



Original Article

Efficacy of Using Problem-Solving Method on the Teaching of Social Studies in Public Primary Schools in Busiki County Namutumba District

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The study sought to establish the efficacy of using a problem-solving approach in teaching social studies in Busiki County, Namutumba District, responding to three questions; (1) how a problem-solving method is used in the teaching of social studies? (2) What are the implications of using the problem-solving method in the teaching of social studies? (3) What are the hindrances to the use of problem-solving methods in the teaching of social studies? The study was conducted using a quasi-experimental design and targeted public primary schools in Busiki County. The study population mainly comprised teachers who are the direct implementers of the approach. Questionnaires were used to obtain findings from 99 respondents purposively selected. According to the findings, the problem-solving method can be used to teach social studies in five main ways: critical thinking, historical studies, multiple analyses of events, using secondary sources of information, and using logical examples. The implications are: promoting critical thinking; developing skills for learners to face the real world; developing the ability to make evaluations; making learning more engaging; and promoting the sharing of ideas. The hindrances include; No platform for professional development, scepticism, no teaching aids, and No integration into the curriculum. Conclusively, the problem-solving method is an effective approach for teaching social studies in primary schools. It is therefore recommended that educational leaders try to consider the significance of incorporating critical thinking into social studies instruction, despite challenges like a lack of professional knowledge and scepticism.

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INTRODUCTION

Social Studies is not a subject. It's a field of study that deals with human beings and their relationship with the environment (Louis et al., 2019). The purpose of social studies education is to develop and produce a learner with the self-reliance skills to enable the learner to live as a useful citizen able to cause development in the community (Parker, 2015). The teaching of this field of study therefore requires a teacher with knowledge in the modern educational teaching and learning methods. The methodical identification, analysis, and resolution of complicated difficulties is called problem-solving (Nagarajan & Overton, 2019). Problem-solving strategies help learners acquire critical thinking skills, active involvement, and a better knowledge of historical events, social challenges, and cultural viewpoints in Social Studies (Fairley et al., 2021). Learners may examine multiple perspectives, analyse evidence, make educated judgements, and offer innovative solutions to real-world Social Studies problems by using problem-solving approaches (Bhatti et al., 2020).

Using a problem-solving method in social studies fosters critical thinking and real-world application (Živković, 2016). Problem-solving helps children grasp social concerns and build empathy and community responsibility. This method also supports active learning and learner participation in their education (Issa, n.d.).

The effect of problem-solving methods on the teaching of social studies is significant (Szabo et al., 2020). By incorporating problem-solving techniques, learners are actively engaged in their learning process and are able to apply critical thinking skills to real-world situations. This approach not only enhances their understanding of social studies concepts but also prepares them for future challenges they may encounter in their personal and professional lives (Szabo et al., 2020).

Problem Statement

The sheer volume of material that needs to be covered in a given period of time is a frequent source of stress for social studies teachers. Teachers face a challenge when trying to guarantee learners have a deep understanding of a wide range of historical

events, cultural features, and political systems while also keeping their attention through interesting debates and activities. In addition, teachers frequently have the challenge of bringing abstract ideas and concepts down to earth and within the reach of pupils of varying linguistic, cultural, and cognitive abilities. The adoption of a problem-solving strategy is thought to improve learners' learning in social studies by encouraging them to think critically and participate actively in class. This method of teaching prompts learners to think critically about their environment, consider alternative explanations, and reach their own conclusions. Learners gain a more in-depth appreciation for the material's application to real-world problems as they work through social studies problems. However, these are merely conjectures; hence, an evidence-based analysis was required, leading to the need for this investigation using a case study of Busiki County, Namutumba District.

Purpose

To evaluate the efficiency of using problem-solving methods in teaching social studies in public primary schools in Busiki County, Namutumba District.

Research Questions

- How is the problem-solving method used in the teaching of social studies in public primary schools in Busiki County, Namutumba District?
- What are the implications of applying the problem-solving method to the teaching of social studies in public primary schools in Busiki County?
- What are the hindrances to the use of problem-solving methods in the teaching of social studies in public primary schools in Busiki County Namutumba District?

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section highlights the information in line with; ways in which problem-solving method is used to teach social studies, the implications of applying problem-solving methods in teaching social studies, and the hindrances to using problem-solving methods in teaching social studies.

