

# Curriculum conceptions of the scope of content of social studies in the colleges of education in Ghana

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## Abstract

Social Studies seen as helping pupils acquire relevant knowledge, positive attitudes, skills and values which in effect will equip them to be competent, concerned, reflective and problem solvers by the Junior High School (JHS) curriculum. Forming a better conception about Social Studies has necessitates the need to research into the scope of content of Social Studies in the Colleges of Education in Ghana since the subject is taught mostly by diploma teachers from the country's thirty-eight public teacher training colleges. The research methods chosen for this study are; both qualitative and quantitative (mixed method). The study revealed that the scope of content of the College of Education Social Studies course structure does not reflect the tools needed by individual to solve personal and societal problems as compared to the JHS syllabus. Final year teacher-trainees' current knowledge base about the scope of content of Social Studies as a problem solving was inadequate. It was recommended that at least two credit hours course should be designed and mounted on the current Junior High School (JHS) Social Studies syllabus for students in Colleges of Education as part of their programme of study. This will help mentees to become familiar with the content of the syllabus, making it easy in their selection of valid content, setting of appropriate objectives in their teaching and even the mode of using appropriate assessment tools.

## Keywords

Curriculum, Conceptions, Scope, Content, Social Studies

## 1. Introduction and Background

One of the recent educational reforms is the Anamuah-Mensah's Educational Review Committee Report of 2002 which was of the view that the philosophy of education in Ghana should be creating well-balanced (intellectually, spiritually, emotionally, and physically) individuals with the requisite knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes for self-actualisation and for the socio-economic and political transformation of the nation (G.O.G, 2002).

This initiative and previous ones helped in structurally transforming the education system and also helped improved considerably access, quality teaching and learning, infrastructure delivery as well as management efficiency.

Aboagye (2002), states that the quality of teachers, the quality of education and the quality of teacher education are inseparable. Quality teacher education has been seen as a crucial factor for effective educational outcomes in moving the nation forward. This shows that the development of education could not be successfully done without looking at the teacher and the training to be acquired. This indicates that teacher training in Ghana should be given priority and subjects like Social Studies taught in Colleges of Education should be geared towards nation building.

Social Studies from its early beginning was intended as a nation building subject and a country's aspiration therefore constitutes the basis for teaching it. This notwithstanding, there is no consensus among educators as regards what

Social Studies is or ought to be. The field of Social Studies is so caught up in ambiguity, inconsistency and contradiction that it represents a complex educational enigma (Martorella, 1994). This signifies that there is controversy surrounding Social Studies with regard to how it is conceptualised in terms of meaning, content, objectives, and assessing its outcomes.

Curriculum differences seem to be evidenced in the Social Studies scope of content for Colleges of Education and how the Basic School teaching syllabus for Social Studies is structured in Ghana. This may confuse trained teachers as to how to teach the subject since the structure of the Basic School Social Studies syllabus they will use to teach will not be in consonance with what they were taught while in college. This has therefore called for the need to research into the scope of content of Social Studies in the Colleges of Education in Ghana.

The purpose of the study was to ascertain whether the scope of content of Social Studies in the Colleges of Education is different from the Junior High School (JHS) syllabus in Ghana. The research was guided by this question - What are the significant differences in the scope of content of social studies of the Colleges of Education (CoE) in relation to the JHS syllabus in Ghana? The research was guided by this research hypothesis - There is no statistical significant relationship in the final year teacher-trainees conceptions of scope of content of Social Studies in the Colleges in Ghana. The research covered three (3) public Colleges of Education in the Western Region out of the thirty-eight (38) public colleges in Ghana. All the CoE in Ghana use a homogenous social studies curriculum. In addition, the study covered only the Social Studies curriculum at the Colleges of Education, the Basic School and the final year teacher-trainees.

