



Incorporating Diverse Cultural Perspectives into Social Studies Curricula: Teaching Multicultural Perspectives within Northern Ghana

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Abstract

The study employed a mixed-method research design, combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches. This design enabled the researchers to gather comprehensive data on the current state of multicultural education, challenges, opportunities, and teachers' practices regarding the incorporation of diverse cultural perspectives in Social Studies education. In all, 414 respondents were involved in the study, comprising 384 Social Studies teachers, 20 school Administrators, and 10 Curriculum Specialists. Through purposive and convenience sampling, the study respondents were selected from 20 schools sampled in 5 districts of the Northern Region of Ghana. The questionnaire was administered to the Social Studies teachers, while Individual Interviews and Focus Group Discussions were conducted for the Administrators and Curriculum Specialists. The findings showed that, while there was acknowledgment of the need for multicultural education, the Social Studies curriculum falls short of representing diverse cultural viewpoints adequately. Social Studies teachers encounter obstacles such as a lack of resources, and cultural biases, which limit their ability to incorporate diverse perspectives. However, there are promising opportunities for enhancing community-based learning, embracing local languages and dialects, and utilizing storytelling and oral traditions to foster cultural awareness and inclusivity. The study, therefore, recommends that the Ghana Education Service and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment should take a fresh look at the Social Studies curriculum to better represent a range of cultural perspectives. It further recommends that Social Studies teach-

ers be trained and supported to boost their cultural competence to enable them and bring diverse cultural viewpoints into their teaching.

Subject Areas

Social Studies

Keywords

Multicultural Education, Social Studies Curriculum, Cultural Diversity, Teacher Perceptions, Northern Ghana

1. Introduction

Background

[1] emphasizes that diverse cultural perspectives should be integrated into the Social Studies curriculum to foster cultural awareness, understanding, and empathy among students. Multicultural education encourages students to appreciate a variety of cultural practices, values, and beliefs. It is also essential for promoting critical thinking, as it enables students to navigate complex social issues. Furthermore, incorporating diverse cultural perspectives into the Social Studies curriculum helps combat cultural misrepresentation and stereotyping, leading to a deeper understanding of different cultures [2]. Integrating cultural diversity into education enhances students' ability to develop a sense of responsible citizenship. Exposure to diverse perspectives fosters global awareness and responsible citizenship. Learners who encounter various viewpoints are more likely to recognize the interconnectedness of global issues and cultivate a sense of social responsibility [3].

Despite the importance of incorporating diverse cultural perspectives into social studies curricula, there is a significant research gap in this area, particularly in the context of Northern Ghana, even though the Social Studies curriculum in Ghana aims at preparing students for national unity and cultural diversity [4], it is characterized by dominant cultural narratives while the minority voices are relegated to the background [5]. The Ghanaian society has over 100 ethnic groups [6] with the Northern Region alone having over 20 of these ethnic groups [7]. The region is home to several marginalized communities including Dagomba, Konkomba, and Bimoba communities [8]. Northern Ghana is bedeviled by a number of development challenges such as cultural marginalization, poverty and limited access to formal education [6]. This study aims to address this gap by exploring the incorporation of diverse cultural perspectives into social studies curricula in Northern Ghana.

There are several problems associated with incorporating diverse cultural perspectives into Social Studies curricula in Northern Ghana. The current Social Studies curriculum in Ghana often lacks representation of diverse cultural perspectives, particularly those of minority groups in Northern Ghana [7]. The curricu-

lum often perpetuates cultural misrepresentation and stereotyping, reinforcing negative attitudes and biases toward minority groups [9]. Teachers in Northern Ghana often lack the preparation and resources needed to effectively incorporate diverse cultural perspectives into their teaching practices [8]. The curriculum materials used in Social Studies education in Northern Ghana often lack diversity and inclusivity, perpetuating dominant cultural narratives [5]. Despite these challenges, there are opportunities for cultural exchange and understanding, promoting empathy and critical thinking among students. Specifically, the objectives of this study were to:

- 1) Examine the current state of multicultural education in social studies curricula in Northern Ghana.
- 2) Identify the challenges and opportunities for incorporating diverse cultural perspectives into social studies education in the region.
- 3) Explore teachers' practices regarding the incorporation of diverse cultural perspectives in social studies education.

