Exploring the role of social studies as a school subject in achieving national cohesion in Ghana.

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Abstract: This study seeks to explore what the 2010 and 2020 social studies curriculum – Ghana, needed to have had in them both contents and pedagogy wise in order to inculcating in its learners, national cohesion spirit. Using exploratory design to find out what is happening, we solicited views of the expertise of the field to ascertain the appropriate means to handle the subject in order to achieve national cohesion in Ghana. The paper fundamentally argues that social studies as a school subject has not been given the needed support to achieve its objective of national cohesion. It is so because the subject is not well organised both in content and pedagogy. Hence, learners' internalization (self-acceptance) of social norms and values as against formal social control where external sanctions are enforced by government to prevent chaos, indiscipline, and other social disorders are not achieved. It was concluded that the subject has been existing in name and not for its core purposes. It was recommended that social studies should serve as link between the companies, and other employment agents to maintain norms, appropriate behaviours and standards that are necessary for national cohesion.

Keywords: Social Studies, school subject, national cohesion, master narrative,

1.0 Introduction

Since independence in 1957, Ghana has undergone series of educational reforms in an attempt to embrace an educational system that promoteseffectiveand efficient social cohesionfor national unity. Ghanaian master narratives have been servingas part of framework within which school curriculum determines what to teach and what to impart to the learners. However, due to globalization and democracy, alien cultures have found their ways into Ghanaian educational system making the central framework for promoting desirable and acceptable cultural values difficult. For instance, the master narratives for Ghanaian children is to be silent. Ghanaian children are not to question the authorities. Ghanaian ethnic groups have a culture of being ruled by kings, chiefs and traditional leaders.The youth supposed to take instructions from the elders without questioning. However, the emergence of democracy and globalization have changed the cultural status quo living internalization of social cohesion in danger.Democracy allows children and youth to question parents and others in authority. As Ghanaian master narratives and democracy comeinto play, there have been confusion in attitudes and behaviours among theyouth leading to poor social cohesion in Ghana. Writing under the heading "The Increasing Level of Indiscipline in Ghana, a Threat to Peace and Development" Derbie (2021) was with the view thatit has increasingly been clear that indiscipline in Ghana has reached a crescendo and even a vertically deficient person can see it without standing on anybody's shoulders.Thus, this paper looks at how social studies as a school subject promotes social cohesion in the learners since it appears national cohesion is missing in Ghana.

Social Studies education has been recognized as a necessary element to develop Ghanaian cultural and socio-economic development since educational reforms started in 1968. According to Akyeampong (2010) the goal of education in Ghana after independence was to provide relevant and high quality education for all Ghanaians, particularly the poor, in order for them to acquire requisite skills and knowledge that would enable them to become patriotic, functionally literate and productive. Thus, Social Studies became an integral part of the Ghanaian school curriculum shortly after the 1968 Social Studies Conference in Mombasa, Kenya. In the year 1972, it was first introduced into Ghanaian primary schools (Eshun& Mensah, 2013). In 1976, the discipline Social Studies was introduced into Ghana's Teacher-Training Colleges in order to meet the educational needs of the people of Ghana. In1987 and 1998 educational reforms, the teaching of Social Studies was fully rolled out and implemented in the Junior High School (JHS) and Senior High School (SHS) curricula in Ghana. Citizenship education wasemphasized throughout the curriculum and that Social Studies was subsequently designed with the

aim of equipping students to be reflective, competent and responsible citizens.

There cannot be development in any country without national unity hence, the need to instil in children social cohesiveness. National cohesion has been defined as a process and result of instilling and enabling all citizens in a country to have a sense and feel of belongingness and facing same challenges (Enem, 2002). National cohesion is achieved when societies and individuals are able to realise their full potential while living and working together towards similar goals and objectives. This aim can be accomplished via a society's regulation and reconciliation of divisions, competing interests, and demands. As a result, national cohesion is at its best when everyone in the country has the chance, resources, and incentive to engage fully in society as one wishes, on an equal footing with others, without undue compulsion, segregation, or inequity (Enem, 2002).

However, many historians have pointed out that the African nation-states are European creations, and West Africa is the continent's most heavily-demarcated region in terms of size and number of states with many foreign cultural infiltrations. Since Ghana's independence, colonial control has had the greatest impact on the country's political, social and moral landscape. The artificial boundaries that presently determine the geographical scope of each specific region within the country Ghana are of particular importance in the colonial legacies. As a result, ethnic groupings have been separated, which does not encourage national cohesion across the country. The ethnically distinct and amorphous states have resulted from the split of the same tribe-group into different regions threatening national cohesion and nation building (Zormelo& Associates, 2021).

