

STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF THE
IMPORTANCE OF MODERN INSTRUCTIONAL
MATERIALS IN LEARNING SOCIAL STUDIES

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Abstract

Previous studies on the use and the importance of instructional materials have concentrated on teachers' experiences and perceptions. This paper reports students' understanding of how modern instructional materials improve their learning of social studies in Junior Secondary school. An unstructured questionnaire on how students see modern instructional materials in the learning of social studies was used to collect necessary data from the two hundred and fifty (250) students randomly selected from five junior secondary schools. The data collected were analyzed using simple percentages; frequency counts, mean, standard deviation, rank and remarks. The result shows that students see modern instructional materials helping them to focus on social studies classroom objectives and creating interest in the classroom activities which eventually become very helpful in learning social studies. Based on these results, it is recommended among others, that government should provide ample and varied modern instructional materials and organize seminars or workshop for the teachers so that they could have skills and positive attitude towards the use of modern instructional materials.

Keywords: Modern, Learning, Instructional materials,
Social studies

Introduction

Instructional materials which are educational inputs are vital to the teaching of any subject in the school curriculum. Heinich (2008) sees modern instructional materials as anything that brought information between source and receiver. Wallis (2005) opines that the use of instructional materials would make students to discover facts and guide the memory of students.. Ugbandu (2002) describes them as those media and infrastructure which bring about efficiency and effectiveness in teaching and learning process and which invariably promote and enhance achievements of instructional objectives. These definitions have been very helpful in understanding the meaning and purpose of modern instructional materials.

Coombs (2000) sees instructional materials as human and non-human materials which help teachers in teaching and learning situation and achieve the objectives. Akorede (2008) added that a well-planned and imaginative use of modern instructional materials in lessons should do much banishing of irrelevant books as well as arouse students' interest towards the teaching and learning process. It is also very vital to have sufficient and adequate human resources in terms of teaching and qualify teachers for the teaching subjects in the school curriculum. These qualified teachers should be those that would be able to handle and use them in a right position. Without the teacher as the implementing factor, the goals of education can never be achieved. In order to achieve the national educational objectives as spelt out in the Nigerian National Policy on Education, schools should be properly and uniformly equipped to promote sound and effective teaching.

There are different types of instructional materials such as visual materials which include printed materials, chalk boards/white boards, flannel or felt boards, bulletin boards and still picture. Also Printed Materials include text-books, work books, and programmed instructional materials. There is Still Picture which consists of non-projected such as slides, film strips, overhead projected, opaque. Another instructional material is Graphics, that include charts,

graphic, maps and globes, posters and diagrams. Audio Visual Aids is another type which include motion pictures and television.

Gleeson (2006) lists modern instructional materials as audio, visual, audio-visual objects or equipment which help in the facilitation of effective teaching and learning process. He also opined that the impact of modern instructional materials on the teaching of social studies cannot be over-emphasized due to the pivotal role the subject plays in inculcating the right types of values and attitudes into the learners.

The traditional materials, such as charts, globes, maps and other visual objects are usually stored in the principals' offices in most secondary schools in Nigeria such that the materials are not usually available during the teaching learning processes in the classroom. Fagbamiye (2007) suggested that qualified teachers, well equipped libraries, which are adequate, should be provided for all these relevant modern instructional materials and resources or facilities to be effectively used.

The more use of the modern instructional materials however, do not guarantee effective communication nor effective teaching. It is therefore important for teachers especially at beginning, to become familiar with various types of instructional materials as well as the values that are derivable from their proper use. It is also necessary for teachers to have a working knowledge of the criteria to be used in selecting and evaluating them and principles underlying their effective use.

These may be learnt within and outside the four walls of the classroom. The teacher (his competence, creativity, motivation, readiness e.t.c) have intrinsic relationship and interaction between the teachers and his environment. It is in the process of interaction that the relevance of modern instructional material became apparent (Aina, 2002).

