# Teacher-Trainees' Varying Curriculum Conceptions of Social Studies in the Colleges of Education (CoE) in Ghana

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## Abstract

Exploring teacher-trainees' varying curriculum conceptions of Social Studies in the Colleges of Education in Ghana has become necessary since the subject perceived as problem-oriented in the Junior High School (JHS) curriculum is taught mostly by diploma teachers from the country's thirty-eight Colleges of Education. The research methods chosen for this study are; both qualitative and quantitative (mixed method). Non-probability sampling method (purposive and convenience sampling techniques) was used to select the colleges and their final-year trainees on teaching practice for the study. The study revealed that the varying conceptions through time and space indicated that Social Studies is seen as a subject introduced solely to right the wrong in society, and its teaching and learning must be centred on issues and how problems are solved to unearth youth with positive attitudinal building skills and behavioural change. It was recommended that citizenship, political, moral and peace education should be taught under the framework of Social Studies programme, and these perspectives must be well framed and properly imparted by teachers.

## Keywords

## 1. Introduction and Background

Social Studies is one of the subjects taught in Colleges of Education and student-teachers are prepared to teach it at the Basic Schools in Ghana. The term "Social Studies", was first used in 1905 by Thomas Jesse in the United States of America. In 1913, it was formally used as part of The National Education Association Report on the re-organisation of secondary education (Saxe, 1991). According to Saxe (1991:18) "the evolution of Social Studies to its present form can be traced from the early stages where it was rooted in the social sciences for the purpose of attending to social welfare and subsequently grounded in the social sciences for the purpose of directly educating future citizens". This implies Social Studies, thus, evolved as a curricular need to serve a purpose for the worthwhile development and nurturing of young citizens to fit into ideal society.

In much of Africa, the introduction of Social Studies as part of the school's curriculum was preceded by the formation of the African Social Studies Programme (ASSP) in 1968 (Kissock, 1981). In Ghana, like the other African countries, Social Studies was introduced as a brainchild of ASSP in 1972. The purpose set forth by the Mombasa Conference in 1968 is that the integrated Social Studies is supposed to

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enable every school-going child in Africa to: understand people's interaction with the cultural, social and physical environment; appreciate home and heritage; develop skills and attitudes expected of citizens; and learn to express ideas in many ways (Merryfield & Mutebi 1991:621).

This notwithstanding, there is no consensus among educators as regards what Social Studies is or ought to be. In the light of this Martorella (1994) asserts that the field of Social Studies is so caught up in ambiguity, inconsistency and contradiction that it represents a complex educational enigma. 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. This is supported by Kankam, Bekoe, Ayaaba, Bordoh, and Eshun (2014:143) that "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."

Although many efforts have been made to improve the teaching of the subject in achieving its intended goals, it seems the varied curriculum conceptions of the subject may lend itself for students' misconstruing the essence of the subject introduction in the Ghanaian education curriculum. On this, Bekoe, Quashigah, Kankam, Eshun and Bordoh (2014) in the write-up of the sense of efficacy in implementing the basic school social studies curriculum in Ghana, posited that "Pedagogical training is a strong predictor of teacher trainees' conception about Social Studies. Content knowledge alone does not adequately prepare teachers for the challenges they face in today's Social Studies classrooms." This implies that in teaching and learning of social studies emphasis must laid on the philosophy underpinning the subject introduction in Ghana which is solving individual and societal problems.

According to the teaching syllabus for Social Studies (CRDD, 2007) the subject 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. In the view of Quashigah, Dake, Bekoe, Eshun, and Bordoh (2014:11) "Although, both the College of Education and the Junior High School Social Studies curricula see the subject as an integration of knowledge, the point of contention has been the nature and acceptable level of integration."This called for the need to find out the final year teacher-trainees' Social Studies curriculum conceptions in the Colleges of Education in relation to the content of the Junior High School Social Studies syllabus in Ghana.

The study was guided by this research question- *What are the Social Studies curriculum conceptions by final year teacher-trainees of Colleges of Education 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. In addition, the study covered only the final year teacher-trainees.

# 2. Literature Review on the Varying Conceptions of Social Studies through Time and Space

Martorella (1994) holds the view that the field of Social Studies is so caught up in ambiguity, inconsistency and contradiction that it represents a complex educational enigma. In the views of Quartey (1984:13), "In the academic world, almost every subject has had its changing views." Lawal and Oyeleye (2003) in support of this view remarked that the definitions, nature and scope of the subject became so restricted to the confinements of the single discipline purview of the social sciences. This implies that there has been emerging conceptions of social studies through time and space with regards to its meaning, scope, nature, objectives and even the way assessment tools are selected in teaching it.