1.2 Problem statement

It appears that Ghanaian cultural values, civic culture, social order and social controlare given way toforeign culturesas globalization and democracy emerged. It has become difficult for people of Ghana to embrace social cohesion for national development. This is because what to serve as a blueprint to guide the social behaviours of the people is in a state of confusion. As evident in Parliament of Ghana, the parliamentarians (the 8th parliament of the 4th republic), have demonstrated that patriotism and national cohesion in Ghana is a thing of the past. The major newspapers, radio stations and television stations in Ghana in the month of January, November and December, 2021 reported how members of parliament fought in defend of their political partiesand for their selfish interest at the expense of building consensus for national development (Yeboah, 2021; Naadi, 2021). Studies have also shown that unpatriotic among students in Ghana is on ascendency (Wireko-brobby, 2008)). There is also enough evidence to show that politics, ethnicity and tribalism have polarized the country Ghana such that nepotism has become the order of the day (Faanu& Graham, 2017). During elections, voters abuse the power bestowed upon them to choose the best leaders for the state by selecting candidates based on gifts received in cash orin kind, family ties, ethnic and tribal allegiance, and religious affiliation, rather than on leadership skills and competence (Atuire, 2020). According to Asante (2020) Ghanaians have a strong sense of social belongingness and national attachment, but they also shy away from formal engagement with the state due to corruption and loss of taste for mother tongue narratives.

Among the main objectivesof Social Studies as a subject in the Ghanaian school curriculum is toinculcate in the learners national consciousness and unity for development. The subject further prepares the individuals to fit into their society by equipping them with knowledge about the culture and societal problems, values and hopes for the future awaiting them. Thus, such leaners are expected to become responsible citizens capable of contributing to societal cohesion and advancement for better society (CRDD, 2010).

The major concern is that most parliamentarians who are showing gross misconduct, senior high school students who put up indisciplinebehaviours, voters who collect bribes before voting,among others, are all products of Social Studieseducation in Ghana. It appears therefore that Social Studies has failed to achieveits objectiveof ensuring social cohesion for national unity.One would argue that these happenings could not be enough to assume that Social Studies education seems to fail on its mandate of ensuring national cohesion. However, exploring the expertise's views on the Social Studiescontent and approachesto have best out of the existing situation could help toensure Social Studies role in achieving national cohesion in Ghana.

2.0. Review of literature

2.1 Social Studies as a school subject

Over the years, different scholars have defined Social Studies as a school subject in different ways (Ananga&Ayaaba, 2004). Barth and Shermis (1970) came to the conclusion that Social Studies is a method of teaching the social sciences or the amalgamation of the social sciences and citizenship education.According to Poatob and Adam (2011) the subject is equal to citizenship education. The aims and purposes of Social Studies are integrally linked to preparing young people for a changing society. Similarly, Dynneson and Gross (1999) stated that the instructional goals of Social Studies are inextricably related to preparing the young people for a changing world. Also, Social Studies focuses on widening students' perspectives and awareness of the community, state, nation, and world (Dynneson& Gross, 1999). The goal of Social Studies education is to teach citizens to be well-informed, reflective, concerned, active, dedicated, and participative in the development of a country by addressing personal and national issues.It has also been established that the subject's concentration is on the development of responsible citizens (Banks, 1990; Martorella, 1994; Quatey, 1984). According to Dynneson and Gross (1999) the core of the Social Studies curriculum has been primarily concerned with sociallisation and citizenship education since its inception. They argue that Social Studies has been tasked with socializing students for their future responsibilities as active, participatory and problem solving citizens. The subject instils in students the necessary knowledge, skills, values, and positive attitudes to fit into society (Quartey, 1984). The subject also strives to promote democratic ideas and ideals, which are essential for national prosperity, peace, and national cohesion and solidarity.

Others argue that Social Studies is a combination of social sciences (NaCCA, 2020). As a result, it is thought that Social Studies is structured to assist students to better understanding the subject matter and content of history, economics, government, sociology, and other social sciences in order to make better decisions. Because these social science disciplines have been merged into one discipline as Social Studies, there is a better probability of applying needed and relevant themes, information, and abilities learned in these subjects to address problems effectively and efficiently. The argument here is that,since what will cause a particular societal or personal problem with time and space cannot be predicted, combining subjects to form Social Studies content is preferable to situation where few themes, are drawn to form such content. As a result, the selected themes (what the curriculum developers select to form the content) may not always be enough for the learner to deal with the multi-faceted nature of societal and personal problems awaiting the learner. Instead, the learner must be allowed to select and apply a theme from amalgamated social science field to better deal with the problem at hand.

This implies that thedefinition of Social Studies should be looked at from two angles. First, its aim and means of delivery;second, sources of its contents. These two angles are worthy of consideringsince we cannot identify a subject by its aims and processes and leave out what it is made up of. Regarding its aim and processes, the question is,why is it important to study the subject? By what means would the set aim be achieved? We can refer to the argument of those who saythat the subject is citizenship education as well as those who claim the subject is a method of teaching social sciences for the answer.Since its inception, the primary goal of the subject has been to produce good citizens and problem solvers (Dynneson& Gross, 1999). The rationale for studying the subject has been to equip learners with knowledge, attitudes, values, and skills that will enable them to become active, informed, innovative, and responsible citizens with problem solving skills. According to Ghana's National Council for Curriculum and Assessment – NaCCA (2020) learners' curiosity, critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and capacities for personal development and leadership are all developed in Social Studies.

