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ACHIEVING NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: THE ROLES OF POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL.

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Abstract

*Postgraduate studies is established to coordinate and develop research studies, training and re-training of students for excellence in research and academic content. The purpose is to facilitate formal instructions and quality educational programmes in the institutions of learning. The paper examines achieving national development through social studies education in Nigeria: the roles of postgraduate school. Descriptive survey research design was used to assess achieving national development through Social Studies Education in Nigeria: the roles of postgraduate school. The population for the study comprised all the postgraduate students offering Social Studies Education, University of Lagos. Purposive sampling technique was used. The instrument for the study was 10 items questionnaire on achieving national development through social studies education in Nigeria: The roles of postgraduate school (ANDTSSERPGS). Experts in the field of Social Studies test and measurement validated the instruments. The researchers distributed and collected copies of the questionnaire with the help of three research assistants. The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics of percentage and mean to answer the research questions. The findings shows that postgraduate studies can be use to achieve national development and postgraduate students are aware of national development. It was recommended that Nigerian Federal Government, state and private institutions should intensify effort in financing and providing adequate facilities for teaching and learning in postgraduate studies especially in the area of Social Studies Education for effective research in postgraduate studies among others*

Keyword: Achieving, National Development, Social Studies Education, Postgraduate School.

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Introduction

Education is a fundamental human right, it is very important to the wellbeing of humankind and effective education help ensure healthier, more prosperous and environmentally sound nation, while contributing to social, political, religious, economic, and cultural progress. Education raises income levels and improves standards of living of people in the society. According to Nwoji (2006), Social Studies is a living subject in that it deals with the matters of the moment as a preparation for now and future. She further added that it is a discipline that deals with social change, better future and problem solving. In the view of Okam (2012), the main goal of Social

Studies Education is to generate and develop intelligent, responsible and self-directing citizens who are expected to explore opportunities to develop their potentials and as well contribute their own quota to the improvement of group living within a social milieu.

Denga (1993), defined education as an on-going process that facilitates the learning and acquisition of skills that equip mankind to utilize the environment effectively for personal success in life as well as for the development of the society. To Hornby (2006), education is a process of teaching, training and learning of ideas especially in schools and colleges to improve knowledge and develop skills in persons



from primary to university level, generally, it is the acquisition of knowledge, skills and expertise for the survival of man in an environment.

Social Studies Education is an educative means of imparting the knowledge of social sciences, arts and humanities, physical, pure and natural sciences to learners which its broad knowledge enable social studies students to acquire a better understanding of the concepts, events and materials around their physical environment. Postgraduate school refers to studies after first degree, leading to a higher degree of learning in an institution while National development refers to the processes of development that a nation experiences or undergoes.

Development as perceived by Rodney (1972) "is a many sided process; at the level of the individual, it implies increased skill and capacity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being. The development of any nation indicates a steady advancement in the socio-economic, cultural and political life of its people. To create an enduring nation, and commitment to the national purpose, the pursuit of development is a prerequisite. Development is necessary for sustaining nationhood and no meaningful national development can be achieved without mass mobilization of citizens. The development of Nigeria as a nation can therefore be enhanced through effective mobilization of its people and efficient manipulation of its other economic resources, with its attendant benefits to the citizens. The population of any nation has long been recognized as a political weapon, being a source of power and authority at national and international levels. Political power and citizens' developmental efforts are basic ingredients of nation building and national wealth is the manifestation of national development. When there is increase in skills, capacity, greater freedom and self-discipline which engender maturity and happiness, development has taken place at the individual level. Besides, when there is that ability to control, influence or deal with environment through the scientific process and independently apply the technological manpower to increase productivity, it is development at the group level (Njoku, in Ololobou, 2004).

Mobogunje (1980) identified four major ways of defining development.

- i. Development as economic growth: A sector of an economy performs well and this is reflected in increase, gross national product (GNP) and per capital income. Increase in per capital income is not synonymous with enhanced welfare for all citizens. However, increase in per capita income is not synonymous with enhanced welfare for all citizens
- ii. Development as modernization: involves making available certain modern goods and services such as schools, colleges and hospitals; extension of the coverage of mass media, especially radio and television; provision of better housing and recreational facilities; greater interest in youths and their activities, etc.
- iii. Development as distributive justice: emphasizes the development of structures which ensure the reduction of the poverty level among the masses or satisfaction of their basic needs.
- iv. Development as socio-economic transformation involves the transformation of society's 'mode of production'; enhancing the capacity of individuals to realize their inherent potentials; the total and full mobilization of a society, resulting in the "movement of the whole social system upwards" overcoming external control and developing a self-centered and self-reliant position or attitude.

