



## TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF MEANING AND OBJECTIVES OF SOCIAL STUDIES IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN EKITI- STATE

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### **Abstract**

*This study examined teachers' perception of meaning and objectives of Social Studies in Secondary schools in Ekiti State. Two research questions and two research hypotheses guided the study. The study employed descriptive survey research design. The population comprised of all secondary school teachers in Ekiti State. The sample was made up of 200 male and female Social Studies teachers selected from 53 secondary schools in Ekiti state based on stratified random sampling techniques. A self designed questionnaire was used for collection of data. The instrument was validated and tested for reliability which yielded 0.89 coefficients. Data collected were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The study showed teachers' positive perception of Social Studies in terms of meaning and objectives. It was also found that sex did not determine perception of Social Studies teachers. The study therefore recommended that good and positive perception of Social Studies in terms of meaning and objectives of teaching the subject, should give room for proper teaching and learning, that teachers without discrimination of sex could keep abreast of current socio- political, economic, scientific, and technological developments that impinge on people in their environment and the government, through its various organized seminars, workshop, conferences, should update teachers' knowledge, techniques or methods and materials for effective teaching and learning of Social Studies.*

**Keywords:** Perception, Social Studies, Teachers, Sex, Experience.

### **Introduction**

For any effective teaching to take place, the teacher must understand his subject matter properly in terms of the meaning and objectives. Thus the teacher of Social Studies is expected to understand the disciplinary nature of the subject in terms of its definitions and objectives. Ngada (2006) asserted that it is indeed not an over statement to state that most of the teachers teaching Social Studies in Nigeria secondary schools today seem to have vague idea of what Social Studies in terms of the meaning and objectives. Akinyele (2007) asserted that practicing teachers in schools have not understood the actual meaning or definition of Social Studies which the National policy on Education (2004) recognized as one of the core school subjects at the lower level of the educational system in Nigeria. Similarly Ololobou (2010) observed that reports from inspectors of the Ministries of Education shed light that few teachers could handle Social

Studies at the various levels of education institutions in Nigeria. He also argued that most of the teachers had no formal training and exposure to effective teaching of Social Studies. Consequently, they perceive the subject as a new field, quite strange to them. Thus, some of the teachers who teach the subject tend to emphasise on the subject in their own area of specialization like History, Geography, Economics, Psychology, Accounting, Government, Philosophy and Sociology under the umbrella of Social Studies.

However, Adewuya (2001) opined that in view of the relative newness of Social Studies in schools and because of how it is poorly perceived by various people in the society the need to know how teachers who teach the subject comprehend its meaning and objectives as a discipline becomes imperative. This is so because Social Studies assumes different names in different parts of the world. According to Ogundare (2007) it is variously referred to as cultural studies,



oriented studies, environmental studies and so on. Orebanjo (2000) opined that Social Studies is the study of man and his substance in society, he also regards Social Studies as integration of History, Geography, Economics and possibly other human subjects in the curriculum. Social Studies is that aspect of learning which deals with how to get on (get along) with one's environment, physical as well as human and how to develop those skills, knowledge, attitudes and values that characterize a responsible citizen in a free society. These studies revealed that majority of the teachers have positive perception of the objectives of Social Studies.

In the assertion of Falade (2007), in view of the different labels given to Social Studies, it has equally assumed a lot of meanings. Thus, it has been seen as Citizenship education, Environmental education, Social Science, History, Geography and Civic education, study of man and his environment, peace education, Values education by various people at different times context. According to Ololobou (2010) Social Studies is a field of study that deals with the integration of knowledge experience and effective use of resources for the purpose of citizenship education. Obebe (2002) implies that Social Studies deals with the study of ourselves and environment. Thus the subject provides understanding of man, ways of living, of his basic needs, of the activities in which he engages to meet his needs and of the institution he has developed.

In the assertion of Onaja (2004) Social Studies is concerned with the study of man within the context of his environment, his social, physical, political, economic, cultural environment. It is in consonance with the above that the comparative education study and adaptation centre (CESAC), summarises the key elements of what Social Studies is, as many of the traditional resources available are based on information and content compressed from various disciplines which are usually labelled interdisciplinary or multi-disciplinary in their approach that is subject as Civics, Geography, Economics and History of Social Sciences. Ololobou (2010) who opined that Social Studies makes learners to grow in wisdom and understanding, trains them to live together with others and improve their basic attitudes to

