

## Appropriate Methods for Building Teachers Competencies for Effective Social Studies Instruction

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### ABSTRACT

Teaching method is a way of planning, addiciting and execution of teaching proper with the appropriate integration of instructional materials to achieve the objectives or goals of the curriculum at the classroom level and beyond. For the goals of the curriculum to be actualized, it calls for teacher competencies in the use of appropriate methods for goal delivery in Social Studies instruction. This paper x-rays appropriate methods for building teacher competencies for effective Social Studies instruction. It also looked at the conceptual framework which are the fulcrum in which the wheels of this paper rotates. The paper highlights the problems of the study with emphasis on the use of non-professionals in the teaching of Social Studies. The paper recommends among others that professional Social Studies teachers should be used in the teaching of Social Studies

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## INTRODUCTION

An instructional method is therefore a systematic procedure adopted to make teaching and learning more result oriented, Esu & Inyanga -Abia, (2004). Various strategies can be utilized in a teaching method to arouse interest, stimulate reflective thinking, decision-making and communicative skill, (Mezieobi, 2013). Ogunsanya (1985) in Uzoagba (2014) illustrated further that "dramatization can be used along with demonstration, discussion, story-telling etc, while, the use of resource persons' can involve lecturing, questioning, discussing, displaying etc. in a single lesson". It can therefore be deciphered from the above comments that method of teaching Social Studies is reinforced by combination of other methods and strategies for effective teaching and learning, Mezieobi, (2013), or that strategies and methods are interchangeably used in Nigeria to refer to teachers instructional activities in the classroom.

Akinlaye (2003)a, revealed that most Social Studies teachers relied on the traditional conventional teachers' dominated instruction which encouraged rote learning memorization, instead of progressive strategies as; inquiry, discussion, problem solving, dramatization, role-playing amongst others. In corroboration, Adeyemi (1989), Mkpa (1989) and Enem (2005) in Uzoagba (2014) observed that Social Studies are not implemented in junior secondary schools with requisite instructional peculiar pedagogies. Social Studies education has come to stay. It is therefore crucial that only the most suitable and effective methods (strategies) should be used if the objective of the subject (content) in meeting the (national) goals of education is to be realized Arisi & Kpanagban, (1997).

In addition, Social Studies curriculum is fluid in terms of accommodating emergent or contemporary content that demands specialization and expertise. Esu, Asim and Obara (2006) observed that professionalism enhances Social Studies teacher's competencies. They maintained that Social Studies professionals or teachers should be grounded in pedagogy and content of their subject. This information is to ensure effective teaching and learning of Social Studies. The situation where non-professionally trained Social Studies teachers are more than professionally trained Social Studies teachers in the school system, may pose significant problem in content delivery, if serving Social Studies teachers are not updated professionally through in-house training, seminars, conferences and workshops, otherwise it will be difficult for the teachers to deliver the goals of Social Studies curriculum. In selecting and teaching Social Studies content, the teacher should be guided by the following specifications:

- Social Studies learning is powerful when it is meaningful.
- Social Studies learning is powerful when it is integrative.
- Social Studies learning is powerful when it is value-based.
- Social studies learning is powerful when it is challenging and
- Social Studies learning is powerful when it is active."

Onuoha (2011), suggest, that Social Studies teaching strategies for effective delivery of content ought to be student centered, collaborative, engaging and has the capability of developing high order thinking skills. In other words, teaching methods/strategies should be student-centered, in terms of their active contribution in the teaching learning process, as well as working together to

share ideas and transfer knowledge and skills to one another through cooperative learning. In addition, the teaching strategies should sensitize critical high order thinking and reasoning, which develops the learners' knowledge and equips them rationally for decision-making on emerging issues or tasks.

A Social Studies teacher should possess a range of teaching strategies because different style or patterns of teaching behaviors are useful for different educational purposes, hence every teacher (of Social Studies) should use more than one way of teaching Ogbonna, (1997). Arisi and Kpangban (1997) in Uzoagba (2014) upheld that the multiple instructional strategies used in teaching Social Studies were to accommodate individuals' differences of young learners. Udo (1999) stressed that teaching of Social Studies require multiple methods because Social Studies content encapsulates dynamic and innovative societal issues which are constantly affected by social change.

