
**SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM EVALUATION:
ISSUES, PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

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Abstract

This paper examined Social Studies Curriculum Evaluation: Issues, Problems and Prospects in the 21st Century. Social Studies curriculum Evaluation being viewed as an integrated study of multiple field of Social Science and Humanities, including History, Political science and Geographical settings. Evaluating the discipline to meet the standard of the 21st century, there is need for availability of manpower, procurement of Educational facilities and appropriate teaching strategies, to meet the standard of the 21st century. Educationist and policy makers appear to be in an unending search for better ways to teach the subject and to apply it in providing solutions to the needs of our society. Students all over the country have consistently had difficulties learning and understanding Social Studies because of issues and problems in social studies curriculum evaluation such as lack of proper Educational policy implementation, insufficient funding, and knowledge explosion among others. Therefore, the need to introduce Social Studies to children at an early age of (early primary) for familiarization to the cultures, the norms, values of our society, thereby building on the existing informal knowledge. The knowledge of Social Studies curriculum evaluation equipped the citizen with the knowledge of the cultural settings, home background which as well encourage and arouse the children's interest of Social Studies. Lastly the knowledge of Social Studies goes a long way in promoting economic growth and national recognition like other countries around the globe who seek innovative ways to promote growth and national development to stand the test of the 21st century.

Key words: Social Studies Curriculum Evaluation: Issues, Problems and Prospects in the 21st Century.

Introduction

Curriculum can be defined as a learning experience in school under the guidance of an instructor; evaluation on the other hand is the process of making value judgment about the merit or worth of a part or the whole of a curriculum. The nature of a curriculum evaluation often depends on its audience and purpose. Curriculum evaluation is a necessary and

important aspect of any educational system. It provides the basis for curriculum policy decisions, for feedback on continuous curriculum adjustments and processes of curriculum implementation. The fundamental concerns of curriculum evaluations relate to effectiveness and efficiency of translating government education policy into educational practices, and the achievement of the goals and aims of educational programs.

This paper focuses on the Social Studies Curriculum Evaluation: Issues, Problems and Prospects of the 21st century. Social Studies can be defined as the integrated study of multiple fields of social science and humanities, including history geography and political science. Social study is the study of history, people and society. An example of social studies is a course you take in school where you learn about the development of cultures and the nature of people.

Within the school program, social studies provide coordinated, systematic study, drawing upon such disciplines as anthropology, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, and sociology, as well as appropriate content from the humanities and mathematics. It is the subject that features the history of the world and the history of a nation. It is the study of natural phenomena that makes up the environment, such as rivers, mountains, landform, whether, climate, soils, plants, and any other physical aspects of the earth's surface.

Branches/types of social studies

1. Subject areas e.g. History, Sociology, Geography etc.
2. The study of social behaviors of humans in society, past or present.
3. The society of the past.
4. The study of the physical feature of the earth.

Social studies Curriculum Evaluation may be an internal activity and process conducted by the various units within the educational system for their own respective purposes. This is very important in order to determine if the curriculum is meeting the standard of the 21st century. These units may include national ministry of education, regional education authorities institutional supervision and reporting systems, department of education, schools and communities. Curriculum evaluation may also be external or commissioned review processes. These may be undertaken regularly by special committee or task forces on the curriculum, or by research –based studies on the state and effectiveness of various aspects of the curriculum and its implementation (Clarke, 2001). These processes might examine, for example, issues and problems, the effectiveness of curriculum content, existing pedagogies and instructional approaches, teacher training and textbooks and instructional materials (Ferrere, 2006). The ultimate goal of curriculum evaluation is to ensure that the curriculum is effective in promoting quality of student learning. Student assessment therefore connotes assessment of students learning. Assessment of student learning has always been a powerful influence on how and what teachers teach and is thus an important source of feedback on the appropriate implementation of curriculum content.

Definition of Evaluation

Evaluation is a systematic determination of a subject's merit, worth and significance, using criteria governed by a set of standards. To ascertain the degree of achievement or value in regard to the aim and **objectives** and results of any such action that has been completed. According to Esu Enuokoha and Umoren (2009), curriculum evaluation is a maintenance process in that it helps to envisage the feature of curriculum development. It provides feature basic data that serves as a control signal to the overall process of curriculum development and implementation.

