

Students and teachers' perception of Social Studies subject - the case of selected Senior High Schools (SHS) in Tamale Metropolis of northern Ghana

ABSTRACT

The upsurge of moral decadence among the youth of Ghana these days **seems** to attest to the fact that the teaching and learning of social studies is beset by some limiting factors. The question that comes to mind is whether students and teachers really understand the purpose of social studies as a subject and whether they even have the right perceptions about social studies for preparing the use for productive citizenship. A descriptive **cross-sectional** survey design was chosen for this study involving 335 SHS social studies students and 32 social studies teachers **for** the 2020-2021 academic years within the Tamale Metropolis. Questionnaires were designed to collect data from the respondents. The quantitative data obtained **were** analyzed using frequencies and percentages. The results showed that even though students and teachers of social studies had appreciable knowledge of what social studies is meant to achieve in the lives of students, the realization of the aims of social studies appears **s** to be hindered by perceptions they have about social studies classroom climate, a situation that has led to poor participation during lessons. The study therefore, recommends that resources such as social studies room, museum, laboratory, reference books, and audio-visual materials should be made available during social studies lessons to encourage active participation by learners.

Keywords: Lateness, Absenteeism, Classroom disturbance, Perception, subject-matter knowledge

1. INTRODUCTION

One area that education can affect change so far as **nation-building** is concerned in Ghana is the impact of **the** Social Studies curriculum on the individuals. According to the **(1)**, citizenship education is the gradual preparation of the youth to fit into the society. Among the subjects that are taught in our schools, social studies is one subject whose aim is to inculcate good citizenship skills into the youth. It involves the inculcation into the youth, positive attitudes, values and skills that will enable them to become reflective, competent and participatory citizens.

The Senior High School (SHS) is the second level of the educational ladder after the basic school in Ghana. At this level, most parents begin to appreciate what knowledge, skills and attitudes their wards will acquire to become useful citizens. No matter the programme a student is undertaking, there are **several** core subjects common to all students. Among these core subjects is the study of social studies. The other core subjects are English Language, Mathematics, and Integrated science. To move to a higher level for tertiary education, a student is expected to pass the core subjects. It makes sense therefore, that failure to perform creditably in any of the core subjects may hinder the academic aspirations of both parents and students. It was hoped that when introduced into the Ghanaian educational system, it would enable all citizens to participate as fully as possible in cultural, economic, political and social life since citizenship education through social studies is meant to prepare the learner to be tolerant, patriotic, one who is devoted to freedom and has faith in democratic values and ideals of life.

Despite the provision made for introducing the learner to citizenship education through social studies education, it is widely acclaimed that very little attention is given to citizenship education at the senior high school. This situation threatens the development of the youth to **become** good citizens who

are prepared to shoulder the responsibilities of Ghana (2). The upsurge of moral decadence among the youth of Ghana these days seems to attest to the fact that citizenship education is hindered by some limiting factors in senior high schools. This is also supported by evidence that young people graduate from senior high schools with little or no knowledge or interest in community participation and decisions that affect their lives (3). This has led to a rise in political apathy, almost as fast as the increasing violent crime rate (4), the resurgence of vigilantism, the impact of global forces on local social traditions, the stresses created by increasingly multicultural societies, the decline of volunteerism in community activities, and the breakdown of moral fabric and democratic deficit (5).

Although, a number of subjects such as Religious and Moral Education (RME), History and Sociology were introduced for the purpose of teaching students to become active citizens [6], it is the social studies education, with its integrative and incorporated nature (integrating History, Sociology and other social sciences disciplines), that has been acknowledged as a major vehicle in promoting effective citizenship among Ghanaian students (6) (GES, 2010). It is based on these that the (7) describes the primary purpose of social studies as helping young people to make informed decisions for the well-being of the general public. The major aim of citizenship education is therefore to equip students with the practical skills of making meaningful contributions toward the development of their society. It is seen as a cross-discipline subject since it cuts across political, social, and economic boundaries (8).