Oboegbulam (2004), further, added that the application of relevant strategies equips the Social Studies teacher to inculcate relevant knowledge and skills in the learners. Esu (2012), highlighted conditions that would help the Social Studies teachers ensure effective teaching in terms of clear presentation of lessons, achievement of good performance and cogent illustrations of the learning contents as follows:

- a. The teacher is a vital element in any educational programmes, hence, the needed changes can occur through improving the quality of the instructional processes and productive competences of the learners.
- b. Sufficient knowledge and clear understanding of the subject matter.
- c. Acquisition of various principles and practices of classroom principles and practices of classroom testing.
- d. Ability to plan and manage learning activities towards attaining specified curriculum objectives".

The competent Social Studies teacher ought to have broad based knowledge so as to influence productive teaching and learning. The teacher has to administer appropriate strategies aimed at achieving specified objectives. Since Social Studies is directed at different forms of instruction and learning experiences, the teacher has to employ diversified instructional strategies or multiple instructional strategies to generate learners' appreciation and understanding of content' from divergent comprehension angles and abilities.

Highlighting the essence of appropriate instructional strategies in the effective teaching of Social Studies, Mezieobi & Ossai (2012) postulated thus: Traditional conventional instructional approach to social studies is teacher centred, undemocratic, dogmatic and encourage learners passivity, while modern instructional strategies are learners centred, stimulate learners active participation, encourage creativity, provide ample learning opportunity for learners to reinforce reflective thinking, acquire multiple learning experiences, integral knowledge, values and attitudes for co-existence, others are to require skills for leadership, interdependence, scientific acquire mind frame and capability to generate innovative idea.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Cognitive Theory*

Is a learning theory that emphasizes the importance of mental processes in learning and is based on the promise that learners actively construct their own knowledge by processing information and making connections between information and what they already know. Cognitive theory is grounded in the idea that individuals must first understand a concept before they can use language to express it. The theory argues that, in order to understand new concepts, children, adults must develop their cognitive ability and build their own mental image of the world. This theory is in line with the study because the study lay more emphasis on teacher's adopting strategies that will enhance their competencies for effective teaching and learning of Social Studies instruction. The theory is of the opinion that individuals or lecturers must develop their cognitive abilities and build their mutual image in the process of learning.

### *Conceptual Framework*

#### *Social Studies*

Social Studies is defined as a part of a school or college curriculum concerned with the study of social relationships and functioning of the society and is usually made up of courses in social science.

According to <https://www.socialstudies.org>, Social Studies is defined as the study of individuals, communities, systems and their interactions across time and place that prepares students for local, international and world at large.

<https://uncommons.wordpress.com> defined Social Studies as a field of study that deals with the integration of knowledge, experience and effective use of resources for purpose of citizenship. Social Studies as a discipline is an interdisciplinary field that examines human societies, cultures, and their interactions, encompassing various social sciences and humanities to foster civic competence and understanding of global issues. Social Studies investigates human behaviours, social structures, cultural practices and the interaction between individuals and their environments. The core aim of Social Studies is to prepare individuals for active and informed participation in a democratic society, emphasizing knowledge of human rights, local, national and global responsibilities. Social Studies helps students understand the complexities of the world, including economic, political and cultural connections between different societies.

Uzoagba (2024) sees Social Studies as the study of the family, community and society in general. These three concepts according to him have continued to interact with each other for the development of mankind. Social Studies looks at the family with its interconnectedness and injects proper values that will enable it to survive from one generation to the other. It sees the community as the fulcrum in which the wheel of the society rotates. Social Studies sees the society as an institution that weld man and his activities today. Similarly, Mezieobi (2005) opined that Social Studies discipline was fashioned to inject in the learner, reflective thinking, attitudinal and psychomotor components, to make the learner acquire education that will help him function very well and solve the problem in his society.