Ways in which problem-solving methods can be used in the teaching of social studies

Teaching social studies by encouraging critical thinking and fostering a deeper understanding of the complexities of historical or societal issues (Mutiani & Faisal, 2019). This approach helps learners develop the skills necessary to navigate diverse perspectives and make well-informed decisions based on gathered evidence (Mutiani & Faisal, 2019). For example, in a social studies class discussing immigration, learners could be guided to analyze multiple perspectives by examining the reasons why individuals choose to immigrate and the impact it has on both the sending and receiving countries (Dekker, 2020).

They could then gather evidence by studying historical immigration patterns and current immigration policies to understand the complexities of the issue (Nganga et al., 2020). Finally, they could propose informed solutions by considering economic, social, and political factors in order to develop policies that balance national security with humanitarian concerns (Nganga et al., 2020).

Teaching social studies by guiding them to analyse multiple perspectives and evaluate historical events allows learners to develop critical thinking skills (Zembylas, 2021). By examining different viewpoints, learners gain a deeper understanding of the complexities of past events and how they have shaped society. This approach also encourages empathy and tolerance, as learners learn to appreciate diverse perspectives and recognise the impact of bias on historical interpretations (Zembylas, 2021).

Teaching social studies by gathering evidence, analysing primary and secondary sources, and critically evaluating historical events allows learners to develop critical thinking skills and gain a deeper understanding of the complexities of the world (Yuan & Stapleton, 2019). Additionally, incorporating interactive activities such as debates, simulations, and role-playing exercises can further engage learners in active learning and foster a sense of empathy towards different perspectives. For example, learners could analyse primary sources such as letters from soldiers during World War II to

gain insight into the lived experiences of individuals during that time period (Nganga et al., 2020). By critically evaluating these sources and comparing them to secondary sources, learners can develop a more nuanced understanding of the challenges and motivations that shaped historical events (Dekker, 2020).

Teaching social studies by proposing informed solutions (Dekker, 2020). By encouraging critical thinking and analysis, learners are empowered to tackle complex social issues. This approach fosters a deeper understanding of historical events and their impact on society, allowing learners to develop informed solutions that address current challenges (Szabo et al., 2020).

For example, a teacher could engage learners in a project-based learning activity where they research and analyze the impact of climate change on coastal communities (Zembylas, 2021). Learners would then propose informed solutions to mitigate the effects, such as implementing sustainable infrastructure or creating educational campaigns for local residents. This approach not only enhances learners' understanding of social studies concepts but also empowers them to make a positive difference in their communities (Zembylas, 2021).

Implications of applying the problem-solving method to the teaching of social studies

The problem-solving approach in teaching social studies has been found to enhance critical thinking and analytical skills among learners (Herawati et al., 2023). By encouraging learners to actively engage in problem-solving activities, they are able to develop a deeper understanding of historical events, cultural differences, and societal issues (Herawati et al., 2023). This approach not only stimulates their cognitive abilities but also fosters their creativity and ability to think critically (Yuan & Stapleton, 2019). Learners are able to apply their knowledge to real-life scenarios, making connections between the past and the present, and developing a more informed and well-rounded perspective on the world around them (Dekker, 2020).

This approach to problem-solving encourages learners to actively engage in the learning process, as they are required to identify, analyze, and propose

solutions to complex problems. By actively participating in problem-solving activities, learners develop critical thinking skills and gain a deeper understanding of the subject matter (Razak, 2022). This approach also fosters creativity and innovation, as learners are encouraged to think outside the box when finding solutions. Moreover, the ability to tackle complex problems prepares learners for real-world challenges they may encounter in their future careers (Razak, 2022). Overall, this method empowers learners to become independent learners who are capable of solving problems in various contexts (Yuan & Stapleton, 2019).

By presenting learners with real-world issues and guiding them to analyse multiple perspectives, gather evidence, and propose informed solutions, learners are able to develop a deeper understanding of social studies concepts and apply their knowledge in a practical manner (Mutiani & Faisal, 2019). This approach fosters critical thinking skills, as learners learn to question assumptions and consider alternative viewpoints. Additionally, by engaging in hands-on activities and project-based learning, learners develop important skills such as collaboration, communication, and problem-solving. Ultimately, this interactive and experiential learning approach prepares learners to become active and informed citizens who are capable of addressing complex social issues in their communities (Mutiani & Faisal, 2019).

