

The Effects of the Attitudes of Senior High School Social Studies Teachers Towards the Use of Community Resources and the Constraints They Face in Their Use in the Tamale Metropolis in the Northern Region of Ghana

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Abstract

The study examined the constraints, attitudes and the use of community resources by Social Studies teachers in the teaching of Social Studies. The field survey collected information on the constraints, attitude and use of community resources in the teaching of Social Studies in senior high school in the Tamale Metropolis. It revealed that majority of the teachers made little or no use of these resources in teaching. Also, inadequate funding, training, technological skills, and low teacher morale were identified as inhibiting factors to the effective use of these resources. It further indicated that no significant difference existed between qualified and unqualified teachers' attitude towards their use of community resources as well as the influence of their qualifications in the teaching of Social Studies in senior high schools in the Tamale Metropolis.

Keyword: Community resources, constraints, and Social Studies

1.0 Introduction

Since independence in the late 1950s and early 1960s, African nations sought ways to change inherited educational systems to make them more suitable to the needs of new nations. "No courses in the curriculum were viewed as more closely tied to national aspirations than those dealing with the country, its people, and the responsibilities of citizenship" (Dondo, Krystall & Dorothy, T. A. 1974, p. 6). By the late 1960s, new approaches to history and geography courses became known in Africa as "social studies."

In Africa, ideas on how to modernize the teaching of social studies in schools started as early as 1961. This was during a conference that took place at the Endicott Summer House study at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. At the conference, prominent African, American and British educationists presented papers on the issues of social studies education in Africa and how they could be resolved. There were various sub-committees set up during the summer study, each of which discussed the subject area and made relevant recommendations concerning the discipline. One of such recommendations of the sub-committee on social studies specified that the social studies should be taught in the integrated way. It was this which marked the beginning of the teaching of social studies in the integrated form in Africa (Tamakloe, 1988)

In September 1967, another meeting was held at Queens College, Oxford. The objective of the conference was to emphasize the need to give serious attention to the development of social studies in the primary schools in Africa. At the conference, it was suggested that in order to consolidate their discussions another conference be held in the following year to examine the issue. As a result, in August 1968, another conference was held in Mombasa. The Mombasa conference was attended by 25 educators from 11 African countries. It was this conference that gave birth to the African Social Studies Programme (ASSEP) (Tamakloe, 1992).

Until the introduction of the New Educational Reform (NERP) in the late 1980s, the development of the integrated social studies had been very unsteady. Though, the integrated social studies as a field of study was introduced into the curriculum of the Teacher Training Colleges as far back as the early 1940, there had been unsteady developments in the middle 80's. The teaching of the integrated social studies was first experimented in the Teacher Training Colleges, namely Presbyterian Training College Akropong, Wesley College Kumasi, and Achimota College in Accra in the year 1940 (GES, 1987).

Social studies is an important subject in the school curriculum for nation building. It equips the learner with critical thinking skills to enable him/her discuss social issues objectively. The learner also acquires socially valued habits, values, behaviour and attitudes which are necessary for the betterment of life, and also acquire social skills which enable him/her participate in civic, economic and political activities in a mature way.

The goal of social studies as noted by Jarolimek and Walsh (1965) is "the development of desirable social-civic and personal behaviour" (p.5). It is an appropriate subject towards the achievement of the goals of education. These goals include the development of critical thinking, self-realization through the provision of experiences that foster maximum growth, understanding human relationships, provision of experiences and information that develop concepts, skills and attitudes related to man's exploitation of limited resources, economic efficiency, civic responsibilities, and learning how to learn (Jarolimek & Walsh, 1965; Yusuf, 1991; Akanbi, Imogie & Yusuf, 1993).

