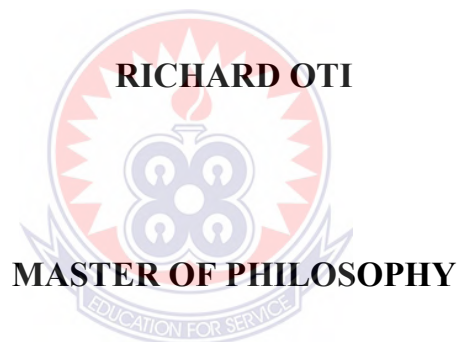


**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**STAKEHOLDERS PERCEPTION OF THE SOCIAL STUDIES  
CURRICULUM IN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS WITHIN THE ACCRA  
METROPOLIS**



**2021**

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CURRICULUM IN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS WITHIN THE ACCRA  
METROPOLIS**

**RICHARD OTI  
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**A thesis in the Department of Social Studies Education,  
Faculty of Social Sciences Education, submitted to the School  
of Graduate Studies in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the award of the degree of  
Master of Philosophy  
(Social Studies Education)  
in the University of Education, Winneba.**

**SEPTEMBER, 2021**

## DECLARATION

### Student's Declaration

I, Richard Oti hereby declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published and unpublished works which have all been identified, cited and duly acknowledged, is entirely my work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this University or elsewhere.

**Signature:** .....

**Date:** .....

### Supervisor's Declaration

The thesis has been supervised and approved as meeting the requirements of the School of Graduate Studies, University of Education, Winneba, Ghana

**Name of Supervisor: Dr. Lawrence Odumah**

**Signature:** .....

**Date:** .....



## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my father, Mr. John Oti Boapeah and my spiritual father, Apostle David Oware for their prayers and financial support throughout my academic journey.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my profound gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Lawrence Odumah of Department of Social Studies Education, University of Education, Winneba for his guidance and suggestions throughout the study. I also want to extend my profound gratitude to Dr. Esther Danso Wiredu who encouraged me to embark on this academic journey.

My sincere gratitude also goes to Dr. Albert Kwame Acheampong of Bradford University, United Kingdom for his assistance and mentorship. Finally, my profound gratitude goes to Dr. Isaac Eshun for his corrections and the time devoted to assess my work in order to ensure its perfection.



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## ABSTRACT

This current study acknowledges efforts made by experts and educators in the field of Social Studies to find out the reasons behind why the subject has been marginalized over the years. These experts have made recommendations over the years, which highlights the need for stakeholders support for the subject if it is to achieve its goals and objects. Gaps were identified in the attempts made over the years by experts in the field. Empirical literature revealed that, most studies conducted in the past mostly used teachers and students as their main participants in conducting their study. In bridging some of these gaps, this study added different strands of stakeholders, which included Headmasters, Parents and Social Studies teachers as participants of the study to explore the perception of stakeholders on the marginalization of Social Studies education in Senior High Schools within the Accra Metropolis. The study sought to achieve four main objectives. Out of the Objectives. A qualitative approach was employed in this study with a case study being used as a design. The main population for the study were stakeholders, i.e. Head teachers, Social Studies teachers, Parents. The convenient and snowball non-purposive sampling technique were employed in sampling 15 participants. A census of schools within the Accra Metropolis was used. Semi-structured Interview guides were the main instrument used to collect data from the 15 participants selected for the study. Findings from data collected revealed that, stakeholders conceptualize Social Studies differently. Some see the subject as citizenship education whereas others also understand the subject to be a combination of subjects in the social sciences (Amalgamation of the social sciences). This study also revealed that, Social Studies is as important as Science, Technology, English and Mathematics. Findings further revealed that, although stakeholders see Social Studies as important they perceive that, the subject lack the needed attention and respect in spite of its importance. Finally, it was revealed in this study that, effective teaching of the subject and encouragement of students by stakeholders might change negative perceptions about the subject.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

Prior literature in the field of Social Studies education has consistently documented the issue of marginalization of the subject in most schools worldwide (Barton & Levstik, 2004). The issue about Social Studies being marginalized has been an existing challenge for the subject for quite a few decades. According to Shaughnessy (1985) cited in Mensah and Frimpong (2020), the past decades have witnessed several studies that have attempted to understand why students either like or dislike Social Studies which may have led to the subject being marginalized. These studies have tried to identify and measure student's attitude about Social Studies and predict what influence their performance relating to the subject.

Looking at some literature gathered about five decades ago, Fernandez, Massey and Dornbush (1976), conducted one of the earliest studies regarding students' attitudes towards Social Studies in San Francisco. Their study revealed that, students in grade 9 to 12 ranked Social Studies last in terms of importance when compared to other core subjects such as English and Mathematics. The participants described Social Studies as confusing and having little relationship to their future. Frazer (1981) also conducted a study in some selected schools in Australia, and the study revealed that student's attitude towards Social Studies was increasingly negative with increasing grade level in grade 7-10. Another study, conducted by Schug (1982), also revealed that, Social Studies is not perceived to be an enjoyable subject and largely it is not also a difficult subject for students to study. Fernandez (1986) also concluded in his

study that, high school students believed Social Studies was less important than Mathematics and English for their future occupation.

The above review of surveys in the field of Social Studies education about five decades ago provides evidence to the assertion that, the subject has battled the issue of recognition in the past. Current surveys and studies however still prove that, Social Studies education is still being marginalized in schools worldwide. For instance, in America, a study conducted by Bailey, Shaw and Hollifield (2006) revealed that, classroom teachers expressed concerns on how their schools place much less importance on Social Studies than other subjects such as reading and mathematics. The study further revealed that, teachers across the nation reported the disappearance of Social Studies from their classrooms as their schools institutionally de-emphasized the importance of Social Studies.

Another study conducted by Cheryl, Reid and Lara (2010) also revealed that, classroom teachers were fond of making reports about the marginalization of Social Studies as compared to mathematics and reading. Rock et al. (2006), also conducted a study that revealed that, classroom teachers echoed national reports concerning Social Studies receiving relatively little instructional time compared to other subjects such as reading and mathematics. Other strands of research about Social Studies marginalization have also repeatedly documented the narrowing of the Social Studies curriculum to the point of exclusion (Leming, Ellington & Shug, 2006; Mcguire, 2007; Rock et al., 2006; Segall, 2003).

Shifting the spectacle down to Africa, a study conducted by Mhauri (2014) in Botswana revealed that teachers in some selected schools expressed concerns on how citizenship education through Social Studies was handled within the school

curriculum. Teachers were appalled by the situation concerning the status of Social Studies in the curriculum as it was totally ignored, not monitored nor supervised. The study further revealed that, there was shortage of Social Studies teachers and there was no department that coordinates it like other subjects such as mathematics and science. Another study conducted in Namibia by Negumbo (2016), revealed that inappropriately qualified and unqualified teachers were used to teach Social Studies in most schools that participated in the study, which was likely due to the fact that, school authorities perceived Social Studies as an easy subject which could be taught by just anyone whether trained or untrained.

In Kenya, an article published by Njoroge, Makewa and Allida (2017) highlighted the continuity of Social Studies as a discipline in Kenyan schools. Their article sought to ascertain reasons why Social Studies was taught in only primary schools in Kenya as compared to other African countries such as Ghana and Nigeria where the subject had slots in higher learning. In their reviews they acknowledged the findings of Mwangi (2014) which highlights that, the usefulness of Social Studies was not realized in Kenyan schools because continuous assessment was not established in such a way that it builds on all the foundations that were beneficial towards the teaching and learning of Social Studies.

Literature gathered in Ghana prior to the issue of marginalization of Social Studies education has also proven the persistence of the issue at hand in Ghanaian schools. According to Sibiri (2017), Social Studies is one of the least favorite subjects and as such, attitudes towards studying Social Studies has become negative with increasing amount of schooling. He further revealed that, In Ghana much attention has been given to subjects like English, Mathematics and science at the Senior High School

level. Khaled (2007) also opines that, some students in senior high school go as far as to say that Social Studies is a „push over“ subject and for that matter there is no need paying regular attention to the subject. He further revealed that, critics of the subject suggests that Social Studies should be eliminated from the Ghanaian school curriculum because students do not learn any basic skills in them and as such students master basic mathematics, English and science skill which are needed for future performance in larger society.

Mensah and Frimpong (2020), acknowledges the efforts made over the years through changes in curriculum design, teaching methodology and administrative practices that may have helped improve students“ performance and perceptions in Social Studies in the Ghanaian classroom, but they however assert that, these efforts have proved futile as students still perceive the subject as boring, dull, and irrelevant. In the quest to help solve the issue of marginalization of Social Studies as a subject in the Ghanaian school curriculum, some suggestions and recommendations have been made over the years. Dunder and Rapoport (2014) has suggested that, if a given subject is to continue to have public support at a local state, or federal levels, attitudes towards the subject would be positive.

They further highlighted that, negative attitudes towards a subject may persist and may result in the decline of resources in the subject area; because all present-day stakeholders were at some time students who once had negative perceptions towards the subject. Cheryl, Reid, and Lara (2010) have also added that, the state of Social Studies in the classroom depends largely on the level of marginalization it receives on federal, state, institutional and individual levels. Mensah and Frimpong (2020), also add that, if the Social Studies curriculum is to continue to have support from school

administrators, politicians, and the public, it is desirable to have positive student attitudes towards the subject matter, as the negative attitude towards it can ultimately result in its removal from the school curriculum.

Eshun (2020) also concluded in his study by asserting that, over the years Social Studies has been marginalized because it is seen as a reading subject and as such, it has not been given the needed attention, he however recommended that, this issue of marginalization could be curtailed by employing strict measures, which places value on its implementation. Inferring from his assertions, employing these strict measures will therefore require the efforts of stakeholders in the discipline. Lilian, Amollo, Jane and Juliet (2020) also add that, Stakeholders' involvement in implementation of Social Studies curriculum forms a cornerstone for strengthening partnerships essential for achieving learning outcomes for sustainable development. In their view, Strong bonds between parents, school administration and community influence knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that learners require for survival in the 21st century as effective citizens.

Having taken into consideration the suggestions and recommendations made by the above strands of researchers and exposure to several literatures on the issue of marginalization of Social Studies education, have identified a gap on the issue at hand. There seems to be a gap in prior literature conducted to address the issue of marginalization of Social Studies. Most of these studies focused on students and teachers as their main stakeholders but this study seeks to explore the perceptions of a wide range of stakeholders other than students and teachers.

Inferring from the above suggestions made by Cheryl, Lara and Reid (2010), Dunder and Rapoport (2014) Mensah and Frimpong (2020), Eshun (2020) and Lilian et al.

(2020), involving stakeholder's aside teachers and students in this study will reinforce the battle against the marginalization of Social Studies as suggested above. Stakeholders in this study were limited to Head teachers, Parents and Social Studies teachers. This study therefore explores the perceptions of stakeholders on the marginalization of Social Studies education in selected senior high schools in the Accra Metropolis.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

According to the Ministry of Education (2007), the success of Ghana's growth and stability relies strongly on its educational system. Social Studies is a major part of the school's curriculum because it explores morals, values, and provides students with the ability to understand the values associated with being a good citizen. The subject also provides skills that are key to opening doors for a more diverse, competitive workforce and responsible citizenry. The Ministry believes that, preparing students for the 21<sup>st</sup> century cannot be accomplished without a strong and sustaining emphasis on Social Studies. Similarly, Sawyer (2015) also highlights that, Social Studies helps learners to grow in their understanding of and sensitivity to the physical and social forces at work around them in order that they may shift their lives in harmony with those forces. It is an undeniable fact that, Social Studies seeks to make the Ghanaian student a good citizen by equipping young people with the right skills and attitudes to fit well in the Society.

Despite the importance of Social Studies Education, literature in the field of the discipline has proven that, the subject continues to suffer a fate of marginalization as compared to other subjects in Ghanaian Schools. According to Grabenstein (2019), the focus on Science, English, and Mathematics has made it easier to forget the

importance of a thorough humanities education that includes Social Studies education. There is a wide range of assumption that, Science, English and Mathematics prepare students for high paying jobs whereas studies in the field of Social Studies have repeatedly documented students disinterest in the subject because they could not see its importance to their future occupationally.

This assertion is supported by a study conducted by Lawson (2003) which sought to compare the level of importance of Social Studies as compared to these outlined subjects. The study revealed that, English, Mathematics, and reading were ranked ahead of Social Studies. Participants of the study described Social Studies as boring and far from anything, they could relate to their daily life.

Eshun (2020) also adds that, over the years Social Studies has been marginalized because it is seen as a reading subject and as such, it has not been given the needed attention. An article published by Ghana Web (2017), with the caption „Correcting the societal miscommunication on Social Studies“ highlighted the gradual loss of the essence of Social Studies in Ghanaian schools. The article raised concerns about the picture being painted about Social Studies, as if without a teacher, pupils can read on their own and pass an exam. The article also sheds light on the gradual reduction in employment of Social Studies trained teachers as compared to English, Mathematics and Science teachers.

In addition, the issue of conceptual debates has led to the subject losing its essence of introduction into the Ghanaian School Curriculum (Bekoe et al., 2014). In the light, Ajiboye (2010), also highlights that, the teaching and learning of Social Studies in Schools has been reportedly difficult because of the inability of stakeholders to conceptualize the nature of the subject itself.