Thus, Social Studies' aim and processes are geared towards producing a good citizen who will fit well into the society. A good citizen in the eyes of Social Studies is one who is reflective in decision making; someone who is concerned and patriotic; someone who thinks critically;someone who has good knowledge, attitudes, values and skills that enable him/her to become active, informed, innovative, and responsible citizen. This is a citizen thatSocial Studies education is expected to produce. The question is, by what processes could we achieve this aim? We know that the word 'education' involves processes which include pedagogies – the methods and practices of teaching young ones. It is against this direction that we employ citizenship education concept in Social Studies.

Having stated the rationale for the subject and its processes which take the form of citizenship education, another question which needs an answer is 'where does the subject take its knowledge content from? The answer for this

question can be found in the 2020 Ghana's Social Studies curriculum document. The document has it that Social Studies is a multi-disciplinary subject that draws its content fromGeography Sociology, Government, Economics and History. Thus, to put the aims, processes and its content into perspective, social studies is seen as a multi-disciplinary subject that draws its content from social sciences with the aim of preparing its learners to become good citizens as they go through citizenship education processes and equip themselves with skills to solve all personal and societal problems.Thus, it must be emphasized that since the word 'education' is a process of acquiring skills and knowledge, Social Studies cannot be the same as citizenship education – process of acquiring civic values and competence. The relationship between Social Studies and citizenship education is that as broader discipline, Social Studies takes the processof citizenship education to achieve its aim of producing civic competent persons (civic ideas and practices) but Social Studies goes beyond civic ideas and competence.

The knowledge and the pedagogical contents of Social Studies give its nature as problem solving discipline. Hence, other aspects of life where problems do emanatefrom also need attention in Social Studies.It can be inferred from the forgone discussion that social studies does not only aim at producing good citizens but also, more importantly, equip the learners with skills to solve personal and societal problems ranging from economics, finance, politics, socio-cultural, and any other aspect of life. These include science and technology, globalization; production, distribution and consumption; power and governance; time, continuity and change; procreation and population; and people, places and environment. However, this paper limits itself to citizenship education since it focuses on social cohesion for nation building.

2.2 Social studies and Social Cohesion

According to Forrest and Kearns (2001) social cohesion needs to be broken down into five dimensions. These are common values and a civic culture; social order and social control; social solidarity and reductions in wealth disparities; social networks and social capital; and place attachment and identity. In the table below, we have adopted Forrest and Kearns' (2001) five dimensions of social cohesion and modified to describe the aim of Social Studies education in achieving national cohesion.

Table 1. Social Cohesion Domains

Social Cohesion Domain	Description
Common values and a civic culture	1. Train social studies students to conform to Common aims and objectives; common moral principles and codes of behaviour in their society and Ghana as nation; 2. Inculcate in students the habit of supporting for political institutions such as electoral commission to function well 3. Help students to participate meaningfully in politics both local and national as they vote according to aim and objectives of the national development.
Social order and social control	1. Train social studies students to avoid conflict and threats to the existing order in the community, society and the country Ghana 2. Inculcate in the learners absence of incivility; 3. Design the learning experience for effective informal social control – internalization (self-acceptance) ofsocial norms and values as against formal social control where External sanctions are enforced by government to prevent chaos. 4. Social studies can be used to achieve social cohesion if the social order and social control is attained through tolerance, respect for difference.

Social solidarity and reductions in wealth disparities	1. Train leaders who acknowledge that harmonious economic and social development is the way to achieving social solidarity and reduction of wealth inequalities and maintaining of common standards 2. Train leaders to accept the fact that redistribution of public finances and opportunities lead to reduction of wealth disparity. 3. Producing leaders who have a sense of creating environment for equal access to services and welfare benefits 4. Preparing students to acknowledge social obligations and willingness to assist others
Social networks and social capital	1. Instil in the learners high degree of social interaction within communities and families 2. civic engagement and associational activity; 3. easy resolution of collective action problems
Place attachment and identity	1. Produce learners with strong attachment to place, intertwining of personal and place identity

Source: Forrest and Kearns (2001,) adopted and modified to suit Social Studies education in 2021

It must be noted from the above table that participation enhances social cohesion which implies that in order to enhance social cohesion Social Studies must be design to promote tolerance and participation. To ensure participations, scholars in the field have suggested that the approach to delivery lessons and the content of the subject need a well-designed framework. It emphases on social control – internalization where people are willing to accept self-discipline rather than state disciplinary measures for social order. Social Studies as a school subject has a duty to attain such a goal by instilling self-control and self-discipline among its learners.

2.3. Imparting Social Cohesion through Social Studies Education

Ellis (1995) proposes three approaches in the teaching and learning of Social Studies: the Learner-Centered Approach or Active Learning, the Society-Centered Approach, and the Knowledge-Centered Approach. Students are provided with freedom of choice under the Learner-Centered Approach which allows students to design their own learning processes. Teachers' role in this approach is to guide and assist the students. The key element in the Society-Centered approach, on the other hand, is citizenship approach. Students work together in groups to internalize good values, participatory and democratic processes. The second characteristic feature that coincides with this strategy is that it invites students to participate in the civic engagement process by incorporating community resources. Thus, students develop awareness of what goes on in their community.Finally, the Knowledge-Centered approach, according to Ellis (1995) employs a variety of teaching strategies, ranging from inquiry to seat work, but the focus is always on the "curriculum." This method modifies student learning to what the teacher believes would generate the best learning outcome. The teacher has ultimate control over what and how the students are taught and learn (Ellis, 1995). When these tactics are properly implemented, they result in the desired improvements in young people. As a result, Social Studies relies not only on its content to educate its students, but also on the manner in which the knowledge is conveyed.

