

Experience and Specialisation-Based Perspectives on Suggested Revisions to Senior High School Social Studies Curriculum for National Development in Ghana

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Abstract

This study explores how Ghanaian Senior High School (SHS) Social Studies teachers' perspectives on curriculum revision are influenced by their teaching experience and subject specialisation. Using a mixed-methods explanatory sequential design, the research drew on data from 245 teachers in the Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews. Statistical analysis revealed a significant correlation between specialisation, experience, and support for curriculum revision. Specifically, 84.4% of specialised and 73.7% of experienced teachers advocated for updates, while 75.6% of non-specialised and 86.1% of inexperienced teachers opposed changes. Thematic analysis of interviews supported these findings, highlighting dissatisfaction with outdated topics, content overload, and the lack of alignment with 21st-century skills and national development goals. Teachers recommended updating topics such as Marriage as an Institution, Ghana and the International Community, and Science and Technology to reflect current societal issues and promote problem-solving, civic responsibility, and economic empowerment. The study underscores the necessity of participatory curriculum reform involving frontline educators and affirms the relevance of Curriculum Change and Teacher Beliefs Theories in understanding educational transformation.

Key Words: Experience; Specialization; Perspectives; Curriculum; National Development.

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I. Introduction

Background of the Study

Curriculum reform is a key component of national development programmes in the modern world, particularly in developing countries like Ghana. The goal of Social Studies, a Senior High School (SHS) subject in Ghana, is to enhance critical thinking, civic engagement, and national awareness (Ministry of Education, 2010). To help students understand and navigate their social context, it integrates elements of geography, history, economics, governance, and sociology (Boakye & Asante, 2019). To ensure that educational objectives align with national development goals, there is a growing need for frequent curriculum reviews for Social Studies curriculum (Akyeampong, 2017). This is due to the fact that cultures evolve and their needs for development become more complex.

Many people, including educators and policymakers, are concerned that Ghana's major issues, such as youth unemployment, environmental degradation, civic apathy, and digital transformation, have not been adequately or pertinently addressed by the current topics covered in the SHS Social Studies curriculum (Anamuah-Mensah, 2015). Since teachers are the ones who use the curriculum the most, they are crucial in determining its effectiveness. How they comprehend, instruct, and assess the curriculum is greatly influenced by their professional background and area of competence (Kwarteng, 2019).

Teachers who have received specialised training in Social Studies or who have worked in the field for a long period may know more about Social Studies and how to teach the subject effectively. This might alter their perception of the curriculum's adequacy. However, instructors who are teaching the subject because of staffing issues but are not subject matter experts may offer special insights based on their experiences in other fields. A teacher's perception of what topics are still or are not important may also change depending on how long they have been teaching. Long-term teachers, for example, could be able to identify curriculum deficiencies that have existed for some time, but more recent educators might have more innovative solutions.

Because of these diverse backgrounds, the researcher is interested in how a teacher's experience and area of expertise influence their opinions regarding what should be altered in the SHS Social Studies curriculum to

help in the preparation of the youth to contribute effectively towards national development. Through practical research, this initiative aims to close the knowledge gaps and contribute to the local and global conversation around curriculum development.

Statement of the Research Problem

Social Studies is especially crucial for fostering civic engagement, economic development, and a sense of community. According to some authors, Ghana's current SHS curriculum falls short in adapting to the evolving needs of the country's population (Boadu, 2020). Few studies have examined how teacher characteristics, such as years of experience and area of expertise, influence their views on modifications to the social research curriculum (Antwi & Anamuah-Mensah, 2019).

Curriculum reviews in Ghana have also frequently been conducted top-down with little input from teachers who teach the subject on a daily basis (Tamakloe, 2008). Changes may become useless or worthless as a result of this disconnect. Teachers' viewpoints are extremely important for identifying gaps, repetitions, and outdated content in the current curriculum because they have varying degrees of subject area knowledge and experience. The people who must implement the reforms might not be able to do so if their diverse points of view are not considered and examined.

This study therefore aims to determine the opinions of both seasoned and inexperienced Social Studies teachers in the Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly about proposed modifications to the SHS Social Studies curriculum. Changes to the curriculum must be successful, inclusive, and relevant if Ghana is to achieve national growth. We must understand their points of view in order to accomplish this target.

Purpose of the Study

The overarching purpose of this study is to explore and analyse the perspectives of Senior High School (SHS) Social Studies teachers in the Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly on proposed changes to the current Social Studies topics in the national teaching syllabus. Specifically, this analysis examines the influence of teacher characteristics namely, subject specialisation and years of teaching experience on their opinions about curriculum reform to promote national development.