### *Lecture Method*

A lecture is the orderly treatment of a particular subject in a speech for purposes of instruction. It is the process of delivering verbally a body of knowledge. In the lecture method, the teacher tries to give to the learner by word of mouth knowledge he possesses which the learners do not have. He presents ideas or concepts, develops and evaluates them and summarizes the main points at the end. The students listen and jot down notes or main points. Student's questions are not always encouraged in the course of the lecture. The lecture is a verbal presentation of subject matter or content, formally organised and supported by other learning media, extending over a protracted period, Onyemerekeya (2004) in Uchegbu (2014).

### ***Story Telling***

Story telling is a useful way of teaching both children and adults. Children love stories about animals, birds, and children. Many creative and intelligent teachers utilize this kind of teaching method, especially in lower primary schools, to train the children's imagination, character or good morals and to give them a sense of values. Examples of are real-life stories, such as the stories of the lives of great men and events, allegories, or stories of imaginary human and non-human beings.

Onyemerenkeya (2004) in Uchegbu (2014) is of the view that Africa is very rich in stories which are used to teach morals. Many stories in the bible also teach morals, and encourage reflective thinking. They are proverbial. Although there are limitations to storytelling, its values as a teaching method are many. It can easily arouse the interest of pupils, their sense of humour and enthusiasm, dispelling any previous boredom due to fatigue in the classroom. But apart from this direct personal effect, it helps to illustrate "the most important points in an indirect, more dramatic way, so that a pupil will retain them more easily. Children learn by example: they often model themselves on men and women, from the stories they have heard of their courage, wisdom, etc. Stories can also be dramatized by the children which are of help in such subjects as drama and language.

### ***Learner-Centred Methods***

Learner-centred method is a type of teaching that places the learner at the centre of all teaching activities. Teaching here must stem from the learner himself and must be linked to the child's stage of growth and development. This type of method deals with students' participation. The learner-centred method recognizes that no learning is effective unless the child is personally involved in the learning situation. He must be constantly participating, help to plan his own and his groups activities. He must engage in discussions, asking questions, seek solutions and generally take part in an activity. The teacher should use the pupils' natural attributes and interests as the basis for their educational procedures. Prominent among these are his natural curiosity to know more about the world around, has sense of creativity which urges him to do things, his need to explain himself and his environment in terms other than those of this world and his need to work and play with others. These are not only attributes of the child, they also express his needs.

The learner-centred methods ensure that the learners' carryout an analysis of their direct experience and also encourage the learners to be more self-directed and self-responsible. Instead of processing from books and teacher talk, learning emerges from the learners' processing of their direct experiences. Skills are not acquired by drill and rote memorization but with activities that the teachers employ to serve the pupils' interest and the Learner-centred methods encourage the development of the students' potential. Learner-centred methods include the project, discovery, discussion, play-way methods, etc., Onyemerekeya (2004) in Uchegbu (2014).

#### ***The Project Method***

The project method of teaching enables the teacher to relate his teaching to real life situations. It is defined as a natural lifelike learning activity involving the investigation and solving of problems by an individual or small groups. It is a purposeful activity or a meaningful whole or unit of experience designed and conducted by the learner in a social environment under the teacher's guidance. Essentially, a project is a learning unit, designed by students in order to attain set goal. Project goals are established by the students based on their background experience. They are encouraged by the teacher to work through study activities towards the attainment of the goals, Uchegbu (2014).

#### ***The Demonstration Method***

Demonstration has been described as an audio-visual explanation, emphasizing the important points of a product, a process or an idea. It is basically an activity which combines telling, showing and doing for the benefit of an audience, be it a group or a group of persons. In teaching, the demonstration is generally used as a method but it is also frequently used in relation with other approaches to teaching as a special technique (Sund and Trowbridge, (1973), Nacino-Brown et al, (1982), Onyemerenkeya (2004) in Uchegbu (2014).