Teaching and learning are very vital in every area of study, how effective a particular subject is taught or handled by teachers and how effective this subject content is learnt and assimilated by the students are crucial for achieving significant learning outcomes. Research by (9) and (10) supports links between the nature of the learning environment and the subject matter. A positive school climate can have a positive impact on teachers and their working lives just as a positive organizational climate can benefit employees, increase their job satisfaction and affect their productivity (11) School climate is the result of a variety of factors and actions that adversely affect both students and teachers: for instance teachers arriving late at school, teacher absenteeism, and teachers' lack of preparation. Students arriving late at school; absenteeism; classroom disturbances; cheating; profanity/swearing; vandalism; theft; intimidation or verbal abuse of other students; physical injury to other students; intimidation or verbal abuse of teachers or staff; and use or possession of drugs and/or alcohol. The systematic study of school climate has its roots in organizational psychology and research on school effectiveness

Studies by (12) point out that students are reliable and sophisticated judges of the learning environment and that it is valid to seek their opinions, thoughts and perceptions. In addition, (10) stresses that student perception research is an effective method of providing useful data on classroom functioning and important feedback for the classroom teacher. Further justification for the use of student perceptions as a valid measure for study is provided by (13). They claim that since students' perceptions determine students' behaviour their self-reports are likely to be more reliable than observed behaviour. It is therefore important to consider how the subject of Social Studies is perceived by students in the SHS in our schools. Information from students with negative or positive perceptions to Social Studies can assist in the improvement of Social Studies delivery to all students. (14) attributed the cause of poor academic performance in the Shama Sub-Metro of Shama Ahanta East Metropolitan Assembly (SAEMA) in Ghana to a combination of factors relating to the school environment, teachers and pupils. The question that comes to mind is whether teachers and students really understand the purpose of social studies as a subject and whether they even have the right perceptions about social studies for preparing productive citizens. The purpose of the study was therefore to investigate the perceptions teachers and students of social studies have about the subject. Specifically, the study sought to examine social studies teachers and students subject matter knowledge of Social Studies subject; assess social studies teachers and students' perceptions of classroom climate in a Social Studies lesson delivery, and identify some reasons social studies teachers and students provide for the perceptions they have of Social Studies.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A descriptive cross-sectional survey design was chosen for this study since the intention was to generalize from a sample of a given population so that inferences could be made about some

characteristics and perceptions of the population. The design selected for the study was appropriate because descriptive survey is basic for all types of research in assessing the situation as a prerequisite for the conclusion and generalization (15). This design was considered appropriate, since the study involved collecting data to answer questions about perceptions possessed by social studies teachers and students about the subject. This study was limited to teachers who teach social studies in SHS as well as SHS students of social studies in the Tamale Metropolis. Social Studies teachers are charged with the responsibility of implementing the Social Studies Curriculum in the schools. This study area was chosen because the researcher had easy access to the study area and also because the Metropolis plays host to several senior high schools in the Region.

The population for the study was social studies teachers and year 2 and 3 social studies students of the 2020-2021 academic years. The population of social studies teachers were those at post within the Metropolis because they could give relevant information on the topic under study. The year 2 and 3 students were considered because, unlike the year 1 students, they had gained enough educational experience and were more likely to offer useful ideas and responses on the phenomenon under investigation. There were 35 social studies teachers and 2600 social studies students (Years 2 and 3) in the Metropolis within the period under investigation. Out of this number, 32 social studies teachers and 335 social studies students were selected for the study. Thus, a total sample frame of 367 comprising 335 students and 32 Social studies teachers were selected for the study. This selection is in line with the guideline provided by (16) which suggests that a minimum sample size of 32 should be selected for a population of 35 and 335 selected from a population of 2600. The simple random sampling technique was adopted in selecting the study participants for the study. This is because each of the study participants (Social studies teachers and students) had equal chance of contributing to the phenomenon under study. For the teachers, 35 pieces of paper equalling the number of social studies teachers were used. 'YES' was written on 32 of the pieces of paper in order to arrive at the sample size of 32 social studies teachers. 'NO' was written on the rest of the three pieces of paper. All the pieces of paper were put in an open container and mixed up for fairness. Each social studies teacher was then asked to pick a piece of paper from the container. This was done until every teacher was given a chance to make his or her picking from each of the selected schools. This exercise was repeated for the students. A total of 2600 pieces of paper equalling the number of social studies students were used. "YES" was written on 335 pieces of paper, and "NO" for the rest of the pieces of paper. All those with 'YES' were selected for the study.

