

Status Of Social Studies Facilitators Of The National Teachers' Institute (NTI) – NCE By Distance Learning System In Enugu State Of Nigeria

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Abstract

The study investigated the status of the social studies facilitators of the National Teachers' Institute (NTI)- National Certificate of Education (NCE) by Distance Learning System (DLS) in Enugu State. To carry out the study, the researchers posed two research questions. The design of the study was a descriptive survey. The population of the study consisted of all the 6 designated viable NTI-NCE-DLS study centers in Enugu State with total population of 11 social studies course facilitators and all the 2nd, 3rd and 4th cycle social studies students, totaled one hundred and four(104). Social studies 1st cycle students were excluded from the study. The total number of research subjects is therefore one hundred and fifteen (115). No sample was drawn. This was due to small population size. Questionnaire was used to elicit information from the respondents. The research questions were answered using frequency and percentage (%). The findings of the study, among others are: the majority of the NTI-NCE-DLS social studies course facilitators are first degree holders on single social science subject. Based on the findings, it was therefore, recommended among others that: more professional social studies course facilitators be recruited since, NCE-DLS does not give room for team teaching. Secondly, the NCCE minimum standard on qualification status of social studies course facilitators should be adjusted to ensure quality of social studies product in the NTI- NCE- DLS.

Introduction

The importance of teacher quality in our educational system has made the Federal Government of Nigeria to intermittently review teacher education programmes to ensure that both quantity and quality of teaching staff in education industry are maintained. In her effort to increase both quantity and quality of teaching staff, the Federal Government in 1990 established National Teachers' Institute Distance Learning System (NTI-DLS) with the aim of helping in-service teachers who have not been up-graded as National Certificate of Education (NCE) holders, since the Federal Government has used NCE as a minimum teaching qualification in both primary and Junior Secondary School levels. Distance learning system of education in the context of this study has been variously defined by academics in various ways. According to Dantani, (2005:51),

It is the type of education that takes place based on certain agreement between the students and the administering body. Here the courses to be studied are prepared in form of lecture notes by the experts, which the person(s) it is meant for is expected to follow as a study guide. The assessment are given and marked by the experts and sent to the students with comments on their progress.

Similarly, Mohammed (2008) maintained that DLS employ different methods for programme delivery which range from paper-based correspondence to the use of multiple technologies such as internet, streaming videos and live videos conferencing. Logical deduction from the above shows that Distance Learning (DL) is an education organized and conducted using time-tested technologies that are capable of delivering education to students that may not be physically present with the teacher. Occasionally, provision is made for a face-to-face discussion and clarification of some gray areas (Nzulumike, Enemuo & Achugbu, 2008).

Structurally,NTI- DLS provides the learner with tutorial and peer support through the face-to-face tutorial contacts which is normally held at the study centers at weekends or forth nights, and daily during holidays. The course facilitator who plays a pivotal role in the NTI programme delivery system according to NTI (2002), is expected to perform the following roles among others:

- 1) Help the students master concepts and skills and develop positive attitudes.
- 2) Explain the course content and help the students to solve their teaching problems.
- 3) Help the students to become good teachers.
- 4) Conduct practical and organize field trips.

It is important to note here, that it is only facilitators who are professionals in a specific area can carry out the above mentioned roles effectively. Concerning this issue, and with particular reference to social studies education, National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE, 2008) recommended minimum Standard and noted that the minimum requirement for academic staff in National Certificate of Education teacher training colleges in Nigeria are as follows: Bachelor Degree in Education with second class and/ or Masters or Ph.D in Social studies; or second class upper degree, Masters or Ph.D in any of the social science and at least NCE social studies or post graduate diploma in education (PGDE). In addition, inquiry and field trip as instructional approaches as well as the use of ICT and electronic facilities in teaching social studies were also recommended.

The reason behind this recommendations lies on the fact that social studies, as a living subject is a problem solving discipline. Knowledge acquired through social studies discipline helps man to solve the problems of his environment. The relevance of social studies as a core curricular school subject was predicated on its dynamic and functional nature in solving societal problem (NTI, 2000, Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN), 2004). Social studies has been conceptualized as an integrated study of man and the outcome of his interaction with his environment (Esu & Inyang, 2004). Nwoji (2006) opined that the dynamic nature of social studies has made various countries in the World to structure social studies programme as a tool for modeling their society.

Despite the effort of the NTI to raise NCE teachers, the level of competences of the products of the programmes still raises a lot of doubts (Abolade, 2003). Considering

the fact that poor quality teachers at the basic education levels according to Baike (2002) and Ayeyalemi (2002) were mainly the products of NTI Distance Learning, one wonders the effectiveness of the NTI-NCE-DLS course facilitators who handle some specific subjects. This however, precipitated the need for this study. Consequently, the objective of the study is, to find out the status of the course facilitators who handle social studies programme in the NTI-NCE-Distance Learning System. Hence, there is correlation between teachers' quality and the learning outcome. Teachers' qualification is an important factor in educative process. Rose and Woodhead as quoted by Ezegebe (2003) were of the opinion that unsatisfactory teaching is a direct consequence of teachers lacking the knowledge, skills or understanding to teach a subject well.