Attempts to resolve the issue of Social Studies being marginalized in Ghanaian schools have seen some recommendations and suggestions being made over the years. Some of these recommendations have stressed out the fact that, if Social Studies is to receive the support of a wide range of stakeholders other than only teachers and students, there is a high possibility that it will no more be marginalized (Cheryl, Reid & Lara, 2010; Dunder & Rapoport, 2014, Mensah & Frimpong, 2020). Exposure to the following suggestions and recommendations as well as literature concerning Social Studies marginalization have influenced the interest in conducting this study. This is because, there seems to be a gap in available literature and studies documented to address the issue of marginalization. Most of these studies focused mainly on teachers and students, but this study seeks to explore the perceptions of a wide range of stakeholders other than students and teachers. Stakeholders in this study will highlight parents, Head teachers and Social studies teachers.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to explore stakeholder's perception of the social studies curriculum in Senior High Schools within the Accra Metropolis.

### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study were to;

- i) Explore stakeholder's conceptualization of Social Studies as a subject in the Ghanaian School Curriculum.
- ii) Ascertain stakeholders view on the importance on Science, Technology, English and Mathematics as compared to Social Studies.
- iii) Explore stakeholders view on the marginalization of Social Studies in Senior High Schools within the Accra Metropolis.

- iv) Determine what stakeholders can do to make Social Studies education relevant.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

- i) How do stakeholders conceptualize Social Studies as a subject in the Ghanaian School Curriculum?
- ii) What is the view of stakeholders on the importance of Social Studies as compared to Science, Technology, English and Mathematics?
- iii) What is stakeholder's perception on the marginalization of Social Studies in Senior High Schools within the Accra Metropolis?
- iv) How can stakeholders contribute to make Social Studies education more relevant in Ghanaian Schools?

### **1.7 Significance of the Study**

This study is significant because online search database had failed to identify adequate research on the marginalization of Social Studies in Ghana. The findings of this study will therefore serve as an updated literature on the marginalization of Social Studies education in Ghana, which may reinforce the battle against the marginalization of Social Studies in Ghanaian schools.

In addition, the findings of the study are expected to be particularly relevant to educational policy and decision makers responsible for the development and improvement of the teaching of Social Studies in Senior High Schools. Based on the outcomes of this research, curriculum developers may find ideas in making Social Studies education more relevant in the Ghanaian school curriculum.

### **1.8 Delimitation of the Study**

The study is limited to stakeholders in Senior High Schools in the Accra Metropolis. Stakeholders are limited to Head teachers, Parents and Social Studies teachers.

### **1.9 Limitation of the Study**

The study was limited by availability of participants especially head teachers of schools within the Accra Metropolitan Assembly. Head teachers were busy during the time of data collection and in view of that; they delegated their interview session to their assistant heads to represent them. Also because of the double track streams, Social Studies teachers were not always available except those on duty. This made it difficult for the researcher to get access to Social Studies teachers to participate in the study except those available during the time of data collection. These challenges were however managed by the researcher through the help of the school administration. The administration minuted the introductory letter to appropriate individuals to be contacted. For instance, the school administration selected some specific Social Studies teachers to be contacted.

### **1.10 Organization of the Study**

The study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter contains the introduction to the study, background information related to the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, and significance of the study and delimitation of the study. Chapter two, also highlights has been divided into two main sections. The first section highlights the theoretical and conceptual framework of the study. The section also reviews empirical review of relevant literature. In chapter three, the researcher presents methodology and methods employed for the study. It deals with the research paradigm, approach and design for the study. It also highlights

population and sample size, sample and sampling procedure, Instrument for data collection, development of questionnaire, and procedure for data collection, and coding and data analysis. Chapter Four also highlights the presentation and analysis of data that emerged from the study. It also includes the discussion of study findings. Finally, chapter five contains the summary, conclusions, implication, major findings and recommendations of the study.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter consist of two sections. The first section captures the theoretical and conceptual frameworks underpinning this study. The second section also captures conceptual review of relevant literature.

#### **2.1 Theoretical Framework**

This study adopts Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres of influence. This theory was developed by Joyce Epstein (1987, 1992). The theory of overlapping spheres of influence integrates and extends Bronfenbrenner's (1979)'s Ecological system's theory (Epstein, 1992). The ecological system's theory argues that the environment you grow up in and the reactions you see towards phenomenons affects every facet of your life (Renn & Arnold, 2003). Epstein (1987, 1992), extended the ecological system's theory by developing the theory of overlapping spheres of influence which posits that, student's attitudes are shaped and are also influenced to learn more when parents, educators, and others in the community work together to guide and support student learning and development.

The theory of overlapping spheres of influence combines psychological, educational and sociological perspectives on social institutions to describe and explain the relations between parents, schools, and local environments. According to Epstein (1992), three contexts (home, school, and community) overlap with unique and combined influences on learners through the interactions of parents, educators, and community partners. The influence of these stakeholders through their interactions

contributes to student's attitudinal change, development, and academic progress. Epstein (1992), further highlighted, the extent to which the spheres overlap is influenced by time and also by the experiences, philosophies and practices of families, schools and communities. Central to this theory is the fact that learner success is of interest to socializing institutions and is effectively realized through partnership, cooperation and support.

### **2.1.1 Application of the theory**

This theory was employed because it serves as a theoretical perspective that helps to explain the need for stakeholder support in the field of Social Studies education as suggested by Cheryl, Lara, and Reid (2010), Dunder and Rapoport (2014) and Mensah and Frimpong (2020). These strands of researchers have asserted that, if Social Studies is to receive the support of a wide range of stakeholders (parents, government, federal states, local community etc.), there is a high possibility that it will no more be marginalized. Stakeholders such as head teachers, Social Studies teachers and PTA members may serve as an influence on how Social Studies is perceived by students in Senior High Schools, which may go a long way to reduce its marginalization. The overlap by these spheres (Social Studies teachers, head teachers and PTA members) may also cause an influence in how these stakeholders themselves perceive Social Studies.

This is imperative because, research has proven that the family, school, and the community influence children's growth and development (Braunger & Lewis, 1997; Hull & Shultz, 2001; Moll et al., 1992) and Epstein's (1987, 1992) theory considers the importance of these contexts in a child's development, as well as the need for families, schools, and the community to share the responsibilities for the socialization

of the child. Epstein used the term “partnerships” to emphasize that schools, families, and communities share responsibilities for children through overlapping spheres of influence. Highlighting the development and effective socialization of students, Social Studies has established itself as the only subject in the Social Studies Curriculum that train students for citizenship education as well as inculcating in students good attitudes, values and skills. Therefore, Strong bonds between parents, school administration and community has the tendency to influence knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that learners require for survival in the 21st century as effective citizens and Social Studies has undoubtedly establish itself as the only subject in the school curriculum that seeks to achieve this goal. Resurgence in stakeholders’ support for Social Studies curriculum, learners continue to display dishonesty, truancy and disobedience which are against tenets of a just and efficient society.

From the lens of Epstein’s theory, stakeholder support for Social Studies in Senior High Schools may help influence the various attitudes and perceptions that have been formed about the subject overtime in Senior High Schools. In view of this Lilian, Amollo, Jane and Juliet (2020) assert that, when the school, families and communities engage in supporting the Social Studies curriculum, there are high chances of increased ethical behavior attributes, which enable learners to progress to adult life as responsible citizens for sustainable development. They further assert that, stakeholders’ support for the Social Studies curriculum may form a cornerstone for strengthening partnerships essential for achieving learning outcomes for sustainable development.

### 2.1.2 Relevance of the theory

Epstein (1989, 2001) Chadwick (2004) argues that when families and communities support education, learners attend school frequently, display positive attitudes and behaviors, complete assignments, receive higher scores, graduate at higher rates and are more likely to enroll in higher education. This argument is supported by Hatch (2009) who also adds that community involvement is critical to challenges of educational achievement and academic success which demand resources beyond the scope of the school and of families. This is premised on the view that strenuous responsibilities, demand of professional work and growing diversity among learners are identified as reasons that schools and families alone may not provide sufficient resources to support learning. School and community partnership connects individuals and organizations that can directly or indirectly promote citizenship and social interactions without boundaries (Epstein, 2001).

In view of the various assertions, Epstein (2013) acknowledges that growing awareness in parent-teacher meetings coupled by mutual respect, empathy in partnership activities can create opportunities for social construction of parental role in molding sense of efficacy among learners. Through parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making and collaborating, Epstein (2013) further argues that community's activities can lead to measurable outcomes beyond educational success with which learners acquire behavioral attributes and social skills. Such engagements require commitment to learning, support from stakeholders and effective communication from schools, welcoming school climate, reflection and evaluation of comprehensive program for schools-family partnership.



According to Epstein's theory, interaction can occur in multiple ways either at the institutional or individual level where internal and external models of influence overlap to promote learner engagements, development and learning. The internal models navigate around interpersonal relations which occur at school, home and in the community all of which influence learner behavior disposition. On the other hand, external models revolve around interactions between the learner at home, in school and in the community which act as a framework for inculcating social ethics. Therefore, [1] emphasize that the theory of overlapping sphere of influence provides an overview through which teachers and school administration are prepared to involve parents and community in decision making organs.

Within the overlapping spheres of influence perspective, there is both mutual responsibility and mutual benefit for the school, families and the community.. Mutual responsibility is highlighted in Epstein's (1990) belief that successful overlap in school-family partnerships helps students know that their teachers and parents are working together to help them set and reach important goals. The partnership also is mutually beneficial to parents and teachers. Epstein (1995) noted that while students are the primary focus of partnerships, there also are various outcomes for parents and teachers, such as more positive relationships between teachers and parents.

## **2.2 Conceptual Review of Relevant Literature**

Review of related literature is based on the following themes.

- i) Stakeholders' Conceptualization of Social Studies
- ii) Reasons why Stakeholders place importance of other core subjects than Social Studies
- iii) Marginalization of Social Studies
- iv) Making Social Studies Education More Relevant in Schools in Ghana.

## **2.3 Stakeholders' Conceptualization of Social Studies**

Social Studies is the only subject in the Ghanaian school curriculum with the sole responsibility of preparing young people as responsible citizens (Kankam, 2016; Mukhongo, 2010; Biesta, 2006). To add to this assertion, Bekoe and Eshun (2013) highlights that, Social Studies in Ghana with reference to the teaching syllabus for Social Studies prepares learners by equipping them with knowledge about the culture and ways of life of their society, its problems, its values and its hopes for the future. Also, Shulman (1986) cited in Mensah and Frimpong (2020) opines that, Social Studies provides the skills that are key to opening doors for a more diverse, competitive workforce and responsible citizenry.

Currently, Social Studies as a subject in the Ghanaian school curriculum is studied as a compulsory subject in all junior high schools and secondary schools as well at the teacher training colleges as an elective subject. Also, Bachelor of Education, Master of Education, Master of philosophy and Doctorate programmes in Social Studies education are also available at the tertiary levels (Kudawe, Otchere & Afari, 2020).

According to Ajiboye (2010), the teaching and learning of Social Studies in schools has been reportedly difficult because of the inability of stakeholders (teachers or

institutions) to conceptualize the nature of the subject itself. He further explained that Social Studies as a subject have not clearly been understood by countless scholars right from its inception. Bekoe et al, (2014) also adds that, the varied conceptions of the subject have led to the misunderstanding of the essence of the introduction of the subject in Ghanaian schools by stakeholders. Eshun (2020) in his view also add that, there is a level of confusion as to what Social Studies is in Ghana, and there is an evidence of curriculum differences across all levels of education (Basic, Secondary and Tertiary).

Similarly, Odada (1993) cited in Kanda (2012) opines that, there is a level of confusion and lack of clarity about what Social Studies entails and as a result, it has affected the teaching and learning of the subject. In the same context Mensah and Frimpong (2020) also opines that, over the years there has not been consensus among Social Studies scholars as to what the term Social Studies means, and this has compelled many scholars and educators to define Social Studies based on their own conceptualization. Mensah and Frimpong (2020) however cited Levit and Longstreet (1993) whose assertions also highlight that, the question of definition and identity has plagued the field of Social Studies since its inception in 1916.

Highlighting some empirical evidence concerning the issue of conceptualization of Social Studies, Quashigah, Kankam, Bekoe, Eshun and Bordoh (2015) conducted a study with the aim of exploring teacher-trainees varying conceptions of Social Studies in some selected Colleges of Education in Ghana. Their study employed the qualitative and quantitative (mixed method) approach. Their target population were the final-year trainees on teaching practice. They used purposive and convenient sampling technique to sample these final year students as well as the colleges. From

their field report, 150 respondents who were sampled from three colleges of education were asked to either agree or disagree whether Social Studies is an amalgamation of the social sciences. Results revealed that, 130(86.7%) agreed, 12(8.0%) were not certain whilst 8(5.3%) disagreed.

Their analysis on data results highlighted that, the 130(86.7%) agreeing out of the 150 mentees implies that, greater percentage of the trainees agreed that Social Studies is an amalgamation of the social sciences. Qualitatively, students explained Social Studies as an amalgamation of the social sciences because it draws relevant themes from the Social Science subjects like history, economics, and geography. Other students also opined that, Social Studies is an amalgamation of the Social Sciences in the sense that facts, concepts, principles, ideas, generalizations, values etc. are drawn from the social sciences and other fields of study into a given subject.

Their study however concluded that, there have been emerging issues and changing conceptions of teaching and learning of Social Studies over the years with regards to its meaning, scope, nature, objectives and even the way assessment tools are selected in teaching it with students viewing Social Studies as the teaching of geographical concepts, citizenship, global citizenship, multicultural, human rights, political, economic, moral and peace education. They further concluded that, there were verifiable evidence of diverse knowledge base of final year teacher-trainees about the conceptions of Social Studies and its effective teaching and as such, Mentees' conceptions formed about Social Studies will live with them and might influence their classroom practices.

