Social Studies and the Nigerian Child: Review of Abraham Maslow Ideas in dealing with Problems

DR. DARAMOLA C. OLADAYO

Department of Social Science Education, Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science and Technology, Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria.
E-mail: **dayoasoju@gmail.com**   ,   Phone No: +2348067098100

Abstract

This paper assessed Maslow Hierarchy of needs which has great implications for the practice of effective teaching and learning. It also discussed the seven levels of needs as physiological needs, safety and security needs, love and belongingness needs, self-esteem or self-worth needs, understanding and knowledge needs, aesthetic needs and self-actualization needs. The National philosophy of education in Nigeria recognizes the need for Social Studies education in building the desired orientation needed after independence in mobilizing the young citizens for national development. An explanation was also made on the challenges of the Social Studies education teachers in meeting the needs of the Nigerian child. Nigerian child is the bedrock of the Nigerian society therefore; it is pertinent to consider their basic needs. The paper discussed the goals and aim of Social Studies education within the view to examine and understand the communities locally and globally, their various heritages, physical systems, interactions and the nature of citizenship within them. Learning must be structured to permit critical thinking and experience based while the Nigerian child should be encouraged to interact among themselves and practice democratic values in school and beyond. The paper concluded that the nature of any society is determined by its educational system, so, to solve the problems of the society, emphasis should to be laid on what and how a subject is taught. If Social Studies is to deliver purposeful and meaningful instructions in Nigerian context, it must engage in challenges of real life activities which directly link the school and community.
Keywords: Social Studies, Child Needs Assessment, hierarchy of Needs, Nigerian Child.

Introduction

Need basically, can be defined as a state created when an organism does not have or is deprived of an object or condition it requires. All organisms need food and water periodically. Thus need connotes lack of something essential as man has an insatiable nature (Muktar, 2014). A child according to Ekpu (1991) in Bozimo, Gotep, Zwalchir & Obanya (2004) is the family crowning glory, he is the link between the present and future. That is, he is the natural extension of the family, a projection or self into the future and is the one who receives the baton from mum and dad depending on how well the child was trained. Nigerian child is the bedrock of the Nigerian society therefore; it is pertinent to consider their basic needs. Maslow (1987) identified these needs as physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem and self-actualization. Other needs like food, water, shelter are biological/natural which all organisms require for their survival Maslow (1987) described the psychological needs as basic and it not met they make one uncomfortable. In support of this, Muktar (2014) said need is that aspect of a person's psychological entity, which has great influence on the life of the individual of which the Nigerian Child are no exception. Need motivates and drives an individual to achieve. Accordingly, needs arranged hierarchically that is organized according to levels based on considerations. This paper intends to consider Maslow's approach ideas in relation to the Nigerian Child from the Social Studies perspective. If basic needs are not met, one

becomes uncomfortable and motivated or driven so as to be able to sufficiently fulfill these needs.

One can understand the concept of Social Studies better by looking at different approaches to its definitions. Kissock (defines Social Studies as a programme of instructions or studies which a society uses to instill in students or pupils, the knowledge skills, attitude, values and action that is considered important concerning the relationships which human beings have with others. The National Council on Education (NCE, 1983) in Nigeria accepts and recommends Social Studies as a study of man as a biological, social, political, economic and Spiritual being responsible and responsive to nature in its entire ramification. Dubey (1980) define Social Studies as a process of education which utilizes the Study of human life for the purpose of giving us the opportunity to practice, solving problems of crucial importance both for individual and the society.

In line with the above definitions, Social Studies is a subject that deals with man, his problems, and environment in a broad framework towards the inter-relationships of issues or problems and knowledge of helping man to think and act systematically, critically and creatively in the world of human affairs. It is indeed a sort of Concentrating on human interactions in an environment either politically, socially, economically, technologically and psychologically. Towards harmonious living. It is a value -laden and value free education being imbibed or dispensed inside and outside the classroom for the purpose of producing prospective citizens for the society. Hence, this paper assessed Maslow Hierarchy of needs which has great implications for the practice of effective teaching and learning.

Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's theory of motivation, presents an hierarchy of needs. Children have needs that should be satisfied and gratified. Need gratification according to Maslow is the most important single principle underlying all developments. As lower needs are gratified, Maslow's principle holds that higher need emerges. This explains why some children are more motivated to learn than others and why some individuals are better adjusted than others. Mulwa (2008) stated that Maslow's theory of needs is specifically built on the idea that human behavior are really motivated by the simple desire to meet specific human needs in the society. Egbule (2007) and Onah (2015) remarked that in 1943, Brandies University Professor of psychology Abraham Maslow as a renowned researcher in the study of human needs and motivation came up with his hierarchy of needs theory with the proposal that people are motivated by seven levels of needs common to all people namely.

1. Physiological needs-food, water, air, set sleep, shelter clothing
2. Safety and security needs- shelter, protection, survival
3. Social needs-love belonging, affection, association friendship acceptance.
4. Esteem or prestige needs or Ego needs-self respect
5. Understanding or knowledge needs-access to better education accountability.
6. Aesthetic needs-enjoy and promote beauty, taste appreciating
7. Self-actualization needs-development of talents or potentials.

Maslow represented these needs as a hierarchy in the shape of a pyramid. A hierarchy is an arrangement that ranks people or concepts from lowest to highest. According to Maslow, individuals must meet the needs at the lower levels of the pyramid before they can successfully be motivated to tackle the next levels. The lowest four levels represent deficiency needs and the upper three levels represent growth needs.
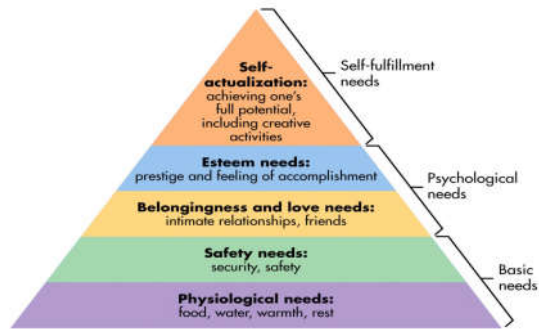
Fig. 1: Abraham Maslow Hierarchy of Needs

1. Physiological Needs

Physiological needs are such human basic needs as food, water, clothing, shelter, sleep and procreation. These needs are the lowest in the hierarchy. Maslow contends that when physiological needs are unsatisfied no other needs will serve as a basis for motivation. Once satisfied newer and still higher need will emerge. Maslow asserts that needs are satisfied in order of priority within each person's hierarchy, (Maslow, 1970). Once the physiological needs have been satisfied their strength and importance decreases and the next higher level need becomes the strongest motivator of people. This process is unending and continues from birth to death (Hellriegel & Slocum, 1977). Basic biological needs generally take precedence over psychological needs. If two needs are incompatible the more basic one is usually satisfied first. If children are hungry and feeling lonely they will probably seek something to eat before they participate fully in the process of learning. We must realize that unfortunately we cannot meet the psychological needs of all our children/learners. There is no possible way that a teacher can provide food, clothing, shelter and adequate sleep for each learner. Fortunately, free and reduced lunch programs have helped combat the effects of hunger in schools. When these basic needs are not met learners will not be able to focus on learning.

2. Safety and Security Needs

Safety and security needs deal with protection and survival from chaotic situations, social disorder, social disturbance and physical dangers in human environment. Safety is feeling that people get when they know no harm will befall them physically, mentally or emotionally. Security on the hand is the feeling people get when their fears and anxieties are low. Examples of chaotic situations are communal crisis, conflicts, wars, riots, terrorism, militancy, Kidnappings, civil disturbances, wanton killings among others that usually threaten peaceful co-existence and harmonious living of people in the society in the contemporary human environment. Similarly physical/natural dangers include flood disasters, fire disasters, earthquake, earth tremors etc. Diaz-Rico (2009) stated that because students learn better in a supportive, non-threatening environment teachers must develop methodologies that make the learning environments comfortable as possible and reduce tension. Aruma (2014) states that the high rate of insecurity of lives and property occasioned by insurgency of Boko haram as an armed rebellious group against constituted authorities of Federal government in the north east zone of Nigeria presents a serious challenge to educational development in the affected areas.