With the development and conceptions of social studies through time and space, Quartey (1984:13-14) asserted that:

> Social Studies was introduced in the American…1880s it was linked up with the activities of the American Historical Association until 1921…A National Council of Social Studies was founded in America in 1921 to disseminate information on the current trends of the subject. By 1920 the subject had grown from being purely a study of history into a subject that aims at acquainting the youth with the skills needed in the society. In the 1930's the subject focused on human problems. Themes discussed…included citizenship education, nationalism and vocational efficiency. The major problems confronting Social Studies between 1930 and 1950 in America was that the protagonists of the subject limited its study to the problems earlier and never allowed the subject to look into current societal issues such as civil rights, anti-war movements, the problems of the growing cities and the poor blacks etc. In the 1950's therefore educationists had condemned the inadequate education offered to the citizens…By the 1970's Social Studies in America has concerned itself with such themes like citizenship, social matters, societal problems and education for good life.

According to Quartey (1984:13) "Social Studies in Britain was not introduced until 1920s". He further asserts that

following the Hadow Report of 1926, Social Studies in Britain focused on how to equip the youth to become well trained adults in an industrialised society. The development of Social Studies in Britain followed a fashion of nation building out of its trade recession in the wake of its industrial revolution. According to Ogundare (2000) there is very little evidence of the existence of Social Studies before the 1930s in Britain and other European countries. What could be regarded as the Social Studies content at that time included materials from the Economics and Political Science, which were then taught as Civics. This view is in line with what Lawton and Dufour (1974) as quoted by Obebe (1990) observed through a remark that, there is little evidence of the existence of Social Studies in the curriculum at the beginning of the twentieth century, although history and geography (which were fairly established in the elementary and grammar school by the1920s) would sometimes include materials generally referred to as "civics". The range was extremely restricted with much of the learning being by rote. According to Quartey (1984:14), "It was the effort to review Social Studies in Britain that brought about Africa Social Studies Programme, Oxford Conference in 1967 and the Mombasa Conference of 1968 which have also influenced the study of Social Studies in Africa".

In Ghana the introduction of a new system of education shifted from the British subject-centred curriculum to an integrated curriculum, first on an experimental basis in 1976 and nationwide in 1987 and emphasised an inquiry approach to teaching and learning which laid emphasis on the attainment of affective objectives, and the development of vocational and creative skills, as well as the attainment of cognitive objectives (Avotri, 1993). She further asserts that this culminated in the introduction of subjects such as social studies, cultural studies, life skills and vocational subjects. It was anticipated that Social Studies, for example, would facilitate the development of more positive attitudes towards society and the environment among students (GES, 1987).

Until the introduction of the New Educational Reform Programme (NERP) in the late 1980s the development of the integrated Social Studies in Ghana had been very unsteady. According to Tamakloe (1994) the early attempt of introducing Social Studies as a field of study dates from the late 1940's when Teacher Training Colleges such as Presbyterian Training College, Akropong-Akwapim; Wesley College, Kumasi and Achimota College initiated some programmes. These experiments, however, collapsed by the middle of 1950s as a result of lack of co-ordination of efforts. The following were the reasons he gave for the collapse of the subjects in those institutions:

a. Lack of competent teachers to handle the subject effectively: Teachers were not trained in the philosophy,

methodology, aims and objectives as well as the techniques of teaching Social Studies.

b. Conflicts with traditionalist ideas: The idea of subject integration had not been well received by many traditionalists. People were afraid that their pet subject such as geography, history, economics and government would lose their distinct identity and methodologies if each was made to become a microscopic member of an integrated Social Studies programme. Social Studies was therefore not welcomed.

c. Lack of textbooks on integrated Social Studies was another factor that contributed to the collapse of the idea (Tamakloe, 1994; cited in Odumah, 2003).

The subject 'resurrected' and was adopted as a result of the follow up of the Educational Conference held at Winneba in 1969 after the Mombasa Conference of 1968. According to Odumah (2003) "Social Studies was therefore re-introduced into Ghanaian schools in 1972 but this attempt also fell through, due to the reasons pointed out earlier". The recent introduction of the subject into the Ghanaian system had to await the implementation of the educational reforms of 1987 (Tamakloe, 1994).

