

Assessment of The Challenges and Opportunities of Teaching Geography in The Integrated Social Studies Curriculum:

A Case of Mwandu District.

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Abstract

The Zambian school curriculum was revised in 2013 where most subjects including Civics, History and Geography were combined into one subject (Social Studies). From 2013, no study has been conducted on the challenges or opportunities encountered in the implementation of Social Studies. Therefore, the central purpose of this study was to assess the challenges and opportunities of teaching Geography as a component of Social Studies in the revised curriculum in Mwandu district.

The objectives were to; ascertain the opportunities of teaching Geography as a component of Social Studies in the revised curriculum; examine the attitude and competences of teachers towards the teaching of Geography as a component of Social Studies in the revised curriculum and to establish the challenges faced by teachers and learners in handling an integrated Social Studies curriculum.

This study utilized a descriptive case study design which offers an analysis and evaluation of the chosen phenomenon, its implementation, outcomes, including strengths and weaknesses. The respondents for the study were 94 in total which comprised 78 pupils, 12 teachers and 4 Head teachers from four (4) sampled schools.

Interview schedules and questionnaires were the main data collection instruments.

Descriptive statistics was used to analyze quantitative data with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16 software. Qualitative data collected was analyzed thematically.

The findings of the study indicated that the opportunities of teaching Geography in the integrated Social Studies curriculum include localized curriculum, better coverage of Geography content and effectiveness of the subject delivery. It was also found that a large number of teachers never received training to teach an integrated Social Studies curriculum. The challenges established in this study include lack of teachers and learners' resource books, lack of trained teachers in Social Studies and inadequate time allocated for teaching.

The study recommended that the Ministry of General Education should spearhead CPDs for teachers, monitor the implementation of the new curriculum and procure more teaching and learning materials for effective implementation of the curriculum.

Keywords: *Attitudes, Curriculum, Integration, Junior Secondary Education, Competence, opportunities.*

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

The movement towards curriculum integration emanated in the early 20th century when John Dewey questioned the purpose of education and criticised what he saw as the prevailing educational environment (Drake & Burns, 2004). Dewey stood for a situation whereby schools provided a platform where learners got acquainted with democratic principles. Similarly, Herbert Spencer in his writings tried to identify trends in the classroom and their subsequent psychological effects on students. He, together with other philosophers debated about the benefits of teaching a core curriculum versus a discipline-based approach. It emerged that integrated curriculum was an innovative method to teaching (Dewey, 2004).

From the above debates, various researchers started looking at the significance of integrated curriculum. It was in the 1930s when a study was done to understand the impact of integrated curriculum. In the United States of America researchers found positive implications of the integrated curriculum as to isolated subject classrooms (Boss, 2011).

Various definitions have been given on integrated curriculum. According to Drake, Reid and Kolohon, (2014) an integrated study is one in which children broadly explore knowledge in various subjects related to certain aspects of their environment. The knowledge acquired is developed and used in more than one subject area. The term integrated curriculum is oftenly used with the concept of interdisciplinary curriculum which refers to a curriculum organization which cuts across subject areas (Voogt & Roblin, 2012).

Whereas Social Studies was adopted as a formal school discipline to enable the young generation adapt and adjust to the situation and demands of

rapidly changing society, research findings have reported problems regarding the methodology used to teach this subject by teachers (Rafique, 2014).

Like many other countries, Zambia started a move towards educational reforms. In 1996, the country began implementing the curriculum reforms recommended in the national education policy document, (MOE, 1996). The document proposed a new curriculum in which the subjects to be taught and learned in Secondary schools were to be integrated and reduced from fragmented learning areas (MOE, 1996). In response to this policy direction, the Directorate of Curriculum and Standards through the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC), embarked on the revision of the entire School syllabuses. The revision saw the emergence of the following subject areas: Business Studies, English Language, Computer Studies, Integrated Science, Social Studies, Mathematics, Religious Education, Zambian Languages and foreign Languages (CDC, 2013). It was in line with this reform that Geography, Civics and History were integrated into Social Studies.

This study was undertaken since the new integrated curriculum approach was introduced in the Zambian schools in 2013, the opportunities and challenges of teaching geography in the new curriculum have not been assessed especially in the research area. The study was conducted in Mwandu District at four selected schools namely UCZ Mwandu Day Secondary school, UCZ Mwandu Primary school, Ilute Yeta Secondary school and Mabumbu Primary school.

1.2 Statement of the problem.

Following the 2012-2013 basic education curriculum reforms, Geography at junior secondary school level is now being taught as part of Social studies (CDC, 2013). Many

studies have been conducted on integration of subjects in the Zambian school curricula. One of these was done by Mbulo (2015) on Lecturers' attitude towards team teaching in Social, Spiritual and Moral Education (SSME) at Kitwe College of education. It came out that curriculum collaboration effective communication, information sharing, coordination; problem solving and negotiation skills were displayed.

Additionally, some teachers and learners in Zambia particularly in the research area have argued that learning Geography at Junior Secondary level can be better in its distinctive form than in an integrated approach (Global e-Schools and Communities Initiative GESCI, 2017). Because of this standpoint, there has been some degree of confusion between the supervisors (Education Standards Officers and Headteachers), teachers and pupils on the implementation of the curriculum change to the integration of Geography in Social Studies (Mwandi District Education Board Report, 2016). In other words, the challenges and opportunities of teaching Geography as a component of Social studies have not clear. What comes out from the above studies is that they mostly looked at the attitudes of educators towards Social Studies and effectiveness of the curriculum, leaving issues like opportunities and challenges, a gap which this study sought to address.

1.3 General objective

To assess the challenges and opportunities of teaching Geography as a component of Social Studies in the revised curriculum in Mwandi district.

1.4 Specific objectives

To achieve the purpose of this study, three specific objectives guided the research process:

- i. To ascertain the opportunities of teaching geography as a component of social studies in the revised curriculum.
- ii. To examine the attitude and competences of teachers towards the teaching of Geography as a component of social studies in the revised curriculum.
- iii. To establish the challenges faced by teachers and learners in handling an integrated Social studies curriculum.

1.5 Research questions

The following were the research questions for the study:

- i. What are the opportunities of teaching geography as a component of social studies in the revised curriculum?
- ii. What kind of attitudes and competences do teachers have towards the teaching of Geography as part of social studies?
- iii. What challenges are faced by teachers and learners in handling an integrated social studies curriculum?