3. Love and Belonging need or Social Needs

Social needs involve needs to feel needed, need for affection, belongingness, association, love, friendship, interaction and acceptance in relationship with other people. These needs are met through satisfactory relationships with family members, friends, peers, classmates, teachers and other people with whom individuals react (acceptance by others) (Muktar, 2014). When people feel secured and safe enough in an environment, the tendency is that they feel the need to identify and belong to a social organization of family, community among others in the society. Anyanwu et. Al. (1985) stated that love and belongingness indicate the need to be part of a group. Such as family, group of colleagues in a workplace, friendship social group in the society. The learner and children will want to feel loved and cared about. They often seek this fulfillment from teachers or other personnel. Teachers must then ensure that our learners know that they are valued as individuals or appreciated for the effort they are making during your time together in the learning environment. The more you understand the basic needs of each student the more likely you are to help remove obstacles from learning so that learning can be enhanced and maximized

4. Self-esteem, Self-worth or Prestige Needs or Ego Needs

It is always natural that people seek for esteem and prestige inhuman environment when it is obvious that they feel secure in their respective social groups in the society. When people achieve their social needs or love and belongingness needs to social groups they tend to seek for self-respect, recognition, reputations, status, self-worth among others in their respective social groups. Onah (2015) asserts that when people achieve their social needs that they focus attention on such matter as reputation, recognition, self-esteem and prestige or self-worth, self-respect, status among others that give people strong confidence to participate in activities that will certainly improve their living condition in their various communities. The fulfillment of the esteem needs leads to feelings of worth, adequacy and self-confidence. The inability of individual to fulfill these needs may lead to a feeling of discouragement. Job title and responsibilities, praises, merit, pay increases, peer/supervisory recognition and competent management are all important factors in satisfying the ego needs in an educational setting

5. The Ned to Know and Understand (Understanding Need)

The understanding needs deals with the desire of people to Know in human environment. This reminds human beings of the urgent need to acquire relevant knowledge, Skills, information, and attitude in order to enable them to function very efficiently and effectively in various social settings in human environment. Anyanwa, Omolowa, Adeyeri, Okanlawon & Siddiqui (1985) opined that understanding needs deal with human need to see how, what they are and what they do and the part they play, in the larger society .Understanding needs widen people's access to education in the contemporary society. The provision of better education with its corresponding more job opportunities and higher income will indeed enhance peoples living conditions in various social settings in human environment. Mulwa (2008) asserted that people need to instill values of honesty, accountability and transparency as opposed to the assumed great courage in stealing from the public purse without guilt or impunity in the society.

6. Aesthetic Need

Aesthetic needs refer to human desire to enjoy and promote the beauty of human environment. The focus of aesthetic need is to conscientize people on the need to love, understand, appreciate and promote the beauty of human surrounding in the society. It also refers to the quality of being creatively, beautifully or artistically pleasing; i.e. expressing oneself in pleasing ways. For example, decorating your living room, wrapping birth day

presents attractively, washing and rating your car and keeping up with the latest styles in clothing are all ways of expressing your aesthetic sense. People are encouraged to love, understand, appreciate and promote the efficacy of beautiful things such as art, music, flowers and painted background in human environment. Aesthetic needs offer people an opportunity for relaxation and recreation in various communities. Mulwa (2008) noted that people need to relax at the appropriate time in the society. Relaxation is imperativein human environment inspite of tight schedule of the days business and work in order to rest and recreate human body need mind.

7. *Self-Actualization Need*

At the top of the pyramid is the need for self-actualization, which is a person's desire to become everything he or she is capable of becoming to realize and use his or her full potential, capability and talents. This need can be addressed only when the previous have been satisfied. It is rarely met completely; Maslow (1968) estimated that less than 1% of people become fully sell-actualized because our society rewards motivation, primarily based on esteem, love and other social needs. Self-actualization needs deal with the desire of people to develop their talents and potentials that are hidden in them. Self-actualization or self-realization needs help people to develop the desire to exploit all their talents that are hidden in them. Onah (2015)perceived self-actualization as self-fulfillment-the need to develop a person's full-potentials in order to enable him or her to become the best that he or she is capable of being in the society.

Maslow (1968) defined self-actualization as the desire to become more and more what one idiosyncratically is to become everything one is capable of becoming. It concerns the need to maximize the use of one's skills, abilities and realize ones potentialities for continued self-development for being creative in the broadest sense of the term. The actualızing person may be described as one who has increased the acceptance of self and others, increased problem solving ability, increased spontaneity, increased detachment and a desire for privacy and the like. People with dominant self-actualization need seek challenging assignments that allow for the use of one's creative or innovative talents and provide opportunities for personal growth and advancement.