According to Bekoe (2007) Social Studies in Ghana underwent a radical change in 1998, at the time that it was being introduced at the Senior Secondary School level of Ghana's educational system. He further asserts that it evolved from a collection of mainly specific history and geography topics, which used to characterise the early Social Studies curriculum, into an issue centred (trans-disciplinary) subject. To him, this evolution/change succeeded in transforming Social Studies curriculum from the amalgam, (citing Kissock, 1981) of discrete traditional social science disciplines to one that is issue centred (citing Noddings, 2000 and Farris, 2001) and problem solving in nature (with reference to Martorrela, 1994).

Social Studies has suffered from identity crisis over the years due to many definitions given to it. Martorella (1994) for instance, argues that its ambiguous nature has turned it into educational puzzle. This will create differences in conception 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 definitions. Mathias (1973) defines Social Studies as the study of man in society. The same view is shared by the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS, 1916) in a report that indicated Social Studies is understood to be those whose subject matter relates directly to the organisation and development of human

society and to man as a member of the social group. The report emphasises that Social Studies deals with man in relation to his environment. This means man must be able to influence his environment to his benefit.

Other authorities define Social Studies as an approach of teaching (Wesley 1950 & 1957; Makinde, 1969). The CRDD (1987) defines Social Studies as man in society and perceive it as the social sciences simplified for pedagogical purposes, distinguished by its method. In effect what the proponents mean is that the content of Social Studies must reflect its method of teaching, different from other subjects. Another school of thought also views the subject as an amalgam, interdisciplinary and integrated and that, it is an outgrowth of the social sciences (Barr, Barth & Shermis, 1977; Tamakloe, 1994). Martorella (1985:5) asserts that Social Studies gains some of its identity from the social sciences such as history, political science, geography, economics, sociology, anthropology and psychology. The proponents of this conceptual approach therefore perceive Social Studies as a subject that draws together knowledge and content from geography, history, sociology, anthropology and civics in order to bring more powerful understanding of a central idea.

There are others too, who perceive the subject as citizenship education. In response to the calls of those like Butts (1988:162) for "the revitalizing of the historic civic mission of American education", the Carnegie Foundation and CIRCLE (The Centre for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement) (2003:6) issued the Civic Mission of Schools report, which concluded that (a) "school-based civic education should be seen as an essential approach to increasing young people's informed engagement with political institutions and issues; and (b) that Social Studies was the curricular area best able to develop competent and responsible citizens". The National Council for the Social Studies (1994:3) confirmed Social Studies' unique mission to "help young people 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."

According to Thornton (1994:224), while "most Social Studies leaders and policymakers justify the subject on the grounds of citizenship…it is here that the consensus ends: What does citizenship mean and what, in turn, does this mean for curriculum and instruction?" In seeking to answer just such a question, Barr et al. (1977) culled the literature and found three approaches to Social Studies-citizenship transmission, reflective inquiry, and social science method, each of which resulted in a different conception of a citizen and a different approach to prepare young people for citizenry.

In Ghana, Social Studies is seen as "the study of the problems of society" (CRDD, 2007). The CRDD (2007) further explains that "the subject prepares the individual to fit into society by equipping him/her with knowledge about the culture and ways of life of their society, its problems, its values and its hopes for the future". This view is also supported by Engle & Ochoa (1988), Barr et al.(1977), Kissock (1981), Quartey (1984), Banks (1990), Aggarwal (2002), and Eshun and Mensah (2013). They all have the notion that the subject must equip the individual with civic competence that will enable an individual to live and to be lived with. In this direction their expectations are that the content and scope of the subject must be issue-centred and problem solving. This means that the main mission of this conceptual perspective is that Social Studies is to prepare students to be responsible, productive and concerned citizens with the ability to solve both personal and societal problems.

Although, Social Studies is seen as citizenship education (NCSS, 2006) there is also the conceptual perspective which views the subject as global citizenship or global education, and multicultural education simply because we now live in a shrinking world. Global citizenship education is usually conceptualised within the framework of international education, global education (Davis, Evans, & Reid, 2005), multicultural education (Quashigah, 2001; Bennett, 2003; Banks, 2004; Ming & Dukes, 2006), peace education (UNESCO, 1998; Oyebamiji, 2001; Odejobi & Adesina, 2009), human rights education (Guadelli & Fernekes, 2004), moral education (Adesina, 2010), or economic education. Practitioners are very well aware that none of these approaches, except may be economic education, has secured a position in school curricula so far. Thus, global citizenship education, if taught as one of the topics within those frameworks, has become even more secondary.