Research Objectives

1. To explore the perspectives of specialised and non-specialised teachers in Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly regarding suggested revision to the existing Social Studies topics in the SHS teaching syllabus to attain national development.
2. To explore the perspectives of experienced and in-experienced teachers in Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly regarding suggested revision to the existing Social Studies topics in the SHS teaching syllabus to attain national development.

Research Questions

1. What are the perspectives of teachers, categorized by specialisation, regarding suggestions for revision to the current Social Studies topics in the teaching syllabus?
2. What are the perspectives of teachers, categorized by experienced, regarding suggestions for revision to the current Social Studies topics in the teaching syllabus?

Hypothesis

H0: There is no significant difference in the opinions of specialization and non-specialised teachers on revision to existing Social Studies topics.

H1: There is a significant difference in the opinions of specialised and non-specialised teachers on revision to existing Social Studies topics.

H0: There is no significant difference in the opinions of experienced and in-experienced teachers on revision to existing Social Studies topics.

H1: There is a significant difference in the opinions of experienced and in-experienced teachers on revision to existing Social Studies topics.

Significance of the Study

For those who work in education in Ghana and elsewhere, this paper contains important insights. Firstly, it contributes to the small amount of empirical research on how teacher characteristics specifically, years of experience and area of expertise influence their attitudes towards curricular change. This gives us additional insight into the human factors that affect how well a curriculum works.

Secondly, the findings of the study would be useful to the Ghana Education Service (GES), the Ministry of Education, and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NaCCA). With the help of the evidence,

these groups can modify the curriculum to take into account the professional views and experiences of both novice and experienced educators.

Thirdly, those who develop curricula, train educators, and conduct educational research will find the study useful. It will provide them with well-supported suggestions on how to match academic assignments with Ghana's long-term development objective (Ghana Education Strategic Objective, 2018–2030).

Finally, by highlighting how important it is for local teachers to be involved in curriculum improvement, the study contributes to the global conversation about education. This increases the likelihood that curriculum development in Sub-Saharan Africa and other comparable locations will employ participatory methodologies.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Overview

Modifying the curriculum is a crucial part of enhancing education, particularly in terms of ensuring that the content is current with societal demands and national development objectives. Ghana's Senior High School (SHS) Social Studies curriculum is especially crucial for teaching pupils how to manage their finances, comprehend political and social issues, and be responsible citizens (Akotia, 2019). However, in order to ensure that the curriculum remains effective, it must be continuously reviewed and updated in response to input from those with a stake in it, particularly educators. With an emphasis on Ghana's SHS Social Studies curriculum, this study examines academic writing on how teachers' backgrounds and areas of expertise influence their views on suggested curriculum modifications.

Conceptual Framework

This study's concepts are derived from experiential knowledge theory and curriculum change theory. According to Fullan (2007), curricular change is challenging and necessitates support from all parties, particularly teachers who are the ones who impart the knowledge. According to the hypothesis, a teacher's professional background and length of teaching experience have a significant impact on their ability to embrace and implement curriculum changes.

According to the Experiential Knowledge Theory (Shulman, 1987), teachers' assessments of the curriculum's applicability and effectiveness are also influenced by their years of experience or subject-matter expertise. For example, while experienced teachers may emphasise the necessity for pedagogical pragmatism while suggesting curricular changes, specialised teachers may advocate for conceptual rigour.

Teacher Specialisation and Curriculum Perspectives

Teacher specialisation is the process of obtaining official training and an academic degree in a certain subject area. Teachers who specialise in Social Studies should be better knowledgeable about the topics and the most effective teaching methods. Their views on the subjects that are essential to the growth of the country may shift as a result (Ampiah & Adu-Yeboah, 2009). These teachers are more likely to support curriculum that addresses contemporary social, political, and economic challenges, according to Mensah (2021).

On the other hand, teachers who are not subject matter experts and frequently teach subjects outside of their areas of expertise could approach the curriculum from a more generalist perspective. They might struggle with abstract concepts or more intricate ideological themes in Social Studies (Ayeni, 2017). This suggests that their suggestions for curricular reform might be grounded less in the depth of the subject and more in actual classroom issues.

According to Asare and Danquah (2020), Ghanaian Social Studies specialists are more likely to support the inclusion of environmental sustainability, global citizenship, and entrepreneurial education in the Social Studies curriculum because they see these topics as essential to the development of both the nation and the global community. Conversely, teachers who lack subject-matter expertise tend to focus more on topics that are more pertinent to their students' lives and ask for less in-depth information.