Olofu (2003) maintained that curriculum evaluation serves as a means by which relevant knowledge, values, attitude and skills are selected. Considering the dynamic nature of the society coupled with the exponential explosion in knowledge, it is necessary that the curriculum be evaluated continuously to ascertain their relevant at any point in time. Through this process, obsolete knowledge, method and materials are done away with while new ones that are identified as relevant are integrated to meet the standard of the 21st century. The primary purpose of evaluation, in addition to gaining **insight** into prior or existing **initiatives**, is to enable **reflection** and assist in the identification of future change. (Biggs & Collis, 2014).

Evaluation is the structured interpretation and giving of meaning to predict actual impacts of proposals or results. It looks at original objectives, and at what was either predicted or what was accomplished and how it was accomplished. So evaluation can be **formative** that is taking place during the development of a concept or proposal, project or organization, with the intention of improving the value or effectiveness of the proposal, project, or organization. It can also be **summative**, drawing lessons from a completed action or project or an organization at a later point in time or circumstance.

Evaluation is inherently a theoretically informed approach (whether explicitly or not), and consequently any particular definition of evaluation would have been tailored to its context– the theory, needs, purpose, and methodology of the evaluation process itself. Having said this, evaluation has been defined as “A systematic, rigorous, and meticulous application of scientific methods to assess the design, implementation, improvement, or outcomes of a program. It is a resource-intensive process, frequently requiring resources, such as, evaluating expertise labor, time, and a sizable budget” (Biggs & Collis 2014).

The purpose of curriculum evaluation is to determine whether or not the newly adopted curriculum is producing the intended results and meeting the objectives that it has set forth, and it is an essential component in the process of adopting and implementing any new curriculum in any educational setting. Education on the other hand is the process of facilitating **learning**, or the acquisition of **knowledge**, **skills**, **values**, **beliefs**, and **habits**. Educational methods include **storytelling**, **discussion**, **teaching**, **training**, and directed **research**. Education frequently takes place under the guidance of educators, but learners may also **educate themselves**. Education can take place in **formal** or **informal** settings and any **experience** that has a formative effect on the way one thinks, feels, or acts may be considered educational. It is as well the act or process of imparting or acquiring general knowledge, developing the powers of reasoning and judgment, and generally of preparing

oneself or others intellectually for mature life. The act or process of imparting or acquiring a particular knowledge or skills for profession, a degree, level, or kind of schooling.

Evaluation as an indispensable tool in the curriculum development process, it helps to identify the strength and weaknesses that characterize every aspects of a designed curriculum. Evaluation is a cardinal element in education and other programs. It helps to ascertain the success or failure and progress of the program, Tyler in Olofu (2003) defines evaluation as the process of finding out how the learning experience developed and organized are actually producing the desired result. Ross, Ellipse and Freeman (2004) sees Evaluation as a structured process of assessing the success of a project, meeting its goals and to reflect on the less learned. Evaluation is necessary because it involves measurement for correction and for placing valued judgment.

Evaluation implies the selection of criteria, collection and analysis of data. It includes obtaining information for use in judging the worth of a program and procedure. Evaluation is as well a set of measurement procedures that use direct observation and recording of student's performance in a specific curriculum to gather information. The information is then used to make instructional decision Olofu (2003) such curriculum evaluation is used to take decision on: Instruction, Curriculum Selection, Placement and classification.

Objectives of Social Studies Curriculum Evaluation in the 21st century

To determine the outcomes of a program, it helps in identifying the necessary improvement to be made in content, teaching method, learning experiences, facilities, staff selection and development of educational objectives of Social Studies Curriculum of the 21st century in this paper.

It also serves the need of policy makers, administrators and other member of the society for the information about the educational system. Education prepares future generation to take their due place in the society it becomes essential and substandard educational goals materials and method of instruction are not retained but update in Conant with the advantage in social cultural and scientific field. Evaluation can be used as a verification of effectiveness of curriculum accomplishment of instructional objectives through the use of a particular teaching strategy.