Research Questions that guided the study are:

- 1) To what extent are diverse cultural perspectives represented in social studies curricula in Northern Ghana?
- 2) What are the challenges and opportunities for incorporating diverse cultural perspectives into Social Studies Education in Northern Ghana?
- 3) What are the practices social studies teachers in Northern Ghana use to incorporate diverse cultural perspectives into their teaching?

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Design

The study employed a mixed-methods research design, combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches, a design which enabled the researchers to gather comprehensive data on the current state of multicultural education, challenges, opportunities, and Social Studies teachers' practices [10] in incorporating cultural diversity in their classrooms. Considering the research problem, the purpose, and the research questions formulated the researchers adopted a mixed methods design. The quantitative data provided an overview of the current state of multicultural education in Social Studies curricula, while the qualitative data provided in-depth insights into the challenges and opportunities for incorporating diverse cultural perspectives. The qualitative data also provided rich descriptions of teachers' practices in incorporating cultural diversity in their classrooms. By using a mixed methods design, this study achieved triangulation of data, which increased the validity and reliability of findings. Quantitative data provided numerical insights, while qualitative data provided contextual and thematic insights. The mixed methods design provided a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem, as it combined the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative approaches [11]. This design enabled the researchers to explore the complexity of multicultural education in Social Studies curricula in Northern Ghana. Mixed methods

design generally offers flexibility and adaptability, allowing the researcher to adjust the research approach as needed [12]. This is particularly important in this study, as the researchers needed to adapt the data collection methods based on the responses from teachers and other stakeholders.

The population for this study was comprised of Social Studies Teachers and Education officials in Northern Ghana. Specifically, the population included Social Studies Teachers in basic schools (primary and junior high schools) in Northern Ghana and Education officials, including District and Regional Directors of Education in Northern Ghana. All Social Studies teachers in both public and private Junior High Schools (JHS) in the Region constituted the accessible population. The objectives of this study necessitated a focus on Social Studies teachers and Social Studies curricula in Northern Ghana. This population was chosen because teachers are crucial in implementing multicultural education in the classroom [13]. By exploring Social Studies teachers' practices, this study identified potential barriers and facilitators to incorporating diverse cultural perspectives. Multicultural education is essential in Social Studies curricula to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion [1].

2.2. Sample Size

A purposive sampling strategy was used to select 5 districts in Northern Ghana, namely: Tamale Metropolitan, West Mamprusi, East Mamprusi, Tolon, and Kumbugu [10]. These districts were selected based on their geographical location, cultural diversity, and accessibility. A stratified random sampling strategy was used to select 20 schools (10 public and 10 private) from the selected districts [14]. The schools were stratified based on their location (urban or rural) and type (public or private). The sample size for this study was determined using a combination of quantitative and qualitative sampling strategies. For the quantitative component of the study, a survey questionnaire was administered to Social Studies Teachers in Northern Ghana [10]. The sample size was calculated using the following formula:

$$n = (Z^2 * p * (1 - p)) / E^2, \text{ where:}$$

n = sample size, Z = Z-score (1.96 for 95% confidence level), p = estimated proportion of teachers who incorporate multicultural education into their teaching practices (0.5, assuming 50% of teachers incorporate multicultural education) and E = margin of error (0.05) [15].

Plugging in the values, we get:

$$n = (1.96^2 * 0.5 * (1 - 0.5)) / 0.05^2$$

$$n = 384.16.$$

Rounding up to the nearest whole number, we arrived at a sample size of 384 social studies teachers.

