



Original Article

## Opportunities and Challenges in the Implementation of Social Studies Curriculum towards Fostering National Cohesion and Integration in Kenya: A Case of Uasin Gishu County

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Social Studies Curriculum (SSC) foster national cohesion and integration in terms of knowledge, intellectual capabilities, and democratic disposition, which are expected of pupils to actively participate and coexist in society. SSC is based on societal needs, challenges, and aspirations, which enable pupils to acquire appropriate and acceptable values. Therefore, in the teaching of SSC in primary schools, teachers' and pupils' perception is paramount. The study sought to find out the challenges encountered by teachers in the implementation of the Social Studies curriculum in fostering national cohesion and integration. Data was sourced from a sample of 12 curriculum support officers, 47 head teachers, 188 Social Studies teachers, and 5,640 pupils from the primary schools in Uasin Gishu County who were selected using stratified and simple random sampling techniques. Instruments for data collection included a questionnaire, observation, interview schedules, and focus group discussions. Data analysis generated frequencies and percentages for interpretation and discussions. The challenges in the implementation of the SSC were found to be the gradual subordination of teachers, demoralisation, poor teaching practices and the contradictions between what learners are taught in school with what they see in the community identified in the study. The study recommended that primary teachers should effectively implement values inherent in Social Studies Curriculum for learners to emerge as responsible, respectful, and cooperative citizens for societal harmony. In conclusion, shows that there was a need for teacher training, workshops, and seminars with more emphasis on the acquisition of new knowledge and current trends on citizenship and the utilisation of appropriate pedagogical practices in the social studies curriculum.

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## INTRODUCTION

The national goals of education in Kenya provide the curriculum developers with an understanding of the general intended outcomes of education. These include the need to foster nationalism and patriotism and promote national unity as Kenya's people belong to different communities, races, and religions and should be able to live and interact as one people. Therefore, education should enable the learner to develop a sense of nationhood and patriotism. It should also promote peace and harmonious co-existence. It also promotes social, economic, technological, and industrial skills for national development, as it is through education that the learner is prepared to play an effective and productive role in the nation. Thirdly, for the social needs, education is envisaged to instil social and adaptive skills in the learner for effective participation in the family, community, national, regional, and international development. For the economic needs, there is an emphasis on education to prepare a learner with requisite competencies that support a modern and independent growing economy that translate into high standards of living for every individual. For the technological and industrial needs, education has been identified as an avenue to develop in the learner the necessary competencies for the technological and industrial development of the nation in tandem with global trends. There is also a need for education to promote

individual development and self-fulfilment by providing opportunities for the learner to develop to the fullest potential, and this includes the development of one's interests, talents, and character for positive contribution to society.

There is an emphasis on the need for education to promote sound moral and religious values through the acquisition of national values as enshrined in the Kenya Constitution. This should be geared towards developing a self-disciplined and ethical citizen with sound moral and religious values. There is a need to promote social equity and responsibility by ensuring inclusive and equitable access to quality and differentiated education that includes learners with special educational needs and disabilities. Therefore, education should also provide the learner with opportunities to develop and practice shared responsibility and accountability through community service learning. In the promotion of respect for and development of Kenya's rich and varied cultures, education should instil in the learner appreciation of Kenya's rich and diverse cultural heritage. Therefore, the learner should be able to value and respect other people's cultures as well as embrace positive cultural practices in a dynamic society.

The role of the curriculum is to identify the educational purposes and organise them into goals, objectives, aims and learning outcomes to be

achieved at the different levels of education and training. Education in the form of formal schooling is the primary instrument for nation-building in Kenya. In the developmental state, education as an instrument is fundamental and powerful because it straddles both the cultural-symbolic and civic-instrumental dimensions of nation-building (Hill & Lian, 1995). Education not only provides high-level technical skills and knowledge for economic development, but it also develops attitudes and motivations in individuals, which ensure continuing collective commitment to active participation in the goals of national development (Green, 1997). In this regard, education has the potential to transform a generation into sharing a common destiny. It is from this perspective that the relationship between education, nation-building, citizenship, and social studies should be understood in Kenya.

Social studies education has been, in some form, an overarching goal of public schooling in every society. Social studies education involves the preparation of young people to become informed, responsible, and participative citizens (Atang, 2013). The task of socialising the next generation to the directions of the nation-state has been so important that schools, directed by many governments, have been specifically assigned that duty. Social studies promote citizenship education which, like anything else, must be learned, as young people do not become good citizens by accident (Parker, 1991; Patrick, 2002). Citizenship education involves preparing young people in the essential areas of knowledge, skills, and values of informed, responsible, and participative citizens of their respective counties.