Appiah (2015) also conducted a study, which aimed at determining teachers' perception of Social Studies and how they teach the subject at Junior High Schools in Berekum Municipality of Brong Ahafo Region in Ghana. The main instrument used for the study was questionnaire, which was made up of forty (40) close-ended four-point Likert Scale structured items. The questionnaires were administered to hundred (100) Social Studies teachers in the selected twenty-five (25) Junior High Schools in Berekum Municipality.

Findings from his study revealed that, seventy-six (76) respondents, representing 76.0% of the total population were of the view that Social Studies is seen as citizenship education in Ghanaian schools while only twenty-four (24) respondents representing 24.0% on the other hand were of the view that Social Studies is not seen as citizenship education in Ghanaian schools. Analysis of the study revealed that, Social Studies teachers had different conception of the subject with majority of them asserting that, Social Studies is seen as citizenship education.

Bas and Durmus (2019) within the same context also conducted a qualitative study which sought to identify the perspectives of parents on Social Studies education using a case study design. Data was obtained using a semi-structured interview guide. The data derived from the study were obtained from the parents of students attending 5th, 6th, and 7th grade of a state secondary school. Findings from their study revealed that, majority of the parents involved in the study linked the concept of Social Studies to the social sciences but however preferred to see the concepts of Social Studies reflecting citizenship values such as love for motherland, nation building, cultural values, democracy etc. Their study further revealed that, parents placed Social Studies

last in terms of importance and showed their disinterest in wanting their children to become Social Studies teachers in future.

Still highlighting some empirical reviews on the conceptualization of stakeholders, Bekoe and Eshun (2013) under the same shed also conducted a mixed method study which sought to determine whether the structure of program of study by the University of Education, Winneba and University of Cape coast influences the conception of their graduates about the nature and content of the subject in Senior High Schools in the Central region of Ghana. The design for their study was a sequential mixed method. Questionnaires were used as their main instrument for data collection. Their study revealed that, most University of Cape coast graduates conceptualize the subject as an amalgamation whilst most University of Education, Winneba graduates conceptualize the subject as problem solving.

Highlighting some findings from their data results, students were asked whether they agree or disagree to the conceptualization of Social Studies as an amalgamation of the social science. Results showed that, most respondents from the University of Cape coast agreed that Social Studies is an amalgamation of the social sciences whilst most respondents from the University of Education, Winneba disagreed that Social Studies is an amalgamation of the social sciences. Students were further asked to agree or disagree if Social Studies in schools should be subject centered (Geography, History, Economics and Sociology etc.). Data results revealed that, out of the 75 graduates from each university, 46 (61.4%) respondents who strongly agreed were UCC products, whilst 4 (5.3%) we respondents from UEW. Respondents who agreed were 19 (25.3%) UCC products, whilst 5 (6.7%) were respondents from UEW. Respondents who were not certain were 3 (4.0%) UCC products, whilst no UEW

product responded to this. Respondents who disagreed were 4 (5.3%) UCC graduates, whilst 29 (38.7%) were products of UEW. Respondents who strongly disagreed were 3 (4.0%) UCC products, whilst 37 (49.3%) were products of UEW.

Eshun and Bekoe (2013) however conducted another study to draw attention to the curriculum implementation challenges of Senior High School Social Studies in Ghana because of the differences in institutional curriculum conception of the subject. Their study adopted the interpretative design which was used to analyse documents of Social Studies programme of UCC and UEW, vis-à-vis the SHS Social Studies syllabus. Their analysis revealed that, the two known universities noted for training teachers (i.e., University of Education, Winneba, and University of Cape coast) subscribe and use a particular conception of Social Studies curriculum to produce Social Studies education graduates.

These strands of researchers used the term „Curriculum feuding“ to describe the divergent views shared by these two institutions. According to them, the curriculum feuding is because of the University of Cape coast subscribing to and using traditional subject-centered or discrete subject perspective (i.e., geography, economics, history, sociology, etc.) with a multidisciplinary approach, whilst UEW subscribes to and uses holistic, theme based, problem solving and trans-disciplinary approach. In their assertions, they highlighted the fact that, although Social Studies is seen as an integrated body of knowledge of the social sciences, there is an issue of acceptable level of integration between the two known institutions (UEW and UCC) noted for producing stakeholders of the subject and this has resulted in stakeholders (teachers, head teachers, curriculum developers, students etc) having varied conceptions about Social Studies. Bekoe and Eshun (2013) however added that, the difference in modes

of delivering Social Studies by these two major institutions may tend to influence the meaning of Social Studies is, its contents and why it is worth studying.

Inferring from the above empirical review of literature, Social Studies as a subject is still battling identity crisis and this has paved way for critics of the subject to find weakness in the inclusion of the subject in the Ghanaian school curriculum, in the sense that, stakeholders in the field of the discipline themselves have not agreed on what the subject is.

#### **2.4 Reasons Why Stakeholders Place Importance on other Core Subjects than Social Studies**

According to Bailey, Shaw and Hollifield (2006), studies have been conducted over the past few decades to record students' attitudes toward various subjects so that educators could understand which school subjects are considered preferable, likable, difficult, or important. These researchers have concluded in their studies that, students see Social Studies as one of the least interesting and most irrelevant subjects in the school curriculum as compared to other core subjects (Chapin, 2006; Chiodo & Byford, 2004; Kanda 2012; Sibiri 2017; Norris-Holt 2002).

Bailey, Shaw and Hollifield (2006) further highlighted that, when it comes to Social Studies, the importance attributed to the subject in schools does not correspond with its mission and to some extent; it has not received the necessary attention, as it should. In their view, the under emphasis on the importance of Social Studies emanates from several factors which has been the reason why the subject has been often ignored compared to other core subjects such as English, Science and Mathematics. Literature gathered on the reasons why stakeholders place importance on other core subjects than Social Studies highlight the issue of stakeholder's attitudes formed overtime,



teacher quality, limited instructional time and teaching strategy (Dunder and Rapoport, 2014; Woolford, 1982; Negumbo, 2017; Marlow and Inman, 1997; Norris-Holts, 2002; Sibiri, 2017; Chiodo and Byford, 2004; Theovos, 2000)

### **i) Stakeholders' Attitude formed over time**

According to Dunder and Rapoport (2014), Social Studies continues to be unimportant because all present-day stakeholders were at some time students who once had negative perceptions towards the learning of Social Studies and as a result, most of these stakeholders (whether a student or graduate) see (saw) the learning of Social Studies as easy and not important for their future occupations with some arguing that Mathematics, English and Science equips learners with skills needed for their career growth. Critics of the subject opine that, Social Studies is not linked to any professional career development but rather, it equips learners with facts and history.

Norris-Holts (2002) within the same light adds that, stakeholders in their early years in school possess a positive attitude towards Social Studies but as they progress, these positive attitudes fade over time because of exposure to prejudice, misconceptions, and negative perceptions about the subject. In his view, these exposures drive stakeholders to devalue the importance of the subject.

Empirically, a cross-sectional study conducted by Sibiri (2017) sought to evaluate the impact of student's attitudes towards the learning of Social Studies in Senior High Schools in the Upper West Region of Ghana. A total population of 255 respondents was sampled for the study. Questionnaires were the main instrument used to obtain data from participants. Findings from the study revealed that, students were not as negative toward Social Studies as previous research studies indicate but however,

students thought learning Social Studies was less important than Mathematics, Science and English since grades acquired in Social Studies was not used to determine their final grade and for admission requirements into the universities. Quantitatively, out of a total population of 252 students sampled for the study, 201 students constituting 78.8% of the population showed positive attitudes towards Social Studies while 54 students constituting 21.2% also showed negative attitudes towards the subject.

However, findings from data results after students were asked to rank Social Studies among English, Mathematics and Science revealed that, 86(33.7%) students each ranked Mathematics and English Language in the 1st position. 50 (19.6%) students ranked Integrated Science in the 3rd position while 33 (12.9%) respondents ranked Social Studies at the 4th position. The reason assigned by some of the students was that, even though they like the subject, they are not motivated to take it seriously because it is not important for their post-secondary studies as compared to Mathematics, English and Science. Chiodo and Byford (2004) however asserts that, one of the reasons for the negative attitudes towards Social Studies can be attributed mainly to motivational factors. Studies have however justified the assertions made by Chiodo and Byford (2004). For instance, a study conducted by Russel and Waters (2010) revealed that, students were demotivated to learn Social Studies because they saw the subject as uninteresting and not important for their future and as a result, showed negative attitudes towards the subject.

Although researchers have documented the issue of negative attitudes towards Social Studies as one of the main reasons for its marginalization, findings from other studies have also proven to be inconsistent with the above assertions concerning attitudes

towards Social Studies. Other studies have also proven that, students had positive attitudes towards Social Studies but however, the evidence are few as compared to studies that has proven the disinterest of the subject as students' progress in their academic life.

Highlighting some of these studies, Theveos (2000) conducted a study, which aimed at examining secondary student's attitudes towards Social Studies as well as identify the factors that influenced attitude of students. His study revealed that, out 14 school subjects, Social Studies was the eleventh most liked subject. The study also showed that student attitudes towards Social Studies were positive, however, liking for the learning area declined significantly by 13.30% from years 8 to 10. The study further revealed that, the reasons for the low status and the magnitude of deterioration in student attitudes towards Social Studies was because students disliked the delivery of the subject, its repetitive content and the learning activities undertaken in Social Studies lessons.

Within the same context, Ayaaba (2013) also conducted a study which sought to examine the attitude of students at the colleges of education towards the teaching and learning of Social Studies in the colleges of education. The study was structured within the framework of descriptive survey. The sample for the study was made up of Two hundred-second year students drawn from four Colleges of Education. The study revealed that students had a positive attitude towards the teaching and learning of Social Studies concepts. Findings from data results highlights that, although students had a positive attitude towards the subject, they agreed that negative attitudes towards the subject have affected the teaching of Social Studies concepts.

## ii) Teacher Quality

According to Dondo, Krystall and Thomas (1974) cited in Adjei (2016), if Social Studies education is to be successful, no matter how well the curriculum and materials are planned, teachers who are the implementers need to be effectively trained in Social Studies pedagogy. Aggarwal, (2006) also opines that, a Social Studies teacher must have special qualities such as an art of development of human relation, objectivity, deep knowledge of the subject matter, application of field study theory, a well-informed teacher, widely travelled person, a good communicator, skilled in the use of technological aids and an interpreter of various experiences.

Highlighting the competencies above, Adeyanju (2006) points out that in America and Britain for instance, any potential teacher is required to have a degree in what they intend to teach before entering any teacher education programme. Despite the assertions made by the above strands of researchers, there is still however documentary evidence of Social Studies teacher quality as a problem in Ghanaian schools.

Empirically, a quantitative study conducted by Adjei (2016) sought to provide evidence about teacher quality and the effective teaching of Social Studies in Senior High Schools in the Kumasi Metropolis. Questionnaires and Observation guide were the main instruments used to examine teacher quality and the effective teaching of senior high school Social Studies in Kumasi Metropolis. Simple random sampling technique was used to select a sample size of one hundred and fifty-nine teachers to respond to the questionnaire and thirty teachers were selected for the observation. A-59 item questionnaire and twenty-nine (29) detailed observation guides were used in the collection of data for the study. The study focused on the teacher's academic and

professional qualification, knowledge of the subject-matter, teaching experience and techniques teachers employed in the teaching of Social Studies in the senior high school.

Data results showed that, the rate of teachers who strongly agreed that professional qualification in Social Studies should be a requirement to be able to teach the subject effectively was one hundred and fifty-seven representing 98.8%, with calculated mean score of 3.9. However, only two representing 1.2% disagreed to the view. The opinion of the respondents revealed that one hundred and fifty-seven constituting 98.8% of the respondents agree that teachers with the B. Ed Social Studies, M. Ed Social Studies or M. Phil Social Studies Education are likely to perform better by achieving the objectives of Social Studies while 2 representing 1.2% disagree.

The opinion of the respondents attracted the highest mean response of 3.9. Findings from data results revealed that teachers' academic and professional qualification in Social Studies has direct bearing on the achievement of Social Studies objectives. Despite the findings derived from results, large numbers of teachers were academically qualified to teach at the senior high school but majority of them did not possess professional qualification in Social Studies.

In discussing findings, Adjei (2016) highlighted that, Social Studies teachers or facilitators of Social Studies must possess and integrate the necessary key teaching characteristics such as academic and professional qualification, knowledge of the subject matter, teaching experience and techniques employed in teaching Social Studies. He however cited Woolford (1982) whose assertions highlighted that, a person cannot be a good teacher without first knowing the content of the subject he is supposed to teach, and such a person must possess the right certification.

Adjei (2016) further reviewed assertions made by The Center for Public Education (2006) which clearly points out that teachers' knowledge of the content they teach is a consistently strong predictor of student performance and attitudes. Agbemabiese (2007) also reinforces the above assertions by adding that, a good curriculum may seem to be the final panacea but, it is the human touch provided by the teacher that will ensure that good and lasting results are produced. He further opined that; it is not the mere presence of human being tagged "teacher" in the classroom that will ensure the desired success of the teaching-learning process but a teacher with the right qualification in the subject area.

A recent study by Mensah and Frimpong (2020) which sought to examine students' attitude towards the learning of Social Studies in the Accra Metropolis of Ghana also highlighted teacher quality as one of the main factors for the negative attitudes towards Social Studies. Findings from their study revealed some factors, which emanates from the issue of teacher quality. They outlined these factors to be i) teachers not showing interest in teaching controversial issues ii) teachers' inability to give needed assistance to students iii) teachers' inability to use different teaching methods in teaching Social Studies classes iv) inadequate teaching and learning materials v) inability of Social Studies teachers to employ resource persons in times of difficulty.