For the qualitative component of the study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with Social Studies teachers and school Administrators [16]. Sampling holds considerable significance in research studies, as emphasized by [17]. It not only saves time and resources but also yields quicker results due to the smaller

sample size compared to the entire population. Additionally, it ensures more precise outcomes when conducted by trained and experienced investigators. A sufficiently sized sample ensures a representative cross-section of the target population, allowing for valid generalization of the obtained data. For this study, purposive and convenience sampling methods were employed, ensuring that the Administrators and Curriculum Specialists selected were well-acquainted with the objectives of Social Studies, and aligned with the study's purpose. The sample size was determined using purposive sampling, where participants were selected based on their expertise and experience in multicultural education. In all, 384 Social Studies teachers were selected from the 20 sampled schools using a random sampling strategy [15]. The teachers were required to have at least 2 years of experience teaching Social Studies. Twenty (20) school administrators (10 Heads of JHS and 10 Departmental Heads) were selected from the 20 sampled schools using a purposive sampling strategy [18]. The administrators were required to have at least 3 years of experience in school administration. Ten (10) curriculum specialists were selected from the Ghana Education Service using a purposive sampling strategy [19]. The specialists were required to have at least 5 years of experience in curriculum development. Thus, the total sample size for the study was 384 (Social Studies teachers) + 20 (school administrators) + 10 (curriculum specialists) = 414 respondents [10].

2.3. Instruments for Data Collection

A survey questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data from Social Studies teachers in Northern Ghana. The questionnaire was designed to examine the current state of multicultural education in Social Studies curricula, while the Interview and FGD guides were designed to identify challenges and opportunities for incorporating diverse cultural perspectives. After constructing the questionnaires, their validity and reliability were taken into consideration. They were thoroughly vetted before the final approval by experts in the field of research from the Department of Social Sciences Education, Tamale College of Education, to establish validity. Examination of the validity was aimed at making sure that the instrument adopted measured what it was supposed to measure. To ensure reliability, the questionnaire, Interview, and FGD guides were pilot-tested in four selected Junior High Schools within Tamale Metro (but not part of the selected schools for the study) to identify loopholes for correction, if any [11]. The aim was to avoid any weaknesses before producing the final version for implementation. The major limitation of the questionnaire was that only closed-ended questions were used, which prevented the respondents from openly giving out responses that could have further enriched the study. Data from the questionnaire test were collected and entered using SPSS version 20, and Cronbach's Alpha (α) was computed to determine the reliability coefficient. A reliability coefficient of 0.90 was obtained for the questionnaire. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data obtained. Frequencies and percentages were used to analyze data on the demographic vari-

ables.

2.4. Data Processing and Analysis

To address the research questions that guided the study, the data obtained from the respondents were checked for corrections before the coding and tabulation of the questionnaires for analysis. The data was then processed using Statistical Product for Service Solution (SPSS) version 20. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the quantitative data. Mean scores and percentages were used to determine responses to the research questions on incorporating diverse cultural perspectives in the Social Studies curriculum. Research Question One examined the extent to which diverse cultural perspectives are represented in social studies curricula in Northern Ghana.

It was measured using a five-point Likert scale where strongly agree = 5, agree = 4, not sure = 3 disagree = 2 and strongly disagree = 1. It was then analyzed using the mean score. The mean score was used to determine respondents' perspectives on the extent to which diverse cultural perspectives are represented in Social Studies curricula in Northern Ghana. A mean score below 3 indicated below average perspective while a mean score of 3.0 and above indicated that Social Studies teachers' perspective was above average.

Research questions two and three assessed qualitative data from the study, administering individual Interview guides and FGD to the School Administrators. Research Question Two assessed the challenges and opportunities for incorporating diverse cultural perspectives into Social Studies Education. Research question three investigated the Curriculum Specialists and the practices social studies teachers in Northern Ghana use to incorporate diverse cultural perspectives into their teaching. The qualitative data were analysed using the interpretive method based on the themes that were identified in the data collection. The researchers related the themes to the research questions and interpreted them based on issues the respondents raised.