Two separate questionnaires were designed to collect data from the students and the teachers. (17) notes that a questionnaire can collect a large amount of information in a reasonably quick space of time and the response can be easily analyzed. The questionnaires for teachers and students comprised of closed-ended items. This enabled the respondents to give specific responses. The questionnaires were divided into four parts namely A, B, C and D. Part 'A' solicited bio-data of the respondents. Part B solicited data on the subject matter knowledge possessed by respondents; parts C solicited respondents' perceptions of classroom climate in a Social Studies classroom while part D solicited respondents' reasons for the perceptions they have about Social Studies classroom climate. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with a given statement. A five-point Likert scale ranging from 'Strongly Disagree' to 'Strongly Agree'. The quantitative data obtained were analyzed using frequencies and percentages.

After constructing the questionnaires, their validity and reliability were taken into consideration. They were thoroughly vetted before the final approval by experts in the field of research from Department of Social Sciences Education, Tamale College of Education to establish validity. Examination of the validity was aimed at making sure that the instrument adopted measured what it was supposed to measure. To ensure reliability, the questionnaires were pilot-tested in four selected Senior High Schools within Tamale Metro (but not part of the selected schools for the study) in order to identify loopholes for correction, if any. The aim was to avoid any weakness before producing the final version for implementation. Reliability coefficients of 0.90 and 0.91 were obtained respectively for the students and teachers' questionnaires. The major limitation of the instrument was that only closed-ended questions were used which prevented the respondents from openly giving out responses that could have further enriched the study. Data from the test were collected and entered into SPSS version 20 and Cronbach's Alpha (α) computed to determine the reliability coefficient. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data obtained. Frequencies and percentages were used to analyze data on the demographic variables

In line with accepted norms, the study was guided by the following ethical considerations: 1) A permit from the Regional Education office was obtained. 2) A good rapport was maintained between the researcher and the respondents. 3) Information given by the respondents was treated as private and confidential. 4) Feedback on results - the participants must know the findings to reinforce future interest in research. The objectives and purpose of the study were explained to all the respondents to get their consent before the commencement of the study.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study was guided by three specific objectives of the study. The first was to examine the subject matter knowledge possessed by social studies teachers and students. The second objective was to assess the perceptions social studies teachers and students have about Social Studies classroom climate. The third was to identify some reasons provided by social studies teachers and students for their perception of social studies classroom climate. This section presents results from data collected, analyzed and interpreted in line with the specific objectives of the study.

3.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The demographic information of the respondents was necessary to understand the nature of the respondents who were taking part in the research study. For the students, the information included gender and age while for the teachers the information included gender, age, level of education, and years of teaching experience. A summary of the demographic background of the study participants is presented in Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1: Demographic information of respondents (social studies students)

Description		Number (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	230	68.65
	Female	105	31.35
Age	< 18 years	295	88.06
	18-20 years	30	8.96
	>20 years	10	2.98

Source: Field data, 2021.

From Table 1, there is an indication that the majority 230 (68.65%) of the respondents were males while females were in the minority 105 (31.35%). Thus, in terms of numbers, the males dominated the females. An overwhelming majority (295 representing 88.06%) of the students were within the age range of 18 - 20 years. Thirty (8.96%) of them were within the age range of 18.20 with only 10 (2.98%) of them being less than 20 years.

The demographic information of the teachers was presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Demographic information of respondents (social studies teachers)

Description		Number (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	20	62.50
	Female	12	37.50
Age	<25 years	11	34.38
	25-35	10	31.25
	36-45	9	28.13
	46-55	1	3.13
	>55	1	3.13

Marital status	Married	15	46.88
	Single	15	46.88
	Divorced/ widowed	2	6.25
Academic Qualification	PhD	0	0.00
	Master's degree	3	9.38
	Bachelor's degree	20	62.50
	Other	9	28.13
Teaching experience	< 5 years	16	50.00
	5-10 years	12	37.50
	11-15 years	3	9.38
	16-20 years	1	3.13
	>20 years	0	0

Source: Field data, 2021.

From the table, out of the 32 teacher respondents, as many as 20 (representing 62.50%) were males while 12 (37.50%) were females. This finding reflects the gender distribution of the labour force in which the males are in larger proportion in the Ghana Education Service. This observation is consistent with earlier observations by (18) that females prefer other professions to teaching. Also, this gender inequality could be attributed to academic qualifications for the teaching profession which few women have as a result of cultural and gender norms holding most women back. Gender discrimination of occupation results from unequal investment in education sometimes in favour of males; cultural and religious practices that mostly deprive women of receiving equal attention in formal education as their male counterparts.