1.6 Significance of the study

The study is significant because its findings would provide information on the challenges and opportunities of teaching geography as a component of social studies in the revised curriculum. It would also give suggestions on how the teaching of Geography as part of Social studies in the junior secondary school curriculum might be improved. This information might contribute to the body of knowledge to be used by CDC, teacher educators, Education Standards Officers and teachers to enhance teaching and learning in this subject area in Zambia. Moreover, the study provides a cornerstone for reaching vision 2030 for diversified education curricula responsive to the

knowledge, values, attitudes and practical skill needs of learners.

1.7 Theoretical framework

This study used the evaluation model. The Context, Input, Process and Product (CIPP) evaluation model was devised by Guba, and further developed by Stufflebeam, in the 1960s (Stufflebeam, 2008). The main purpose of this evaluation is to measure and assess the workability of a program. In this respect, the model is necessary to be used on assessing the challenges and opportunities of teaching Geography as a component of Social Studies in the revised curriculum.

According to the CIPP model there are four kinds of decisions, called planning, structuring, implementing, and recycling, which respectively are served by context, input, process, and product evaluation. It is a comprehensive structure enabling to evaluate programs, projects, principles and evaluation systems (Stufflebeam and Coryn, 2014).

In contextual evaluations, the researcher studies the needs, problems, and gains and opportunities, and related contextual conditions and dynamics. Curriculum specialists use this stage for establishing targets and priorities and monitor how the curriculum outcomes correspond to the determined needs of learners and the society at large. The targets, issues, the availability of contact time, the education periods, and the time schedule may be seen as examination spheres that may evaluate the effectiveness of Geography.

In evaluating of *inputs*, the evaluators pay attention to all resources allocated for the meeting of the targeted needs and achieving the targets. In other words, inputs are focused on the source involved in helping the achievement of programme goal and objective. Therefore, input

evaluation must include work plan, equipment, funds, and personnel resources, at the least. Program-based alternative approaches, availability of teaching and learning resources, and availability of qualified teachers may also be considered in this scope (Stufflebeam, *ibid*). In this study, the input evaluation shall guide in establishing the extent to which the Geography subject can be taught separately or integrated in the Social Studies curriculum and see whether it meets the needs of the learners. It will be at this level that the changes that have taken place in the Social Studies/Geography syllabus will be established.

As another component of the CIPP model, *process* evaluation helps to monitor and report on the application of program activities. The evaluators make feedbacks in the implementation process of a program, and upon completion of the program, report on the continuation of the program as targeted and required (Stufflebeam, *ibid*). In the process evaluation dimension of an instructional design, the activities; and the used instructional methods and techniques may be examined. In this case, the researcher finds the basis to evaluate how the Geography component of Social Studies has been taught to the attainment of the objectives and goals of Social Studies in relation to challenges faced, and come up with recommendations related to the continuation of the course.

The product evaluation at the end of the program serves as determination and review of all the program achievements. The key questions of the product evaluation are as follows: Has the program achieved its targets? Has it handled the targeted needs and problems successfully? What are the positive and negatives effects of the program? In the end, questions evaluating all of the activities and the investment decisions may be reconsidered by

these data. In this study, the learners, teachers, education authorities and stakeholders will be able to conclude whether there are benefits or challenges in the existing curriculum.

1.8 Delimitation

The study was confined within the four (4) rural schools in Mwandia District. This is the population that provided meaningful responses to the research questions at hand.

1.9 Operational definition of terms.

Attitude: In this study, the word refers to the views and opinions of head teachers, teachers and pupils on the teaching and learning of Geography as part of Social studies.

Competence: refers to the capability of teachers to teach Geography as a component of Social studies.

Curriculum: a prescribed programme of study for learners in institutions of learning.

Integration: the term refers to the teaching and learning whereby similar content, topics and themes from different subjects (Geography and Social studies) are planned as one and taught together in one syllabus.

Junior Secondary Education: the formal education provided at Grades 8 and 9.

Optional Subjects: Subjects where learners have an opportunity to choose what they want to study.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 OPPORTUNITIES OF TEACHING GEOGRAPHY IN AN INTEGRATED SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM

A study by Dhandhanika (2016) on the infusion of Geography in Social Studies in Canada found that learners who were taught from two or more subjects within a single unit had multiple opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in a range of settings. It also came out that learners were able to develop critical

thinking abilities. Based on the ideas of the American and European educators, the purpose of integrating the curriculum has been to create children who will be able to use the disciplines to advance democratic thought and life. The other study carried out by Ibrahimova (2017) on the implementation of the integrated curriculum in Kazakhstani secondary schools brought out a number of opportunities. One of the merits mentioned was the development of a holistic view of learning where learners divide a particular topic into meaningful concepts. Bridges (2014) agrees with Ibrahimova (*ibid*) that an integrated curriculum promotes the development of learners' critical thinking skills to prepare them to the demands of rapidly changing world in new society members.

The studies undertaken by Guo, (2012) in China revealed that integration of disciplines in Social Sciences enables learners to have a deep understanding of their surroundings and making connections between the learnt material and their experience. Many teachers in the study also mentioned that integrated curriculum implementation gives learners an opportunity to understand learning phenomena from multiple perspectives.

The post-independence era in the 1960s saw some African countries seeking ways to change the colonial educational systems to make them more suitable to the needs of new nations (Sears and Hughes, 2006). This was realized in the late 1960s when eleven nations founded the African Social Studies Programme (ASSP) to monitor the development of social studies curriculum and instruction in the continent (Thornton, 2005). A conference held at Queens College, Oxford concluded that a new approach based on integration of the traditional subjects (History, Geography, and Civics), was needed (Report on a Conference of African Educators, EDC and CREDO, 1968).

Oluniyi and Olufemi (2013) researched on curriculum integration in Social Studies as predictor of academic performance in Social Sciences in Nigeria. The findings indicated that subjects like Geography in the integrated curriculum was considered more effective on learners compared to single subject approach. Similarly, Adesina (2013) in a study conducted to assess the Social Studies curriculum of Secondary School in Southwestern Nigeria revealed that a good Social Studies Curriculum is one which helps young individuals to fully develop into adults by relating them to their society through appropriate knowledge and experiences selected from the Social Sciences.