This approach encourages learners to think critically, evaluate information, and make informed decisions, all of which are essential skills for success in the modern world. This approach encourages learners to think critically, evaluate information, and make informed decisions, all of which are essential skills for success in the modern world (Nagarajan & Overton, 2019). Additionally, this approach also fosters creativity and innovation as learners are encouraged to explore alternative solutions and think outside the box. It helps them develop a deeper understanding of complex issues and challenges, as they learn to analyze different perspectives and consider multiple factors before reaching conclusions. Ultimately, this approach equips learners with the necessary skills and mindset to navigate the ever-changing landscape of the modern

world and thrive in their personal and professional lives (Nagarajan & Overton, 2019).

Additionally, the problem-solving approach in teaching social studies can be facilitated by the use of technology. Technology provides learners with access to a wide range of resources and information that can enhance their learning experience. For example, learners can use online databases, interactive simulations, and virtual field trips to explore historical events and cultures in a more immersive way (Fitriyani & Nugroho, 2022).

This not only makes the learning process more engaging and enjoyable for learners but also allows them to develop important digital literacy skills that are increasingly necessary in today's digital age (Christina & Kristin, 2016). Furthermore, technology can also facilitate collaboration among learners, allowing them to work together on projects and share ideas. In addition, technology can also facilitate collaboration among learners, enabling them to work on group projects and communicate with their peers more effectively (Zulaeha, 2013).

With the help of online platforms and communication tools, learners can easily share ideas, feedback, and resources, creating a more interactive and dynamic learning environment. Moreover, technology can personalize the learning experience by providing adaptive learning platforms that cater to each learner's individual needs and pace of learning, ultimately promoting a more effective and efficient educational journey (Widodo et al., 2020).

Hindrances to the use of problem-solving methods in the teaching of social studies

The role of teachers is to facilitate problem-solving activities in social studies and how learners can adapt to the teaching strategies to promote an interactive and dynamic learning environment. There is a need to provide professional development opportunities for teachers to enhance their problem-solving skills and knowledge in social studies (Drigas & Karyotaki, 2016). By providing professional development opportunities for teachers, they can enhance their problem-solving skills and knowledge in social studies. This allows them to adapt their teaching strategies to promote an interactive and dynamic learning environment

(Zulaeha, 2013). Furthermore, these opportunities enable teachers to stay updated with the latest teaching methods and resources, ensuring they are equipped to facilitate problem-solving activities effectively in the social studies classroom. Ultimately, investing in professional development for teachers is crucial in ensuring learners receive a high-quality education in social studies and develop essential problem-solving abilities (Widodo et al., 2020).

The need to address any resistance or scepticism from stakeholders, such as parents or administrators, by highlighting the benefits of problem-solving in social studies education and showcasing successful outcomes from other schools or districts. By addressing any resistance or scepticism from stakeholders, it becomes crucial to emphasize the benefits of problem-solving in social studies education (Szabo et al., 2020). This can be done by showcasing how problem-solving skills enable learners to think critically, analyze complex issues, and develop a deeper understanding of historical events and societal challenges. Furthermore, highlighting successful outcomes from other schools or districts that have implemented problem-solving approaches can provide concrete evidence of its effectiveness and encourage stakeholders to embrace this innovative teaching method (Szabo et al., 2020).

Lack of resources and funding may pose a challenge in implementing problem-solving approaches in social studies curriculum (Živković, 2016). Additionally, resistance from traditional teaching methods and lack of teacher training in facilitating problem-solving activities may hinder successful integration. It is crucial for educators and policymakers to address these challenges and provide support and resources to ensure a smooth implementation of problem-solving approaches in social studies education (Bhatti et al., 2020).

Some potential obstacles to implementing a problem-solving approach in social studies may include resistance from educators or stakeholders, who are accustomed to traditional teaching methods, lack of resources or access to technology necessary

for adaptive learning platforms, and the need for ongoing professional development and support for teachers to effectively implement this approach (Nagarajan & Overton, 2019).

Additionally, ensuring that the problem-solving approach aligns with curriculum standards and assessments may pose a challenge (Nganga et al., 2020). It is important to strike a balance between promoting critical thinking and problem-solving skills while still meeting academic requirements. This can be achieved through collaboration with curriculum specialists and ongoing communication with educators to ensure that the problem-solving approach is integrated seamlessly into the existing curriculum as educators may need to find ways to integrate problem-solving activities into existing lesson plans and assessments (Živković, 2016). Furthermore, addressing potential concerns about the time commitment required for implementing a problem-solving approach in social studies may be necessary, as teachers may worry about covering all necessary content within limited class time (Živković, 2016).