society. Social Studies as a discipline has the capacity to sensitize the citizens on the need to be patriotic, cooperative, tolerant hardworking, fair, have integrity and justice at work. Social Studies play an important role in inculcating the spirit of national consciousness and patriotism in the youths through the teaching of citizenship concepts as an aspect of Social Studies curriculum. Obebe (2005) emphasized that for male and female teachers to have positive perception of Social Studies as well as they need re-training in this subject and also re-orientation to appreciate the need for Social Studies at the school levels instead of the separate systematic discipline such as History, Geography, Economics, Sociology and Political science for which they were trained. Therefore be have effective teaching of the subjects. Falade (2011) opined that both male and female teachers have knowledge about the meaning and the goals of Social studies. Jekayinfa (2012) stressed that teachers perceive Social Studies as citizenship education. This is possible because the discipline centre around human being behaviour, values and attitudes as they affect life in the society. Ngada (2006) asserted that teachers have knowledge about the subject, as well as effective concerns in objectives of the Social Studies Education. Social Studies give teachers opportunity to have knowledge and understating of the society in which they live and promotes living together of the people as one people. They are able to inculcate this knowledge on theirs students effectively through teaching.

The virtues of activities, discovery, inquiry, discussion, values clarification and field work integrated approaches and talk expository method of class teacher. Danladi (2005) suggest that as perception of Social Studies began to change from mere accumulation of knowledge and learning of concepts in social sciences. Educators saw the need to realize that a child contact with his social, physical, economic, political and religious environment usually provide him with sufficient problems. Based on this, the exposure and knowledge of teachers to the curriculum of the subject matters, it affects the understanding of the learners. Teachers develop more knowledge on meaning and objectives of Social Studies. Musa (2004) asserted that Social Studies as a subject that



studies man in his physical and social environments. The definition was amplified by a basic objective (Social, political and economic) which is to prepare students to become well informed citizens who will be able to contribute to the advancement of their community. The main thrust of this subject is to inculcate certain value such as honesty, industry, cooperation and respect in them. According to Ololobou (2010) the logical steps in Social Studies curriculum development are worthy of consideration for the purpose of achieving any set goals of developing and improving the curriculum. In the assertion of Danladi (2005) it is possible that the changes advocated in the Social Studies Curriculum were not accompanied by changes in the skills and attitudes of teaching of the teaching personnel. The changes in the curriculum content has no effect on the experience of the teachers teaching the subject.

In empirical studies of Onaja (2004) his investigation indicated that male teachers perceive Social Studies as cultural studies oriented studies, environmental studies, citizenship education and concluded that male teachers exhibited this knowledge more than female counterparts. A possible reason for the differences between male and female teachers may hinge on the fact both groups are essentially exposed to sources of information about the subject differently. Danladi (2005) posited that Social Studies as problems solving discipline, Social Studies teachers have access to internet facilities which further boost their knowledge about the contemporary issues in our environments and ways of solving them. It gives more information about the values, positive attitudes of citizenship and patriotism.

The study of Ololobou (2010) revealed that Social Studies teachers who have been on the field perceive Social Studies as man's interaction with his environment. This include how he interacts with his fellow men in society the kind of institutions (Social, political and economic) that he establishes and the different kinds of value system that he upholds. On the other hands newly teachers on the field perceive Social Studies as man in his social environment and physical environment.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Most of the teachers teaching Social Studies in Nigeria secondary school today are observed to have vague knowledge of the subject in terms of the meaning and objectives. The subject is faced with the problem of incompetent and specialist teacher that are supposed to be teaching the subject. The authority allocate this subject to teachers who specialize in either Geography, Economics, History, Philosophy, Sociology, Government, and even sometimes these teachers cannot teach the subject effectively as those who really study and specialize in Social Studies.

This has result in poor performances of secondary school students in such it also affect their attitudes in the school, among peers, at home and the society. These students lack discipline making them to behave negatively towards norms of the society. Indiscipline such as criminal acts, theft, pilfering, examination malpractices, truancy, pre-marital sex, cultism afterwards are ecoming nuisance in the society. Henceforth, these negative attitudes thereby jeopardise the development of the society.

In view of the relative newness of Social Studies in schools and because of how it is poorly perceived by various people in the society the study therefore examined how teachers comprehend its meaning and objectives as a discipline. The vague knowledge of non specialists Social Studies teachers about Social Studies affect the impacting of the Subject on Social Studies students. It contributes to poor performance of students on the subject. Non specialists Social Studies teachers do not have enough experience in discharging the information to the students as they cannot teach the subject effectively as the specialist Social Studies teachers and this affects the interest of the students negatively. Lack of interest of the students in attending Social Studies class result in truancy on students side. Ineffective teaching of the subject by non- specialist Social Studies teachers make the subject boring to students while teaching the subject in the class.

This has resulted in negative behaviour of secondary school students in such it also affect their attitudes in the school, among peers, at home and the society. These students lack discipline making them to misbehave towards norms of the society. Indiscipline such as



criminal acts, theft, pilfering, examination malpractices, truancy, pre-marital sex, cultism there after becoming nuisance in the society. Henceforth, these negative attitude also jeopardise the development of the society.