Teaching Experience and Curriculum Perspectives

It has also been demonstrated that teaching experience influences how teachers view the curriculum. Long-time or highly experienced teachers typically have a better understanding of what students are interested in and what is challenging to teach effectively (Obeng, 2015). Their ideas frequently arise from learning via trial and error and challenges encountered in the classroom.

According to studies, seasoned teachers frequently suggest modifying the curriculum's framework to make it more profound, understandable, and pertinent. For example, Antwi and Osei-Tutu (2018) discovered that seasoned SHS teachers in Ghana believed that combining civic education with practical policy discussions would help the nation achieve its development objectives. They maintained that their years of experience as teachers

enabled them to see the discrepancies between what was actually taught and what was intended to be taught. However, because they have not been in the classroom long enough to observe how things change over time, new teachers may be more accepting of the status quo (Boakye & Owusu, 2022). However, they may also come up with new, more modern teaching methods that older teachers would not consider, such as integrating technology into the classroom.

Relevance of Curriculum Content to National Development

An increasing number of studies contend that curricular changes should promote national development objectives such as civic engagement, employment for youth, and democratic participation (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). Ghana's Social Studies programme is designed to help students acquire these skills. However, both seasoned and specialised teachers have stated that some of the subjects being taught at the moment are too abstract, outdated, or unrelated to the students' lives to help them achieve these objectives (Osei & Boampong, 2021). According to the Ghana Education Service (GES), curriculum creation requires the use of participatory methodologies. They do not, however, consistently include teachers' viewpoints in a manner that takes into account their level of experience and area of speciality (GES, 2019). This division makes it difficult to achieve policy goals in the classroom.

Empirical Studies and Gaps

Many studies have been conducted on curriculum reform in Ghana, but few have examined how teachers' perspectives vary based on their training and experience. The impact of these teacher groups' viewpoints on their perceptions of the curriculum and proposed changes has not received much attention in research. This is a significant research gap because understanding these diverse viewpoints is essential to creating Social Studies curricula that address the needs of the nation and foster its development.

Summary and Rationale for the Study

The literature review shows that a teacher's perception of the curriculum is significantly influenced by factors such as their experience and area of expertise. However, Ghana's evidence is insufficient, particularly with regard to the SHS Social Studies programme. Since the curriculum is a vital component of the development of the country, it is imperative to learn how various types of teachers evaluate its significance and room for improvement. By examining the opinions of specialised and non-specialized, as well as seasoned and inexperienced, Social Studies teachers in the Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly about proposed changes to the national curriculum for development, this study attempts to fill that gap.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Overview

Finding out what Senior High School (SHS) Social Studies teachers in the Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly (KMA) think about potential curriculum changes that could help the nation improve was the aim of this study. The study examined how teachers' opinions regarding changing the present Social Studies themes are influenced by factors such as their years of experience and area of competence or specialisation. The method is a strict and structured strategy to achieving the objectives, enquiries, and hypotheses of the study.

Research Paradigm

According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), the study employed the pragmatic research paradigm, which contends that combining quantitative and qualitative data may improve our understanding of difficult educational issues. Finding practical solutions to real-world issues and using a variety of approaches to effectively answer research questions are the hallmarks of pragmatics. This model supports the study's goal of examining different teachers' perspectives through thorough narratives and numbers.

Theoretical Framework

The Curriculum Change Theory and the Teacher Beliefs Theory served as the study's pillars. Curriculum Change Theory states that modifications to the curriculum must align with the goals of the system, stakeholder values, and societal needs (Fullan, 2007). However, the effectiveness of educational innovations is greatly influenced by the way teachers believe about the curriculum, according to the Teacher Beliefs Theory (Pajares, 1992). These hypotheses supported the investigation of teachers' beliefs based on what they taught.

Research Approach: Mixed Methods

In order to produce more accurate and comprehensive results, the study employed a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data. The results are easier to understand when a variety of statistics are combined with a rich narrative using mixed techniques (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). This idea

was beneficial since it allowed for the measurement-based comparison of various teacher types and yielded a wealth of information through interviews.

Research Design: Explanatory Sequential Mixed Design

Using an explanatory sequential mixed design, the study initially gathered and analysed quantitative data before obtaining qualitative data to supplement or explain the quantitative findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Finding out how statistically significant the differences were across groups (specialised vs. non-specialized; experienced vs. inexperienced) and then learning more about the reasons behind these discrepancies were two notable benefits of this strategy.