The respondents' ages showed that out of the 32 of them, 11 (34.38%) of them were less than 25 years old. Also, ten (31.25%) were of 25-35 years as compared to only 11 (34.38%) who were 36 years or more. Thus, quite a reasonable number of the respondents were below 35 years, as opposed to only 2 (6.26%) who were 46 years or more. The numbers of married and single teachers were equally divided with 15 (46.88%) of them married and another 15 (46.88%) being single. Two (6.25%) of them were widowed.

Results from the study indicate further that an overwhelming majority of the respondents, 23 (71.88%) had at least Bachelor's degree. Thus, it is evident that most of the teachers were qualified to teach in the schools and it is expected that the teachers were professionally qualified to teach social studies in the schools. This is in line with a report by (19) that the highest quality teachers are those capable of helping their students to learn.

The table also indicates the number of years the teachers had been teaching. Out of the 32 teachers, as many as 16 (50%) of them had been teaching for less than 5 years while 12 (37.50%) had taught for 5 to 10 years. The table depicts that out of the remaining 4 teachers, 3 (9.38%) had been teaching between 11 and 15 years with only 1 (3.13%) teacher teaching for 16 years or more.

3.2. The subject-matter knowledge social studies teachers and students have in Social Studies as a subject.

According to (20), the teacher needs to possess subject matter content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge and curricular knowledge, knowledge of learners' personal characteristics in order to achieve results. From the two categories of respondents, the study investigated the subject matter knowledge possessed by social studies teachers and students. Six variables used to ascertain this knowledge bothered on the respondents' understanding of what social studies means. These were: to equip students with the practical skills for developing society; to promote effective citizenship among students; to develop civic competence among students; to provide students with sufficient knowledge and understanding of national history and politics; to offer the young generation moral, social, intellectual, and knowledge about cultural heritage; to instil in students ideas, beliefs, desirable behaviour and attitude for responsible citizenship. Their responses are summarized in Table 3 below:

Table 3. Respondents' knowledge of social studies as a subject for citizenship education

Social studies is meant to:	Students						Teachers				
	Yes	%	No	%	Total	Yes	%	No	%	Total	
Equip students with the practical skills for developing society.	320	95.5	15	4.5	335	29	90.6	3	9.4	32	
Promote effective citizenship among students	302	90.1	33	9.9	335	27	84.4	5	15.6	32	
Develop civic competence among students	295	88.1	40	11.9	335	20	62.5	12	37.5	32	
Provide students with sufficient knowledge and understanding of national history and politics	290	86.6	45	13.4	335	25	78.1	7	21.9	32	
Offer young generation moral, social, intellectual, and knowledge about cultural heritage	289	86.3	46	13.7	335	23	71.9	9	28.1	32	
Instil ideas, beliefs, desirable behaviour and attitude in students for responsible citizenship	315	94.0	20	6.0	335	27	84.4	5	15.6	32	

Source: Field data, 2021.

On the issue of equipping students with the practical skills for developing society, the overwhelming majority of the students (320 representing 95.5%) were of the view that social studies is meant to equip students with the practical skills for developing society. Only 15 (4.5%) disagreed with this view. Similarly, the majority (29 representing 90.6%) of the teachers shared this viewpoint with only 3 (9.4%) disagreeing with the majority.

On whether social studies is meant to promote effective citizenship among students, the majority of both categories of respondents agreed with this statement. Out of the 335 students that were surveyed, as many as 302 (90.1%) of them agreed that social studies is meant to promote effective citizenship among students. The rest of the 33 (9.9%) students disagreed on the issue. Out of the 32 teachers, that were surveyed as many as 27 (84.4%) shared the view that social studies is meant to promote effective citizenship among students. Only 5 (15.6%) of them did not agree with this viewpoint.

When the respondents were asked if they felt that social studies is meant to develop civic competence among students, their response pattern was similar to the earlier responses. Out of the 335 students, the responses of 295 (88.1%) were in the affirmative with only 40 (11.9%) disagreeing with the opinion of the majority. Out of the 32 teachers, 20 (62.5%) shared the view that social studies is meant to develop civic competence among the students.

