



Evaluation of Social Studies Curriculum on Compassion Dispositions in Students of Colleges of Education in North-West Zone of Nigeria

Bulus Mgwaongs Dalyop
FCT Area Command, Abuja, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

This study examined the impact of social studies curriculum on the affective dispositions of students of Colleges of Education in North-West Zone of Nigeria. The purpose of the study was to determine the level of NCE I and NCE III students' affective dispositions in the area of compassion. One research question and one hypothesis was advanced for the study. Survey and causal comparative designs were adopted for the study. A sample of 3970 NCE students were carefully selected through a proportionate stratified sampling technique. Questionnaire was developed and tagged Student-Teachers' Affective Disposition Rating Scale (SADRS) and used for the study. Data were collected and analyzed using simple percentage, and t-test statistic. Results indicated that, social studies curriculum has significant impact on affective disposition of NCE social studies students. NCE III social studies students exhibited greater level of moderate to high compassion as a result of exposure to social studies curriculum. Based on these findings, the researcher made some recommendations such as inclusion of cultural values that encourage compassion into social studies curriculum among others.

INTRODUCTION

Affective domain involves the manner in which an individual deals with things emotionally such as compassion. As an important component of the NCE social studies curriculum, the affective domain of the subject area provides, skills through which students can cope with the emotional impediments of life such as anger, anxiety, frustration, and the dark moods of despair. Social studies curriculum in this study refers to the social studies curriculum of Colleges of Education in North- West Zone of Nigeria.

Compassion is a virtue. It means a feeling of sympathy, pity that inclines one to spare or simply the ability for a person to feel what the other

Evaluation of Social Studies Curriculum in North-West Zone of Nigeria

person is feeling. It therefore, follows that compassion dispositions in education, has something to do with what is taught to students in the colleges, and more importantly how it is taught. It is therefore, essential that this aspect of affective dispositions as expected in the social studies curriculum are effectively taught to students to enable them develop positive dispositions to people on issues of human life and the nation at large (Eisenberg, 2002).

Compassion is a feeling of sorrow or concern for another person's suffering or need accompanied by a subsequent desire to alleviate the suffering. It is emotion short-lived feeling that students may be experiencing. There are also specific conditions in which students will be more likely to feel compassion, and many people and cultures may view compassion as value. Compassion is much like sympathy in that it stems from the suffering of another, but it also includes the need or desire to alleviate suffering (Eisenberg, 2002).

Several authors looked at compassion from different dimension, for instance, compassion motivates care-taking behavior (Horberg et al., 2009). Compassion promotes attention to the needs of weak or suffering others, often motivating actions costly to the self for the benefit of others. Compassion involves the concern for those who suffer or are vulnerable and the motivation to enhance the welfare of others (Eisenberg, 2002; Lazarus, 1991; Nussbaum, 1996; Post, 2002). Compassion likely emerged evolutionarily as part of a care-taking system oriented towards those who are in need (Hrdy, 1999; Keltner and Haidt, 2001; Mikulincer and Shaver, 2005). The most important elicitor of compassion are visual and auditory cues of suffering (Zahn –Waxler et al., 1992). Compassion can be easily conveyed through soothing tactile contact, which reduces stress related autonomic response and activity in the recipient (Coan et al., 2006; Hertenstein et al., 2006; Wilhelm et al., 2001).

These affective and emotional dispositions and thought-processes include shared responsibility for the common good of society; moral and spiritual values in interpersonal relations; a cultivation of a sense of compassion for the less fortunate; a cherishing of a sense of respect and tolerance for others; a cultivation of social attitudes and values such as co-operation, participation, interdependence, open-mindedness, honesty, integrity, trustworthiness, diligence and obedience; acquisition of attitudes favourable to educational social, physical, cultural and economic development through the social studies curriculum.

The two values most relevant to the concept of compassion is benevolence which has to do with preservation and enhancement of the welfare of students with whom one is in frequent and personal contact. Universalism is the second value that has a boarder application- the understanding, appreciation, tolerance, and protection for the welfare of all students and for nature (Schwartz et al., 2001).

One way in which this moral emotion may influence students through the social studies curriculum. Compassion may cause students to think of others as being more similar to them or more universally alike. Another study

Bulus Mgwaongs Dalyop

on how to foster compassion indicates that stable personality for compassion can be fostered through acquisition of the social studies curriculum and affective dispositions (Davis, 1983; Davis et al., 1999).