Survey results from their study revealed that, out of a total of 72 teachers sampled for the study, 67 (93.0%) agreed that well trained teachers affect the attitudes of students towards Social Studies of which 5 (7.0%) disagreed. Results further revealed that, 35 (48.6%) of the teachers agreed that teachers' ability to explain concepts in Social Studies to students affected students' attitude towards Social Studies. For response on

the fact that, student's negative attitudes towards the subject is as a result of teachers inability to train students in critical thinking, results showed that, 43 (59.7%) agreed and 29 (40.3%) disagreed. Relating to the statement on the fact that most Social Studies teachers in the metropolis are not interested in teaching controversial issues it was found out that 23 (32.0%) agreed and 49 (68.0%) disagreed. In addition, 40.3% agreed that teachers' inability to give needed assistance to students affected their attitude towards Social Studies whilst 43 (59.7%) disagreed. Moreover, 41 (56.9%) agreed that teachers' inability to use different teaching methods in Social Studies classes affected their attitude towards Social Studies whilst 31 (43.1%) disagreed.

Qualitatively, teachers were however asked to outline other factors that affect student's attitudes towards Social Studies. Teachers outlined some factors such as lack of adequate classrooms, lack of better perspective of the subject, lack of dedicated tutors, lack of exposure to the real world, lack of teaching and learning materials in teaching Social Studies, constant teachers absenteeism, inadequate instructional time on the school time table for teaching Social Studies, large class size, the time allocated to the period (last period of the day), students inability to read Social Studies notes and understand it, students perceptions about the subject, teachers inability to embark on field trips to help learners in the learning process, teachers inability to mark exercises for prompt feedback and teachers personal disposition towards students all influence students attitude towards the subject "Social Studies".

Findings from a study conducted by Negumbo (2017) however give a different light to the issue at hand by revealing some reasons why teacher quality has been a dominant problem in the Social Studies classroom. His study revealed that

inappropriately qualified and unqualified teachers were used to teach Social Studies in most schools sampled for the study because school authorities perceived Social Studies as an easy subject which could be taught by just anyone whether trained or untrained. Negumbo's assertion is however supported by Mensah and Frimpong (2020), Abudulai (2020), and Kanda, (2012). These strands of researchers have also highlighted the issue of unqualified teachers in Senior High schools in their respective studies. These researchers have concluded in their respective studies that, the issue of out of field teacher's dominance in teaching the subject among others have contributed to the subject receiving negative attitudes from various stakeholders causing it to be marginalized in Senior High Schools in Ghana. They have however recommended in their studies that, stakeholders such as school authorities and the Ghana Education service should recruit trained and skilled professionals to teach Social Studies.

Obotan (2011) also asserts that, most Social Studies teachers are not trained in the field but are permitted by school authorities to teach the subject simply because importance is placed on other subjects more than Social Studies. In the same light, Aggarwal (1982), cited in Kanda (2012) and Sibiri (2017), also highlights the fact that, Social Studies education is perceived to be an easy subject in that any person can teach it and learners can learn at their chosen time and still perform well in examination. A newspaper review by Ghana web (2017) raised similar concerns about the picture being painted about Social Studies, as if without a teacher, pupils can read on their own and pass an exam. The review also shed light on the gradual reduction in employment of Social Studies trained teachers as compared to English, Mathematics and Science.



### **iii) Limited instructional time and passive teaching strategy**

Marlow and Inman (1997) cited in Dunder and Rapoport (2014) asserts, the teaching of Social Studies suffers from two factors, which has gradually led to the subject losing its importance. In their view, Social Studies suffer from limited instructional time and passive teaching strategies, which relies on textbook. In justifying the assertions above, Dunder and Rapoport (2014) reviewed that, abundant research demonstrates that insufficient time is allocated for Social Studies instruction (Bailey et al., 2006; Burroughs, Groce & Webeck, 2005; Burstein, Hutton, & Curtis, 2006; Finkelstein, Nielsen, & Switzer, 1993; Goodlad, 1984; Houser, 1994; McEachorn, 2010; VanFossen, 2005; VanFossen & McGrew, 2008; Wood et al., 1989).

The review highlights that, limited instructional time forces teachers or facilitators to adhere to less time-consuming teacher-centered strategies to cover the material, as opposed to student-centered strategies, which required more time (Burstein et al, 2006). The above assertions simply connote that, limited instructional time given to Social Studies facilities limits their ability to use other teaching method aside the teacher-centered method of teaching such as the lecture technique to teach students. This makes lesson delivery ineffective and hinders the achievement of intended objectives to be achieved.

Empirically, a survey by Russel and Waters (2010) which sought to gain a better understanding of what instructional methods students enjoy in the Social Studies classroom came out with some findings which reinforces the issue of limited instructional time. The survey was made up 480 respondents who were sampled conveniently. Prior to data collection, students were asked a question, which required them, provide answers to some reasons why they dislike Social Studies instructions.

Out of the total population, 75% responded that, the use of lecture technique to teach Social Studies as well as rote memorizations and note taking turns them off and that has been their reason for not enjoying Social Studies lessons. On the other hand, these passive techniques made Social Studies lessons boring and uninteresting.

Mampah (2016) also conducted a study in two senior high schools in the Krachi-East District in the now Oti Region (Formerly Volta Region) of Ghana to investigate the teaching of Social Studies concepts. The study was structured within the framework of mixed method approach. The instruments used in the collection of data were interview guides, questionnaires and observation guide. The participants of the study were six Social Studies teachers who were purposively sampled as well as thirty students who were sampled based on stratification. Findings from the study revealed that discussion technique dominated the teaching of Social Studies whereas fieldtrip and pre-reading activity for concept enhancement were virtually absent in the teaching of Social Studies. The study further revealed that, teachers in the teaching of Social Studies still heavily relied upon lecture technique.

Survey results from a study conducted by Mensah and Frimpong (2020) also revealed that, out of a total population of 89 students sampled for the study, 41 (56.9%) agreed that teachers' inability to use different teaching methods in Social Studies classes affected their attitude towards Social Studies whilst 31 (43.1%) disagreed. The findings from the study revealed that, teachers were unable to use different methods of teaching but resorted to the lecture method of teaching which emanates from the fact that, teachers were being allocated with limited instructional time of the timetable. Adding to the above findings, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports (2007) asserts that, there is less number of periods allocated to Social Studies

on the timetable and sometimes-large class size affects teaching and learning negatively.

Similarly, findings from a study conducted by Kanda (2012) which sought to investigate the educational background of Social Studies teachers and how it relates with pupils' academic performance in Public Junior High Schools in Mfantseman Municipality reinforces the assertions that less time is allocated for Social Studies by revealing that, there are few reference materials available for teaching the subject as well as limited number of periods allocated for the teaching and learning of the subject.

## **2.5 Marginalization of Social Studies**

Eshun (2020) asserts that, there is a level of confusion as to what Social Studies is in Ghana, and there is an evidence of curriculum differences across all levels of education (Basic, Secondary and Tertiary). Aside the numerous attempts made over the years, the subject is still battling with finding its identity as it has experienced in the past. Bekoe et al (2014) adds that, the varied conceptions of the subject have led to misunderstanding the essence of the subject's introduction in the Ghanaian educational curriculum. These contentions have paved way for a wide range of perceptions to be formed about the subject, since stakeholders within the subject have not yet settled their differences.

Findings from a number of research have revealed the issue of unqualified teachers as facilitators of Social Studies and have therefore concluded in their respective studies that, the issue of out of field teachers dominance in teaching the subject among others have contributed to the subject receiving negative attitudes from various stakeholders causing it to be marginalized in Senior High Schools in Ghana (Mensah & Frimpong,

2020; Abudulai, 2020; Kanda, 2012). Their findings highlight the fact that, stakeholders such as school authorities and the Ghana Education service do not recruit trained and skilled professionals to teach Social Studies as compared to other subjects.

Obotan (2011) asserts that, most Social Studies teachers are not trained in the field but are permitted by school authorities to teach the subject. He further adds that, these out of field teachers can teach the subject because importance is placed on other subjects more than Social Studies. Aggarwal (1982), cited in Kanda (2012) and Sibiri (2017), also highlights the fact that, Social Studies education is perceived to be an easy subject in that any person can teach it and learners can learn at their chosen time and still perform well in examination. In the same light, Negumbo (2017), also adds that, school authorities perceive Social Studies as an easy subject which could be taught by just anyone whether trained or untrained. A newspaper review by Ghana web (2017) raised similar concerns about the picture being painted about Social Studies, as if without a teacher, pupils can read on their own and pass an exam. The review also shed light on the gradual reduction in employment of Social Studies trained teachers as compared to English, Mathematics and Science.

A study by National Council for Social Studies (2009) also highlights that, students show less interest in studying Social Studies because they perceive the subject as being easy and therefore do not see the need to study it and pay critical attention to it. Sibiri (2017) also adds that, much attention has been given to subjects like English, Mathematics and Science at the Senior High School level in Ghana. According to him, Social Studies is an important subject to every citizen, but students in Senior High Schools in Ghana have not given attention to the study of Social Studies.

A study by Norris – Holt (2002) adds to Sibiri's assertion by revealing that, Students in their early years in school possess a positive attitude towards Social Studies but as they progress these positive attitudes fades till, they get to Senior High Schools. He adds that, these changes occur because of exposure to prejudices and misconceptions about the subjects, which drives these students to form negative perceptions towards the subject. Sibiri (2007) however asserts that, not only do these students in Senior High Schools accord low status to Social Studies, but also generally have negative attitude towards the subject with most of them showing apathy when it comes to Social Studies lessons. He adds that, most students hold several beliefs about Social Studies, which diminishes the importance of the subject. According to him, the most common of these beliefs are that Social Studies is cheap, not important, because it is not used to grade students in their final West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE), and it is not used as a strong admission requirement to tertiary institutions.

A study by Khaled (2007) have also revealed that, some students in high school go as far as to say that Social Studies is a „pushover“ subject and for that matter there is no need paying regular attention to it. Khaled further asserts that; critics of the subject also suggest that Social Studies should be eliminated from the Senior High School curriculum because students do not learn any basic skills in them. The critics maintained that Social Studies waste time, energy and resources, which could be used to help students“ master basic mathematics, English and science skills, which are needed for future performance in larger society. Within the same light, Eshun (2020) also adds that, Social Studies have been marginalized because it is seen as a reading subject and as such, it has not been given the needed attention.

## 2.6 Relevance of Social Studies Education

The relevance of Social Studies as a subject in the Ghanaian School curriculum have been justified by several researchers and it is not surprising to see the subject being studied at all levels of education in Ghana. It has already been captured in previous chapters that, attempts have been made to understand why students either like or dislike Social Studies, which may have led to the subject being marginalized (Shaughnessy, 1985, cited in Mensah & Frimpong, 2020). According these researchers, the attempts acknowledge the efforts made over the years through changes in curriculum design, teaching methodology and administrative practices which may have helped improve students' perceptions about Social Studies in the Ghanaian classroom. Bekoe, Quashigah, Kankam, Eshun and Bordoh (2014) cited in Eshun (2020) also acknowledges that, there have been many efforts made to improve the teaching and learning of Social Studies.

Highlighting some of these efforts, over the years educational reforms has seen the stability of Social Studies at some levels of education.

According to Kankam (2016) there were periods in the development of Social Studies where it progresses to a higher level and eventually come down. He asserts that, it was the recommendation of Dzobo committee's report implemented in 1987 as a reform that stabilized the development of Social Studies in Ghana. Curriculum reforms have hence contributed to Social Studies becoming a core subject in both junior high schools and senior high schools (Kankam, 2016; Eshun & Bekoe, 2013). Which means students are mandated to study Social Studies at these levels of education in Ghana because its importance has been realized over the years as the only subject in the Ghanaian school curriculum with the sole responsibility of

preparing young people as responsible citizens (Kankam, 2016; Mukhongo, 2010; Biesta, 2006).

Many researchers have either reviewed the fact that, Social Studies equip learners with the relevant skills to become active citizens or prepares them to face the realities of life. Out of the many assertions on the relevant of Social Studies education, Ayaaba and Odumah (2013) asserts that, the writings of these researchers point to the same thing, that is, training for citizenship. Their assertion is however supported by Banks (1994), Martorella 1994 cited in Kanda (2012) who also adds that, the subject is to prepare citizens who can make reflective decisions and participate successfully in the civic life of the local community, nation, and the world. According to these researchers, the basic purpose of Social Studies is to develop reflective competent and concerned citizens.

Highlighting some of the relevance of Social Studies education, Dynneson and Gross (1999) cited in Abudulai (2020) opines that, Social Studies prepare learners for a changing world and, this is necessitated by the fast-growing population of the world with its challenges. He further highlights the fact that, Social Studies is a subject that provides learners with the right knowledge, skills, attitudes, and understanding that are needed in both their public and personal endeavors and according to him, these skills, knowledge, and attitudes are very relevant in addressing personal and societal challenges, which is one of the major objectives of Social Studies. Within the same context, Shulman (1986), NCSS (1994) cited in Mensah (2020) also adds that, Social Studies helps young people to develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse democratic society in an interdependent world.

Mensah (2020) shares a similar view with Abudulai (2020)'s review by adding that, Social Studies provide the skills that are the key to opening doors for a more diverse, competitive, workforce and responsible citizenry. Ananga and Ayaaba (2004) also agrees with the assertions being made above by opining that, the purpose of the subject is to prepare learners to be good citizens, to teach learners how to think and pass on the cultural heritage to the younger generation. They further highlight that; Social Studies does not only pass on the cultural heritage to the next generation but inculcates the relevant aspect of culture to the younger generations.