## 2. Review of the Literature

In Ghana, according to Quashigah, Dake, Bekoe, Eshun, & Bordoh (2014:3) the teaching syllabus for Social Studies prepares the individual by equipping him or her with knowledge about the culture and ways of life of their society, its problems, its values and its hopes for the future. These clearly show that it is accepted that the ultimate aim of Social Studies is seen as Citizenship Education.

The scope of content of Social Studies at the Junior High School level is concerned with equipping the pupil with an integrated body of knowledge, skills and attitudes that will help the pupil develop a broader perspective of Ghana and the world. The integration is achieved in the three sections of the syllabus each of which focuses respectively on (1) The Environment; (2) Governance, Politics and Stability; and (3) Social and Economic Development (CRDD, 2007). This implies that the subject must be woven around these three thematic areas.

On the scope of the Colleges of Education and that of the JHS, a research conducted by Quashigah *et al.* (2014:10) revealed that the scope of content of the Social Studies

curriculum at the JHS level reflects the tools needed by the individual to solve personal and societal problems. The units/topics under this curriculum is based on themes derived from the persistent contemporary problems of Ghana and is transdisciplinary in nature. The nature of the content of Social Studies at the JHS level (CRDD, 2007) does not fall in line with that of the Colleges of Education. The courses in the Social Studies curriculum in the Colleges of Education are mainly facts, concepts and topics bootlegged from the discrete subjects in the social sciences with geography taking precedence. Examples are maps and scales; methods of showing relief on maps; representation of direction, position and conventional signs used on Ghana maps and methods of showing relief and drainage on maps among others.

This, supports Bekoe and Eshun (2013:44a) on Social Studies curriculum feuding and implementation challenges in Ghana, which revealed that "Teacher Training Institutions subscribe and use a particular conception of Social Studies curriculum for the production of Social Studies education graduates". The implication here is that teachers may come to conceptualize the subject differently based on how they will perceived the scope of content of the subject. Bekoe and Eshun (2013:44a) recommended that "if importance is attached to Social Studies then resources already invested in its implementation in Ghana, must be followed by programme review and remedial measures taken early, so as to make it more effective and viable".

From the documents on Social Studies curriculum at Colleges of Education and the JHS, one can deduce that Social Studies at Colleges of Education is meant to produce trained and qualified teachers who have subject matter knowledge in areas such as Geography; where many topics are bootlegged from (i.e. map work, statistical mappings etc), but are not taught at the JHS level. The JHS syllabus rather shows that the programme is to equip students with relevant knowledge which form the basis for enquiry into issues and how to solve one's problem and that of society; inculcate in students the attributes of good citizenship (Quashigah, *et al.* 2014).

The above suggests that the Colleges of Education Curriculum is in sync with the 1987 JHS Social Studies syllabus while the current JHS syllabus is theme based, trans-disciplinary in nature and focused on problem solving. It shows clearly that "there are confusing arrays of conceptual perspectives concerning the aims, nature and content of Social Studies and that cultivation of a clearer conception of the subject in Ghana has become very necessary" (Bekoe & Eshun, 2013:93b).

Eshun and Mensah (2013:183) assert that Social Studies should be taught as a holistic subject, which should reflect behavioural change in students and not facts from other social sciences. Social Studies teachers should stress on teaching of skills more than the factual content. The main role of the Social Studies teacher is to emphasize the development of relevant knowledge, positive attitudes, value and problem solving skills of students. This calls for effective teacher who will assess his / her teaching and learning

outcomes bearing in mind the general aims of social studies in the school curriculum in Ghana. With this Eshun, Bordoh, Bassaw, and Mensah (2014:47) emphasise that “effective formative assessor requires someone who has the necessary depth of content knowledge of the subject s/he is teaching”. This implies that Social Studies can be taught and assessed best by a teacher who is highly abreast with scope of content knowledge of the subject curriculum. Bekoe, Eshun, Bordoh (2013:28) stressed that “students taught and assessed not to understand Social Studies as citizenship education is a problem. Formative assessment should cover the three learning domains, but in setting and scoring questions importance is attach to cognitive domain to the neglect of the affective and psychomotor domains which are also important. The over emphasised knowledge component of the subject may let students pass through the academic system without acquiring needed skills, values and attitudes that will enable them to right the wrong in society using appropriate tools.

