

A Comparative Study of Students' Performance in Economics Concepts and Other Concepts in Social Studies Curriculum

Dada Adekunle Babatunde, Titus Adesegun Benedict and Emmanuel O. Adu

Faculty of Education, University of Fort Hare, South Africa
E-mail: ¹<201608504@ufh.ac.za>, ²<201613959@ufh.ac.za>, ³<eadu@ufh.ac.za>

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ABSTRACT Social Studies is described as an integrated study of many academic disciplines, which promotes civic competence in the learners at all stages of education. This study, therefore, showed a comparative analysis of students' performance in Economics Concepts and other Social Studies Concepts with a view to determining the relevance of Economics Concepts among other Concepts in the Social Studies Curriculum. Descriptive research was carried out in twenty (20) junior secondary schools with 200 respondents in Nigeria. Two instruments whose reliability coefficient values are 0.78 and 0.82 were used. Data was analyzed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and t-test to determine the differences in students' performance. The study showed that the inclusion of economics concepts into the content of social studies curriculum is justified and capable of helping to achieve the objectives of social studies but not in isolation of other concepts. The study concludes that the economics concepts in social studies curriculum is imminent, as the knowledge acquired from it by students is applied even after graduation at school to solve emergencies.

INTRODUCTION

Education in Nigeria is regarded as an instrument per excellence for effecting national development. Therefore, education is no more seen as a private enterprise but a huge government venture that has witnessed a progressive evaluation of government's intervention and active participation (National Policy on Education (NPE 1978)). Towards this end, different subjects were introduced into the school curriculum at different levels of the educational system. At primary and post-primary levels, education planners prescribe a set of subjects to meet the minimum requirements of an education that is designed to meet the peculiar needs of the society. The compulsory subjects in the junior secondary school curriculum include Mathematics, English, Nigeria language, Social Studies, Science, Art, Music and Practical Agriculture, among others (NPE 2013).

Social Studies is one of the core disciplines in the school curriculum in Nigeria that is firmly rooted as a compulsory subject been taught as an integrated discipline and generally defined as the study of man in his society, which deals with man's interaction with his physical and social environment. Dada (2009) summarized that social studies attempted to study the total realities of man's existence on earth.

A cursory look at the contents of social studies revealed that concepts or themes are embedded from the various disciplines of the social sciences, but the way these contents were fused and integrated into social studies appears to be a major concern. The concept of integration is a wide one, as it is seen in the work of Dada (2008), which implies the bringing together of elements that are recognizably distinct from each (of the social sciences) disciplines to produce a synthesis. This is what distinguished social studies from the other school subjects where these school subjects are separate, and compartmentalized having their own concepts and methodologies.

The concept of integration for sometime has been a subject of controversy between different subject specialists (the separatists) and the integrationists, where the integrationists argued that since all knowledge is for the benefit of man, there should be a unity of knowledge. On the part of separatists they argued that the only meaningful accumulation of knowledge is within the confines of those subjects, for example, History, Economics, Geography, whereas social studies lead to accumulated knowledge as well.

This study was predicated on the basic assumption that if schools are to prepare young people for competent adulthood in the society, they must always operate within the cultural, economic, social, political and moral ideas and

values of the society. This study therefore envisaged that the curriculum in social studies would be more adequate to cater for the needs of Nigerian youth, if relevant materials from other disciplines are adapted for instructions in the schools.

Research Objective

Despite the transdisciplinary nature of the subject of Social Studies, the framework for the elaboration and organization of facts, concepts and generalization for easier and better understanding are still been taught as fragmentation of disciplines within the school curriculum. Hence, the objective of this study was to show a comparative analysis of students' performance in economics concept and other concepts in social studies curriculum with a view to determining the extent to which the content of economics concept within the curriculum of social studies influences the academic performance of students in the subject.

Research Question

The research question for the purpose of this study was:

How is the inclusion of economics concepts into social studies justified in students' performance?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypothesis were tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship in the academic performance of students in economics concepts and other concepts in social studies.
2. There is no significant difference in the academic performance of male and female students in social studies.

Literature Review

Objectives of Social Studies

For a subject to be relevant, it must have reasons for which it is being taught. Like other school subjects, social studies has its own stated objectives, which spelt out the kind of learning outcomes that are desired in the learners through the teaching of the subject in terms of

knowledge, skills, values and attitudes (Ajiboye et al. 2005). The aims and objectives of teaching any subject must conform to the general aims and objectives of education in any given society or country. The revised National Policy of Education (2013) by the Federal Republic of Nigeria gives the goals of Nigeria education as indicated below:

1. The inculcation of national consciousness and national unity.
2. The inculcation of right type of values and attitudes for the survival of individual and the Nigerian society.
3. The training of the mind in the understanding of the world around.
4. The acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competences both mental and physical as equipment for an individual to live in and contribute to the development of his society.