There is an increasing need for the use of resources at all levels of the Ghanaian educational system. This is

because adequate teaching and learning resources will be needed to meet the demand for quality education. Such education shall provide an understanding of the behavioural pattern of the learner, social, political, psychological, and economic changes within the immediate and larger society. According to Abolade (2004), community resources are both human and non-human materials that are within the geographical milieu of teachers and the learners. Community resources are the various groups of things found in the community or outside it that appeal to the senses of hearing, seeing, touching, feeling and smelling, which greatly promote the teaching of social studies. They include; castles, chiefs' palaces, historical sites in the communities, museums, places of geographical interest, places of economic interest, places of civic interest, places of scientific interest, and various research institutions. They provide an enduring view of the physical, social, and political environment of the learners. Also, community resources open up opportunities for students to be acquainted with real situations, problems, and potentials, and thus bring about critical thinking and inquiry mind. Therefore, social studies lesson moves from mere teacher-centred verbal instruction to student-centred activity. Resources make students to be involved through practical activities (Ogundele, 1983).

Community resources are very useful in social studies instruction. The use of community resources will ensure the effective teaching and learning of the subject by both teachers and students. Since the classroom is a limited environment, the teaching and learning of Social Studies must extend beyond the four walls of the classroom. Contents of the Social Studies curriculum are not only relevant to the environment but are also derived from the daily experiences of any given society. Therefore, the physical environment in and around the vicinity of the school can be used as a living laboratory for the study of natural phenomenon, socio-cultural development, and economic activities of any given society. Whether the school is located in a rural or urban area, the resources in the environment can be used as resources for instruction (National Academy of Science, 1996). The use of community resources in the teaching of social studies will contribute to the efficiency of teachers in planning, organizing and, in operating the instructional system as part of the psycho/pedagogical principle underlining the understanding of subject matter content. Also, students would be able to develop required behavioural patterns to achieve intended educational outcomes (Iyewarun, 1984; Ogunsanya, 1984; Jekayinfa, 1993).

When students use community resources, they develop skills that enable them to work in groups, forming questions, collecting data and observing the environment, which are inherent skills in social studies. Thus, through the use of community resources the experience of the students can be diversified and school lessons can be connected with daily life and real problem (National Academy of Science, 1996). By using local resources students are given the golden opportunities of seeing, in practical terms, what they have heard, read, or imagined. Through the use community resources, students would be able to collect data, observe, record, and extract necessary information from the environment (Agbam, 2006).

Teachers' attitude is a very important factor in classroom application because of the relationship between attitude and action. Their attitudes are often translated into specific classroom and instructional practices which in turn affect student behaviour and learning outcomes (Cook, 2002). Teacher's attitude towards teaching has important implications for understanding the classroom environment. According to Eggen and Kauchak (2001), positive teachers' attitudes are fundamental to effective teaching. Teachers' attitude towards the use of community resources in teaching Social Studies seems to be very poor. Eggen and Kauchak (2001) assert that most teachers often complain about the difficulties involved in using community resources in teaching Social Studies lessons.

Also, in a study conducted by Hendrickson (1985), it was revealed that, in some cases, fees or other forms of payments are demanded before schools can use community resources. His study revealed that the use of resource persons to some extent disrupts the time table and also sometimes very costly as some resource persons would charge or demand payment for their services rendered. These and some other factors seem to be militating against the use of community resources by social studies teachers in teaching.

The quality of the teacher comprises the qualification and the teaching skills of the teacher and his/her ability to use varied instructional resources in the teaching and learning process. This implies that teacher quality can affect the teaching and learning process since education depends on the quality and mental health of the people who are recruited to teach (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 2000). Shulman (1987) also supported this view when he opined that teachers need to have a deep and flexible understanding of the subject matter so as to be able to help students create useful cognitive maps, relate one idea to another as well as to address their misconceptions. On teachers' knowledge of their subject matter and the use of instructional resources, Shulman states that teachers need to master two types of knowledge; these are content knowledge and knowledge of the curriculum. A poor quality teacher is a threat to the effective use of instructional resources in the teaching and learning of social studies in the senior high schools in Ghana.