In the views of the majority (290 representing 86.6%) opinion, the students felt that social studies is a subject that is meant to provide students with sufficient knowledge and understanding of national history and politics. The minority (45 representing 13.4%) disagreed with this statement. Similarly, the teachers' responses showed that out of the 32 teachers, the majority 25 (78.1%) of them agreed that social studies as a subject is meant to provide students with sufficient knowledge and understanding of national history and politics. Only 7 (21.9%) of them disagreed with this opinion.

As to whether social studies is meant to offer the young generation moral, social, intellectual, and knowledge about cultural heritage, 289 (86.3%) of the students agreed with this opinion with only 46 (13.7%) disagreeing with this viewpoint. Out of the 32 teachers as many as 23 (71.9%) of them shared the views of the majority opinion of the students. Only 9 (28.1%) of them stated otherwise.

In line with the previous responses, the majority of both categories of respondents were of the view that social studies is meant to instil in students ideas, beliefs, desirable behaviour and attitude toward responsible citizenship. An overwhelming majority (315 representing 94.0%) of the students agreed with this statement with only 20 (6.0%) of them disagreeing. Out of the 32 teachers, as many as

27 (84.4%) of them shared the views of the majority viewpoint of the students. Only 5 (15.6%) of them had a contrary view on the statement.

From the responses of both categories of respondents, it is obvious that both the students and the teachers knew what social studies is meant to achieve in the lives of students. Therefore, it can be stated that their subject matter knowledge could not be a hindrance to the realization of the goal of social studies.

3.3. Social studies teachers and students' perceptions of classroom climate during Social Studies lessons.

According to (21), it is the totality of the classroom environment that determines how students interpret specific events. By exploring the classroom environment and the subject content from the respondents' perspective, many new questions may surface about the thoughts and feelings of respondents while in a Social Studies classroom. The study, therefore, investigated the social studies teachers and students' perception of their classroom environment. Some variables used to measure respondents' perception of the classroom climate include late arrival by teachers, teacher absenteeism, classroom disturbances, students' inability to finish class assignments and students being inactive during lessons. Their responses are summarized in Table 4 below:

Table 4: Respondents' perceptions of the classroom climate during social studies lessons

Social s	Social studies students										Social studies teachers									
	SD		D		U		A		SA		SD		D		U		A		SA	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Latenes s to class by teacher s	20(6%)		10(3%)		16(4.8%)		200(60%)		89(26.6%)		14(43.8%)		12(37.5%)		1(3.1%)		4(12.5%)		1(3.1%)	
Teache r absenteeism	17(5.1%)		13(3.9%)		14(4.2%)		201(60%)		90(27.9%)		16(50%)		10(31.3%)		1(3.1%)		3(9.4%)		2(6.3%)	
classro om disturba nces	23(6.9%)		60(17.9%)		13(3.9%)		150(44.8%)		89(26.6%)		1(3.1%)		3(9.4%)		3(9.4%)		10(31.3%)		15(46.9%)	
Inability to finish class assignments	20(6%)		8(2.4%)		18(5.4%)		100(29.8%)		189(56.4%)		4(12.5%)		2(6.3%)		0(0.0%)		12(37.5%)		14(43.8%)	
Inactive during lesson	21(6.3%)		9(2.7%)		13(3.9%)		100(29.8%)		192(57.3%)		3(9.4%)		1(3.1%)		2(6.3%)		10(31.3%)		16(50%)	

Source: Field data, 2021.

Note: SD = Strongly Agree, D = Disagree, U = Undecided, A = Agree, SA = Strong Agree.

Out of the 335 students, as many as 200 (60%) of them agreed that teachers were late to class. Eighty-nine (26.6%) of them strongly agreed with this statement. Only 20 (6%) disagreed and 10 (3%) of them agreed with this statement. The remaining 16 (4.8%) were not certain about social studies teachers' punctuality to lessons. Thus, in terms of punctuality, the majority of the students felt that social studies teachers were always late to class. From the perspective of the social studies teachers, out of the 32 teachers, the majority of them (14 representing 43.8%) strongly disagreed while another 12 (37.5%)

disagreed with lateness. Only 1 (3.1%) strongly agreed and 4 (12.5%) agreed **with** this statement. The remaining 1 (3.1%) was uncertain about this statement. This revelation by the teachers is contrary to the perception of **the** majority of the students who indicated that their social studies teachers were always late for class. There appears to be **an** inconsistency of responses between students and teachers. Thus, from the students' perspective, this negative attitude of the teachers shows **a** lack of commitment to duty by teachers. If the perception of the students is anything to go by, the implication is that social studies have fewer hours of instructional time for the students, a situation which could adversely affect the **student's** learning outcome. This attitude also **tends** to **instill** indiscipline and lack of commitment in the students if not checked. This is in line with the views of (22), who **argue** that workers who are always late to work have substantially lower levels of organizational engagement than those who are punctual.

