

Social Studies Teachers' Content Knowledge in Senior High Schools in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis in the Western Region of Ghana

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Abstract

The main objective of the study was to find out how Social Studies teachers at the Senior High School (SHS) understand the content of what they are teaching to be able to achieve the objectives of the subject. To achieve this objective, interview guide, observation checklist and questionnaire were used to elicit the views of respondents. In all, 54 Social Studies teachers were involved in the study. The simple random, cluster and convenient sampling techniques were used to select the respondents for the study. Frequency counts and percentages were used as statistical tools for analysing the questionnaire data collected, and the data from the interview guide was transcribed, categorized, analysed and discussed on themes and subthemes that emerged. The findings revealed that majority of the teachers lack content knowledge of Social Studies and they were not teaching to develop attitude, skills, values and knowledge. Teachers were teaching the subject in as amalgamation of social sciences and are thus not making students to be reflective, concerned and participatory citizens. Based upon the findings, it was recommended there should be courses on Social Studies content so as to develop teachers' knowledge about the subject to enhance effective teaching.

Keywords

Social Studies, Content, Knowledge, Senior High School

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1. Introduction

The overall goal of the Ministry of Education is to provide relevant and quality education for all Ghanaians, including the disadvantaged, to enable them acquire skills which will make them functionally literate and productive to facilitate poverty alleviation and promote the rapid socio-economic growth of the country Curriculum Research and Development Division (CRDD) (2012). Preparing students for the 21st century cannot be accomplished without a strong and sustaining emphasis on Social Studies. Social Studies

provide cornerstone skills that are the key to opening doors for a more diverse, competitive workforce and responsible citizenry. Students use critical thinking, self-assessment, reasoning, problem-solving, collaboration, research, and investigation to make connections in new and innovative ways as they progress through Social Studies education. These standards outline the knowledge and skills needed to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a

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culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world National Council for Social Studies (NCSS) (2008).

Ghana's education has gone through many reforms dating back to colonial times to date. All these reforms aim at bringing constant improvements in its availability and relevance of education to the citizenry. In achieving this, the Ministry of Education in Ghana has since the early 1950's modified their entry requirements for admissions into the Colleges of Education. Time was when applicants entered Colleges of Education from standard seven, but this changed to entry after Senior Secondary School. Again, the duration of training was also changed from one year to two years and to three years. These changes in duration spent at the College of Education help to ensure higher content knowledge before and during training.

It is traditionally accepted that for any effective teaching, the teacher should have both the content knowledge and the pedagogy. Teachers' knowledge about the subject matter to be learned or taught and that of content to be covered in the syllabus are very important and when applied well will promote effective teaching and learning. According to Bordoh (2012) the idea that knowledge is constructed during the learning process and that a student discovers knowledge for him/herself, rather than receiving knowledge, inspires the notion of performance-based assessment. Since content knowledge is vital to good teaching, there should be courses on Social Studies content so as to develop teachers' knowledge about the subject to enhance effective teaching. Questions in Social Studies should emphasize on how to address the problems of human survival (Kankam, Bordoh, Eshun, Bassaw & Andoh-Mensah, 2014).

A teacher with deep pedagogical knowledge understands how students construct knowledge and acquire skills and how they develop habits of mind and positive dispositions toward learning. As such, pedagogical knowledge requires an understanding of cognitive, social, and developmental theories of learning and how they apply to students in the classroom. A thorough grounding in college-level subject matter and professional competence in professional practice are necessary for good teaching.

Recent scholars have emphasized that meaningful learning is a product not of activity *per se*, but of *sense-making discourse* aimed at developing conceptual understanding and the links between theory and observable phenomena (Bereiter, 1994; Mortimer & Scotty, 2003). Thus, learning is not accomplished through teacher's approach to teaching and learning but rather how the teacher will integrate curriculum content to teacher's own professional content knowledge to diverse interests and abilities of learners. The teacher is required to blend both the nature and the scope of the subject

to achieve its purpose, goals and objectives.

