

## **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CURRICULUM COMPONENTS AND STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN SOCIAL STUDIES AMONG JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN DELTA CENTRAL SENATORIAL DISTRICT**

**IGBEN, OBORAKPORORO MORRISON, PhD**

Curriculum of Instruction Department

College of Education, Warri

Delta State, Nigeria

E-Mail: [ariellaichifi@gmail.com](mailto:ariellaichifi@gmail.com)

### **Abstract**

*The study investigated the relationship between curriculum components and students' academic performance in social studies among Junior Secondary Schools in the Delta Central senatorial District. Two research questions and hypotheses guided the study. A correlational research design was adopted. The population of the study consisted of 30,790 Junior Secondary Schools (J.S.S) II students in the Delta Central Senatorial District. A sample of 500 J.S.S II students was selected using a multi-stage sampling technique. Four Local Government Areas were drawn from the eight Local Government Areas that make up the Delta Central senatorial District using simple random sampling, ensuring equal representation. Subsequently, 25 J.S.S II students were selected from each school, totaling 500 participants. The instrument for the study was a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher and students' academic performance scores in Social Studies for the 2023/2024 academic session. The questionnaire, titled "Curriculum Content and Instructional Strategies," consisted of two sections: Section A, which collected personal biodata, and Section B, which contained 32 items divided into two clusters. Cluster one focused on curriculum content, while cluster two focused on instructional strategies. Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used to test the hypotheses. Findings revealed a significant relationship between curriculum content and students' academic performance in social studies. Based on these findings, it was recommended that the social studies curriculum be reviewed to ensure it is comprehensive, relevant, and engaging for students.*

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### **Introduction**

Education is a cornerstone of any nation, significantly influencing individuals' knowledge, attitudes, values, and skills essential for personal and national development. In Nigeria, Junior Secondary School Education serves as a transitional phase where foundational knowledge is consolidated. Social studies has been integrated into the Junior Secondary curriculum to help students develop a deeper understanding of their society and the world around them.

A curriculum is a structured plan designed to achieve specific educational goals and objectives (Mba, 2016). It encompasses various components such as content, instructional strategies, assessment strategies, and learning resources. These components interact to create a learning environment that can either enhance or hinder students' academic performance in social studies. Ogunleye (2016) found that students are more likely to excel in social studies when the curriculum content aligns with their interests and experiences. Similarly, Ukeje (2016) supports the view that a well-structured curriculum content that aligns with students' interests and societal needs can enhance their motivation and performance. Conversely, Afolabi (2018) argues that outdated or irrelevant content can lead to disengagement and poor academic

performance. Therefore, curriculum developers must ensure that social studies curriculum content is relevant, current, and reflective of Nigerian society. Adama (2018) believes that interactive student-centered teaching methods, such as group discussion and project-based learning, are more effective in enhancing students' performance in social studies.

Adeyemi and Adeyemi (2018) emphasize the significant impact of teaching quality and methods on students' academic performance. The authors highlight the importance of engaging and interactive teaching methods that cater to diverse learning styles. Traditional rote learning methods have been shown to hinder academic performance. Nwankwo (2017) suggests that when teachers rely heavily on lecturing without engaging students in the learning process, students may struggle to grasp concepts, resulting in lower academic performance. Therefore, adopting diverse pedagogical approaches is crucial for improving students' understanding and achievement in social studies.