In summary these goals clearly emphasize individual self-realization, better human relationships, individual and national efficiency, effective citizenship and national consciousness and unity among others. In a bid to adequately assess the potential of social studies in contributing to the realization of the nation's aim of education, Ajiboye (2010) identified the following as the objectives for teaching of social studies for Nigerians:

1. To create a consciousness and understanding of the evolving social and physical environment as a whole in its natural, manmade, cultural and spiritual resources together with the national use and conservation of these resources for national development.
2. To develop an ability to learn and to attain certain basic skills including not only those of listening, speaking, reading and writing, and of calculation but also those skills of hand and head, together with those observations, analysis and inference, which are essential to the forming of sound social, economic and political judgment.
3. To ensure the acquirement of that relevant body of knowledge and information, which is essential requisite to personal knowledge as well as to a positive personal contribution to the betterment of mankind.
4. To develop a kind appreciation of the diversity and interdependence of all mem-

bers of the local community and the wider national and international community.

5. To develop in students a healthy attitude of togetherness, comradeship and cooperation towards having a healthy nation, the inculcation of suitable values of honesty, integrity, hard work, fairness and justice at work and play that contributed to the development of national goals.

The need for the inclusion of social studies in schools has been noted by Olubela (2014), he emphasized that social studies curriculum should meet the unprecedented fast changes in the society, the outcome of which is the multiplication of social evils and the breakdown of traditional institutions, to reflect the modern trend in educational practices, which emphasizes child-centeredness, and to acquire learning experiences in whole and not as a separate component, a fact which recognizes Gestalt Psychology Theory.

Concept of Integration and Gender

The wide spread belief in the academic environment is the recognition of facts. Teaching and learning is more effective when facts and principles from another area can be applied in solving problems of living. It is important to note that there is a need for human repertoire and this may not be visible if facts, skills and abilities, which are common to more than one subject or discipline, are not attracted and explicitly taught. An approach to the study of these facts and abilities is seen in a more digestible integrated or interdisciplinary form, as they are drawn from certain numbers of subject disciplines.

Olubela (2014) views integration as the horizontal relationship of the various disciplines within the curriculum in such as a way by which what is learnt in mathematics is related to what is learnt in science. Tyler's view of integration in this sense is not different from the concept of subject correlation, which have been advertised in educational literature but seldom effectively used during classroom instruction. Today, social studies is an integrated subject because of the following strands.

The strands in Table 1 explain the areas and the importance with which disciplines that are embedded into social studies help students make effective decisions in life.

With the fact that gender of students can effect their learning abilities and outcomes, this study, used gender as the moderator variable. The Human Development Report, in its gender related development index as reported by Azgaku (2007) claimed that out of 130 and 116 countries in its gender disparity and empowerment measure, Nigeria was positioned 100th and 108th, respectively. Despite the high population and the contributions made by women to national development, they are still been regarded as lesser to men. Hyde et al. (2008) confirmed that researches indicated that girls performed better than boys in the computation and understanding of some mathematical concepts while boys achieved better than girls in solving complex problem in mathematics. In another area of study, such as social studies, boys seem to perform better than girls, Abdu-Raheem (2010) was at variance with the submission of Hyde et al (2008) who discovered that there was no significant

Table 1: The eight social studies strands

<i>History</i>	This shows how people and students learn about events and issues that occurred in the past that influences the present and possibly the future.
<i>Geography</i>	This shows the relationships that exist among people, places and their environment, which resulted in geographic patterns on earth's surface.
<i>Economics</i>	This shows how the economic systems are organized to produce the desired goods and services and how to effectively distribute them. The understanding of this concept would assist the students to make decisions on what and where to make demand and produce goods and services.
<i>Government</i>	This shows how systems are created and administered through the structures of power and authority in order to bring about orderliness in the society.
<i>Citizenship</i>	This shows the requirements of a committed citizenship and how people can be awoken to their civic responsibilities, rights and ethical behavior.
<i>Culture</i>	This shows the development, learning and adaptation of cultures. The appreciation and respect for human cultures is developed by students.
<i>Science and Technology</i>	This shows the efficacies and how science and technology influence the society. This enables students to deductively adjust their ways to the ever-changing human society.
<i>Social Studies Skills</i>	This displays how skills are acquired and organized to solve human problems that would help the students in making vital decisions.

difference in the performance of male and female students in Social Studies.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A descriptive survey research was used for this study. It is adopted because of its nature of collecting data through a questionnaire in order to test for hypotheses and answering the research question. It is also a correlation study because it sought to establish the relationship that exists between variables.

Population

This study made use of all the teachers and students of social studies in junior secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria as population.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

80 teachers and 200 students were selected from 20 junior secondary schools in Ekiti State using the simple random sampling techniques, which allows all the population an equal chance of being selected as samples.

Data Collection

Three instruments were developed and used to gather the needed information for the study.

These were the Subject Teachers Questionnaire (STQ), the Economics Concept Achievement Test (ECAT), and the Other Concepts of Social Studies Achievement Test (OCSSAT).

