

**INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS'
TECHNOLOGICAL PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES ON
STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS SOCIAL STUDIES**

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of Study: This paper examined the influence of social studies teachers' technological pedagogical approaches on students' attitudes towards social studies in Junior High Schools in the Ho Municipality. It was believed that the traditional teaching methods employed by their instructors were the cause of their students' negative attitudes and poor performance. The study was grounded in Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) and employed a descriptive survey.

Methodology: Questionnaire was used to collect data from 67 students in Ho Technical University Junior High School and Presbyterian Junior High School.

Result: According to the study's findings, junior high schools in the Ho Municipality pupils' perceptions of, and understanding of social studies have improved because of the usage of technological approaches like the use of audio-visual aids in the teaching process. It was discovered that the Teachers' traditional methods of instruction were to blame for the pupils' negative attitudes about the topic and subpar performance.

Recommendation: The study recommended the use of audio-visual aids in the instructional process to enhance students' perception and comprehension of the subject matter and, consequently, their performance. The study also recommends instructor collaboration, encouraging student participation in the learning process, parental involvement, and the development of school policies and curricula to support instructional strategies that promote student participation and positive attitudes toward social studies.

Keywords: *Social Studies, Teachers, Pedagogical Approaches, Students' Attitudes*

INTRODUCTION

In modern education, Social Studies offers part of enlightening each generation with a system of beliefs and values relating to all cultures in providing students with full knowledge to help them build a sound awareness of the world (Alazzi & Chiodo, 2004). Social Studies investigates principles and values and helps students understand the importance of living up to community standards about being a good citizen. Students with an appreciation for the history and culture of a nation would be more likely to discuss current socio-political issues (Alazzi & Chiodo, 2004). Considering the significance of Social Studies as a subject, it is quite disheartening that, instead of developing a positive attitude towards the subject, students have rather developed a negative perception (Kankam, 2012).

In support of the above claim, a casual survey by the researcher on 7th February 2019, in three Junior High Schools in the Ho Municipality revealed that most students expressed dislike towards Social Studies. The researcher saw and heard students passing comments such as 'Social Studies is too boring', 'Social Studies does not benefit us after school, all we do is reading', 'Our Social Studies teacher makes the Social Studies class less interesting. He is always reading from the textbook'. With such comments, it is evident that students have developed a negative attitude towards Social Studies because of their teachers' pedagogical approaches.

Due to students' negative approach to Social Studies, the researcher also discovered that, they were unconcerned with their performance in Social Studies. This made the researcher believe that, their poor attitude towards the subject due to the traditional teaching methods employed by their teachers might be why they were performing poorly in Social Studies, whether at the school's internal examination or the Basic Education Certificate Examination. Looking at the marked benefits of audio-visual aids in the teaching and learning process and the fact that one cannot just base on a casual survey to conclude, the researcher deems it appropriate to conduct a study to examine if when audio-visual aids are used in the instructional process, it will have a positive impact on the students' perception and understanding towards the subject and consequently lead to an improvement in their performance.

Moreover, it appears very little empirical research investigating the effects of audio-visual aids on the academic achievement of students has been conducted in Junior High Schools in Ghana. For instance, Ode (2014) examined the effect of audio-visual resources on teaching and learning in some selected private secondary schools in Makurdi, Nigeria.

Kasilia, Mulwa and Kamwaria (2017) also examined the effects of instructional media on the academic performance of students in Christian religious education in public secondary schools in Kenya. Tang and Intai (2017) also researched on the effectiveness of audio-visual aids in teaching lower secondary science in a rural secondary school in Malaysia. Finally, Quarcoo-Nelson, Buabeng and Osafo (2012) also studied the impact of audio-visual aids on achievement of Senior High School Students in Physics in the Cape Coast Metropolis. From the above discussion, very few literature exists in Ghana to investigate Influence of Social Studies Teachers Pedagogical Approaches on Student' Attitudes Towards Social Studies