Assessment is another vital component of the curriculum that influences academic performance. It involves evaluating students' understanding and competencies. Eze (2019) highlights the importance of formative assessments, such as quizzes and class participation, in providing ongoing feedback, identifying areas needing improvement, and encouraging continuous learning. High-stakes summative assessments, which often focus on memorization, can create anxiety and may not accurately reflect a student's understanding of social studies. Oduolowu (2020) argues that assessment should be varied and aligned with instructional methods to promote deeper learning and better academic outcomes. By incorporating diverse assessment strategies, teachers can create a more comprehensive picture of student performance. Scholars (Eze, 2019) have also emphasized the role of adequate and appropriate learning resources in enhancing students' academic performance. Adebayo (2015) argues that access to textbooks, multimedia resources, and educational technology can help students engage with the curriculum content and deepen their understanding of social studies concepts. Conversely, Adekunle (2021) points out that lack of resources, such as outdated textbooks or limited internet access, can affect student academic performance in social studies. Consequently, there is an urgent need to investigate how these various curriculum components affect students' learning experiences and academic performance in social studies.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Despite the importance of social studies in the educational curriculum, there have been persistent challenges regarding students' academic performance in this subject. Reports indicate that many students struggle with social studies, including a lack of engaging teaching methods, difficulty connecting abstract concepts to real-world issues, and insufficient emphasis on critical thinking and analytical skills, leading to poor performance in examinations. Factors such as curriculum content, instructional strategies, assessment strategies, and learning resources may significantly impact students' academic performance. Therefore, understanding these specific components of the curriculum that influence academic performance is crucial for teachers.

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## Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between curriculum components and students' academic performance in social studies among secondary schools in the Delta Central senatorial District.

The specific objectives are to:

- i. Determine the extent to which curriculum content affects students' academic performance in social studies.
- ii. Investigate the extent to which instructional strategies affect students' academic performance in social studies.

## Research Questions

The following research questions were posed to guide the study:

- i. What is the relationship between curriculum content and students' academic performance in social studies?
- ii. What is the relationship between instructional strategies and students' academic performance in social studies?

## Hypotheses

In line with the research questions, the following hypotheses were formulated and tested at a 0.05 level of significance:

- H01: There is no significant relationship between curriculum content and students' academic performance in social studies.
- H02: There is no significant relationship between instructional strategies and students' academic performance in social studies.

## Literature Review

The literature review encompasses studies that examine the various components of the curriculum and their effects on students' academic performance. It also highlighted key findings on the significance of curriculum content, instructional strategies, assessment strategies, and learning resources.

## Curriculum Content

The content of the curriculum refers to the subject matter that students are expected to learn. According to Ogunleye (2016), students are more likely to perform well in social studies when the curriculum content is aligned with their interests and experiences. Afolabi (2018) argues that outdated or irrelevant content can lead to disengagement and poor academic performance among students. Johnson and Johnson (2019) describe curriculum content as the organized and sequenced set of learning experiences, materials, and resources that are designed to support students' acquisition of knowledge and skills in a specific subject area or domain. Anderson and Wiggins (2022) define curriculum content as the specific content standards, learning objectives, and

instructional materials that are selected and aligned to support students' learning and achievement within a curriculum.

### **Instructional Strategies**

Teaching methods refer to the strategies and techniques used by teachers to deliver the curriculum content. Adeyemi (2017) suggests that interactive and student-centered teaching methods can enhance students' understanding and retention of social studies content. Oladele (2019) warns that traditional lecture-based teaching methods may not be effective in promoting critical thinking and analytical skills among students. Instructional Strategy is a pattern of acts that serves to attain certain outcomes and geared against others. Strategy is described as a complex behavior used by the teacher to implement a method (Amadi, 1997).

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is anchored on constructivist learning theory, which posits that learners construct knowledge through experience and interactions. According to Piaget (1976), effective learning occurs when students actively engage with content, reinforcing the need for curriculum components that foster active participation. This framework aligns with principles of effective curriculum design, emphasizing the importance of active learning, collaboration, and the relevance of content to students' lives. The theory analyzes how different curriculum components can be designed to foster meaningful learning experiences in social studies.

### **Methodology**

A correlational research design was adopted in this study. According to Nwargu (2015), a correlational research design is a type of research design used to determine the extent to which two or more variables are related. This design involves measuring and analyzing the relationship between variables but does not imply causation. In correlation research, the focus is on determining the strength and direction of the relationship between variables rather than establishing a cause-and-effect relationship. Thus, the design was adopted in investigating the relationship between curriculum components and students' academic performance in social studies in Junior Secondary Schools.