In Ghana, Social Studies seems to occupy a high profile in the Senior High School curriculum and it is one of the core subjects to be studied at that level. Because of its importance, the government of Ghana is committed to ensuring the provision of high quality Social Studies teachers in our educational system through the Universities in the country. Besides, Social Studies is compulsory at the Junior and Senior High Schools. Personal experience and unverified information seem to point to the fact that most of our graduates from the senior high schools display their inability in the needed behavioural change which Social Studies seeks to address (Kankam *et al.*, 2014).

Consistently, negative citizenry behaviours of all sorts are on the increase in the country and one begins to ask if the subject Social Studies is actually achieving its purpose and goals. Social Studies was introduced into Senior High Schools in Ghana and made compulsory in September 1996. It is expected that the nation would have by this time realized some positive behavioural traits among the products of the Senior High School. The question is why is it that the subject is not achieving its intended goals and purpose. Do the teachers have any gap in content?

The content knowledge of tutors' influences the assessment in Social Studies curriculum (Bordoh, 2013). It is a well-known fact that teachers' content knowledge will influence how teaching is carried out in the classroom. This awareness prompted the researchers to conduct a study into teachers' content knowledge of Social Studies and its effects on the teaching of Social Studies in Ghana. The effectiveness of teaching is highly enhanced by the technique and content knowledge. Integrating teachers' content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge will produce a multifaceted and dynamic classroom context.

2. Literature Review on Content knowledge of Social Studies

The content of a discipline is largely dictated by the acceptable definition prescribed by its practitioners. Unfortunately, in the field of Social Studies the practitioners have held different definitions and there are those who do not seem to see any link between the definition and the content. According to Shulman (1992), teachers need to master two types of knowledge: (a) content, also known as "deep" knowledge of the subject itself, and (b) knowledge of the curricular development. Content knowledge encompasses what Bruner (1960) called the "structure of knowledge" namely: the theories, principles, and concepts of a particular

discipline. Especially important is content knowledge that deals with the teaching process, including the most useful forms of representing and communicating content and how students' best learn the specific concepts and topics of a subject. "If beginning teachers are to be successful, they must wrestle simultaneously with issues of pedagogical content or knowledge as well as general pedagogy or generic teaching principles" (Grossman, as cited in Ornstein, Thomas, & Lasley, 2000: 508). Shulman (1995) defined *content knowledge* as the knowledge about the subject, for example, mathematics and its structure.

However, knowledge of Social Studies and knowledge of Social Studies presentations are related to content knowledge, while knowledge of students and how teaching is done is related to pedagogical content knowledge. Thus, what a teacher perceives the subject to be and the methodology to make known what he/she perceived will bring good presentation of the subject, so that its philosophy, nature, goal and objectives will be well integrated to produce learners whose civic competencies are well developed. The perceived knowledge of the subject is what Shulman (1995) termed as its subject matter and deep understanding of the subject matter is the foundation for pedagogical content knowledge which enables the teacher to teach effectively so that students become well informed to develop their civic competence.

Shulman (1995) was of the view that, for a teacher to be able to teach effectively, he/she needs to understand the subject matter deeply so that he/she can relate one idea to another, and address misconceptions in students. Teachers need to see how ideas connect across fields of study and to everyday life. This kind of understanding provides a foundation for pedagogical content knowledge that enables teachers to make ideas accessible to others. This means that a number of factors may influence the teaching of Social Studies but teachers play an important role in the teaching process. The common belief in society is, if a Social Studies teacher knows Social Studies very well, he or she is the best person to teach Social Studies. But, what about knowing how to teach Social Studies?

Fennema and Franke (1992) came out with components of Social Studies teachers' knowledge as;

1) Knowledge of Social Studies

- Content knowledge
- The nature of Social Studies
- The mental organisation of teacher knowledge

2) Knowledge of Social Studies representations

3) Knowledge of students' cognitions

4) Knowledge of teaching and decision-making

The first item is about having conceptual understanding of Social Studies. They argue that if a teacher has a conceptual understanding of Social Studies, this influences classroom instruction in a positive way. Therefore, it is important for teachers to possess Social Studies knowledge. Teachers' interrelated knowledge is very important as well as procedural rules. They also emphasize the importance of knowledge of Social Studies representations, because Social Studies is seen as a composition of a large set of highly related disciplines.