Implication of the Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs to Social Studies and the Nigerian Child

The National Philosophy of education in Nigeria recognizes the need for Social Studies education in building the desired orientation needed after independence in mobilizing the young Citizens for national development. Bozimo (2004) defines Social Studies as a specialized area of study that deals with the study of man and his environments and how they interact with each other. Thus, the various definitions have focus on man in relations to his environment with vital variables as values, attitudes, skills and knowledge which constitute the content of the subject.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs posits that humans need is to have the most basic life needs met before they can achieve anything in life. Beyond those basic needs for example, we must be able to be fed, clothed and sheltered before we are able to work on being part of the society, meeting our social needs, which are higher on Maslow's Pyramid. Teachers must have an awareness of the unmet needs of students, since teaching and learning occur at the higher parts of the Pyramid with social gratification, self-esteem and self-actualization. These are what leaning is meant to achieve. A student who is homeless or unsafe cannot focus on learning anything properly. A student who is hungry or tired cannot either. Learning implies that one's brain is clear of the dreadful disruption of problems such asthese. So while teachers sometimes complain that they are not social workers, it is incumbent upon us to understand

Maslow's dynamics and do our best to ameliorate the appalling conditions under which students often are trying to learn.

The teacher's goal is to aid students in self-actualizing or becoming all that one can be by creating a safe classroom environment. That is, develop rules and procedures which provide a structured environment rich in routine and shared expectations where no student would physically or verbally hurt another. Additionally learn to use positive reinforcement instead of negative reinforcement to correct students' behaviours. Teachers should take time out to let each student know how well they are doing. This could take the form of short handwritten note on their papers or verbal comment. The key is to focus on the students positive attributes and aid the student in developing on increased level of self-esteem. Let the students know that you care about them, want them to succeed and you appreciate their work. Similarly, the students must feel a sense of connection and love from their school. They must sense that their school administrators and teachers care for them. In addition, they must develop a healthy sense of self-regard fostered by their schools, and parents. Only if all these elements are in place they will be able to move to the level of self-actualization or realizing their potentials.

Goals and Objectives of Social Studies

Generally, Social Studies education all over the world has fourma in goals which are directly or indirectly derived from its meaning, According to Kazi (2006) the goals and objectives are:

1. The inculcation of values, attitudes and appreciations in the learners.
2. The development of skills like groups, social, intellectual and manipulative.
3. The acquisition of knowledge and understanding.
4. The development of concepts and generalization peculiar to Social studies as a discipline or subject.

The primary purpose of Social Studies is to help young people develop the ability to make informed or reasoned decisions for the public's good as citizens of a culturally diverse democratic society in an independent world (NCSS, 1992). Jarolimek (1981)viewed Social Studies as a subject that concerns itself with learning about people, how and where they live, how they form a structure societies, how they govern themselves and provide for their material, psychological needs, how and why they love and misuse the resources of the planet (earth) which is their home. Our goal as teachers is for students to learn or gain knowledge and information purposeful and meaningful to them so that it may be retained and used throughout their lives. An essential factor involved in meeting these goals is motivation. If students are unmotivated in one way or the other no learning will take place or if by chance some learning should take place, it is possible that it will not be retained or utilized.

Challenges Facing Social Studies Education Teachers

If a successful classroom dispensation of Social Studies in the minds of pupils and individuals alike, is to be achieved as Eagle (1977) entertained, then the teacher must be charged with the responsibilities of manipulating the environment of the Nigerian child in such way that their likelihood of acquiring certain specific behavior is increased. This development could create the basis that will enable the child acquire and display a variety of human resources and capacity-build skills and access intrinsic drive in the Social Studies curriculum. Social Studies scholars suggested ways that will underscore the relevance and vitality of the aspects of an educational environment in the effort of providing an optimum educational setting if Nigerian child are to attain goals established in norms of citizenship studies education aspiration of a given society (Abdulraheem & Ayorinde, 2009). It has been noted that Social Studies curriculum is determined by the problems and aspirations of the

society in question. Nigeria needs to develop a Social Studies curriculum which will emphasize the issue that unite rather than divide the nation and that will develop responsible citizens who will preserve and continue to advance efforts towards a just and humane society (Bolarinde, 2011). Therefore, the Social Studies content in Nigeria should be determined by the problems of Nigeria, and address her democratic challenges in order to meet the educational objectives of the country.