Population for the Study

All 827 Social Studies teachers at senior high schools in the Ashanti Region were the larger target group. However, during the 2023–2024 academic year, this study solely examined the 629 Social Studies teachers employed by the 52 public SHSs in the Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly. Since they were responsible for instructing the SHS Social Studies programme, these teachers were in a unique position to assess its effectiveness and suggest changes.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

To get the appropriate sample size from the finite population ($N = 629$), the researcher applied Yamane's (1967) formula for selecting sample size when the population is known:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

- n = sample size
- N = population size
- e = margin of error (0.05)

$$n = \frac{629}{1 + 629(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{629}{1 + 1.5725} \quad n = 245.$$

To ensure that there were an adequate number of both seasoned and inexperienced teachers, as well as specialised and non-specialized ones, the researcher employed a stratified random sampling technique. Teachers who had been teaching for more than five years (experienced) or less than five years (inexperienced) and who had received Social Studies training or not comprised the groups.

Data Collection Instruments

Two main instruments were employed in the gathering of data for the study:

Questionnaire: Quantitative information was gathered from the 245 sampled teachers using a standardised, self-administered questionnaire that included both closed-ended and Likert-scale items. Based on their years of experience and area of expertise, the purpose of the questionnaire was to learn how teachers felt about curricular modifications.

Interview Guide: To gather qualitative information from 20 teachers who were selected due to their extensive teaching experience and subject-matter expertise, the researcher used a semi-structured interview guide. While some of these teachers were subject-matter specialists, others were not. The purpose of the interviews was to gather more details and first-hand accounts that would help interpret the data effectively.

Ethical Considerations

The appropriate educational research supervision authorities granted their request and approval to the vetted instruments. These moral guidelines were appropriately adhered to:

All participants were fully informed of the study's objectives, procedures, and their rights prior to choosing to participate.

Privacy: The participants' names were kept private in all reports and analyses.

Individuals may decide to participate or not, and they may discontinue participation at any moment.

Data security: The acquired data could only be viewed and stored by the researcher.

Data Analysis Procedures

To examine the survey data, the researcher made use of SPSS, which stands for Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. Included in the study were:

To sum up the responses, the researcher employed frequencies and basic percentages.

To determine whether there were any statistically significant variations in the opinions of various teacher groups (specialised versus non-specialized; experienced versus inexperienced) about curricular modifications, the researcher employed the Chi-square test of independence.

Theme analysis, according to Braun and Clarke (2006), is a method for examining interview data that is not numerical. Theme analysis included the following:

- Finding out about the data
- Creating the initial codes
- Looking up and reviewing subjects
- Providing themes with names and definitions
- Creating the last report

This made it easier to understand the underlying causes of the numerical patterns.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Overview

The curriculum for Social Studies needs to be updated to reflect the evolving political, social, and economic demands of the country's development (Shulman, 1987; Banks, 2015). Knowing how teachers feel about the suggestions for updating current curriculum topics is important, particularly when those suggestions are split down by years of teaching experience and area of expertise. Since they are the ones that implement curriculum policies, it is crucial to hear what teachers have to say about them.

Biographical Profile of Respondents: Teachers' Area of Specialization and Years of Experience in Teaching Social Studies at the Senior High School Level

It is useful to know about the work history and length of time spent teaching in order to have an understanding of the opinions of Social Studies teachers regarding the goals of the subject and its role in national development. Teachers' educational backgrounds and years of experience provide valuable insights into their subject-matter expertise, pedagogical proficiency, and curriculum delivery (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Shulman, 1987). This section provides extensive information about the 245 Social Studies teachers selected for the study, including their backgrounds and specialisations.

Area of Specialization of Teachers

Table 4.1: Distribution of Area of Specialization (Teachers)

Specialisation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Economics	1	.4
Geography	3	1.2
Government	1	.4
History	9	3.6
Political Science	19	7.8
Social Studies	167	68.2
Sociology	38	15.5
Other	7	2.9
Total	245	100

Source: Field survey, (2023)

As indicated in Table 4.1, respondents were categorised by their field of academic study. 167 (68.2%) of the 245 teachers surveyed claimed to be trained Social Studies teachers. Given the size of the number, it is likely that more than two-thirds of the teachers have formal academic training related to the subject they teach. Better instruction and more pertinent material are generally linked to this (Ball, Thames, & Phelps, 2008).

Sociology (15.5%), political General Science (7.8%), History (3.6%), Geography (1.2%), Economics (0.4%), and Government (0.4%) were among the other areas of knowledge. An additional 2.9% of respondents said they had specialisations not on this list. Teachers who studied Political Science, Sociology, and History may be able to bring perspectives from other disciplines that make the subject more engaging to teach, even if they were not trained as Social Studies specialists.