Again, Fennema and Franke (1992:19) stated that "if teachers do not know how to integrate these disciplines into a form that enables learners to relate the Social Studies to what they already know, they will not learn with understanding". This means that Social Studies knowledge for teaching goes beyond that captured in the curriculum content of Social Studies. Knowledge of students' cognitions is seen as one of the important components of teacher knowledge, because, according to Fennema and Franke (1992), learning is based on what happens in the classroom, and thus, not only what students do, but also the learning environment is important for learning. The last component of teacher knowledge is "knowledge of teaching and decision making". Teachers' beliefs, knowledge, judgments, and thoughts have an effect on the decisions they make which influence their plans and actions in the classroom. (Fennema et al., 1992)

An, Kulm and Wu (2004) pointed out that pedagogical content knowledge has three components:

- Knowledge of content
- Knowledge of curriculum
- Knowledge of teaching

They are of the opinion that knowledge of content and curriculum knowledge are of great importance to knowledge of teaching because teacher's subject matter which is the knowledge of content plus the content given in the syllabus will produce effective teaching and learning. They were of the same view with Shulman (1992) and they accept that content knowledge is the core component of pedagogical content knowledge. In Social Studies, for example, its content deals with such distillate knowledge, development of attitudes, values and skills that are essential in solving the problems of the individual's survival in a given community. This means that what can rightly be called Social Studies would centre on issues, questions and problems of the individual's survival in the society and the development of positive mind and skills towards their solutions. To be able to achieve this requires the teacher deep understands about the subject and his/her right approach to the teaching of the content as prescribed to him/her.

Grouws and Schultz (1996) summed up the argument when they stated that “pedagogical content knowledge includes, but is not limited to, useful representations, unifying ideas, clarifying examples and counter examples, helpful analogies, important relationships, and connections among ideas (p. 46)”. For example, Kizlik (2012), who for many years perceived Social Studies as amalgamation of the social sciences, was teaching Social Studies courses as history, civics and geography at the secondary level. From his experience, he claimed he had reached some conclusions about what it takes to teach these diverse subject areas effectively. Social Studies is rather broad set of subject-matter courses, and for a teacher at the secondary level, it is highly unusual that he or she would have mastery of more than two or three of them. Included in the Social Studies curriculum are such courses as economics, history, geography, civics or government and anthropology. Political Science is usually reserved for the college level, but it appears as a course in many high school curricula. Kizlik (2012) stated that “much too often, Social Studies courses are regarded as relatively unimportant subject matter, whether in elementary school, middle school, or high school”. This is a perception used by many practitioners and it leads to diminished attention being paid to Social Studies as a serious subject area, yet in the overall development of the intellect of students, no other subject matter content holds as much promise.

Kizlik (2012:43) made his assertion by using citizenship education. He said “if an intended learning outcome of the Social Studies curriculum is good citizenship, then it is patently clear that there is a disconnect between intentions and outcomes”. This trend has persisted, despite countless reforms in the curriculum, instructional techniques, and programmes of studies and goals promulgated by such organizations as the National Council for the Social Studies, and the virtual mountain of programmes and technology “solutions” touted as effective. In the main, Social Studies is about understandings, not skills. Ostensibly, these understandings will lead one to become just, compassionate, honest, and perhaps even curious about not just questions of “what,” but also questions of “how” and “why.” Kizlik (2012) said that “learning the content of the social studies is about creating knowledge, not memorizing facts. Students certainly require factual information to construct knowledge, but that is only the beginning. As opposed to the content of the “structured disciplines,” the Social Studies is especially amenable to constructivist ideas for teaching and learning. Constructivism has little value in learning skills such as those found in mathematics, language arts, and certain content represented in the sciences (Kizlik, 2012). For the Social Studies, it can be pure magic in the hands of competent

teachers.

Various schools of thought have emerged to give different definitions to the subject but there has been a consensus that the definition of Social Studies is Citizenship Education. Blege (2000:13) viewed citizenship education as “the instructional preparation of the younger generation towards making students good and effective persons in society”. Blege’s (2000) definition implies helping the up and coming members of the society to acquire adequate knowledge, desirable attitudes, values and skills, to enable them become useful citizens in the society in which they live. Obviously, the word preparation used in Blege’s (2000) definition means a systematic orientation of students for readiness towards citizenship functions including active participation in every effort designed to promote the progress of society. These may involve active participation in communal life such as clean-up campaigns, voting in elections, etc.