### Purpose of the study

The study investigated teachers' perception of the meaning and objectives of Social Studies as a discipline in secondary school .It examined the influence of working experience of teachers on the perception of Social Studies teachers about Social Studies. It also explored male and female teachers' perception of Social Studies as a discipline.

### Research Questions

The following research questions have been raised in the study:

1. How do secondary school Social Studies teachers perceive the meaning of Social Studies?
2. How do Social Studies teachers perceive the objectives of Social Studies?

### Research Hypotheses

1. Teachers working experience has no significant influence on the perception of Social Studies teachers about Social Studies.
2. There is no significant difference between the male and female teachers perception of Social Studies as a discipline.

### Research Method

The study adopted a descriptive research design of the survey type. The population of the study comprised all 807 Social Studies teachers in all secondary schools in Ekiti State. The sample consisted of 200 Social Studies teachers of public secondary schools selected from the three senatorial districts of Ekiti State such as Ekiti North senatorial district, Ekiti Central Senatorial district and Ekiti South Senatorial district. Fifty-three secondary schools were used out of 202 public secondary schools in Ekiti State based on stratified random sampling technique. Male teachers chosen were 89 from the Senatorial districts while 111 female teachers were selected also to carry out the research work using simple random sampling method. A self designed instrument used for this study was face and

content validated. The reliability of the study was carried out on 20 Social Studies teachers not included in the sample. The instrument was administered twice on the respondents within an interval of two weeks. The two scores were obtained and correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and coefficient. The result yielded 0.89 which was found to be very reliable. Data collected for the study were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The general questions were answered by using descriptive statistics such as frequency count, percentage scores. Hypotheses 1 and 2 were tested using t- test statistics.

### Result

**Question 1:** How do the Social Studies teachers perceive the meaning of Social Studies?

**Table 1:** Frequency counts and percentages of teachers' perception of the meaning of Social Studies

S/N	Items	Agree	%	Disagree	%
1	Social Studies is an integration of traditional subjects like Economics, Geography, Government and History.	199	99.5	1	0.5
2.	Social Studies is Social Sciences modified for teaching purpose at the junior secondary schools.	170	85	30	15
3.	Social Studies is a study which promote s effective citizenship within defined environment.	157	78.5	43	21.5
4.	Social Studies is the study of how man influences and is being influenced by his environment	154	77	46	23
5.	Social Studies is the study of ourselves and environment	187	93.5	13	6.5
	Total Average	173.4	86.7	26.6	13.3

Table 1 shows how Social Studies teachers perceive the meaning of Social Studies. Item 1 shows that 199 representing 99.5% agree that Social Studies is an integrated of traditional subjects like Economics, Geography, Government, History, e.t.c. Item 2 shows that 170 representing 8.5% agree that Social Studies is Social Science modified for teaching purpose at the lower level of the school system. Item 3 shows that 157 representing 78.5% agree that Social Studies is a study which promote effective citizenship within a defined environment. Item 4 shows that 154 representing 77% agree that Social Studies is the study of how man influences and he is being influenced by his environment. Item 5 shows that 187 representing 93.5 agree that Social Studies is the study of ourselves and our environment. An average percentage of the responses was 86.7%. It therefore showed that Social Studies teachers have high perception about the meaning of Social Studies.



**Question 2:** How do the Social Studies teachers perceive the objectives of Social Studies?

**Table 2:** Frequency counts and percentages of teachers perception of objectives of Social Studies

S/N	Items	Agree	%	Disagree	%
6.	Social Studies assists individuals to live effectively in their immediate cultural environment	160	80	40	20
7.	Social Studies makes the learner useful and functional to his or her citizen	159	79.5	41	20.5
8.	Social Studies enables people to adapt to their environment	189	94.5	11	5.5
9.	Social Studies develops in learners positive attitude of togetherness, comradeship and cooperation towards a healthy nation	172	86	28	14
10.	Social Studies develops a capacity to learn and acquire skills and desirable values that are essential to the formation of sound judgment	148	74	52	26
	Total Average	165.6	82.8	34.4	17.1

Table 2 shows that in item 6, 160 representing 80% agree that Social Studies assist individual to live effectively in their immediate cultural environment. Item7 shows that 159 representing 79.5% agree that Social Studies make the learner useful and functional to his or her citizen. Item8 shows that 189 representing 94.56 agree that Social Studies develop in learners' positive attitude of togetherness, comradeship and cooperation towards a healthy nation. Item 10 shows that 148 representing 74% agrees that some studies develop a capacity to learn and acquire skills and desirable values that are essential to formation of sound judgment. The average percentage of the responses was 82.8%. From the findings Social Studies teachers have good perception about the objectives of Social Studies.