The fore-going really shows that there is therefore the need for a national pathway to curriculum design, development and implementation in the broad scope of the content of social studies. This has become necessary because a findings of research conducted by Bekoe and Eshun (2013:111c) shows that teachers varied conceptions about Social Studies as an amalgamation of the social sciences, citizenship education, reflective inquiry or problem solving have influence on their classroom practices. This is further buttressed by Quashigah, Eshun and Mensah (2013:84) that the pedagogical content knowledge of Social Studies teachers do influence the way they assess their lessons.

### 3. Methodology

The research methods chosen for this study are; both qualitative and quantitative (mixed method). Since a design is seen as the blue print that spells out how data relating to a problem should be collected and analysed, we considered the mixed-method as the most suitable design for the study as data collected were of both quantitative and qualitative in nature. According to Hantrais (2005:399) “attempts to make sense of diversity have led to a blurring of the traditional methodological divide between quantitative and qualitative paradigms, opening up new perspectives and creating opportunities for synergies and complementarities”. Triangulation was used to test the consistency of findings obtained through different instruments used, whilst complementarity clarifies and illustrates results from one method with the use of another method.

The population for this study included all final year teacher-trainees offering the general programme for Diploma in Basic Education (DBE) certificate in the three Colleges of Education in the Western Region of the Republic of Ghana.

Non-probability sampling method (purposive and convenience sampling techniques) was used to select the sample of districts, colleges and respondents for the study. One hundred and fifty final year teacher-trainees were sampled from the three Colleges of Education in the Western

Region of the Republic of Ghana, namely, Enchi College of Education; Holy Child College of Education and Wiawso College of Education. Eighteen (18) final year teacher-trainees: six from each of the three Colleges of Education were also guided through focus group discussion.

The researchers used the following in gathering the data: A questionnaire made up of fourteen (14) close ended three-point Likert scale structured items were administered to one hundred and fifty (150) final year teacher-trainees from three Colleges of Education; and a focus group discussion checklists made up of fifteen (15) items were administered to eighteen (18) trainees (three groups of six trainees).

The quantitative data entry and analysis was done by using the SPSS software package. The data was edited, coded and analysed into tables, frequencies, percentages with interpretations. Pearson's Correlation Coefficient ( $r$ ) or technically called Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) co-efficient was used to determine whether significant relationship exists in teacher-trainees' conceptions of Social Studies from the colleges used. Pearson's correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) is a measure of the strength of the association between two or more variables. Pallant (2007:132), citing Cohen (1988) suggests the following guidelines for determining the strength of relationship: small  $r = .10$  to  $.29$ ; medium  $r = .30$  to  $.49$ ; and large  $r = .50$  to  $1.0$ . Judging the strength of linear relationship - according to Cohen (1988), the following can be concluded:  $r = +/- .50$  are considered strong;  $r = +/- .30$  are considered moderate; whilst  $r = +/- .10$  are considered weak. With a sample size of  $N = 150$ , there is the probability that a statistical significance test can gather enough evidence to correctly reject the null hypothesis in favour of the alternative hypothesis, maintaining the predetermined statistical criterion of  $.05$  and medium effect size ( $r = .30$ ) (Cohen, 1988).

The  $r$ -value is the smallest value (probability) for finding out whether there is statistical significant relationship. The  $r$ -value is the probability for which the null hypothesis was rejected. A critical value of  $\alpha = 0.05$  was adopted for significance in the statistical analysis.

The qualitative data was analysed by the use of the interpretative technique based on the themes arrived at during the data collection. The themes were related to the research question and interpreted on the number of issues raised by respondents on the focus group discussions of final year teacher trainees.