Obviously, global citizenship education should be placed within the broader framework of citizenship education due to the similarity of rationale and the variability of models that the latter offers (Davis et al., 2005). It is the logical development of a citizenship that is required for all citizens in the 21st century. It should help students to develop cultural, national, and global identifications; it also significantly contributes to civic democratic development (Banks, 2004). The implication here is that teaching and learning about how to inculcate into students how to become competent, reflective and responsible citizens and the functions of democratic government or about decision-making cannot be only based on local or central paradigms.

Also, in the framework of citizenship education is multicultural education and according to Pattnaik (2003:205), "many people do not understand the true scope of multicultural education. It is important to reflect the diversity

of society so that students are "living diversity" rather than "doing diversity." Young children are not born with attitudes that cause them to discriminate against others. However, they quickly learn such attitudes as they watch and learn from what others do and say (Ramsey, 1982). With this Quashigah (2001), cited in Merryfield and Wilson (2005:37) writes that:

> we need an appreciation of global issues which would lead to the realisation that the world has a common course and then we can talk a common future. We have been emphasising this is America, this is Africa, instead of emphasising this is the world… the U.S. is rich and powerful and exploits resources so it has tons of garbage to be dumped elsewhere. Should that garbage be exported to West Africa?

In the framework of citizenship education, Quashigah (2001) uses multicultural perspective and asked for double consciousness that might lead to a common future.

Numerous definitions of multiculturalism and multicultural education have been proposed by scholars, researchers and organisations. Gorski's (2001:1) definition of multicultural education provided a strong foundation on which curriculum should be developed:

> Multicultural education is a transformative movement in education that produces critically thinking, socially active members of society. It is not simply a change of curriculum or the addition of an activity. It is a movement that calls for new attitudes, new approaches, and a new dedication to laying the foundation for the transformation of society.

The development of skills required for all these call for the introduction of appropriate approaches of teaching Social Studies.

Another conceptual perspective about Social Studies is how morals are imparted to children. Moral education was introduced into the school system at the elementary stage in order to inculcate moral uprightness in small children so that by the time they grow up they would not become a menace to the nation (Adesina, 2010). According to Adesina (2010) factors such as poor teaching methods, lackadaisical attitudes of the learners to learning because of social influences such as the attitude of the masses especially in regards to looking for money or wealth at all cost, corruption by law enforcement agents and politicians and the inconsistencies of government policies as regards to education militate against the achievement of the goals set for the subject.

The introduction of peace education to elementary school children is also a conceptual perspective which is likely to instil the values of peaceful co-existence in children. To this end, curriculum planners and educators wrote many curricula with the hope of including contents that will inculcate the values of peaceful co-existence and social integration into the learners. Social Studies is a good subject in this regard. The main purpose of its introduction into the country's educational system is to bring about good and socially competent citizens that would live cordially with the members of the society and contribute individually and collectively to the growth and development (Adesina, 2010).

Peace education in the name of Social Studies is viewed by Oyebamiji (2001) as essentially the type of education in which learners are taught how to develop senses of maturity in their activities or encounters with people and embrace the principles of cultural relativity and shun cultural ethnocentrism. Peace Education has been clamoured for its placement in the school curriculum (UNESCO, 1998; Oyebamiji, 2001). The objectives of Peace Education according to UNESCO recommendations (1981:132); in Odejobi and Adesina (2009) were summarised as:

> Combining learning, training, information and reaction, international education should further the appropriate intellectual and emotional development of the individual. It should develop a sense of social responsibility and of solidarity with less privileged groups and should lead to observance of the principles of equality in everyday conduct. It should also help develop qualities, aptitudes, and abilities which enable the individual to acquire a critical understanding of problems at the national and the international level; to work in a group; to accept and participate in free discussion; and to base value-judgments and decisions on a national analysis of relevant facts and factors.

Also, Religious Studies has as one of its major aims, the teaching of religious values which would bring about ideal behaviours among learners with the hope of improving the future (NECO, 2011). This can also be taught under the framework of social studies.

