

# **SELECTED FACTORS INFLUENCING TEACHING AND LEARNING OF SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM FOR UPPER PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL IN KITUI DISTRICT, KENYA**

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the selected factors influencing teaching and learning of social studies curriculum for upper public primary school in Kitui District, Kitui County, Kenya. The objectives of the study were: to find out the availability and adequacy of resource materials and facilities in the teaching and learning of Social Studies, to determine if class sizes affect the teaching and learning of Social Studies in any way, to establish in what way the scope of Social Studies Curriculum affect the teaching and learning of Social Studies, to find out if teachers of Social Studies are adequately trained in the teaching and learning of Social Studies, to establish the perceptions of pupils towards Social Studies in public primary schools in Kitui District. The theoretical framework employed in this study was that of implementation of innovations put forward by Gross, Giacquinta & Bernstein (1971). The study employed a descriptive survey design. The target population for the study was the teachers of Social Studies and pupils in upper primary school in Kitui District. The research sample was gotten by using purposive, stratified and simple random sampling techniques. The teachers were selected through stratified and simple random sampling techniques. Purposive

sampling method was used to select pupils in Standard Seven classes. Simple random sampling was employed to get from each school four girls and four boys from standard seven. The research instruments used in this study included questionnaires and focused group discussion schedules. The questionnaires were administered to the teachers of Social Studies while discussions with the pupils were undertaken. The data collected was analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The descriptive statistics used were frequency distribution tables and percentages and the programme used to analyze data was Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Qualitative data obtained from focused group discussion was analyzed by identifying coherent categories and by use of iteration; patterns were pointed out that revealed information related to factors influencing teaching and learning of Social Studies. The study findings indicated that there was inadequacy of resource materials, inadequate trained teachers, utilization of poor teaching and learning methods, congestion in classrooms, and positive perception of pupils in the study of Social Studies. This study recommends that government and other stake holders to intervene and provide teaching and learning materials; installation of electricity to schools to utilize resource materials like television sets and computers; services of Kenya National Library to cover all the schools in the region; proper storage and utilization of all available resources; construction of spacious classrooms to accommodate display of teaching/learning materials; provision of more teachers to cater for inflated enrolment of pupils; allocation of more time in teaching and learning of Social Studies to sort out the issue of wide scope; pupils' positive perception should be upheld. The government policy makers and other stakeholders would use the recommendations of this study to make judgments on the scope of Social Studies, and the adequacy of teaching and learning resource materials in the subject.

## **INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY**

### **1.0 Overview**

This chapter forms the general introduction to the study. Specifically it discusses background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, and assumptions of the study, scope and limitations of the study, justification of the study, significance of the study, theoretical framework and definition of operational terms.

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Education is believed to be a major tool for enhancing a country's development. Undoubtedly it is the aim of most societies to provide equal opportunities and facilities to all school age children to gain access into the school system (Otieno, 2003). The significance of education is clear to most people in every country. Most governments recognize the strategic importance of improving the overall education level within the context of poverty reduction and economic growth. In this regard, education is not only a welfare indicator but a key determinant of earnings and thus an important exit route from poverty (Chepyegon, 2002).

For a country to achieve the desired economic growth targets and social development, a high priority needs to be placed on the development of human capital through education, (Sessional paper 1 of 2005). After the 1948 Universal Declaration on Human Rights by the United Nations Organizations (UN), where education was declared a universal basic human right to everybody. The sessional paper No. 10 of 1965 on African socialism observed that education and training were mandatory in eliminating poverty and disease from the developing countries. There is therefore need to increase access and quality education in order to increase socio-economic growth, productivity, increased individual earnings reduced income inequalities and poverty

reduction. Education leads significantly to improved health, enhanced democracy and good governance.

As a nation, Kenya hopes to achieve Education for All (EFA) by the year 2015. This is an uphill task given the various challenges in the education sector. The Social Studies curriculum offered in primary schools in Kenya is very significant in the achievement of provision of education for all through universal primary school education. The Social Studies that this study investigated was first introduced into the curriculum of Kenyan primary schools in the 1985 when the government announced the adoption of the 8:4:4 education system in which the 8 years are for primary school education, the first 4 years are for secondary school education and the second and last 4 years are for the university education (Adam, et al., 2009).