## 4. Findings and Discussions

### 4.1. Final Year Teacher-Trainees' Conceptions of the Scope of Content of Social Studies

Conceptions of final year teacher-trainees' on the scope of content of Social Studies are discussed here. Some items were placed in the questionnaire to elicit teachers' views on the issue. Some of the analysed questionnaire outcomes using simple percentages were triangulated with focus group

discussion or interviews on the said concept discussed. The *r-value* of an item served as an indicator whether there is linear relationship of the conceptions formed by mentees towards the teaching and learning of Social Studies, whilst testing for statistical significant was done by the use of *sig. (2-tailed)* figures generated.

Item 1 which is - *Social Studies curriculum of schools should be subject-centred (i.e. Geography, History, Economics, Sociology, etc.)* shows an *r-value* of  $-.076$  indicating a weak negative linear relationship. The *sig (2-tailed)* of  $.353$  which is greater than the alpha value of  $.05$  means statistical significant relationship did not exist in the responses from the final year teacher-trainees from the Colleges of Education in conceptualizing Social Studies curriculum of schools should be subject-centred. The item 1 shows that out of the 150 final year teacher-trainees from the three Colleges, 96 (64.0%) agreed, 17 (11.3%) were not certain, whilst 37 (24.7%) disagreed. The 96 (64.0%) agreeing out of the respondents of 150 implies that greater percentage of the mentees agreed that Social Studies curriculum of schools should be subject-centred. The *r-value* of  $-.076$  indicates that as one variable increases in its values, the other variable decreases. The strength of linear relationship can be considered as small. With the focus group discussion on - *Do Social Studies curriculum of schools be subject-centred (i.e. Geography, History, Economics, Sociology, etc.)? Explain your answer.* With the three groups of five students, one group said yes with this reason "that in our college different subject teachers are employed with a task to teach different subject aspects of the subject such as Geography, Economics etc in the name of Social Studies". Another group said yes with this reason "Social Studies at the college is full of geography and some of us do not do geography in the secondary school making the learning difficulties... and some topics from other subjects which are not familiar...some of us did programmes like Visual Arts, Home Economics, Business...so you now know the reason". The third group concluded, "Yes in the sense that it sounds difficult for a teacher to be well abreast in teaching both the content and method integration effectively in class...division of labour will be better". Different conceptions of the subject are likely to influence mentees to adopt teaching approaches that are consistent with their conceptions. This means that efforts to improve teaching in Social Studies will often fail if the complexity of teaching it is underestimated. In teaching the subject there should be the attempts to rather consider the integrated system of relationships that constitute the teaching experience as a whole.

Item 2 which is - *Curriculum of Social Studies should focus on problem-solving skills* shows an *r-value* of  $-.099$  indicating a weak negative linear relationship. The *sig (2-tailed)* of  $.227$  which is greater than the alpha value of  $.05$  means statistical significant relationship did not exist in the responses from the final year teacher-trainees from the Colleges of Education in conceptualizing curriculum of Social Studies should focus on problem-solving skills. The item 2 shows that out of the 150 final year teacher-trainees

from the three Colleges, 123 (82.0%) agreed, 10 (6.7%) were not certain, whilst 17 (11.3.0%) disagreed. The 123 (82.0%) agreeing out of the respondents of 150 implies that greater percentage of the mentees agreed that curriculum of Social Studies should focus on problem-solving skills. The *r-value* of  $-.099$  indicates that as one variable increases in its values, the other variable decreases. The strength of linear relationship can be concluded as small. The responses really indicated Social Studies is seen as a subject introduced solely to right the wrong in society and its teaching and learning must be centred on how to identify and solve problems of society.