The demonstration method is one of the teacher's greatest assets in arriving at fundamental skills and practice in a very short amount of time. This method is valuable to the job trainers in industries, to teachers of various trades, and to many other institutions in situations where people want to learn a new skill or ability, or to learn a better way of doing something. It is the basic method for introducing new skills to the learner for developing understanding and better ways of doing something. The demonstration is done by the teacher while the learners watch. It is accompanied by explanations on the part of the teacher. This method can only be effective if it is properly chosen and used. Demonstrations, if used by the skillful teacher, are conducive to the development and maintenance of interest among the pupils.

#### ***Discovery/Inquiry Method***

It is to be emphasized that by whatever name this approach is called, it involves the learner in the process of investigating, searching, defining a process, formulating a hypothesis, gathering and interpreting data and forming a conclusion. All these activities aim at developing in the learner the ability to think critically and reflectively. The learner seeks to discover and create an answer to the problem through the process of making a diligent search.

### ***Problem-Solving Method***

Gagne (1977) in Uchegbu (2014) viewed problem-solving as a process by which the learner or any person discovers a combination of previously learned rules which can be applied to achieve a solution to a new situation. It yields new learning. Problem-solving requires the ability to reason and demands active thinking on the part of the learners. They further explained that problem-solving develops reflective thinking, and creative expression, critical analysis, and logical reasoning in pupils and provides valuable carry-over benefits of application to future individual and group problems. In this type of teaching, the teacher withholds the concepts and principles they are to learn but gives them exemplars and problems from which they can induce these concepts and principles.

In other words, the students are allowed to work on their own, through a set of activities and experimentation to find out answers to problems. They are given opportunities to find out new truths, new rules and new methods of solving problems. The teacher's task is to select suitable problems which are within their capacity to solve, and in some cases, to suggest methods or procedures or provide suitable materials. But he will not tell them exactly what to do, though they will often rely on using methods which he has previously taught them. Capacity to use reasoning to solve problems will increase as pupil have more knowledge of facts, materials, and methods which can be employed.

### ***The Play Way Method***

Play can be described as a pleasurable activity undertaken to enable children carry out real life activities. Often it is usually a spontaneous activity in which children are free to participate in an atmosphere of mutual interaction. Today in schools, play way method is used in all kinds of subjects in such forms as games, simulation, dramatization, or role playing as well as modelling, Teachers are advised to adopt a variety of these activities in teaching since playing brings joy to the children and hence breakdown resistance to learning. Play is important to every one's life, particularly that of the child. All work and no play makes jack a dull boy" is true to a large extent. But the concept of play has developed beyond understanding it just as a means of relieving boredom. It is now seen equally as important element of learning. Almost every subject has a potential play angle, and there are considerable educational values to the learner.

### ***Dramatization***

This is a method of teaching in which the students put into action a story or event they have heard or read about. The students are very active and participate during the learning process. The dramatic method involves dramatizing or acting out of ideas or to concretize learning and make it easier. Both facts and skills can be converted into drama. Process of learning make such facts and skills more interesting. Unachukwu (1990) in Uchegbu (2014) noted that dramatization is much more than imitation, co-operating, enjoying, playing, singing, dancing, reciting, practicing, obeying, controlling, helping, sharing and participating.

Examples can be seen in English Language and literature the acting of "things fall apart" or "this is our chance" etc, In social studies a marriage

ceremony can be dramatized to make them clear and easier to understand as well as make learning a pleasurable activity.

### ***The Discussion Method***

Class discussion is designed to develop group agreement through talk and reflective thinking. Its purposes are to stimulate analysis, encourage interpretations, and develop or change attitudes. In other words, the individual is guided in reflection on a problem that involves weighing the evidence before a decision or opinion is reached. Through appropriate leadership, evidence is brought to bear on crucial issues of a problem: the evidence is analyzed and evaluated by the group: and certain conclusions are reached (Hoover, 1980) in Uchegbu (2014). When individuals engage in discussion, they ponder or meditate; or think critically.

They reflect on their views along with those of their colleagues. Such individual are searchers and inquirers. They are willing to alter views that seem inadequate under the scrutiny of thoughtful analysis. Discussion is most appropriate when areas of controversy exist. Discussion is ideal for the evolving, sorting and sifting facts and values essential for the resolution of problems. Discussion engages the group in problem-solving.