It was agreed that the aims of Social Studies Curriculum must be clearly thought out and conceived in specific terms rather than in some ambitions form like citizenship education. Following the Mombasa conference of 1985, the following year, Social Studies was introduced into the primary teacher training colleges but with the name Geography, History and Civics (GHC-Combined) and it was referred to as the Social Studies. Due to resistance from senior officers at KIE and the Ministry of Education who were for the name to be changed from GHC to Social Studies (Shimada, 2010).

By fostering nationalism, patriotism and promotion of national unity, the Social Studies have been designed to help Kenya in achieving Vision 2030, where by 2030 Kenya will be expected to be at par with other Medium Level Economies like South Korea and India [Government of Kenya (GOK), 2012]. Social Studies is also expected to foster and promote the social, economic, technological and industrial development needs by both enhancing national development and promotion of international consciousness through fostering of positive perception towards other nations (Oketch and Somerset, 2010). Social Studies would therefore, enable the country to make the right positive progress to middle income economic status

through fostering the positive perception towards other nations as well as fostering patriotism among the Kenyan citizens (GOK, 2012).

Social Studies Curriculum in public primary schools attempt to define to the learners what is constitutionally and legally relevant to them (Shiundu & Omulando, 1992). Secondly it attempts to create a learning environment to enable the pupils to internalize the values that underlie the country's constitution and laws (GOK, 2012). Beyond the constitution and the laws, the course attempts to develop rationality in the pupils so that they are to analyze social values and practical and make independent decisions as to what is good or bad behaviour and be able to act responsibly for their own good and the good of the society (Oketch and Somerset, 2010).

Therefore, the primary school social studies' Curriculum covers various thematic contexts for holistic growth and development of the learners namely: Human virtues, basic needs and resource management, human dignity, personality and behaviour, drug use and abuse and ethnic traditions and African religious ethnics (Oketch and Somerset, 2010). Shiundu and Omulando (1992) assert that the Social Studies curriculum in primary school education system is aimed at providing the children with adequate intellectual and practical skills useful for living in both the urban and rural areas. It intends to expose the children to a high quality and relevant curriculum, which enhances their life skills competence in a variety of development tasks and benefit the majority of them for whom primary education is terminal. In Kenya, between the years 2006 to 2010 the country has witnessed dismal performance in KCPE in Social Studies nationally as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.1: National 5-Years [2006 -2010] Performance in KCPE Social Studies**

<b>Year</b>	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
<b>Social Studies % Mean Score in KCPE</b>	32.28	38.08	36.81	37.46	37.18

**Source:** KNEC, 2011

The percentage performance in KCPE in Social Studies in Kitui District is poorer when compared to the neighbouring district of Mutomo and the national performance as well as shown in Table 2.

**Table 1.2: Comparative National/Kitui/Mutomo Districts' % Score in KCPE in Social Studies**

<b>Year</b>	<b>National % Mean Score in Social Studies KCPE examination</b>	<b>Kitui District % Mean Scores in Social Studies KCPE examination</b>	<b>Mutomo District % Mean Scores in Social Studies KCPE examination</b>
2006	32.28	33.01	34.12
2007	38.08	31.11	33.09
2008	36.81	34.12	34.48
2009	37.46	35.09	35.29
2010	37.18	48.99	49.11

**Source:** Field Survey Data (2011) from DEO's Reports for Kitui/Mutomo Districts

As shown in Table 1.2, above the performance in KCPE in Social Studies has been persistently poor in the whole country and also in Kitui District, the selected study area which justifies the

choice of the district for this study. This study aimed at investigating the factors that could be responsible for the poor performance in Social Studies in Kitui District. The results of this study could be used to improve on the national performance in Social Studies. Therefore, this study investigated some selected factors affecting the teaching and learning of Social Studies in Upper Public Primary School in Kitui District in Kenya.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

As alluded to from the background of the study, although the government of Kenya has made major educational reform milestones as has been spelt out in the Kenya Education Sector Support Programme (KESSP) policy paper of 2006 and the re-introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE) in 2003, performance in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examination in terms of percentage mean score in Social Studies has remained poor in fact stagnating below 50 percent both nationally and in Kitui District.