Item 3 which is - *The scope of Social Studies Education is based on current issues in society* shows an *r-value* of  $-.303$  indicating a moderate negative linear relationship. The *sig (2-tailed)* of  $.000$  which is less than the alpha value of  $.05$  means statistical significant relationship exist in the responses from the final year teacher-trainees, so the null hypothesis was rejected. The item 3 shows that out of the 150 final year teacher trainees from the three Colleges, 73 (48.7%) agreed, 16 (10.7%) were not certain, whilst 61 (40.7%) disagreed. Although, there is statistical significant relationship, the *r-value* of  $-.303$  indicates that as one variable increases in its values, the other variable decreases. The strength of linear relationship can be concluded as medium. The almost split decision of the findings explain the mentees' distinctive personal framework of understanding whether the scope of Social Studies education should be based on current issues in society. This shows that, although, the colleges of education have a homogenous curriculum, the differences in conceptualizing the scope of content to cover current issues in society by mentees, may be as a result of the different modes of delivering the subject to teacher-trainees by tutors.

Item 4 which is - *The scope of Social Studies Education is based on solving issues that threatens human survival* shows an *r-value* of  $-.065$  indicating a weak negative linear relationship. The *sig (2-tailed)* of  $.430$  which is greater than the alpha value of  $.05$  means statistical significant relationship did not exist in the responses from the final year teacher-trainees. The item 4 shows that out of the 150 final year teacher trainees from the three Colleges, 105 (70.0%) agreed, 21 (14.0%) were not certain, whilst 24 (16.0%) disagreed. The 105 (70.0%) agreeing out of the 150 respondents implies that greater percentage of the mentees agreed that the scope of Social Studies is based on solving issues that threaten human survival. The *r-value* of  $-.065$  indicates that as one variable increases in its values, the other variable decreases. The strength of linear relationship can be concluded as small. The findings show that the scope of content of Social Studies should deals with solving the problems of man not forgetting to place the environment at the centre stage as anything put into the environment also affects man.

Item 5 which reads - *There is significant difference between the content of social science subjects and Social Studies,* shows an *r-value* of  $-.020$  indicating a weak negative linear relationship. The *sig (2-tailed)* of  $.812$  which is greater

than the alpha value of .05 means statistical significant relationship did not exist in the responses from the final year teacher-trainees from the CoE in perceiving that there is significant difference between the content of social science subjects and Social Studies. The item 5 shows that out of the 150 final year teacher-trainees from the three Colleges, 74 (49.3%) agreed, 37 (24.7%) were not certain, whilst 39 (26.0%) disagreed. Those who disagreed and those who were not certain whether there is significant difference between the content of Social Studies and social sciences were more than those who agreed. The *r-value* of -.020 indicates that as one variable increases in its values, the other variable decreases. The strength of linear relationship can be concluded as small. The responses show that from the perspective of the traditions of Social Studies in the Ghanaian context, is largely conceptualised and taught as citizenship transmission and as a simplified social science. This implies that there is the need to inculcate in students that Social Studies as a subject stands on its own, although borrows relevant themes from the social sciences into a transdisciplinary perspective and not crossdisciplinary, and multidisciplinary perspectives whereby all its distinctive parts shows glaring. It must also be known that Social Studies does so as many subjects also burrows contents from different subjects areas.

Item 6 which is - *There is significant difference in the method of teaching the social science subjects and Social Studies* shows an *r-value* of .086 indicating a weak positive linear relationship. The *sig (2-tailed)* of .297 which is greater than the alpha value of .05 means statistical significant relationship did not exist in the responses from the final year teacher-trainees from the Colleges of Education in perceiving that there is no significant difference in the method of teaching Social Studies and the social sciences. The item 6 shows that out of the 150 final year teacher trainees from the three Colleges, 69 (46.0%) agreed, 36 (24.0%) were not certain, whilst 45 (30.0%) disagreed. Those who disagreed and those who were not certain whether there is significant difference in the method of teaching Social Studies and the social sciences were more than those who agreed. The *r-value* of .086 indicates that as one variable increases in its values, the other variable increases. The strength of linear relationship can be considered as small. Respondents were tossed between whether there is significant difference in the method of teaching Social Studies and social sciences. Social Studies as a subject is an issue oriented subject and should be taught to result in students having positive attitudes and acquisition of skills to solve threatening problems. This means Social Studies should not be taught by bootlegging facts and concepts from the social sciences but persuasive messages and issues that can develop positive attitudes of students.

