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CURBING SOCIAL VICES THROUGH SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated the potential of the Social Studies curriculum to address and mitigate social vices among youths in Nigeria. Social vices such as drug abuse, violence and corruption pose significant challenges to the nation's development and social cohesion. The Social Studies curriculum, with its focus on civic education, ethical behaviour, and community involvement, is uniquely positioned to combat these issues. This research evaluated the effectiveness of the current Social Studies curriculum in fostering positive values and reducing the prevalence of social vices among Nigerian youths. Through a combination of curriculum analysis, educator interviews and student surveys, the study identifies strengths and weaknesses in the existing educational framework. Preliminary findings suggest that while the curriculum includes relevant topics, its impact is limited by inadequate teacher training, lack of resources, and insufficient emphasis on practical applications. The study concludes that enhancing teacher education, incorporating interactive and experiential learning methods, and increasing community engagement are crucial for the Social Studies curriculum to effectively address social vices. By strengthening these areas, the curriculum can play a pivotal role in shaping responsible, ethical and socially conscious individuals, contributing to the broader goal of national development and social stability in Nigeria.

Keywords: Curbing social vices, Social studies, Curriculum

Introduction

Social vices such as drug abuse, violence, corruption and truancy are increasingly prevalent among youths in Nigeria, posing significant challenges to the nation's social fabric and developmental goals. Addressing these issues is critical for ensuring a stable, prosperous

future. The Social Studies curriculum, with its comprehensive approach to fostering civic responsibility, ethical behaviour, and social awareness, offers a promising solution for curbing these social vices.

Current literature highlights the importance of education in shaping societal values and behaviours. According to Adeyemi and Adeyinka (2018), the Social Studies curriculum is pivotal in promoting national consciousness and unity, crucial elements for social stability. Similarly, Enoh (2019) emphasizes that well-structured educational programmes can instill moral values and deter youths from engaging in detrimental activities.

Despite these promising insights, there are challenges in the implementation and effectiveness of the Social Studies curriculum in Nigeria. For instance, Ogundele and Adebayo (2020) identified gaps in teacher preparedness and resource allocation as significant barriers to achieving the curriculum's full potential. Moreover, Nwafor and Nwogu (2021) argued that the curriculum often lacks practical applications that resonate with students' real-life experiences, thereby limiting its impact.

This study evaluated the current state of the Social Studies curriculum in Nigerian schools and its effectiveness in addressing social vices among youths. By analyzing curriculum content, teaching methodologies, and student outcomes, this research provided comprehensive recommendations for enhancing the curriculum's role in fostering a more ethical and socially responsible generation. Through targeted improvements in teacher training, resource provision and community involvement, the Social Studies curriculum can be a powerful tool in curbing social vices and promoting national development.

Social vices such as drug abuse, violence, corruption and truancy are some of the significant challenges facing Nigerian society, particularly among its youth. Recent studies highlight the pervasive nature of these issues and their detrimental impact on the nation's social and economic development.

According to Ojedokun and Balogun (2021), drug abuse among Nigerian youths has seen as troubling rise, fueled by factors such as peer pressure, unemployment and inadequate parental supervision. This increase in substance abuse contributes to other social vices,

including violence and criminal activities which has also escalated in the urban areas.

Eze and Ezeh (2022) report that youth involvement in violent activities, including gang-related violence and political thuggery, is often driven by socio-economic disparities and the lack of educational and employment opportunities. This violence not only threatens public safety but also undermines community cohesion and stability.

Corruption remains a pervasive issue, deeply rooted in various sectors of Nigerian society. As noted by Adebayo and Akinlabi (2023), corruption perpetuates a cycle of poverty and inequality, eroding trust in public institutions and impeding national development. The normalization of corrupt practices among the youth is particularly disturbing, as it jeopardizes the ethical foundation of future generations.

Truancy and school dropouts are additional vices contributing to the broader issue of youth delinquency. Adeyemi and Adeoye (2023) emphasized that educational disengagement often led to higher rates of criminal behaviour and reduces the potential for socio-economic mobility among young Nigerians.

Addressing these social vices requires comprehensive strategies, with education playing a pivotal role (Oyebade, 2003). Youths are the future of any nation. By curbing social vices such as drug abuse, violence, and corruption, societies can harness the potential of their young population to contribute positively to economic and social development. Social vices contribute to instability and insecurity within communities. Reducing these behaviours helps create safer, more cohesive societies, where individuals can live and work without fear of crime and violence. Social vices such as drug abuse and violence have direct negative impacts on the health and well-being of individuals. Addressing these issues can lead to healthier, more productive lives. Curbing it equally assist educational outcomes leading to improved, better opportunities for youths and reducing socio-economic disparities.