Bello (1991) conceive development as "qualitative improvement that take place in human society, politically, economically, educationally, socially among other sector of life. Based on this conception, development take different dimensions, be it economic, political, educational, religious, social, cultural and technological aspect of a nation.

According to Ake (1996), Development is a collective enterprise; Political authoritarianism is an important reason why the development project in Africa has not been able to take off based on the above view, the following are some factors that could inhibit national development;

- i. Persistent ethnic and regional conflicts
- ii. Political instability



- iii. Negative values and attitudes
- iv. Inclination towards consumption rather than production
- v. Feeling of insecurity
- vi. Poverty, illiteracy and health problems.
- vii. Deterioration and deliberate destruction of cultural identities.
- viii. Inadequate distribution of resources and opportunities

In order not to jeopardize the development of a nation, the following supportive actions are worth trying:

- i. Acknowledging the political and cultural dimensions in development
- ii. Recognizing and harnessing people's capabilities, values, needs and aspirations.
- iii. Promotion and preservation of national cultural heritage.
- iv. Projection of the human factor in defining strategies for development and nation building.
- v. Tapping individual and collective potentials for creativity, innovation and inventiveness.
- vi. Co-operating with inter-governmental organizations-UNESCO, UNICEF, WHO in improving areas of education, health, industry, agriculture etc for global relevance.

Social Studies Education played a major role in supporting national development and meeting the needs and aspirations of any society. While the relationship between education and sustainable development is complex, education is the key to a nation's ability to develop and achieve sustainable development (Arisi, 2013).

Danladi (2005) saw Social Studies as a complex but organized process through which individual acquire worthy knowledge, attitude, values, skills and competences that are vital for self fulfillment and effective contribution to the survival and captivity of the society. These definitions imply that Social Studies have the attribute to develop desirable qualities for an all round development of rich personality and therefore, it is important to:

- understand the facts, concepts, principles, and perspectives that shape social studies,
- apply learning to complex situations and contexts,

- think critically about important issues and communicate their findings,
- engage in the processes of problem solving and discipline-based inquiry.

Maclean (2008) observed that UNESCO Medium term strategy 2008-2013, saw development and economic prosperity as depending on the ability of countries to educate all members of their societies and offer them lifelong learning. An innovative society prepares its people not only to embrace and adapt to changes but also to manage and influence it education, enriches cultures, and creates mutual understanding that underpins peaceful societies. UNESCO is guided by upholding education as a human right and as an essential element for the full development of human potentials. The goal of education for sustainable development covers three objectives:

- to promote understanding of the interdependence of natural, socio-economic and political systems at local, national and global levels.
- to encourage critical reflection and decision making that is reflected in personal lifestyles
- to engage the active participation of the citizenry in building sustainable development. (Lopez, 1997)

Udoukpong (2012), observed that one way to transform social studies curriculum requires that teachers move away from a traditional mode of teaching towards partnership with students in which they converse with each other as they create knowledge and share pedagogical stories as democratic citizens as well as helping them to develop "learning to learn" skills. Furthermore, Mezieobi & Domike (1996) have indicated that one of the barriers in Social Studies classroom communication which may result in withdrawal behaviour by students is the teacher's ridiculing of students' wrong answers, non-tolerance of some of the students' questions and teacher's display of atrophic behaviour toward students' answers. More so, Sansanwal (1985) reported that one of the indices of teacher efficacy is teacher's acceptance of students' ideas and failing may adversely affect learning, it is a motivating factor. Effective teaching of Social Studies rejects the passive transmission of facts as an appropriate method of teaching and should be modified in favour of active approaches to learning (Mullins, 1990).



Okorosaye-Orubite (2005) summaries the functions of the school thus

- The school provides training in basic skills as reading, writing and counting (arithmetic)
- It attempts to provide the young ones with social and civil competencies to make them useful adults in the society.
- The school teaches the young one scientific method with sharpened intellect, they are curious and enabled to satisfy their curiosity.
- The school plays a conservative role. This conservative role refer to preservation of the community's socio-cultural practices
- The school is an agent for cultural change. Progressive education accepts that nothing is static. The school must be aware of this and anticipate change, since these changes might occur, it would be better if the schools were prepared for them when the changes occur; the school serves as institution for fostering and disseminating the ideas.
- The school provides children the opportunity for participation in healthy games and exercise. It also affords them the opportunity to develop virtue and discourages all evil tendencies.

