



Improvisation Competencies Possessed by Junior Secondary School Social Studies Teachers in Rivers State, Nigeria

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Article History

Received: 04.12.2022

Accepted: 12.01.2023

Published: 17.02.2023

Abstract: The study focused on the improvisation competencies possessed by junior secondary school social studies teachers in Rivers State. Ex-post facto research design was used for the study. The population was made up of all the social studies teachers in the 23 Local Government Area of Rivers State. The sample size of the study was one hundred and thirty five (135) social studies teachers selected through simple random sampling techniques (74 male and 61 female). The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire. The reliability of the instrument was determined through test-retest techniques and a reliability coefficient of 0.86 was attained, in analyzing the data collected, a statistical package of social science (S.P.S.S) for window version 15.0 was employed. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while independent t-test and one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study show that teacher's qualification, gender and years of experience influences social teacher's improvisation competencies. On the strength of the above findings, it was recommended among others that qualified teachers be employed to teach the subject, improvisation be made part of teacher education programme while government and stakeholders in education should create conducive atmosphere for social studies teachers.

Keywords: Sample size, questionnaire, ANOVA, S.P.S.S.

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INTRODUCTION

The teaching and learning of social studies like any other subject on the Nigerian school curriculum requires the use of instructional material, be it ready-made or improvised, so as to facilitate optimal outcome of instruction. Nevertheless, there are cases of shortage of provision and the use of these materials in schools. For instance, readymade instructional materials may not be enough or plentiful for instructional usage. However, it is advisable for teachers not to limit themselves to such a situation because there are ways to improve classroom environment by creating

media that are capable of making the classroom teaching interesting.

The above idea cannot be easily swept under the carpet in any worthwhile discourse in relation to Vikoo (2017) when he reacted that "classroom teaching does not have to be impaired by the lack of sophisticated materials. He therefore suggested that teachers need to have two aptitudinal dispositions-resourcefulness and improvisation. This implies that social studies teachers need to create or improvise for instructional materials where there has been a shortage or absence of media creation before. Although, to some, this may

Citation: T. S. Birabil, Abe Ezinne C. (2023). Improvisation Competencies Possessed by Junior Secondary School Social Studies Teachers in Rivers State, Nigeria. *Glob Acad J Humanit Soc Sci*; Vol-5, Iss-1 pp- 16-21.

look like an extra burden or additional task and will quickly reflect their mind back to some of their colleagues that may not care.

Although, the blame could not be pushed to teachers alone. This view was reiterated by Fadeyiye (2001) that the improvisation of instructional materials becomes more relevant and crucial now that the Nigerian economy is not buoyant and the government is even finding it extremely difficult to fulfill the basic obligations to its citizen. He further added that Nigeria is particularly going through a terrible austere period and this is why it becomes highly necessary that encouragement should be given to teachers to improvise some of the instructional materials from local materials. In a related development, Gbamanja (1991) added that the skill to improvise might include an effective use of locally made materials especially inexpensive materials, produced by consortiums, agencies, but mostly by the teachers instead of imported ready-made materials.

According to Vikoo (2003), improvisation is the ability to make alternative "local" materials in place of "standard" ready-made materials which are either lacking or in short supply. Okorosaye-Orubite (2017) succinctly made this point clear when he defined improvisation as the art of making one's own instructional materials from local materials available in the environment.

Mezieobi, Fubara and Mezieobi (2008) summarized it all as they conceptualized "improvisation" to be the provision, creation or construction and use of alternative or substitute materials in the place of the real or standard thing. They went further to say that improvisation connotes two major factors, namely: role substitution –constructed instructional materials that takes on the role or place of the standard or real item and role simulation that gives the illusion of reality.

The above definitions put to test the ingenuity, resourcefulness and creative capacities of a social studies teacher. In case, improvisation procedures may be time consuming and are capable of usurping the time set out for teaching and learning in the classroom setting. However, improvisation competencies possessed by teachers is cardinal in the realization of their noble mission in relation to the concept. This may bring to our mind, certain questions like;

1. How creative, imaginative, resourceful and efficient are the Nigerian social studies teachers?
2. Are they capable of breaking new grounds?

3. Can they properly relate lesson to real life situation?
4. Do they have passion for home-made instructional materials? and
5. Are they ready to go extra mile with improvisation?

The advice provided by Agogo (2018), was so instructive when he however noted that improvisation demands creativity, attention, curiosity and perseverance on the part of the teacher, such skills are only reliable through well planned training programmes on improvisation.

Although, despite the usefulness of improvised, locally produced materials, some scholars often criticized the peculiar nature of improvisation. For instance, Oguniyi in Vikoo (2017) identified three of such general criticism on the ground that:

1. They are crude;
2. Their degree of accuracy is rather low; and
3. They may not last unless constructed well.

In a related development, Balogun (2020) reported lack of adequate professional training as a major problem militating against the proper use of implementation of local resources for science teaching.