To identify area which requires great attention in terms of participation of trainees, academic activities and management at planning stage? To identify bottlenecks in various activities carried out during the operation of the programme (implementation stage). To diagnose nature of difficulties. To measure student achievement prediction of an individual level of achievement in future activities, to access the applicability of training in field or actual situation. And to qualitative improvement of instruction, promote better learning, determine future changes and need. For quality control or qualitative improvement. For participation of trainees, academic activities and management at planning stage. To identify bottle necks in various activities carried out during the operation of the programme (implementation stage). To diagnose nature of difficulties. To measure student achievement and prediction of an individual level of achievement in future activities.

Types of curriculum evaluation

Olofu (2003) and Esu et al. (2009) identify two types of curriculum evaluation which are formative and summative curriculum evaluation, whereas Scriven (1972) identify three types of curriculum evaluation which include formative, summative and diagnostic evaluation. According to Olofu (2003) formative evaluation is undertaken during the process of developing the curriculum. When used in terms of classroom instruction, it is aimed at identifying student needs/ performance in all ramifications in order to achieve the desired goal.

This will enable the evaluator find appropriate remedial measures. According to Ndubisi in Olofu (2003) the feedback gotten from the evaluation/assessment is used to improve the curriculum further before its final adoption. By this, formative evaluation is very useful at the trial stage of any curriculum before the general implementation. Esu et al (2009) opined that formative evaluation, ideas are tried out, modified and retried until the developer is reasonably convinced and assured of the curriculum before its introduction, a necessity for social studies curriculum.-

Summative evaluation unlike the formative evaluation is conducted at the end of the development or at the mature stage of the programme. The essence is to determine how well and how much of the intended goals have been achieved. It is also used to make decision whether to continue or terminate the development of the curriculum. Ureubu (1990) in Olofu (2003) observed that summative evaluation is conducted at the completion of the curriculum development process. It provides a terminal judgment on the completed project. To Ndubisi, in Olofu (2003) summative evaluation tells whether the new curriculum is yielding better results or not.

Distinct as formative and summative type of curriculum evaluation may appear, they are complementary. What may be considered as summative in a programme may still serve the purpose of a formative evaluation especially in a curriculum programme that is continuous, as in the case of social studies curriculum. In such a programme, evaluation considered as summative can equally yield results that will serve as inputs in revising earlier stages on build-up of subsequent strategies (Olofu, 2003).

According to Scriven, in Olofu (2003) the following areas are the three main types of curriculum evaluation:

Formative evaluation: It occurs during the course or beginning of curriculum development. The merit of a programme is evaluated during the process of its development. It helps the developers to immediately correct its flaws detected in the programme. **Summative evaluation:** This takes place (at the end of the development) after the curriculum, has been fully developed and put into operation.

Diagnostic evaluation: This is used either for placement of student properly at the outset of an instructional level (such as secondary instructional level, or to discover the underlying cause of deviancies in the merit of a programme during the process of its development. It helps the developers to immediately correct its flaws detected in the programme. Curriculum evaluation involves identification and provision of information, the selection of criteria, data collection, data analysis and drawing logical conclusion for specific purpose using the above process.

Issues in social studies curriculum evaluation in the 21st century

Arowolo (2003) lamented over the lethargic attitude of the government towards Social Studies. The non-challant attitude of the Government towards Social Studies discourages Social Studies educators. It took a long time to incorporate Social Studies Education into Curriculum of the formal Educational system. This explains the non-challant attitude towards its funding and maintenance. Equipment and facilities procured for Social Studies Education should be qualitative, varied in number and sufficiently supplied that there should be spares to use in case of damage. Designing and implementation of Social Studies Curriculum Education availability of manpower, procurement of Educational facilities and appropriate teaching strategies. Issues in Social Studies Curriculum Evaluation for the 21st century revolve around a sound Philosophical and moral ideology which is subsumed under Social Sciences Education towards enhancement of skills acquisition, political quagmires and values orientation for socio-economic and technological development of the country for the 21st century. There is need for moral or affective Education to boost in its citizenry, the spirit of patriotism for adequate participation in meaningful ventures geared towards improving individual(s) wellbeing and the Society at large.