Modern instructional materials are more information carriers, designed specifically to fulfill instructional objectives in a teaching and learning situation (Aina, 2002). These information carriers include: textbooks, workbooks, journals, newspaper periodicals, maps, models media etc. Oluyori (2000), while stressing the importance of instructional materials revealed that if the recently

introduced system of education (6-3-3-4) in accordance with the National Policy on Education is to be a success, then instructional materials have a role to play. He also revealed that audio visual materials as integral part of teaching and learning situation help in bringing about permanent and meaningful experience, provide first-hand experienced where possible or of vicarious one, where only that is feasible. Onwuasoanaya (2009) reveals that to facilitate learning the teacher uses the right material for the right class, have full knowledge of the learning resources, ensure the availability of the materials at all times and master the technique, skill and method of utilizing the resources. Other values of using instructional materials in teaching social studies in junior secondary schools are: ensure better retention, thus, making learning more permanent; promote meaningful communication, hence effective learning stimulate and motivate students to learn; help develop interest in other area of learning; encourage active participation, especially if students are allowed to manipulate materials used; help overcome the limitation of classroom by making the inaccessible accessible; and provide direct or firsthand experience with the realities of social and physical environment.

Recently, the teaching of social studies in the Nigerian secondary schools with the aid of modern instructional materials has become an issue of great concern in the educational sector. Teachers are facing many challenges in selecting modern instructional materials (Oladele, 2004). These challenges include the learning environment, the school, instructional resources etc. Oladele states further that the selection of the materials which are related to the basic contents of a course or lesson by the students, and which help to make lesson attractive, thereby arresting students attention and thus, motivating them to learn, are generally lacking in our schools. Walles (2005) posited that modern instructional materials in the teaching of social studies that have an intrinsic relationship and interaction between the teacher, learners and the environment are insufficient in schools. A social studies teacher therefore needs to improvise and make instructional materials available during the teaching and learning process. Thus this serves as a determining factor of what transpire in the teaching learning

situation. If the teacher fails to provide and manage the student instructional materials, and learning environment, the instructional objectives will be difficult to achieve.

Empirical studies on impact of modern instructional materials on Social Studies students' performance have revealed relationship between performance and instructional materials. Thankga (2005) reveals that there is significant relationship between instructional materials and student academic performance in social studies in secondary schools and student taught with instructional materials performed better in class assessment test than those taught without instructional materials.

Crookell, (2005) was emphatic in his view that no child who has not been learning how to make use of books is truly educated. What he is emphasizing is that of helping the child to become independent of his teachers and parents because when children are exposed to books they can increase confidence in their ability to make a success of life. Wales (2001) found that instructional aids/ materials make a good and conscientious teaching because they increase knowledge. They sometimes enable us to convey a class, a degree and depth of comprehension which would have been impossible to achieve through the spoken or printed word alone. However, he also saw the other side of the coin when he raised that equally, wrongly, lazily or unintelligently used, this can cause misconception or misinterpretation of the message. He further emphasized that instructional objectives must determine the instructional materials to be used and every member of the class should actively participate when teaching material is used.

Purpose of the study

Previous studies on the use and the usefulness of instructional materials have concentrated on teachers' views as well as observation of teacher' use of instructional materials. Students' views on the importance of instructional materials have not been seriously investigated. But end users' views and beneficiaries' viewpoints of any product is equally important. Therefore this study investigates students' views on the impact of modern instructional materials on

teaching and learning of social studies in Junior Secondary schools in Eredo Local Government Area of Epe, Lagos state.

Research Question

What are the students' perceptions of the importance of modern instructional materials in their learning of social studies?

Method

This study adopts a descriptive research design which enables the researcher to gather necessary and useful information to describe the impacts of modern instructional materials in the teaching and learning of social studies in Junior Secondary Schools in Eredo Local Government Area. The population of this study was all Junior Secondary Schools social studies students in Eredo Local Government Area. Simple random sampling technique was used in choosing five Junior Secondary Schools. In each of the schools 50 JSS II students were selected by systematic sampling of all those who fell on figure 3 out of 1,2,3,and 4. In all, two hundred and fifty (250) were selected. The instrument used was a questionnaire which consisted of two sections. The first section consists of respondent's personal data. In section B, students were asked to supply three (3) ways in which they consider modern instructional materials helpful in learning social studies in the classroom. They were also asked to rate the level of importance of each of the three ways they have given on a scale of Very helpful (4), Helpful (3), Fairly helpful (2), Just helpful (1).