2.5. Ethical Consideration

With permission from the Northern Regional Director for Education, the study participants were provided informed consent before data collection which involved a clear explanation of the study's purpose, procedures, and potential risks and benefits [20], assuring participants that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time [21]. Their consent was sought before the interview was scheduled with them. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, the researchers used pseudonyms or codes to protect participants' identities [22] as well as storing data in a secure location, such as a password-protected computer or encrypted files [11]. Also, draft findings of the study were given to them to go through to be sure their views were not misinterpreted. Given the focus on multicultural education, the researchers approached the study with cultural humility, recognizing the researchers' own biases and limitations [23]. They also ensured

that the study respected and valued diversity by avoiding cultural appropriation or exploitation [24]. To minimize potential harm, the study conducted a thorough risk assessment to identify potential risks and took steps to mitigate them [18]. The study also provided support and resources for participants who might experience distress or discomfort during the study [25].

2.6. The Theoretical Foundations of Multicultural Education

This section aligns with the theory that served as the foundation for incorporating diverse cultural perspectives into the Social Studies curriculum in northern Ghana. Recognizing that theories play a crucial role in shaping educational practices, this research emphasized the importance of multicultural education with pertinent learning theories to enhance the quality of educational programs at all levels in Ghana. This study is, therefore, grounded in the theoretical frameworks of Critical Multicultural Education (CME) and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP). CME emphasizes the importance of recognizing and challenging power imbalances and promoting social justice [19]. CRP emphasizes the importance of using cultural knowledge to improve student learning and promote academic achievement (Ladson-Billings, 2014). CME is a theoretical framework that recognizes the importance of multicultural education in promoting social justice and challenging dominant narratives [19]. CME emphasizes the need to identify and challenge the power imbalances that exist in society and in education [19]. It also promotes social justice and equity in education, recognizing the importance of diversity and inclusivity [1].

3. Results and Discussion

The study was guided by three research questions. The first question was, to what extent are diverse cultural perspectives represented in Social Studies curricula in Northern Ghana? The second was, what are the challenges and opportunities for incorporating diverse cultural perspectives into Social Studies education in Northern Ghana? The third was, what are the perceptions and practices that Social Studies teachers in Northern Ghana use to incorporate diverse cultural perspectives into their teaching? For the qualitative data collection, individual interviews and focus group discussions were administered to 20 school administrators (10 heads of JHS and 10 departmental heads) and 10 Curriculum Specialists from the 5 Districts of the Region. The data were analyzed to identify categories, themes, and patterns relevant to the study objectives. This section presents results from data collected, analyzed and interpreted in line with the research questions of the study.

3.1. Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The demographic information of the respondents was necessary to understand the nature of the respondents who were taking part in the research study. The information included gender, age, level of education, professional experience, years of work experience and in-service training. A summary of the demographic back-

ground of the study participants is presented in **Tables 1-3**. The demographic characteristics of the 384 Social Studies Teachers in Northern Ghana are presented in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of social studies teachers.

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender of Respondent	Male	264	68.75
	Female	120	31.15
Age of respondent	<25 years	110	28.75
	25 - 35	105	27.50
	36 - 45	96	25.00
	46 - 55	73	18.75
	>55	0	0.00
Highest level of education	Certificate A	62	16.25
	Diploma	202	52.50
	1st Degree	96	25.00
	2nd Degree	24	6.25
	PhD	0	0.0
Any professional education in social studies?	Other	0	0.0
	Yes	384	100
How long have you been teaching social studies in the JHS	No	0	0
	<1 year	67	17.50
	1 - 5	149	38.75
	6 - 10	96	25.00
Have you attended in-service training in Social Studies before?	>10	72	18.75
	Yes	82	21.25
Total	No	302	78.75
		384	100

Source: Field Survey (2024).