Other issues of Social Studies curriculum in the 21st century include:

1. Lack of competent human and teaching resources.
2. Conservation and resistance by vested interest.
3. Lack of governmental, non- governmental and economic support.
4. The conflict of individual values and individual philosophies.
5. Overcrowded time- table or over bearing of demand on teachers.
6. Ignorance and illiteracy.

Problems in social studies curriculum evaluation in the 21st century

According to Wobo, Uwalaka and Agha (2018), the Problems of Social Studies Curriculum Evaluation in Nigeria are due to non-challant attitude of the Federal, State and Local government and the ineffectiveness of Educational planners, administrators to render Social Studies Curriculum quality of Educational services as required to meet Educational goals. Some administrators and government often than not misplace appointments with regards to who manages the educational sector. It is only an educationist that can effectively manage educational development plan. Okoroma (2016) highlighted some issues and problems hindering quality and functional social studies curriculum of the 21st century among others as follows; non-implementation of educational policies, knowledge explosion, insufficient funding, quality/instructional delivery process, political instability/ political interference.

Non-implementation of educational policies

Educational policy refers to the specific goal. Here is the Social Studies Curriculum that must be pursued through educational institution (Ogbannaya, 2010). It has to do with the formation of education decision, implementation and its evaluation. Okoroma (2017) declared that for education to be progressive there must be sufficient discipline to put into

practice any state or national than sectional or individual interest. The problem of social studies curriculum of the 21st century can be implementation of policies.

Evaluation is the measurement, judgment of the worth, quality, significance, amount of degree or condition of effectiveness and adequacy of a program appropriateness of the curriculum of Social Studies curriculum Evaluation of the 21st century. According to Mirriam Webster dictionary (2010), it is to judge the value or condition of someone or something in a careful and thoughtful way. To determine the significance, worth or condition after appraisal of the study. Onwuka (2001) opined that social studies curriculum evaluation of the 21st century can be the utilization of modern techniques and the best alternative in education. It involves the identification and provision of information, the selection of criteria, data collection, data analysis and drawing logical conclusion for specific purpose.

Okeem (1992) views evaluation as the process of determining the degree to which aims and objectives of educational activities are achieved. Hassan (2014) views evaluation as the systematic process of judging the worth, desirability, effectiveness or adequacy of something according to definite criteria and purpose. From an educational standpoint, evaluation may be defined as a systematic process of determining the extent to which instructional objectives are achieved. The curriculum of social studies curriculum must therefore be implemented effectively according to these polices on education in order to achieve the goals and objectives of education.

Insufficient Funding

It is obviously difficult for the educational sector to stand firm or break through the 21st century without a strong financial back-up. Lips service funding is what education sector is facing, causing issues and problems. The Federal Government needs not to forget that the educational sector is the antidote to challenges in other sectors. Okoroma (2006) explained that even when budgets are passed, to release fund; the executive are usually reluctant to do so. Financial support to procure new teaching material. Teachers need for in-service training to meet up with the 21st century, supportive personnel required to assist the teachers for the new curriculum design are some of the issues and problems of the curriculum of social studies.

Knowledge Explosion

The knowledge of the 21st century is dynamic and regular changes in knowledge must be taken into consideration for the curriculum of social studies of the 21st century. Considering the dynamic nature of the society coupled with the exponential explosion in knowledge, it is necessary that the curriculum be evaluated continuously to ascertain their relevant at any point in time. Through this process, obsolete knowledge, method and materials are done away with while new ones that are identified as relevant are integrated to meet the standard of the 21st century. The primary purpose of evaluation, in addition to gaining **insight** into prior or existing **initiatives**, is to enable **reflection** and assist in the identification of future change. (Biggs & Collis, 2014).

Instructional Delivery Process

A teacher is a person whose occupation is to instruct his students. He guides them towards the teaching and learning process. Quality is the degree of excellence one has, quality for the scholar is the level of achievement in which others are to be judge. The teacher is a vital personality in teaching and learning process, he prepares the lesson plan/ note, observed that the higher the teacher's qualification, the higher his teaching performance. The utmost function of the teacher is to select the language style, process and medium of instruction or communication that is appropriate for learners in other to achieve optimal result.