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study employed a cross-sectional design with a predominantly quantitative approach. It was a survey because it gathered data from a large number of respondents at the same time so as to describe the nature of the commitment of teachers in public primary schools.

Study Population

The study was conducted in Busiki County, Namutumba District. The study was conducted in government primary schools because they all have full-time, qualified trained teachers, are paid by the government, are provided with reference materials by the government, and all implement government programs/curricula. This puts them in the right position as a resource for this study. The study population in Busiki County is categorized in Table 3.1.

Table 1: Study population

No	Name of School	Staff Composition 99 (M = 45; F = 54)	
		Male	Females
1.	School A	5	9
2.	School B	6	5
3.	School C	8	10
4.	School D	7	5
5.	School E	6	6
6.	School F	4	5
7.	School G	3	6
8.	School H	6	8
	Total	45	54

Source: From head teachers of the primary schools

Sampling of the Population

This comprises sample size determination and determination of sampling techniques that were used to obtain the study population.

The sample size for the schools was determined using Krejcie and Mogan's (1970) table guide. This table guide states that an appropriate sample size for the eight primary schools is eight. The Krejcie and Morgan table guide treats any study population with numbers from 0 to 14 as to be considered directly. The notion in the Krejcie and Morgan Table Guide is that sample size calculation or determination starts at 15 members and above.

However, when it comes to the 99 members of the teaching staff, the most appropriate sample size is 76. This is because it is within the range of 95–99 people, whose sample size is 76.

Sampling Strategies

Selection of schools. Primary schools were stratified between government-established and privately created in order to assure representative sampling. Consequently, public primary schools were considered for the study. Private primary schools were excluded from the study to avoid any potential bias that could arise from differences in resources and supervisory modes. By focusing solely on public primary schools, researchers were able to gather data that accurately reflected the overall educational landscape in the country.

The selection of teachers. For teachers, convenience sampling was an appropriate technique. Only teachers who were at school were sampled. However, the stratified sampling approach was also

applied here to establish male and female teachers at each school selected for this study. This allowed for a more balanced representation of both genders in the sample. Additionally, the stratified sampling approach ensured that the teachers were selected from different schools to capture a diverse range of perspectives and teaching styles. By combining convenience and stratified sampling, the researchers were able to gather a comprehensive and representative sample of teachers for their study.

Instruments of Data Collection

In this study, the researcher prepared a set of structured questions for teachers in the public schools to be selected. The questionnaire comprised various sections, including the respondents' social and demographic characteristics; questions on the use of problem-solving methods and the teaching of social studies. As indicated earlier, no qualitative findings were obtained.

Data Analysis

The data collected using the questionnaire was coded and entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software to prepare it for analysis. Data were then edited for accuracy, especially to check if there was no missing data or if there was any missing data. Tools were checked and re-checked for confirmation of this. Once the data was cleaned and verified for accuracy, various statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS. Descriptive statistics, such as means and standard deviations, were calculated to summarize the data. Additionally, inferential statistics, such as t-tests or chi-square tests, were performed to examine relationships and determine any significant findings. The results

obtained from these analyses provided valuable insights and formed the basis for drawing conclusions and making recommendations in the research report.

Ethical Considerations

No non-academic information was recorded to protect respondents' and participants' privacy. Using a university opening letter, teachers and head teachers were assured that the study was intellectual.

During the study, respect and dignity were given, so no one was biased before or after. Thus, all replies and participants were treated equally to encourage participation.

All scholars and experts referenced in this paper were properly quoted and cited. To prevent falsifying results, the researcher verified what was observed.

Many attempts were made to protect participants/respondents' privacy by withholding their identities to prevent traceability and provide flexibility so they might leave the exercise at any time.

From the beginning of data collection, the researcher established rapport with participants and respondents, declared the research project's

intentions, and asked for their permission to record, photograph, or videotape.

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

This chapter comprises the presentation and analysis of findings in line with ways in which the problem-solving method can be used in teaching social studies, the implications of the problem-solving approach in teaching social studies and the hindrances to the use of problem-solving methods in teaching social studies.