Boikhutsol, et al, (2013) conducted a study to investigate the perceptions of the role of Botswana's Social Studies teachers at secondary school level in fostering citizenship competencies and skills. The research findings indicated that teachers generally perceive their subject as critical in helping learners become responsible, well informed and self-reliant citizens who can function independently.

In Zambia, the purpose behind the integrated curriculum is because learners at lower and middle levels of education view life holistically as opposed to viewing life in compartmentalised segments (CDC, 2013). The other reason for opting for the integrated curriculum is that it allows the education system to be less content-based and more skills-based in approach and emphasis. It helps learners acquire life skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, decision-making and self-reliance. Furthermore, it will help pupils to see links between different learning areas such as to understand that what they learn has meaning outside the school; relate new learning to previous learning; and transfer skills from one area of learning to another.

Samwimbila (2015) conducted a study aimed at establishing teachers' attitudes towards the implementation of the revised Social Studies curriculum in selected secondary schools in Mufumbwe District, Zambia. The researcher used descriptive design in a qualitative approach with twenty-five (25) participants who were purposively sampled from five (5) selected secondary schools in Mufumbwe District. In the study, it was discovered that the rationale for introducing Social Studies at Secondary School was to focus on issues and problems relevant to the learners' experiences in the changing environment. Besides, the Ministry of General Education thought of integration as an effective way of introducing new career pathways such a practical and pre-vocational subject, creating the vocational orientation in schools (CDC, 2013).

2.2 ATTITUDES AND COMPETENCES OF TEACHERS TOWARDS THE TEACHING OF GEOGRAPHY IN AN INTEGRATED SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM

A study by Köksal (2013) in Turkey revealed that the general competencies for the teaching profession has 6 main competency areas: Personal and professional values, professional development, knowing the student, the process of learning and teaching, monitoring and evaluating learning and development, curriculum and content knowledge. The findings showed that pre-service teachers do possess general teaching competencies and develop a positive attitude towards the profession.

Al Bataineh and Anderson (2015) carried out a research on Jordanian Social Studies teachers' perceptions of competency needed for implementing technology in the classroom. The results showed no differences in teachers' perceptions of the competency needed with

technology between basic upper and secondary social studies teachers. The lack of technology resources and a lack of time were possible reasons that hinder teachers from implementing the subject in these schools.

However, an explorative study by Zandt, et al (2017) on the state of Social Studies teacher preparation in the United States found that most current social studies education graduates remained ill-prepared for teaching; lacking the necessary tools to add substantial value to student achievement through their teaching practice. Many teachers lack necessary content knowledge and pedagogical experience, leading to high turnover in the profession.

In the African context, Chiodo and Byford (2004) conducted a study inquiring into the attitudes, learners possessed regarding Social Studies and revealed that the attitudes have unique influence on the Social Studies curriculum. Similarly, the findings from other studies indicate that the decisions of what to teach children under Social Studies education often shift and are dependent on the influence of the conception of the teacher about the subject (Rumzan, et al 2010). On the other hand, Abie (2017) in an investigation of qualified Social Studies teachers in post-primary schools in Rivers State showed that those who studied (specialized) other subjects other than Social Studies were drawn to teach the subject because of persistent dearth of Social Studies Teachers. They were not given the right orientation and right concepts of Social Studies and they found it strange and difficult to grasp the real meaning of the course. These findings revealed that most of the teachers who taught Social Studies were not Social Studies specialists and so their teaching and learning activities were dull and uninteresting.

A research by Negumbo (2016) on the underperformance in Social Studies in Grade 5-7 in Namibian primary schools found that the participating schools in her study were failing to implement the integrated curriculum because teachers were not qualified to handle the subject. Similarly, in a study done by Jotia and Mtlale (2011) in Botswana, teachers who did not undergo formal training in Social Studies were not aware of any special teaching and learning strategies to teach Social Studies. Although these studies were done in Namibia and Botswana, the question does arise as to whether this might also be the case in the Zambian context.

Mbulu (2015) in a study of Lecturers' attitude towards team teaching in Social, Spiritual and Moral Education in the Primary Colleges of Education noted that the implementation of an integrated curriculum in Primary Colleges of Education led to a major shift from traditional solo teaching to Team Teaching. The results of the study showed that lecturers had mixed views on the integrated curriculum in that they said they had no problem with the integrated curriculum and yet they also lamented that the same curriculum was challenging to the students. Based on the foregoing findings, the study recommends that Ministry of Education provides the necessary materials and infrastructure to facilitate the use of different forms of teaching which is one of the teaching methodologies and teaching strategies of the 21st century.

A related study by Lufungulo (2015) on Primary School Teachers' Attitudes towards ICT integration in Social Studies in Lusaka and Katete Districts found that the teachers' attitudes are responsible for the success or failure of a new innovation in education. It also came out clear that primary school teachers held positive views towards the integration of ICT in the

teaching and learning of Social Studies. This was mainly attributed to the training they had undergone on the usage of ICTs.

The findings of Samwimbila (*ibid*) shows that the teacher's attitude towards the implementation of Social Studies Revised curriculum was somehow negative due to the misconception and how the teachers felt to be sidelined in the development and implementation of the revised curriculum. However, some teachers supported the introduction of the new revised Social Studies subject at Junior Secondary school, stating that, it was a good idea as it helped to train teachers to work as a team.

Another study by Kabombwe and Mulenga (2019) about a competency-based curriculum for Zambian primary and secondary schools, indicated that a number of teachers were not competent enough to handle the new curriculum. Similarly, Mulenga (2015) observed in his study that most of the lecturers who were preparing teachers in public universities in Zambia taught in secondary or primary schools many years ago and had a very scanty knowledge of what was taught there. This is likely to affect the teaching of Social Studies where Geography, Civics and History are combined.

2.3 CHALLENGES FACED BY TEACHERS AND LEARNERS IN HANDLING AN INTEGRATED SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM

The implementation of an integrated Social Studies curriculum has come with its challenges in most studies done in global contexts. A study done by Murat (2014) on the problems related to the teaching of social studies and suggestions for solution in Ankara used qualitative research in descriptive survey model on 12 participants. The researcher found that among other issues,

the course books prepared by private publishing firms were more detailed whereas the books prepared by Ministry of National Education were more suitable for the structure of the new program. Most teachers supporting that opinion thought that publishing firms' concern was because of the questions students encountered in central exams. In other words, the resource books used promoted rote learning.