Item 7 which is - *There is significant difference between citizenship education and education for citizenry* shows an *r-value* of -.068 indicating a weak negative linear relationship. The *sig (2-tailed)* of .408 which is greater than the alpha value of .05 means statistical significant relationship did not exist in the responses from the final year teacher-trainees.

The item 7 shows that out of the 150 final year teacher-trainees from the three Colleges, 52 (34.7%) agreed, 44 (29.3%) were not certain, whilst 54 (36.0%) disagreed. Those who disagreed and those who were not certain whether there is significant difference between citizenship education and education for citizenry were more than those who agreed. The *r-value* of -.068 indicates that as one variable increases in its values, the other variable decreases. The strength of linear relationship can be concluded as weak. There is a problem as mentees could not agree that there is significant difference between citizenship education and education for citizenry. This implies that the teaching of Social Studies should be stressed as an issue oriented subject with a transdisciplinary approach and that it is through citizenship education that young people are prepared for citizenry.

Item 8 which is - *Social Studies curriculum should be separated into individual subject areas rather than organised as integrated discipline* shows an *r-value* of .079 indicating a weak positive linear relationship. The *sig (2-tailed)* of .334 which is greater than the alpha value of .05 means statistical significant relationship did not exist in the responses from the final year teacher-trainees from the Colleges of Education in conceptualizing Social Studies curriculum should be separated into individual subject areas rather than organised as integrated discipline. The item 8 shows that out of the 150 final year teacher-trainees from the three Colleges, 88 (58.7%) agreed, 12 (8.0%) were not certain, whilst 50 (33.3%) disagreed. The 88 (58.7%) agreeing out of the 150 respondents implies that greater percentage of the mentees agreed that Social Studies curriculum should be separated into individual subject areas rather than organised as integrated discipline. The *r-value* of .079 indicates that as one variable increases in its values, the other variable increases. The strength of linear relationship can be concluded as small. For clarification a focus group discussion on- *Should Social Studies curriculum be separated into individual subject areas rather than organised as integrated discipline? Explain your answer.* Two of the three groups said yes with the following reasons. What the two groups came out can be summarised as, since its scope of content comprised different subject areas then it is important that it is separated into their individual subjects for easy teaching and learning. The third group said no with this reason "it is Social Studies and not Economics - Social Studies or Geography - Social Studies and other subject-social studies... the content and method integration should rather be applied in its teaching". This shows that respondents were not decisive on Social Studies curriculum being separated into individual subject areas rather than organised as integrated discipline. These clear conceptual differences will go a long way to influence mentees in perceiving the subject, selection of its content, how it will be taught and even the assessment procedure to be used. The issue of what should be taught to students at all levels of education (the issue of curriculum content) obviously is a fundamental one, and it is an extraordinarily difficult one with which to grapple with. Making inferences, it is then very important that, in tackling the ideal Social Studies curriculum,

care needs to be taken to distinguish between education and schooling—for although education can occur in schools, so can miss-education.

Item 9 which is *Curriculum should be determined by content that is essential for the development of positive attitudes of students* shows an *r-value* of .016 indicating a weak positive linear relationship. The *sig (2-tailed)* of .850 which is greater than the alpha value of .05 means statistical significant relationship did not exist in the responses from the final year teacher-trainees. The item 9 shows that out of the 150 final year teacher trainees from the three Colleges, 130 (86.7%) agreed, 11 (7.3%) were not certain, whilst 9 (6.0%) disagreed. The 130 (86.7%) agreeing out of the 150 respondents implies that greater percentage of the mentees agreed that Social Studies curriculum should be determined by content that is essential for the development of positive attitudes of students. The *r-value* of .016 indicates that as one variable increases in its values, the other variable also increases. The strength of linear relationship can be concluded as small. Teaching and learning about how to inculcate into students how to become competent, reflective and responsible citizens and about critical decision-making must be taken very seriously in Social Studies curricula of institutions as curriculum dictates what is taught in schools. This can be done best when content is packed in attitudes building themes.