According to the data, 68.2% of respondents are qualified to examine the Social Studies curriculum and offer recommendations for changes to the subject. The findings support Grossman and Schoenfeld's (2005) assertion that it is critical for educators to be subject-matter experts. This is particularly true for subjects like Social Studies that need a great deal of knowledge.

Teaching Experience of Respondents

Table 4.2: Distribution of Teaching Experience of Respondents (Teachers)

Number of years of teaching	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1-5yrs	36	15
6-10yrs	84	34
11-15yrs	103	42
Above 15yrs	22	9
Total	245	100

Source: Field Survey, (2023)

The majority of respondents had extensive teaching experience, as seen in Table 4.2. According to 15% of the teachers, they had been Social Studies teachers for one to five years. Conversely, 34% had been teaching the subject for 6–10 years, 42% for 11–15 years, and 9% for beyond 15 years.

According to the findings, over half (51%) of the respondents had taught the subject for more than ten years, and 85% of those who responded had done so for more than five years. This tendency demonstrates that the teachers are mature and well-versed in the curriculum and classroom operations. Cimbriz (2002) asserts that a teacher's experience is a critical factor that significantly influences both their teaching effectiveness and the learning outcomes of their students. Due to their extensive expertise, these teachers are well-versed in the Social Studies curriculum and its intended lessons. More seasoned teachers are typically better at determining which elements of the curriculum work effectively and which ones require revision. Additionally, they ensure that their instructional strategies align with the nation's overarching development objectives (Stronge, Ward, & Grant, 2011). Since these teachers' perspectives are founded on their own experiences in the current discussions, they are significant.

Research Question One

What are the perspectives of teachers, categorised by their area of specialisation, regarding the potential revision of the current Senior High School Social Studies syllabus for promoting national development?

Teachers' Perspectives Categorised by Area of Specialisation

Table 4.3 presents the responses of Social Studies teachers categorised by whether they specialised in the subject or not, and their views on the proposed changes to the current syllabus.

Table 4.3: Teachers' Perspectives Categorised by Specialisation on Proposed Revisions to Senior High School Social Studies Topics in Attaining National Development

Cat.	Respondents Views		Total	χ^2 Value	df	Prob. Value
	Yes	No				
S	141 (84.4)	26 (15.6)	167	107.825	7	.001
NS	19 (24.4)	59 (75.6)	78			

Source: Field Survey, (2023). S (Specialisation), NS (Non-Specialisation).

According to the findings, the majority of non-specialist teachers (75.6%) opposed changes to the Social Studies curriculum, whereas the clear majority of specialised teachers (84.4%) were in favour of the senior high school Social Studies curriculum. Specialisation and support for curriculum change are statistically significantly correlated, according to the chi-square test ($\chi^2 = 107.825$, $df = 7$, $p < 0.001$). This finding supports earlier research showing that subject-matter experts are better able to critique and modify the curriculum (Grossman & Richert, 1988; Darling-Hammond, 2006). Specialised teachers may have requested adjustments to better meet the demands of modern society and development since they are aware of the objectives of education and the multidisciplinary nature of Social Studies curriculum in the senior high school.

Research Question Two

What are the perspectives of teachers, categorized by experienced, regarding suggestions for changes to the current senior high school Social Studies topics in the teaching syllabus?

Teachers' Perspectives Categorised by Teaching Experience

Table 4.4 presents the distribution of responses based on teachers' teaching experience distinguishing between experienced and inexperienced teachers and their views on the proposed revisions to the Social Studies curriculum.

Table 4.4: Teachers' Perspectives on Proposed Revisions to Senior High School Social Studies Topics for Attaining National Development: A Categorisation by Teachers' Experience

Cat.	Respondents Views		Total	χ^2 Value	df	Prob. Value
	Yes	No				
E	154 (73.7)	55 (26.3)	209	74.432	4	.001
IE	5 (13.9)	31 (86.1)	36			

Source: Field Survey, (2023). E (Experience) and IE (In-Experience).

Teachers' Perspectives Based on Teaching Experience

As indicated in Table 4.4, the responses were categorised by years of teaching experience. The study found that 86.1% of less experienced teachers opposed curriculum modification, whilst 73.7% of more seasoned teachers were in favour of modifying the senior high school Social Studies curriculum. A significant correlation between the length of time teachers have been teaching and their attitudes towards curriculum change is demonstrated by the high chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 74.432$, $df = 4$, $p < 0.001$). Because they have been teaching for a long time, seasoned teachers are better able to identify what is lacking from the curriculum and what does not function in the classroom. This supports the assertion made by Fullan (2007) that, those teachers who have experienced educational transformation are the finest sources of information.