### Statement of the Problem

Social studies as a subject are a program of study that a society uses to instil in students the knowledge, attitudes, and actions that it considers important concerning the relationship human beings have with each other, their world, and themselves (Edinyang et al., 2015). Social studies are an area of curriculum designed specifically for the study of man and how his problems could be solved within the immediate environment. It does not only concern using timely and necessary curriculum content that students perceive as being relevant but also emphasise the need to help pupils develop the

competencies and attitudes essential for democratic living. Mezieobi and Edinyang (2013) opine that social studies have contributed to the socio-economic, socio-political, and socio-technological advancement of the nation as it liberates individuals to adjust, adapt, and accommodate varying ethnic groups. In their study in Nigeria, Mezieobi and Edinyang (2013) assert that one of the specific aims of establishing social studies is to identify and appreciate the cultural similarities and differences of the people. They further claim that cross-cultural interaction through national festivals of art and culture makes citizens understand and interact and appreciate their art and craft and respect the cultural diversity that enhances cooperation.

However, social studies being the engine of social cohesion to increase social capitalism, have been marginalised in training. Hence, for the economists to have value for good relations amongst states therefore, there is a need for emphasis on subjects such as social studies that could provide the necessary knowledge on the need for social harmony in society. Social Studies subject is instrumental in enabling learners to achieve most of the cohesion and integration objectives (Oyibe, 2015). These have resulted in the lowering of the productivity and job satisfaction of teachers of the subjects and this has negatively affected the aspects of social cohesiveness as witnessed in society. There was therefore need for the current study to ascertain the teacher's perception of the relevance of the social studies subject and its role in fostering social cohesion and integration for good citizenship. There is enormous pressure on education systems to adopt corporatisation and marketisation approaches as observed by Rizvi and Lingard (2010).

In Kenya, this has led to a proliferation of foreign curricula. Such curricula do not promote national cohesion and integration. Learners study the history of foreign countries at the expense of learning the history of their own country. Such learners are unlikely to be patriotic to their own country. It has also been noted that in such cases, the instructional materials used in such schools may not expose the learners to experiences that foster national values. Eventually, as observed, most of these children become alienated in their own country (Oyo, 2008). Therefore, it is against this background that the current study sought to examine the effectiveness of

Social Studies education in fostering national cohesion and integration as perceived by teachers of this subject in primary schools in Kenya. This study sought to ascertain the perception of teachers, pupils, and Curriculum Support Officers (CSOs) on the role of the elementary Social Studies Curriculum in fostering national cohesion and integration. The study was guided by the following research objective:

To find out the challenges encountered by teachers in the implementation of the Social Studies Curriculum in fostering national cohesion and integration

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Opportunities in Implementation of Social Studies School Curriculum

The importance of social studies instruction cannot be underestimated as it prepares future citizens and leads them to independent lives. Scruggs et al. (2008) stated that social studies instruction is mainly to prepare students for making decisions that can improve the society in which they live. They explained that social studies are more than learning the facts. Moreover, students can apply problem-solving skills to authentic situations and explore new questions. Scruggs et al. (2008) further stated that students could assimilate the knowledge and apply it to their own educational aspirations and become more informed and productive learners.

The challenges, including insecurity, ethnic distribution, and regionalisation of national wealth, among others, hinder the development of national integration. Edinyang et al. (2015); Sim and Print (2005) assert that the nature and purpose of the social studies curriculum in the light of the demands of citizenship education in formal schooling is the primary instrument. Schools become the vehicle through which youth are inculcated with the values and goals of the nation.

In primary schools, social studies include integrated geography, history, civics, and religion, while in secondary schools, citizenship is taught in history and government subjects which is optional. The opportunities and challenges that exist within the school curriculum to foster national cohesion and integration are to look at the way students are

taught about the skills needed to become engaged citizens who can participate in the debates of their nation (Sim & Print, 2004).

The new generation is to be engaged and involved in the political life of the nation. Therefore, the learners need to learn the knowledge and the skills of informed citizens. It is ultimately the teacher who makes a difference in implementing a curriculum which will truly prepare young people to be effective citizens in future. Taghreed and Fakhri (2014) aver that some teachers do not include controversial issues in their classroom or prefer certain issues with low public sensitivity. Some issues are ignored or briefly skimmed over to prevent learners from being aware of these issues in depth, the likes as conflict, disagreement, and integral elements of teaching; therefore, all teachers must anticipate controversy and plan to incorporate it constructively.

To find out the opportunities and challenges that exist within the social studies curriculum to foster national cohesion and integration. According to Taghreed & Fakhri (2014), teachers are viewed as a vehicle for preparing students to avoid and resolve conflict and to look for peaceful solutions. They have continued to argue out that the social studies classroom emphasises on achievement and acquisition of objectives associated with the cognitive domain while the affective and psychomotor domains are neglected. Students, on the other hand, should develop critically and informed decision-making skills, learn to be tolerant and respectful to different views as well as develop empathy with others, and learn to communicate effectively and develop global awareness.