The discussion method involves interchange of ideas, questions and answers among the students primarily. It connotes a give-and -take between the teacher and the students and among the students themselves. Discussion assumes a willingness to share points of view, to hold an open mind and to weigh evidence objectively. Essentially, members of the group pool knowledge and ideas in the co-operative<sup>1</sup> tasks of trying to understand a problem by learning from one-another. During the discussion, the teacher plays the role of a moderator and a facilitator. He roughly defines the area for discussion and only supplies information when the students request for it directly or when it illustrates a point already made or pass a question relevant to the topic under study. The discussion may be introduced by means of questioning on the part of the teacher, a symposium, debate, report or demonstration. Both the teacher and the students should be adequately prepared and actively involved for the discussion to succeed.

### ***Statement of the Problem***

Teaching method are seen as series of teacher-directed activities which stimulates and motivates children to learn. They are means of communication, directing, conveying and inculcating values, skills, competencies and ideas to the learners. With appropriate teaching methods, goals are reached and purpose accomplished. The problem of this study is that most teachers are not competent enough in the application of appropriate method especially in the delivery of Social Studies curriculum.

These teachers lacks the knowledge of the subject matter, they are not qualified in the subject discipline they have no knowledge of instructional skills and pedagogy to deliver the curriculum content. To this end, it becomes difficult for them to achieve the goals of the curriculum. On this note, the researcher intends to find out how the use of appropriate teaching methods can promote teachers competencies in teaching of Social Studies instructions.

### ***Research Questions***

- Are teachers teaching Social Studies competent enough in delivering curriculum content?
- Are teachers teaching Social Studies knowledgeable in the subject matter?
- Does teachers teaching Social Studies posses the requisite qualification in delivering the curriculum content.

## METHODOLOGY

The study utilized a descriptive survey design to explore appropriate methods for building teachers' competencies for effective Social Studies instruction in Nigerian secondary schools. Conducted in Owerri Education Zone I of Imo State, the research focused on a population of 296 Social Studies teachers. A stratified proportionate sampling technique was employed to select a representative sample of 60 teachers, accounting for 20% of the total population. Data collection was carried out using the Questionnaire on Methods for Building Teachers' Competencies in Social Studies Instruction (QMBTCSSI), a researcher-designed instrument validated by three subject experts. The reliability of the questionnaire was established using the Cronbach Alpha method, producing a coefficient of 0.81. Data analysis was conducted using mean and standard deviation, with a criterion mean of 2.50 serving as the benchmark. Mean values exceeding 2.50 indicated a significant effect of specific competency-building methods, whereas lower values suggested limited influence.

## RESULTS

Table 1. Mean Responses on the Competence of Social Studies Teachers in Effectively Delivering Curriculum Content

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Social Studies teachers effectively communicate curriculum content to students	3.40	1.231	Agree
2	Teachers use appropriate teaching strategies to enhance students' understanding.	3.40	1.231	Agree
3	Teachers integrate real-life examples to improve students' grasp of concepts	3.30	1.218	Agree
4	Teachers demonstrate effective classroom management skills while delivering Social Studies lessons	3.30	1.218	Agree
5	The lack of continuous training affects the ability of teachers to effectively deliver Social Studies curriculum	3.50	1.572	Agree
	<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>3.38</b>	<b>1.294</b>	<b>Agree</b>

The data presented in Table 1 highlights the competence of Social Studies teachers in effectively delivering curriculum content. The grand mean score of 3.38 indicates that respondents generally agree that Social Studies teachers possess the necessary competence for effective instruction. Specifically, teachers are perceived to communicate curriculum content effectively (Mean = 3.40, SD =

1.231) and employ appropriate teaching strategies that enhance students' understanding (Mean = 3.40, SD = 1.231). Additionally, the integration of real-life examples (Mean = 3.30, SD = 1.218) and effective classroom management (Mean = 3.30, SD = 1.218) are recognized as key aspects of competent teaching.

