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## REPOSITIONING SOCIAL STUDIES FOR THE CHALLENGES OF POST COVID-19 NIGERIA

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### **Abstract**

*The COVID Pandemic which bedeviled the global space in 2019 and, has been with the people more than two and half years after; has brought along with it the new normal which may be with the people for yet a longer period to come. This study examined the role Social Studies could play in the socio-economic and technological adjustment of Nigerians, given the various challenges that have come with the pandemic. The study adopted survey research method. A total of 127 teachers of Social Studies in Osogbo, Osun State filled a questionnaire on their perceptions of the role Social Studies. in bringing about the necessary adjustment to the COVID 19 Pandemic. It was found that Social Studies had a positive role to play in the management of COVID-19 and other issues relating to it. The Pandemic contributed to the development of anti-social, deviant behaviours in youths which arose as a result of lack of access to school, an essential socialization agent. It was also found that superstitions beliefs peddled in the society on the origin and spread of COVID-19, its vaccinations and other related issues could be addressed by the problem-solving nature of Social Studies. It was suggested that lessons learnt in terms of online education and the*

*management of the social restriction should be harnessed for future development in Social Studies curriculum.*

**Key words:** Access to education, Online education, Post Covid-19, Social Studies

### **Introduction**

Social Studies is a multi disciplinary course of studies. It does not have a universally accepted definition. Since its evolution in United States of America and its subsequent introduction to Nigeria, it has attracted various definitions from scholars(Ogundare, 2000). The author noted that a committee that was set up in the United States of America in 1916 first defined it as a subject which relates directly to the organization and the development of human society and to man as a member of the social group (Ogundare & Jekayinfa, 2017).

Meizeobi (1992; 2010) viewed it as a subject that provided coordinated and systematic study of information, skills and concepts from various disciplines cutting across humanities and social sciences with the attention given to connections among the people and nations of the world, the effect of science and technology on society and the way to practice good citizenship. The above definition is comprehensive and is hereby adopted in this study. It may be contended that social readjustment required by Post-COVID-19 in many areas of living is subsumed within the discipline of Social Studies.

Social Studies as a school subject focuses on identified social issues and problems (Ogundare, 2000;Ogundare&Jekayinfa, 2017). The authors emphasized that although it has many objectives, these could be grouped into three broad categories of knowledge, skills and attitudes and values (Ogundare & Jekayinfa, 2017). Specific objectives of Social Studies include: presentation of knowledge as a whole; helping to create awareness and an understanding of the evolving social and physical environment, cultural and spiritual resources along with the use and conservation of these resources (Ogundare &

Jekayinfa, 2017). It also helps in developing positive attitudes of togetherness, the inculcation of appropriate values of honesty, hardwork, farmers and justice in social interactions (Ogundare&Jekayinfa, 2017).

Social Studies, therefore, is at the centre of ethical/moral development; child socialization; political and democratic education; social values development; citizenship education; civic values and responsibilities; peace education; health awareness, among others. The broad nature of the Social Studies coverage makes it appropriate as a vehicle to examine critically, any social, economic, political, environmental and health issues from human angle (Ogunyemi, 2008; Ukadike, 2010; FGN, 2015). Social Studies in the curriculum the world over, it became so vast and it encompassed so many study areas that the earlier definition was criticized, challenged and finally modified.

Cennimo (2022) defined Coronavirus diseases 2019 (COVID-19) as illness which occurred as a result of coronavirus called severe acute respiratory syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS. CoV-2, formerly called 2019-nCov). Its outbreak was first discovered in Wuhan city, Hubei Province, China (CDC, 2019). It was declared a global health emergency on January 30, 2020 by the World Health Organization. Due to its virulence and large scale infections. It was later declared a global pandemic (Cennimo, 2022).