Teachers' perceptions are the thoughts or mental images that they have regarding the use of curriculum to foster national unity. It is shaped by their background knowledge and life experience. Teachers face a lot of constraints when teaching controversial topics and use a lot of time, and lack appropriate materials for teaching in order to be able to develop informed and enlightened citizens. Taghreed and Fakhri (2014) suggested that there is a need to motivate teachers to gain more awareness of the sensitive issues which are predominantly relevant in the social studies curriculum for classroom deliberations.

The nature and extent of current inter-school cooperation were that the schools were to be visited regularly for joint activities such as debate, sporting, and cultural exchange, which are conducted face to face. These will break down religious and cultural barriers and build cooperation among the citizens. Corot et al. (2006) state that inter-institution activities like debates, group discussions, and cultural exchange will break the misconception stereotypes about a community among students and establish a friendship that will last beyond the school because they (learners) will test and better understand their own cultural identity and hence foster national integration and cohesion. These attributes are highlighted in the Social Studies curriculum.

As noted by Njeng'ere (2014), there is a need for curriculum planning with the emphasis that education should serve to enable society to achieve its needs and aspirations. One such need in Kenya, which has remained largely elusive, is national cohesion and integration. As noted by Njeng'ere (2014) and Oluoch (1982), there are opportunities for social studies in the promotion of national cohesion and integration in terms of the formal, non-formal and informal dimensions.

One of the most powerful curriculum dimensions is the in-formal, which Oluoch (1982) explains as the dimension that entails interaction between learners and the environment where they are growing up, either in school or other environments. This is one of the most powerful curriculum dimensions. The value systems of learners form at the age when they are in primary and secondary schools, and therefore there is a need for an education system that identifies all the available opportunities to help the learners acquire desirable values. Njeng'ere (2014) argues that education is still a very important vehicle for fostering national cohesion and integration. He further noted that the MOE had made significant investments in training school managers and teachers in Child-Friendly Schools by use of rules and regulations. The creation of national schools, with students being admitted from every county, is also supposed to enhance national cohesion and integration through interactions that help them learn, appreciate, and respect each other's cultures. School uniform also helps to create cohesion among learners. However, there is a need

to reflect a little more on the strategies that have been adopted in curriculum design, implementation, and the context of implementation. Some curriculum dimensions like the informal are very critical and need to be planned in a holistic way to include policies of school staffing and the role models the society is creating for the children (Njeng'ere, 2014).

### **Challenges in the Implementation of Social Studies School Curriculum**

There are many challenges the education sector faces in fostering national cohesion and integration through the curriculum. Some of these include the gradual subordination of social capital to human capital; the gap between the intended, implemented, and achieved curriculum; and the context in which the curriculum is implemented (Njeng'ere, 2014).

The gap between the intended, implemented, and achieved curriculum in Kenya is too wide (KIE 2011). With the increased enrolment in schools and a limited number of places in 'quality' secondary schools and limited places in universities that offer high-stakes courses like medicine, engineering etc., educational competition has increased making schools and families respond by devising strategies of 'teaching to the test' (Njeng'ere, 2014). This has resulted in the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that would foster national cohesion and integration and are not likely to be tested not to be taught at primary and secondary levels (KIE 2011). Another factor that has been noted to contribute to this state also is that whereas the KICD is expected to offer orientation to teachers on how to teach new or revised curricula, this is either inadequately done or sometimes not done at all (Njeng'ere, 2014).

Another challenge to curriculum implementation in Kenya is the context of curriculum implementation. A summative evaluation of the primary and secondary school curricula carried out by KICD revealed that the negative practices learners encounter outside of school do not enable them to internalise the values of nationalism, patriotism, and national unity as spelt out in the national goals of education. As noted by Njeng'ere (2014), the opportunity to foster cohesion and integration has been hampered by reckless statements from opinion leaders in society who talk ill of some ethnic groups, defy court orders, and get away with it. This,

according to him, makes children start to internalise that it is not wrong to stereotype ethnic groups and disobey authority.

Njeng'ere (2014) further noted that in the non-formal dimension, although many schools participate in music and drama festivals, these are reduced to competition rather than a dimension to inculcate the intended cohesion and integration values. The evidence shows that schools only put on plays and practice songs for the festivals but rarely do the same outside the festival calendar. The unintended outcome is that many schools that do not stand a chance to win in the festivals and do not have an active drama or music presence at schools (Njeng'ere, 2014).