However, the highest mean score (Mean = 3.50, SD = 1.572) suggests that the lack of continuous training negatively affects teachers' ability to effectively deliver the Social Studies curriculum. These findings indicate that while Social Studies teachers demonstrate competence in instruction, ongoing professional development programs are essential to further enhance their teaching effectiveness.

Table 2. Mean Responses on the Subject Matter Knowledge of Social Studies Teachers

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Social Studies teachers have in-depth knowledge of the subject matter	3.40	1.231	Agree
2	Teachers stay updated with new developments in Social Studies education	3.70	1.490	Agree
3	Teachers can effectively analyze and explain Social Studies concepts	3.20	1.399	Agree
4	A lack of content knowledge negatively impacts teachers' ability to deliver lessons effectively	3.40	1.231	Agree
5	Teachers utilize their subject knowledge to relate Social Studies concepts to contemporary issues	3.60	1.465	Agree
	<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>3.46</b>	<b>1.363</b>	<b>Agree</b>

The data in Table 2 illustrates the subject matter knowledge of Social Studies teachers, with a grand mean score of 3.46 indicating that respondents generally agree that teachers possess adequate knowledge of the subject. Teachers are perceived to have in-depth knowledge of Social Studies (Mean = 3.40, SD = 1.231) and effectively relate concepts to contemporary issues (Mean = 3.60, SD = 1.465). Additionally, teachers are seen as staying updated with new developments in the field (Mean = 3.70, SD = 1.490), which supports their ability to analyze and explain Social Studies concepts effectively (Mean = 3.20, SD = 1.399). However, the findings also suggest that a lack of content knowledge negatively impacts lesson delivery (Mean = 3.40, SD = 1.231). Overall, while teachers demonstrate a strong understanding of Social Studies, continuous professional development is essential to ensure they remain current with evolving trends and methodologies in Social Studies education.

Table 3. Mean Responses on the Qualification of Social Studies Teachers for Effective Curriculum Delivery

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Remark
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1	Teachers with relevant academic qualifications deliver Social Studies lessons more effectively	3.30	1.218	Agree
2	Professional training enhances teachers' ability to teach Social Studies	3.40	1.231	Agree
3	Workshops and seminars improve the instructional competence of Social Studies teachers	3.35	1.496	Agree
4	Teachers without adequate qualifications struggle with curriculum implementation	3.40	1.569	Agree
5	Certification programs could be encouraged to improve teachers' competency in Social Studies instruction	3.40	1.231	Agree
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>3.37</b>	<b>1.349</b>	<b>Agree</b>

The data in Table 3 highlights the importance of teachers' qualifications in effectively delivering the Social Studies curriculum, with a grand mean of 3.37 indicating overall agreement among respondents. Teachers with relevant academic qualifications are perceived to be more effective in lesson delivery (Mean = 3.30, SD = 1.218), while professional training is seen as essential for improving instructional ability (Mean = 3.40, SD = 1.231).

Workshops and seminars are also recognized as valuable in enhancing teachers' competence (Mean = 3.35, SD = 1.496). However, the findings suggest that teachers without adequate qualifications face challenges in implementing the curriculum effectively (Mean = 3.40, SD = 1.569). To address this, certification programs are recommended as a means of strengthening teachers' competencies in Social Studies instruction (Mean = 3.40, SD = 1.231). Overall, the results emphasize the need for continuous professional development and formal qualifications to enhance teaching effectiveness.

## DISCUSSION

The findings of this study underscore the critical role of teacher competence, subject matter knowledge, and academic qualifications in the effective delivery of Social Studies instruction. The data suggest that Social Studies teachers are generally competent in delivering curriculum content, as evidenced by their ability to communicate effectively, employ appropriate teaching strategies, integrate real-life examples, and manage classrooms efficiently. However, the lack of continuous training emerged as a significant challenge, highlighting the need for ongoing professional development. These findings align with the study by Uzoagba (2014), which emphasized that teacher competence significantly influences student engagement and learning outcomes.