Qualitative Insights: Thematic Analysis from Teacher Interviews

The qualitative information supports the quantitative findings considerably better. Of the twenty individuals interviewed, sixteen were seasoned and specialised teachers who wanted to enhance the key areas. They all concurred that the general framework of the curriculum aligns with the goals of civic education, although they pointed out that many of the topics need to be updated to reflect current events.

The curriculum received a 7 out of 10 from an experienced teacher (ET.5), who also mentioned that topics like "Marriage as an Institution" have to adapt to the circumstances. "Our Social Environment and Socialisation" may be more beneficial, he argued, if it covered peacebuilding. He stated that:

"I believe that, given the rationale for teaching Social Studies in Senior High School in Ghana as a subject to prepare students to fit into society well by equipping them with knowledge about the society's culture, ways of life, as well as its problems and values, the topics included in the teaching syllabus are generally appropriate. However, specific topics should be reviewed, upgraded, changed, or modified to better meet the current needs of our society and country as a whole, particularly the content of these topics. On a scale of ten, I would give the appropriateness of the topics' content a seven. I suggest that the curriculum developers reconsider some of the topics to be redesigned. Our national development is based entirely on problem-solving, and since Social Studies is a problem-solving subject, the content of the topics should be oriented around identifying problems and developing practical solutions to those problems. For instance, when considering the topic "Marriage as an Institution" and how marriages have deteriorated in the modern world, we must recognize that our society is gradually changing. Students must understand the contemporary trend of marriage, particularly ordinary marriages. The topic "Our Social Environment and Socialization" needs to be integrated with another topic, such as "Peace Building and Conflict Resolution," or it should stand alone, as the content or details of that topic are inherently Social Studies. Other topics that should be reviewed for their content include "Ghana and the International Community" and "National Independence and Self-Reliance" (ET.5).

In order to reflect contemporary global trends, another teacher (ET.14) suggested that "Science and Technology" be updated to incorporate digital literacy and entrepreneurial skills like data analysis and coding (UNESCO, 2015). He mentioned that:

"When I consider the subject's overall content and the intended purpose or objectives to be accomplished, I conclude that the topics are appropriate for the subject. I say this because, after more than nineteen years of teaching Social Studies, I am convinced that the subject is assisting the country in accomplishing its mission. It's more of a silent mode with a focus on character development. I will state that the subject has enriched many people's lives, particularly those who have studied it since its inception. Even if one does not notice the improvement, if we speak with former Social Studies students, they will attest that the subject had a significant impact. Without Social Studies, and in light of modern changes in society and the world, the situation with deviant and other harmful acts would have been much worse than today. However, I think there should still be changes significantly to the content of some of the topics. I feel that the contents of some of the topics are not directly related to Social Studies and its purpose especially topics such as "Ghana and the International Community" and "National Independence and Self-Reliance. I believe such topics could be taken care of in the hands of the other

subject areas. For example, "Science and Technology" is an excellent topic in the Social Studies syllabus, but the content does not relate to social issues. If nothing at all, it should have some focus on ICT to include significance of digital literacy for every individual, covering essential areas like coding, data analytics, and digital marketing. This is essential to equip students with the skills required for the constantly evolving job market. I believe that curriculum designers should take out such a topic or instead review the content to meet the issues related to Social Studies education. And I'm making this statement because the content focuses more on the natural science associated areas than the social sciences. As I have always been saying, education is the holistic development and is not only Social Studies that can cater for all sizes, so some of the topics should be given a second look by our leaders" (ET. 14).

Additionally, a specialised instructor (ST.1) claimed that "The World of Work and Entrepreneurship" placed an excessive amount of emphasis on business concepts. According to her, vocational training ought to be given more importance in order to help people obtain employment and become more self-sufficient (Afeti, 2009). She stated that:

"I want to emphasise that the contents of the topics are quite appropriate for the subject's objectives. And suppose Social Studies is given the necessary attention and continues to promote or educate people about the subject's purpose. In that case, we will reach a point where most of the problems we are currently facing in our country will be reduced or eliminated. To some extent, the subject achieves its core purpose though we are not yet fully there. I believe that we are not yet there because some of the content topics need to be changed. For example, the topic "The World of Work and Entrepreneurship" is perfect. There is an aspect that focuses more on business-related issues. I feel that such an aspect should be given to purely business students and rather focus more on vocational training, skills development, and entrepreneurship education as key elements in empowering students for economic independence. This approach will aim to provide students with the practical skills needed to succeed in various economic ventures. Again, most teachers seem not to be comfortable teaching that aspect. WAEC hardly asks questions on that, so such an aspect can be dropped and something more related to work attitudes and values introduced to increase productivity or output. Let me also add that a topic that needs to be examined in terms of content is "Ghana and the International Community. Some aspects of this topic are unnecessary even though some aspects may be good. I believe that the content should focus more on challenging students to think critically about Ghana's potential contributions to international initiatives aimed at tackling these issues". (ST.1).