Political Instability/ Interference

There have been eleven regimes since independent in 1960; Wobo et'al (2018). They all have different priorities such as building of schools, infrastructures, yet others are interested in building of roads, hospital etc. This makes it difficult to implement policies in education because new regimes abandon their predecessor's policies on education. Thus, absence of continuity in policy implementation of educational framework has hindered the development of effective education. Universal primary education of the Eastern State 1957 was replaced by UPE in 1976 and the Universal Basic Education replaced September 10th 1999 by the former head of state Chief Olusegun Obasanjo who was the same president after twenty years of its introduction as a military head of state to a civilian government.

Bribery/Corruption

Bribery and corruption is the order of the day, basically in our institutions. Teachers are corrupt in that, they take bribe as a prerequisite to student success, Ogbonnoya (2010) affirmed that some commissioners of education, permanent secretaries, and state schools board chairman receive 10% gratification for the importation of introductory technology for our secondary schools. Parent equally gives bribe to teachers to admit their children in the school of their choice. Teachers give bribes to official in the board for preferential posting. Some teachers have immoral dealings with their students.

Prospects of social studies curriculum evaluation for the 21st century

The first National Curriculum Conference (NCC) of 1969 gave speedy approval for Social Studies Curriculum Education as navigation for quality Education in Nigeria; hence the prospect development requires moral character development such as honesty, transparency, sincerity, accountability and integrity for the 21st century (Denga, 2010). Other prospects for Social Studies Curriculum Evaluation is a work assiduously with other disciplines towards equipping the learners(s) with the right attitudes and habits for the achievement of Educational goals, and be proactive to the global trends of nations technology drive among the comity of nations. The basics for the realization of the 21st century global trends anchored on accurate designing and implementation of the Social Studies Curriculum Evaluation. Social Studies Curriculum Evaluation Pundits, educational facilities and teaching appropriate and techniques as the case may be.

The inculcation of national consciousness and national unity, the right type of value, attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigeria society. The training of

the mind in the understanding of the world around us. The acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competences, both mental and physical as requirement for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of his society.

Conclusion

Generally, Evaluation guarantees the quality product with regards to educational development. Evaluation of the process of curriculum development plays a vital role in channelizing and keeping the direction of young generation the desired way for the achievement of national objectives and keeping the system up date in respect to changing scenario of time. Curriculum development process also undergoes transformation due to newer developments in Education and its evaluation keeps it in the right direction.

Part of the solutions to issues and problems of Social Studies Curriculum Evaluation can be the application of modern technology in the teaching and learning of Social Studies at both primary and secondary school levels. Technology provides abundant opportunities for students/ citizens to build or modify their knowledge. Magwa (2013) stated that modern technology motivates learners. We should help to create change in the quality of life of our people by assisting our students to use technology in order to understand concepts and utilize its vast repertoire of information to enhance our country's growth and development.

Therefore, recognizing important knowledge of Social Studies to human existence and the rapid evolution of modern technologies to Educational systems, the solution to issues and problems once again can be founded in the application of modern technologies on the teaching and learning of Social Studies. The achievement of Social Studies Curriculum Evaluation depends on its process, before during and after the development of the programme. If the process indicators involve comprehensively at grass root level, the product will be valid for use. Content selection regarding objective consideration and with respect to the content organization is some-what critical during the process of the curriculum development.

Therefore, the need to organize the curriculum development process in such a way which should prepare the nation for pursuer of the higher Education as well as to make them able to adjust with their practical life meaningfully and productively is a necessity since the goal of education can only be attained through valid and reliable curriculum and proper/regular evaluation process for update and fulfilling required social needs.

Functional and quality Social Studies Curriculum Evaluation in 21st century in Nigeria is a business for all. Education administrators and planners, personnel and stakeholders should realize that to achieve a qualitative educational system in this nation, all hands must on deck. Education should be embraced with total dedication to its policies and implementation starting from the top to the least person involved. To grab it, all stakeholders should embrace the Education with a clean hand.

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