There were challenges in terms of congested classrooms and inadequate time allocated for teaching. An integrated curriculum implementation requires sufficient amount of time necessary for preparation. What could lead to inadequate time for planning is a huge teaching load. In addition, teachers' general opinion was that teaching skills was problematic relatively to teaching concept and value; and teaching value was problematic relatively to teaching concept (Murat, *ibid*).

Moreover, a study carried out by Ibraimova (*ibid*) on the implementation of the integrated curriculum in Kazakhstani secondary schools brought out a number of challenges. The researcher noted the lack of instructional resources as a drawback in the implementation of the integrated curriculum. Some schools in Kazakhstani had limited number of instructional materials and equipment such as books and up-to-date library. Consequently, teachers who had a resource deficit reverted to old methods of teaching since it was difficult for teachers to implement integrated curriculum.

MacMath (2011) noted that those who implemented the new curriculum did not fully aware of how to integrate it into the classroom. Differences in perception of what implementation looks like arose often between teachers and administrators. Moreover, teachers that implement an integrated curriculum need to manage co-planning by rearranging their timetables and synchronizing course plans. In

other words, teachers do not always have sufficient time to plan lessons effectively because of their workload at schools.

Another impediment discovered by Shankar (2014) in his study on the challenges of shifting to an integrated curriculum in a Caribbean medical school was on the number of questions in the integrated exams. In most Caribbean schools the dominant method of examination was multiple choice questions. In a discipline-based system the subject faculty has full freedom regarding the number of questions they could incorporate in the exam. With an integrated curriculum the distribution of multiple-choice questions (MCQs) among different subjects becomes an important issue. In addition to MCQs, short answer questions (SAQs) and assignments are also incorporated. Often the number of questions remains a difficult issue to resolve.

In a related study by Ntumi (2016), the challenges that pre-school teachers face in the implementation of the early childhood curriculum in the Cape Coast Metropolis revealed that most pre-school teachers did not properly deliver the subject content due to inadequate teaching and learning materials. The study's recommendations were that private proprietors and government authorities overseeing the pre-school program should provide enough learning and teaching resources for successful implementation of the curriculum. However, this study did not show the teachers attitude towards the implementation of the revised social studies curriculum at junior secondary but attempted to close the research gap

Moreover, Omondi's (2014) study on factors influencing implementation of curriculum in public primary schools in Ukwala division of Siaya County, Kenya found a serious shortage

of teaching and learning materials on curriculum. The findings of the study noted a serious shortage of teaching and learning materials on curriculum. A book ratio of one to five (one book to five pupils) was predominant in the findings. The findings in Ukwala Division are in line with the findings of Mutai (2011) in rift Valley provinces Kenya, who noted a serious shortage of text books in the public primary schools in the province.

Meziobi et al (2012) investigated Social Studies teachers' capability for effective implementation of the Universal Based Education (UBE) in Junior Secondary Schools in Orlu Education Zone of Imo State of Nigeria. The results from the study revealed that Social Studies teachers were not adequately aware of the objectives of UBE. In addition, teacher training institutions did not prepare Social Studies teachers sufficiently for the implementation of the UBE programme. Furthermore, the results showed that their teaching did not produce appreciable creativity in the learners, and teachers did not use information and communication technologies (ICT) in the discharge of instruction as they were not ICT-skilled.

In efforts to revise the school curriculum to the changing educational needs, the Ministry of Education in Zambia introduced a new curriculum in which civics, geography and history were bonded into one subject called Social Studies. To add on, the curriculum revision was conducted in an effort to enhance pupil performance at secondary school level. However, the purpose of integrating the subjects in Social Studies to enhance pupil performance seems to be defeated because the recently released 2017 Grade 9 results indicated 30% pass rate in Social Studies. Some scholars have argued that teacher's negative attitude and reluctance to accept change and make the

necessary adjustments in their work as individuals and schools is likely to negatively affect the smooth implementation of this curriculum reform (*ibid.*).

According to Kelly (1999), Zambian schools had limited number of instructional materials and equipment, such as “books, writing material, science apparatus, and inadequate or out of-date libraries” (as cited in Mkandawire, 2010). He stressed that classrooms were overcrowded, which caused students to share books and other materials with one another. Teacher effectiveness was limited and they were not able to pay attention to students because of the large number of pupils in classes. The supply and distribution of textbooks from ministry headquarters also proved to be a stumbling block in the implementation of new integrated curriculum.

Siamwimbila (*ibid.*)’s recent research echoed that all participants in his study agreed that they were experiencing problems with the implementation of Social Studies at Junior Secondary school. The problems they were experiencing ranged from implementation, lack of resources, inadequate training and uncertainty on teaching contents. Lack of trained teachers, materials and knowledge of the subject content and especially the aspect of monitoring was other major challenges face by the teachers. Besides, the teachers noted that, the timing in the implementation of the new revised Social Studies curriculum was not okay. The teachers felt that, the Ministry of Education just imposed the implementation of the new revised Social Studies curriculum without taking into consideration the views and aspiration of the teacher’s country wide.

2. 4 Personal critique and gaps of the study

The researcher firmly believes that as educators we need to stress the importance of students

starting with a common base of factual information about separate subjects and contemporary experience. This is important because in the current Zambian curriculum, learners are exposed to the integrated Social Studies at Junior level, thereafter taught History, Geography and Civics separately at senior level. In other words, the researcher agrees with Zevin (2000) that learners should learn subjects in separate entities as they appear at high school level.

The researcher has also taken note of curriculum changes in some countries especially in social sciences. Ross, Mathison and Vinson (2013) pointed out that the implementation of statewide standards, social studies advocates in many states can no longer count on flexibility or rely on opportunistic lessons drawn from the supposed needs and fleeting interests of students and teachers. This position favors the return of subject-centered models. While countries continue to cling to social studies in name, there seems to be a significant dent in the eclectic social studies. Given this, it is not surprising that social studies have been racked by intellectual battles and periodic changes over its purpose, content, and pedagogy since its very inception as a school subject in the early part of the 20th century. Therefore, social studies curriculum has historically been defined by a lack of strong consensus and contentiousness over its goals and methods (Jorgensen, *ibid.*).