Giving their impression **of** teacher absenteeism, a significant number of 201 (60%) out of the 335 students agreed that social studies teachers were absent from classes sometimes. Also, 90 (27.9%) of them strongly agreed **with** this point. Only 17 (5.1%) strongly disagreed and another 13 (3.9%) disagreed that the teachers were absent sometimes. The remaining 14 (4.2%) were not certain about this viewpoint. The perspective of the teachers was in sharp contrast with that of the students. Out of the 32 social studies teachers, only 2 (6.3%) strongly agreed and 3 (9.4%) disagreed that they were sometimes absent from social studies lessons. A significant number of 16 (50%) of them strongly disagreed and as many as 10 (31%) of them disagreed that they were absent **from** class sometimes. The remaining 1 (3.1%) was not certain if the teachers absented themselves sometimes. Here again, if the perception of the students on teacher absenteeism is anything to go by, then efforts to achieve the goals of social studies would be compromised. This observation is in line with the opinion of (23) who stated that absenteeism is a critical issue which constitutes a set of activities with disparate triggers masquerading as a unified phenomenon. Thus, efforts to check the phenomenon of teacher absenteeism must be pursued vigorously if social studies students must develop the right attitude needed to fit well in society.

On the issue of classroom disturbance, a good number of 150 (44.8%) student-respondents agreed and a significant number of 89 (26.6%) strongly agreed that there were classroom disturbances during social studies lessons. Out of the 335 students that were surveyed, only 23 (6.9%) strongly disagreed and another 60 (17.9%) disagreed that there were disturbances during lessons. A few of the students (13 representing 3.9%) were not certain of any disturbances during social studies lessons. From the perspective of the teachers, as many as 15 (46.9%) out of the 32 teachers strongly agreed that there were disturbances during social studies lessons. Only 1 (3.1%) of them strongly disagreed and 3 (9.4%) agreed that there were no disturbances in class with another 3 (9.4%) being uncertain of any disturbances. Thus, from the perspectives of both students and teachers, social studies lessons are usually characterized by disturbances. Their responses suggest that the right atmosphere necessary to promote effective teaching and learning is a major constraint to achieving the goals of social studies among the students. This observation is consistent with recommendations by (24) and (25) that teachers should encourage the development of tolerance, **respect**, and collaboration so that their students can practice live citizenship in **their classroom**. Similarly, the observation is contrary to the views of Young (2011) that in curriculum implementation the teacher is supposed to build relationship with the students and promote individual learning. Thus, it can be deduced that teachers' teaching environments aimed at exposing learners to the accepted way of life of the society need to be improved. This observation is in line with **a** report by (24) as well as (26) that teachers must generate an open and participatory classroom with experimental, collaborative, intercultural, active and contextualized learning (27).

The table revealed that out of the 335 students, a significant number of 189 (56.4%) strongly agreed and 100 (29.8%) agreed that they are unable to finish class assignments in good time. On the other hand, 20 (6%) strongly disagreed and 8 (2.4%) disagreed that they are unable to finish **the** class assignment in good time. Out of the 32 teachers as many as 14 (43.8%) of them strongly agreed and 12 (37.5%) of them agreed that students are unable to finish their class **assignments** in good time. Only 2(6.3%) disagreed and another 4 (12.5%) strongly disagreed with students' inability to finish their class **assignments**. Thus, from the majority viewpoint, both students and teachers appeared to be unanimous in the perception that students are unable to finish their class **assignments** in good time. Late submission of class **assignments** has the tendency to adversely affect students' performance if not checked. This observation supports the findings by (28) who reported that pupils' inability to submit their homework in good time was a contributory factor to poor academic performance among social studies students in Asunafo North District in the Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana.

