovative instructional methods, irregular renewal of curricula, inadequate professional training of teachers and pervasive insecurity. The prospects of good governance through Social Studies depend on the promotion of functional contemporary education, effective roles of Social Studies Associations, improvement in organization of conferences, seminars and workshops, effective teacher preparation programmes in of tertiary institutions as well as the use of ICT in teaching, Social Studies, among others. Based on the foregoing, It was recommended that adequate funding of Social Studies education programmes, effective training of Social Studies teachers, teachers' utilization of Innovative Communication Technologies, among others should be vigorously pursued by Government and other relevant stakeholders as viable way of promoting good governance education.

Keywords: Social Studies Education, Good Governance, Institutional Roles, Challenges and Prospects.

Introduction

The Nigerian state has been governed by leaderships that are remarkably religious, ethnic, and regionally biased in orientations, attitudes and behavioral inclinations, in the distribution of national resources, infrastructural provision, governance, political appointments, recruitment of public servants among others. (Mezieobi (2016)). These trends in process or system of governance seem to have generated conflicts, mutual suspicions, dissatisfaction and agitations among ethnic and sub-ethnic nationalities in Nigeria. This persistent anomaly, justified why Achebe (1983) and Nnoli (2006) argued that ethnic rivalry and pronounced favouretism, constitute the bane of Nigerian politics. It is therefore imperative that strong institutionalization of good governance education through Social Studies, at all levels of our Nigerian's educational system would help in training future leaders who are imbued with core national values, philosophies and desirable attitudes for achieving national unity and sustainable national development. This perspective constitutes the main thrust of this paper.

The National Policy on Education acknowledged that the teaching of social studies education within the framework of National values curriculum which are needed to promote national values, could equip the youth with diverse skills to survive in a fast transforming

world (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014). Based on the above, the teaching of good governance education through social studies instruction, at all levels of education in Nigeria, is ideally one of the ways of promoting leadership for ethnic integration, cooperation, unity of ideas and demonstration of qualities of transparency, accountability, justice, fairness and tolerance which constitute hallmark of good governance (Nwaubani, 2022).

In view of the foregoing, Social Studies is perceived as an innovative curricula offering whose contents are derived from societal challenges, needs and aspirations (Mezieobi, Onyeausi & Ugwuanyi, 2020). Thus, it has been widely argued that based on its value-laden nature and unique contemporary need orientation, Social Studies if effectively taught at different levels of the education system can assist learners to imbibe leadership values which are vital for the prospects of good governance in Nigeria (Nwaubani, Nwaubani, Okechukwu & Bassey, 2021).

Indeed, as argued by Mezieobi (2015) good system of governance promote popular participation in governance, through the application of rule of law respect for human rights which makes governance accountable, tolerant, fair, just and good oriented. This is to ensure democratic order and avert misrule and anarchy. Governance ought to be transparent and based on due process, principles of fairness or equity for all citizens with respect to allocation of national resources, responsibilities or appointments. Effective governance is necessary because politics is a product of social conflicts, diversities and disagreements (Ogunna, 2003). Good governance education therefore ought to address issues or factors that generate social conflicts in a plural or multi-cultural state like Nigeria. Good governance education is therefore very necessary in a multi-ethnic diverse nation such as Nigeria. This is because it is necessary to understand the diverse needs of the peoples and cultures of Nigeria, with a view to building acceptable social order through effective system and process of governance. The focus of leadership adequately guided by good governance is to encourage integration of diversities in order to achieve sustainable unity, social order and national stability. Thus, as argued Udelala (2017) ethnicity, as a "virus" is mainly responsible for social conflicts, social crisis, injustice, inequality, political tension and disunity. It is therefore the place of good governance through effective teaching of Social Studies to reshape the political landscapes of Nigeria, by training and providing leadership directed at achieving nation building goals.

Invariably, Social studies education is an effective instrument for all round development of citizens for good governance education (Nwaubani, Nwaubani, Okechukwu & Bassey, 2021). This shows that social studies equip individual with requisite knowledge, desirable values and skills for achieving the goals of democratic society. Social studies curriculum contents are to study interactive relations of man in the society. In addition, the contents are focused on the maintenance of social order through the teaching of values for cohesive and harmonious social existence (Mezieobi, Ediyang & Nwanekezi, 2015). The aforementioned attributes make it feasible to promote the knowledge and principles of good governance education through social studies. However, the extent to which the ideals of good governance are achieved depends on the instructional roles of Social Studies.

Instructional Roles of Social Studies in Promoting Good Governance Education

Social studies education promotes good governance education in diverse ways. These are briefly discussed below:

1. **Teaching Related Contents and concepts** Social studies curricula is focused on teaching good governance related contents such as: leadership and followership, human relations, Social order, political education peace education, conflict resolution, man and his government, among others. This makes social studies a veritable instruction needed to promote good governance in Nigeria. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014) stressed the

need for continuous provision of peace education at all levels in order to sustain national unity. The curriculum structure and objectives of Social Studies could therefore facilitate the implementation of good governance education.

2. **The use of innovative instructional methods:** Social studies encourage the use of innovative and active teaching methods and learning activities. These provide ample learning experiences and involve the learner practically in understanding political issues of the nation. It is to be noted that any worthwhile Social Studies instruction ought to accommodate innovative teaching learning experiences and inculcation of good governance education skills in order to be needful in contemporary global society (Mezieobi, Onyeausi & Ugwanyi 2020).

3. **Qualitative Development of Professionals in Social Studies Education:** Social Studies is offered at Postgraduate levels in most Nigerian universities. This creates ample opportunities to produce qualified personnel and needed activities in the development of good governance education through teaching research.