The COVID-19 Pandemic affected peoples and economies generally, but its effect on developing economics were quite enormous. Eze, Sefotho, Onyshi and Eseadi (2021) examined this on the Nigerian educational sector. They noted that prior to the pandemic, the educational system adopted purely face-to-face approach to teaching and learning in primary and secondary schools. Using a sequential exploratory mixed method, the authors examined challenges posed by the pandemic. Results indicated that these included school closure, poor learning, unequal access to education opportunities and poor skills. It was also found that the pandemic caused poor school enrolment, poor achievement and poor school health. In a similar vein, Olatunde-Ayedun (2020) attributed it to the closure of schools, colleges and universities by the Federal and State governments for preventive

reasons. This closure had tremendous effects on students during this period. They noted that a number of youths depended on the social media for interaction, while some others acquired unethical characters, and yet some others, left their studies. As such, with the easing of the lockdown, new challenges arose and the new normal in education, namely, the use of online education had become imperative. In a yet another study conducted on the impact of COVID-19 administration and Management of Environmental Education (EE), Olatunde, Ayedun, Ogunode and Ohibime (2021) found that funding, shortage of manpower, disruption of teaching programme, disruption of academic calendar and research programme were some of the challenges.

According to Onyekwena and Ekeruche (2020), the virus had serious impact on the economy. The aggregate demand for oil fell while the government expenditure increased. There was also generally a fall in household consumption. The authors noted that the response from the government was impeded by the mono-product economy. Economic responses were mainly on a cash transfer programme to cushion the effect of COVID lockdowns, while the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) as well as State Inland Revenue Services (SIRS) waived payments on personal and corporate income tax, among others. These policy interventions in the main did not do much to reduce the sufferings of millions of Nigerians already living below the poverty line.

In order to curb the spread of the virus, NCDC issued guidelines for its clinical management (NCDC 2022). Akinyemi, Fakorede, Anjorin, Abegunrin Adunmo, Ajoseh & Akinkunmi (2020) reviewed extensively the nature of the COVID-19 virus. The study found that what was aiding community transmission of the disease was the distrust of some Nigerians towards government on COVID-19 management, poverty, religious beliefs, ignorance on the face mask sharing, misconceptions, stigmatization of infected individuals, poor health facilities, and shortage of health workers among others. Furthermore, the need for effective health preventive behaviour and community-based health policy was stressed. Akinyemi *et al* (2020) noted that the

Federal Ministry of Health and Nigerian NCDC worked assiduously to put in place comprehensive guidelines for the control of the spread of the virus.

It is against the various challenges in the educational sector that the researcher examined the perception of Social Studies teachers in surmounting the various challenges of Post COVID-19 Pandemic in Osogbo, Osun State. It is instructive to infer that in view of the vast guidelines made by the CDC and Presidential Steering Committee on COVID-19 since 2020, there was a need to incorporate them in the teaching of Social Studies for socialization of youth on COVID-19 Prevention.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objective of the study was to identify the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 Pandemic to the Nigerian educational industry and examined the perception of Social Studies teachers on how it could assist in overcoming these challenges for better social and environmental conditions. Specifically, the objectives of this study are to:

- I. identify the challenges brought about by COVID-19 Pandemic to the Nigerian peoples.
- ii. analyse the perceptions of Social Studies teachers on the role of Social Studies to solve the problems in Osogbo, Osun State Nigeria.
- iii. examine the extent of the perceived preparedness of Social Studies teachers to the challenges of Post COVID-19 Era.

### **Research Questions**

The research investigated the following three questions:

- i. What are the challenges brought about by Post COVID-19 to Nigerian peoples?
- ii. What are the perceptions of Social Studiteachers to the role of Social Studies in solving the problems in Post COVID-19 Era?
- iii. To what extent are Social Studies teacher prepared for the challenges of Post COVID-19 Era?

## **Methods**

The study adopted purposive survey design method to elicit the role Social Studies in alleviating the challenges of Post COVID-19 Nigeria. The population of the study was made up of Social Studies teachers in the 23 public secondary schools in Osogbo. A total of 127 teachers were purposively sampled in 15 public secondary schools. The instrument used for the data collection was Social Studies Teachers on Adjustment to the Challenge COVID-19 Pandemic (SSTACCP). The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire, divided into two sections. Section 'A' was designed to collect demographic variables as sex, working experience and qualifications, while section 'B' contains 14 items which sought to elicit the opinions of Social Studies teachers on the knowledge of the COVID-19 Protocols and the challenges of the new normal. The data collected in the study were analyzed using the mean score of 2.50 as the cut-off point. This means SA (4 points); A (3 points); D (2 points) and SD (1 point) with the average of 2.50. Hence, the cut-off point of the mean provides a standard for decision-making (Shettu, 2011). The sectional score of 2.50 and above is, therefore, accepted while any one below is rejected.

