



Social Studies Education: A Tool for Effective Leadership

Uzoagba, B. C¹ & Ebebe, I. E²

Department of Social Studies

Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri, Nigeria

uzoagbabc23@gmail.com¹/[08036636874](tel:08036636874)¹, drebebe19@gmail.com²/[08105885647](tel:08105885647)²

ABSTRACT

Social Studies is the study of man in his physical, social, economic, political, religious and cultural environment. It is an integrated approach that draws its contents from other discipline in humanities. It looked at man's activities in the family, community, kingship, state and nation in general. The paper x-rayed the concept of Social studies and leadership. It viewed leadership as a concerted effort by individuals or groups to influence the will of others, it also looked at the role of Social Studies in promoting effective leadership. The paper discussed leadership in the 21st century. The research investigated the obstacles to effective leadership in Nigeria and Africa. Conclusions were made with useful recommendations that will promote qualitative leadership in Nigeria.

Keywords: Social Studies, leadership, humanities and Integration

INTRODUCTION

Social Studies is not only a study, but also a way of life of how man is influenced by his physical, social, political, economic, psychological and cultural environment (Ezegba, 1998). These areas of the environment are continuously affecting man and influencing his behaviours, his occupations, working period, socio-economic relations, political behavior and cultural traits are to a large extent controlled and determined by the environment with which he lives. As the environment influence man, on the other hand he also influences his environment, (Uzoagba 2019). Dubey et al (1980) in Ebirim et al (2011) sees Social Studies as an investigation of human activity and further postulated that "it studies man at home, at workshop, in politics, at play, in the family, village, nation and everywhere he is engaged in busy programme of living.

Social Studies teaches citizenship education which its indices include loyalty, obedience to law, ways of political participation, proper information about the society, human relation, how to keep rules and regulation, payment of taxes, rates and dues, environmental sanitation and responsible good leadership qualities and followership (Ebirim et al 2011). How true is it, that Social Studies can be used as a tool in teaching leadership qualities. Ebirim et al (2013) opined that Social Studies can be used as a tool to teach citizens on responsible leadership qualities such as honest services and dedication to duty, good sense of judgment and moral values, discipline and orderliness, truthfulness, accommodation, maintenance of law and order and knowledge of how to preserve the culture of the people. Supporting this view, Uzoagba (2021) opined that the interactive nature of Social Studies offers the discipline a great opportunity to relate with people and produce good leaders who can maintain orderliness, self-respect, honesty and discipline in the discharge of their duties.

God in Genesis 1 vs 27, created man and made him the head of the family, by so doing the man becomes the leader of family. Also in social contract theory of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-78) in Ebirim et al (2018), the theory postulates that people lived in a period before the state was instituted without a leader, no government, no law which could be enforced by a coercive authority. The theory went on to say that men lived, it was said in a state of nature, in which they were subjected to only such regulations as nature

was supposed to prescribe. No human authority to formulate rules and enforce them, after sometimes they decided to appoint a leader and set up a government. By so doing, they parted with their natural liberty and agreed to obey the law formulated by their leaders. Therefore, leadership is an important tool in the society.

Leadership involves making sound and sometimes difficult decision, creating and articulating a clear vision, establishing goals and providing followers with the knowledge and tool necessary to achieve those goals. An effective leader possess the following qualities; self-confidence, strong communication and management skills, creative and innovative thinking, perseverance in the time of failure, willingness to take risks and openness to change (teachtarget.com.cdn.ampproject.org).

Conceptual Clarification

Social Studies

Social Studies is an integrated or interdisciplinary subject which draws its content, concepts, methods and generalization from various subjects in social sciences and humanities. It is a skill developer, it develops in the learner, the social and effective thinking skills that would enable one actively participate and effectively survive in all spheres of life in once environment and beyond, it helps the individual in rational collection and sieving of ideas with sound interpretation and analysis in applying them in real life setting, (Obilo et al; 1982).

The Nigerian Educational Research Council (NERC) defined Social Studies as “Those common learning of man’s interactions with his social and physical environment. Hogan (1969) in Ebirim et al (2011) see the subject as that which is concerned with man and his relationship with his environment while Ezegebe (1998) points out that in integrated Social studies, children learn about the world around through the co-ordination of information, concepts, structure and methods from other Social Sciences subject like political science, history, geography, economics and sociologists.