On the issue of students' activeness during social studies lessons, the majority of the students (192 representing 57.3%) strongly agreed and as many as 100 (29.8%) out of the 335 students agreed that they were inactive during lessons. Only 21 (6.3%) strongly disagreed and 9 (2.7%) disagreed with the point. The remaining 13 (3.9%) were uncertain about the item. Their responses were congruent with those of the teachers. Out of the 32 teachers surveyed, half (50%) of them strongly agreed and 10 (31.3%) agreed with the fact that students were inactive during lessons. With only 4 (12.5%) of them feeling otherwise, the remaining 2 (6.3%) were uncertain about this statement. Their inactivity could be due to inadequate teaching and learning resources posing major problems to the teaching and learning of social studies. The use of instructional materials is one of the most significant strategies for encouraging active student participation in the social studies teaching and learning process. This observation corroborates the views of (29) that there appear to be a lot of weaknesses in the use of teaching and learning materials among social studies teachers that must be addressed to ensure effective lesson delivery during social studies lessons.

Thus, in summary, even though students and teachers of social studies had appreciable knowledge of what social studies is meant to achieve in the lives of students, the realization of the aims of social studies appears to be hindered by perceptions they have about social studies classroom climate, a situation that has led to poor participation during lessons. Research conducted by (30) showed that the culture of schools and classrooms influences teachers and the approaches they adopt in teaching citizenship education. Also, (31) I agreed with these views when he explained that an "open classrooms climate" contributes to effective learning process. This implies that school climate which is a set of internal characteristics that distinguishes one school from another influences the people (students, teachers, and administrators) in the school. This is because the climate of the school is in turn influenced by several factors such as, technological adequacy.

3.4. Reasons provided by social studies teachers and students for their perception of social studies subject

Based on the variables used in assessing respondents' perceptions toward classroom climate, the study investigated the reasons for their perceptions. The respondents were requested to share their views on the nature of their perceptions. In analyzing the views of their respondents, the following responses emerged:

3.4.1 Late arrival by teachers

Some reasons by the teachers for being punctual include; to justify the monthly salary received (18 representing 56.3%), to avoid being queried or questioned (15 representing 46.9%), to accomplish work targets (10 representing 31.3%) and to meet work obligation (18 representing 56.3%). On the other hand, reasons for not being punctual to work as cited by some of the teachers include; attending to unexpected private issues (15 representing 46.9%) and extra office responsibilities involving travels (10 representing 31.3%). On the other hand, among teachers who were not punctual, some indicated that they had to drop their children at school (15 representing 46.9%), poor monitoring by their supervisors (17 representing 53.1%), home care (11 representing 34.3%) and lack of motivation (30 representing 93.7%) on the job as reasons for being late to social studies lesson. Some reasons cited by the students for the teachers' lateness included; lack of motivation on the job (330 representing 98.5%), travelling long distances to school from home (130 representing 38.8%) and home/family challenges (150 representing 44.8%).

One reason cited by teachers for lateness was lack of job satisfaction among the teachers. This is in line with (32) who opined that when employees are not satisfied, they may develop negative attitudes like lateness, absenteeism, tardiness, laziness, rudeness, mongering among others which could retard the overall progress, goals and objectives of the organization.

3.4.2. Teacher absenteeism/regularity

Some reasons cited by teachers for being regular in class were; to justify the monthly salary received (30 representing 93.8%), to avoid being questioned by their supervisors (30 representing 93.8%), to meet deadlines (20 representing 62.5%) and to accomplishing work target (29 representing

90.6%), to impact positively on students' upbringing to achieve the goal of social studies (30 representing 93.8%). Some reasons assigned by social studies teachers who were not regular in class were; sickness or **travel** (28 representing 87.5%), poor work **conditions** (10 representing 31.3%), lack of career progression (20 representing 62.5%), poor remuneration (30 representing 93.8%), attending to private matters (25 representing 78.1%), inappropriate supervision style by supervisors (9 representing 28.1%) and funeral/bereavement (27 representing 84.4%). On the issue of absenteeism, **the regular teachers** seemed to be concerned about the negative effect of absenteeism on the students' upbringing. From the perspective of some social studies students, it amounts to irresponsibility for a teacher to be perpetually absent from class. The study revealed from the student perspective that the majority of the teachers are not regular to class (217 representing 64.8%). Their responses suggest they had a very good appreciation of the impact of teacher absenteeism on the achievement of the goals of social studies as a subject. The respondents' understanding of the impact of absenteeism seems to be at variance with the view of (33) that employee absenteeism is a poorly understood organizational phenomenon.