## **Results**

**Research Question 1:** What are the challenges of COVID-19 Pandemic to Post COVID-19 Nigeria?

**Table 1: Challenges of COVID-19 Pandemic to COVID-Nigeria**

Items	Statements	N	Man	Remarks
1.	Avoiding close contact poses challenges to human socialization	122	3.64 1st	Accepted
3.	Use of alcohol-base sanitizer to prevent COVID-19 is against the tenets of some religions	122	2.51 4th	Accepted
6.	Physical distancing negates communal interaction and Kinship values	122	3.63 2nd	Accepted
7.	COVID-19 Pandemic has disrupted normal school Activities	122	2.43 5th	Not Accepted
9.	COVID-19 lockdowns have increased unemployment and poverty among the people	122	3.61 3rd	Accepted

Table 1 shows that items 1,3,6 and 9 of the questionnaire were accepted by the respondents as major challenges of COVID-19 Pandemic to Post-Covid Nigeria, while item 7 was not accepted because it fell below the cut-off mean of 2.50. The sectional mean is 3.18, indicating that the challenges of COVID-19 were generally accepted as affecting Post-COVID Nigeria. particularly, item 7 as a challenge was not accepted ( because it fell below the benchmark mean of 2.50.

**Research Question 2:** What are the perceptions of Social Studies teachers to the problem-solving role of Social Studies in Post COVID-19 era?

**Table 2: Perceptions of Social Studies Teachers to the Problem-solving Role of Social Studies in Post COVID-19 era.**

<b>Items</b>	<b>Statements</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
2.	COVID-19 vaccination is a means of reducing African population by causing death and infertility	122	1.92	Not Accepted
4.	COVID-19 is a disease of the rich politicians and men	122	2.36	Not Accepted
8.	Cultural beliefs could impede the management of COVID-19 Pandemic	122	3.68	Accepted
10.	Formulation of guidelines for the prevention of COVID-19 could assist its management Post COVID-19 Era	122	3.41	Accepted
14.	Improved youth socialization through Social Studies would assist COVID-19 prevention	122	3.64	Accepted

**Section Mean: 3.00**

Table 2 indicates the section mean of 3.00. this signifies that it is greater than the cut off means of 2.50. the perceptions of Social Studies teachers to the problem-solving role of Social Studies in Post COVID-19 era is accepted in the following order: cultural beliefs impeding the management of COVID-19 management (x=3.68, N=122); improving youth socialization through Social Studies (x=3.64, N=122) and formulating guidelines for the management of COVID-19 in post COVID-19 era (x=3.41, N=122). However, Social Studies did not accept vaccination as a means of reducing African population by causing death and infertility (x=1.92, N=122) and that COVID-19 was a disease of the rich politicians and businessmen.

**Research Question 3:** To what extent is Social Studies prepared for the challenges of Post COVID-19 era?



**Table 3: The Extent Social Studies Prepared for the Challenges of Post COVID-19 Era**

Items	Statements	N	Mean	Remarks
5.	The integrative nature of Social Studies positions it to Incorporate COVID-19 preventive measures	122	3.48 2nd	Accepted
11.	Social Studies teacher's skills and value that can help dispel superstitions beliefs and encourage learning of coping skills	122	3.61 1st	Accepted
12.	Social Studies and develops attitudes of comradeship and healthy living which can help in post COVID-19 socialization	122	2.51 4th	Accepted
13.	Social Studies curriculum is dynamic and can Accommodate expanding knowledge, skills and attitudes Required in Post COVID-19 era	122	3.01 3rd	Accepted

**Section Mean: 3.15**

Table 3 shows that the section mean of 3.15 is greater than the cut-off mean of 2.50. the perceptions of Social Studies teachers on the extent Social Studies as a subject is prepared for the challenges of Post COVID-19 era is accepted in the following order: teaching of skills and values that can help to dispel/superstitions beliefs and encouraging learning of coping skills ( $x=3.61$ ,  $N=122$ ); the integrative nature of Social Studies which positions it to incorporate COVID-19 preventive measures ( $x=3.61$ ,  $N=122$ ); the integrative nature of Social Studies which positions it to incorporate COVID-19 preventive measures ( $x=48$ ,  $N=122$ ), dynamic curriculum which can accommodate expanding knowledge, skills and attitudes required in post COVID-19 era ( $x=3.01$ ,  $N=122$ ) and developing attitudes of comradeship and healthy living which can help or post COVID-19 socialization.