The Social Studies curriculum, through its focus on civic education, ethical behaviour and community engagement, holds significant potential for curbing these negative behaviours and fostering a more responsible and socially conscious youth population. The curriculum emphasizes civic responsibilities and the importance of

active participation in community and national life. This education fosters a sense of belonging and accountability among students. The curriculum encourages critical thinking and informed decision-making, enabling students to make better choices and resist peer pressure and other influences that lead to social vices. It educates students about various social issues, their causes, and their impacts. This awareness motivated youths to avoid engaging in harmful activities and to become proactive in solving community problems. The objectives of this paper therefore is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the current state of social vices among Nigerian youths, the role of the Social Studies curriculum in addressing these issues, and actionable recommendations for improving curriculum delivery and outcomes.

Methodology

Qualitative research method was adopted for the study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted for teachers and educational administrators responsible for implementing the Social Studies curriculum in Nigerian schools. This is to explore their perspectives on the current curriculum, its effectiveness in addressing social vices, challenges faced in implementation, and suggestions for improvement. Focus group discussions with students were organized to gather their insights on the relevance of Social Studies curriculum in addressing social vices, their understanding of societal issues, and the impact of classroom learning on their attitudes and behaviours. Classroom Observations of Social Studies classes including the school environment were conducted to assess teaching methodologies, student engagement levels, and the integration of topics related to social vices into the curriculum.

The official Social Studies curriculum documents provided by educational authorities in Nigeria were analyzed, focusing on the stated objectives, content coverage, teaching guidelines, and recommended resources related to addressing social vices. Review of national and regional educational policies and guidelines relating to curriculum development, teacher training and strategies for promoting positive behaviours among students. Thematic data analysis was used to analyze interview transcripts, observation notes, and document reviews to identify recurring themes and patterns related to the effectiveness of the Social Studies curriculum in curbing social vices. Findings were

validated using triangulating data from multiple sources, such as interviews, observations, and document analysis, to enhance the credibility and reliability of the research findings.

Findings

The findings showed that the focus of social studies curriculum in Nigeria is to educate students about societal norms, ethics, and civic responsibilities to foster moral development and reduce social vices. The studies indicated that Social Studies can effectively address social vices by promoting critical thinking, ethical behaviour, and awareness of social issues among students. However, the studies identified challenges that might emerge at the curriculum implementation stage such as lack of adequate instructional materials, insufficiently trained teachers, and sometimes outdated contents.

Discussion

Social vices refer to harmful behaviours and activities that deviate from societal norms and ethics, adversely affecting individuals and the broader community. In Nigeria, these vices are prevalent among the youths and pose significant challenges to social cohesion, economic development and national stability. Behaviours and practices that deviate from accepted social norms according to Ojedokun and Balogun (2021) are detrimental to individual and the society at large. These behaviours as opined include abuse of drug, corruption, and other unethical activities'. Social vices encompass a range of anti-social behaviors such as truancy, theft, violence, and substance abuse. Adeyemi and Adeoye (2023) wrote that these vices undermine societal values and can disrupt the social order leading to exuberated crime and moral decadence among the youths. Bribery, embezzlement, and fraud, which erode public trust in institutions and promote a culture of impunity are some of the examples of social vices as explained by Adebayo and Akinlabi (2023). To Eze and Ezeh (2022), social vices are destructive actions and behaviours, these include cultism, armed robbery, violence posing a great threats to public safety and peace of the communities. Several authors see these as menace that are immoral and harmful, violating the ethical standards of any organized society. Types of social vices ranges from drug abuse, gang violence, cultism, prostitution, truancy, internet fraud, under age pregnancy to

gang- related crimes and political thuggery. These social vices are interrelated and compound the challenges facing Nigerian society. Addressing them through comprehensive educational strategies, such as an effective Social Studies curriculum, is essential for fostering a more responsible and ethical youth population (Adeyemo and Balogun, 2022)

Social vices in Nigeria have historical roots that span various periods, reflecting the country's complex socio-political and economic evolution. In pre-colonial Nigeria (Pre- Colonial Era), social structures were guided by traditional norms and customs, with strict community-based systems for regulating behaviour. While some forms of social vices existed, such as inter-tribal conflicts and certain customary practices, communal living and traditional laws helped manage and mitigate these issues.