With the above mentioned functions of schools, postgraduate school can lend a helping hand to Social Studies Education as a result of teaching principles and values that the society cherishes as reflection of the current changes that is taking place. In view of this, Arisi (2013) observed that the Social Studies Education should achieve changes in the community which will:

- Provide information for students in the course of running postgraduate programme
- Review performances to maintain high standard in learning
- Providing supportive services for research.
- Lead to changes in work, lifestyle and consumption patterns.
- Encourage people to consider alternatives.
- Enable people to take part in decision making.
- Enable people to find information.
- Give people opportunities to participate.

- Encourage principles leading to a fairer society.
- Help people to understand the links between issues

Otoja (2013), opined that the major instrument to be used to achieve this positive value is through effective teaching and learning of Social Studies Education in schools, proper teaching and learning of value contents in Social Studies Education would not only improve conceptualization of values, but could also curtail other societal ills, such as, examination malpractice, cultism, corruption, excessive materialism, social and political differences in Nigeria. These societal vices are all inimical to national transformation in Nigeria

Arisi (2013) observed that the topics development require students to appreciate the importance of the uncertainty and precaution and list nine set of educational benefits of teaching students about the importance of uncertainty and precaution in human affairs:

- Appreciate cultural change
- Ability to listen carefully
- Ability to think creatively
- Understand cultural diversity
- Appreciate different views
- Ability to think critically
- A positive sense of urgency
- Appreciate alternative pathways
- Understand the precautionary principle.

Problems that Affect the Attainment of National Development

Obaje (2015), outline the following problems as they affect the attainment of National Development

- Problems of leadership and followership
- Ethnicity and regionalism
- Problems of crime and insecurity
- Poverty and unemployment
- Negative values and attitudes
- Political instability
- Dependent economy

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine achieving national development through Social Studies Education in Nigeria: the roles of postgraduate school. Specifically, the objectives of the study are to:



1. Examine how can postgraduate studies be use to achieve national development.
2. Assess whether or not postgraduate studies students are aware of national development.

#### Research Questions

1. Can postgraduate studies be use to achieve national development?
2. Are postgraduate studies students aware of national development?

#### Methodology

The descriptive survey research design was used to assess achieving national development through Social Studies Education in Nigeria: the roles of postgraduate studies school. The population for the study comprised all the postgraduate students offering Social Studies Education, University of Lagos. Purposive sampling technique of 20 students

including Postgraduate Diploma in Education, Masters and Doctor of philosophy in Social Studies Education were used. The instrument for the study was 10 items questionnaire on achieving national development through Social Studies Education in Nigeria: The roles of postgraduate school (ANDTSSERPGS). The instrument was based on a four point scale of Strongly Agree (SA) Agree (A) Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). Experts in the field of social studies test and measurement validated the instruments. The researchers distributed and collected the copies of the questionnaire with the help of three research assistants from the schools used. The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics of percentage and mean to answer the research questions.

#### Results

Research question one: Can postgraduate studies be use to achieve national development?

Table 1: Using Postgraduates Studies to Achieve National Development.

S/N	Items	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Mean
1.	Postgraduate studies do not provide training in basic skills in national development?	1(5.0)	8(40.0)	9(45.0)	2(10.0)	2.40
2.	Can postgraduate studies be an agent of change to national development?	5(25.0)	9(45.0)	5(25.0)	1(5.0)	2.90
3.	Do postgraduate studies enable students in decision making in matters of national development?	1(5.0)	8(40.0)	7(35.0)	4(20.0)	2.30
4.	Do postgraduate studies give students opportunity to maintain standard in matters of national development?	10(50.0)	6(30.0)	3(15.0)	1(5.0)	3.25
5.	Do postgraduate studies teach scientific methods of inquiring on issues of national development?	12(60.0)	5(25.0)	0(0.0)	3(15.0)	3.30

• Percentages in parenthesis

Source: Field Survey 2018

Table 1 shows the responses on using postgraduates to achieve national development. Most (at least 70.0 %) of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statements items 2, 4 and 5. Not more than 30.0 % either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statements of items 1 and 3. The mean rating of the responses for statements items 2, 4 and 5 also were above 2.50 in each case. Since the mean values of statement items 2, 4 and 5 were more than 2.50 which is the benchmark for acceptance of a statement, it follows that the statement items 2, 4 and 5 were accepted by the respondents. This is a confirmation of the result

found from the frequency and percentages analysis. Based on this, the respondents infer that:

- Postgraduate studies do provide training in basic skills in national development.
- Postgraduate studies can be an agent of change to national development.
- Postgraduate studies enable students in decision making in matters of national development.
- Postgraduate studies give students opportunity to maintain standard in matters of national development



- Postgraduate studies teaches scientific methods of inquiring on issues of national development

Research question Two: Are postgraduate studies students aware of national development?