A review by Sawyer (2015) also highlights that, Social Studies helps learners to grow in their understanding of and sensitivity to the physical and social forces at work around them in order that they may shift their lives in harmony with those forces. Jesim (2008), on the other hand opines that, Social Studies prepare the individual to fit into society. He further adds that, the subject helps learners to understand their society better, helps them to investigate how their society functions as well as assist them to develop their critical and at the same time developmental kind of mind that transforms societies.

Similarly, Garcia (2021) also opines that, Social Studies course is one of the important courses aiming to teach skills in elementary and secondary education. Also, Social Studies enables citizens to take part in the society as effective citizens. He further asserts that; Social Studies is a key tool in this changing world because it serves as the foundation of social development. De Guzman and Ecle (2019) also stressed that that, the subject acts as an agent of change, which transforms an individual to be an effective citizen of the country.



The Ministry of Education Science and Sports (2007) cited in Kanda (2012), Ayaaba and Odumah (2013) and Abudulai (2020) adds to the relevance of Social Studies by highlighting the objectives of Social Studies. In their review, Social Studies is designed to help learners to: i) develop the ability to adapt to the developing and ever-changing Ghanaian society ii) develop positive attitudes and values towards individual and societal issues, iii) develop critical and analytical skills in assessing issues for objective decision making iv) develop national consciousness and unity v) develop enquiry and problem-solving skills for solving personal and societal problems vi) become responsible citizens capable and willing to contribute to societal advancement.

Gabay, Pangkurikulum, Araling and Panlipunan (2013) also asserts that, Social Studies aims at integrating knowledge, experience, and effective use of resources for the purpose of fostering national unity and citizenship education. Social Studies exposes students to their cultural environment, which enables them to develop desirable concepts, values, and attitudes. They further opine that, the subject gives learners good idea of their environment and the problems therein, so that they may be involved deeply in life and problems of the community, promote the appreciation of cultural and cultural heritage, and build patriotic and self-actualized citizens. In their view, Social Studies inculcate the spirit of interdependence, unity in diversity and cooperation of all members of the local government as well as the national and international communities.

Dhandhanian (2016) also reviews some relevance of Social Studies by highlighting that, the inclusion of Social Studies in the curriculum right from primary to the secondary level signifies the importance of the subject and the role it plays in a

student's life. According to him, Social Studies is incorporated in the school curriculum through a combination of subjects like – History, Geography, Cultural Studies, Economics, Political Science, Sociology, Psychology, Anthropology, etc. These subjects help children to develop: (1) Awareness of The World and Environment: Lessons in Social Studies related to topics like – My Family, My Neighborhood, Community Helpers, Early Man, Civilization, History, Revolution, Great World Leaders, etc. teach students about the various civilizations, movements and renaissances that occurred over the years.

This knowledge enables the students to understand how the world and different societies have evolved, the important events that have occurred in the past, enduring ideas and eminent personalities that have created an impact and affected the lives of people both locally and globally (Garba, 2013). (2) Helps to Develop Critical Thinking Abilities: Social Studies inculcate higher order thinking abilities and skills like – Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Evaluation and Synthesis, Creativity in students. Learning a variety of topics such as – Natural Resources, Water Resources, Transport, Communication, Political Ideologies, Social Reformers, Our Cultures, United Nations, etc give students a chance to gain appropriate information and data in various contexts.

The information gained allows students to make relevant observations, identify similarities and differences, and make connections between related concepts, ideas, and resources (Dhandhania, 2016). (3) Helps to enhance the social understanding of students: Different topics included in the Social Studies curriculum for various age groups like – Festivals, Different types of Families, Clothes We Wear, Food We Eat, Our Country, States, My Community, Socio-Religious Reforms – help students to

observe, learn and understand human behavior, values and attitudes and the interrelationships which exist among different people (Edinyang, Unimke, Ubi, Oboh & Imoke, 2015). (4) Helps Students to Become Better Citizens: Subjects in Social Studies like Economics, Political Science and History educate students on Political Ideologies, Constitutional Laws, Citizenship, Rights and Duties, Morals and Virtues, Social Code of Conduct, thus making children aware of their roles and responsibilities particularly in relation to social and civic affairs (Dhandhania, 2016). Garcia (2021) however adds that, Social Studies course is one of the important courses aiming to teach skills in elementary and secondary education. In his view, Social Studies aim to enable citizens to take part in the society as effective citizens. He further highlights that, Social Studies is a key tool in this changing world and as such, it serves as the foundation of social development across countries.

In a different light, Grabenstein (2019) also opines that, the focus on STEM subjects have diminished the importance of a thorough humanities education that includes Social Studies. She however adds to her assertions by highlighting the importance of Social Studies with the view that, STEM disciplines may prepare students for high-paying jobs but a solid grounding in the social sciences (civics, geography, economics, religion, history) provides them with the context they need to make sense of the world. Dodson and Faust (2016) also with the same view asserts that, STEM has emerged as one of the most popular concepts in education currently but there is a forgotten core subject which has been left behind and this subject is „Social Studies.

Their assertion implies that, although Social Studies is also a core subject, it has not been given the same level of importance as STEM. According to Dodson and Faust (2016), people often do not feel like it is important for students to learn Social Studies, but

however these individuals are oblivious that STEM itself is Social Studies. They further explain their assertion by highlighting that, Social Studies is everything around us and as such STEM needs Social Studies to be relevant.

Within the same context, the National council for Social Studies (NCSS), also opines that, Social Studies education is the original STEM initiative and as such, it should be given the same attention as STEM subjects. In explaining their assertions, they shared insights on the meaning of the acronym STEM and Social Studies by drawing similarities between the two. According to NCSS, “STEM” and “ Social Studies” share a similar focus on using multiple bodies of knowledge to understand and solve problems in the world around us.

In explaining this, they highlight that, STEM is the acronym for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics, and it encompasses a vast array of subjects that fall into each of those terms. According to them, some common STEM areas include aerospace engineering, astrophysics, astronomy, biochemistry, biomechanics, chemical engineering, chemistry, civil engineering, computer science, mathematical biology, nanotechnology, neurobiology, nuclear physics, physics, and robotic etc. On the other hand, the NCSS also defines Social Studies as the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence.

They further assert that, within the school program, Social Studies provide coordinated, systematic study drawing upon such disciplines as anthropology, archaeology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, and sociology, as well as appropriate content from the humanities, mathematics, and natural sciences. After drawing the similarities, they further concluded that, in essence, Social Studies promote knowledge of and

involvement in civic affairs/issues (i.e., health care, crime, and foreign policy) which they classify as multi-disciplinary in nature and in their view, understanding these issues and developing resolutions to them require multidisciplinary education which will involve connecting Social Studies and STEM education together at meaningful points (because civics issues like those described above are both “physical world” and “human-made world” issues) . The NCSS however concluded that, “STEM” and “Social Studies” when given equal importance will enable us to ask deeper questions and propose sharper conclusions based on a wide body of evidence.



## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher discusses the research approach, design and methodology that were applied in conducting this study. The chapter is structured as follows: research paradigm, approach, and design; case selection and access, population, and sampling; data collection and data analysis methods. Ethical considerations, as well as credibility and trustworthiness of the study are also included in this chapter.

#### 3.1 Research Paradigm

A research paradigm is the way a researcher thinks about research or the researcher's worldview, which includes sets of assumptions and beliefs that underpin what a researcher does in the process of research (Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2011; Neuman, 2011; Mertens, 2014). These worldviews are regarded as assumptions or paradigms. The ontological assumption of the researcher in this study is the belief in multiple realities, which can be explored and re-constructed by interacting with the participants. This ontological position emanates from the interpretive paradigm, which is informed by the philosophical thought that, the view of the world that we see around us is the creation of the mind and as such, reality is better experienced through our perceptions, which are influenced by our preconception, and beliefs (Walliman, 2005, cited in Kusi, 2012).

### **3.2 Research Approach**

Creswell (2014) describes research approaches as plans and the procedures outlining the steps a researcher follows. These plans and procedures include matters from broad assumptions of the research to the detailed data collection methods analysis and interpretation. The researcher adopted qualitative research to understand and interpret the different perspectives of participants involved in the study. The choice of this approach emanates from the researcher's philosophical standpoint about social reality and knowledge construction.

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2013), the qualitative approach focuses on phenomena that occur in natural setting (real world) capturing the complexity of the phenomenon (real world). In this study the real world were the schools involved in this study. (Crossman, 2019) also adds that, qualitative research gathers and uses non-numerical data to understand the value of the social life in a targeted community or location. Creswell (2013) however asserts that, a study that seeks to undertake an in-depth case analysis requires a robust qualitative approach.

Qualitative study was deemed appropriate for this study as the researcher wanted to focus on making sense of the different views of the participants who would be involved in the study. Qualitative researchers aim at obtaining in-depth data through probing the responses of the participants for clarity and depth.

### **3.3 Research Design**

Research design is the “procedures for collecting, analyzing, interpreting and reporting data in research studies” (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007). In other words, the research design lays out the method for gathering and evaluating the necessary data and ways in which this will address the research question (Grey, 2009).

This study employed a case study design to explore the perspectives of stakeholders on the marginalization of Social Studies in Senior High Schools within the Accra Metropolitan Assembly. According to Punch (2005), a case study aims to understand a case in-depth and in its natural setting, recognizing its complexity and its context.

### **3.4 Case Selection and Access**

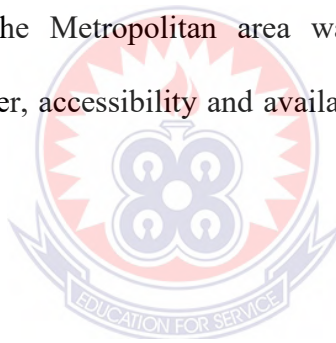
The relevance of Social Studies education in Senior High Schools cannot be under emphasized. The subject because of its importance is a core subject in Senior High Schools currently. Despite its importance, there has been empirical evidence of negative attitudes and marginalization of the subject in Senior High schools across the country. This implies that, a study that covers the whole country is important, however, it will not be possible to involve all senior high schools and stakeholders in the country in this study because of constraints of time and financial cost to conduct a nationwide study. Therefore, it is considered appropriate to conduct a bite size research covering stakeholders of Senior high schools in one area rather than an elephant size research covering the whole country (Kusi, 2012).

Out of the 260 districts in Ghana, the Accra Metropolitan Assembly was purposively selected as the setting for the study (O'Leary, 2005) cited in (Kusi 2012). Accra is the capital of the Republic of Ghana and the Greater Accra Region. It is geographically located on longitude 05°35'N and latitude 00°06'W. It shares boundaries with La-Dadekotopon Municipality to the east, the Gulf of Guinea to the south, Ga South and Central Municipalities to the west, and Ga West and La-Nkwatanang Municipalities to the north. With a total land area of 139.674 Km<sup>2</sup> (GSS, 2014), Accra is the largest populated city in Ghana has a population of 2,277,000 in 2015 and is expected to grow to 2,870,000 by 2025 (UN-Habitat, 2014, 2016). Accra is noted for major



economic, institutional, and social activities, such as manufacturing, marketing, banking and finance, entertainment, learning institutions, transport, and governance (Aryee, Pumijumng, Punwong & Roachanakanan, 2018). There are five (5) secondary schools in the Metropolitan Area. These are Accra Academy Senior High School, Accra Wesley Girls Senior High School, Holy Trinity Cathedral Senior High School (HOTCASS), St Margaret Mary Senior High School and Kaneshie Senior High Technical School (GES, 2021).

Accra Metropolitan Area (AMA) was selected because of the large number of schools in the area due to the number of households and businesses and the level of economic and educational activities within the area in terms of population and number of educational activities. The Metropolitan area was also selected because of its proximity to the researcher, accessibility and availability to the study population and data.



### **3.5 Population**

The concept research population refers to the participants of a research study. According to Kumar (2011), it is from these research participants that relevant needed information or evidence that answers the research questions are obtained. The source of evidence for the study could be variables from which data is collected. In this study, the population from which relevant data was collected were school stakeholders, which included Assistant Headmasters, Social Studies teachers, and Parents Teacher Association members of the five senior high schools in the Accra Metropolitan Assembly.

### **3.6 Sample and Sampling Technique**

A sample is a subset of a population selected to participate in a study (Trochim, 2006). Creswell (2013) alluded to the point that although there is no specific answer as to the number of sites and participants the researcher ought to have, qualitative research is mostly characterized by small sample size, which also depended on the research designs used. Fifteen participants were sampled from the five schools in the Accra Metropolitan Assembly. The breakdown of the participants includes five Assistant head teachers, five Social Studies teachers and five PTA members. In each school a sample of one head teacher, one Social Studies teacher and one member of the PTA were taken.

The researcher sampled one Social Studies teacher from each school because most of the teachers were in the Gold track stream due to the double track system and those available were busy and showed unwillingness to participate in the study hence the researcher's adoption of the convenient sampling technique to sample one Social Studies teacher from each school making a total of five Social Studies teachers representing each school. Similarly, convenient sampling was employed in sampling Assistant Head teachers. This sample technique was employed due to the busy schedules of the Assistant head teachers. Those who were willing to participate in the study were those that was sampled for the study. At the end of the data collection process, Five Assistant head teachers representing each school agreed to participate in the study conveniently.

According to Dörnyei (2007), convenience sampling (also known as Haphazard Sampling or Accidental Sampling) is a type of non-probability or non-random sampling technique where members of the target population that meet certain

practical criteria, such as easy accessibility, geographical proximity, availability at a given time, or the willingness to participate are included for the purpose of the study.

Sampling of PTA members was based on recommendation. PTA members because of their position as external stakeholders were not available in the schools and as such, the school administration was in the right position to make recommendations. The administration of the schools was able to suggest parents to be contacted to aid in obtaining data. In view of this, the snowball sampling technique was employed. All five schools recommended one parent making a total of 5 parents.