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

The study was grounded in Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory (SCT). The Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) postulates that the acquisition of knowledge and skills is facilitated by social interactions that involve the observation, modeling, and imitation of others. As per this theoretical framework, individuals attain knowledge and behavior by means of their interactions with the social and physical milieu. The Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) posits that the instructional methods employed by Social Studies educators can have an impact on the attitudes of students towards Social Studies, as it pertains to the scope of this research. Educators who exemplify affirmative dispositions towards Social Studies and employ

efficacious pedagogical approaches that captivate learners in the educational process can amplify students' drive and curiosity towards the discipline. In contrast, educators who employ pedagogical methods that are not effective in stimulating students or exhibit pessimistic attitudes towards the subject matter can diminish students' drive and enthusiasm for Social Studies. The Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) emphasizes the significance of self-efficacy in the process of acquiring knowledge. Self-efficacy pertains to an individual's conviction in their capacity to execute a task with success. As per the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), the self-efficacy beliefs of students can be impacted by their social and physical surroundings, which encompasses their educators. Educators who employ efficacious pedagogical strategies that bolster students' self-efficacy beliefs have the potential to amplify their motivation and engagement in the field of Social Studies.

The Social Cognitive Theory offers a pertinent theoretical structure for examining the impact of Social Studies instructors' pedagogical methodologies on the attitudes of students towards Social Studies. This theoretical perspective places emphasis on the communal aspect of knowledge acquisition and the influence of educators in molding the cognitive frameworks, values, and conduct of learners. Comprehending the mechanisms by which teachers' pedagogical approaches impact students' attitudes towards Social Studies can facilitate the creation of efficacious teaching strategies and interventions that foster favorable attitudes and motivation towards the subject.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

In a study of the attitudes of secondary students towards Social Studies, conducted by Hansberry and Moroz (2001) it was found that, the weak student picture of Social Studies is due to the pedagogical didactics focused on the teacher, and to an unsound material. It has also been discovered from this study that, women have a favourable view of social science rather than men. The research was designed to get information on the attitudes and factors that affect students' attitudes towards Social Studies. The research used the mixed method approach where both a questionnaire and a conversation technique for the focus group were used.

Muema, Mulwa and Maila (2018) conducted a study to determine how the teaching methods used by teachers affect students' performance in mathematics. Their study employed the experimental research design but with a pinch of the mixed method approach. They targeted head teachers, teachers, and the form two students from five senior high schools. They employed both the probability and non-probability sampling technique in sampling 155

respondents. Detailed figures, percentages and mean values were used for their data analysis. The study showed that the relationship between teaching methods and student success in mathematics is positive. In other words, they realised that students achieved better when teachers taught mathematics using ICT aids.

In addition, all longitudinal research on students' academic success have been performed above. None of them focused on the students' attitude to the subject. Therefore, this review is intended to fill the literature void.

The results of the frequent tests on Iranian English students' achievement and class attendance were analysed in a research carried out by Zarei and Sharifabad (2012). The findings showed that the more people were subjected to exams, the higher their performance was. Furthermore, there was a strong link between the management of regular quizzes in the course of class and academic achievement of students. The descriptive survey design was used for both studies.

Ganyaupfu (2013) also carried out a review to explore the usefulness of teaching approaches in academic success of students. For the study, a total of 109 participants was sampled. His research has shown that the collaborative teacher-student approach is the most efficient form of teaching among the chosen approaches. The academic performance of students was high compared to the other with the teacher's interactive process. In other words, teaching methods play an important role in student success. He studied the impact of teaching approaches on academic performance of students.

Rios (2013) research on the impact of teaching methods on students' actions and accomplishments during calculus recitations showed that the student attitude towards a course (calculus) was optimistic when teachers employed the student-centered approach.

The research aimed to observe the various teaching approaches used by teachers in their recitations and then assess their effectiveness in enhancing student attitudes and accomplishments, which are focused on student-centered and conceptual education.

Another research by Pana and Escarlos (2017) on the efficacy of contemporary educational techniques in improving the attitude of students' academic achievement and learning levels of the 21st century showed that the attitudes of students toward learning and academic performance in students taught using modern methods of teaching and those taught with the traditional method. In the study, a mixture of descriptive and quasi-experimental research design was employed to interpret the data using the mean, mean percentages, and covariance analysis. Two unchanged classes were selected and graded using the toss coin system. A

problem-based learning community, a round-table discussion and debate were presented in the contemporary teaching strategies group, while seminars, studies, discussion, and demonstrations were presented in the non-contemporary teaching strategies group.