Item 10 which is - *Social Studies curriculum of schools should focus on the great thinkers and problem solvers of the past*, shows an *r-value* of -.372 indicating a moderate negative linear relationship. The *sig (2-tailed)* of .000 which is less than the alpha value of .05 means statistical significant relationship exist in the responses from the final year teacher trainees from the Colleges of Education in conceptualizing that the Social Studies curriculum of the schools should focus on the great thinkers and problem solvers of the past, so the null hypothesis was rejected. The item 10 shows that out of the 150 final year teacher-trainees from the three Colleges, 58 (38.7%) agreed, 14 (9.3%) were not certain, whilst 78 (52.0%) disagreed. The 78 (52.0%) disagreeing out of the 150 respondents implies that greater percentage of the mentees disagreed that the Social Studies curriculum of the schools should focus on the great thinkers and problem solvers of the past. Although, there is statistical significant relationship in the responses, the *r-value* of -.372 indicates that as one variable increases in its values, the other variable decreases. The strength of linear relationship can be concluded as medium. The responses go to supports the documentary analysis of CoE Social Studies curriculum which shows that themes in history are none existing in the Colleges of Education Social Studies curriculum as compared to the JHS Social Studies syllabus, let alone those dealing with great thinkers and problem solvers of the past (Quashigah, et al. 2014).

Item 11 which is *Social Studies curriculum needs to focus on the critical examination of controversial issues* shows an *r-value* of -.144 indicating a weak negative linear relationship. The *sig (2-tailed)* of .079 which is greater than the alpha

value of .05 means statistical significant relationship did not exist in the responses from the final year teacher trainees. The item 11 shows that out of the 150 final year teacher-trainees from the three Colleges, 80 (53.3%) agreed, 20 (13.3%) were not certain, whilst 50 (33.3%) disagreed. The 80 (53.3%) agreeing out of the 150 mentees implies that greater percentage of the trainees agreed that Social Studies curriculum needs to focus on critical examination of controversial issues. The *r-value* of -.144 indicates that as one variable increases in its values, the other variable decreases. The strength of linear relationship can be concluded as small. It can therefore be concluded that traditional citizenship education should focuses on critical examination of controversial issues which is well suited to developing some of the intellectual skills necessary for civic and political participation.

Item 12 which is - *Critical thinking is the most important skill for problem solving, inquiry and discovery in Social Studies*, shows an *r-value* of -.035 indicating a weak negative linear relationship. The *sig (2-tailed)* of .675 which is greater than the alpha value of .05 means statistical significant relationship did not exist in the responses from the final year teacher-trainees. The item 12 shows that out of the 150 final year teacher trainees from the three Colleges, 130 (86.7%) agreed, 14 (9.3%) were not certain, whilst 6 (4.0%) disagreed. The 130 (86.7%) agreeing out of the 150 mentees implies that greater percentage of the mentees agreed that critical thinking is the most important skill for problem solving, inquiry and discovery in Social Studies. The *r-value* of -.035 indicates that as one variable increases in its values, the other variable decreases. The strength of linear relationship can be concluded as small. To begin with, the way Social Studies is taught need to get a makeover. To us, so many Social Studies teachers only teach by lecturing and expect rote memorisation from their students. This happens often because of the “overwhelming amount of material contained in a typical Social Studies curriculum. The teachers have so much information they are required to cover that they have trouble getting beyond the mere facts content coverage into higher-level and critical thinking delivery that involve their students.