Pecku (1994) viewed citizenship education as education which sharpens the civic competencies of the individual. Civic competencies here have to do with the citizen’s ability to perform duties expected of a citizen. These include showing concerns for activities that help uplift the image of the society he/she finds himself or herself in. Even though by consensus Social Studies is accepted as citizenship education in Ghana, it must however be emphasized that there are still arguments about how this citizenship education must be carried out (Bekoe, 2006). From these arguments emerge two schools of thought: one advocating for the integration of knowledge for solving problems of the individual’s survival (citizenship education) and the other amalgamation of the social sciences to give students broader knowledge about what happens around him/her; an opinion Quartey described as education for the citizenry (Quartey, 2003).

Citizenship education in sum is the preparation of citizens to participate actively in a democratic society (Blege, 2000; Pecku, 1994). Blege (2001) and Odumah (2003) agreed that “the nature of Social Studies is problem-solving”. In an attempt to give effect to this position these authors explained that Social Studies deals with the contemporary persistent problems of human survival. These problems, according to Blege (2001), are those current and “perplexing issues” in our particular societies which when left unattended for a long time poses a threat to the continued survival of people in that society. This raises two major points about the nature of Social Studies. Firstly, Social Studies deals with the problems of the “here” and the “now”. The “here” refers to the problems of the particular society. For instance, Social Studies in Ghana should deal with the problems that confront Ghana as a nation. This is because the problems of Ghana are not essentially the same as those of Nigeria. Although, the two countries are developing countries Ghana however faces

distinct economic and social problems that Nigeria might not be facing.

With the problems of the “now”, Social Studies as a subject is concerned with current socio-economic and political issues or challenges that confront people in their society. This is better expressed in the definition by Quartey (1985) that Social Studies equips “man” with the necessary tools to combat the problems of human survival in his/her community. For instance, Ghana is currently faced with high rates of road accidents, HIV/AIDS pandemic, deep seated political division, killings of people by loved ones and the nation’s currency depreciating as against the foreign currency.

Secondly, the problems Social Studies seek to prepare individuals to be able to identify and find solution to must be persistent and contemporary. The persistent and contemporary problems are those re-current problems that continue to afflict society in spite of the many attempts to deal with them in the past. Some of those problems, in Ghana, that Social Studies must deal with are corruption, maintaining constitutional order, ethnocentrism, road accidents, armed robbery and economic dependency associated with tripling foreign debts among others.

Ultimately, Social Studies is, or at least should be, about helping students develop positive *values* that will lead them to make good decisions, do the right thing, and be decent, moral, caring, and involved citizens. Akinlaye (2003) also share the same view that “the competence in teaching Social Studies depends largely on sound understanding of its philosophy” and that how the subject is perceived plays an important role in the determination of its goal and objectives.

Another writer like Quartey (2003) said that the philosophy of a subject is the main core that links the content, teaching and assessment of that subject; appropriate teaching techniques and assessment procedures depend to a large extent on what the subject stands for. To achieve the intended objective of Social Studies therefore begins with a clear understanding of what the subject is about. Effective teaching of Social Studies requires that its teachers hold perceptions that fall in line with what the subject is intended for. This implies that, Social Studies knowledge for teaching goes beyond that captured in the curriculum content of Social Studies and also pedagogy plus content knowledge will lead to effective teaching of Social Studies which will at the end imbibe in students’ attitudes, values, knowledge and skills for their survival in the society. For example, teachers of Social Studies do not only need to teach to test but also need to know how to use pictures or diagrams to represent Social Studies concepts and facts to students, provide students with information that will make students to be concerned, reflective and participatory citizens to help solve problems of

man’s survival and that of the nation. The Social Studies curriculum builds four capacities in young people: disciplinary knowledge, thinking skills, commitment to democratic values, and citizen participation and at the end of each lesson, teachers must achieve that in their teaching.

The contents of Social Studies are drawn from several social sciences but not determined by the discipline of any one of these. Social Studies is meant to cover the ground, traditionally associated with History, Geography, Economics, Civics etc, if the teaching of these subjects only imparts miscellaneous and unrelated information and does not throw any light on it or provide insight into social conditions and problems or create the desire to improve the existing state of things, their educative significance will be negligible. The whole group of studies has, therefore, to be viewed as a compact whole, whose object is to adjust the students to their social environment.