More so, as indicated in the literature, the government uses national schools as a strategy for fostering national cohesion and integration. However, there is a major challenge associated with staffing in most schools as very often, the school principal, teaching staff, and support staff are drawn from the community where the school is located as children are the only ones drawn from different ethnic communities (Njeng'ere, 2014). He further notes that in some instances, some children feel alienated as there have been reported cases of bullying and discrimination. He suggested the need for the government to ensure that national schools draw both teaching and non-teaching staff from across the country if the intended outcome of fostering national cohesion and integration is to be achieved. Therefore, the challenges within the educational setup in general and the social studies curriculum need to be addressed for the realisation of the goals of the social studies subject in fostering national cohesion and integration and thus the need for this study.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Research Study Design

This study adopted the descriptive survey design with both quantitative and qualitative approaches. This design was chosen because it is appropriate for educational fact-finding as it yields a great deal of information which is accurate. It also enables a researcher to gather data at a point in time and use it to describe the nature of the existing conditions. This research aimed to gather accurate information

that is observable in the teachers' perception of the role of the elementary Social Studies curriculum in fostering national cohesion and integration.

To accomplish this, there was a need to supplement the empirical data with qualitative data in the present study. The qualitative aspect of the research methodology was undertaken with one purpose in mind carrying out interviews to unravel meanings that the students attach to classroom interactions and/or experiences with the instructional material, particularly the strategies used in Social Studies instruction and how learners are developed towards understanding the need to live in harmony with one another for national cohesion and integration. By employing a descriptive survey design, the researcher was able to observe teachers in class and examine how teaching-learning takes place, the instructional methods and resources employed as well as how learners adapt to the instructions in their natural setting.

Bryman and Bell (2011) observed that descriptive research design involves observing and describing the behaviour of a subject without influencing it in any way. In addition, the researcher/research assistants' responses, and remarks, queried a selected group of subjects to garner their experiences with the methods of instruction commonly used by their teachers and how it relates to the promotion of the values for cohesiveness among the learners.

### Location of the Study

This study was carried out in Uasin Gishu County, which is one of the 47 counties of Kenya, located in the former Rift Valley Province. Eldoret town is the county's largest population centre as well as an administrative, commercial, and educational centre. Uasin Gishu is located on a plateau and borders Kericho to the south, Nandi to the southwest, Kakamega to the west, Trans Nzoia to the north, and Elgeiyo Marakwet to the east and Baringo to the southeast.

This county is cosmopolitan among them are all Kenyan communities, Africans, Asians, and Whites. Politically, it is organised with leadership from all tribes and races who are residing in the county. During election seasons, campaigns are too

vigorous that it affects the normal routine in the entire county.

### Study Population and Sample Size

The study focused on primary schools to target the head teachers, all social studies teachers, and pupils from classes five, six, seven, and eight, and zonal Curriculum Support Officers from Uasin Gishu County, Kenya.

**Table 1: Study Population and Sample Size**

Sub Counties	CSOs		H/Teachers		Teachers		Pupils	
	N	n	N	n	N	n	N	n
Soy	6	2	68	7	656	28	18,000	840
Turbo	8	2	8	8	732	32	20,500	960
Moiben	5	2	61	6	645	24	19,450	720
Kapseret	6	2	76	8	820	32	22,000	960
Kesses	7	2	88	9	1,022	36	18,600	1,080
Ainabkoi	8	2	93	9	957	36	25,300	1,080
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>467</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>4,832</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>98,600</b>	<b>5,640</b>

*N = population; n = sample size*

**Source:** UG County 2019

Information in *Table 1* gives the distribution of CSOs, schools, head teachers, teachers, and pupils in the study region. The county has six sub-counties, namely Soy, Turbo, Moiben, Kapseret, Kesses and Ainabkoi, having a total of 467 schools. The breakdown is as follows: Soy 68, Turbo 81, Moiben 61, Kapseret 76, Kesses 88 and Ainabkoi 93.

The sample size of 10% is deemed appropriate as it ensures an appropriate size is dealt with. Sampling is a research technique used to sample a specific number of objects from a respective group and reduces the larger population to a manageable size (Ogula, 2005). A proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to select schools from the six sub-counties of Uasin Gishu County based on the number of each group. Purposive sampling was used to select head teachers, and a simple random sampling technique was used to select four teachers from the social studies teachers of classes five, six, seven, and eight from each of the selected schools. The procedures helped to achieve the desired representation as they ensured the inclusion of sub-groups in the sample. This ensured that all primary schools in Uasin Gishu County had an equal chance of being selected for the study.