According to Tebabal and Kahssay (2011) most of the traditional methods that were teacher-centred, made students passive and had little engagement with the subject concerned. Such approaches according to him are less practical and encourages memorization (Tebabal & Kahssay, 2011). When student-centered approaches are employed, it encourages the concept of discovery learning (Brindley, 2015). The poor academic achievement by most students is virtually linked to the fact that some teachers still employ ineffective teaching methods (Adonula, 2011).

Luo (2017) claims that poor use of educational methods, lack of funds, lack of teaching experience, lack of teaching aids, lack of qualified instructors and misguided teaching methods influence the interest of students in a subject. Social Studies integrates several distinct disciplines, including history, geography, economics, government and so requires an integrated way to present certain topics to students. From experience as a teacher, most Social Studies teachers in Ghana still employ the traditional didactic method of teaching Social Studies. This certainly negatively affects the way students view the subject.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a descriptive survey. Descriptive survey is a type of research that gathers information to describe a phenomenon or a population. This kind of survey is used to gather information about the traits, viewpoints, and actions of a group of people. The information gathered is frequently utilized to understand a particular problem or to guide policy choices (Babbie, 2016). Data about the teaching strategies employed by Social Studies instructors and the opinions of students toward the study can be gathered in this using the descriptive survey.

Population

The study was conducted in the Volta Region of Ghana, consisting of all Junior High School students from the Ho Municipality. All Junior High School students at the Junior High School of Ho Technical University Basic and at the Presbyterian Junior High School of Ho Municipality in the Volta Region of Ghana were included in this study group of participants (the target population). Specifically, only the form 2 students were included in the study. This was because they have read Social Studies for at least 2 years and as such the researcher sees them as ideal respondents to be engaged. The form ones were excluded from the study because

the researcher believes that they are not well-informed about Social Studies education. Similarly, the form 3 students were excluded. This is because during the time of data collection they were preparing for their final exams so the school authorities did not allow those students to be engaged for that period of time. The target population was 8,133 JHS students in the Ho Municipality in the Volta Region of Ghana (GES, 2022). However, the accessible population of students was 67 JHS students from the two selected JHS.

Data Collection Instrument

The study employed a questionnaire as the instrument for data collection from the respondents. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section (A) collected data on the demographic characteristics of students and section (B), was focused on soliciting responses from the respondents on the extent to which the method used by their Social Studies teachers affect their perception about Social Studies. The questionnaire consisted of only close -ended questions. The questionnaire used a 4-point Likert Scale weighed as follows:

“Strongly Agree”, “Agree”, “Disagree”, “Strongly Disagree”.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table1: Pedagogical Approaches of Teachers that Influence Students’ Attitude towards Social Studies

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
My Social Studies teacher does not frequently conduct class exercises and tests as compared to other subjects. It therefore makes me feel that Social Studies is not as important as the other subjects.	67	1.81	.609
My Social Studies teachers always read from a textbook during lessons. This makes the subject boring and unattractive.	67	1.90	.431
I see Social Studies as boring and unimportant because during Social Studies lessons our teacher makes it less practical.	67	1.55	.501
My Social Studies teacher sometimes displays or uses charts and graphics when teaching. This has positively affected my attitude towards Social Studies.	67	2.57	1.25
Most of the time, my Social Studies teacher divides us into groups for us to discuss some topics in Social Studies. This makes the class interactive and has positively affected the way I see Social Studies as a subject.	67	2.43	1.25
Sometimes my Social Studies teacher takes the class on field trips to learn about some topics that were treated in class. This has made me develop a positive attitude towards the subject.	67	2.60	1.16
Total/Mean of means	67	2.14	.87

Source- *Field Survey, 2020.*

From the Table, the majority of students indicated that their Social Studies teachers divided the class into groups for them to discuss some topics during Social Studies lessons and it made the class interactive and also it positively affected their attitude towards Social Studies as a subject ($M=2.43$, $SD=1.25$). The standard deviation of 1.25 meant that the responses of the students were heterogeneous in nature. That is, they differed from one another. Meaning not all the students shared the idea that group discussions during Social Studies lessons positively affected their attitude towards the subject however most of them believed otherwise. Similarly, most of the students revealed that their Social Studies teachers took the class on field trips to learn about some topics that were treated in class and it made them develop a positive attitude towards the subject ($M=2.60$, $SD=1.16$). The standard deviation of 1.16 was indicative of the fact that there were differences in the responses given by the students. That is, although a few of the students did not develop a positive attitude towards the subject due to the field trips, the majority of the students revealed that the field trips that they embark on as part of the Social Studies class made them develop a positive attitude towards the subject.