Gender Distribution

The majority of respondents (68.75%) were male, while 31.15% were female [26]. This suggests that males dominate the teaching profession in Social Studies in Northern Ghana. Research has shown that teacher gender can influence student outcomes and teacher-student relationships [18].

Age Distribution

The age distribution of respondents shows that 28.75% were under 25 years old, 27.50% were between 25 and 35 years old, 25.00% were between 36 and 45 years

old, and 18.75% were between 46 and 55 years old. This suggests that the majority of Social Studies teachers in Northern Ghana are relatively young. The youthful nature of the respondents is indicative of the fact that the future of the Region and the country (Ghana) is essentially dependent on the youth; as such, the number of young people interested in the teaching of Social Studies is seen as very significant [10]. Research has shown that teacher age and experience can influence teacher effectiveness and student outcomes [19].

Educational Qualifications

The majority of the respondents (52.50%) held a diploma, while 25.00% held a first degree, and 6.25% held a second degree [10]. This suggests that Social Studies teachers in Northern Ghana have a relatively high level of educational qualification. This implies that teachers teaching in the Junior high schools in the Region have the minimum academic qualifications to teach at the junior high school level. Research has shown that teacher education and qualifications can influence teacher effectiveness and student outcomes [26].

Professional Education in Social Studies

All respondents (100%) reported having professional education in Social Studies [19]. This suggests that Social Studies teachers in Northern Ghana have received specialized training in their subject area. The fact that the majority of the teachers had professional education in Social Studies is inconsistent with earlier observations made by 19 that Social Studies teachers receive fewer professional development opportunities than teachers in other disciplines. The implication of the results suggests that most of these teachers teaching Social Studies may not find it difficult to cope with the primary purpose of teaching the subject. There was a high percentage of teachers with professional qualifications, yet the widespread perception of inadequate multicultural representation in the curriculum could be due to a lack of resources needed to ensure multicultural representation.

Teaching Experience

The majority of respondents (38.75%) reported having 1 - 5 years of teaching experience in social studies, while 25.00% reported having 6 - 10 years of experience, and 18.75% reported having more than 10 years of experience [26]. This suggests that Social Studies teachers in Northern Ghana have a relatively moderate level of teaching experience.

In-Service Training

Only 21.25% of respondents reported having attended in-service training in Social Studies, while 78.75% reported not having attended such training [18]. This suggests that there may be a need for more professional development opportunities for social studies teachers in Northern Ghana. Years of teaching, and education level did not significantly influence the teachers' perception of the curriculum's multicultural inclusivity. Social Studies teachers encounter obstacles such as a lack of resources, and cultural biases, which limit their ability to incorporate diverse perspectives.

Demographic Characteristics of School Administrators

There was no difference in findings between the public and private schools, or between urban and rural schools. The demographic characteristics of the 20 administrators in Northern Ghana are presented in **Table 2**.

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of school administrators.

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender of Respondent	Male	16	80
	Female	4	20
Age of respondent	<25 years	1	5
	25 - 35	8	40
	36 - 45	7	35
	46 - 55	4	20
	>55	0	0
Highest level of education	Certificate A	1	5
	Diploma	6	30
	1st Degree	8	40
	2nd Degree	5	25
	PhD	0	0
Any professional education in social studies?	Yes	20	100
	No	0	0
Years of experience in curriculum development	<5 year	0	0
	5 - 8	5	25
	9 - 12	10	50
	>12	5	25
Total		20	100

Source: Field Survey (2024).

Majority of respondents (80%) were male, while 20% were female. This imbalance is consistent with the underrepresentation of women in educational leadership positions in Ghana [27]. The age distribution of respondents shows that 40% were between 25 - 35 years old, while 35% were between 36 - 45 years old. This suggests that the majority of school administrators in Northern Ghana were middle-aged, which may impact their perspectives on multicultural education [1]. The highest level of education attained by respondents is predominantly a first-degree (40%), followed by a second-degree (25%). This indicates that school administrators in Northern Ghana have a relatively high level of education, which may influence their understanding and implementation of multicultural education [26].