Others contended that the phrase "Ghana and the International Community" ought to be modified to incorporate Ghana's role in resolving global issues. This will improve the teaching of global citizenship.

There were discussions about real-world issues as well. According to SP.15, the existing syllabus is overly comprehensive for the time allotted for instruction, making it challenging to cover everything. One of these Participant (SP. 15), a male firmly said:

"To me, the senior high school Social Studies teaching syllabus is overloaded. By this, the content is too much or overloaded, especially looking at the allotted periods and the three years the students have to go through the entire topics in detail. The subject's content is too detailed to the extent that as teachers, we always encounter challenges in completing the topics, especially if we compare this to the time allotted to the subject in my school here" (SP. 15).

Another specialised teacher (SP.18) stated that curriculum evaluations, particularly WASSCE, place too much emphasis on memory and not enough on learning about values and attitudes. Based on this, the participant (SP. 18), a female categorically said:

"For me, though, one of the main objectives of Social Studies education, as I know, is to prepare the young ones to develop positive attitudes and values. From what I have been observing for almost twenty years of teaching Social Studies, not much attention is given to this development of positive attitudes and values in students through the teaching of the subject. However, the content of topics in the teaching syllabus emphasises the development of these attitudes and values. I'm making this statement because teachers' attention in teaching the subject has always been the cognitive aspect, neglecting the affective and psychomotor domains. Our Social Studies teaching is geared toward getting students ready to pass the exams that the West African Examination Council gives to students (WAEC). What I mean by this is that we only teach for the knowledge base. For the students to pass the exams because if you don't teach that way, your students will lack during the exams since the type of questions asked during the West African Senior Secondary School Certificate Examinations (WASSCE) demand that kind of teaching". (SP. 18).

This issue has been discussed by Banks (2008) and Osei (2011), who claim that test-taking frequently impedes Social Studies' transformative objectives.

V. Synthesis of Findings

Together, the two analyses show that teachers' subject specialisation and teaching experience in Social Studies have an impact on their ideas on how to enhance the curriculum. The transdisciplinary and problem-solving nature of Social Studies, for example, was more readily appreciated by teachers who had received Social Studies training (Akinloye, 2003). When society changed, these teachers were also more likely to suggest significant changes to the subject. However, seasoned teachers used their years of expertise to identify issues with particular subjects and advocate for more effective teaching methods (Steven, Hanushek & Kain, 2005).

Proponents of curriculum change frequently propose "Science and Technology," "National Independence and Self-Reliance," "Promoting National Socio-Economic Development," and "Ghana and the International Community." They claim that these topics are insufficiently deep or ineffective in fostering civic awareness and skills (Evans, 2004; Ministry of Education, 2010).

According to these findings, a basic principle is that curricular changes are most effective when professionals with the necessary skills are involved. They are crucial to a curriculum that is dynamic and responsive since they have extensive knowledge of the boundaries of topic and the requirements for teaching. According to the Ghanaian Ministry of Education (2010), Social Studies instruction should equip students with the skills they need to make a difference in the real world. Curriculum changes are therefore very necessary to achieve this objective.

Both quantitative and qualitative assessments indicate that the Social Studies curriculum in Ghanaian senior high schools need to be revised in a systematic and inclusive manner. The majority of teachers with specialised training and extensive classroom experience concur that curriculum changes are necessary to ensure that the content is current and that teaching strategies are consistent. The findings support the claims made by Smith (2019), Kwakye (2019), and Akwetey and Afriyie (2014) when they argued for curriculum reform as a mechanism for equipping students with the competencies required for national and global engagement. Ultimately, the transformation of Social Studies education must be both content-sensitive and context-responsive to meet the challenges of 21st-century Ghana.

VI. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Research Summary

This study investigated the opinions of Ghanaian teachers over the revision of the Senior High School (SHS) Social Studies curriculum. The results were broken down by subject matter and the length of time the teachers had been in the classroom. The study found a statistically significant correlation between teachers' support for curriculum revisions and their professional backgrounds. In order to ensure that the curriculum remains relevant to the demands of national growth, Social Studies specialists and experienced teachers generally supported changes to the senior high school Social Studies curriculum.