A census of the Senior High Schools in the Accra Metropolitan area was used for the study. This was because there are only five senior high schools in the Accra Metropolitan Assembly and all schools were selected for the study. Although the researcher took samples of five Social Studies teachers, five head teachers and five PTA members, during the data collection process the researcher realized saturation in each strand of population. For instance, all five Social Studies teachers gave out same information likewise Head teachers and Parents. In view of that, the researcher ended the data collection process after realizing saturation among participants.

### **3.7 Data Collection Instruments**

According to Mertler and Charles (2011), qualitative data is often presented in words, either descriptive or narrative in nature. In their view, these words are visible in the form of interviews transcripts, observation notes; journal entries; transcriptions of audio or video recordings, existing documents, records, or reports. The main source of data collection for this study was obtained from primary data. According to Salkind (2010) a primary data source is an original data source, that is, one in which the data are collected firsthand by the researcher for a specific research purpose or project.

In this study, the main instrument for the collection of primary data was through semi-structured interview guides. Semi-Structured interview guides were used to obtain primary data from participants of the study. According to O'Leary (2005), semi-structured interviews are neither fully fixed nor fully free and are perhaps best seen as flexible. Wragg (2002) also highlights that, semi-structured interview guides allow the interviewer to ask initial questions, followed by probes meant to seek clarification of issues raised. Probes are either pre-stated or posed during the interview making the interview process flexible.

Data gathering for this study was in the form of an interview using an interview guide prepared in English, made up of open –ended questions and close ended questions. The interview guide was developed in line with research questions. Probing questions were asked based on what the participants said to elicit clarification to get detailed and accurate information. For instance, participants who gives close answers or answers that seems not to answer research questions were asked further questions to get detailed information from them.

The interview guide was organized into two sections which highlighted sections A and B. Section A comprised of demographics of participants which highlights age, occupation, marital status. Section B consisted of questions that elicited information on Stakeholders conceptualization of Social Studies, the placing of importance on English, Math and Science as Compared to Social Studies, Justification of the marginalization of Social Studies and some ways stakeholders can make Social Studies more relevant in Schools. The interview guide was reviewed by experts and the supervisor of the researcher to help ensure their validity and reliability of the guide.

The interview guide was reviewed by the supervisor of the researcher to help ensure their validity and reliability of the guide. The interview guide was piloted on 1 respondent who did not participate in the final study.

This was to help the researcher fine-tune the interview guide and ensure the validity, reliability and objectivity of the instrument and procedure.

### **3.7.1 Process of data collection**

An introductory letter was obtained from the Department of Social Studies from the University of Education, Winneba and submitted to the administration of each school. The letters after being reviewed by the administration were minuted to the appropriate individuals concerned. The researchers after being given the permission interacted with the participants (School Head teachers and Social Studies teachers). These participants could easily be interacted with because they are internal stakeholders of the school. Schedule for interview meetings were arranged with the participants.

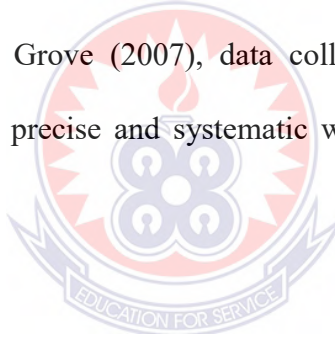
With the PTA members, because they are external stakeholders of the school, the researcher was given a recommendation by the school administration. The researcher was given 1 contact of parents from each school based on the recommendation of the school administration. The researcher interacted with the parents to arrange meeting with them.

The data was collected from 15th April 2021 to 15th May 2021. For school administrators and Social Studies teachers, the data was collected at the school premises. Data was collected from parents on a weekend in the comfort of their homes. The interview guides were administered personally. This gave the researcher

the opportunity to brief respondents to help them understand exactly what the research was about to obtain the right responses.

The briefing gave the researcher the opportunity to seek the express consent of the participants who participated in the study and to assure them of their anonymity, confidentiality, and the use of the information for academic purposes only. The data collected was treated with anonymity, confidentiality, and academic purposes only.

The interviews were conducted in English. All the interviews lasted between 15 minutes to 20minutes. The interview guide was used to guide the questions to be asked and information received was recorded with the consent of participants. Data gathering ended when responses from participants kept repeating (saturation). According to Burns and Grove (2007), data collection is a process of gathering relevant information in a precise and systematic way in line with the purpose of a study, research questions.



### **3.7.2 Data management**

After the interview sessions with participants ended. The researcher created a folder for each school and uploaded audio data into each folder. Each folder was named after each school. For instance, folder names were captioned Accra Academy data, St Margaret Mary Data, Aweygey Data, Hotcass Data and Katecho Data. All the folders were uploaded on google drive to ensure its safety in case the research misplaces recording device or laptop.

After ensuring the safety of data, the researcher manually transcribed each audio data into transcripts. Transcripts were captioned according to participant number. i.e., each participant was given a number like Participant 1, Participant 2, and Participant 3 etc.

The researcher after transcription obtained 15 transcripts representing each transcript. Softcopy of transcripts were also uploaded into google drive to ensure its safety. The researcher also made a hardcopy printout of transcripts to facilitate a manual coding of transcripts.

### **3.8 Data Analysis**

Thematic analysis method was used to analyse the data. Four Codes were derived with Nine Themes emerging from these codes. Thematic content analysis is a procedure for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns in data collected (Braun, & Clarke, 2006). The thematic content analysis enabled the researcher to critically examine the narratives of participants by breaking the data into smaller units for easy description and interpretation (Vaismoradi et al., 2013). Thematic content analysis also enabled the researcher classify data and deduce patterns in the unrefined form (Javadi & Zarea, 2016). Thematic content analysis provides flexibility in the researcher's choice of theoretical framework, provides for detail and rich descriptions of the data obtained.

Thematic analyses vividly define steps to ensure data clarity and rigour in the process. These steps include the researcher familiarizing with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, defining, and naming themes and producing report. Initial interviews were transcribed verbatim, read and re-read many times to give direction for the conduct and questions of subsequent interviews to get better responses and outcome. At the end of the day, the researcher transcribed the recorded data.

After transcription, data were read again and again to obtain in-depth meaning to aid the researcher identify concepts within and between participant's data.

Coding was done where phrases, sentences, statements, and paragraphs of interest to the researcher were taken note of and given a label code. The coded passages were compared and codes with common elements were grouped to form major themes and sub-themes (Bradbury-Jones, 2007).

### **3.9 Positionality**

The role of the researcher is an outsider and not a parent, school administrator, teacher, or community leader. Hence, all investigation was done from the lens of impartiality, with no influence on the findings.

### **3.10 Ethical Consideration**

Ethics is concerned with how people act judgments about the acts and developing rules for justifying actions (Jones, 2000). Ethical considerations ensure the protection of dignity and safety of participants. Ethical clearance and approval were sought for this study from the Department of Social Studies Education and the administration of schools involved in the study. Copies to that effect is attached to the appendix of this study.

Introductory letters were minuted to participants involved in the study. The objectives of the study were equally explained to participants and their consents were obtained before taking any information from participants. Participants were made aware that they have the right to decline to take part in the study if they felt like doing so.

Anonymity of participants was ensured by using pseudonyms to avoid easy identification. Data collected were kept confidential and safely by the researcher and was used only for the research purpose.



### 3.10.1 Trustworthiness

According to Polit and Beck (2014), trustworthiness is very vital to ensuring confidence in data gathered, analyzed and interpreted. It highlights with the quality and relevance of the instrument and methods used for the study. In a similar context, it also describes the degree at which a study is worth giving attention to, worth taking note of, and the degree to which others are convinced that study findings are trusted (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). According to Guba (1992) cited in Kusi (2012), the elements of trustworthiness criteria includes credibility, transferability and confirmability. Thus in this study, trustworthiness was ensured through confirmability and credibility.

The first step to ensuring trustworthiness was through confirmability. Confirmability deals with how the research findings are supported by the data collected. It also brings to light whether the researcher has been bias in the presentation of findings. According to Kumar (2005) „bias“ is a deliberate attempt to either hide what you have found in your study, or highlight something disproportionately to its trues existence. Personal convictions which was likely to impact the findings of the study was avoided by ensuring that data gathered could be traced back to the raw data of the research and that they are not merely as a product of the researchers worldview, disciplinary assumptions and research interests (Charmaz, 1995) cited in (Kusi 2012).

In the same light, credibility was ensured through member checks. This was done by allowing participants to review the data obtained from them in order to confirm the accuracy of data collected from them. To simply put, participants were given the chance to crosscheck the information they gave out which aims at filling gaps and making the necessary corrections where appropriate from earlier discussions.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.0 Introduction

This current study sought to explore the perceptions of stakeholders on the marginalization of Social Studies education in Senior High Schools within the Accra Metropolis. The study sought to answer four main question. Presentation and discussions are done under themes that emerged from research questions and data gathered. The themes are further broken down into subthemes.

In addition, discussion of findings in this chapter also highlights how findings either support or contradicts existing literature.

#### 4.1 Stakeholders Conceptualization of Social Studies as a Subject in the Ghanaian School Curriculum

Participants gave varied views about their understanding of Social Studies concepts. Three sub themes were derived from the responses of participants under this theme. These sub themes highlights citizenship education, combination of other subjects and not much knowledge on what Social Studies is.

##### 4.1.1 Citizenship Education

Some participants in their view opined that, the subject trains students to be good citizens. In presenting study findings on the regard, Participant 1 who is a Social Studies teacher and a head of department in Accra Academy Senior High School asserted that,

*“With Social Studies in senior high schools, I believe that one is citizenship education. Citizenship education in the sense that we are looking at the fact that when children are introduced to topics, before then we will identify problems relating to the topic and then we believe that after everything they should be equipped with the necessary values and skills that will let them contribute to societal as well as individual problems” (Participant 1)*

Within the same light Participant 9 who is also a teacher of Social Studies at St Margaret Mary Senior High School also opined that,

*“ Basically, Social Studies is very broad as a subject as we all know. But looking at it, it actually has to do with a holistic study of the individuals we are teaching. It goes beyond just the subject but the molding of the totality of the individuals we are handling. So for me as a teacher Social Studies is more than a subject. Because the development of the child in the societal relationship and even in the relationship in the societal environment and even in relationship in his relationship to come it all depends on the subject. How the teacher is able to make sure that the kid understands most of these aspects so that it will help in most of the development of the child” (Participant 9)*

Participant 10 who is a parent and has a ward in Kaneshie Technical Senior High school also added that.

*“ I know the subject talks about social and political issues and individuals in the community. For my child to learn that subject, I think is a plus for him to know how to relate with people in the community and know how to handle the affairs of politics and social affairs” (Participant 10)*

#### **4.1.2 Combination of other subjects**

Other strands of Participants also shed views on Social Studies concepts being a combination of different subjects being put together. Highlighting some of their

assertions, Participant 4 who is an assistant headmaster of Holy Trinity Catholic Senior High school asserted that;

*“ Well Social Studies as I understand it from my personal perspective is a combination of some subjects together and also more or less to inculcate in our children good moral values right from day one till they leave school. Yes, what I know is a combination of subjects put together but also certain subjects which previously were done but are no more in existence so coupled with other subjects put together to make sure the children understand” (Participant 4).*

Similarly, Participant 5 who is also a Social Studies teacher at the same school also added that,

*„I think it is comprehensive because when you look at the content, the topics, there are various topics that has other subjects in it. For instance, I recently just finished teaching a topic like the physical environment. We have an aspect of geography where we need to talk about the main component of the atmosphere and other things. When you take other topics too, we have science in it. Even that same topic, we had science in it where we talked about food chain. We also talked about food web and all these things with this topic can be found in science. When we take a topic like population, we have a bit of some calculations in there, calculations we all know can be aligned to mathematics, can be aligned to science, can be aligned to Economics, geography, and that. So, I think with my comprehensive aspect, that is what I mean. I mean we have every bit of other subjects inside Social Studies” (Participant 5).*

As a Social Studies teacher and a head of department, Participant 11 also asserted that;

*„Social Studies is a subject that consists of many other discipline, such as history, economics, geography which are fused together, which are taught as a single subject” (Participant 11)*

### 4.1.3 Not much knowledge

Some participants after being asked to shed their views on how they understand Social Studies also admitted that they had not much idea about what the subject entails. Highlighting some of their assertions, Participant 3 who is an assistant headmaster after being asked to share his view on his understanding of Social Studies asserted that,

*„Yeah, I do not know much, not much. I know they do some traditional aspect; they talk about environment and then governance. That is all I know ‘ ‘ (Participant 3).*

Participant 7 who is a parent and has a ward in Accra Academy Senior High school also shed his view that,

*„I don't know much about the subject, but I know Social Studies is a subject that talks more about our constitution, our community, our nation, and our history‘ ‘ (Participant 7)*

Participant 12 also shed her view on his understanding of Social Studies by asserting that

*‘ ‘ Not much, I just know the name but the content I don't think I know is it‘ ‘ (Participant 12)*

## 4.2 Comparison of the Relevance of Science, Mathematics, English Language with Social Studies

Participants were asked to share their view on the importance of English, Math's and Science as compared to Social Studies. Participants shared varied views on the questions asked with two main themes emerging. These themes highlighted that all subjects have equal importance whiles other participant also asserted that Science, Technology is more important.