The majority of school administrators were male, which may impact the representation of diverse perspectives in educational leadership [27]. The middle-aged

demography of school administrators could influence their perspectives on multicultural education, with more experienced administrators potentially holding more traditional views [1].

Demographic Characteristics of Curriculum Specialists

The demographic characteristics of the 10 Curriculum Specialists in Northern Ghana are presented in **Table 3**.

Table 3. Demographic characteristics of curriculum specialists.

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender of Respondent	Male	7	70
	Female	3	30
Age of respondent	<25 years	0	0
	25 - 35	3	30
	36 - 45	5	50
	46 - 55	2	20
	>55	0	0
Highest level of education	Certificate A	0	0
	Diploma	1	10
	1st Degree	8	80
	2nd Degree	1	10
	PhD	0	0
	Other	0	0
Any professional education in social studies?	Yes	10	100
	No	0	0
Years of experience in school administration	<3 year	0	0
	3 - 8	5	50
	9 - 14	4	40
	>14	1	10
Total		10	100

Source: Field Survey (2024).

The majority of the respondents (70%) were male, while 30% were female. This imbalance is consistent with the underrepresentation of women in educational leadership positions in Ghana [27]. The age distribution of respondents shows that 50% were between 36 - 45 years old, while 30% were between 25 - 35 years old. This suggests that the majority of curriculum specialists in Northern Ghana were middle-aged, which could impact their perspectives on multicultural education [1]. The highest level of education attained by respondents is predominantly a first-degree (80%), followed by a second-degree (10%). This indicates that curriculum specialists in Northern Ghana had a relatively high level of education, which could influence their understanding and implementation of multicultural

education [26]. All respondents (100%) had received professional education in social studies, which suggests that they had a strong foundation in the subject area. The demographic characteristics of curriculum specialists in Northern Ghana had implications for the implementation of multicultural education in the region. The majority of curriculum specialists were male, which could impact the representation of diverse perspectives in educational leadership [27].

3.2. Research Question One: To What Extent Are Diverse Cultural Perspectives Represented in Social Studies Curricula in Northern Ghana?

The incorporation of cultural diversity into education enhances the learners' ability to develop the notion of responsible citizenship. Cultural diversity in education contributes to developing global awareness and responsible citizenship. Learners exposed to diverse perspectives are more likely to appreciate the interconnectedness of global issues and develop a sense of social responsibility [3]. From the Social Studies teachers that were surveyed, the study investigated the extent to which diverse cultural perspectives are represented in Social Studies curricula in Northern Ghana using a five-point Likert scale where strongly agree = 5, agree = 4, not sure = 3 disagree = 2, and strongly disagree = 1. As depicted in **Table 4** below, questions on diverse cultural perspectives were asked, and their responses are summarized in the table. The table presents the responses of JHS Social Studies teachers in Northern Ghana regarding the representation of diverse cultural perspectives in the social studies curriculum.

Out of the total number of 384 Social Studies teachers surveyed, 250 (65%) of them, with a calculated mean score of 2.3 were not of the view that the social studies curriculum in Northern Ghana adequately represents the cultural practices and traditions of local communities. Only 84 (21%) shared the view that the Social Studies curriculum in Northern Ghana adequately represents the cultural practices and traditions of local communities. The results further show that 50 (13%) teachers were not sure if the Social Studies curriculum in Northern Ghana adequately represents the cultural practices and traditions of local communities. The observations suggest that a significant majority (65%) of Social Studies teachers in Northern Ghana do not believe that the social studies curriculum adequately represents the cultural practices and traditions of local communities. This finding is consistent with recent literature, which highlights the limitations of the social studies curriculum in Ghana in terms of representing local cultures and perspectives.