The population of this study consists of all Junior Secondary Schools (J.S.S) II students in the Delta Central Senatorial District. Available statistics show that there are 30,790 students (Source: Delta State Post Primary Education Board, Asaba, 2023). A sample of 500 J.S.S II students was sampled for the study. The sample was randomly drawn from a population of 30,790 students. This sample size represented about 5% of the entire population as recommended by Cohen, et al (2011) for a large population. Four Local Government Areas were drawn from the eight Local Government Areas that make up the Delta Central senatorial District. A multi-stage sampling technique was adopted for this study. In the first stage, four Local Government Areas were selected from the eight Local Government Areas using simple random sampling technique. Simple random sampling technique was used to give every Local Government an equal chance of being selected for the study. In the second stage, 5 secondary schools each were drawn from the 4 Local Government Areas chosen for the study using purposive

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sampling technique. Purposive sampling technique was used to select schools with a large population of J.S.S II Students. Lastly, 25 J.S.S II Students were selected from each school, making a total of 500 students used for the study.

The instrument for this study was a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher and students' academic performance scores in Social Studies for the 2023/2024 academic session. The researcher developed the instrument titled "Curriculum content and instructional Strategies." This instrument consisted of Section A and Section B. Section A elicited information on the personal biodata of the students such as name of school and gender. Section B contained 32 items put in two clusters. Cluster one contained 16 items that elicited information on the curriculum content, and Cluster two also contained 16 items that elicited information on instructional strategies. The items in clusters one and two of Section B were placed on a four-point rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE), Very Low Extent (VLE) with weighted value of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively for positive items and reverse for the negative items. The student academic performance result was collected.

The instrument used in this research work was validated by three experts from the College of Education, Warri: one from the Social Studies Department, one from the Curriculum and Instruction Department, and one from the Measurement and Evaluation Department. The experts examined the instrument for language clarity, item adequacy, relevance to state objectives, and item correctness. Their comments, input, suggestions, and corrections were incorporated into the final draft of the instrument.

To ensure the reliability and internal consistency of the instrument, Cronbach's Alpha was used. As a form of trial testing, the researchers administered the instrument to twenty students in Warri South Local Government Area, outside the main study area. The collected data was used to compute the reliability coefficient, which was established as 0.75. This figure indicates that the instrument was suitable and reliable for the study.

The researcher personally administered all 500 copies of the questionnaire directly to students in each of the selected schools, collecting them immediately after completion to avoid loss. All 500 questionnaires were administered and retrieved on-site, resulting in a 100% return rate.

The generated data was analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient to answer research questions one and two. Multiple regression analysis was used to test the two-null hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance.

## **Results**

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between curriculum content and students' academic performance in social studies?

**Table 1: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis on Curriculum Content and Students' Academic Performance in Social Studies**

Variable	SD	N	R	R <sup>2</sup>
Curriculum Content	28.14	500	0.61	0.37
Students' Academic Performance	46.78	500		

To answer this research question, the scores from the students' responses on curriculum content were correlated with their academic performance scores. The results in Table 1 showed that the correlation coefficient obtained was 0.61, indicating a medium direct positive relationship between curriculum content and students' academic performance in Social Studies in the Delta Central senatorial District. The coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>) associated with the correlation coefficient of 0.61 was 0.37, indicating that 37% of students' academic performance in Social Studies can be attributed to curriculum content.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between instructional strategies and students' academic performance in social studies?