The debate over the nature, purpose, and content of the social studies curriculum continues today, with competing groups variously arguing for a social issues approach, the disciplinary study of History and Geography/Civics. However, there has been some agreement that the purpose of Social Studies is to prepare the young generation so that they possess the knowledge, values, and skills needed for active participation in society (Jorgensen, *ibid.*), but the content and

pedagogies of Social Studies education have been greatly affected by various social and political agendas. Thus, it is impossible to teach Social Studies according to any other approach without simultaneously maintaining some structural comprehension of the knowledge and modes of inquiry of the various academic disciplines. There are, however, competing and dynamic possibilities such that teachers, and students may each possess a unique orientation.

Social studies teaching should not be reduced to an exercise in implementing a set of activities pre-defined by policy makers or potential scholars. Rather teachers should be actively engaged in considering the perennial curriculum question—what knowledge is of most worth? Thinking of curriculum not as disciplinary subject matter, but as something experienced in situations is an alternative. Therefore, previous research had not looked in details the kind of problems or opportunities that are confronted by and what are the perceptions of the teachers of Social Studies concerning the teaching of Geography. In Zambia too, the study has not been undertaken particularly in the research area. This is what the study focuses on.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design

The researcher used a case study design. Among the types of case studies, the researcher specifically used descriptive case study design. According to Denscombe (2003), a descriptive case study design offers an analysis and evaluation of the chosen phenomenon, its implementation, and the outcomes, including strengths and weaknesses, tradeoffs, and lessons learned. In this study, the researcher assessed a programme being the curriculum under which Geography was infused in Social Studies. It also offers flexibility in combining a vast of methods

(qualitative and quantitative) in sampling, data collection, data validation and analysis.

3.2 Research sites

The research was conducted in Mwandia District of western province. The district shares borders with Namibia to the South-West, Sesheke District to the west and Kazungula to the North-East. The researcher chose the area because of his familiarity with the region which enhanced better management of the study.

3.3 Target population

The study population was composed of school administrators, heads of departments (Social Sciences), teachers of Social Studies and pupils from grade 8 and 9 from Mabumbu primary, UCZ Mwandia Primary, UCZ Mwandia Secondary and Ilute Yeta Secondary schools.

3.4 Study sample

The respondents of the study were drawn from four (4) schools. These include 78 pupils, 12 teachers and HODs, and 4 Head teachers. The total sample was 94 respondents.

3.5 sampling techniques

The researcher used purposive and simple random sampling procedures in selecting respondents for the study. The teachers, HODs and administrators were purposively selected on the basis of being directly involved on learners' well being. Simple random sampling method was used to select pupils.

3.6 Data collection

Secondary data for the research was obtained through the use of sources such as public documents and past researches. Primary data was collected from the field using questionnaires and interview schedules. The instruments supplemented each other to close the gap which might have been left if one instrument only was used.

3.7 Research Instruments

3. 7. 1. Interview Schedule: The researcher used semi-structured interviews to gather data from head teachers. The questions were designed in such a way as to elicit subjective views of the research participants.

3. 7. 2. Questionnaires

The questionnaires were administered to Heads of Departments, teachers and pupils. According to Kothari (2004), one of the merits of the questionnaire is freedom from the interviewer's bias as answers are in respondents' own words and that it gives respondents adequate time to give well thought answers.

3.8 Reliability

Reliability is essentially a synonym for consistency and replicability over time, over instruments, and over groups of respondents. The reliability of the questionnaires was tested by distributing them to four teachers who were not to be included in the main study. This was to help the researcher know whether the questions in the instruments were clear.

3.9 Validity

Validity was addressed through member checking, depth, richness and scope of the data. Content validity was established by seeking judgments from the supervisors who assisted in developing and revising the research instruments. The supervisors provided feedback and their recommendations were incorporated in the final questionnaire.

3.10 Pilot Testing

The interviews were pre-tested to a selected sample that was similar to the actual sample to be used in the study in Mwanzi District of Zambia. The researcher selected two schools in the district. The two schools that were used in pilot testing did not take part in the main study.

3. 11 Data analysis

Quantitative data collected from questionnaires was processed by coding the closed ended questions and entering the data using SPSS

Version 16 to run descriptive analysis such as frequencies, percentages and pie charts. Open ended questions, interview schedules and observation guide were analyzed thematically.

3. 12 Ethical considerations.

In addition to seeking permission, in advance, from the DEBS office, anonymity was promised to all participants. The participants were given adequate information on the aims of the research. Additionally, the researcher provided the participants with copies of informed consents. All participants were assured that the data which they would give would be treated with confidentiality.

3. 13 Limitation of the Study

The limitation of this study relates to the duration of the fieldwork, which lasted for only six months. Taking into account the complexity of the phenomenon investigated in this research, more longitudinal studies are needed to address this limitation.

Finally, the information depended on self-reported data and the responses of participants provided were based entirely on the attitudes of the teachers and on their perceptions of their competencies; therefore, the results might be affected by the teachers' social desirability to provide desired information rather than accurate information.

4. PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS.

4.1 Opportunities of teaching and learning Geography as a component of Social Studies in the revised curriculum

4.1.1. Comprehension of new concepts in learning Geography in the integrated Social Studies lessons

The learners were asked if they understood the new concepts of learning Geography in the integrated Social Studies curriculum. The responses were as follows in table 1 below:

Table 1. Learners’ understanding of the new concepts of learning Geography in the integrated Social Studies

	Scale	Frequency	(%)
Valid			
	Strongly agree	19	24.36
	Agree	48	61.54
	Strongly disagree	3	3.85
	Disagree	7	8.97
	Total	77	98.72
Missing		1	1.28
Total		78	100

Responses from table 1 were varied. 61.54% agreed that they understood the new concepts, 24.36% strongly agreed, 8.97% disagreed, 3.85% strongly disagreed while 1.28 % did not enter their responses. Therefore, learners were better in terms of comprehending the new concepts in the integrated Social Studies curriculum.

4.1.2. Performance of learners in social studies assessments.

In relation to how learners perform in Social studies assessments, figure 1 shows the responses from the learners.