An overwhelming majority of 280 (73%) with a calculated mean score of 2.2 were not of the view that the Social Studies curriculum includes diverse perspectives and experiences of various ethnic groups in Northern Ghana. Only 84 (22%) shared this view, while 20 (5.2%) were not sure if the Social Studies curriculum includes diverse perspectives and experiences of various ethnic groups in Northern Ghana. The observations suggest that a significant majority (73%) of Social Studies teachers in Northern Ghana do not believe that the Social Studies

Table 4. JHS social studies teachers' responses on diverse cultural perspectives of social studies in the Northern Region.

	SA		A		NS		D		SD		Mean
	F	(%)	F	(%)	F	(%)	F	(%)	F	(%)	
Section 1: Representation of Local Cultures											
The social studies curriculum in Northern Ghana adequately represents the cultural practices and traditions of local communities	40	10.4	44	11.5	50	13	100	26	150	39	2.3
The social studies curriculum includes diverse perspectives and experiences of various ethnic groups in Northern Ghana.	30	7.8	54	14	20	5.2	130	33.8	150	39	2.2
The social studies curriculum promotes critical thinking and analysis of multicultural issues in Northern Ghana.	20	5.2	64	16.7	30	7.8	110	28.6	160	41.7	2.1
Section 2: Inclusion of Diverse Perspectives											
The social studies curriculum in Northern Ghana includes diverse perspectives on historical events and cultural practices.	44	11.5	40	10.4	10	2.6	130	33.9	160	41.7	2.2
The social studies curriculum incorporates traditional knowledge and practices of local communities in Northern Ghana.	42	10.9	42	10.9	0	0	150	39.0	150	39.0	2.1
The social studies curriculum promotes cultural awareness and appreciation of diverse cultural groups in Northern Ghana.	40	10.4	40	10.4	50	13.0	104	27.1	150	39.0	2.3
Section 3: Representation of Marginalized Groups											

Continued

The social studies curriculum in Northern Ghana adequately represents the experiences and perspectives of marginalized groups, such as women and minority ethnic groups.	30	7.8	54	14.0	10	2.6	138	35.9	152	39.6	1.9
The social studies curriculum promotes critical thinking and analysis of social justice issues affecting marginalized groups in Northern Ghana.	20	5.2	64	16.7	0	0	100	26.0	200	52.0	1.9
The social studies curriculum includes diverse perspectives on the contributions and achievements of marginalized groups in Northern Ghana.	45	11.7	39	10.2	0	0	150	39.0	150	39.0	2.2

Source: Field Survey (2024). Key: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, NS = Not sure, D = Disagree, SD = S.

curriculum includes diverse perspectives and experiences of various ethnic groups. This finding is consistent with recent literature, which highlights the limitations of the Social Studies curriculum in Ghana in terms of representing diverse ethnic groups and perspectives. Research has shown that the Social Studies curriculum in Ghana tends to prioritize dominant ethnic groups and perspectives, marginalizing minority groups [27]. This can lead to a lack of representation and voice for minority groups, perpetuating social injustice and inequality [19].

As many as 270 (70%) with a calculated mean score of 2.1 were not in agreement that the social studies curriculum promotes critical thinking and analysis of multicultural issues in Northern Ghana. Only 84 (22%) felt that the Social Studies curriculum promotes critical thinking and analysis of multicultural issues in Northern Ghana while the remaining 30 (7.8%) were not sure if the curriculum promotes critical thinking and analysis of multicultural issues in Northern Ghana. The observations suggest that a significant majority (70%) of Social Studies teachers in Northern Ghana do not believe that the Social Studies curriculum promotes critical thinking and analysis of multicultural issues. This finding is consistent with recent literature, which highlights the limitations of the social studies curriculum in Ghana in terms of promoting critical thinking and multicultural educa-

tion. Multicultural issues and think critically about social justice and inequality [19].