Based on the foregoing, the findings of this study have some significance to Federal Government and NTI management. For the Federal Government, the findings of this study would help her improve DLS through effective policy implementation and monitoring of NTI zonal headquarters. For the NTI management, in the area of staff recruitment, it will help them to ensure that more qualified teaching staff in social studies are employed.

To carry out the study, the following research questions were posed.

1. What is the qualification status of the social studies course facilitators of the NTI-NCE-DLS programme?
2. How do the NTI-NCE-DLS social studies facilitators carry out their teaching exercise?

Method

The study made use of the descriptive survey research design. The study was carried out in Enugu State of Nigeria. The choice of Enugu State is because, Enugu had been the capital of the rest of other South-East States of Nigeria and it is expected that the teaching and learning resources there will be very adequate. The population of the study is made up of all the six viable NTI-NCE-DLS designated centers in Enugu state consisting of all the 11 Social studies course facilitators and all the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Cycle social studies students (104). The 1st cycle social studies student was excluded because they are new in the system, and may not have detail information needed for the research purpose. The total number of the research population is therefore one hundred and fifteen (115). No sample was conducted due to the small number of the population. The questionnaire entitled: "Status of the NTI-NCE-DLS social studies Questionnaire" was used to elicit information from the respondents. The instrument was validated by 3 experts in the department of social science education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. It comprised three sections: A, B, and C. Section 'A' sought information on the personal data of the respondents (study center and Local Government Area), while section 'B' was rated by the course facilitators, hence it sought information on their qualification(s). Lastly, section 'C' which has 15 items, sought information from the social studies students on the way course facilitators carry out their teaching exercise. Frequency and Percentage (%) were used to analyze data. For the research question 2, the bench mark for acceptance was 50% and above, while 49% and below was considered not accepted.

Result

The data obtained were presented in tables 1 and 2 below, which contained the information that answered the two research questions.

Research question 1: What is the qualification status of the social studies course facilitators of the NTI-NCE-DLS programme?

Table 1: Response on Qualification status of NTI-NCE-DLS Social Studies Course Facilitators

S/No	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
1	B.Sc	5	45.4
2	B.Sc and PGDE	2	18.2
3	M.SC and PGDE	2	18.2
4	Ph.D (Social Science Education)	-	-
5	Ph.D (Social Studies)	-	-
6	Masters in Social Studies	-	-
7	First Degree in Social Studies	2	18.2
8	NCE(social studies)	-	-
Total		11	100

S/NO	Item Course facilitator:	YES	%	NO	%
1	Is very committed to his/her teaching	102	98.1	02	1.9
2	Explains information in the course book with clear examples.	98	94.2	06	5.8
3	Carries students along while teaching.	96	92.3	08	7.7
4	Use different kinds of teaching strategies to make learning simple.	100	96.2	04	3.8
5	Permits interaction between him and the students.	94	90.4	10	9.6
6	Is always punctual to work.	92	88.5	12	11.5
7	Is dedicated to duty.	89	85.6	15	14.4
8	Makes use of some teaching aids like globes, wall maps, during course delivery.	40	38.5	64	61.5
9	Marks assignment diligently.	104	100	00	0.0
10	Uses relevant community resource in the teaching process.	101	97.1	03	2.9
11	Records his teaching in cassettes for Students use.	06	5.8	98	94.2
12	Concretize learning experiences during Teaching/learning process.	84	80.8	20	19.2
13	Improvises some instructional materials for his/her teaching.	80	76.9	24	23.1
14	Exposes students to internet services.	24	23.1	80	76.9
15	Motivates and encourages students.	100	96.2	04	3.8

Table 1, presents data on the qualification status of the NTI-NCE-DLS social studies course facilitators. The result showed that social studies course facilitators with NCE (Social Studies) and B.Sc. in other social science courses are 5 (45.4%), followed by those with B. Sc. and Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE), 2(18.2%), M. Sc and PGDE 2(18%). Others are Ph. D social science education (Nil), Ph. D social studies

(Nil), Masters degree in Social Studies (Nil), First degree in Social Studies (18.2%) and NCE(social studies) Nil.

Research question 2: How do the NTI-NCE-DLS social studies facilitators carry out their teaching exercise?