Statement of the Problem

The social studies curriculum at the NCE level has some designed contents specifications but with less emphasis with affective domain. This lack of emphasis on the affective domain objective might have resulted in many societal problems. For example, as a result of the degradation in the values system of Nigerian students, some of the more commonly exhibited traits include: lack of patriotism, ethnicity/tribalism, corruption and corrupt business practices (economic, social, political), examination malpractice, indecent dressing, feelings for one another, poor attitude to public offices and duties, violent crimes, drug trafficking, armed robbery, prostitution, kidnappings, four one nine (419) syndicates, poor attitude to public utilities, sharp business practices, fallen standards of education, and general indiscipline among students and youths. This situation negates the philosophical bases of compassion, hence the need for evaluation of the social studies curriculum.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the social studies curriculum on compassion dispositions in students of colleges of education in North-West zone of Nigeria. Specifically, the objective is to determine the level of NCE I and NCE III students' affective dispositions in the area of compassion.

Research Questions

What is the level of social studies curriculum of NCE I and NCE III students' affective dispositions in the area of compassion?

Hypothesis

This hypothesis will be tested at 0.05 level of significance.

There is no significant difference in mean scores of NCE I and NCE III social studies students in their attitude to compassion.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts the survey and causal comparative design aimed at determining the impact of social studies curriculum on the affective disposition of students on Colleges of Education in North-West Zone of

Evaluation of Social Studies Curriculum in North-West Zone of Nigeria

Nigeria. The survey nature of this research is such that the levels of affective disposition will be determined from a representative sample of the population. Survey design is used when data is collected from a sample for describing the population (Awotunde et al., 1997).

Similarly, causal-comparative research design was used to establish relationship among the variables of the research. Causal-comparative research involves comparing two groups in order to explain existing differences between them on some variable or variables of interest. There was also no manipulation of independent variable namely, compassion (Awotunde and Ugodulunwa, 2004).

The population of this study includes social studies students drawn from six colleges of education in the North West Zone of Nigeria. The study was selected based on simple random technique. The sample of the students was made up of 2120 NCE I, and 1841 NCE III social studies students in the six conventional Colleges of Education in the study area. The choice of NCE I and NCE III was to find out whether there will be a difference in the levels of compassion dispositions between NCE I and NCE III that have been exposed to the social studies curriculum for 3 years.

Instrumentation

One instrument was used for the purpose of data collection in this study. The Student-Teachers' compassion Dispositions Rating Scale (SCDRS). Part A of the instrument provided background information on name of institution, class level and the area of specialisation. The part B of the instrument was the Students' compassion Dispositions Rating Scale (SCDRS) which contains 10 items reflecting the social studies curriculum. This provided students with opportunity to verify the current thinking in the area of compassion components of social studies education. The SCDRS instrument sought to determine the extent to which social studies curriculum has impacted on students' compassion dispositions. The items were set based on the National Commission for Colleges of Education specification, Minimum Standards for Nigeria Certificate in Education, and finally Arts and Social Sciences curriculum respectively.

The instrument was administered, collected and analysed following the research question and statistical analysis, using t- test for independent sample, and simple percentages were used. The results are presented below.

RESULTS

Research Question One

What is the level of social studies NCE I and NCE III students affective dispositions in the area of compassion?

Table 1: Percentage of Level of Compassion Dispositions of Social Studies NCE I and NCE III Students.

Level of Compassion		Level of Study				Total	
Level	Range of scores	NCE I		NCE III		N	%
		N	%	N	%		
Low	10-29	877	41.4	660	35.9	1537	38.8
Moderate	30-39	1169	55.1	1142	62.0	2311	58.3
High	40-50	74	3.5	39	2.1	113	2.9
Total		2120	100	1841	100	3961	100

Table 1 indicates the cross tabulation of NCE students responses on their level of compassion Eight hundred and seventy-seven (41.4 %) of NCE I students have low level of compassion and six hundred and sixty (35.9%) NCE III students have low level of compassion to affective dispositions of social studies. One thousand One hundred and sixty nine representing 55.1% of NCE I students have moderate level of compassion while one thousand, one hundred and forty-two (62.0%) NCE III students have moderate level of compassion. Whereas seventy-four representing (3.5%) NCE I students had high level of compassion thirty-nine representing (2.1%) also had high level of compassion. The general finding from the result shows that NCE I students have moderate to high compassion dispositions while majority of NCE III students have moderate to high level of compassion dispositions.

Hypothesis One

There is no significant difference in the compassionate dispositions mean scores of NCE I and NCE III social studies students.

Table 2: t- test Analysis of Significance in compassion disposition mean scores of NCE I and NCE III students.

Group	N	\bar{X}	sd	df	-t-cal	P value
NCE I	2120	30.65	4.62	3959	-2.56	.011
NCE III	1841	31.02	4.28			

For degree of freedom of 3959 and level of significance at .05, calculated t-test statistics is given as -2.56 which is significant beyond 0.05 level. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis. This means that a significant difference exist in the compassionate dispositions level of NCE students in favour of NCE III students. The general findings from the result shows that NCE III students have higher level of compassion dispositions mean score than the NCE I students.