Countries that experience inter-ethnic conflict, chieftaincy clashes, land disputes, and inter-party clashes require a careful selection of Social Studies curriculum contents as well as coordinated themes and delivery processes to imbibe and inculcate good morals, the ability to make informed decisions, become critical thinkers, patriotism, tolerance, peace, love for one another, and all other civics responsibilities through citizenship education.

All forms of citizenship education, according to Wordu (2020), are aimed at instilling respect for others and recognising the equality of all human beings, as well as eliminating all forms of discrimination by cultivating a spirit of tolerance and harmony among human beings. Citizenship education allows persons to develop general knowledge, respect for others, and, most significantly, patriotism. Citizenship education broadens and enriches democratic culture while also enhancing democratic values. It contributes to the promotion of civility and tolerance in national cohesion. Citizenship education aids in the promotion of peaceful coexistence in a country like Ghana, which has a diverse culture and multi-ethnic communities.

Ghana's Social Studies curriculum is reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that it remains relevant to the country's development. The following were the precise aims, purposes, and goals of Social Studies for Senior High Schools (SHS) in Ghana as provided by the Curriculum Research & Development Division - CRDD (2010):

1. To develop the ability to adapt to the developing and ever-changing Ghanaian society.
2. To develop positive attitudes and values towards individual and societal issues.
3. To develop critical and analytical skills in assessing issues for objective decision-making.
4. To develop national consciousness and unity.
5. To develop enquiry and problem-solving skills for solving personal and societal problems.
6. To become responsible citizens capable and willing to contribute to societal advancement.

These objectives were revised in the year 2020 by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment – NaCCA (2020) as follows:

1. Explore and protect the environment
2. Exhibit sense of belonging to the family and community
3. Appreciate themselves as unique individuals
4. Demonstrate responsible citizenship
5. Develop attitudes for healthy and peaceful co-existence
6. Ensure sustainable use of resources
7. Develop sense of patriotism and national pride
8. Make themselves globally competitive

Both the year 2010 and 2020 Social Studies curriculum of Ghana placed emphasis on aspects of social cohesion that deal with common values and civic culture as well as social order and control. According to Atuire (2020) the lack of a strong commitment to national cohesion leads to widespread of corruption; waste of limited national resources and poor resource distribution that is biased against ethnic and political lines.

2.4 Hindrance to Social Cohesion

Ghanaian master narrativewhich could have provided framework within which Social Studiescurriculum situate common values and civic culture for national cohesion has been deviated. The basic aspects among this master narrative includes respect for authority; children accepting instructions with no questions; hospitality;culturally accepted sexual morality; wives' submissiveness to their husbands; husbands having right to marry more than one wife; and elders are always right. These aspects of life became oppressive and inimical to the people as democracy, Christianity, gender activists, human rights andglobalization emerged.

McLean et al. (2018) studies show that deviating from the master narrative can lead to oppression and confusion in life. McLean et al. (2018) quoted a respondent who seems to have deviated from sexual master narrative as follows:

> My whole life I always felt there was something slightly different about me regarding my sexual orientation. I grew up in a very hetero normative household and followed what I was taught. I am very masculine and never could accept the possibility of being gay until I got married to my girlfriend that I was with for about five years. I now don't place a label on my sexuality but am interested in dating men. This is common but definitely diverges from the hetero normative story that is set out for me to follow. I struggled with a lot of depression for a few years but after accepting myself I have never felt better.

There is always a problem with what to include in school curriculum since culture is dynamic. What normally deepens the confusion is the fact that some cultural changes are undesirable and therefore face a lot of resistance. Thus, master narratives and undesirable but internationally accepted cultural change, always set confusion in the societies.

One of the instances where Social Studies discipline faces challenges in ensuring national cohesion in Ghana is how to design the curriculum todiffuse the minds of learners on ethnocentrism. Multi-partisan democracy in Ghana has become the fertile ground to breed ethnocentrism. With a few exceptions, Ghana's political environment is such that the two largest political parties' core followers are divided along ethno-cultural lines:

Eastern and Ashanti regions, known as Akans, are dominated by the NPP (New Patriotic Party); Volta and the Northern Regions are dominated by the NDC (National Democratic Congress). Party leaders are not the only ones who express tribal and ethnocentric beliefs but the traditional leaders from various regions as well. Despite the fact that Article 276 (1) of the Republic's Constitution prohibits traditional leaders from doing so (Atuire, 2020).