Social Studies teaching must include material which is conducive to the development of a well-informed, intelligent person who is capable of comprehending properly the current problems, is keen to accept responsibilities as a citizen for the welfare of all and has developed insights, skills and moral qualities which are so essential and desirable in a democratic society (Kizlik, 2012). This was exactly again what Shulman (1995: 40) was saying in his pedagogical content knowledge that effective teaching includes, “the ways of representing and formulating the subject that make it comprehensible to others ... an understanding of what makes the learning of specific topics easy or difficult; the conceptions and preconceptions that students of different ages and backgrounds bring with them to the learning of those most frequently taught topics and lessons” and this portrays a teacher who possesses an in-depth knowledge of how to represent the subject matter to learners.

Additionally, pedagogical content knowledge refers to the ability of the teacher to transform content into forms that are pedagogically powerful and yet adaptive to the variations in ability and background presented by the students (An et al., 2004). Meaning, Social Studies content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge are integrated parts of effective Social Studies instruction. In order to construct Social Studies concepts in students’ mind, pedagogical knowledge as well as Social Studies content knowledge is needed. The manner in which teachers relate their subject matter (what they know about what they teach) to their pedagogical knowledge (what they know about teaching) and how subject matter knowledge is a part of the process of pedagogical reasoning are seen as integrates pedagogical content knowledge (Cochran, DeRuiter & King, 1993).

Most researchers point out the importance of Social Studies

content knowledge as well as pedagogical knowledge. Despite this widespread interest and concern, what counts as “subject- matter knowledge for teaching” and how it relates to student achievement has remained inadequately specified in past research. A closer look at the educational production function literature, for example, reveals that researchers working in this tradition have typically measured teachers' knowledge using proxy variables, such as courses taken, degrees attained, or results of basic skills tests. This stands in sharp contrast to another group of education scholars who have begun to conceptualize teachers' knowledge for teaching differently, arguing that teacher effects on student achievement are driven by teachers' ability to understand and use subject-matter knowledge to carry out the tasks of teaching (Shulman, 1986; Wilson, Shulman, & Richert, 1987).

Kahan, Cooper and Bethea (2003:233) review shared the same concern that “student learn more Social Studies if their teachers knew more Social Studies but content knowledge in the subject area does not suffice for good teaching”. However, they also outlined that the content of pedagogical content knowledge is ‘content-specific and at the same time goes beyond simple knowledge of Social Studies therefore a Social Studies teacher may not possess it. Because teachers' knowledge has not been adequately measured, the existing educational production function research could be limited in terms of its conclusions, not only regarding the magnitude of the effect of teachers' knowledge on student learning but also regarding the kinds of teacher knowledge that matter most in producing student learning. Teachers' content knowledge and pedagogy knowledge interact with one another to produce effective teaching.

3. Methodology

The design for study was descriptive survey. Data collected was analyzed in the form of tables and words. Triangulation was used to test the consistency of findings obtained through different instrument. The population for this study comprised all Social Studies teachers in the Senior High Schools (SHS) in the Western Region of Ghana. According to Cohen and Manion (1994), a targeted population is a group of respondents from whom the researcher is interested in collecting information and drawing conclusions. In this present study, the target population comprised all Social Studies teachers teaching the subject in Senior High Schools at Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis in the Western Region of Ghana.

The sample size for the study was fifty-four (54) Social

Studies teachers teaching the subject. Sampling method such as random, cluster and convenient sampling techniques were employed by the researcher to select the sample of district, schools and respondents for the study. The Table 1 below shows the number of schools and respondents (teachers) selected for the study.

Table 1. Name of Schools.

School	Number of Teacher Respondents	Percent
TADISCO	9	16.7
SECKO	5	9.3
BOMPEH	10	18.5
ST JOHN'S	6	11.1
FIJAI	11	20.4
GSTS	7	13.0
ADIEMBRA	6	11.1
APSS	0	0
Total	54	100.0

The Table 1 above shows the number of schools and respondents (Social Studies teachers) used for the study. Fifty four teachers were selected from the eight Senior High Schools in Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis in the Western Region of Ghana.