**Hypothesis 1:** Teachers working experience has no significant influence on the general perception of Social Studies teachers about Social Studies

**Table 3:** t-test analysis on influence of teachers' teaching experience on perception of Social Studies.

Experience	N	X	SD	Df	t cal	t-table
Below 10 years	135	84.76	8.32	198	0.111	1.96
Above 10years	65	84.63	6.99			

$P > 0.05$  (not significant)

Table 3 above shows the t-calculated and t-tabulated as 0.111 and 1.96 respectively at 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated value is lower than the tabulated value, we can

therefore conclude that the hypothesis is not rejected. Therefore there is no significant difference between the teachers below 10 years of teaching experience and teachers above 10 years teaching experience.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant difference between the male and female teachers perception of Social Studies as a discipline.

**Table 4:** t – test Analysis of teachers' sex on perception of Social Studies.

Sex	N	X	SD	Df	t cal	T table
Male	89	85.26	7.17	198	0.863	1.96
Female	111	84.29	8.44			

$P > 0.05$  (not significant)

Table 4 above shows the t- calculated and t-tabulated as 0.863 and 1.96 respectively at 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated value is lower than the tabulated value. The hypothesis is accepted. Therefore it can be concluded that there is no significant difference between the male and female teachers of Social Studies.

### Discussion

The study revealed that teachers have high perception on the meaning of Social studies. Social Studies is the study of the effects of the environment on man and also is the study of the effects of man on the environment. This agree with the study of Orebanjo (2000) who opined that Social Studies is the study of man and his substance in society, this also regards Social Studies as integrated of History, Geography, Economics Government and possibly other human subjects in the curriculum. The study also revealed that majority of the teachers have positive perception on the objectives of Social Studies. Social Studies enhance the development of favourable attitudes of social, physical, cultural and economic development in the students to enable them participate in the development of the community as students and later as adult citizens. This agree with the study of Ololobou (2010) who opined that Social Studies makes learners to grow in wisdom and understanding, train them to live together with others and improve their basic attitudes to society. This also agree with the study of Ogundare (2007) who asserted that Social Studies as a discipline has the capacity to



sensitize the citizens on the need to be patriotic, cooperative, tolerant hardworking, fair, have integrity and justice at work. Social Studies play an important role in inculcating the spirit of national consciousness and patriotism in the youths through the teaching of citizenship concepts as an aspect of Social Studies curriculum.

The result further showed that there is no significant difference between the teachers below 10 years of teaching experience and above 10 years of teaching experience in their perception of Social Studies in secondary schools. Social Studies teachers have adequate experience about the subject most especially in their social environment. This makes the teaching of Social Studies more effective. This finding is in agreement with the studies of Ngada (2006) who asserted that teachers teaching Social Studies have good experience based on the subject matter. Their experience based on the subject makes their teaching meaningful in the classroom. Social experience of teachers teaching Social Studies allow learning to be easier for students. It also agrees with Ololobou (2010) who opined that Social Studies is a field of study that deals with the integration of knowledge experience and effective use of resources for the purpose of citizenship education.

Another finding from the study revealed that there is no difference between the male and female teachers' perception of Social Studies as a discipline in terms of meaning and objectives of Social Studies. Social studies teachers both male and female perceive Social Studies as a discipline that examines the ways man influences or is influenced by his physical and social environments. It allows the development of students' sense of respect for tolerating the opinion of others even in disagreement. This agree with Falade (2011) who opined that both male and female teachers have knowledge about the meaning and the goals of Social studies and they are better exposed to its numerous objectives and they understand it appropriately. It also agrees with the study of Jekayinfa (2012) who found that teachers perceive Social Studies as citizenship education. This is possible because

the discipline centre around human being behaviour, values and attitudes as they affect life in the society. The study of Jekayinfa is not limited only to a sex but for both male and female Social Studies teachers. By looking at the established values in the society with view to inculcate the spirit of national consciousness, patriotism, tolerance, honesty, respect, appreciation and other positive attitude to citizenship in any society.

### Conclusion

It is concluded from the findings of this study that teachers have a positive perception of Social Studies in terms of the meaning and objectives of Social Studies. Both male and female Social Studies teachers have high perception of the subject. It also revealed that sex does not determine the perception of Social Studies teachers. It can be concluded that newly experienced and old experienced Social Studies teachers have positive perception of the subject since both of them view the subject in the same direction.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Government should provide instructional materials and appropriate text books for both new and old experience teachers teaching Social Studies so that they could be more effective in the teaching of the subject.
2. Social Studies teachers of both sexes and experience should be more exposed to the socio- political, economic, scientific and technological developments of their environment by allowing them to attend workshops, seminars, conferences which can further improve their teaching and learning activities.

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