Table 2: Response on how the social studies course facilitators carryout their teaching exercise

The responses in table 2, showed that 98.1% of facilitators are committed to their teaching, while only 1.9% are not; 94.2% explains the content in the course book with clear examples while 5.8% didn't; 92.3% carry the students along while 7.7% didn't. The result also showed that course facilitators used different kinds of teaching strategies (96.2%), permit classroom interaction (90.4%), while 3.8% and 9.6% respectively, didn't exhibit such qualities. Furthermore, the result revealed that 88.5%, 85.6%, 38.5%, 100% and 97.1% of the course facilitators are always punctual, dedicated to duty, make use of some identified teaching aids, mark assignment diligently and use relevant community resource in the course of teaching respectively. On the other hand, 11.5%, 14.4%, 61.5% and 2.9% of course facilitators respectively didn't exhibit such qualities.

The result in table 2, equally showed that 4.8%, 80.8%, 76.9%, 23.1% and 96.2% of the course facilitators record their teaching in cassettes, concretize learning materials, improvise some instructional materials, expose students to internet services, motivate and encourage students respectively. On the other hand, with reference to the above items (12-17), 94.2%, 19.2%, 23.1%, 76.9% and 3.8% of the course facilitators didn't exhibit the identified qualities respectively.

Discussion of result

The results in table 1, showed that most of the Social Studies course facilitators are first degree holders of the single Social Science subjects like (Economics, Political Science, Geography etc.) and some with additional Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE). This implies that most of the course facilitators are first-degree holders and some of them have PGDE followed by the M.SC/PGDE degree holders.

From the above results, there is no doubt that the course facilitators, who were holders of the single social science subjects would be teaching social studies from the perspective of their academic disciplines. It should be noted that social studies is an applied field of study and ought to be taught with special approaches as recommended by the NCCE, since its essence is to assist learners acquire knowledge, skills, attitude and values that will help them functional in a dynamic environment.

The nature of the course demands that course facilitators should be grounded in all aspects of social studies, not being a specialist in one particular aspect like Geography or Economics. There is tendency that such facilitators would like to teach only units related to their discipline, leaving other areas to suffer. This is not the case in regular NCE awarding institutions where there is team teaching by lecturers from various social science subject areas that make up social studies. As an umbrella subject, no single facilitator can teach social studies effectively in NCE-DLS.

Acknowledging this fact, NTI (1990) stated that, Social Studies teachers teach it from the perspective of their academic disciplines, which were often discrete. This implies that social studies have special methods and approaches for its delivery in order to achieve its lofty objectives. In line with the findings of this study, Ezegbe and Nwaubani (2009) stated that, quality of teachers who handled the NTI- NCE-DLS programmes was hardly of the required standard.

The result in table 2, showed that greater percentage of NTI-NCE-DLS social studies facilitators at the designated centers are very committed to their job. They also carry students along as well as permit classroom interaction. Though the study showed that great percentage of course facilitators are dedicated, but only few of them (40%) made use of teaching aids, such as globes and wall maps during course delivery. The implication of this finding is such that most of the facilitators who do not have much knowledge of Geography may likely not have knowledge of map and certain geographical instructional aids that will help them to handle certain aspect of geography units of social studies. This view however supports earlier submission by NTI (1990) which stated that social studies teachers teach the course from the perspective of their academic disciplines.

Other major findings of this study are: All the course facilitators mark students' assignment diligently; great percentage of them made use of relevant community resource in the teaching process; good number of them concretize learning experiences and improvise some instructional materials during teaching/learning process. However, the findings equally showed that only few course facilitators (5.8%) record their teaching in cassettes, while 23.1% of them expose their students to internet services. Nevertheless, this finding negates the importance of electronic media and ICT services in DLS programme as recommended by the NCCE. Nzewi, (2009:162) emphasized so much on the importance of ICT in information age in the following lines:

ICT has the capacity to provide higher interactive potential for users to develop their individual, intellectual and creative ability. ICT helps in the development of human mental resources, which allows people to both successfully apply the existing knowledge and produce new knowledge....ICT provides productive teaching and learning in order to increase people's creative and intellectual resources especially in today's information society.

This assertion implies that social studies as a dynamic subject needs ICT environment where both teachers and learners develop their resource horizons.

Recommendations

In view of the findings, the following recommendations became necessary. The study recommends that NTI zonal offices should ensure that they recruit facilitators, who are professionals in social studies, since NCE-DLS does not give room for team teaching. The NCCE minimum standard on qualification status of the Social Studies course facilitators should be adjusted to ensure quality teaching of social studies in NTI- NCE-DLS. Again team teaching which is the case with regular teacher training programme could be adopted by the NTI management. The course facilitators should be closely

monitored to ensure that they effectively use necessary instructional strategies and materials for effective social studies instruction.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

The success of the NTI- NCE-DLS social studies programmes would largely depend on the qualification status of their course facilitators.

The extent to which the problems raised and discussed on the quality of the course facilitators are effectively addressed would determine the extent the objective of NTI- NCE-DLS social studies programmes would be achieved. It could be noted that human resources is the moving force that controls all other resources in the education process. In fact, the impact of quality academic staff in the delivery of social studies programmes of the NTI- NCE-DLS cannot be measured; hence the teacher is the major determinant of quality in education.

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