Findings

The students supplied twelve categories of ideas as ways they see the usefulness of modern instructional materials. They are processed and ranked as presented in the table below.

Table 1: Students' views and rank of usefulness of modern instructional materials in the teaching and learning of Social Studies

Importance of Instructional materials	MEAN	SD	%	RANK	REM
Supporting retention of Social Studies contents	3.55	0.30	88.8	1 st	Very helpful
Focusing on social studies classroom objectives.	3.53	0.89	88.3	2 nd	VH
Making the subject relevant to live	3.30	0.87	82.5	4 th	VH
Creating interest on the subject	3.30	0.01	82.5	3 rd	VH
Supporting specific topics	3.26	1.26	81.5	5 th	VH
Involving many students	3.19	1.35	79.8	6 th	H
Making teachers have interest and active in the class	3.18	0.85	79.5	7 th	H
Making teachers ready for class	3.10	1.48	77.5	8 th	H
Providing real learning situation of Social Studies	3.09	0.84	77.3	9 th	H
Seeing pictures or photographs of environment and other places	3.05	1.31	76.3	10 th	H
Making students to compare performance without the use of instructional materials and with the use of modern instructional materials	3.04	1.54	76	11 th	H
Teaching social studies in a more active ways	2.96	1.38	74	12 th	H

The table above revealed the items supplied by the students on how modern instructional materials do aid their learning of social studies. From the table, supporting retention of social studies contents came first with the mean score of 3.55 (88.8%) and rated very helpful. The students believe that through the use of modern instructional aids, they remember more of what they see during the examination and after the examination Focusing on social studies classroom objectives came second with the mean score of 3.53 (88.3%) also

rated very helpful. May be teachers follow social studies objectives more in the classroom with instructional materials. Making the subject relevant to live and creating interest on the subject came third with the mean score of 3.30 (82.5%). Many students supplied this importance possibly because of their experience. Other areas of importance that they considered just helpful are involving many students, making teachers have interest and be active in the class, making teachers ready for class, providing real learning situation of Social Studies, seeing pictures or photographs of environment and other places, making students to compare performance without the use of instructional materials and with the use of modern instructional materials and teaching social studies in a more active ways.

Discussion

The table above revealed that supporting retention of Social Studies contents came first with the mean score of 3.55 (88.8%). This was rated very high because students believed that teaching and learning with modern instructional aids will assist them to have full recall from memory of different topics in Social Studies. This is followed by focusing on social studies classroom objectives with the mean score of 3.53 (88.3%). This also was rated high possibly because students see a close relationship between the specific objectives that teachers give at the beginning of a lesson and the appropriateness of instructional materials which make the teaching very flow and effective. Making the subject relevant to live came third with the mean score of 3.30 (82.5%). These are rated very high along with others such as supporting specific topics while involving students, making teachers have interest, providing real learning situation, seeing pictures or photographs of the environment of other places also rated high. This finding supports Onwuasoanaya (2009) who found out that to facilitate learning, the teachers should used the right material for the right class, have full knowledge of the learning resources, ensure the availability of materials at all times and master the technique, skill and method of utilizing the resources.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study revealed that students see the academic importance of instructional aids particularly how they are helpful to them and as learners, and their teachers of social studies. Their views support what many authors have theorized about the importance of instructional materials. However, as the end beneficiaries of instructional materials, it is not unexpected that their priorities would differ somehow from those of their teachers. In the use of modern instructional materials, teachers have to bear in mind the students' views particularly the first three items supplied by the students, that is, by supporting retention of social studies contents, by focusing on social studies classroom objectives and by making the subject relevant to live. This means that teachers are to take them into consideration while selecting modern instructional materials.

The essence using modern instructional materials to support each specific topic of instruction, while teaching, is also brought to the fore by the students. Therefore, seminars and workshop should also be organized for the teachers on how to master the techniques, skills and method of utilizing the resources so that they can have positive attitude towards the use of modern instructional materials. Government should also provide conducive learning environment such as electricity, in order to aid the use of modern instructional materials. Also school administrators need to organize proper monitoring teams in the area of constant use of modern instructional materials. Orientation should also be given to students on how to handle different modern instructional materials with care so as to avoid damages.

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