If valid objectives are to be drawn from the various definitions/conceptions given above, then each of them will have a different outline of content altogether. The confusion created by varying definitions and perceived objectives could hinder the teaching and attainments of the subject's goal. However, putting the various conceptions and explanations of Social Studies together, Dynneson and Gross (1999:13) provide a definition that can be used to support any Social Studies instructional programme. In their view, Social Studies can summarily be seen as:

> an integration of broad field of learning, drawing upon the concepts and processes of the social sciences and related areas; it features problem-focused inquiry, ethical decision making, and personal or civic action on issues vital to

individuals and their society.

Their definition has two implications. The first is the material that is studied (the content of Social Studies). This includes information, ideas, skills, generalisations, concepts, principles, issues, and inquiry procedures drawn from the social sciences - history, geography, government, civics, political science, economics, sociology, and anthropology. Others are literature, music and the visual and performing arts, religion and archaeology. These fields serve as resources for the Social Studies curriculum which blends and integrates them as and when necessary to provide learners with worthwhile experiences. The second implication is the purpose of Social Studies, which is citizenship education.

By surveying the various definitions/conceptions, it is equally true to assert that in spite of the turmoil in Social Studies there is a general agreement among academics about what the essential goals and, especially, the overarching goal of Social Studies ought to be. Risinger (1997:223) has observed that "for all the arguments, convention speeches, and journal articles, it seems clear that the term citizenship education lies at the heart of Social Studies." Likewise, the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) (2006) has long been a leading advocate in this area, linking citizenship education to the core mission of the Social Studies, as well as the leading scholars in Social Studies, have all identified citizenship education as the major and overarching goal of Social Studies. This view is also shared by CRDD (2007) and was, in fact, the basis for the introduction of Social Studies into the curriculum of Ghanaian basic school. This suggests that development of Social Studies must depend on a consensus building of a definition which in its effect will enhance its contents, objectives and even the assessment tools to be used for the subject by its experts. On this, Jeromelik (1961) and Maxim (1983) hold the view that definition provides distinctiveness of scope, nature, focus and structure of a subject. This shows that consensus definition and conception of Social Studies will help to sharpen its focus and enhance its growth in Ghana and the continent of Africa. For this reason, there is a need to provide pedagogical activities that would accommodate the needs of an increasingly diverse learner pool.

## 3. Methodology

The research methods chosen for this study are; both qualitative and quantitative (mixed method). 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". In terms of the purposes of combining methods; methods were combined both for triangulation and complementarity, where each method addressed a different aspect of the research question and for development where the qualitative component facilitated the analysis for the quantitative component.

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. 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. Non-probability sampling method (purposive and convenience sampling techniques) was used to select the sample of districts, colleges and respondents for the study.

Having in mind the number for fair representation and the calibre of teacher-trainees for the study, the researchers selected fifty final year teacher-trainees from each of the three colleges to make up the one hundred and fifty (150) sample size. Eighteen (18) final year teacher-trainees: six from each of the three Colleges of Education were also guided through focus group discussion.

Data Collection was facilitated through the administration of questionnaire and focus group discussion. The quantitative data entry and analysis was done by using the SPSS software package. The qualitative data was analysed by the use of the interpretative technique based on the themes arrived at during the data collection from the focus group discussions.

## 4. Findings and Discussions on Teacher-Trainees' Conceptions of Social Studies

Conceptions of final year teacher-trainees (mentees) are presented under this section based on the research question- *What are the Social Studies curriculum conceptions by final year teacher-trainees of Colleges of Education in Ghana?* The main focus is to establish the Social Studies curriculum conceptions by final year teacher-trainees of the CoE in Ghana. Questionnaire outcomes using simple percentages were triangulated with the focus group discussion on the concepts discussed.

Item 1 which reads - *Social Studies is an Amalgamation of the Social Sciences* shows that out of the 150 respondents from the three Colleges, 130 (86.7%) agreed, 12 (8.0%) were not certain, whilst 8 (5.3%) disagreed. 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. With the focus group discussion on - *Do you see Social Studies as an amalgamation of the social sciences? Explain your answer.* With the three groups of five students, one group said that "Social Studies is an amalgamation of the social sciences because it draws relevant themes from the social science subjects like history, economics and geography." Another group said "Social Studies as an amalgamation of the social sciences in the sense that facts, concepts, principles, ideas, generalisations, values etc. are drawn from the social sciences and other fields of study into a given subject." The third group, however, said Social Studies is not necessarily an amalgamation of the social sciences. The reason the group gave was that Social Studies is a problem solving subject that deals with issues. The questionnaire and the focus group discussion suggest that mentees' conceptions formed about Social Studies will live with them, and it is likely that it will influence their classroom practices. It is highly said that when people are indoctrinated, it becomes very difficult for them to be de-indoctrinated.