4. **The Use of Information Communication Technologies:** The use of Information Communication Technologies in teaching social studies improves research and provides current contents, including contemporary global education. Mezieobi (2014) identified most appropriate method of teaching social studies as follows: inquiry method, problem solving method, simulation method, discussion method, dramatization method, questioning method, including individualized instruction, programmed instruction, computer assisted instruction, mastery learning instructional method, advanced organizer model of instruction, flexible scheduling, other are team (cooperative or collaborative) teaching, concepts mapping, future wheel instructional model, value clarification method and ICT in social studies. Proper training of teachers and effective application of these methods widens the horizon and scope of learning in social studies. In addition, good governance education can be effectively implemented through diverse instructional methods and information technological materials.

5. **Use of Resource Persons:** Social studies education encourages practical learning, this encourages field learning trip and invitation of resource persons, as government officials to the classroom. This makes learning realistic, exciting and deepens understanding. Akpochofo (2014) asserts that this approach makes the teaching and learning of social studies functional.

6. **Organization of conferences, seminars and workshops:** Social studies organizations such as Social Studies Association of Nigeria (SOSAN), Social Studies and Civic Education Association (SOSCEAN), frequently organize conferences, seminars and workshops, which facilitate current publications, which will add resources in perfecting good governance education.

7. **Deepening of Political Literacy Education:** Deepening of political literacy education through social studies instruction is an in asset promoting good governance education. In addition, Mezieobi, Ediyang and Nwanekezi (2015) observed that human rights violations in democratic political governance, calls for concern. The promotion of good governance education through social studies instruction is therefore likely to deepen political literacy education which is ideal for sustainable good governance education.

Challenges

The likely challenges confronting the promotion of good governance education through social studies instruction are delineated as follows:

1. **Limited funding of research in social studies education,** may limit quality publications, teaching resources and skills to expand the scope of good governance education. In corroboration, Akpochofo (2014) hinted that government in Nigeria value functional quality innovation in education, but pay lip service to funding education.

2. Social studies teacher inability to adequately utilize innovative instructional methods, strategies and techniques in social studies classrooms, may limit creative learning experiences and skill to be acquired by learners. The effective teaching of social studies, requires elaborate use of innovative instructional strategies and methods to encourage active learning and participation, which are necessary for inculcating good governance education. Conversely, Ediyana, Njoku, Opah and Nse (2014) doubts if there is active (innovative) patterns in the teaching of social studies.
3. Inadequate and frequent review, revision and renewal of social studies curricula at all levels of our education enterprise, could slow down the implementation of contemporary issues as good governance education.
4. There is ineffective professional training of teachers in the utilization of information and communication technologies to generate contents spread, innovative ideas and learning experiences. To buttress the foregoing, Mezieobi, Onyeausi and Ugwuanyi (2020:198) commented "Many social studies teachers are not professionally trained to acquire these skills and also be computer competent for quality social studies instruction in schools".
5. Social insecurity in Nigeria limits the use of resource persons, field trips and visit of resource persons, field trips and visit of resource centers across the general country. It is to be noted, that the state of general insecurity confronting Nigeria today is not only alarming but also pervasive (Nwaubani, Nwaubani, Okechukwu& Bassey, 2021).

Prospects

There are prospects of promoting good governance education through the following ways:

1. The government of the day supports the teaching of contemporary issues that affects majority of Nigerians, such as good governance education, peace education, political education, entrepreneurial education and so on.
2. Social studies conferences, workshops and seminars organized by social studies association, provides quality material publications to facilitate good governance education.
3. Teacher training instilment of colleges of education and universities are vigorously improving their teacher preparation programmes in social studies, in order to meet contemporary social needs.
4. The use of innovative communication technologies in teacher preparation and classrooms, could improve quality instruction in social studies.
5. Periodic review of social studies curricula at all levels of education enterprise, enlarges the scope of social studies to embrace good governance education.
6. Pupils and students' general interest in the use of social media provides ample opportunities to understand the contents of good governance education.
7. The integration approach in teaching social studies and organization of contents and learning experiences, makes it a dependable source of enlarging good governance education.

Conclusion

The place of social studies in promoting good governance education at all levels of education enterprise in Nigeria, have been adjudged feasible, because of the integrated approach of the discipline and its emphasis on contemporary political issues, use of diverse innovative instructional methods, strategies and techniques. This paper examined social studies limitations and challenges in promoting good governance education, including the prospects of social studies in achieving this noble objective. Good governance education is democratic value education, designed to enhance political stability in a polity, ensure peaceful co-existence of citizens, including fairness and justice in treatment of persons. The

pronounced essence of good governance education is to provide comprehensive orientations to serve as effective leadership guide, in the pilot of governance.

Recommendations

The following suggestions are put forward:

1. Social studies teachers should be adequately trained in the use of information communication technologies skills, so as to improve their research skills for content development in good governance education.
2. Professionally trained social studies teachers, ought to be involved in journals and text books publications, so as to improve the source materials for good governance education.
3. Government should step up funding of social studies education, because of its contemporary importance in promoting good governance education.
4. Constant, regular and periodic review of social studies curricula, would make it current in promoting good governance education in Nigeria.
5. The state of Nigeria requires relative peace and social order, this is to enable practical learning experiences through social studies education, to be nurtured and improved.
6. Social studies teachers' adoption of innovative instructional methods, strategies and techniques, will enable the activation of social studies teaching, independent creation of knowledge by learners and improvement of learning experience to facilitate deeper appreciation and understanding of good governance education.

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