The teaching of social studies in senior high schools in Ghana is considered critical as it is among the core subjects considered during placement for further studies. Despite its importance, the attitude of the teachers of the subject toward the use of community resources in teaching it and the constraints they face in their use can not

be over emphasized. It is against this background that this study was conducted to:

1. Examine the effects of the constraints social studies teachers face in the use of community resources in teaching the subject in senior high schools in the Tamale Metropolis.
2. Examine the effects of the teachers' attitude toward the use of community resources in teaching the subject in senior high schools in the Tamale Metropolis. The following research questions were addressed.
 1. What are the effects of the constraints of social studies teachers in the teaching of the subject in senior high schools in the Tamale Metropolis?
 2. What are the effects of teachers' attitude towards the use of community resources in the teaching of the subject in senior high schools in the Tamale Metropolis?

2.0 Methods

The study was conducted in the Tamale Metropolis for the reason of the concentration of many senior high schools in the region. All the 25 senior high schools in the Tamale Metropolis with a total of 129 Social Studies teachers comprising 81 (62.8%) males and 48 (37.2%) females were used for the study. The survey used all the 25 teachers social studies teachers as they are the subject of the study and could provide the needed relevant information concerning the study.

The questionnaires used had open and closed - ended items and designed to capture information on the constraints and attitude of senior high school Social Studies teachers toward the use of community resources in teaching the subject.

The questionnaire was divided into four sections, namely; A. B. C and D, to facilitate the collection of data on the various aspects of the topic. Section A sought for demographic information of respondents which comprised the name of the school, gender, professional qualification and teaching experience of respondents. The second section consisted of a four-point Likert scale items for data on teachers attitude towards the use of community resources in teaching. Items in sections C and D were structured as a four-point Likert scale. The items sought to find out how often teachers used community resources in teaching and the constraints teachers encountered in the use of community resources.

The questionnaires were administered to the teachers in the 25 senior high schools in the Metropolis. Before the administration of the questionnaires, the rationale for the study was explained to the heads of the chosen schools with accompanied permission letter from the Regional Director of Education. The questionnaires were given out to heads of departments to be distributed to the teachers to respond to through the various heads of departments. The researcher returned to the schools to collect the questionnaire after two days. The datum was analyzed using SPSS statistical software version 13 (USA)

This section basically gives background information about respondents' gender, professional qualification and teaching experience.

Table 1: Gender of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	81	62.8
Female	48	37.2
Total	129	100.0

Source: Field data

Table 1, shows that 81 Social Studies teachers representing 62.8% of the respondents were males while 48 teachers representing 37.2% were females. An indication of more male respondents to female and confirming that more males are found teaching Social Studies in senior high schools in the Tamale metropolis.

Table 2: Professional Qualification of Respondents

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
B.A Social Sciences	4	3.1
B. Ed (Social Studies, History)	67	51.9
B. Ed Economics	10	7.8
PGCE/PGDE Social Studies	14	10.9
Diploma in Social Studies	20	15.5
B.A Economics	7	5.4
B.A History	7	5.4
Total	129	100.0

Source: field data.

Table 2 shows that majority of the respondents, 67 representing 51.9% , were First Degree holders in Bachelor of Education (Social Studies, History), 20 of them representing 15.5% were Diploma holders in Social Studies and 14 representing 10.9% are holders in PGDE in Social Studies. This shows that majority of the teachers in the senior high schools in the Tamale Metropolis possess the professional qualifications required for effective teaching of Social Studies. The results further indicate that the teachers have obtained the skills, knowledge and competencies required to support the teaching of Social studies.

Table 3: Teaching Experience of Respondents

Years	Frequency	Percentage
1-4 years	27	20.9
5-10 years	51	39.5
10 years and above	51	39.5
Total	129	100.0

Source: Field data

102 respondents representing 79 % have taught for over 5 years. It can therefore be concluded that most of the teachers are adequately experienced in teaching social studies. Since most of them have been teaching the subject for over 5 years, it is long enough to conclude that they are abreast with trends hence; their experience in respect of teaching social studies cannot be doubted.