The item 2 shows that out of the 150 respondents from the three Colleges, 47 (31.3%) agreed, 20 (13.3%) were not certain, whilst respondents who disagreed were 83 (55.3%). A little greater percentage of the mentees disagreed that Social Studies is a method of teaching. With the focus group discussion on - *Do you see Social Studies as a Method of Teaching?* One group said yes and the reason was, it has distinctive techniques and strategies college tutors employ in teaching the subject which is different from that of the other subjects. When asked further about the techniques, the group gave examples like simulation, discussion, debate, role-play etc. when asked why? The group said for instance discussion and debates make people to be tolerant as they disagree to agree on issues. The remaining two groups, however, did not see Social Studies as a method of teaching. One of the two remaining group said Social Studies is like any of the subjects taught in the school and does not lend itself to any extraordinary teaching method, whilst the other group said any technique can be used to teach Social Studies and any other subject but it takes only the teacher to use varying techniques and strategies that may result in helping pupils to become problem solvers. The outcomes from the focus group discussion support the questionnaire outcomes that Social Studies cannot be viewed as a method of teaching.

Item 3 shows that out of the 150 final year teacher trainees from the three Colleges, 148 (98.7%) agreed, whilst 2 (1.3%) were not certain whether Social Studies is Citizenship Education. None from the three Colleges disagreed. The 148 (98.7%) agreeing out of the 150 respondents implies that greater percentage of the mentees agreed that Social Studies is Citizenship Education. With the focus group discussion

item on - *Do you see Social Studies as Citizenship Education? Give reason for your answer.* All the three groups said yes with varying reasons. Interestingly, one group consensually agreed and the reason is "citizenship education is bringing the relevant themes from the social science subjects together to become Social Studies". Another group said yes and the reason was 'the heart of the subject is building ideal citizens for a country as it equips people to solve today's and tomorrow's problems of their community". The last group said "citizenship education is training citizens who will participate in ideal activities of society". The views of the respondents imply that differences may exist in the conceptualisation of Social Studies as Citizenship Education but its focal point must reflects on how contemporary problems could be solved.

Item 4 shows that out of the 150 respondents from the three Colleges, 131 (87.3%) agreed, 15 (10.0%) were not certain, whilst 4 (2.7%) disagreed. The 131 (87.3%) agreeing out of the 150 respondents indicates that greater percentage of the mentees agreed that Social Studies is Global Citizenship Education. The responses from the focus group discussion on - *Is Social Studies Global Citizenship? Explain your answer.* Their explanations really speak into the need for global citizenship. To them there are always spills over of civil wars and other disturbances of one's place or country into another country. Some said for instance Ghana as a country is having other nationals living here as refugees as a result of political upheavals they faced in their country. Respondents conceptualizing Social Studies as global citizenship recognise the fact that all human beings live in a multi-boundary world; not simply a world of nation-states, but one with a diversity of worldwide systems in which all people affect and are affected by others across the globe.

Item 5 shows that out of the 150 respondents from the three Colleges, 136 (90.7%) agreed, 11 (7.3%) were not certain, whilst respondents who disagreed were 3 (2.0%). The 136 (90.7%) agreeing out of the respondents of 150 implies that greater percentage of the trainees agreed Social Studies can be seen as civic engagement/ participatory citizen. The outcome indicates that one needs not lose sight on the fact that, while the acquisition of knowledge can enhance awareness, awareness itself does not necessarily lead to effectiveness or a more participative role in shaping Ghana's destiny. The crust of the matter is behavioural change.

Item 6 shows that out of the 150 final year teacher trainees from the three Colleges, 128 (85.3%) agreed, 16 (10.7%) were not certain, whilst 6 (4.0%) disagreed. The 128 (85.3%) agreeing out of the 150 respondents indicate that greater percentage of the mentees agreed that Social Studies can be seen as multicultural education. Encouraging it still suggests that teachers need to play an important role in developing

effective multicultural practices in their students.