The sample size of the 47 schools, 47 head teachers, 188 social studies teachers, 5,640 pupils, and 12 curriculum support officers from the six sub-counties in Uasin Gishu County was acquired. The sample sizes are indicated in *Table 1*. Teachers'

responses were exclusively collected using questionnaires, while interview guides and questionnaires were used for both headteachers and CSOs, whereas focus group discussions were primarily used for pupils. In addition, lesson observation schedule for teachers was also one of the methods for data collection as it enabled the researcher to cross-check the information given through the questionnaires and interviews on the availability and use of instructional materials, procedures of teaching content, and the methods /approaches employed and the outcomes.

### Data Analysis

The collected data were analysed using descriptive statistics that involved the computation of frequencies and percentages. During the data entry process, the data were checked for accuracy and consistency of entry to ensure the integrity of the data. In addition, the quantitative analysis was supplemented by qualitative descriptions to provide a fuller picture of the findings, particularly in those areas that were not easily amenable to quantification.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Response Rate

The response rate of the subjects that participated in the study is presented in *Table 2*. From *Table 2*, it is

evident that the sampled respondents of 40 (85.11%) head teachers, 152 (80.85%) teachers, 10 (83.33%) CSOs, and 192 (81.70%) pupils

participated in the study. This showed positive participation, which can be used to represent the entire population.

**Table 2: Response Rate**

The Respondent	Expected Number	Actual Number	Response Rate
Headteachers	47	40	85.11%
Teachers	188	152	80.85%
Curriculum support officers	12	10	83.33%
Pupils	235	192	81.70%

**Demographic Information**

The study involved curriculum support officers, head teachers, and teachers from the selected

primary schools in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. This section gives information about the characteristics of the participants in this study.

**Table 3: Demographic Information of CSOs, Teachers and Headteachers**

CSOs			Teachers			Headteachers		
Demographic	f	%	Demographic	f	%	Demographic	f	%
<b>Gender</b>			<b>Teaching Experiences</b>			<b>Level of qualification</b>		
Male	6	60	Less than 5 Years	47	31	Certificate	6	15
Female	4	40	5-10 Years	50	33	Diploma	12	30
<b>Age</b>			Over 10 Years	55	36	Bachelor's Degree	17	43
20-30	1	10	<b>Age</b>			Masters	5	12
31-40	2	20	20 -30 years	28	18	<b>Experience</b>		
41-50	3	30	31 -40 years	55	36	1 - 5 Years	7	18
51 and above	4	40	41 -50 years	57	38	5-10 Years	12	30
<b>Length of Service</b>			51 -60 years	12	8	Over 10 Years	21	52
Less than 5 years	2	20	<b>Class</b>					
5 – 10 years	5	50	5	22	15			
Over 10 years	3	30	6	67	44			
<b>Number of Sub counties supervised</b>			7	25	16			
1	4	40	8	18	12			
2	3	30						
3	0	0						
4	2	20						
5	1	10						

**Social Studies Curriculum and National Cohesion and Integration**

The objective was to find out the opportunities and challenges in the implementation of the Social Studies curriculum towards fostering national cohesion and integration as perceived by the teachers who participated in the study. Opinions were sought from the curriculum support officers, head teachers, and teachers who participated in the

study, and the findings are presented in the following sections.

***Opportunities in Social Studies Curriculum that Promotes National Cohesion and Integration***

The study sought to identify the existing opportunities within the Social Studies Curriculum that can foster national cohesion and integration as perceived by the curriculum support officers, head



teachers, and subject teachers who participated in this study. The potential opportunities within the Social Studies Curriculum that can foster national cohesion and integration include training, workshops, and seminars. More emphasis is given

to cohesion topics that include: Citizenship, Human rights, moral values, responsibilities, games, and sports for better grasping of the national goal and the use of modern technology.

**Table 4: Opportunities in Social Studies Curriculum that promotes National Cohesion and Integration**

Opportunities	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
CSOs	1 (10%)	3 (3%)	2 (20%)	4 (40%)
H/Teachers	0	4 (10%)	12 (30%)	24 (60%)
Teachers	22 (14%)	0	34 (22%)	96 (63%)

The results that were reported by 4 (40%) of the CSOs, 24 (60%) of the head teachers, and 96 (63%) of the teachers who participated in the study show that there is a need for more opportunities for training, workshops, and seminars for the teachers to be able to understand the use of modern technology in instruction. Citizenship, human rights, moral values, responsibilities, games, and sports were opportunities within the Social Studies Curriculum that can foster national cohesion and integration, as reported by 2 (20%) of the CSOs, agreed by 12(30%) head teacher, and 34(22%) teachers. However, 3 (30%) of the CSOs and 4(10%) of the head teachers who participated in the study never gave any opinion. Finally, 1(10%) of the CSOs and 22(14%) teachers disagreed.

Studies on the constitutional reviews, with emphasis on corruption, are other potential opportunities within the social studies curriculum that can be used to instil values and goals amongst people that can serve to enhance awareness of the need to foster national cohesion and integration.