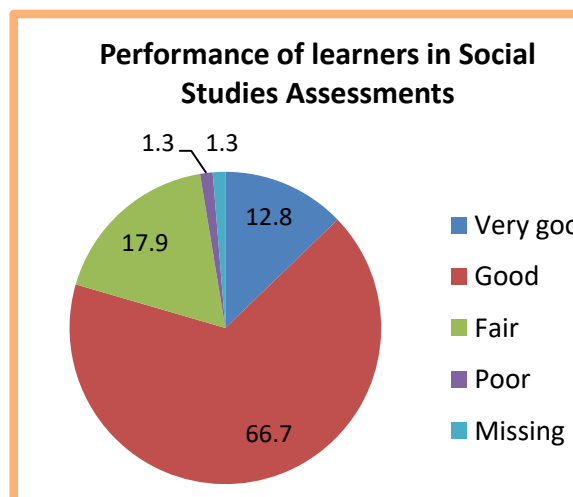


Fig. 1

The above figure indicates that 52 (66.7%) out of the 78 learners performed good in Social Studies assessments. 14 of the learners representing 17.9% performed fairly, 10 which is 12.8% did very good while only 1 believed that he/she recorded poor results. This item had only 1 missing score at 1.3%.

Teachers were also asked to indicate how learners perform in Social Studies assessments. The responses are indicated on table 2 below.

Table 2 Performance of learners in Social Studies assessments. (response from teachers)

Pass range	Frequency	(%)
Less than 5%	0	0
5-10%	0	0
10-20%	5	41.67
20-50%	5	41.67
over 50%	2	16.67
Total	12	100

The findings showed that 5 (41.67%) teachers responded that learners performed below 50%.

Only 2 (16.67%) indicated that learners scored above 50 %. Therefore, the majority of the respondents believed that learners did not perform well in the assessments. Additionally, data was collected through the Headteachers' interviews about the performance of learners in the Social Studies examinations for the last three years (2015-2017).

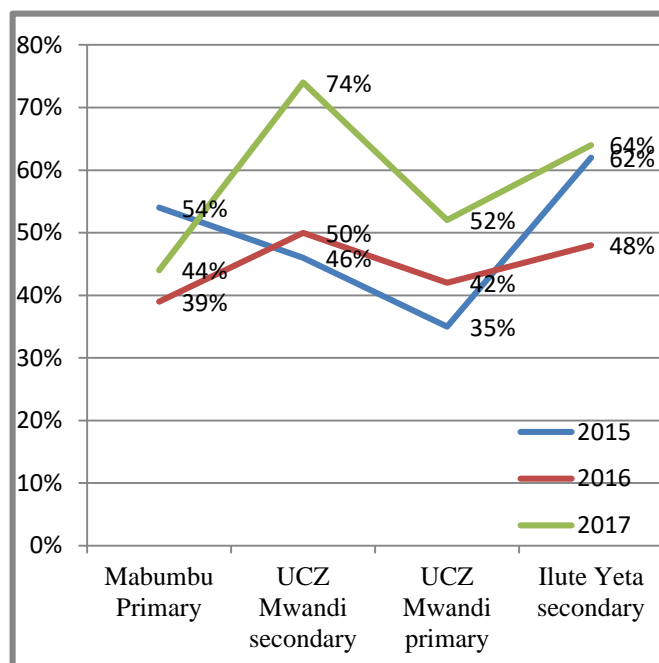


Fig. 2

From figure 2, the result analysis indicates that in 2015, Ilute Yeta Secondary school recorded the highest pass rate at 62%. The year 2016 saw UCZ Mwandi Secondary topping with 50% followed by Ilute Yeta Secondary at 48%. In 2017 the highest score was 74% from UCZ Mwandi Secondary.

4.1.3. Coverage of Geography content in Social studies lessons

The researcher also intended to find out the views from the teachers how the coverage of Geography content in Social Studies was. The details of the findings are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Coverage of Geography content in Social Studies lessons

Coverage	Frequency	(%)
Very good	0	0
Good	8	66.67
Fair	3	25
Poor	1	8.33
Total	12	100

Table 3 above shows that the majority of teachers 8 (66.67%) responded that the coverage was good while 3 (25%) of them believed that it was fair. It was only 1 teacher (8.33%) who indicated that the coverage was poor.

4.2 Attitudes of teachers and learners towards the in teaching and learning of Geography in integrated Social Studies.

4.2.1. Teachers' experience and training in Social Studies

Teachers who are the implementers of the new integrated curriculum in class were asked how competent they were to teach the new integrated curriculum. This is what they had to say in response to the question:

Table 4. Teachers' experience in Social Studies.

Response	Frequency	(%)
Yes	4	33.33
No	8	66.67
Total	12	100

From the findings above, 8 (66.67%) of the teachers lacked experience in teaching the integrated Social Studies. Additionally, responses from the Headteachers' interviews were similar to the views on table 4.4 in that there were few teachers from the sampled

schools who were competent to teach Social Studies. The researcher sought to find out why teachers lacked experience and competency to teach Social Studies. The table below provides the answers.

Table 5. Teachers trained in the new Social Studies curriculum?

Response	Frequency	(%)
Yes	2	16.67
No	10	83.33
Total	12	100

From the table above, 10 (83.33%) of the teachers indicated that they never received training to teach an integrated Social Studies curriculum. This could pose a negative attitude towards the teaching of Geography in the integrated Social Studies curriculum.

4.3 Challenges faced in handling Geography in an integrated Social Studies curriculum

4.3.1. Lack of teachers and learners' resource books

One challenge that emanated throughout the data collection exercise was to do with inadequacy of learning and teaching materials especially the learners and teachers' guides. Additionally, the HODs stated that the structure of a few text books available does not show integration leaving the task of planning in the hands of an often-ill-prepared teacher. Inadequacy of textbooks was the challenge identified by all the headteachers interviewed. One of the headteachers said that *"textbooks is a challenge as the number of students taking the subject keeps on increasing and some of the textbooks get lost in previous years"*.

4.3.2 Inadequate Teacher Professional Development

Most Headteachers interviewed voiced the lack of appropriate professional development as frustrating implementation of the integrated Social Studies curriculum. Figure 3 indicates the frequency of holding CPDs at school level in a term.