### **Discussions**

Results identified the challenges of COVID-19 to the post COVID-19 era. It was revealed that there were basic challenges associated with COVID-19 as a global pandemic which totally had changed the way things were done for a long period of time. The most critical challenge is that of avoiding close contact posed to human socialization. The implication of this was grave for a society based on communal life where people interacted at close physical and social levels. This was closely corroborated by the finding that physical distancing negated communal interaction and kinship values and reduced face-to-face interaction (Eze, *et al*, 2021 & Olatunde-Ayedun *et al*, 2020). Also, the disruption of normal school system was a major challenge which had promoted remote learning and online classrooms (Eze *et al*, 2021). The remote and online learning is gradually becoming the new normal and learners had to adjust to the new way(s) of learning through the internet. It was also discovered that lockdowns associated with COVID-19 increased unemployment and poverty among the people and led to crimes (Akinyemi *et al*, 2020). Also, the use of alcohol-base sanitizer to prevent COVID-19 was moderately viewed as being against the tenet of Islamic religion.

Results presented indicated that Social Studies teachers perceived the problem-solving trait of subject as being relevant to the prevention of COVID-19 and its management in the post COVID-19 era. Specifically, the teachers believed that the superstitious beliefs that COVID-19 vaccination was meant to reduce African population by death and infertility could be dispelled in Social Studies classrooms. This showed that the view that COVID-19 vaccination could cause death and infertility was outrightly rejected. This finding agreed with Akinyemi, *et al*, (2020), Olatundun-Aiyedun, *et al* (2021). Also, that COVID-19 was a disease of the rich politicians and businessmen was rejected the Social Studies teachers. Hence, the superstitious beliefs at the root of such thoughts could be resolved through problem-solving approach of subject (Ogundare & Jekayinfa, 2017). Meanwhile, the views that cultural beliefs could impede the management of

COVID-19 Pandemic, that improved youth socialization through Social Studies would assist COVID-19 prevention and that formulation of guidelines for the prevention of COVID-19 could assist its management were accepted COVID-19 era.

It was also revealed that Social Studies could help in the management of the challenges of post COVID-19 era. Specifically, the integrative nature of Social Studies made it a programme of studies that could incorporate COVID-19 preventive measures. In a similar vein, the fact that it teaches skills and values and such could help to dispel superstitious beliefs and encourage learning of coping skills was accepted as capable of helping to alleviate the challenges of COVID-19. Other findings were that Social Studies developed attitudes of comradeship and healthy living which could help in post COVID-19 socialization. It was also reported that its dynamism could accommodate expanding knowledge, skills and attitudes required in post COVID-19 era. These findings were in line with the previous findings on the efficacy of Social Studies (Ogunyemi, 2008; Ogundare&Jekayinfa, 2017).

### **Conclusion**

The COVID-19 Pandemic has brought about many challenges which had negated the prior ways of living. It affected ways and modes of physical and social interaction, introduced new protocols; affected economies and had affected the manner and method of education (Eze, *et al*, 2021). This study examined the concept of Social Studies and how the interdisciplinary and dynamic subject could assist in the management of the rapid changes introduced by the pandemic.

### **Recommendations**

There is need for further enlightenment and training of Social Studies teachers and educators on the causes, symptoms and management of COVID-19 for an effective management, post COVID-19 era. Also, Government, stakeholders, curriculum planners and the general public should come together and agree on guidelines for the management of COVID-19 to be taught in the

Social Studies classroom. Efforts should also be made by the government and other stakeholders to generate skills that could lead to employment of the youths and reduction of poverty in order to reverse the current trend of crimes and insecurity Post COVID-19 era in Nigeria. Finally, there should be greater youth exposure to remote and online learning to facilitate access to materials which could help in the management of COVID-19 through provision of internet facilities that could support this.

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