Social Studies promotes in the individual intellectual, affective and the social skills for effective living in the society and for shaping “enlightened humanity”, social world awareness, sensitivity, acquaintance with coping mechanisms for social realities. It is therefore a study of human interactional and interactive behaviours, values and problems associated with human ecology (Mezieobi 1996).

Social Studies emphasizes that “the proper study of man is man”, man in his environment, man in his religious activities, man and his government (that is, civic responsibilities and obligations). The methodology of Social Studies emphasizes on cognitive, functional skills and desirable attitude. Therefore, it is a veritable tool for the acquisition of leadership skills that can promote nation-building. Social Studies starts at primary school to inculcate in the citizen the importance of everyone keeping to rules and regulations that promote peace and harmony which are instrument of a good leader. Social Studies teaches good leadership qualities from the family and moves in a spiral way to the kindred, village, community, town, state, nation and global community (Emenyonu, 1998).

Leader

A leader is one who is appointed, elected, selected or one who had divine mandate to direct and influence the affairs of others. He makes sure that the authority or mandate given to him by others is respected and honored. His mindset is on how things can be improved and he rallies around his subjects in other to achieve a better vision. Leaders can work towards making their vision a reality while putting people first. It is just being able to motivate people. Leaders need to be empathetic and connect with others successfully, (chieflerningofficer.com).

Leadership

Leadership is the ability of an individual or a group of individuals to influence and guide their followers or other members of his organization. It involves having business acumen, setting a vision or achieving goals for his organization. A good leader possess too many qualities such as charismatic abilities, tolerance, obedience to his people, a servant leader, disciplinarian and must be knowledgeable enough to govern his people. Such a leader must have the mandate of his people either through election,

appointment or selection. He must be a trustworthy person who should have the charisma to influence his people positively, Uzoagba (2017).

Theoretical Framework

This research study is anchored on behavioral theory of leadership propounded by Rensis Likert in the 1950s. The theory is interested on behavior of leaders, and suggests that this trait can be emulated by other leaders. Sometimes called the style theory, it suggests that leaders aren't born successful, but can be created based on learnable behavior. Behavioral theories of leadership focus heavily on the actions of a leader. This theory suggests that the best predictor of leadership success is viewing how leaders act. This theory is actually in line with the type of leadership found in Nigeria and indeed among African nations where leaders are not born but rather they are elected, selected, appointed and some are products of coup *d'état*. Most of these leaders are not interested in the welfare of their subjects and they lack leadership skills to run the affairs of their states. Their styles of leadership do not portray the qualities of a good leader. Social Studies teaches good leadership qualities such as charismatic abilities, tolerance, obedience to his people and a servant leader.

Leadership in 21st Century

The 21st century has features of change and multiple problems. The period has witnessed waves of great achievements which were not there before. The degree of achievements accelerated and influenced the activities of people of the world and has prompted the growth of technological development and innovation. It is a period that is characterized by technologies of different kinds, social media explosion such as computer, smart phones, projector, drones, CCTV cameras, internet devices of all kinds, vehicles of different kinds, mass media of different kinds, information communication technology ICT, nuclear weapons, destructive devices, ammunition of different kinds, corruption at all spheres of human development and globalization.

These features of 21st century are today the fulcrum of socio-economic and political developments of nations of the world. More importantly the period saw the emergence of digital platform of social media activities which is the driving force behind the breakthrough of many Nations of the world. Features of this century has impacted so much on organizational structures of how business are carried out among Nations of the world.

As mentioned earlier, the century has witnessed a great explosion on information communication technology which is the pivot in which the wheels of globalization rotates. With globalization, the world can better be described as one family, where trade, diplomatic relationship, politics, economic integration are moving freely among Nation of the world. It has witnessed rapid increase in emerging economies which has brought a great shift in global powers.

Challenges of this century have affected leadership roles to a great extent in modern times, contemporary leaders are now faced with the problems of sit tight syndrome, insecurity, terrorism, corruption, poor vision, political instabilities, electoral fraud and god fatherism. All these negative values have affected the drift in global economic and political situation among Nations of the world. The effects of these problems are felt at all levels of National development. Leadership in modern times requires responsive and proactive approach in managing the emerging changes that may tend to affect National developments (Uzoagba, 2020).