3.0 Results and Discussion

Research Question 1: What are the effects of the constraints on the use of community resources in the teaching of Social Studies in senior high schools in the Tamale Metropolis?

The study examined the constraints teachers of social studies in senior high schools within the Tamale Metropolis faced. The results are presented in Table 4

Statement	Resources			
	Not At All N %	Slightly N %	Sometimes N %	A Great N %
Lack of experience with community resources oriented pedagogy	13(10)	23 (18)	34(26)	59(46)
Too little or inadequate time to integrate community resources	11 (9)	28 (21)	30(23)	60(47)
Lack of support from school administrator	13 (10)	24 (19)	28(21)	64(50)
Financial constraints	2 (2)	12 (9)	51(39)	64(50)
Teacher's low morale which affect innovative approach to teaching	21(16)	17 (13)	26(21)	65(50)
School time table scheduling	29 (23)	16 (12)	17(13)	67(52)
Inadequacy of pre-service training	16 (12)	35(27)	18(14)	60(47)
Distance of needed resources to the School	31 (24)	13(10)	22(17)	63(49)

From the results in Table 4, it can be deduced that most of the itemized constraints were considered by the respondents as militating against the effective use of community resources. For instance, regarding lack of experience with community resources oriented pedagogy, the study revealed that 13 teachers representing 10 % of the respondents felt it did not affect the use of community resources while 59 teachers representing 46% of the respondents considered it as a great constraint.

Concerning the inadequacy of time to integrate community resources in their instruction, the study showed that majority of respondents 57, representing 44% perceived it as a great deal of constraint and 11 teachers representing 9% considered it not to be a constraint at all.

On financial constraints, 3 teachers representing 2% of the respondents indicated not at all, 11 teachers representing 9% indicated slightly, 5 teachers representing 40% indicated sometimes and 64 teachers representing 50% of the respondents considered it as a great deal of constraint. The same trend could be observed from the remaining responses.

Thus, the findings of the study clearly indicate that teachers' lack of experience with community oriented pedagogy, inadequate time to integrate community resources, administrators' not being supportive; financial constraints, teachers' low morale, the school time table, inadequacy of pre-service training, and distances of needed resources to the schools, militate against effective use of community resources by teachers.

This is in line with the works of Hendrickson (1985), Popoola (1980), and Taiwo (2000). Where they indicated factors militating against the use of community resources as observed in the responses include, lack of fund, low administrative support, low teacher morale, lack of needed pedagogical skills, and time constraints, among others, as challenges confronting the teaching of social studies.

Research Question 2: What are the effects of teachers' attitude towards the use of community resources in teaching of social studies in senior high schools in the Tamale Metropolis?

The survey investigated the attitudes and use of community resources by Social Studies teachers in teaching social studies in senior high schools in the Tamale Metropolis.

Table 5: Social Studies Teachers' Attitude and Use of Community Resources

		ATTITUDE	COMMUNITY
ATTITUDE	Pearson Correlation	1	-.038
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.678
	N	129	129
COMMUNITY	Pearson Correlation	-.038	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.678	
	N	129	129

Correlation is not significant at .05 (2-tailed)

Source: field data,

The results in Table 5 show that there is a non-significant, weak and negative correlation between the teachers' attitude and their use of community resources to teach social studies ($r = -.038, p > .05, 2\text{-tailed}$). It further demonstrates that there is no positive relationship between the attitude of social studies teachers and their use of community resources in teaching the subject. This implies that most social studies teachers do not use community resources to teach the subject. This is at variance

Conclusion

The study showed that, majority of social studies teachers made little or no use of community resources in teaching social studies. It also revealed that lack of funds, inadequate training, lack of technological skills, and low teacher morale are inhibiting factors to the effective use of community resources.

It is hereby recommended that, social studies teachers should try to integrate the use of community resources in teaching social studies to improve the quality of instruction and that school administrations should financially support social studies teachers to teachers

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