According to a quantitative analysis, just 24.4% of non-specialized teachers did not support curricular reforms, while 84.4% of specialised teachers suggested a major revision to the Social Studies curriculum. Similarly, 86.1% of less experienced teachers opposed changes, compared to 73.7% of more seasoned teachers who suggested revisions to be made. These findings were supported by the chi-square tests, which showed a significant relationship between teacher characteristics and their perceptions of the curriculum ($\chi^2 = 107.825$ and $\chi^2 = 74.432$, $p < .001$).

There was qualitative evidence to support these findings. Old subjects and excessive content were cited by participants as major issues. Based on their observations in the classroom, experienced and specialised teachers proposed updating or reorganising themes such as "Science and Technology," "Marriage as an Institution," and "Ghana and the International Community." They asked for changes that were more pedagogically sound, situation-relevant, and development-focused.

Conclusions

The findings highlight how important it is for teachers to possess extensive knowledge and competence when implementing curricular changes. Teachers with greater theoretical and practical knowledge of Social Studies may be better able to assess the programme's value and request changes. Their perspectives align with the ever-evolving nature of civilisation. This implies that in order to stay abreast of emerging social, political, and economic developments, educational content must be continuously assessed and updated.

Additionally, the poll found that while the current SHS Social Studies curriculum largely aligns with national educational objectives, it lacks the flexibility to meet the demands of modern society. The topics are not profound or significant enough to impart to kids the knowledge, abilities, and civic values they need to support the development of their nation. This supports the claim that the full potential of Social Studies education may not be realised with a static curriculum (Smith, 2019; Kwakye, 2019).

Recommendations

The Curriculum Research and Development Division (CRDD) and the Ghana Education Service (GES) ought to collaborate to start a review of the SHS Social Studies curriculum in which all students are welcome to participate. Experienced and specialist teachers should be included in this process to ensure that the new material is both pertinent and suitable for the developmental stages of the students.

Changing the Content: With the rise of digital literacy, global interconnectedness, and evolving societal ideals, topics like "Science and Technology," "Ghana and the International Community," and "Marriage as an Institution" should be revised to reflect these changes in society. Rather than forcing children to memorise facts, teachers ought to employ inquiry-based, value-based, and critical thinking techniques. Values, attitudes, and the application of civic knowledge should all be tested in addition to knowledge recall in the WASSCE and other external exams.

Teacher Professional Development: Ongoing training and seminars should be available to both new and seasoned educators who are not social studies experts. These should make it easier for them to evaluate and apply what they learn in class and help them better comprehend how Social Studies is an interdisciplinary subject.

To address the issue of having too much content, the curriculum should be organised using a modular or theme approach. Teachers will have more time to discuss topics in more detail as a result.

Areas for Further Study

- **Student Opinions:** Future studies are needed to find out how SHS students feel about the Social Studies curriculum and whether they believe it advances the nation. To find out how much the new Social Studies curricula affect students' involvement in their communities and the development of the nation as a whole.
- **Comparative Studies:** By examining how other developing nations have modified their curricula, we might identify suitable methods for aligning Social Studies with developmental objectives.
- **Assessment Practices:** Studies could examine how various test formats could enhance overall learning results and how test administration alters the learning objective.

Contribution to Knowledge Advancement

By demonstrating how a teacher's experience and area of expertise may influence their support for curricular modifications, this study advances the field of curriculum studies. It supports the Curriculum Change Theory, which holds that in order for new curriculum to be sustained, teachers and other key stakeholders must be involved as change agents (Fullan, 2007). The findings also support the Teacher Beliefs Theory, which holds that teachers' beliefs about learning, teaching, and the subject matter influence their decisions about how to instruct and adapt (Pajares, 1992).

By focussing on the crucial perspectives of seasoned and specialised teachers, the study advances our understanding of teacher-driven curriculum evaluation. It also offers helpful guidance for human-centered transformation processes. It emphasises that in order to ensure that curriculum modifications are beneficial, pertinent, and consistent with national development goals, they should be grounded in both theory and practice.

Theoretical Implications

Curriculum Modification Theory: This study supports Fullan's (2007) argument that effective curriculum modification should be based on teachers' experiences and observations in the classroom. The need for teachers to be involved in genuine change is demonstrated by their requests to modify the content of their courses, including current events, and to ensure that their teaching strategies reflect these changes.

Teacher Beliefs Theory: The diverse responses from seasoned and novice teachers, as well as specialised and non-specialized teachers, show how beliefs are formed through education and experience which influence curricular choices. These findings support Pajares' (1992) assertion that teachers' beliefs play a critical role in implementing innovative ideas in the classroom.

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