Conclusion

The seven levels of needs in Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of need range from the basic human needs of physiological needs for food, clothing, shelter, water, comfort, procreation among others to the highest level of aesthetic and self-actualization needs. Human needs are insatiable. It is fundamentally part of human nature and characteristics to always desire to achieve more and more things inhuman environment. The realization of the human needs demands appropriate application of Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of needs with specific focus on certain basic needs which must be achieved before any consideration is given to other human needs in the society. The seven levels of needs of Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs undoubtedly strengthen human desire to address human needs with a view to improving children's living condition in the environment.

Recommendations

The nature of any society is determined by its educational system, therefore in order to solve the problem of the society emphasis should be laid on what and how a subject is taught. If Social Studies are to deliver purposeful and meaningful instructions in the Nigerian context, it must engage in challenging real life activities which directly link the school and the community. Maslow's Hierarchy of needs reveals that humans need to have the most basic life needs met before they can achieve any other.

Teachers must have an awareness of the unmet needs of students because learning is at its peak of one's brain which must be clear of the dreadful disruptions of problems. Students must feel a sense of belonging and love from their school. That is, they must sense that their administrators and teachers care for them. Many teachers' sometimes keep food handy or take time out to listen and offer best advice on solving student's most basic needs. It would be wonderful if the rest of the society would understand this hierarchy and be willing to ensure that the most basic needs of all students were met to achieve a better society.

References

Abdulraheem A. & Ayorinde, A. S (2009).Effects of Citizenship Education Component of Social Studies on Civic. Nigerian. *Journal of Social Studies and Civic Education,* 12(2).

Anyanwu, C. N. Omolowa, M. A. Adeyeri, C.L.K Okanlawon A. B.& Siddiqui, A. A. (1985). *Adult Education and Community Development.* Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books (Nig) Ltd.

Aruma, E. O. (2014). Peace as a critical component for sustainable community Development in Nigeria. In D.U. Akubuilo. *African Journal of Educational Foundation* (AJEP), 5 (2), 21.Department of Educational Foundations, Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT).

Bolarinde, O. (2011). The place of Social Studies Education SOSCEA, SOSCIAN. *ORG/African Review of Arts; Social Science and Education,* (1)/153.

Bozimo, G. O. (2002). *Social Studies theories and perspectives.* Onitsha. Outright Publishers Ltd.

Bozimo, G. Gotep M. G. Zwalchir R & Obanya O. A. (2004). Current Trends in Social Studies, Federal College of Education PankshinWais Printing Press. Jos, Nigeria.

Diaz-Rico, L. (2009). Teaching English Learners,: Pearson U.S.A.

Dubey, D. L. (1980). *Social Studies Methods for Nigerian Teachers*. University Press Ibadan.

Eagle, S. H. (1977). Exploring the Meaning of the Social Studies in Rubin I (Ed) Curriculum Handbook: Boaston: Allyn and Bacon Inc.

Egbule, J. E (2007).Readings in Educational Psychology Published by Chins and Chis Ventures Owerri, Nigeria.

Ekpu, A. O.O. (1999). The Law on Domestic Violence and Child Abuse, University Press.

Hellriegel, D. & Slocum, J. W. (1977), Organizational Behaviour South-Western Cengage Learning. Mason, U.S.A.

Jarolimek, J. (1981).Teaching Social Studies in Elementary Education N.C.E. MacMillan Publishing Company NewYork.

Kazi, N. P. (2006) Social Studies for Nigerian Schools: A Scholar Handbook published by Federal of College of Education, Pankshin. Wais Printing Press Jos.

Kissock, C. (1979). Curriculum Planning for Social Studies Teaching, John Willey & Sons New York.

Maslow, A. H. (1968). *Towards a Psychology of Being.* Van Nostr and Rernhold, New York, U.S.A

Maslow, A. H. (1970). *Motivation and Personality*. Harpert Row New York.

Maslow, A. H. (1987). A theory of Human Motivationhttp://psycnet.apa.org1987-98126-000.

Muktar, N. (2014). Abraham Harold Maslow theory of Need and its implication to Nigerian primary school children. Department of Adult Education and Extension Services, Usman Danfodiyo University Sokoto, University Press.

Mulwa, F. W. (2008). Demystifying Participatory Community Development Nairobi, Paulines Publications Africa.

National Council on Education (NCE, 1985). *Perspective of Qualities & Quantities in Nigeria Education.* Government Press Lagos.

National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS, 1992). Expectations of Excellence: Curriculum Standards for Social Studies (Washington, D.C: NCSS, 1994).