Item 13 which is - *Social Studies curriculum needs to focus on the critical thinking about important social and political issues* shows an *r-value* of -.141 indicating a weak negative linear relationship. The *sig (2-tailed)* of .085 which is greater than the alpha value of .05 means statistical significant relationship did not exist in the responses from the final year teacher-trainees. The item 13 shows that out of the 150 final year teacher-trainees from the three Colleges, 131 (87.3%) agreed, 10 (6.7%) were not certain, whilst 9 (6.0%) disagreed. The 131 (87.3%) agreeing out of the 150 mentees implies that greater percentage of them agreed that Social Studies curriculum needs to focus on the critical thinking about important social and political issues. The *r-value* of -.141 indicates that as one variable increases in its values, the other variable decreases. The strength of linear relationship can be concluded as small. Conceptualizing the scope of

content of Social Studies curriculum to focus on the critical thinking about important social and political issues, it is concluded that traditional citizenship education is well suited to developing some of the intellectual skills necessary for civic and political participation.

Item 14 which is - *Social Studies curriculum planners should consider key social and cultural situations in the community in the Social Studies programme*, shows an *r-value* of -.102 indicating a weak negative linear relationship. The *sig* (2-tailed) of .212 which is greater than the alpha value of .05 means statistical significant relationship did not exist in the responses from the final year teacher-trainees. The item 14 shows that out of the 150 final year teacher-trainees from the three Colleges, 120 (80.0%) agreed, 26 (17.3%) were not certain, whilst 4 (2.7%) disagreed. The 120 (80.0%) agreeing out of the 150 mentees implies that greater percentage of them agreed that Social Studies curriculum planners should consider key social and cultural situations in the community in the Social Studies programme. The *r-value* of -.102 indicates that as one variable increases in its values, the other variable decreases. The strength of linear relationship can be considered small. Culture is dynamic so it is very important to be abreast with what culture is and why the ideal culture need to be preserved and those objectionable ones like widowhood rites abolished or refined. A citizen cannot be called educated if he or she is trained to misunderstand his or her immediate environment and the world. Rich tradition can be an anchor of stability and a shield to guard one from irresponsibility and hasty decision.

Contextualizing this section on the final year teacher-trainees' conceptions of the scope of content of Social Studies, the subject can be seen as a discipline that has suffered from identity crisis over the years due to many perspective dimensions given to its content. Martorella (1994) for instance, argues that its ambiguous nature has turned it into educational puzzle. This will create differences in conceptions and ultimately influence the content and create confusion as to which direction the particular content has to go. This brings to the fore the different schools of thought about Social Studies through time and space. However, the focuses are the objectives around which the various proponents identified as elements of their conceptual dimensions and definitions.

## 5. Conclusions and Recommendation

There have been many different conceptual perspectives given to the scope of content of Social Studies through time and space. However, the focuses are the objectives around which the various proponents identified as elements of their conceptual dimensions and given definitions.

The scope of content of the CoE Social Studies course structure does not reflect the tools needed by individual to solve personal and societal problems as compared to the JHS syllabus.

There are varied conceptions about the scope of content of Social Studies in the Colleges of Education in Ghana. Final

year teacher-trainees conceptualised the content of Social Studies to cover: subject-centred; acquisition of problem-solving skills; solving issues that threaten human survival; separated into individual subject areas rather than organised as integrated discipline; development of positive attitudes of students; critical examination of controversial issues; on the critical thinking about important social and political issues; and the key social and cultural situations in the community.

Teacher-trainees were confused whether there is significant difference between the content of social science subjects and Social Studies; the method of teaching social science and Social Studies; and citizenship education and education for citizenry. Mentees disagreed that Social Studies curriculum of the schools should focus on the great thinkers and problem solvers of the past. Final year teacher-trainees' current knowledge base about the scope of content of Social Studies as a problem solving was inadequate.

As a result of the inadequacies it is recommended that at least two credit hours course should be designed and mounted on the current JHS Social Studies syllabus for students in Colleges of Education as part of their programme of study. This will help mentees to become familiar with the content of the syllabus, making it easy in their selection of valid content, setting of appropriate objectives in their teaching and even the mode of using appropriate assessment tools.

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