Ways in which problem-solving method is used to teach social studies.

The first objective of this study was to unveil the ways in which problem-solving methods are used to teach social studies. By exploring the utilisation of problem-solving methods in teaching social studies, the study aimed to shed light on their effectiveness in enhancing learners' critical thinking skills and understanding of complex societal issues. Additionally, it sought to identify any potential challenges or limitations associated with implementing this approach in the classroom. The mean rating and interpretation scale is: 1.00-1.80 - *strongly disagree*; 1.81-2.60 – *Disagree*, 2.61-3.40 - *Neutral or uncertain*, 3.41- 4.20 – *Agree*, and 4.21- 5.00- *Strongly Agree*.

Table 2: Ways in which problem-solving is used

Approaches to teaching social studies:	N	Mean	SD
1. Through encouraging critical thinking	99	4.01	0.52
2. Through historical studies	99	3.96	0.74
3. Through multiple analyses of events	99	4.00	0.78
4. Using secondary sources of information	99	4.24	0.85
5. Using logical examples	99	4.12	0.85

Findings from Table 2 show that the statement that indicates that teaching social studies can be done through encouraging critical thinking among pupils was ranked with a mean of 4.01 and a standard deviation of 0.52. This implies that, though not practised, teachers are aware that the use of a problem-solving approach to teach social studies can be encouraged through encouraging critical thinking among pupils. This finding suggests that teachers recognize the potential benefits of incorporating critical thinking into social studies instruction. Despite the fact that this teaching approach may not

be widely implemented, the data indicates that educators acknowledge its importance in fostering problem-solving skills among learners. These results highlight the need for further exploration and promotion of critical thinking strategies within the social studies curriculum. The results mirror those of Mutiani and Faisal (2019) which indicate that teaching social studies encourages critical thinking and fosters a deeper understanding of the complexities within historical or societal issues.

In addition, the idea that the problem-solving method can be used to teach social studies through historical studies is indicated by the mean = 3.96 and the standard deviation = 0.74. This suggests that there is a high level of agreement among educators regarding the effectiveness of using the problem-solving method in teaching social studies through historical studies. The mean score of 4.00 indicates that most educators find it beneficial, while the low standard deviation of 0.78 suggests that there is little variation in their opinions. Thus, it can be inferred that the problem-solving method is widely accepted as a successful approach to teaching social studies through historical studies. Relatedly, Nganga et al., (2020) indicate that teaching sst using problem-solving is through gathering evidence by studying historical immigration patterns and current immigration policies to understand the complexities of the issue.

Further still, the idea that multiple analysis of historical events is an approach to problem-solving that can be used to teach social studies was rated with a mean of 4.00 and an SD of 0.78 and evaluated as a positive result. This suggests that incorporating multiple analyses of historical events into social studies education is widely accepted and appreciated by educators. The high mean score indicates that the approach is perceived as effective in enhancing problem-solving skills among learners. Additionally, the low standard deviation suggests that there was a general consensus among the participants regarding the positive impact of this teaching method. Relatedly, Zembylas (2021) shows that teaching social studies by analysing multiple perspectives and evaluating historical events allows learners to develop critical thinking skills.

The notion that using secondary sources of information is a problem-solving dimension in teaching social studies was rated with a mean of 4.24

and a standard deviation of 0.85. These also indicate agreement. The high mean rating of 4.24 suggests that educators generally perceive the use of secondary sources as an effective approach to problem-solving in social studies teaching. The relatively low standard deviation of 0.85 further indicates a consensus among teachers regarding the value of incorporating secondary sources into their instructional practices. Similarly, Yuan and Stapleton (2019) reveal that teaching social studies by gathering evidence, analysing primary and secondary sources, and critically evaluating historical events allows learners to develop critical thinking skills and gain a deeper understanding of the complexities of the world.

As the mean of 4.12 and the SD of 0.85 shows, using local examples is another way to teach social studies using the problem-solving method. By incorporating local examples, learners can better relate to the subject matter and understand how social studies concepts apply to their own lives. This approach also encourages critical thinking and analytical skills as learners analyse real-world situations and develop solutions based on their understanding of the subject. Yuan and Stapleton (2019) also emphasize that teaching social studies by gathering evidence, analysing primary and secondary sources, and critically evaluating historical events allows learners to develop critical thinking skills and gain a deeper understanding of the complexities of the world.