According to Government of Kenya (2012), a report of the task force on the re-alignment of the education sector to the New Constitution of Kenya (2010) and to the Kenya's Vision 2030, the government is committed to provision of quality education, training and research for all Kenyans. However, the dismal performance in KCPE in Social Studies might stand in between the country's achievement of Education for All (EFA) goals, the Millennium Development Goals (GOK, 2012) as well as the goals of education in Kenya vision 2030.

As revealed in the background information, primary schools in Kitui District has shown deteriorating results in terms of performance in KCPE in Social Studies compared to the neighbouring Mutomo district and even nationally as shown in Table 1.2. The choice of Mutomo District for comparison with Kitui District's performance in KCPE in Social Studies was because it shares the same geographical characteristics with the Kitui District. Therefore, the reasons behind Kitui District performing poorer than Mutomo District in KCPE in Social

Studies even though, they share similar socioeconomic characteristics prompted this study. The major concern therefore was to investigate some selected factors affecting the teaching and learning of Social Studies in upper public primary schools in Kitui District.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of Study was to find out how some selected factors influence the teaching and learning of Social Studies Curriculum in Upper Public Primary School in Kitui District, Kenya.

### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

#### **1.4.1 Main Research Objective**

The main research objective was to investigate some selected factors influencing the teaching and learning of Social Studies Curriculum Upper Public primary School in Kitui District in Kenya.

#### **1.4.2 Specific Objectives of the Study**

This study addressed the following specific research objectives:

1. To determine the availability and adequacy of resources for teaching and learning of Social Studies in Kitui district.
2. To determine how class sizes influence the teaching and learning of Social Studies in any way.
3. To establish how the scope of Social Studies curriculum influence the teaching and learning of Social Studies.
4. To find out if the teachers of Social Studies are adequately trained in the teaching and learning of Social Studies.
5. To establish the perception of the pupils in upper primary school towards the teaching and learning of Social Studies as an integrated subject.

## **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the study area, the research design, the target population of the study, sampling design and sample size, data collection procedures, ethical considerations, research instruments, reliability and validity of research instruments, and data analysis procedures.

### **2.2 Research Design**

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. Descriptive survey is applicable because the phenomenon under study is already in existence. The descriptive study seeks to investigate an individual, group of institutions under study. It is mostly based on premises that the study is typical of many other cases. It makes detailed examination of single subject.

### **2.3 The Study Area**

The study was conducted in Kitui District, Kitui County of Kenya. According to the survey undertaken at DEO's Office in Kitui District the performance of Social Studies subject in primary schools has been declining over the years (See table 1.2). Therefore, the researcher's curiosity was aroused as to why the subject was fairing on badly. Kitui District is among other eleven districts in Eastern province with an estimated population of 506,355 people served by 600 primary schools (Author, 2012). Descriptive study was found appropriate as the study was an investigation on the factors influencing the teaching and learning of Social Studies curriculum.

### **2.4 Target Population**

This study targeted teachers of Social Studies and pupils in upper primary classes. The target population of the study is 720 respondents. The number was used to establish the sample population. The sample size was 640 pupils and 80 teachers of Social Studies making a total

of 720 respondents. Standard seven pupils were selected because of their maturity; they are also busy preparing for their final exams. Standard eight pupils would have been part of the respondents but they were busy preparing for their final exams.

## **2.5 Sampling procedures and Sample Size**

The schools within Kitui District were selected using stratified and simple random sampling procedures. The researcher grouped the Schools into zones. Kitui District has 3 zones, Simple random sampling was used by writing papers that were picked randomly where the representative of the school which picked 'yes' was included in the research while the school which picked 'no' automatically pulled out of the research. The total number of the schools was 100 and 40% of the schools were selected for the Study. This yielded to 40 schools that participated. Out of the 40 schools, 16 Schools were selected from Kalundu zone, 14 from Changwithya zone and 10 Schools from Miambani zone.