Item 7 shows that out of the 150 final year teacher trainees from the three Colleges, 145 (96.7%) agreed, 3 (2.0%) were not certain whether Social Studies can be seen as human rights education, whilst 2 (1.3%) of the respondents disagreed. The 145 (96.7%) agreeing out of the 150 respondents implies that greater percentage of the mentees agreed that Social Studies can be seen as human rights education. With the focus group discussion on - *Do you see Social Studies as Human Rights Education? Explain your answer.* All the three groups said Social Studies can be viewed as human rights education. One group gave the reason as "Social Studies is about development of society and neither can people nor do communities develop when there are disturbances". Another group concluded that "it is through Social Studies education that one gets to know his/her rights and liberties enshrined in the 1992 constitution of Ghana". The third group centred their thought on "…Social Studies made them to understand the need for people to live and be lived with one another in peace and unity… that Social Studies deals with provisions of human rights". The focus group discussions really support the outcome of the questionnaire administered.

Item 8 which reads *Social Studies can be seen as Political Education* shows that 135 (90.0%) agreed out of the 150 respondents. This implies that greater percentage of the mentees agreed that Social Studies can be seen as political education. With the focus group discussion on – *Do you see Social Studies as Political Education? Explain your answer.* All the three focus groups agreed that Social Studies can be seen as political education. They came out with varying reasons like: the subject teaches them how to participate successfully in the civic life of their community; help them acquire skills to influence policies; sensitise them on how and why to vote in elections; and become aware of issues on constitutional rule and the importance of democracy. Political education was seen as an important conceptual perspective as some cited the need of neither the National Democratic Congress (NDC) nor the National Patriotic Party (NPP) picking arms in settling the NPP's dissatisfaction of the 2012 election after the electoral commissioner had declared the NDC's presidential candidate the winner, but the aggrieved party petitioned the supreme court of the land for smooth adjudication. This, to some of the mentees the two parties have promised to accept the verdict the Supreme Court will pronounce. The outcomes of the questionnaire and the focus group discussion suggest that political education is very important as it helps people to express their opinions on political, social and controversial issues. In this way, students can develop the ability to critique, analyse and formulate possibilities for action critical for responsive citizenship. This

is because Social Studies deals directly with human problems and tries to shape the behaviours of individuals.

Item 9 which reads *Social Studies can be seen as Economic Education* shows that 128 (85.3%) agreed out of the respondents of 150. This implies that greater percentage of the mentees agreed that Social Studies can be seen as economic education. For better clarification, a focus group discussion was carried out on - *Do you see Social Studies as Economic Education? Explain your answer.* One of the three groups of five, said yes and concluded that "the subject help one to make informed decision for example on buying and selling". Another group came out that "Social Studies can be seen as economic education because as a subject it is concerned with aspect of production, distribution and consumption of goods and provision of services". The third group concluded that "it deals with how to use scarce resources efficiently and effectively to satisfy man's needs". Responses from the focus group discussion support the outcomes of the questionnaire administered.

Item 10 which reads *Social Studies can be seen as Peace Education* shows that out of the 150 final year teacher trainees from the three Colleges, 141 (94.0%) agreed, 4 (2.7%) were not certain, whilst 5 (3.3%) disagreed. The 141 (94.0%) agreeing out of the 150 respondents implies that greater percentage of the mentees agreed that Social Studies can be seen as peace education. The responses show that peace education can be seen as a conceptual perspective of Social Studies. This suggests that teachers of the subject need to make it their clarion call in their classroom activities.

Item 11 which reads *Social Studies can be seen as Moral Education* shows that out of the 150 final year teacher-trainees from the three Colleges, 121 (80.7%) agreed, 18 (12.0%) were not certain, whilst 11 (7.3%) disagreed. The 121 (80.7%) agreeing out of the 150 respondents implies that greater percentage of the mentees agreed that Social Studies can be seen as moral education. The 121 (80.7%) agreeing out of the 150 respondents implies that greater percentage of the mentees agreed that Social Studies can be seen as moral education. This clearly shows that another conceptual perspective about Social Studies is how morals are imparted to children. This really shows that Social Studies education is inextricably linked with Moral Education as both deals with how pupils will grow uprightly based on the norms of society and how corrupted attitudes can be changed.