Implications of Problem-solving approach on the teaching of social studies

The implications indicated in Table 3 were obtained and analyzed as per the situation in primary schools. The mean rating and interpretation scale is: 1.00- 1.80 - *strongly disagree*; 1.81-2.60 – *Disagree*, 2.61- 3.40 -*Neutral or uncertain*, 3.41- 4.20 – *Agree*, and 4.21- 5.00- *Strongly Agree*.

Table 3: implications of using a problem-solving approach to teach social studies

Implications	N	Mean	SD
1. It enhances critical thinking	99	4.01	0.79
2. Prepares learners to face real-world	99	4.16	0.85
3. Prepares learners to make evaluations	99	4.07	0.82
4. Makes learning more engaging	99	3.91	1.07
5. Promotes sharing of ideas	99	3.74	1.35

Five implications were identified as above. First, the statement that the use of a problem-solving approach to teaching social studies enhances critical thinking was rated with Mean = 4.01 and standard deviation = 0.79 and evaluated as agree. This implies that educators recognize the value of incorporating problem-solving methods in social studies instruction to foster critical thinking skills. The high mean rating and low standard deviation suggest a strong consensus among respondents regarding this statement's effectiveness. In related literature, Herawati et al., (2023) indicate that the problem-solving approach in teaching social studies has been found to enhance critical thinking and analytical skills among learners.

The statement that the use of a problem-solving approach to teach social studies prepares learners to face the real world was received with a rating of 4.16 and a standard deviation of 0.85, indicating positive implications. This high rating suggests that educators and researchers recognise the value of utilising problem-solving methods in social studies education. By engaging learners in critical thinking and decision-making processes, this approach equips learners with the necessary skills to navigate complex issues and challenges in the real world. Moreover, the low standard deviation indicates a consensus among the participants, further supporting the notion that problem-solving instruction in social studies is an effective pedagogical strategy. By actively participating in problem-solving activities, learners develop critical thinking skills and gain a deeper understanding of the subject matter as indicated by Razak (2022).

The idea that using the problem-solving method to teach social studies prepares learners to make evaluations was rated with a mean of 4.07 and a standard deviation of 0.82, indicating that this was true. This finding suggests that learners who are taught social studies through the problem-solving method are more likely to develop critical thinking skills and effectively assess information. The high mean rating and low standard deviation indicate a strong consensus among participants regarding the positive impact of this teaching approach on learners' evaluation abilities. Ultimately, this

interactive and experiential learning approach prepares learners to become active and informed citizens who are capable of addressing complex social issues in their communities as established by Mutiani & Faisal (2019).

The mean = 3.91 and the standard deviation = 1.07 show that using a problem-solving approach to teach social studies further increases learning engagement. This suggests that learners find the problem-solving approach to be an effective and enjoyable way to learn social studies. The low standard deviation also indicates that the majority of learners had a positive experience with this teaching method. In related literature, Nagarajan & Overton (2019) established that this approach encourages learners to think critically, evaluate information, and make informed decisions, all of which are essential skills for success in the modern world.

Finally, the statement that the use of a problem-solving approach to teaching social studies promotes the sharing of ideas was rated with a mean of 3.74 and a standard deviation of 1.35, which confirms that the statement was valid. This high mean score suggests that learners found the problem-solving approach in social studies to be effective in fostering idea-sharing. The low standard deviation indicates that there was a general consensus among the participants regarding the validity of this teaching method. Similarly, Zulaeha, (2013) established that technology can also facilitate collaboration among learners, allowing them to work together on projects and share ideas, which can also facilitate collaboration among learners, enabling them to work on group projects and communicate with their peers more effectively.

Hindrances to the use of problem-solving methods to teach social studies

The third and final objective was to present the findings on hindrances to using problem-solving to teach social studies. Table 4 shows the results obtained. The mean rating and interpretation scale is: 1.00-1.80 - *strongly disagree*; 1.81-2.60 – *Disagree*, 2.61-3.40 -*Neutral or uncertain*, 3.41- 4.20 – *Agree*, and 4.21- 5.00- *Strongly Agree*.