Teachers teaching Social Studies in the selected schools were selected using simple random sampling by taking 2 teachers from every school that were handling upper primary classes. Standard Seven pupils were also selected because of their maturity .Standard eight pupils were excluded because they were busy preparing for their KCPE examination. In every school the standard seven pupils who participated were selected through stratified and simple random sampling method. Stratified sampling was used to divide the pupils into boys and girls. Simple random sampling was then used to select 4 boys and 4 girls from each school. The sampling frame is shown in table 3.1

**Table 3.1: Sampling Frame**

Zone	Selection of schools		Selection of teachers		Selection of pupils	
	Total	sample	Total	Sample	Total	Sample
Kalundu	40	16	400	32	12500	256
Changwithya	33	14	264	28	9405	224
Miambani	27	10	216	20	7020	160
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>880</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>28925</b>	<b>640</b>

## 2.6 Data collection procedures

The researcher obtained an introductory letter from the school of education Moi University which facilitated procurement of the research permit. The researcher sought permission from the Ministry of Education, which was issue a permit, to be presented to the DC, DEO and head teachers at school level to access the respondents. Data was collected through administration of questionnaire involving techniques such as self-administration and delivery. The questionnaires were received back and recorded for analysis. Interviews were conducted in places and time convenient to the interviewees.

## 2.7 Research instruments

### 2.7.1 Questionnaires

Kisilu & Kombo (2009) state that a questionnaire is a research instrument that gathers data over a large sample. The researcher administered the questionnaires to the teachers to fill. Kothari (2003) states that questionnaires have the following advantages; the information can

be collected from a large sample and diverse regions, and there is confidentiality, which is upheld. However, the questionnaires response rates can be quite low and there is no direct contact so the researcher cannot deal with any misunderstanding. This disadvantage was catered for by the researcher. The researcher requested the teachers to fill the questionnaire as he waited after which he collected them. This improved the return rate. The questionnaire had 3 sections that focused on the objectives of the study. A copy of the questionnaire appears in this thesis as Appendix B. the questionnaire was administered to teachers of Social Studies in the selected schools.

### **2.7.2 Focused Group Discussion (FGD)**

Kothari (1984) asserts that Focused Group Discussion involves the researcher asking questions orally to get information from the respondents. 640 respondents in this case were standard seven pupils who were involved in the focused group discussion. With the aid of the Social Studies teachers, the researcher selected a quiet classroom and involved the respondents by asking them questions and immediately recording the information. Focused Group Discussion has the following advantages, it saves time as the researcher records the raw data immediately, the researcher gets data from the respondent which is true data, and the researcher can reframe the questions if the respondent does not get the questions properly. The procedure of Focused Group Discussion is simple method of collecting data. A copy of the focused group discussion guide appears in this thesis as Appendix D.

## **2.8 Validity and Reliability of the Research Instruments**

### **2.8.1 Validity of the Research Instruments**

Bishop (1985) asserts that validity implies the evaluation instrument measuring what is set out to measure. The researcher did piloting in the neighbouring district, which is Mutomo to ascertain validity. Mutomo district was found appropriate for piloting as it shares same

characteristics with Kitui District. The questionnaires were administered to teachers of Social Studies in Mutomo Primary School. The Focused Group Discussion was undertaken with 8 pupils from standard seven in the schools. The feedback obtained from piloting was used to improve on the instruments like in cases of unclear wording and ambiguity. Validity was also ensured through review of the instruments by the supervisors and colleagues in the department of Education, Curriculum, Instruction and Educational Media who ensured that the research instruments are valid for data collection. Moi University content validity was ascertained by developing the items in the instruments based on the research objectives.