Meziobi, Fubara and Mezieobi (2008) were apt to disagree with the above view and highlighted some of the benefits of utilizing improvised instructional resources in social studies as follows:

1. It put to test the ingenuity, resourcefulness and creative capacities of a teacher.
2. It bridges the yawning gap between effective teaching and non-availability or inadequacy of instructional materials.
3. It is a ready substitute or alternative to the real or standard instructional materials.
4. It makes it possible for the teacher and the students to really understand the community in which the school is located in order to identify possible source of materials and kinds of available materials for improvisation.
5. Improvisation, in a subtle way, promotes the cordial school community relationship.
6. It makes it possible for effective teaching or poor student performance to be blamed on inadequacy of materials in the teaching-learning process.
7. Materials for improvisation are easily procured or secured.

In view of the above importance attached to improvisation, Omotayo in Guanah and Uzoehina (2018) added that for Nigeria's education sector to

witness rapid transformation in teaching and learning, effective usage or supplementary educational materials remains of vital importance. Gbamanja (1991) also added that “the ability to improvise needs professional commitment, creative ability, technical skill, ingenuity and competencies. The above mentioned qualities or commitment is what social studies teachers needed and could only be developed over time, right from teacher education programmes or in service or on-the-job experience. Obanya (1982) crown it all when he submitted that “improvisation should become a major area of specialization in educational technology courses” in our institution of higher learning especially those concern with teacher training. Bomide (2021) also stressed the need for definite well-planned training programme of improvisation for teachers.

Statement of the Problem

Generally, there is an increasing realization that instructional materials play magnificent role in the context of social studies classroom interactive process.

However, in the present face of the deadening economic crunch or the skyrocketing inflationary trend in Nigeria, the need to improvise has become increasingly necessary for the teaching of social studies as result of the peculiar characteristics of foreign ready-made instructional materials. Fadeyiye (2001) averred that “no government whether federal, state or local government council or even ministry of education, proprietors of schools and colleges etc. can adequately or satisfactorily provide all the teaching aids that their teachers will use”. It is also generally observed over time that improvisation competencies among social studies teachers seems to be declining in Rivers State because a lot of teachers solely depends on readymade instructional materials that may not be readily available at all times. Consequently, this might be responsible for the poor performances of students in both internal and external examinations in the state.

Therefore, the statement of this problem put in interrogative form is: What are the improvisation competencies possessed by social studies teachers in Rivers State of Nigeria.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study aims to examine improvisation competencies possessed by social studies teachers in Rivers state. Specifically, the objectives of the study are to:

1. Find out the influence of academic qualification of social studies teachers on

improvisation competencies of instructional materials.

2. To determine the influence of social studies teachers gender on improvisation competencies
3. To find out if social studies teachers are influence by their years of experience in improvisation competencies.

Research Questions

To guide the study, the following research questions were raised and answered:

1. Do academic qualifications of social studies teachers influence their improvisation competencies?
2. Do genders influence the improvisation competencies of social studies teachers?
3. Do years of experience influence social studies teacher’s improvisation competencies?

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis were formulated and tested in the study;

1. Academic qualifications
2. Gender
3. Years of experience

METHODOLOGY

The research design used in this study was ex-post facto design, this design was adopted because the event under study, have already occurred. Nwankwo (2016) sees ex-post facto design as an empirical study that does not allow the researcher to manipulate any factor especially because the event is already past or taken place. The population of the study consisted of all the social studies teachers of the 23 local government area of Rivers State. The sample size of the study was one hundred and thirty five (135) junior secondary school teachers of social studies selected through simple random sampling techniques with 9 teachers from 15 local government area of the state as respondents (74 male and 61 females). A 20 item researcher’s design instrument titled: “Social Studies Teachers Improvisation Competence Questionnaire (SSTICQ) was used as instrument for data collection. The instrument was validated by two experts from university of Port Harcourt, and subjected to test re-test techniques of estimating reliability. A reliability coefficient of 0.86 was attained and considered adequate for the study. Data gathered from the respondents were statistically analyzed using Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) for window version 15.0. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while independent t-test and one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) are used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significant.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: Do academic qualification of social studies teachers influence their improvisation competence?

Hypothesis 1: Academic qualification of social studies teachers does not significantly influence their improvisation competencies.

Table 1: Independent t-test analysis of teachers and improvisation competencies

AQ	n	\bar{X}	SD	df	t	Sig.	Decision
G	100	61.5	14.92	133	0.37	0.560	NS
PG	35	62.5	13.56				

NS = Not significant, $P > 0.05$ level of significant

G = Graduates (BA/BSc/B.Ed/Equivalent)

PG = Post Graduate (M.A/MSc/M.Ed =/Ph.D/Equivalent)

Table 1 shows independent t-test analysis on social studies teachers' academic qualification on improvisation competencies. This shows no significant differences in the mean scores of graduate holders ($M = 61.5, SD = 14.92$) and those of post graduate holders ($M = 62.5, SD = 13.56, t_{(133)} = 0.37, P > 0.05$ (two-tailed). This means that, academic qualification of social studies teachers does not influence their improvisation competencies. In addition, the null hypothesis was

accepted. Thus, teachers' academic qualification does not significantly influence their improvisation competencies.