4. Social Studies Teachers Understanding of the Content they are teaching at the Senior High School

This research theme sought to determine how familiar Social Studies teachers are with the content knowledge of Social Studies education. The main focus of this section is to examine the content knowledge of Social Studies teachers at the Senior High School level. The researchers adopted questionnaire, structured interview and observation as the tools for the data collection on this theme. Some items were placed in the questionnaire, the interview and the observation guide to seek teachers' views on the issues. The research question- *How far do Social Studies teachers understand the content they are teaching at the Senior High School?* Is discussed under three sub-themes: (1) *teachers' content knowledge in Social Studies* ;(2) *teachers developing attitude, values, knowledge and skills in the students in teaching Social Studies* ;(3) *the evaluation of the teachers' content knowledge in social studies.*

The table below shows items on teachers' knowledge of Social Studies and how that helps in achieving the goals and objectives of the subject. Respondents gave various responses to the items.

Table 2. Teachers' Content Knowledge in Social Studies.

ITEMS	RESPONSES			TOTAL (%)
	D (%)	U (%)	A (%)	
1. Teachers' knowledge of Social Studies helps in achieving goals and objectives of the subject.	-	-	54(100%)	54(100)
2. teachers knowledge in Social Studies can enhance the teaching of the subject	1 (1.9%)	4 (7.4%)	53(98.1%)	54(100)
3. Social Studies is a citizenship education.	3 (5.5%)	2 (3.7%)	47 (87%)	54 (100)
4. Social Studies is a combination of knowledge of Geography, History, Economics and Government.	6(11.1%)	10(18.5%)	46(85.2%)	54 (100)
5. in teaching Social Studies, the teacher tries to address the concept for the topic.	13 (24%)		41(75.9%)	54 (100)

Where A stands for Agreed, U = Undecided, D = Disagreed

Data in Table 2 above shows that all 54 (100%) of the Social Studies teachers sampled for the study agreed that teachers knowledge of Social Studies helps in achieving goals and objectives of the subject, 53 (98.1%) agreed that teachers knowledge in Social Studies can enhance the teaching of the subject, 1 (1.9%) disagreed with the statement. Still on teachers understanding about the content they teach, 47 (87%) of the teachers agreed that Social Studies is a citizenship education, 4 (7.4%) were undecided, while 3 (5.5%) disagreed with the statement; 46 (85.2%) agreed that Social Studies is a combination of knowledge of Geography, History, Economics and Government, 2 (3.7%) were undecided about the statement, while 6 (11.1%) disagreed with the statement. The result also shows that 41 (75.9%) of the respondents agreed that in teaching Social Studies, the teacher tries to address the concept for the topic, 10 (18.5%) were undecided, while 13 (24%) also disagreed.

The interview questions that fall under research question based on the second sub-theme as follows;

“In teaching Social Studies, do you consciously develop attitude, values, knowledge and skills in the students?”

- “Which of these directs a Social Studies teacher in the teaching of topics in the subject?

a). Nature of topic

b). the problems of man's survival in the country

c). the related content the topic addresses”

- “Which of these will be the driving force when you are teaching the topic ‘Physical Environment’ in Social Studies?

a). The relief, climate and the drainage of the area

b). The climate and the geomorphology of the world

c). How the individual can utilize the physical environment for his benefits

d). How the physical environment dictates the activities of the individual.”

The responses from the respondents during the interview revealed the following:

A respondent said the following:

1. “It is better to get someone who has a broad spectrum of the subject (Social Studies). It will be very difficult for a science teacher to teach social studies. It will be very difficult for most teachers who are more biased in science to teach social studies. It will be better for someone who has a good Arts background to teach social studies”.
2. “Generally, yes, but what is very important is, normally, you know Social Studies has a whole lot of areas, for example, economics, an aspect of geography, it entails an aspect of environmental science, so I think that if a teacher has a background knowledge, it will go a long way to build capabilities and capacity in students”
3. “With the problems, it helps us a lot. Although, it is a challenge, being a teacher, it helps to strive to overcome those challenges in terms of research and other things in order to teach the students very well.”