The advent of British colonial rule (Colonial Era 1861- 1960), disrupted traditional governance and social structures. The introduction of Western legal and administrative systems often conflicted with indigenous practices. Colonialism also led to urbanization and the growth of cities like Lagos, which saw the rise of new social vices such as prostitution, theft, and substance abuse, partly due to the socio-economic dislocation and cultural disintegration caused by colonial policies.

Following independence (Post-Independence 1960 till date), Nigeria faced rapid urbanization, population growth and economic challenges. The oil boom of the 1970s brought wealth but also corruption, economic disparity, and unemployment. These issues exacerbated social vices, including corruption, armed robbery, drug trafficking, and internet fraud (locally known as "Yahoo Yahoo"). In recent decades, Nigeria has continued to grapple with social vices amid political instability, economic difficulties, and a growing youth population. Issues like terrorism (notably Boko Haram), cybercrime, human trafficking, and systemic corruption have become prominent. Efforts to combat these vices include government initiatives, civil society activism and international cooperation, although challenges remain significant. Social vices in Nigeria have evolved with the country's historical context, influenced by cultural changes, economic pressures, and political developments.

Key social vices include corruption, drug abuse, human trafficking, cybercrime and violent crimes such as terrorism and kidnapping. Corruption remains pervasive in Nigeria (Adebayo and Akinlabi, 2023) affecting both public and private sectors. Despite various anti-corruption efforts by successive governments, including the establishment of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), corruption continues to impede governance and economic growth. Drug abuse is a growing concern, particularly among the youths (Ojedokun and Balogun, 2021). The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) reported rising cases of drug trafficking and substance abuse, with cannabis, methamphetamine, and codeine-based syrups being the most commonly abused drugs. Nigeria is a source, transit and destination country for human trafficking. Women and children are particularly vulnerable to trafficking for sexual exploitation and forced labour. Despite international and domestic efforts to combat trafficking, it remains a significant issue. Cybercrime has seen a notable increase, with Nigeria being notorious for internet fraud, commonly known as "419 scams" (Nwafor and Nwogu, (2021).

The proliferation of technology and inadequate cyber security measures contribute to the prevalence of cybercrime, which affects both individuals and businesses globally. Violent crimes, including terrorism, kidnapping, and armed robbery, pose severe threats to security and stability. Boko Haram and other extremist groups continue to perpetrate terrorism, particularly in the Northeastern geo-political zone kidnapping for ransom has also surged, affecting both Nigerian citizens and foreigners. Efforts to combat these vices included: government initiatives, civil society activism and international cooperation, although the challenges remain significant. Social vices in Nigeria have evolved with the country's historical context, influenced by cultural changes, economic pressures and political developments. Social vices in Nigeria have profound implications on various aspects of the country, including its economy, social fabric, governance and international reputation. These implications hindered development and created a cycle of challenges that are difficult to break. Economically, corruption significantly undermines economic growth.

It leads to misallocation of resources, reduces foreign direct investment, and increases the cost of business transaction. Cybercrime not only affected individuals and businesses domestically but also

tarnishes Nigeria's reputation globally. It reduces trust in Nigerian businesses, impacting international trade and investment. Drug abuse reduces productivity and increases healthcare costs. It impacts the workforce, leading to higher absenteeism, workplace accidents, and a general decline in economic output. Socially, trafficking erodes the social fabric by exploiting the most vulnerable populations. It led to a loss of human capital and contributes to family disintegration and psychological trauma. The prevalence of violent crimes like kidnapping and terrorism creates a climate of fear and insecurity. It disrupts community life, displaces populations, and contributes to the breakdown of social cohesion. Corruption undermines democratic institutions and the rule of law. It leads to weak governance structures, lack of accountability, and public distrust in government. This hampers effective policy implementation and public service delivery. Persistent violence and terrorism strain security agencies and divert government resources from development projects to security measures. It also disrupts political processes and can lead to state fragility. The health implication of social vices most especially excessive use of drug not only contributes to a rise in health related issues such as mental health disorder but the spread of infectious diseases placing additional burden on the already overburdened health care system.

Internationally, human trafficking and cybercrime damage Nigeria's international standing and relations. They attract sanctions and reduce the country's ability to engage positively on the global stage. International collaborations and aid can be adversely affected by Nigeria's reputation for high levels of corruption and cybercrime.

Addressing these social vices requires comprehensive strategies, including strengthening legal frameworks, improving law enforcement, enhancing public awareness, and promoting economic opportunities to reduce poverty and unemployment.