Evaluation of Social Studies Curriculum in North-West Zone of Nigeria

From the results of data analysed the following can be summarized about the study:

1. In general, social studies curriculum has significance impact on compassion disposition of NCE social studies students.
2. NCE I students have low affective disposition for compassion compared to NCE III students who have high disposition.

DISCUSSION

Another area of concern about the impact of social studies curriculum on affective disposition of students was the level of compassion. Research question two looked at the issue. It was found that, NCE I student have low compassion dispositions as against the NCE III students with between moderate to high level of disposition. This mean that the greater number of NCE III students have moderate to high level of disposition than the number of NCE I students. This may not be surprising considering the in-depth exposure or impact of the NCE III students to the social studies curriculum which may give them an edge over the counterparts in NCE I.

When tested statistically using t-test statistic, it was found that significant difference exist in the compassion disposition mean score of NCE I and III students. The latter has higher level of compassion disposition than the former. This finding supports the statement in literature which opined that compassion is a subsidiary of empathy (Eisenberg, 2002; Wikipedia, 2011). It is the ability of someone to feel what the other is feeling. The author believes that compassion in education, has something to do with what is taught to students in the colleges and more importantly how it is taught using the social studies curriculum. That believed that someone may need to have certain amount of empathy before he/she is able to feel compassion. It may mean that one with empathy also have a feeling of compassion, while those without, may not do not take into account other people's emotion.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made: Parents should be enlightened to inculcate in their children, the attribute of compassion. Since findings tend to show that NCE I students demonstrated low compassion disposition as against NCE III with moderate to high level of compassion disposition. It means that, the school system is supposed to build upon the efforts of the home. Therefore, it is recommended that, as a matter of moral up-bringing, NCE teachers should deliberately teach students positive compassion disposition in addition to the teaching by parents from

individual homes. This will enable students when these issues that ponder on feelings of sharing in someone's difficulties are being taught at the tertiary level, higher positive level of compassion will be enhanced.

REFERENCES

- Awotunde, P. O, C. A. Ugodulunwa and E. D. Ozoji (1997). Practical steps to research in education. Jos: DekaPublishers.
- Coan, J. A., H. S. Schaefer and R. J. Davidson (2006). Lending a hand: Social regulation of the neural response to threat. *Psychology Science* 17: 1032 – 1039.
- Davis, M. H. (1983). Measuring individual differences in empathy: Evidence for a multidimensional approach. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 44 (1): 113-126.
- Davis, M. H., K. V. Mitchell, J. A. Hall, J. Lothert, T. Snapp and M. Meyer (1999). Empathy, expectations, and situational preferences: Personality influences on the decision to participate in volunteer helping behaviors. *Journal of Personality* 67 (3): 469 – 503.
- Eisenberg, N. (2002). Empathy –related emotional responses, altruism, and their socialization. In R. J. Davidson & A. Harrington (Eds.), *Visions of compassion: Western scientists and Tibetan Buddhists examine human nature*. (pp. 131-164). New York NK: Oxford University Press.
- Hertenstein, M. J., B. Kelner, B. App, B. A. Bulleit and A. R. Jaskolka (2006). Touch communicates distinct emotions. *Emotion* 6: 528 - 533.
- Horberg, E. J., C. Oveis, D. Keltner and A. B. Cohen (2009). Disgust and the moralization of purity. *Journal of personality and social psychology* 97: 963 – 976.
- Hrdy, S. H. (1999). *Mother nature: A history of mothers. Infants and natural selections*. New York, NY: Pantheon.
- Keltner, D. and J. Haidt (2001). Social functions of emotions. In T. Mayne and G. Bonanno (Eds.), *Emotions: Current issues and future directions*. (pp. 192- 213). New York, NY: Psychology Press.
- Lazarus, R. S. (1991). *Emotion and adaptation*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Mikulincer, M. and P. R. Shaver (2005). Attachment security, compassion and altruism. *Current Directions in Psychology Science* 14: 34 – 38.
- Nussbaum, H. C. (1996). Compassion: The basic social emotions. *Social Philosophy and Policy* 13: 27 – 58.
- Post, S. G. (2002). The tradition of a gape. In S. G. Post, L. G. Underwood, J. P. Schless and W. B. Hurlbuut (Eds.), *Altruism and altruistic love:*

Evaluation of Social Studies Curriculum in North-West Zone of Nigeria

Science philosophy and religion in dialogue. (pp. 51-64). London: England: Oxford University Press.

Schwartz, S. H., G. Melech, A. Lehmann, S. Burgess, M. Harris and V. Owens (2001). Extending the cross-cultural validity of theory of basic human values with a different method of measurement. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 32 (5): 519- 542.

Zahn-Waxler, C. and M. Radke-Yarrow (1990). The origins of empathy concern. *Motivation and Emotion* 14: 107 – 130.