#### 4.2.1 Equal importance

Majority of the Participants involved in this study made it clear that all subjects being taught in the school curriculum have equal importance and as such no subject is important than the other. Twelve out of the fifteen participants involved in the study asserted that all subjects within the school curriculum are equally important. Highlighting some of the views of participants, Participant 4 who happens to be a headmaster at Holy Trinity Catholic Senior High School highlighted that;

*“ From where I am coming from, I keep all subjects on the same level, I don't take one to be more important than the other, because all are important. It is just like the human system, like the question we often ask ourselves, which one is more important. Is it the head, neck, the hand, the limbs, or what? . Everybody has a role that they all play so when it come together, it's a teamwork so together with combination of all subjects that is what makes the student a unique person because you cannot depend on one subject and then move on, you need the rest as well” (Participant 4)*

Sharing similar view with participant 4, Participant 7(Parent) and 10(Parent) in their respective views highlighted that,

*“ All subjects are important. They are all the same level. No subject is above the other. They all help at a point in time. So they are all important” (Participant 7)*

*“ They are equally important, but I cannot fish out one. They are all important” . (Participant 10)*

#### 4.2.2 Science, English and Mathematics are important than Social Studies

Although most of the participants in their views admitted that all the subjects in the school curriculum are important, Participants 3,12 and 13 shed an opposing view.

These participants highlighted that; Science, Technology, English and Mathematics are important than Social Studies although they admitted that Social Studies is also important. Highlighting some of their view, Participant 12(Parent) gave a precised answer by asserting that.

*“Yes. Because Math’s, Science and English are the required courses or subject needed to progress. These three subjects are more important than Social Studies. Yes, Social Studies is important because it can make the sixth grade needed to enter university but I place more emphasis on math and science because if you fail these two subjects, you may not get into any university” (Participant 12).*

Participant 3(Assistant Headmaster) and 13(Assistant headmaster) also opined that,

*“ Social Studies is within, it’s practical, we are seeing it so students or people think that the little talk or discussion on it, the students get it. I am telling you. Social Studies is not difficult to learn or even pass in an examination. It is not, because we are with it, we are within it, we are seeing it but for the other one, the science and the math, is somehow abstract, do you get it? You need to spend a lot of time. Science students do not have time for anything else. Science students if you watch, they are bookworms, always their heads are buried in their books. But Social Studies we are within (Naming ceremony) we have been watching it, do you get it? For the environment we learnt all in science. We learn our environment in science. So, the one you will be taught in Social Studies you add it to it. So that is the issue” (Participant 3).*

*“ Yes, I see it so. I think that that for those areas, they are specific in terms of personal development. The Social Studies I see it as a mix up of all the subject. Once a person studies, economics as a subject, History, Geography, coming to study Social Studies again is repetitive. I think the STEM subjects should stand on it own and Social Studies should not be much needed because it will be like we are repeating*

*what the student has already learnt. I think that Social Studies must be out of the context because it is repetitive. (Participant 13)*

### **4.3 Stakeholders Perception on the Marginalization of Social Studies in Senior High Schools within the Accra Metropolis**

Participants in their respective views after being asked to share their view of the marginalization of Social Studies came out with varied opinions, which formed the basis of two main themes. For instance, Participants 1, 11 and 10 highlighted that, to some extent, they see Social Studies as being marginalized. Other participants also indicated that, they feel the subject lacks the needed respect.

#### **4.3.1 To some extent Social Studies is being marginalized**

Some Participants in responding to the question on whether they see Social Studies as marginalized responded that to some extent they see the subject as being marginalized. Highlighting some of their assertions, Participant 1 who is a teacher and Head of department highlighted that.

*‘To some extent, because if they can even mention other subjects and then leave Social Studies out, that should communicate to you what is happening. If some of the schools can allow any teacher at all to teach Social Studies, then it is so glaring that we are not looking at Social Studies with ‘much seriousness’ (Participant 1).*

Participant 5 who is also a teacher also reinforced the view of participant 1 by also adding that,

*‘I think to an extent the subject has been marginalized because I teach Social Studies, I know the attitudes of students towards the course and I think that is because they have made or they have an idea from wherever they picked it from I do not know, thinking that the three other core subjects which is English, Math and Science are more*



*important, and they feel that those are the courses from which they are usually graded on, especially when they write the WASSCE. (Participant 5)*

Similarly, Participant 11 (Teacher) and 10 (Parent) also asserted that,

*“Yes, it has been a problem since time immemorial. It’s one of the problems that we teachers are facing. They do not give much attention to the subject. Students for instance. They think it is easy. Teachers also think it is easy and anybody can teach it. Students and teachers have marginalized it. Because they think, anybody can pass or teach the subject. But that is not the case” (Participant 11).*

*“To some extent because most of the educational program being hosted on tv and radio set is more of math and science excluding Social Studies” (Participant 10)*

#### **4.3.2 Social Studies lacks attention and respect**

Participant’s views on the marginalization of Social Studies also revealed that, the subject lacks the needed respect and attention from students. Highlighting some views, Participant 2 opined that.

*“You cannot compare the attention given to the science and math to Social Studies. And so even for the kids, they themselves they give more attention to the science and math than Social Studies because they see it to be something that has less importance as compared to the other areas but if same attention is given to it. then they will see the need to attach some importance to the subject and when they do, it helps shape themselves and it helps build our nation in general” (Participant 2).*

Participant 6 (Assistant Headmaster) and 7 (Parent) also within the same light added that,

*“I think teachers are giving it the needed attention, but from my perspective it looks like the students rather do not give much attention to it. They do not see the subject as very important. Their key interest is in the English, Science, and the Mathematics. Teachers are giving it the best attention as they can, but it is only the students who are underrating the importance of the subject” (Participant 6).*

*“it does not have attention like Math, English and the other subject tho. Because I think the demeanor I do not know if it is the teachers or the students approach the subject per say. Because you cannot even see the influence on it and even when someone is persuing Social Studies as a career you do not see that much respect accorded the person as someone persuing accounting or studying science as in Doctor or something. It is being given little attention and respect” (Participant 7).*

#### **4.4 Stakeholders Contribution to making Social Studies Education more Relevant in Ghanaian Schools**

In view of participant's role as stakeholders, they made suggestion which in their view may go a long way in making Social Studies relevant in Ghanaian schools. Two sub themes were drawn from the theme „“Suggestions””: These sub themes derived were effective teaching, encouraging students to learn Social Studies.

Headmasters and teachers centered their suggestions on effective teaching as the way to go if Social Studies are to be made relevant. On the other hand, Parents also suggested the encouragement of students at home to study Social Studies as a way of helping them develop interest for the subject.

#### 4.4.1 Effective teaching of the subject

Participants in their respective views highlighted concerns on the need for effective teaching if Social Studies is to be seen as more relevant in Ghanaian schools.

Highlighting some of their views, Participants 1 (Teacher and HOD) suggested that,

*“ if you want something to be part of you, the way you receive it, the way you even put it into practice is different from just you thinking about you passing exams and that is all. So, the presentation, I do not expect teachers to go to class and then pick textbooks and then be reading”.* (Participant 1).

Within the same context, Participant 5 (Teacher) and 6 (Assistant Headmistress) also asserted that,

*“ Teachers who are in the field of Social Studies should also put in more effort, widen up their scope of knowledge, be very confident and knowledgeable in delivering the subject Social Studies because when we are role models, then it gets to attract the interest of all or arouse the interest of students in the subject area”* (Participant 5).

*“ It all starts from the teacher, from the point of administration, just as I said we are encouraging students to learn the subject because the need that too to pass their wassce convincingly to pursue which ever course they want to pursue. That is what administration is doing now. We can only provide students and teachers the needed resources, but much will be expected from the teacher who is always with the students. Teachers must do a lot to change the narrative of the subject”* (Participant 6).

#### 4.4.2 Encouraging students

Participants also highlighted the need to encourage students to learn Social Studies.

This in their respective views will encourage students to develop some interests in

students. Highlighting some views from participants, Participant 8(Parent) highlights that,

*“I guess, to encourage my ward, to take it as serious as the other courses and to learn the bits that are in there. I learnt some time back, it used to be a substitute for science for even school, so all the courses are equally important. I will urge parents also to encourage their wards to find it entertaining and not belittle it” (Participant 8).*

Similarly, Participant 10(Parent) and 12(Parent) also highlighted that.

*“ I will always encourage my ward to always learn the subject of Social Studies.*

*He or she may see it as a reading subject but should be encouraged to sit down and learn it as he does with math and science. So that will be what I will do to enhance my ward to get better understanding of what he or she is studying at school which includes all the core subjects” (Participant 10)*

*“As a parent I will encourage my ward to pay attention to all subjects because you cannot pass Math, English and Science and leave Social Studies out. So as a mother, I will make sure my kids learn virtually everything. In a bigger picture, I will get it done by channeling it through the PTA and then leave it for the PTA executives to take it up. (Participant 12)*

#### **4.5 Discussion of Findings**

The discussions are pinned to the main themes that emerged from the study. As earlier mentioned, four main themes were derived from the data gathered. These Themes are Stakeholder’s conceptualization of Social Studies as a subject in the Ghanaian school curriculum, Comparison of the relevance of Science, Mathematics, English Language

with Social Studies, Stakeholder's perception on the marginalization of social studies and Stakeholder's contribution to making Social Studies relevant.

#### **4.5.1 Stakeholders conceptualization of Social Studies as a subject in the Ghanaian school curriculum**

According to Ajiboye (2010), the teaching and learning of Social Studies in schools has been reportedly difficult because of the inability of stakeholders (teachers or institutions) to conceptualize the nature of the subject itself. Within the same light, Bekoe et al. (2014) also adds that, the varied conceptions of the subject have led to the misunderstanding of the essence of the introduction of the subject in Ghanaian schools by stakeholders. Similarly, Eshun (2020) in his view also add that, there is a level of confusion as to what Social Studies is in Ghana, and there is an evidence of curriculum differences across all levels of education (Basic, Secondary and Tertiary).

Findings from this study concerning the conceptualization of Social Studies seems to be in synergy with the assertions from the above strands of researchers. Findings revealed that, stakeholders are conceptualizing Social Studies differently. Participants in this study in responding to how they understand or conceptualize Social Studies gave varied views which were group as sub themes under the main theme „Concepts“. These sub themes derived from participant views are Citizenship education, Combination of subjects and not much Knowledge.

Study findings supports the findings of Appiah (2015) who conducted a study which aimed at determining teachers' perception of Social Studies and how they teach the subject at Junior High Schools in Berekum Municipality of Brong Ahafo Region in Ghana. His study findings revealed that Social Studies has different conceptualization, and teachers who are seen as the direct stakeholders of the subject understand it

differently. Similarly study findings also supports the findings of, Bekoe and Eshun (2013) who conducted a study to determine whether the structure of programme of study by the University of Education, Winneba and University of Cape coast influences the conception of their graduates about the nature and content of the subject in Senior High Schools in the Central region of Ghana. Their study revealed that, most University of Cape coast graduates conceptualize the subject as an amalgamation whilst most University of Education, Winneba graduates conceptualize the subject as problem solving. Their study also reinforced the issue of varied conceptions of stakeholders the field of Social Studies.

The current study revealed that, the issue of Social Studies conceptual debates persists in senior high schools within the Accra Metropolis and this is evident in study findings with regards to how stakeholders conceptualize Social Studies. In view of the conceptual debates, Bekoe et al. (2014) has asserted that, the varied conceptions of the subject have led to the misunderstanding of the essence of the introduction of the subject in Ghanaian schools by stakeholders. Inferring from Bekoe et al's assertion, this have paved way for critics of the subject to find loopholes in the subject and this is simply because stakeholders within the field of the subject are still battling identity crisis.

#### **4.5.2 Comparison of the relevance of Science, Mathematics, English Language with Social Studies**

According to Bailey, Shaw and Hollifield (2006), studies have been conducted over the past few decades to record students' attitudes toward various subjects so that educators could understand which school subjects are considered preferable, likable, difficult, or important. These researchers have concluded in their studies that,

stakeholders see Social Studies as one of the least interesting and most irrelevant subjects in the school curriculum as compared to other core subjects (Chapin, 2006; Chiodo & Byford, 2004; Kanda, 2012; Sibiri, 2017; Norris-Holt, 2002).

This current study revealed that, Out of the Fifteen participants interviewed, twelve of them asserted that, they see Social Studies as important as Science, Technology, English and Mathematics. Four Participants however indicated that, Science, Technology, English and Mathematics are important than Social Studies. This implies that, Majority of the stakeholders involved in the study sees Social Studies as important as STEM subjects. This finding contradicts with the findings of a study by (Chapin, 2006; Chiodo & Byford, 2004) which has been cited in Kanda 2012). The findings by these researchers revealed that stakeholders see Social Studies as the least interesting and unimportant subject as compared to other core subjects. Stakeholders in this study were precised in their responses that the see Social Studies as equally important as other core subjects. For instance, Participant 4 who is a headmaster asserted that;

*“From where I am coming from, I keep all subjects on the same level, I don’t take one to be more important than the other, because all are important. It is just like the human system, like the question we often ask ourselves, which one is more important. Is it the head, neck, the hand, the limbs, or what? Everybody has a role that they all play so when it come together, it is a teamwork so together with combination of all subjects that is what makes the student a unique person because you cannot depend on one subject and then move on, you need the rest as well” (Participant 4)*

This study findings with regards to Social Studies having the same importance as the stem subjects supports assertions made by Grabenstein (2019) who also opines that,

STEM disciplines may prepare students for high-paying jobs but a solid grounding in the social sciences (civics, geography, economics, religion, history) provides them with the context they need to make sense of the world.