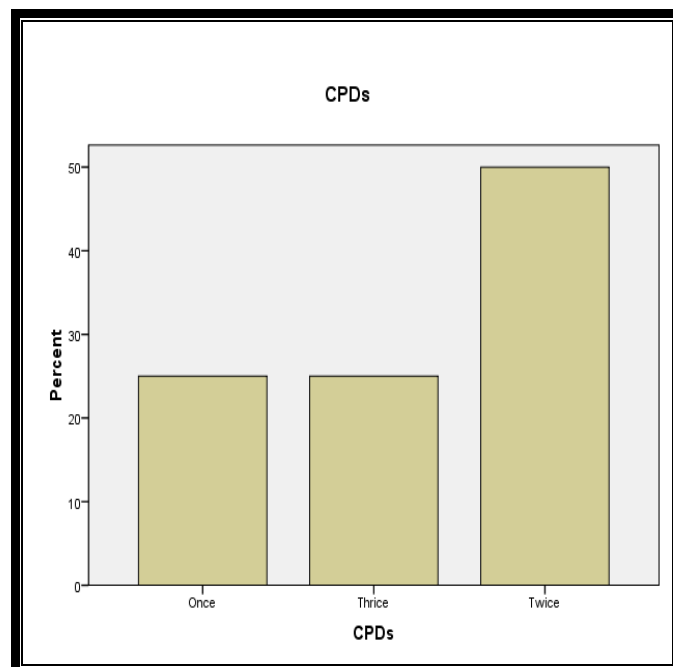


Fig. 3

From the responses, 2 Headteachers representing 50% indicated that they held CPD meetings two times in a term. 1 headteacher representing 25% responded that CPDs were held once and thrice termly. These findings indicated that teachers did not receive adequate orientation on the teaching of not only Geography but other areas in the integrated Social Studies curriculum.

4.3.3 Lack of trained teachers in Social Studies

As presented above, there was no teacher trained to teach Social Studies from all the sampled schools. Most teachers were prepared as History, Civic Education, Geography and Religious Education teachers separately. On the same theme, one of the

teachers said, "...the new curriculum was introduced without considering such factors as knowledge of implementation about it".

4.3.4 Inadequate time allocated for teaching

Some teachers indicated time was not enough for teaching the subject as the current six (6) periods per week was not enough since most of the teachers do not complete the syllabus on time and this affects the performance of the subject negatively. One of the teachers responded as follows "time is not enough due to length of the subject and therefore more time should be created to enable the teachers to complete the syllabus as scheduled".

4.3.5 Inadequate learning and teaching aids

Teaching aids are very important when teaching because they help the learners to understand the content properly, but as was found out most schools do not have teaching aids for teaching, the teachers were left to use textbooks only for teaching, this greatly affects the performance of the subject.

5. DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

This section focuses on the discussion, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

5.1. Opportunities of teaching Geography as a component of Social Studies in the revised curriculum

5.1.1 Better coverage of Geography content

The researcher intended to find out the views from the teachers how the coverage of Geography content in Social Studies. It was indicated that 30 learners representing 38.46% pointed out that the coverage of Geography in the integrated Social Studies was fair while the majority of teachers 8 (66.67%) responded that the coverage. In the revised curriculum, the general concepts of Geography are incorporated

into social studies and teachers are supposed to go more in depth on the topics covered at Junior secondary level.

In the previous syllabus, Geography had a total of twenty-four (24) topics while in the revised there are eleven (11) topics. This simply means that the coverage of the revised curriculum is fair and manageable for meaningful learning and this is what integration of the curriculum offers. Babatunde et al. (2016) assert that subject delivery in the integrated nature offers learners an opportunity to view learning in a unified way. The researcher believes the integrated approach was suggested because of the growing dissatisfaction with the content provided under separate subjects that separated learners from their local context

5.1.2 Effectiveness of the subject delivery

The researcher gathered that teachers (58.33%) indicated that the teaching of Geography in Social Studies was effective. This implies that the teachers participating in this study did support the implementation of revised Social Studies curriculum. They felt more comfortable with the subject outline, though the debate over the former caused some confusion over the acceptance of the latter. This can be confirmed by 41.67% of the teachers who disagreed about the effectiveness of the current arrangement of the subject.

He revealed that there was a lot of skipping of most Geography topics by most teachers. The remedy to this problem has been proposed by McGee, et al. (2003) who viewed that teachers who were not familiar with the integrated curriculum approach would be trained through short, in-service programmes within schools, zones, districts and provinces.

As noted, the findings on the opportunities of introducing Social Studies at Junior Secondary school the findings revealed that some teachers

enjoyed teaching Social Studies because they found it less difficulty and that learners actually concentrated more as compared to the precious learning of separate subjects which at that time was burdensome to most learners. It was not possible in the past for teachers to complete the syllabus but presently has been found to possible due to the fact that, some topics in some subject which seemed repeated and meaningless were done away making the new Revised Social Studies subject much easier to teach (Samwimba, *ibid*)

5. 2 Attitudes and competences of teachers towards the teaching of Geography as a component of Social Studies in the revised curriculum

Teacher's behavior and attitude are important variable which account for student achievement. This implies that the teaching of Social Studies in which Geography is integrated must be done by teachers who have a positive attitude towards teaching and are well competent to deliver. From the findings it emerged that 53.85% of the teachers taught Geography as integrated in Social Studies. The researcher firmly believes that such teachers have the zeal and will to teach the subject. This view is related to Tomal (2010) who opines that learning is affected by the attitude and motivation of teachers. If a teacher has a positive attitude toward his or her subject, learning occurs easily.

It also came clear from the research findings that 83.33% of the teachers never received training to teach an integrated Social Studies curriculum. This could pose a negative attitude towards the teaching of Geography in the integrated Social Studies curriculum. Munyari (2014) notes that the negative attitude towards Geography may originate from the fact that its scope had complex topics which may not be favourable to the teachers. For instance, one of the pupils

stated the difficulty of learning the integrated approach by saying that "*I find difficulty to study three subjects at a time*" while one of the teachers referred to map reading as a challenging topic to her. This problem could be due to insufficient professional training on the part of the teachers. The findings from the study indicated that there were very few teachers who were trained to teach an integrated Social Studies curriculum. The correlations between teacher qualification and learners' attitudes were extremely low, indicating that the teacher's qualification had very little effect on the attitudes of learners toward Geography. This could be an indicator that the better qualified teachers were in a position to influence their learners to attach value to Geography as a subject.

Further, the analysis of the data to the second research question shows that necessary competencies are needed in the teaching of Geography in schools. This is in support of Nnawugwu (2010) who opined that there are several skills needed by Social Studies teachers to possess for effective teaching of Geography; and that teachers should demonstrate their competencies in knowledge and skills while teaching the needed skills.