The structural deficit in Ghana's educational system is another issue impeding national cohesion. It is disheartening that Ghanaian school systems priorities foreign subjects over national studies and master narratives. The continued use of English as the lingua franca in Ghana, particularly in the educational sector, has weakened national cohesion. The employment of English as a medium of instruction, particularly in primary school, elevates English culture above indigenous culture. The use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction is critical in the development of skills, values, knowledge, and attitudes, particularly at the pre-tertiary level. There have been proposals that the language of instruction should be the children's first language in order for citizenship education to achieve its goal. Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) confirms that denying a Ghanaian child the use of his or her native language in school is committing "linguistic genocide" in education and that using English is not the best alternative, but rather deepens a class system society by favouring a few privileged citizens over the majority of dissatisfied citizens. According to Paauw (2009) a local common national language will serve as a symbol of togetherness among citizens. Since the single cultural aspect that binds the citizens together as one people is a language. As a result, having a national language will improve national cohesion.

Njengere (2014) bemoaned the chasm that exists between a country's intended, implemented, and achieved curriculum. According to Chiodo and Byford (2004) instructors' attitudes have a significant impact on the achievement of the Social Studies curriculum's goals. Similarly, data from other studies show that decisions regarding what to teach our children in Social Studies classes frequently vary and are influenced by the teacher's perspective on the subject (Bekoe&Eshun, 2013). Thus, teachers' cultural orientations and the extent to which they embraced social changeand foreign culture do affect the implementation of curriculum in Social Studies classrooms.

The literature reviewed shows that Social Studies as a discipline is packaged to equip learners with the requisite skills, knowledge and attitude necessary for solving societal problems, ensuring social cohesion, fostering civility and nation building.However, the success of these goals depend on the processes, content and themes of the curriculum. Hence, exploring the expertise's views to show the way forward would help to suggest an effective way of achievingnational cohesion through Social Studies education.

3.0 Methodology

The researchers adopted a qualitative research approach for the study. The theoretical perspective or paradigm of qualitative research posits that the knowledge of the world is socially constructed, understood and interpreted by the individual participants based on the experience of their world in which they live and work. It is more concern with an in-depth understanding of human behaviour in a context or phenomenon. It seeks to describe and interpret the meaning people give to things and events so as to gain valuable insight and generate explanations or theories about a phenomenon under study (Smith, Denzin& Lincoln, 1994).

This study used exploratory research design. According to Roberson (2002), exploratory research design is very useful in a study that seeks to find out what is happening, to seek a new insight and assess a phenomenon in a new light. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2007) provided three principal ways of conducting exploratory research. These are: "a search of a literature; interviewing 'expertise' in the subject; and conducting focus group interviews". As one engages in a process of exploratory, one finds out whether the activities, approaches and means to effect changes in people's lives are effective to achieve the needed results (Mouton, 2001).

The choice of this design afforded the researchers an opportunity to conduct an in-depth study of phenomena through one-on-one interviews in order to explore how Social Studies as a school subject could aid in achieving national cohesion in Ghana. The population for the study (respondents) were all the experienced Social Studies Lecturers who have ever taught Social Studies in the basic or secondary schools before becoming lecturers in the University of Cape Coast (UCC) and University of Education, Winneba (UEW), both in Ghana. However, the accessible population was those lecturers who pursued Social Studies and are experts in the field. A sample sizeof

ten (10) participants were purposively and conveniently selected and interviewed – sixparticipants from University of Education Winneba and 4participants from University of Cape Coast.Six of the respondents were females and 4 of them were male. Three out of ten respondents had ever taught in basic schools for six to ten years before they became lecturers. Two had taught in basic schools for over ten years before their appointments +into the universities as lecturers. The other two respondents had ever taught in basic schools for two years. None of the respondents had taught at the university for less than one years. The population – lecturers who have ever taught as teachers were selected ahead of other category of teacher for two reasons. First, such teacher could tell their experience from basic school through to university teaching. Thus, we were with the view that they could be in a better position to talk to various levels of Social Studies education. Second, such experienced teachers have in-depth knowledge and information on category of teachers and students they have ever engaged and taught and could give vital information on them than any other set of population.

The researchers adopted one-on-one interview as a tool for gathering data. In order to ensure the trustworthiness of the instruments and the data the study was evaluated as Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed: credibility, transferability, dependability, and checking/conformability. In ensuring the credibility of the study, the researchers engaged the participants in prolonged interviews in order to unearth all the issues. In ensuring dependability, the researchers engaged in inquiry audit by giving the interview questions to the well experienced lecturers to examine both the process and product of the study. To confirm the data obtained, data interpretations and findings were shaped by the experienced lecturers who are senior members from whom the data were obtained. The one-on-one interviews were tape-recorded, and the audio-tapes were listened to repeatedly and transcribed to facilitate analysis. Words that were foundinteresting were quoted directly. In the analysis, broad themes were developed and discussed. Data analysis was done by arranging the interview transcripts. Basically it involved the making of sense out of the data, followed by identifying significant patterns, and finally drawing meaning from data and subsequently building a logical chain of evidence. Confidentiality was ensured, since an audio tape recording was used in the discussion that transpired one-on-one interview.