The head teachers were interviewed using the interview schedule on the role of the Social Studies curriculum in fostering national cohesion and integration. One of the statements sought their perception of what they thought were the existing opportunities within the Social Studies curriculum that could foster national cohesion and integration. The sentiments were noted as follows:

*"The emphasis on human rights, moral values, responsibilities, games and sports within the Social Studies Curriculum serves as a good*

*opportunity for fostering national cohesion and integration"* (Headteacher 4).

Other headteachers points that elaborated on this sentiment included:

*"In most cases, teachers use various methods that inculcate in learners an understanding of the need for reconciliation, mediation and togetherness that is learned from lessons in the national anthem, especially the need for national peace, love, and unity"* (Headteacher 5)

*"In the social studies curriculum, through topics such as governance, democracy, tourism, trade, and industrialisation learners' realisation of the need for national cohesion and integration is enhanced and hence this is a potential opportunity"* (Headteacher 6).

*"In the implementation of the social studies curriculum, the topics of constitutional review, training, workshops, emphasis against corruption and appreciation of diverse cultural practices of communities are seen as potential opportunities that can be used to foster national cohesion and integration"* (Headteacher 7).

Results show that the head teachers reported that the emphasis on human rights, moral values, responsibilities, games, and sports within the Social Studies Curriculum is a potential opportunity that can foster national cohesion and integration. It was also reported that reconciliation, mediation, national anthem, and national unity and the topics of governance, democracy, tourism, trade, and industrialisation offer opportunities for national cohesion and integration. Emphasis on appreciation

of diverse cultural practices, participation in constitutional review, training, workshops, and stressing against corruption in society within the social studies curriculum is a potential opportunity for fostering national cohesion and integration.

The findings of this study concur with the findings of Scruggs et al. (2008), who asserted that social studies instruction is mainly to prepare students for making decisions that can improve the society in which they live. Similarly, they agree with the assertions of Scruggs et al. (2008) that students can assimilate the knowledge and apply it to their own educational aspirations and become more informed and productive learners. The findings of this study on the role of social studies subject in promoting citizenship concur with the findings of Sim & Print (2005), who asserted that the nature and purpose of the social studies curriculum in the light of the demands of citizenship education in formal

schooling is the primary instrument and that schools are the vehicle through which youth are inculcated with the values and goals of the nation (Edinyang et al., 2015). The findings of this study corroborate the findings of Njeng'ere (2014), who asserted that the opportunities of social studies in the promotion of national cohesion and integration are in terms of the formal, non-formal, and informal dimensions.

**Challenges in the Implementation of Social Studies Curriculum**

There are several challenges in the implementation of the social studies curriculum in fostering national cohesion and integration. The study sought to identify the challenges as perceived by the curriculum support officers, head teachers, and the teachers who participated in the study. Among the challenges include time allocated, content, subordination, and omission, among others.

**Table 5: Challenges of time allocated to the teaching timetable in the Social Studies Curriculum**

Time	Not Enough	Normal	Undecided
CSOs	9(90%)	1(10%)	0
H/Teachers	36(90%)	4(10%)	0
Teachers	65(43%)	50(33%)	37(24%)

Results in *Table 5* show that 9 (90%) of the curriculum support officers reported that the period is not enough time to cover the content in the curriculum as a result of the existing gap between the intended, implemented, and achieved curriculum. However, 1 (10%) could not give any reason. The majority of the head teachers (36, 90%) reported that the wide curriculum makes teachers rush in implementation with no regard to learner understanding of concepts, while 4 (10%) never

gave any reason. It, therefore, takes longer to achieve the objectives due to the short time frame compared to the actual and intended time to cover the content. Results show that 65 (43%) of the teachers reported that the gap between the intended, implemented, and achieved is narrow, and hence the objectives are not fully achieved. The effect of this on curriculum implementation was reported by 50 (33%) of the teachers, while 37 (24%) of the teachers never commented on it (see *Table 5*).

**Table 6: Challenge on the wide content hindering the implementation of the Social Studies Curriculum**

Wide Content	Wide	Normal	Undecided
CSOs	6(60%)	4(40%)	0
H/Teachers	31(78%)	7(18%)	2(5%)
Teachers	67(44%)	85(56%)	0

As shown in *Table 6*, 6 (60%) of the Curriculum Support Officers reported that the curriculum content is wide with few topics that can promote national cohesion in the social studies curriculum.

The majority (31, 78%) of the head teachers reported that the context in which the curriculum is arranged provides many wide theoretical contents and is not practical-oriented work. It was reported

that 67 (44%) of the teachers reported that the teachers are given too much work that makes it difficult to emphasise the ideals of cohesion and integration. However, 4(40%) of the CSOs, 7(18%)

of the Headteachers, and 85(56%) of the teachers reported that the content was enough, while 2(5%) of the head teachers were undecided.