The study further, established that teacher's attitudes towards implementation of the revised curriculum were not welcome because they were not consulted at the beginning. This is in line with Mata (2012) who argued that teachers can manage the implementation of a new revised curriculum if they are considered as integral parts of the change process. Therefore, lack of teacher involvement could be responsible for poor teacher articulation of the revised curriculum even when the intent may be good

Along with this information learners were asked if they were finding something difficult to learn

Geography in integrated Social Studies. 87.18% learners responded that the integrated approach of learning Geography in Social Studies was difficult. As in most of the cases the learners wrote such things in their questionnaires which show their deficiency in learning:

“Some teachers skip some topics”

The above statement is an indicator that some learners have negative attitude towards the learning of Geography in the integrated Social Studies. According to Day (2004), teacher attitude is found to exert important influence on learners' achievement and attitudes toward school. In this research, sentiments such as teachers skipping certain topics demoralize learners to learn a particular subject.

5. 3 Challenges faced by teachers and learners in handling an integrated Social Studies curriculum

According to the third objective, the researcher sought to establish the challenges faced by teachers and learners in handling an integrated Social studies curriculum. The themes below have been discussed with reference to the research findings from the previous chapter.

5.3.1 Lack of teachers and learners' resource books

Findings from this study revealed that there were inadequate resources to impart knowledge to the learners. It emerged from the findings that the most important learning and teaching resource that was scarce in schools was the provision of text books. A few books that were available lacked coherence in terms of content. For instance, one from the twelve (12) teachers supporting similar ideas explains his/her ideas with following sentence: *“a certain Grade 8 Social Studies text book from one of the publishers does not have a topic on map reading”*.

This finding agrees with Mutai (2011) and Omondi (2014's study on factors influencing implementation of curriculum in Kenya. It was found that there was a serious shortage of teaching and learning materials on curriculum.

5.3.2 Lack of trained teachers in Social Studies Teachers and Headteachers from this study indicated that the schools lacked adequately trained teachers to handle the subject. That finding substantiates other research that indicated that the absence of trained teachers in a particular course hinders the delivery of quality subject matter to the learners (Nyambe, 2015; Babatunde et al. 2016). Negumbo's research (2016) also revealed that inappropriately qualified and unqualified teachers were used to teach Social Studies in most of the schools.

5.3.3 Inadequate time allocated for teaching Social Studies is officially considered as a compulsory subject on the junior secondary school curriculum. However, it emerged from the findings that the subject is allocated less teaching time on the timetable than other subjects like English and Mathematics. Yet, integrated programmes need a lot of time to enable pupils to explore different social issues. Studies by Samia (2013) and Omondi (2014) indicate that inadequate allocation of time for teaching integrated lessons was found to be barriers to education. Thus, it is important when integrating education into the curriculum that a specific amount of time be allocated to the subject and that it be clearly scheduled in the school timetable.

5.3.4 Inadequate learning and teaching aids

The findings in this study indicate that Social Studies teaching and learning aids available were inadequate in the schools. One of the teachers who was asked about the challenges faced in handling an integrated Social Studies

curriculum said “*there is lack of teaching and learning aids*”. Matimbe (2014) is of the view that lack of instructional materials to use during teaching and learning process negatively affects effective teaching. Najumba (2013) in his studies of school achievement discovered that schools which are well equipped with relevant educational facilities do much better in standardized examination than those which do not have resources. However, even if the school has instructional learning materials to use learners still fail if these teaching materials are not revised because some of them may be out dated or not relevant to the curriculum taught this means that high pass rate at grade seven examinations will not be achieved (Mupa & Chinooneka, 2015).

5.4 Conclusion

From the findings of the study, it is clear that although the teaching of Geography in the integrated Social Studies is going on, the teaching and learning of the subject is not very effective because of some problems such as lack of teachers and learners’ resource books, lack of trained teachers in Social Studies and inadequate time allocated for teaching

The study has also shown that schools in the study areas did not have adequate teaching and learning aids to enable Social Studies teachers deliver quality education to their pupils. It was also seen that in terms of availability of teaching/learning resources, schools were grossly under-resourced in terms of basic facilities such as instruments and other important equipment. This scenario has greatly affected teaching and learning for both teachers and pupils respectively.

Secondly, the findings also showed that some of the teachers had a positive attitude toward the teaching of Geography in the integrated Social Studies subject. However, teachers claimed that inadequacy of teaching and learning resources

and poor academic performance of learners has contributed to the failure of teachers from performing well. Administrators need to motivate their teachers even when there is slight improvement in learners’ academic performance to enable them feel appreciated and being part of the teaching in schools.

It was also clear that although the teachers seem to be happy with the new integrated curriculum because of reduced planning work, most of them actually have a negative attitude towards the teaching of Social Studies. Instead of teaching the subject properly, some teachers skipped some topics. Finally, although the teachers in the four schools were not teaching Social Studies properly, claiming that they were not trained or adequately oriented in teaching an integrated curriculum, they were fairly competent to handle the learning area and the rest of the new integrated curriculum. This is because any professionally trained social science secondary school teacher did not need long detailed training to be able to teach the integrated Social Studies lessons.

5.5 Recommendations

The following recommendations were made for the study.

The Ministry of general Education through the schools and resource centres should spearhead CPDs in the new integrated curriculum approach to teachers who were trained in the old methodologies. This is to enable teachers get acquainted with the new approaches to teach an integrated curriculum and overcome challenges related with delivering the curriculum. There is also need for the Education Standards Officers, CDC and other stakeholders to follow up and monitor the implementation of the new integrated curriculum approach in schools.

In order to supplement government efforts, teachers of Social Studies should regularly go for in-service training to upgrade their skills. This helps them learn how to change their negative attitude to the new Social Studies curriculum which in turn improves the performance of learners.

MOGE and schools should procure more of the needed teaching and learning materials for effective implementation of the new integrated curriculum, including Social Studies.

5. 6 Suggestions for further research

In the view of the delimitation of the study, the researcher suggests further research be carried out in other public schools in the province since the study was carried out in Mwandia district, Western province.

Another study can also be carried out on the assessment of the methodologies and teaching strategies recommended for teaching Social Studies.

Apart from that, it is imperative to do a study on how the teachers' attitude towards the teaching of Geography in the integrated Social Studies can be changed or improved.

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