4.0 Discussion of findings

The discussion highlights various views of our respondents. How Social Studies should be handled and taught in our schools to promote national cohesion was the main issue raised. In all, the respondents were with the view that the stated objectives in the curriculumif followed and the proper methodology and processes are followed, national cohesion could be achieved. However, Ghanaian youth who have passed through Social Studies curriculum and therefore, are supposed to promote national cohesion by exhibiting all domains of social cohesion are not doing so due to the fact that their subject content wasinsufficient andor poorly delivered.

4.1 Social Studies cannot promote national cohesion due to how it is defined and taught in Ghana

Respondents were asked to state how they seeSocial Studies education in Ghana. They were to share with us their experiences over the years how they have come to realize how the subject should be taught to promote national cohesion. Almost all the respondents touched on the subject objectives, how the subject is taught and measured in our schools. On how to assess the achievement of the objectives, they all agreed that for Social Studies to achieve its aim as a school subject, there was the need to measure the affective domain which in reality, it is almost absent. One of the respondents stated:

> One of the cardinal objectives of the Social Studies is toinstil in the learners national consciousness and unity. What it means is that the subject is expected to unite us to see ourselves first and foremost as Ghanaians and to allow national aspirations to override individuals or groups' parochial interest. That in itself is a way of fostering national cohesion.

> Notwithstanding, the way the subject is taught in our classrooms is very crucial in determining whether the objective is attained or not. If teachers are not well trained to understand the goal and the appropriate pedagogies to use, this great dream could become a mirage. And as former basic school teacher, I can tell you that teachers only teach the subject purposely forexams (a female lecturer from UCC).

A thirty-year experienced'teacher – lecturer' who has been involved in educational reforms in the country attributed the problem to misconception the politicians as well as the expertise in the subject have on the subject.

This lecturer respondent, and other six respondentswere with the view that there has been so much politics in Social Studies as a school subject, between Social Studies and other social science subjects and the definition of the subject as well. It came out that as the University of Cape Coast sees the subject as the amalgamation of social sciences and therefore seeks to introduce its learners into better understanding of social science subjects such as economics, geography, sociology and history such that the learners can better be positioned to approach societal problems holistically as they conveniently employ a combination of any relevant aspect of these social science subjects to solve societal problems, the other university, University of Education, Winneba sees it as citizenship education and therefore only needs some selected themes, selected from these social sciences subjects by the university to solve societal problems. The two main universities which offer the subject seem not to agree on common focus of the subject. Thus, have different approaches,in terms of the content employed in training Social Studies teachers in Ghana, Social Studies teachers from these universitiesdo not have common focus for nation building. It appears to us that considering the objectives set out by NaCCA (2020), and the fact that society is dynamic and therefore personal and society problems do occur in complex situation, it would be unfair and inappropriate to be selective in themes to form SocialStudies course as a single subject.

Solicitinginformation on how the subject should be taught, a respondent said:

> Discovery method needs to be adopted. Assessment of behavioural change should be a hallmark of the subject. I don't see why a subject that seeks to change behaviours does not measure behaviours". Science students who are training to become scientists and medical doctors, engineers, and all professionals in the country must imbibe in themselves good attitudes. Every student must have a checklist tracking changes in behaviour and attitude from junior high school level to secondary, and at the university level as a scorecard. Thus, the aspirations of the nation Ghana concerning the national unity needs shall be achieved since failure in the set desirable character traits nullifies one's first class certificate (a male lecturer at UEW).

Some of the respondents also attributed the problem to how some of the training institutions like universities and teacher training colleges train their students. Out of ten respondents, eight were with the view that universities which offer Social Studies education should redesign their pedagogies to enrich the skills of their product. Here is an excerpt of such views:

> Social Studies subject teaching, seriously requires experts and professionals who will deploy the relevant knowledge, skills, methods and strategies in teaching the concepts and topics in the curriculum effectively. When I say expert, I am not talking about just university graduate who has social studies certificate, but a well-trained graduate who adheres to all principles of teaching social studies. The training institutions also need to mount good teaching courses with high caliber of trainers. Social Studies teaching and learning should be seen as utilizing service learning approach, thus a type of educational philosophy that requires the students to demonstrate their knowledge, by connecting the cognitive to the emotion and resulting in better learning outcomes.Active learning approach that requires a broad range of teaching strategies which engage students as active participants in their learning during class time with their instructor and controversial learning approach, relating to or causing much discussion, disagreement, or argument between and among learners (a male lecturer at UCC).

4.2 Social Studies curriculum in Ghanaian Schools Lack Essential Contents

It was discovered that the content of Social Studies must be carefully chosen in order to improve learners' time management, self-discipline, instilling social values, assisting learners in developing a teamwork spirit, and producing citizens who are subservient to authority. The response was informative when it came to determining how the students should be examined to see if they had changed in character, attitudes, behaviours, and knowledge to satisfy the national cohesiveness objective. All of the respondents believe that the goal of Social Studies has not been met because the subject is expected to measure affective domain but has yet to do so. The subject must be linked to the measurement of attitudinal change at every stage of a student's educational career. Students should be granted a proficiency certificate for good behaviour and patriotism at the end of secondary school education, and it should include data from junior high school. As a result, companies must consider such qualifications when making job appointments across the country.