**Table 7: Challenge the subordination/omission that hinders the implementation of the Social Studies Curriculum**

Subordination	Hinder	Does not Hinder	Undecided
CSOs	7(70%)	2(20%)	1(10%)
H/Teachers	27(68%)	12(30%)	1(2%)
Teachers	115(76%)	23(15%)	14(9%)

Results in *Table 7* show that 7 (70%) of the curriculum support officers reported that the gradual subordination of social studies teachers might result in poor implementation of the curriculum. 27 (68%) of the head teachers reported that some teachers might skip or use less time in teaching about the need for national cohesion and integration. In the same vein, 115 (76%) of the teachers reported that the gradual subordination of social studies teachers is a factor that contributes to low morale and, thereby, poor implementation of the social studies curriculum. Lack of enough skills in the preferred

areas of teaching and learning the subject was identified as a contributing factor that hinders the implementation of the social studies curriculum. However, 2 (20%) of the curriculum support officers perceive the low morale of the teacher as a factor that could not lead to poor teaching/ learning of the subject, 12(30%) head teachers and 23(15%) teachers reported that omission could not impact on curriculum implementation. 1(10%) of CSOs, 1(2%) of head teachers and 14(9%) of the teachers who participated in this study were undecided.

**Table 8: Challenge the negative practices outside the school that hinder the implementation of the Social Studies Curriculum**

Negative Practices	Hinder	Does Not Hinder	Undecided
CSOs	9 (90%)	0	1(10%)
Headteachers	39 (97%)	0	1 (3%)
Teachers	138 (90%)	0	14 (9%)

A challenge in the implementation of the social studies curriculum, as reported by 9 (90%) of the curriculum support officers who participated in the study, is the negative practices that learners encounter outside of school that lead to myths and misconceptions that hinder the attainment of educational goals. Tribal, political, and cultural practices erode what learners gain in school affecting the learners' concentration in class and, thereby, performance. On the other hand, 39 (97%) of the head teachers reported that what learners are taught in school contradicts what they see in the community, especially political differences, ethnicity, cultural practices, and immoral behaviours are adopted from the community members as 1 (3%) of the head teachers did not give any reason. Results show that 138 (90%) of the

teachers reported that the negative practices learners encounter outside of the school are detrimental to their learning, and immoral experiences they encounter in society are not good, as 14 (9%) of the teachers never responded.

To ascertain the challenges in the implementation of the social studies curriculum, focus group interviews involving pupils were conducted using the focus group interview schedule. One of the statements in the schedule probed the sampled pupils to describe the challenges they face when learning social studies subjects.

*"We don't face any challenges"* (Pupil A).

*"The teachers just teach us how to relate well with others in the society and encourage us to*

*share materials willingly during instruction"* (Pupil B).

*"We are encouraged by our teachers to avoid bad behaviours"* (Pupil C).

Another student was quick to interject

*"The bad behaviours include discrimination, corruption, segregation, nepotism, tribalism and ethnicity"* (Pupil D).

Another statement sought to find out how the teachers use methods such as role play, dramatization, and discussion to enhance learners working in groups.

*"Teachers use the methods of role play, dramatisation, discussion and we are really encouraged to live together in harmony"* (Pupil E).

The teachers were asked about the challenges to the implementation of the Social Studies curriculum in schools. As reported, there is gradual subordination of social studies teachers who are demoralised and this affects teaching, hinders the attainment of objectives, and hence the poor implementation of the curriculum by the teachers. The context in which the social studies curriculum is structured is biased and gives a challenge during the lesson presentation. Furthermore, the content presented a wide theoretical concept which needs explanations without providing much practical work. It was also reported that what learners are taught in school contradicts the political differences and ethnicity that they encounter day by day in society.

To ascertain the sentiments as reported by the teachers, the head teachers were interviewed. What is the role of the social studies curriculum in fostering national cohesion and integration?

*"The subject promotes national cohesion and integration as learners are taught topics such as citizenship which aim at instilling good behaviours in the learners"* (Headteacher 1).

What support are teachers giving to the learners?

*"In most cases, teachers use various methods that involve learners working together, but in most classes, there are cases of overcrowding*

*that strains the available resources"* (Headteacher 2).

What negative practices do learners encounter outside the school environment?

*"What children encounter outside school really affects the attainment of the goals of teaching the subject. In most cases, the learners are influenced by the negative practices of ethnicity, nepotism, and tribalism that they encounter in society. This really affects the implementation of the Social Studies curriculum"* (Headteacher 3).