Challenges of 21st Century Leadership in Nigerian and Africa

- Sit tight in office syndrome

Most African leaders have refused to vacate office once their tenure is over. Many of them have ruled for twenty to thirty years, many are too old and lack the political will to respond to national and international issues. As a result of these sit tight syndrome, the youths and opposition parties are not allowed to express

themselves and air their opinions for national development. The effect of this scenario is political instability, extra judicial killings and marginalization of opposition parties.

- **Insecurity**

This is a feeling of inadequacy, not being good enough and state of uncertainty. It produces anxiety about ones goals, relationship and inability to handle situation. Among African nation which Nigeria is inclusive, it has been a problem of socio-economic, political and religious development. Citizens are not sure of their lives and properties. There are evidences of extra judicial killing, riots, protest and hate speeches arising from separatist and militia groups, such as indigenous people of Biafra, Oduduwa agitators, movement for emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND), etc. The activities of these groups have fueled high level of insecurity in Nigeria, and have affected diplomatic relationship among African Nations.

- **Terrorism**

This is violence used in order to create fear in the minds of the public. It involves the unlawful use of force and violence against persons and property, to intimidate or force a government to achieve a political or social goal. In Nigeria and most African nations, terrorism is fast trending like a normal business. The activities of Boko Haram insurgence, Taliban, Islamic states of West African Province (ISWAP), Bandit among others have led to the killings of innocent citizens both men, women and children. It has affected socio-economic, political, religious and educational development of people living in Nigeria especially in the northern part of the country and by extension other African nation like Chad, Cameroon etc.

- **Corruption**

Nigerian leaders are highly corrupt and this has resulted in retardation of national development. They engage in looting of public fund and properties, engage in nepotism, award of lofty contracts and embezzlement of public fund. Their leadership skills are very poor, untrustworthy and lack vision. Corruption has eaten so deep in the fabrics of all the government establishment in Nigeria and its effect is obvious in all facets of our social life. It has given birth to low output in economic development, underdevelopment in all spheres of life and has reduced the qualities of its citizens among the committee of nations.

- **Poor Vision**

Most of our leaders are visionless and lacks the wisdom and intellectual capacities to lead their people. Many are products of ethnic prejudice and therefore their interest is not for national development rather they focus on ethnic consciousness and tribal sentiments. Such leaders cannot integrate their subjects into one political unit. The effect is disunity and ethnic rivalries among the citizens of such nation.

- **Political Instability**

This is the national tendency of a government to collapse either because of conflict or rampant competition between various political parties. Political instability in most African nations are caused by lack of political socialization, political will, political communication, rule making, interest in articulation of government policies, poor leadership, challenges in economic situations, fluctuation in stock markets, marginalization of some ethnic groups, nepotism and favouritism, all these affects the economy of any nation and increase uncertainty about future economic situation and policies. Political instability can lead to demonstrations, strikes and various forms of violent crime, coups, regime reversals and government collapse.

Roles of Social Studies in Promoting Effective Leadership

- The United States National Council for Social Studies NCSS (1991) opined that one of the expected outcomes of Social Studies education is a “sense of efficiency in analyzing and predicating in contemporary affairs, public matters and global issues” as well as “commitment to democratic values and ethical standards”. Based on this declaration, Social Studies if well taught by the teachers and properly internalized by the pupils has the potentials of solving Nigeria’s leadership problem.

- The basic goals of Social Studies education has long been established by specialists like Adaralegbe (1990) Adeyoyin (1981) and Akinlaye (1980). The goals include preparing the young to be humane, rational, skilful on decision making, responsible citizens in the world that is becoming increasing complex and interdependent. By understanding human relationship, Social Studies aimed at producing citizen and leaders with skills, competencies, moral values and seasoned judgment who can contribute positively to economic, social and political development of Nigerian society.
- By the nature of Social studies, one area of its roles is that it provides the moral, emotional and intellectual foundations on which citizens, leaders, individual, groups and national identity must reinforce and revitalize each other in order to ensure the development of a concerned and committed citizens who should be seen as effective leaders, conscious of their right and that of their followers, who perform their duties and are committed to set of values that will foster strong participant orientation.
- Social Studies by its nature can also instill in our leaders, sense of responsibility, loyalty, dedication to duty, truthfulness, trustworthiness and honest services to the citizenry. These attributes can help to foster unity, mutual co-operation, obedience and develop sense of solidarity by the citizenry which will lead to National development. Social Studies education arouse in the citizens devotion to acquire an idealistic quest for the betterment of the society at large. Social Studies teaches its citizen on how to respect the cultures of others. Social Studies is capable of instilling in the youths good leadership qualities and mode of living with people from different parts of the country with a view of removing ethnic prejudices, ignorance and confirming at first hand, the common traits of unity in diversity among all ethnic groups (Uruakpa 1998).
- One of the goals of Social Studies is citizenship education, which allows the learners to know their rights, duties and privileges. If citizens are allowed to enjoy their rights and privileges, in turn they will perform their duties and pay allegiance to the constituted authorities which are indices of good leadership. Good leadership promotes co-existence, trustworthiness, loyalty, honesty and love for one another. It encourages debate, open discussion, feedback and promotes an atmosphere of love. A good leader is eager to be held accountable and readily admits when they are wrong. He communicates, show empathy, show positivity, build confidence in his followers, visionary, responsible, transparent, motivating and shows high level of humanity to his subject, Ebirim (2013).