The social studies curriculum in Nigeria is designed to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of their social environment, cultural heritage, and the interconnectedness of global societies. The curriculum aims to foster civic responsibility, cultural awareness and critical thinking skills among students. The primary objectives of the social studies curriculum include:

1. **Civic Education:** This helps to instill a sense of national consciousness and patriotism and aimed at educating students about their rights and responsibilities as citizens.
2. **Cultural Understanding:** It promotes appreciation and respect for Nigeria's diverse cultural heritage. This includes understanding the customs, traditions and values of different ethnic groups.
3. **Critical Thinking:** This is targeted at developing analytical and problem-solving skills. Students are encouraged to critically examine social issues and contribute to such challenges and their solutions.
4. **Social Skills:** It enhances interpersonal skills and foster cooperation and teamwork among students.
5. **Global Awareness:** This provides insights into global issues and how they impact Nigeria, promoting an understanding of international relations and global interdependence.

The content of the social studies curriculum typically covers several key areas:

1. **History and Geography:** This has to do with lessons on Nigerian history, including pre-colonial, colonial and post-independence periods, as well as the geographical features of Nigeria and the world.
2. **Government and Politics:** This examines the basic principles of government, the political structure of Nigeria, and the roles and functions of government institutions.
3. **Economics and Development:** It covers introduction to basic economic concepts, Nigeria's economy, and issues related to development and underdevelopment.
4. **Culture and Society:** This covers exploration of Nigerian cultures, languages, religions, and social norms, as well as the impact of globalization on Nigerian society.
5. **Current Affairs:** This has to do with discussions on contemporary social issues such as corruption, human rights, environmental challenges and social justice.

1. The teaching methods employed in delivering the social studies curriculum include:
2. Lectures and Discussions: This is a traditional classroom instruction complemented by interactive discussions.
3. Project-Based Learning: Students engage in projects and research activities to explore social issues in-depth.
4. Field Trips: It involves visitation to historical sites, government institutions, and cultural centers to provide practical learning experiences.
5. Use of Multimedia: This deals with incorporating videos, documentaries, and other multimedia resources to make learning more engaging.

Despite its comprehensive framework, the social studies curriculum in Nigeria faces several challenges such as resource constraints, many schools lack adequate teaching materials and resources, which hampers effective curriculum delivery. There is a need for better training and professional development for teachers to effectively teach social studies. Equally, the need to ensure that the curriculum remains relevant and up-to-date with current social and global issues. Developing assessment methods that accurately measure students' understanding and critical thinking skills rather than rote memorization is very essential. The social studies curriculum in Nigeria is well-structured to provide students with a holistic education about their social environment and the world. However, addressing the challenges related to resources, teacher training, curriculum relevance, and assessment methods is crucial to enhancing the effectiveness of the curriculum and achieving its objectives.

Summary

The social studies curriculum in Nigeria aims to equip students with a comprehensive understanding of their social environment, cultural heritage, and the interconnectedness of global societies. Its primary objectives include fostering civic education, cultural understanding, critical thinking, social skills, and global awareness. The curriculum covers a wide range of content areas such as history, geography, government and politics, economics and development, culture and society, and current affairs. Teaching methods employed included

lectures and discussions, project-based learning, field trip and the use of multimedia resources. However, the curriculum faces several challenges, including resource constraints, insufficient teacher training, the need for curriculum updates to maintain relevance, and the development of effective assessment methods. Enhancing teacher training and updating educational materials are recommended to improve its impact on reducing social vices.

Conclusion

The social studies curriculum in Nigeria is a crucial component of the educational system, aimed at developing informed, responsible and culturally aware citizens. Despite its comprehensive design and significant objectives, the curriculum's effectiveness is hampered by various challenges. Addressing these issues, particularly through enhanced resources, better teacher training, and updated assessment methods, is essential for improving the delivery and impact of social studies education in Nigeria. By doing so, the curriculum can better achieve its goal of preparing students to actively participate in and contribute positively to their society and the global community.

Recommendations

The study recommended the following, the need to incorporate practical ethics and moral education into social studies curriculum so as to strengthen civic education components and to educate students about their rights and responsibilities as citizens. It equally promote critical thinking and problem-solving skills with the use of real life case studies involving community and stakeholder participation. It will enhance teacher training and professional development with the incorporation of technology and multimedia resources that promote values through co-curricular activities, assessment methods focused on critical thinking and values fostering on supportive school environment: The implementation of these recommendations through social studies curriculum in Nigeria play a pivotal role in curbing social vices and promoting a more ethical, responsible, and engaged citizenry. These efforts will help address the root causes of social issues and contribute to the overall development and stability of the country.

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