Table 4: implications of using a problem-solving approach to teach social studies

Hindrances	N	Mean	SD
1. No platform for professional knowledge	99	3.45	1.48
2. It is full of scepticism	99	3.43	1.46
3. There is a lack of teaching aids	99	3.43	1.46
4. Not easy to integrate the approach into the curriculum.	99	3.52	1.52

Table 4 shows different hindrances to the use of a problem-solving approach to teach social studies. The mean of 3.45 and the standard deviation of 1.48 support the idea that using a problem-solving approach to teach social studies does not create a platform for professional knowledge. These findings suggest that educators may feel uncertain or lacking in expertise when it comes to implementing a problem-solving approach in social studies instruction. This could be due to a lack of training or resources provided to teachers, hindering their ability to effectively utilise this teaching method. A related study indicates the importance of providing professional development opportunities for teachers to enhance their problem-solving skills and knowledge in social studies as stated by Drigas & Karyotaki (2016)

In addition, the idea that using a problem-solving approach to teach social studies is full of scepticism was also rated as true, as indicated by the mean = 3.43 and SD = 1.46. This suggests that there is a significant level of doubt or uncertainty among educators regarding the effectiveness of problem-solving methods in teaching social studies. It may be necessary to further explore and address these concerns in order to promote wider acceptance and implementation of this approach in the field of education. On this subject, Szabo et al., (2020) stress that by addressing any resistance or scepticism from stakeholders, it becomes crucial to emphasize the benefits of problem-solving in social studies education.

The mean of 3.43 and the SD of 1.46 also support the notion that using a problem-solving approach to teach social studies faces difficulties due to a lack of teaching resources. This is because the mean and SD indicate that there is a wide variation in learner performance, making it challenging to effectively address individual needs. Additionally, without sufficient teaching resources, it may be difficult to provide learners with the necessary tools and

materials to engage in problem-solving activities effectively. As indicated by Živković, (2016), a lack of resources and funding may pose a challenge in implementing problem-solving approaches in social studies curriculum.

Finally, the mean value of 3.52 and the standard deviation value of 1.52 support the claim that using a problem-solving approach to teach social studies presents a challenge of difficulty in integrating it into the curriculum. This finding suggests that learners may struggle with applying problem-solving skills in the context of social studies, which could hinder their overall learning experience. Additionally, educators may need to develop innovative strategies and resources to effectively incorporate problem-solving into the social studies curriculum. These results are also reflected in Nganga et al., (2020) study that ensuring that the problem-solving approach aligns with curriculum standards and assessments may pose a challenge.

CONCLUSIONS

The study shows that teachers recognize the benefits of incorporating critical thinking into social studies instruction, particularly through historical studies. Multiple analyses, secondary sources, and local examples are considered effective in enhancing problem-solving skills. However, further exploration and promotion of these strategies are needed to improve learners' analytical skills and relate to the subject matter.

The study reveals that problem-solving methods in social studies instruction improve critical thinking, real-world challenges, evaluation abilities, and learning engagement. The majority of learners found the method effective in fostering idea sharing, with a high mean score indicating its validity. The study supports the importance of problem-solving in social studies education, highlighting its effectiveness in promoting idea-sharing.

Table 4 highlights challenges in implementing problem-solving in social studies teaching, including lack of professional knowledge, scepticism about its effectiveness, and difficulty addressing individual learner performance. Additionally, integrating problem-solving into the curriculum presents challenges, necessitating the development of innovative strategies and resources.

Recommendations

The government should provide support to enhance the use of problem-solving approaches to teach social studies. This approach fosters critical thinking skills and encourages learners to actively engage with real-world issues. By incorporating problem-solving methods into social studies education, learners can develop a deeper understanding of complex societal problems and become better equipped to address them in the future.

The value of a problem-solving approach in teaching should be recognised and embraced by teachers in primary schools. By incorporating problem-solving activities into their curriculum, teachers can help learners develop critical thinking skills and enhance their ability to apply knowledge in real-world situations. This approach fosters a deeper understanding of concepts and encourages learners to become active participants in their own learning journey.

There have to be ways of responding to challenges faced in using a problem-solving approach to teach social studies. One possible way to respond to challenges faced in using a problem-solving approach to teaching social studies is by incorporating real-world examples and case studies. This can help learners connect the subject matter to their own lives and understand the relevance of social studies in solving everyday problems. Additionally, providing ample opportunities for collaboration and group work can enhance problem-solving skills as learners learn from each other's perspectives and experiences.

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