Table 2A: Postgraduate Studies Students' Awareness of National Development

S/N	Items	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Mean
1.	Are postgraduate studies students aware of national development?	10(50.0)	5(25.0)	4(20.0)	1(5.0)	3.55
2.	Do postgraduate studies students actively participate in national development?	10(50.0)	7(35.0)	3(15.0)	0(0.0)	3.35
3.	Do postgraduate studies students have logical reasoning to solving national development problems.	6(30.0)	7(35.0)	4(20.0)	3(15.0)	2.80
4.	Can postgraduate studies student's project strategies for national development?	8(40.0)	4(20.0)	6(30.0)	2(10.0)	2.90
5.	Are postgraduate studies students fully involved in research for national development?	8(40.0)	11(55.0)	1(5.0)	0(0.0)	3.35

- Percentages in parenthesis Source: Field Survey 2018

Table 2 shows the responses on the postgraduate studies students' awareness of national development. Most (more than 60.0 %) of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statements of all the items 1 to 5. However, not more than 40% of the respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statements. The mean rating of their responses also was above 2.50 in each case. Since the mean values were more than 2.50 which is the benchmark for acceptance of a statement, it follows that all the statements were accepted by the respondents. This is a confirmation of the results found from the frequency and percentages analysis, and in the opinion of the respondents:

- postgraduate studies students are aware of national development,
- postgraduate studies students actively participate in national development,
- Postgraduate studies students have logical reasoning to solve national development problems,
- postgraduate studies student's project strategies for national development,
- Postgraduate studies students are fully involved in research for national development.

#### Discussion

The study found that Postgraduate studies do provide training in basic skills in national development, can be an agent of change to national development, enable students in decision making in matters of national development, give students

opportunity to maintain standard in matters of national development and Postgraduate studies teaches scientific methods of inquiring on issues of national development. The finding is in line with Jacques Delors (2011), who identified many ways in which education and Social Studies Education is contributing to the goals of national development. He also noted that economic and social progress has been uneven and often brought with it a widespread sense of disillusionment over the prospects for future generations. The study also corroborated Arisi (2013), who noted that Social Studies Education which is imbedded in the culture and values of society can bring about sustainable development in any society, including that of Africa. The author submitted that Social Studies Education for sustainable development in this activity does not imply that these are a definitive set of objectives. Rather, it invites analysis of proposals from one country's education system in order to encourage reflection on what would be an appropriate set of objectives of education for sustainable development in other education systems

The study discovered that postgraduate studies students are aware of national development, actively participate in national development, have logical reasoning to solve national development problems, project strategies for national development and Postgraduate studies students are fully involved in research for national development. The study agreed with Nnabuo and Asodike (2011), who observed that the real problem facing humanity today in terms of achieving sustainable development is how to motivate people to change underlying behaviours



and activities that are problematic in this case unsustainability since human beings are very resentful to change. The idea of education for sustainable development has a special role in vindicating how various processes in education, which lie at the heart of promoting change in human behaviour, can be used on a global level to help turn things around. Supporting this, Arisi (2013), proposed that the aims of Social Studies Education are to be built on four pillars of learning:

- Learning to know. Knowledge, values and skills for respecting and searching for knowledge and wisdom.
- Learning to do. Knowledge, values and skills for active engagement in productive employment and recreation.
- Learning to live together. Knowledge, values and skills for international, intercultural and community cooperation and peace.
- Learning to be. Knowledge, values and skills for personal and family well-being.
- Learning to transform oneself and society – knowledge, values and skills for self-reflection and active citizenship.

Ukeje (1986), summed it up when he opined that education is power, it is a process of acquiring knowledge and ideas that shape and condition man's attitude, actions and achievements; it is a process of developing the child's moral, physical, emotional and intellectual power for his contribution in social reform; it is the process of mastering the laws of nature and for utilizing them effectively for the welfare of the individual and for social reconstruction; it is the art of the utilization of knowledge for complete living.

#### Conclusion

Postgraduate studies as an approach that combines the development needs and aspirations of the present society without compromising the ability of the future can be the tools with which to achieve national development and maintain sustainability since intensive and extensive research are ongoing to bring about changes in behaviour of the postgraduate students.

#### Recommendations

1. Federal Government, state and private institutions should intensify efforts in

financing and providing adequate facilities for teaching and learning in postgraduate schools especially in the area of Social Studies Education for effective research in postgraduate studies.

2. Government should increase awareness of national development through seminars and conferences to encourage students to undertake postgraduate studies so as to boast National development

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