Item 12 which reads *Social Studies can be seen as the teaching of geographical concepts* shows that out of the 150 final year teacher-trainees from the three Colleges, 144 (96.0%) agreed, 4 (2.7%) were not certain, whilst 2 (1.3%) disagreed. The 144 (96.0%) agreeing out of the 150 respondents implies that greater percentage of the mentees

agreed that Social Studies can be seen as the teaching of geographical concepts. For better clarification, a focus group discussion was carried out on - *Do you see Social Studies as the teaching of geographical concepts? Explain your answer.* All the three groups came out that Social Studies can be seen as the teaching of geographical concepts. When asked why, they concluded that apart from a semester course work on methods of teaching Social Studies, the remaining three semesters for the two years on campus course work are made up of many geography topics.

Item 13 which reads *Social Studies can be seen as the teaching of historical facts* shows that out of the 150 final year teacher-trainees from the three Colleges, 65 (43.3%) agreed, 11 (7.3%) were not certain, whilst 74 (49.3%) disagreed. The 74 (49.3%) disagreeing against the 65 (43.3%) agreeing out of 150 mentees implies that greater percentage invariably disagreed that Social Studies can be seen as the teaching of historical facts. The responses show that final year teacher-trainees indicated that the teaching of historical facts cannot be seen as a conceptual perspective in Social Studies in the Colleges of Education in Ghana.

Concluding the section on the teacher-trainees' conceptions of the term "Social Studies", Martorella (1994) holds the view that the field of Social Studies is so caught up in ambiguity, inconsistency and contradiction that it represents a complex educational enigma. In the views of Quartey (1984:13), "In the academic world, almost every subject has had its changing views." Lawal and Oyeleye (2003) in support of this view remarked that the definitions, nature and scope of the subject became so restricted to the confinements of the single discipline purview of the Social Sciences. This implies that there has been emerging conceptions of Social Studies through time and space with regards to its meaning, scope, nature, objectives and even the way assessment tools are selected in teaching it. This has become a national and international concern in a sense that Bekoe, Kankam, Ayaaba, Eshun, and Bordoh (2014) concluded that "Mentees lack the needed methodology, knowledge and skills in teaching Social Studies that will result in problem solving." This may be attributed to the inconsistencies in curriculum framework of the subject across the first cycle, the second cycle and the tertiary institutions in Ghana.

## 5. Conclusions

There have been emerged 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. Social Studies is viewed as the teaching of geographical concepts, citizenship, global citizenship, multicultural, human rights,

political, economic, moral and peace education.

Differences exist in the conceptualisation of Social Studies as Citizenship Education but its focal point reflects on how contemporary problems could be solved. There were verifiable evidence of diverse knowledge base of final year teacher-trainees about the conceptions of Social Studies and its effective teaching. Pedagogical training is a strong predictor of teacher-trainees conception about Social Studies. Mentees' conceptions formed about Social Studies will live with them, and might influence their classroom practices.

The varying conceptions through time and space indicated that Social Studies is seen as a subject introduced solely to right the wrong in society, and its teaching and learning must be centred on issues and how problems are solved to unearth youth with positive attitudinal building skills and behavioural change.

## 6. Implications for Teaching

Students taught not to understand Social Studies as an attitudinal building or problem-oriented subject but over emphasised knowledge component of the subject may pass through the academic system without acquiring worthwhile skills, values and attitudes that will enable them to solve their own problems and that of society. The ramification of this ineffectiveness of some Social Studies teachers may results in moral decadence among our Ghanaian youth. The varied conceptions can be addressed by introducing the Social Studies syllabus in use as a course of study in Social Studies curriculum for student-teachers at the Colleges of Education. This will help them acquire the most basic orientation of the current Social Studies syllabus in used at the Basic School level.

## Recommendations

Citizenship, political, moral and peace education should be taught under the framework of Social Studies programme, and these perspectives must be well framed and properly taught by teachers. This will enable Ghana hopefully witness a better moral and peaceful future where good productivity, secured lives and properties, and the removal of anxieties and political upheavals will be put in place. Children learn better at their formative ages; doing so will help them to learn the importance of various perspectives and be encouraged to embrace the principles of problem solving as future leaders.

It is also recommended that, the affective domain aspect of education should be given most priority while implementing citizenship, political, multicultural, economic, moral, and peace education, etc. under the framework of Social Studies

programme. Appropriate inferences, teaching resources and trained teachers for the subject should be given serious attention by the government if it would achieve its intended national goals. Social Studies tutors should be sensitised to let trainees know the reasons underpinning the subject introduction in Ghana.

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