Similarly, Mezieobi (2013) found that effective classroom management and the use of relevant instructional strategies contribute to improved student performance in Social Studies. Regarding subject matter knowledge, the findings reveal that teachers generally possess a strong understanding of Social Studies concepts, with many staying updated on new developments in the field. This aligns with the work of Onuoha (2011), who stressed that content knowledge is a fundamental aspect of effective teaching.

Additionally, the ability to relate Social Studies concepts to contemporary issues further enhances the relevance of instruction, as supported by the research of Esu et al. (2006), who argued that Social Studies education should connect historical and societal developments to present-day realities. However, the study also indicates that a lack of content knowledge negatively impacts lesson delivery, reinforcing the argument by Uzoagba (2015) that deep subject matter expertise is essential for fostering critical thinking among students.

Teacher qualification was another crucial factor examined in this study. The findings suggest that teachers with relevant academic qualifications are more effective in delivering Social Studies instruction, and professional training further enhances their ability to teach. The significance of workshops and seminars in improving instructional competence was also highlighted, consistent with the findings of Esu (2012), who posited that professional development programs play a crucial role in enhancing teacher effectiveness. However, the study also revealed that teachers without adequate qualifications struggle with curriculum implementation, which aligns with the research of Mezieobi and Ossai (2012), who found that unqualified teachers often face difficulties in meeting instructional demands.

The recommendation for certification programs to improve teachers' competencies is supported by Uzoagba (2024), who emphasized that structured teacher training programs contribute to sustained improvements in teaching practices. The implications of these findings are significant for educational policymakers, teacher-training institutions, and school administrators. The study highlights the urgent need for continuous professional development programs tailored to enhance teacher competence and subject matter expertise. Additionally, curriculum planners should ensure that Social Studies teachers receive adequate training in contemporary pedagogical strategies, including the integration of technology and real-life applications.

Schools should also prioritize hiring qualified Social Studies teachers and encourage existing educators to pursue further certifications to enhance their instructional capacity. By addressing these challenges, the quality of Social Studies education can be significantly improved, leading to better learning outcomes for students.

In conclusion, the findings of this study underscore the vital role of teacher competence, subject matter knowledge, and academic qualifications in ensuring effective Social Studies instruction. While teachers demonstrate proficiency in communicating curriculum content, employing appropriate teaching strategies, and integrating real-life examples, the lack of continuous professional development remains a major challenge. Similarly, teachers generally possess

strong subject matter knowledge and an ability to relate Social Studies concepts to contemporary issues, yet gaps in content knowledge can hinder lesson effectiveness. Furthermore, teacher qualification significantly impacts instructional effectiveness, with professional training, workshops, and certification programs playing crucial roles in enhancing teaching competence.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Social Studies as an integrated discipline that involves the learner in creative thought, critical thinking and equips him/her with values, skills and information that will help them to discover knowledge and the world around them. The discipline is environmentally focused and its content is dynamic with contemporary needs of the society.

Social Studies promotes citizenship education, stimulates national consciousness and patriotic behaviours in the learner. For the goals of Social Studies to be achieved, there is need for teacher competencies and effectiveness in the use of appropriate methods or strategies in the delivery of instruction.

## **FURTHER STUDY**

The following recommendations were made:

1. Educational authorities should establish regular training programs, workshops, and certification courses to enhance Social Studies teachers' competencies in curriculum delivery, subject matter expertise, and modern teaching strategies.
2. Schools should mandate and support the adoption of interactive and participatory teaching approaches, such as discussions, debates, and real-life applications, to improve student engagement and understanding in Social Studies.
3. Professional Social Studies teachers should be used in the teaching of Social Studies.
4. Only teachers who are grounded in pedagogical and content of Social Studies should be allowed to teach the subject.
5. Professional Social Studies teachers should be devoted to in-house training, seminars, workshops and conferences so that they should be updated to current trend in the school system as this will encourage goal delivery of the curriculum content.
6. Professional Social Studies teachers should develop multiple teaching methods so as to accommodate individual differences among young learners.

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