On paper, the current scenario in the teaching of Social Studies in Ghana intends to enhance national cohesion because the subject appears to encourage young people to think critically and be tolerant, but this goal is not being reached, according to the respondents. The subject's vision of changing attitudes in Ghana has remained elusive or a mirage because Ghana's educational system fails to provide the subject with the necessary support and purposeful directions to ensure that all students achieve a set of national standards of behaviour and attitude traits.

4.2.1NaCCA's 2020 Social Studies Curriculum Cannot Change the Status Quo

Our research also compelled us to evaluate the new Social Studies curriculum critically, and we can conclude that it is merely a repackaging of old content and methods with new terminologies that will not change the status quo. In this session, we discussed how the Social Studies curriculum in elementary school in Ghana is structured before taking a stand.

Curriculum, according to Cheung and Wong (2002), is about maximising an individual's humanity by assisting them in reaching their full potential in life, as well as identifying and passing on values, relevant knowledge and intellectual developments, skills, and attitudes that will promote peaceful and harmonious living. It is therefore sufficient to comprehend the reasons for the frequent adjustments and revisions in Ghanaian school curricula. The new Social Studies curriculum's rationale states that the subject's goal is to provide students with the knowledge, attitudes, values, and abilities necessary to become engaged, informed, inventive, and responsible citizens. Social Studies is designed to address the challenges or problems that face Ghanaian society and endanger its survival, such as national cohesiveness (NaCCA, 2020). As a result, the new Social Studies curriculum aims to improve communication and collaboration, creativity and innovation, digital literacy, cultural identity, and global citizenship by cultivating learners' curiosity, critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and competencies for personal development and leadership.

As previously mentioned by Martorella (1994); Banks, (1990); and Blege, (2001), the purposes and objectives of Social Studies as a Common Core Programme (CCP) of the Pre-tertiary Education Curriculum are to enable learners to acquire relevant tools to become productive, active, and patriotic citizens. The new Social Studies curriculum also asserts that learners display responsible citizenship, develop attitudes for healthy and peaceful coexistence, and generate national pride that allows them to compete globally.

The Ghanaian 2020 Social Studies curriculum suggests learning-centered pedagogy to attain these goals. This is a method of teaching and learning Social Studies in which students discuss ideas inspired by the teacher. The students become more active in their search for answers, working in groups to solve issues. It allows for deep and profound learning to take place. Students are provided freedom of choice under the Learner-Centered method, according to Ellis (1995). It is student-driven, and students are in charge of their own education. The teacher's role is to help pupils acquire knowledge and abilities that will help them solve social problems. This means that the new Social Studies curriculum aspires to develop excellent citizens through citizenship education methodologies and problem-solving skills in students.

Though the new Social Studies curriculum sounds to give possible solutions to man and his environment for a meaningful and sustainable life in society, it is conspicuously silent on solution to the threatening socio-economic issues such as corruption, political intolerance, homosexuality, cyber fraud, illegal mining, solutions to road accidents; means of working on the attitude of the learners, as well as means to track the learners attitudinal change and moral standards. Some of these social conditions require an immediate attention in the Social Studies curriculum to refocus on building a nation of relative peace, stability and a stronger cohesion.

4.2.2 Respondents' views on thegapthat exist between new Social Studies curriculum and achievement of national cohesion

When the respondents were asked about their views on the effectiveness of the new Social Studies curriculum in changing the existing social deviant behaviours which have crept into our society as a result of social media and traditional media, the response was that, 'it is the old curriculum in a new suit'. Majority of the respondents (six out of ten) stated that the new Social Studies curriculum for the pre-tertiary education lack life-changing essentials, content and proper training to challenge the status quo. A 10-year experienced lecturer's assertion issummarised below:

It appears the focus and the relevance of the subject is not properly understood by various protagonists of the subject and that has affected the content and the pedagogy of the subject. There are new topics in the curriculum that are not relevant to attaining the goals of the subject. Likewise, there are relevant ones which are not found there. Social studies education in Ghana has been an ordinary subject and mere academic requirements for school placement and that cannot change anything. The new curriculum needed to have addressed the core problems facing the society (a male lecturer, UCC).

This respondent suggests that the approach and contents of the new curriculum cannot change the status quo.In anotherresponse to the same question, a respondent had this to say:

By choosing Society-Centered approach, I am building a community in the classroom. This approach creates a "society" where students decide how it is run. This approach will better prepare students to learn how to cooperate and collaborate with other members of that same society. Students, as a group, decide on changes that can be made to strengthen their learning community, rules in the classroom that should be followed, and the consequences for not following the rules. It creates a collaborative environment and I believe it is essential for students to learn how to participate in the society as a critical thinker, a problem solver, and an active, knowledgeable and participatory citizen with positive attitudes towards national cohesion (a male lecturer at UEW).

Banks (1990), Martorella (1994) and Quatey (1984) have all previously expressed similar views. The aforesaid assumption was backed up by the comments of other respondents. It was discovered that Social Studies pedagogies and contents, as well as all other practices as a school subject cannot achieve their primary goal in isolation. Almost all the respondents (98%) agreed that Social Studies departments in universities and secondary schools should collaborate with businesses, corporations, and government organisations and institutions to establish and maintain moral standards for employees. As a result, citizenship education would extend beyond the four walls of the classroom. The subject will also act as a link between educational institutions and governmental programmes aimed at upholding social norms, moral standards, and preventing the spread of immoralities.