### **2.8.2 Reliability of the Research Instruments**

Orodho and Kombo (2002) state that reliability is the measure of internal consistency of the results obtained from a sampled population. This usually determines the degree of stability by comparing the results of repeated measurements. The researcher administered test-retest to standard seven pupils by administering the same instruments twice to the same group of pupils after an interval of two months to confirm the reliability of the instrument. The research employed Karl Pearson's r-test for a threshold value of  $r=0.5$ . The data from the tests-retest experiment was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Scientist to produce an r value of 0.7 and thus the data was deemed reliable considering the threshold value of 0.5.

### **2.8 Data Collection Procedures**

The researcher obtained an introductory letter from the school of education Moi University which facilitated procurement of the research permit. The researcher sought permission from the Ministry of Education, which was issue a permit, to be presented to the DC, DEO and head teachers at school level to access the respondents. Data was collected through administration of questionnaire involving techniques such as self-administration and delivery. The questionnaires were received back and recorded for analysis. Interviews were conducted in places and time convenient to the interviewees.

### **2.9.1 Data Analysis Procedures**

The study adopted descriptive survey study so as to attain the desired objectives of the study. Descriptive statistical techniques involved tabulations, percentages and frequencies. Then researcher then used SPSS computer programme for data analysis purposes. Data from focused group discussion (FGD) was analysed qualitatively.

### **2.9.2 Ethical Considerations**

The researcher maintained professional ethics and good conduct throughout the study. The researcher made sure that he maintained confidentiality at all times. The respondents were asked not to include their names anywhere on the questionnaire. The participants in the study were also voluntary. Informed consent from the subjects was sought. Reasonable measures were taken to protect the subjects psychologically.

### **2.9.3 Chapter Summary**

This chapter has discussed the study area, the research design, the target population of the study, sampling design and sample size, data collection procedures, ethical considerations, research instruments, reliability and validity of research instruments, and data analysis procedures. The next chapter will discuss the data presentation, analysis and interpretation.

## **3.0 Discussion of findings**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the selected factors influencing the teaching and learning of Social Studies curriculum for upper public primary school in Kitui District, Kitui County, Kenya. The major findings of this study will be highlighted, discussed and pegged to earlier studies. The similarities and differences between the findings of this study and those of the earlier studies will be stated and explanations for the findings offered.

### **3.1 Pupils Perception towards Social Studies curriculum in Kenya**

The selected pupils were interviewed on methods used by their teachers in teaching Social Studies. Majority of the pupils were for the question and answer method. Pupils further showed that teachers rarely used class discussion, storytelling and debate. A few pupils indicated that their teachers never used games and simulation, field trips and excursions, project work group work, role play, debate and demonstrations. These findings are in collaboration with results supported by the African Social and Environmental Programme (1993) which looked at curricula, learning and assessment in primary schools in Kenya and Uganda and found out that most teachers and tutors used questions and answer, lecturing and note-taking more than any other technique.

The findings of this study are in line with another study conducted by Salamu in Nigeria and reported in ASESP (1994) which sought to investigate the problems of teaching Social Studies in secondary grammar schools in Ibadan established that Social Studies teachers relied on lecture as their major teaching method. Further findings done by Ayot (1986) as reported in ASESP (1994) found out that the lecture method was commonly used by teachers in the instructional process. The pupils were also asked the same question to gauge their perception towards learning Social Studies and the responses show that majority of them have positive perception towards the subject. Most of the pupils were for the opinion that they enjoyed learning Social Studies with regards to who teaches Social Studies, with the minority having the opinion that they will choose a career based on the topics learned in Social Studies (Bold, et al., 2009).

These results differ with the findings of another study reported in Ogula (1994) Shaughnessy and Haladyna reviewed a body of literature on student's perceptions towards Social Studies in United States of America from 1949 to 1982 which found that for most pupils at all grade level,

Social Studies is one the least interested and most irrelevant subjects in the school curriculum as reported in Ongus (2003). The results of this study are supported by another study by Ongus (2003) and Chuck (2009) which sought to evaluate the overall objective of encouraging and supporting member countries to introduce, expand and improve their Social Studies programmes found out that many teachers in Kenya, Zambia and Botswana held a positive perception towards Social Studies but lacked the skill of inquiry approach that is recommended for teaching Social Studies (Ogula, 1994).