**Table 2: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis on Instructional Strategies and Students' Academic Performance in Social Studies**

Variable	SD	N	R	R <sup>2</sup>
Instructional Strategies	29.8	500	0.62	0.39
Students' Academic Performance	50.29	500		

To answer research question 2, the scores from the students' responses on instructional strategies were correlated with their academic performance scores. The results in Table 2 showed that the correlation coefficient obtained was 0.620, indicating a medium direct positive relationship between instructional strategies and students' academic performance in Social Studies in junior secondary schools in the Delta Central senatorial District. The coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>) associated with the correlation coefficient of 0.620 was 0.39, indicating that 39% of students' academic performance in Social Studies can be attributed to instructional strategies.

### Hypothesis One

There is no significant relationship between curriculum content and students' academic performance in social studies.

**Table 3: Regression Analysis of Curriculum Content and Students' Academic Performance Variable**

Variable	SS	DF	MS	F	SIG
Regression	459.475	1	459.475	6.143	0.01
Residual	37246.325	498	74.792		
Total	37705.8	499			

The regression analysis in Table 3 showed an F-ratio of 6.143 with an associated probability value of 0.01. This probability value was compared with the significance

level of 0.05 and found to be significant. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected, indicating a significant relationship between curriculum content and students' academic performance in social studies in the Delta Central senatorial District.

### Hypothesis Two

There is no significant relationship between instructional strategies and students' academic performance in social studies.

**Table 4: Regression Analysis of Instructional Strategies and Students' Academic Performance Variable**

Variable	SS	DF	MS	F	SIG
Regression	50.212	1	50.212	0.665	0.02
Residual	37698.588	498	75.7		
Total	37705.8	499			

The regression analysis in Table 4 showed an F-ratio of 0.665 with an associated probability value of 0.02. This probability value was compared with the significance level of 0.05 and found to be significant. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected, indicating a significant relationship between instructional strategies and students' academic performance in social studies in the Delta Central senatorial District.

### Discussion of Findings

Hypothesis one predicted that there is no significant relationship between curriculum content and students' academic performance in social studies, and this hypothesis was rejected. The present findings of the study revealed a significant relationship between curriculum content and students' academic performance in social studies. This finding corroborates with Ogunleye (2016), who reported that students are more likely to perform well in social studies when the curriculum content is aligned with their interests and experiences. Similarly, Ukeje (2016) affirmed that a well-structured curriculum content that aligns with students' interests and societal needs can enhance their motivation and performance.

Hypothesis two predicted that there is no significant relationship between instructional strategies and students' academic performance in social studies, and this hypothesis was also rejected. The present findings revealed a significant relationship between instructional strategies and students' academic performance in social studies. This finding aligns with Adeyemi and Adeyemi (2018), who affirmed that the quality of teaching and the methods used to deliver the curriculum have a direct impact on students' academic performance. In support of this assertion, Adama (2018) reported that interactive and student-centered teaching methods, such as group discussion and project-based learning, are more effective in enhancing students' performance in social studies.

### Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was determined that curriculum content has a significant impact on students' academic performance in social studies. This implies that the content of the social studies curriculum plays a crucial role in determining

students' academic achievement in the subject. Additionally, instructional strategies have a significant influence on students' academic performance in social studies. This suggests that the way in which social studies is taught has a direct impact on students' academic success.

### **Recommendations**

1. **Curriculum Review:** The social studies curriculum should be reviewed to ensure it is comprehensive, relevant, and engaging for students. The content should be updated to reflect current issues and events, and it should be presented in a way that is accessible to all students.
2. **Teacher Training:** Teachers should be trained in a variety of instructional strategies to cater to the diverse learning needs of students. They should be encouraged to use interactive and participatory teaching methods that promote critical thinking and active engagement with the subject matter.
3. **Regular Assessment:** Regular assessment and monitoring of students' academic performance in social studies should be carried out to identify areas of strength and weaknesses. This will help in designing targeted interventions to support students who may be struggling with the subject.
4. **Further Research:** Further research should be conducted to explore the specific aspects of curriculum content and instructional strategies that have the greatest impact on students' academic performance in social studies. This will provide valuable insights for curriculum development and teacher training programs.



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