Research Question 2: Do gender influences improvisation competencies of Social Studies teachers?

Hypothesis 2: Gender does not significantly influence improvisation competencies of social studies teachers.

Table 2: Independent t-test analysis of teacher's gender and improvisation competencies

Gender	n	\bar{X}	SD	df	t	Sig.	Decision
Male	74	31.3	4.92	133	41.2	0.000	Sig
Female	61	61.4	3.56				

*Significant, $p < 0.05$ level of significance.

Table 2 shows independent t-test analysis on social studies teacher's gender and improvisation competencies. There is a significant difference in the mean scores of male teachers ($M = 31.3, SD = 4.92$) and female social studies teachers ($M = 61.4, SD = 3.56, t_{(133)} = 41.2, P < 0.05$ (two - tailed). This means that, gender of social studies teachers influences their improvisation competences. In addition, the null hypothesis was rejected. That is gender of social studies teachers significantly influence

improvisation competencies, in favour of the female teachers.

Research Question 3: Do years of experience influences social studies teachers improvisation competencies?

Hypothesis 3: Years of experience does not significantly influence improvisation competencies of social studies teachers.

Table 3: Independent t-test analysis of teachers and improvisation competencies

Y of E	μ	\bar{X}	SD
1 - 12yrs	30	31.3	4.92
13 - 22yrs	60	43.0	2.90
23yrs & above	45	61.5=4	3.56
SV	SS	DF	MS
Between groups	57.915	2	28.958
Within Group	162.450	132	1.231
Total	220.365	134	
	F-RATIO	SIG.	Decision
	23.52*	0.00	Sig.

Significant, $P < 0.05$ level of significance

Table 3 shows s significant difference at the $P < 0.05$ level of significance in improvisation mean scores of the three groups:

$F(2,132) = 23.52, p = 0.01$. This means that the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that social studies teacher's years of experience significantly influence improvisation competencies. Post-hoc

comparism using the Turkey HSB test indicated that the mean score for group 1 (1-12years teaching experience) (M = 31.3, SD = 4.92) was significantly different from group 2 and 3 (13 – 22 years and 23 years and above respectively) (M = 43.0, SD = 2.90 and M = 61.4, SD = 3.56). Also, the post-hoc comparism for group 2 (13-22years of teaching experience) (M = 43.0, SD = 2.90) was significantly different from group 3 (23years and above of teaching experience) (M = 61.4, SD = 3.56).

DISCUSSION

The finding on table 1 indicates that academic qualification of social studies teachers does not significantly influences improvisation competencies. This means that teachers with higher qualification could not use the wealth of knowledge and skills to be more resourceful than their counterpart with first degree. The result of this finding is at variance with the findings of Atlatobe, Ogala and Zuru (2017) who found out that principals' academic qualification does not significantly influence conflicts resolution in school. Apedende (2017) who also conducted a study found out that teachers' qualification does not influence or impede the use of projected materials in instruction.

The result on table 2 indicates that gender of social studies teachers significantly influence improvisation competencies in favour of the female teachers. The above result shouldn't be out of place when compared with the treatment Nigerian government gave to teachers for instance, Fadeye (2001) rightly point out that "Nigerian government is finding it difficult to fulfill the basic obligation to its citizens. Again, based on the premise that often times, Nigerian government feels reluctant to motivate teachers and expect them to get their reward from heaven, most male teachers might not be happy on the teaching job to discharge their duties effectively.

Results on table 3 shows that year of experience of the social studies teachers in improvisation competencies indicate a significant difference. In addition, the result shows that the older the teacher experience, the better their improvisation competencies. There is concord between this findings and the assertion made by the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014) on teacher quality and factor that no nation rise above the qualities of its teachers, implying that "experience is the best teacher".

CONCLUSION

From the data analyzed, the study arrived at the following conclusion; academic qualification of social studies teachers does not influence their improvisation competencies. Gender influenced

improvisation competencies in favour of female social studies teachers. Years of experience significantly influenced improvisation competencies. Therefore, improvisation competencies are needed by social studies teachers to facilitate teaching and to promote students understanding.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusion of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Qualified social studies teachers should be recruited and allowed to teach social studies in schools.
2. Government and stakeholders in education should provide and promote conducive atmosphere that will enhance teacher's productivities in schools.
3. School community relationship be encouraged as substitute or alternative materials abound in communities in which the schools are located.
4. Improvisation should made part of teacher education programmes and a major area of specialization in instructional or education technology.
5. Improvisation should not lead to laxity in the provision of the real or ready-made instructional materials on the part of the authorities concerned.

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