Although most participants were of the view that they see Social Studies important as other core subjects, three participants however gave an opposing view. These participants were of the view that they see Social Studies as less important than Science, Technology, English and Mathematics. For instance, participant 12 who is a parent asserted that,

*“Yes. Because Maths, Science and English are the required courses or subject needed to progress. These three subjects are more important than Social Studies. Yes, Social Studies is important because it can make the sixth grade needed to enter university but I place more emphasis on math and science because if you fail these two subjects, you may not get into any university” (Participant 12).*

The assertions of these participants rather justify the findings by (Chapin, 2006; Chiodo & Byford, 2004) which has been cited in Kanda 2012 which revealed that, stakeholders see Social Studies as one of the least interesting and most irrelevant subjects in the school curriculum as compared to other core subjects but however findings from this current study indicates that Out of the fifteen participants, majority of the stakeholders sees Social Studies as important as other core subjects.

#### **4.5.3 Stakeholders perception on the marginalization of Social Studies in senior high schools within the Accra Metropolis**

According to Barton and Levstik (2004), the field of Social Studies education has consistently documented the issue of marginalization of the subject in most schools. Similarly, Sibiri (2017) also asserts that Social Studies is one of the least favorite



subjects and as such, attitudes towards studying Social Studies have become negative with increasing amount of schooling.

He further revealed that, In Ghana much attention has been given to subjects like English, Mathematics and science at the Senior High School level. Findings from this current study revealed two main themes from the responses of participant responses. Participants in this study revealed that to some extent Social Studies is being marginalized while other participants also indicated that Social Studies lacks the needed attention and respect.

Out of the fifteen participants who took part in the study, seven participants asserted that to some extent, they see Social Studies as marginalized. Participant in their views highlighted that Social Studies is being perceived as cheap and easy and as such anyone can teach the subject, and this has made the subject lost its value in Senior High schools. For instance, Participant 1 shared her view on the marginalization of Social Studies by asserting that.

*“To some extent, because if they can even mention other subjects and then leave Social Studies out, that should communicate to you what is happening. If some of the schools can allow any teacher at all to teach Social Studies, then it is so glaring that we are not looking at Social Studies with ‘much seriousness’ (Participant 1).*

The above findings from participants supports study findings by Negumbo (2016). His study revealed that inappropriately qualified and unqualified teachers were used to teach Social Studies in most schools that participated in the study, which was likely due to the fact that, school authorities perceived Social Studies as an easy subject which could be taught by just anyone whether trained or untrained. Participants in this study shared similar concerns.

Six participants also highlighted that although Social Studies is important, it lacks the needed attention and respect. In their views, the subject although has similar importance as Science, Technology, English and Mathematics lacks the needed respect and attention. These claims has been featured in the assertions of participants. For instance, Participant 7 asserted that,

*‘‘ it does not have attention like Maths English and the other subject tho. Because I think the demeanor I do not know if it is the teachers or the students approach the subject per say. Because you cannot even see the influence on it and even when someone is persuing Social Studies as a career you do not see that much respect accorded the person as someone persuing accounting or studying science as in Doctor or something. It is being given little attention and respect’’*  
(Participant 7).

This study finding by participants supports the assertion made by Eshun (2020) also adds that, over the years Social Studies has been marginalized because it is seen as a reading subject and as such, it has not been given the needed attention. Findings also support Sibiri (2017) whose study revealed that, In Ghana much attention has been given to subjects like English, Mathematics and Science at the Senior High School level.

#### **4.5.4 Stakeholders contribution to making Social Studies education more relevant in Ghanaian schools**

Participants in this study made some suggestion concerning making Social Studies relevant in Ghanaian schools. Varied among them are Effective teaching and Encouraging students.

Findings from this study revealed most that Teachers and Headmasters were of the view that, if Social Studies teachers who are the direct stakeholder of the subject commits themselves to teaching the subject well, the subject will be more relevant in our Ghanaian educational system. For instance, Participant 5 asserted that;

*“ Teachers who are in the field of Social Studies should also put in more effort, widen up their scope of knowledge, be very confident and knowledgeable in delivering the subject Social Studies because when we are role models, then it gets to attract the interest of all or arouse the interest of students in the subject area ” (Participant 5).*

Study findings with regards to effective teaching supports assertions made by Dondo, Krystall and Thomas (1974) cited in Adjei (2016) who opines that, if Social Studies education is to be successful, no matter how well the curriculum and materials are planned, teachers who are the implementers need to be effectively trained in Social Studies pedagogy. Similarly, findings also support Aggarwal (2006) who also opines that, a Social Studies teacher must have special qualities such as an art of development of human relation, objectivity, deep knowledge of the subject matter, application of field study theory, a well-informed teacher, widely travelled person, a good communicator, skilled in the use of technological aids and an interpreter of various experiences.

Some participants also suggested that, students need to be encouraged to learn Social Studies just as they spend time learning the other core subjects because they need a good pass in the subject to progress to the university. According to these participants, when students are encouraged to learn Social Studies at home, it goes a long way to influence their perception about the subject. For instance, participant 8 asserted that,

*“ I guess, to encourage my ward, to take it as serious as the other courses and to learn the bits that are in there. I learnt some time back, it used to be a substitute for science for even school, so all the courses are equally important. I will urge parents also to encourage their wards to find it entertaining and not belittle it” (Participant 8).*

Findings from this study supports the assertions of Mensah and Frimpong (2020) who opines that, if Social Studies is to continue to have support from school administrators, politicians, and the public, it is desirable to have positive student attitudes towards the subject. When parents support the subject by encouraging their wards to learn the subject at home just as they have been learning other subjects, there is a high possibility that it will have a negative perception from students.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter present the summary and implications of the study. Limitations of the study is also presented with conclusions drawn and some suggested recommendations.

#### 5.1 Summary

This current study acknowledges efforts made by experts and educators in the field of Social Studies to find out the reasons behind why the subject has been marginalized over the years. These experts have made recommendations over the years, which highlights the need for stakeholders support for the subject if it is to achieve its goals and objects. Gaps were identified in the attempts made over the years by experts in the field. Empirical literature revealed that, most studies conducted in the past mostly used teachers and students as their main participants in conducting their study. In bridging some of these gaps, this study added different strands of stakeholders, which included Headmasters, Parents and Social Studies teachers as participants of the study to explore the perception of stakeholders on the marginalization of Social Studies education in Senior High Schools within the Accra Metropolis.

The study sought to achieve four main objectives. Out of the Objectives, four main Research questions were derived. A qualitative approach was employed in this study with a case study being used as a design. The main Population for the study were stakeholders, i.e. Assistant Head teachers, Social Studies teachers and Parents. The convenient and purposive sampling technique were employed in sampling 15

participants. A census of schools within the Accra Metropolis was used. Semi-structured interview guides were the main instrument used to collect data from the 15 participants selected for the study.

Findings from data collected revealed that, stakeholders are conceptualizing Social Studies differently. Some see the subject as citizenship education whereas others also understand the subject to be a combination of subjects in the social sciences (Almagation of the social sciences). This study also revealed that, Social Studies is as important as Science, Technology, English and Mathematics. Findings further revealed that, although stakeholders see Social Studies as important they perceive that, the subject lack the needed attention and respect in spite of its importance. Finally, it was revealed in this study that, effective teaching of the subject and encouragement of students by stakeholders might change negative perceptions about the subject.

## **5.2 Implication of the Study**

In view of the findings of this study, the study has implications for the Ghana education service, School Heads and National Social Studies Association (NASSA) to take into consideration the suggestions made by stakeholders in this study which may help balance the level of respect and attention given to Social Studies. Study findings have established that, although Social Studies is important as Science, Technology, English and Mathematics, it is not given the needed respect and attention. Findings further revealed suggestions from stakeholders, which highlights the need to ensure effective teaching of the subject and ensure that students are encouraged give the subject the needed attention. Implementing some of these suggestions will take the efforts of the Ghana education service, School Heads and the National Social Studies

Association who have in the past stood against the threat against the removal of Social Studies as a subject from the school curriculum.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

This study justified the importance of Social Studies and also reinforced the „old conceptual debate“ in the field of Social Studies through the findings revealed in this study. Highlighting the issue of conceptual debates as revealed in this study, Social Studies is still conceptualized differently by stakeholders in senior high schools especially school within the Accra Metropolis. Delving into the history of the subject, the journey of Social Studies since its inception has faced conceptual differences, which resulted in a period of instability for the subject in the educational history of Ghana. The current trend of how Social Studies is being conceptualized differently by stakeholders is threading on the same path that led to the subject facing instability in the past. Senior High school stakeholders within the Accra Metropolis hold different conceptualization of the subject. This has the tendency to cause the removal of the study subject in the current school curriculum as it has been experienced in the past. The current Social Studies curriculum in senior high schools have been criticized especially when it comes to how the subject is being conceptualized which has affected the intended objectives of the subject. Trails from such attempts of removal from the school curriculum within the Ghanaian context in the year 2019 led to the formation of a unified Social Studies body at the University of Education, Winneba who held series of meetings to stand against the alleged removal of the subject from the Ghanaian School Curriculum.

Social Studies education has undoubtedly established its importance over the years in the Ghanaian School Curriculum and in spite of its importance, earlier studies has documented its marginalization in schools. The subject as compared to other subjects in terms of respect and attention falls short and this was highlighted the study participants. There continue to be consistent documentation of the level of respect and attention given Social Studies especially from the past till present. Issues pertaining to marginalization of the subject seems to be over studied but the reality is that, Social Studies teachers continue to lament especially when it comes to the level of respect and attention given to the Subject of which they are facilitators. Some participants who tends to be facilitators of the subject highlighted that, the Subject ( Social Studies) is not being treated with the needed attention and respect as the see with other core subjects

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this and conclusions made, the following recommendations are being made;

The issue of conceptual debates facing the current Social Studies curriculum tends to hinder the intended objectives and purpose of the subject. It has been documented by some experts within the field that, even with the mode of preparation of training teachers to teach in the Senior High Schools is one recipe for the prevalence of conceptual issues within the subject.

Experts like Eshun and Bekoe (2014) has documented that, the two known universities known for training teachers to teach in senior high schools subscribes to difference Social Studies conceptualisations which is gradually causing the subject to lose its identity. It is therefore recommended, Stakeholders especially the National



Social Studies Association and other concerned stakeholders should engage in stakeholder consultation in order to come out with a unified conceptualization to train teachers to teach in Senior High Schools.

Also, Stakeholders are also encouraged to support the Social Studies Curriculum. Head teachers who are seen as internal authorities within the walls of senior high schools are encouraged to appoint teachers with a strong Social Studies background to teach the subject. In addition, Parents are also encouraged to support the learning of Social Studies by declaring their interest for the subject so that their ward can also be influenced by their interest in the subject.

Finally, it is also recommended that, the Ghana Education Service should recruit trained Social Studies teachers to teach the subject in senior high schools which may help address the issue of out of field teachers plaguing the Social Studies classroom.

### **5.5 Suggestions for Further Research**

This qualitative study was limited to the Accra Metropolis with 15 participants being selected for the study. In view of that, study findings cannot be generalized. It will be therefore imperative for studies to be conducted in other parts of the country with similar objectives, which will aim exploring perceptions of stakeholders on the marginalization of Social Studies

In addition, as part of the gaps identified in this study, this study employed head teachers, Social Studies teachers and parents. Other studies can also use different strands of stakeholders aside the population used in this study.

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## **APENDIX B**


### **Interview Guides**

#### **Introduction**

Interview guides for the study comprises of two main sections. The first section highlights the demographic data of study participants. The second section also highlights semi-structured interview questions, which served as the main instrument through which data was be collected from participants.

#### **SECTION A**

##### **DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF PARTICIPANTS**

- 
- i) **Basic Information of participants (Name, Age, Marital status, Gender)**
  - ii) Career details (Institution of employment, Working Experience, Role/Position)
  - iii) Educational qualification of participants

## SECTION B

### SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE

#### INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR RESEARCH QUESTION ONE

**Research Question one:** How do stakeholders Conceptualize Social Studies as a subject in the Ghanaian school curriculum?

##### Interview Questions

- i) How do you understand Social Studies as a subject in the School curriculum?
- ii) What is your view on the subject's content in the current Social Studies curriculum?
- iii) What aspects of Social Studies do you feel are important for students to learn?
- iv) In your view, what topics should be included in the Social Studies curriculum?

#### INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR RESEARCH QUESTION TWO

**Research Question 2:** Do stakeholders place importance on other subjects such as Math, Science and English as compared to Social Studies?

##### Interview Questions

- i) Do you see English, Maths and Science as more important than Social Studies? If Yes, why? /If No why?
- ii) With reference to the current minister of education's speech on the need to make STEM education a priority in Ghanaian schools, do you think Social Studies should be given the same attention looking at its importance?
- iii) What is your view about Social Studies being included in the National quiz which has Maths and Science as it is priority?
- iv) Will a national quiz on Social Studies for senior high schools be relevant considering the importance of Social Studies?

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR RESEARCH QUESTION 3**

**Research question 3:** What is stakeholder's perception on the marginalization of Social Studies in Senior High Schools within the Accra Metropolis?

#### **Interview Questions**

- 1) Has Social Studies received the needed attention as it should?
- 2) If Yes: What factors have led to the subject receiving the needed attention.
- 3) If No: Why do you think the subject has not received the needed attention.
- 4) Do you think Social Studies is being marginalized?
- 5) If Yes: What factors has caused the subject to be marginalized.
- 6) If No: What improvements has caused the subject not to be marginalized.

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR RESEARCH QUESTION 4**

**Research question 4:** What can be done by stakeholders to make Social Studies education more relevant in Ghanaian school?

#### **Interview Questions**

- 1) Do you think Social Studies is making an impact in the society?
- 2) If Yes: What are some of the impacts the subject is making in the society.
- 3) If No: Why?
- 4) As a stakeholder, what role can you play to make the subject more relevant?  
Give examples.