4.3 Hindrances to national cohesion in Ghana

When we asked the participants about their thoughts on the key issue that impedes national cohesiveness in Ghana (as we single out language), practically all of them focused their arguments on ethnocentrism. Three out of ten respondents said that national cohesion could not be achieved unless there was a single common local language used as a national language. Their main point was that language is one cultural factors that draw people together. As a result, they regard Ghana as a country devoid of culture. Majority's view (8 out of 10 respondents) on this issue was that, hindrances to national cohesion emanates from the fact that some tribes look down on others. Religious intolerance, disrespect for other smaller ethnic groups and the fact that our educational system has failed to eliminate ethnocentric tendencies in the so-called elite class.

This response underscores that ethnic cleavages, linguistic differences, social status inequalities religious rivalry andcrave for power are all threats to national peace and cohesion. This claim seems to be targeted at in the JHS Social Studies aim 7 – to developsense of patriotism and national pride.Kumah (2005) explains thatthe educational system should nurture individuals to take interest in local, institutional and national identity that will breed national cohesion. The existing Social Studies curriculum and the new one designed in the year 2020 appear to have in their contents and pedagogies to address such situation. However, the fact that the problem persist means that all mechanisms employed to address it, including the use of Social Studies, have failed. Majority's view, (8 out of 10) on this issue was that using one Ghanaian language is not the way forward for promoting national cohesion. It is all about revisiting our national values norms and inculcating them seriously in the younger generation. Our problems are attitudinal. We must create an environment that will allow for attitudinal change. In addition, laws must be enforced without partiality. When conscious education is done with laws that are enforced effectively, that can change our attitudes for the better and the cohesion that is needed can become a reality. Social Studies as a school subject must be committed to equipping learners with the appropriate knowledge, attitudes, values and skills. It is not just writing it in a curriculum, but proper implementation is required and thatthis has nothing to do with language.

Clearly, the respondentsdo not subscribe tonative national language as a panacea to national cohesion. The majority view was in support of Owu-Ewie, (2006) who argues that the multilingual nature of Ghana and its classrooms cannot support the use of the Ghanaian language as a medium of instruction in our schools.On the contrary, Skutnabb-Kangas, (2000) had confirmed that denying a Ghanaian child the use of his/her native language in education is tantamount to committing the crime of "linguistic genocide" in education and that the use of English is definitely not the best alternative but rather deepens a class system society by favouring a few privileged citizens as against the majority who are dissatisfied.Rather, the educational system should be redesigned to equip the citizenry the requisite knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that will eschew disrespect for other smaller ethnic groups and eliminate ethnocentric tendencies in the so-called elite class.

Conclusion

The basic argument of this paper is that Social Studies as a school subject has not received the necessary support to realise its goal of national cohesiveness. The reason was found to be the fact that the subject is poorly organised in terms of both content and pedagogy. As a result, learners' internalisation (self-acceptance) of societal norms and values, as opposed to formal social control, in which the government imposes external sanctions to avoid chaos, indiscipline, and other social disorders. Despite the fact that Ghana's new Social Studies curriculum, 2020, focuses on teaching young people core competencies such as patriotism, tolerance, peaceful coexistence, positive attitude, civic duties or responsibilities, and societal values, it lacks appropriate pedagogies to challenge the status quo as a means of achieving and measuring attitudes for national cohesion.The study acknowledges that Social Studies should be taught in the same way as Citizenship Education, but it disagrees that Social Studies and Citizenship Education are the same thing. Rather, the character of Social Studies must take the form of integrated social sciences, with the goal of developing good citizens, where a good citizen is defined as someone who is introspective, patriotic, and capable of functioning in civil society.

Recommendation

Social Studies as a teaching subject in the Ghanaian schools should be accorded the needed support from national government, education policy makers to function as a subject that can train the citizenry to become critical thinkers, problem-solvers and competent collaborators to enhance national cohesion.In order to solve indiscipline and the importation of immoral acts and unacceptable foreign culture into Ghana, the subject should be redefined to encompass a means to measure moral and attitudinal standards and aspirations of the country. Its departments in schools and universities must link up with companies and employers to maintain attitudinal and moral standards of the country, Ghana.

The nature of Social Studies Education should be an integrated social sciences with an 'open ended curriculum' that allows teachers to address any imported immoral and counterproductive acts into the country in order to producea set standard of 'good citizens'. The content must be master narrative, depicting the traditional culture, aspiration and wishes of the people. The approachto achieve its main goal must be through the use of citizenship education – creating communities in the classrooms and imbibing in the learnersthe country's 'set standard bahaviours'. The curriculum should give room to teaching threatening socio-economic issues such as corruption, political intolerance, avoidance of homosexuality which threaten the survival of human existence, cyber fraud, illegal mining etc. which are set to be endangering Ghana national cohesion.

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