CONCLUSION

The paper x-rayed the role of Social Studies in promoting effective leadership in 21st century. Efforts were made by the researchers to look at leadership and qualities of a good leader. It also sees Social Studies as a veritable tool to addressing leadership issues in Nigeria and African nation. Based on the aforementioned issues, the researchers advocated that if Social Studies is properly taught, it has the propensity of instilling good leadership qualities in the students and citizen at large. The researchers also advocated that 21st century leaders should be responsive enough in addressing issues confronting their nations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study, the researchers made the following recommendations;

- That Social Studies should be taught at all levels of education in order to teach our students on how to relate with one another in their environment and beyond.
- Our leaders should lead by showing good examples worthy of emulation by the citizens, so that citizen can follow suit in their time.
- That institution of learning should increase the credit hours for teaching Social Studies because the course is important in our everyday life and also it is a veritable tool for acquisition of leadership skills that can promote nation building.

REFERENCES

- Aderalegbe, A. (1990). *The Nigerian Social Studies Program: Retrospect and Prospect*, Nigerian Education Research and development Council (ED) Social Studies Teaching Issues and Problems: Benin: Ethiop Publishing Corporation.
- Adeyoyin, F. A. (1981). *The dynamics of teaching Social studies at final Grade II Teacher's college level in Lagos State*: Unpublished Ph. D thesis University of Lagos.
- Akinlaye, F. A (1980). "Meaning and concept of Social Studies" NERC (ED) Social Studies Teacher's Issues and Problems: Benin City, Ethiopia Publishing Corporation.
- Ebirim, D. C. & Uzoagba, B. C. (2011). *Selected Themes in Social Studies Education in Nigeria*: Owerri, Ray Publishing Company.
- Ebirim, D. C., Emenyonu, O. D. C., Uzoagba, B. C. (2018). *Social Studies Education: Theories and Prospect of Nation Building Owerri*: Ambix Publishers.
- Emenyonu, O. D. C. (1998). *Journal of the Department of Social Studies: Alvan Ikoku College of Education Owerri*, vol. 1 No 1: 1998.
- Ezegbe, M. O. (1998). *Foundation of Social Studies, Owerri Corporate impressions*.
- Holy Bible: King James Version (2000). Grand Rapid: Michigan USA. Genesis 1:27: Zonderan Publisher.
- Mezieobi, K. A. (1996). *Social Studies Education in Nigeria: An Anthology Owerri*: Versatile Publishers.
- National Council for Social studies (1991). *Report of the Task Force on Studies in the Middle School. Social Education – 55 (5) 287-293*.
- Obilor, E. E & Aina, N. F. (1982). *Social Studies: A handbook in Methodology*. Ibadan: Evans Brother Nigeria Limited.
- Uruakpa, (1998). *Journal of the Department of Social Studies: Alvan Ikoku college of Education Owerri*, vol. 1 No 1: 1998.
- Uzoagba, B. C. & Ebebe, I. E. (2019). A paper presented on Students week of Social studies Association of Nigeria (SOSSAN) with theme "Social Studies a vehicle for solving man's problem" at Social Science hall of the school of Arts and Social Science.
- Uzoagba, B. C. & Ebebe, I. E. (2021). A paper presented at the school of Arts and Social Sciences conference with the theme Physical Social Studies Classroom and leadership problems in 21st century. Held on 5th – 7th July, 2021 at the NASS Conference Hall.
- www.chieflearningofficer.com
- www.teachtarget.com.cdn.ampproject.org.