Validity and Reliability

The copies of the research questionnaire were subjected to face and content validity. The drafts were given to experts in the field of social studies to determine whether the instruments adequately measure the anticipated content areas of the study. Their observations were used as guide in reviewing the instrument prior to the administration of them on the subjects. The reliability of the instruments was determined using the test-retest reliability mode to determine the consistency and reputability of the instruments. The reliability coefficients of 0.78 and 0.76 were arrived at using the instruments ECAT and OCSSAT respectively, which make the instrument more reliable at a significant level of 0.05.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question 1

Table 2 shows that the respondents strongly agreed with the statements on items 3 and 4. The mean scores are 3.45 approximately 4.0 and 3.70 approximately 4.0 respectively, meaning that

Table 2: Mean score on the justification of the inclusion of Economics concept into social studies curriculum

<i>S.No.</i>	<i>Statement</i>	<i>4 SA</i>	<i>3 A</i>	<i>2 D</i>	<i>1 SD</i>	\bar{X}	<i>Std. dev</i>
1	Economics concept is more relevant than other concepts of social studies	4(2.0)	28(14.0)	28(14.0)	20(14.0)	2.20	0.88
2	The Economics concept in Social studies curriculum alone can help to achieve the overall objectives of social studies.	-	-	32(40)	48(60)	1.40	0.49
3	The knowledge of economics concept helps the students in taking vital decisions on their ways of life even after graduation	36(45.0)	44(55.0)	-	-	3.45	0.50
4	The Economics concept blended with other concepts of social studies as it appears in its curriculum could help the students to achieve the overall objectives of the subject	56(70.0)	24(30.0)	-	-	3.70	0.46

Source: Fieldwork Weighted average 2.70

the knowledge of economics concept, which the students acquired from the teaching of social studies is been utilized in their ways of life even after graduation from school and by extension it means that the respondents agreed that the inclusion of economics concept is justified as it helps the students in making vital decisions that affect their lives even after graduation. However, the respondents also agreed that despite the position of the economics concept in social studies, no single concept can help achieve the overall objectives of social studies, and therefore, the economics concept cannot in isolation achieve the objectives of social studies.

Furthermore, the Table shows that the respondents disagreed with statement 1 and strongly disagreed with statement 2. The mean scores are 2.20, approximately 2.0 meaning the respondents disagreed with statement 1, and 1.40 approximately 1.0 meaning that the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement 2. The results of this study indicated that the inclusion of economics concept into social studies curriculum is relevant and capable of fusing the other concepts in achieving the overall objectives of social studies. This is buttressed by the submission of Ajiboye et al. (2005) that the basic element drawn from various disciplines, which are integrated in social studies, should be meant to help in solving human problems.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant relationship between the academic performance of students in eco-

nomics concept and other concepts in social studies curriculum.

Table 3 showed a positive and significant relationship. The correlation coefficient (r) is 0.732 at $P < 0.05$. This means that a relationship exists between economics concept and other concepts of social studies. Since this relationship is significant, the null hypothesis is rejected. It is gathered from the study that a positive and significant relationship exists between the economics concept and other concepts of social studies. Since social studies is centered around man, the integration of knowledge will address human needs and problems which are complex, interwoven and multidimensional. Hence, social studies is justified to follow the integrative trend.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference in the academic performance of male and female students in social studies.

Table 4 showed that t is -0.582 with $df = 198$ and $P > 0.05$. This means that there is no significant relationship between the gender and academic performance of students in social studies, and the null hypothesis is hereby accepted, and that, the academic performance of male and female in social studies shows no difference significantly. The study also revealed no difference between the performance of male and female academically in social studies in junior secondary school in Ekiti State. This study is in agree-

Table 3: Economics concepts and other concepts of Social Studies

Variables	<i>N</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>Std dev</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>Sig (p)</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
Academic performance of students in other concepts	200	14.87	3.52	0.732	0.000	Significant
Academic performance of students in economics concept	200	13.30	2.64			

Source: Fieldwork Positive, significant relationship ($r = 0.732$; $P < 0.05$).

Table 4: Gender and academic performance

Variables	<i>N</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>Std dev</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>Sig (P)</i>	<i>Rm</i>
Male	85	14.5	4.28	0.582	198	0.56	NS
Female	115	15.0	2.86				

Source: Fieldwork ($t = -0.582$, $df = 198$; $P > 0.05$).

ment with the findings of Abdu-Raheem (2012) who discovered that there was no significant difference between the performance of male and female students in English Language but in contrary to the submission of Abiem and Odok (2006) who exposed in his study that girls outperformed the boys in the aspect of Mathematics called Number and Numeration, while boys performed better than the girls in other branches of Mathematics. However, this was in line with the study of Olubela, (2014), which saw the girls perform better than their male counterparts in the quantitative aspect of economics.

CONCLUSION

From literature and research studies, there are statements claiming that social studies is an integrated discipline with basic elements drawn from various disciplines, which are meant to solve human problems. The finding of this study corroborated it in such a way that it is the integration of knowledge that can help to achieve the overall objectives of social studies. The study discovered that the male and female performed equally in social studies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

1. The government should direct and compel the curriculum planners of social studies to always blend all the concepts and facts that are derived from other disciplines that formed social studies adequately with a view to solving human needs and problems that are complex, interwoven and multidimensional.
2. The teachers handling the teaching of social studies at the primary and junior secondary school levels should be those who

had degrees in the subject and not in other disciplines that were integrated.

3. All learners should be given equal attention, opportunity and treatment irrespective of their sex.

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