4. Nature of topic

Another teacher also had this to say

1. “Some topics are technical, for example, geography, teachers who have not gotten the knowledge in Social Studies may not teach the subject effectively”.

1. “Not necessarily, because the issue is not only about the facts but the facts acquired should be used in daily life situation”.

2. “It really helps you very much because when you read the problem and in your absence or when you are not there and somebody comes who has no knowledge in Social Studies, that person will have a background knowledge and it will enable the person to look for the necessary materials to take over the subject.”

3.” The problems of man's survival in the country.”

A teacher had this to say;

1. "Yes and No, because for those who teach in their speciality that is Social Studies has something in social aspect over human life". He further added that "such a person can teach other subjects but not into detailed as the one who has knowledge in the subject".
2. *That is what is supposed to be, because it involves the human settlement and the various topics relate very well in human existence, so I think it is in the right direction.*
3. *"Because the topics and the problems are set out, they help the teacher to go straight to the problem without even digressing from the issue."*
- 4 "The problems of man's survival in the country"

A colleague also had this to say;

1. "It is impossible, I do not think so, because in my observation, Social Studies, though any teacher with a social science background can teach, I think it is an additional advantage to teach the subject, but then it needs more of the understanding of what the subject matter is than applying any other thing in teaching Social Studies."
2. "No, because it is about attaining the knowledge but looking at the practical aspect of it, I think this is the way Social Studies should be taught."
3. "The problem stated in the syllabus needs to be garnished by you the teacher because, sometimes it does not commensurate the content you are going to teach. But then all the same, you can add up to what you have."
- 4 "To me, all the three options are right to be considered when teaching the topics in Social Studies."

This is what another teacher from other schools interviewed said:

1. "No, because, looking at the subject you have to be trained. Although, people from other subject background teach the subject, to me, the subject should be taught by its specialists, that is, the trained personnel to teach it."
 2. "No, it is not only the presentation of facts. The subject needs to be imparted for attitudinal change."
 3. "I present the subject in a practical way"
 4. "The problems of the individual's survival in the country"
- Teacher B in the same school had this to say;
1. "No, if we say it can be taught by teachers with any educational background, it means we are not helping the subject. It means anybody can handle the subject which is not true."
 2. "This is not the main focus of Social Studies because we are not just only imparting the knowledge but we are inculcating the right attitude as well so that they will be self-disciplined in the society."
 3. "It helps a lot because knowing the problem at hand, when teaching I use the problem as my introduction and with that, the background, it helps me to impart the right knowledge to the children."
 4. "The related content the topic addresses."

Below is what went on in the classroom when the researchers visited the classroom to observe teachers as they teach to find out whether responses from the teachers gave during the interview session were authentic. The items in the table fall under the research question based on the third (3) sub-theme.

Table 3. Below are data collated from the evaluation of the teachers' content knowledge through the observation of their lessons.

Table 3. Observation of lessons.

To what extent are the following true of the Social Studies teaching.	Very great extent	Great extent	Moderately true	Averagely untrue	Not true
Facts used make the students' conscious of the problems for the individual's survival.	-	-	2	-	6
Did teacher's content address the stated problem?	-	-	-	8	-
Teacher's knowledge in Social Studies helped in achieving the stated objectives.	-	-	-	8	-

The data in the table 3 show that out of the eight (8) teachers observed, 2 (25%) moderately presented facts of Social Studies to make students conscious of the problems for the individual's survival, 6 (75%) do not present facts to make students conscious of the problems for the individual's survival. Also, 8 (100%) of the teachers observed lack content knowledge of the subject although, they agreed that Social Studies is citizenship education. The result also shows that 8 (100%) of the teachers observed were in no way teaching for the attainment of the stated objectives of the subject.

5. Conclusions

Based on the findings it can be concluded that many teachers in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis do lack content knowledge in Social Studies. This made them not able to understand the essence of the problem in the syllabus. They therefore did not select facts which will develop the civic competences of the learners. Again many Social Studies teachers do not know what the general objectives of the

subject are. They therefore do not select facts which address the attainment of these goals and objectives. Again, achieving good WASSCE results give teachers some fame and reward and so teachers are poised to achieve these rewards rather than developing the learners' attitudes, values, skills and giving them knowledge which will benefit the society and the nation at large

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