The findings agree with other findings on the challenges within the social studies curriculum, which are insecurity, ethnic distribution, and regionalisation of national wealth, among others which hinder the development of national integration. According to Taghreed & Fakhri (2014), teachers are viewed as a vehicle for preparing students to resolve conflict and look for peaceful solutions. However, as found out in this study, just like in the study of Taghreed & Fakhri (2014), teachers face a lot of constraints when teaching controversial topics and use a lot of time, and lack appropriate materials for teaching to be able to develop informed and enlightened citizens. Some teachers also do not include controversial issues in their classrooms or prefer certain issues with low public sensitivity.

The challenges to social studies education in fostering national cohesion and integration were identified as gradual subordination of social capital to human capital, the gap between the intended, implemented and achieved curriculum and the context in which the curriculum is implemented (Njeng'ere, 2014). The findings agree with those of Rizvi and Lingard (2010), who agreed that the social values of equality and democracy have gradually been subordinated to dominant economic concerns. Accordingly, there is a global shift towards neoliberal values orientation, manifested most clearly in privatisation policies and in policies that assume the validity of market mechanisms to solve the various problems and crises facing governments.

The gap between the intended, implemented, and achieved curriculum in Kenya has also been identified as a challenge to the implementation of

the social studies curriculum and to fostering national cohesion and integration (KIE, 2011). The findings show that knowledge, skills, and attitudes that would foster national cohesion and integration are neither tested nor taught at primary and secondary levels (KIE, 2011). As it was pointed out by Njeng'ere (2014) that the strategy for KICD to offer teachers orientation on how to teach new or revised curricula was either inadequately done or sometimes not done at all. In Kenya, there have been moments of prioritising and motivating teaching and learning of science and mathematics at the expense of the arts, which are the main channels of developing social capital by increasing individual propensity to trust and be tolerant (World Bank, 2005). According to Njeng'ere (2014), such policies have resulted in a shortage of teachers of history and government and religious education subjects which are instrumental in enabling learners to achieve most of the cohesion and integration objectives.

As found out in this study, reckless statements from opinion leaders in society have hampered the opportunity to foster cohesion and integration and as noted by Njeng'ere (2014), the leaders who talk ill of some ethnic groups defy court orders and get away with it. This has made children understand that it is not wrong to stereotype ethnic groups and disobey authority. He further noted that despite the many schools' participation in music and drama festivals, these had been reduced to competition rather than a dimension to inculcate the intended cohesion and integration values (Njeng'ere, 2014).

From the findings, the curriculum support officers, head teachers, and teachers reported that training, workshops, and seminars should be emphasised. Awareness of human rights, moral values, responsibilities, games, and sports are the potential opportunities within the Social Studies Curriculum that can foster national cohesion and integration. This agrees with the findings of the study reported by Ewebus International (2014) on the nature and extent of current inter-school cooperation that found out that the schools needed to be visited regularly for joint activities such as debate, sporting, and cultural exchange that are conducted face to face. These were envisaged to break down barriers and build cooperation among the citizens.

## CONCLUSIONS

Social Studies Curriculum, as used in elementary schools, promotes National Cohesion and Integration by enhancing unity and togetherness and bringing a sense of respect hence building the spirit of cooperation among various ethnic groups. Gender responsiveness, child and human rights, social responsibility, integrity, moral values and rights, and responsibilities of citizens are important components of the Social Studies curriculum that promote national cohesion and integration. However, the teachers reported that there are omitted areas in the curriculum of Social Studies, such as citizenship, that would otherwise educate on how people can live together in peace and harmony and foster national cohesion and integration.

The potential opportunities within the Social Studies Curriculum that can further foster national cohesion and integration include training, workshops and seminars, human rights, moral values, responsibilities, games and sports, and constitutional review. There are several challenges in the implementation of the social studies curriculum in fostering national cohesion and integration. These results reveal the gap between the intended, implemented, and achieved; subordination of social studies teachers; the context in which the curriculum is implemented; and the contradictions between what learners are taught and what they see in the community. The wide curriculum of Social Studies with the limited time given makes teachers rush through syllabus coverage by use of few teacher-centred methods at the expense of learner mastery of concepts.

There are few topics on cohesion in the Social Studies curriculum coupled with the inability of teachers to teach the topics. The syllabus of the social studies subject is wide, and teachers face challenges in teaching various topics without knowledge of the context.

As found out, what learners are taught in school contradicts what they see in the community, especially political differences, and ethnicity. These negative practices learners encounter outside of school hinder goals achievement since myths and misconceptions dominate there. The tribal and cultural practices, which erode what learners gain in school, also affect their performance, especially

when it comes to concentration in class. These are manifest in the immoral behaviour displayed by community members and the negative practices learners encounter outside school that contradict their learning.

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