1.4.3 Classroom disturbance

Both students and teachers viewed inadequacy of teacher preparation resulting in incompetency in classroom control as a major reason for classroom disturbance during social studies lessons. This implies that the views of students and teachers support that of (34) that insufficient preparation of teachers is one difficulty encountered in the development of social studies. Similarly, (35) stated that inadequacy of the preparation of teachers to handle citizenship education in the school curriculum has also been found to pose major problems in teaching citizenship education. He further pointed out that this inadequacy relates not only to a lack of teacher content knowledge but also to an inability to employ a range of teaching and learning approaches appropriately for citizenship education.

3.4.4 Inactive during lessons

Both students (330 representing 98.5%) and teachers (30 representing 93.8%) viewed inadequate teaching and learning resources as posing **a** major problem to the teaching and learning of social studies. The use of instructional materials is one of the most significant strategies for encouraging active student participation in **the** social studies teaching and learning process. Students learn through their senses which create impressions on their minds by arousing and stimulating attention. Consequently, (36) emphasised the use of instructional materials when he stated that the insatiable quest for social studies scholars to collect data to test hypotheses, answer questions and solve problems that have arisen in individual and group inquiry in response to instructional programmes necessitates the use of many and varied teaching resources.

Literature indicates that the availability of teaching and learning resources and the professional manner in which the teacher uses these teaching and learning resources **are** indispensable in the delivery of social studies lessons (37). Thus, the active participation of students in social studies lessons is likely to be influenced by the teaching and learning resources made available and the appropriate manner in which these resources are used by teachers and utilized by learners (38).

2. CONCLUSION

From the findings of the current study, both students and teachers appear to have appreciable subject-matter knowledge of social **studies including equipping** students with practical skills, **promoting effective citizenship, developing of civic competence**, instilling beliefs, desirable attitudes and behavior into young people to become responsible adults among others. The study also revealed that some teacher factors that were found to contribute to the low academic performance were incidences of lateness to school, absenteeism and classroom disturbance. Student factors that contribute to low academic performance include students being inactive during lessons and inability to finish class assignments in good time. Both students and teachers perceived that inadequacy of teaching and learning resources is a major cause of students being inactive during lessons as the use of instructional materials is a significant strategy for encouraging active participation in teaching and learning process. From the perspectives of both students and teachers, some of the teachers are regular in class because they want to justify **their** monthly salary received, avoid being questioned by their supervisors, **accomplish** work target, to impact positively on students' upbringing for achieving the goal of social studies. Some

reasons they assigned for teacher absenteeism included sickness or travels, poor work condition, lack of career progression, poor remuneration, attending to private matters, inappropriate supervision style by supervisors and funeral/bereavement.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion drawn from the current study the following recommendations are made for practice:

- Poor work conditions and remuneration: it is recommended that factors that influence job satisfaction such as sufficient and equitable compensation; secure and stable working conditions; the immediate opportunity to use and expand human capacities; and the possibility of sustained development and security, avoidance of favouritism in terms of promotion should be given attention in the Ghana Education Service. This is necessary to ensure a quality of work environment that enhances job satisfaction and the positive attitude of teachers. It is further recommended that the Management of the Service should create a motivating climate with emphasis on improving the work environment to enhance workforce productivity in the Service. This is necessary to promote employees' job satisfaction leading to commitment and dedication to work. It is further recommended that there should be regular involvement of staff members in the decision-making process as a key strategy for enhancing job satisfaction among the staff. Leadership responsibilities promote affective commitment by social studies teachers and keep them strongly identified with the goals of the social studies subject.
- Lack of career progression: It is also recommended that regular in-service training, workshops, seminars, conferences and other continuous professional development programmes should be organized for social studies teachers, especially for those who have taught for long in order to keep them abreast with current social issues
- Inappropriate supervision style by supervisors: There should be more regular and unannounced supervision of social studies teachers to improve punctuality and commitment. Supervisors should recognize or acknowledge laudable services offered by social studies teachers.
- Teaching and learning resources: If the teaching and learning of social studies is to be promoted in the SHS, then, necessary teaching and learning resources should be provided. Although the availability of well-equipped teachers with requisite knowledge in social studies and civic-related subjects are no doubt important, the necessary teaching and learning resources which facilitate or support effective teaching and learning are equally important. Resources such as social studies room, museum, laboratories, reference books, and audio-visual materials which engage students' attention should be provided since learning occurs through the active behaviour of the learner.

Consent

As per international standard or university standard, respondents' written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

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