Furthermore, most of the students revealed that their Social Studies teacher sometimes displayed or used charts and graphics when teaching and it made them develop positive attitude towards Social Studies ($M=2.57$, $SD=1.25$). The standard deviation of 1.25 meant that the responses of the students did differ from one another. This was not different from the findings of Pana and Escarlos (2017). They asserted that there was a significant difference in students' attitudes towards learning and academic performance in students who were taught using modern technological methods of teaching and those taught using the traditional approach. That is, students who are taught with modern technological methods of teaching developed positive attitude towards such a subject. Also, the majority of students disagreed with the statement that they saw Social Studies as boring and unimportant because their teacher made it less practical ($M=1.55$, $SD = .501$).

In explaining this result, it can be stated that their Social Studies teacher made Social Studies lessons more practical and as such Social Studies lessons were not boring. The variations of the .501 standard deviation meant that the responses of the students were equally distributed with uniformity. In general, most students indicated that their Social Studies instructor did not always perform class activities or research, and this made them feel that Social Studies was not as important as the other subjects.

This process showed that Social Studies teachers gave class test and exercises as frequently as other subjects and as such, students thought that Social Studies was as important as the other

subjects. This was consistent with the recommendations found in the analysis carried out by Zarei and Sharifabad (2012) and Rios (2007). They propose that making students take quizzes often would improve students' performance and improve students' interest in a subject. The standard deviation of the students' answers was .609 which means that the students were all asking similar questions. The mean of the means of 2.14 suggests that teachers have some control over coursework attitude. This match with the previous finding by Mugolo, Mulwa and Maila (2018). They discovered that, there was a positive correlation between teaching approach and students' academic achievements. To better understand, it can be said that the Social Studies teachers used varying methods to teach Social Studies to the Junior High School students, which led them to develop positive attitudes towards the subject.

From the above discussion, it is very clear that the pedagogical approaches of a teacher do influence the way students view a particular subject. From the data in table 1, it could be seen that, the Social Studies teachers took students on field trips, divided the class into groups during Social Studies lessons, and sometimes used charts and graphics when teaching. All these positively affected the way students viewed Social Studies as a subject.

CONCLUSION

The technological pedagogical approaches of Social Studies teachers influence students' attitude towards Social Studies as a subject. It was revealed that, Social Studies teachers divided students into groups to discuss some topics during Social Studies lessons which made lessons interactive and had a positive influence on students' attitude towards Social Studies as a subject. Similarly, it was revealed that Social Studies teachers at the Junior High Schools took their class on field trips to learn about some topics that were treated in class. This also made the students develop a positive attitude towards the subject.

Furthermore, it was again revealed that the Social Studies teachers displayed or used charts and graphics when teaching and it made students develop a positive attitude towards Social Studies. Finally, it was again revealed that Social Studies teachers frequently conducted class exercises and tests just as the other subjects. It made students feel that Social Studies is as important as the other subjects. It can therefore be concluded that the pedagogical approaches of Social Studies teachers influenced students' attitude towards Social Studies as a subject.

RECOMMENDATION

1. Collaboration among instructors is essential: The study underlines the need of Social Studies educators working together to share best practices and enhance instruction. A more effective and cohesive teaching community may result from this.
2. Encourage student participation in the learning process: The study emphasizes the value of encouraging student participation in the learning process. This can be accomplished by utilizing interactive teaching techniques like group projects, discussions, and arguments. To make the subject matter more pertinent and engaging for pupils, teachers might also include real-world examples and current events.
3. Parental involvement: The study emphasizes the value of parents becoming involved in helping students develop positive attitudes toward Social Studies. Parents might be encouraged to connect with their children about what they are learning in class and to join in school events like social studies fairs and field excursions.
4. The study recommends that school policies and curricula be created to support efficient instructional strategies that encourage student participation and favorable attitudes toward Social Studies.

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