On whether the Social Studies curriculum in Northern Ghana includes diverse perspectives on historical events and cultural practices, only 84 (22%) teachers were of the view that the social studies curriculum in Northern Ghana includes diverse perspectives on historical events and cultural practices. A vast majority of 290 (76%) with a calculated mean score of 2.2 did not share this view, while 10 (2.6%) teachers were not sure if the Social Studies curriculum in Northern Ghana includes diverse perspectives on historical events and cultural practices. The observations suggest that a significant majority (76%) of Social Studies teachers in Northern Ghana do not believe that the Social Studies curriculum includes diverse perspectives on historical events and cultural practices. This finding is consistent with that of [27] that the social studies curriculum in Ghana tends to prioritize dominant perspectives and narratives, marginalizing minority voices and experiences.

Out of the 384 teachers, only 84 (22%) with a calculated mean score of 2.1 felt that the social studies curriculum incorporates traditional knowledge and practices of local communities in Northern Ghana. As many as 300 (78%) of them felt otherwise. The observations suggest that a significant majority (78%) of Social Studies teachers in Northern Ghana do not believe that the social studies curriculum incorporates traditional knowledge and practices of local communities. Incorporating traditional knowledge and practices of local communities is essential for promoting cultural relevance, sensitivity, and awareness [1].

As many as 254 (66%) Social Studies teachers with a calculated mean score of 2.2 did not think that the social studies curriculum promotes cultural awareness and appreciation of diverse cultural groups in Northern Ghana. Only a few of them (80 representing 21%) indicated that the social studies curriculum promotes cultural awareness and appreciation of diverse cultural groups in Northern Ghana while 50 (13%) indicated that they were not sure if the curriculum promotes cultural awareness and appreciation of diverse cultural groups in Northern Ghana. The observations suggest that a significant majority (66%) of Social Studies teachers in Northern Ghana do not believe that the Social Studies curriculum promotes cultural awareness and appreciation of diverse cultural groups.

On whether the Social Studies curriculum in Northern Ghana adequately represents the experiences and perspectives of marginalized groups, as many as 190 (49%) with a calculated mean score of 1.9 were of the view that the curriculum does not adequately represent the experiences and perspectives of the marginalized groups. Only 84 (22%) shared the view that the curriculum adequately represents the experiences and perspectives of marginalized groups. Only 10 of them indicated that they were not sure of that. According to Adu-Yeboah, 2018, marginalized groups, such as women, ethnic minorities, and people with disabilities, are often excluded or marginalized in the social studies curriculum in Ghana.

An overwhelming majority (300 representing 78%) of the respondents, with a

calculated mean score of 1.9, did not think that the Social Studies curriculum promotes critical thinking and analysis of social justice issues affecting marginalized groups in Northern Ghana. Only 84 (22%) shared this view. Their responses were not different from what they offered when asked if the social studies curriculum includes diverse perspectives on the contributions and achievements of marginalized groups in Northern Ghana. Here again, an overwhelming majority (300 representing 78%) of the respondents, with a calculated mean score of 2.2, did not think that the social studies curriculum includes diverse perspectives on the contributions and achievements of marginalized groups in Northern Ghana. The observations suggest that an overwhelming majority (78%) of Social Studies teachers in Northern Ghana do not think that the social studies curriculum promotes critical thinking and analysis of social justice issues affecting marginalized groups. Additionally, a similar proportion (78%) of teachers do not think that the curriculum includes diverse perspectives on the contributions and achievements of marginalized groups. According to Adu-Yeboah, (2018), Social Studies curriculum in Ghana tends to focus on factual recall and rote memorization, rather than promoting critical thinking and social justice.

3.3. Research Question Two: What Are the Challenges and Opportunities for Incorporating Diverse Cultural Perspectives on Social Studies Education in Northern Ghana?

This section presents the outcomes derived from the collected, analyzed, and interpreted data, aligning with the specific objective two of the study. To maintain participant anonymity and confidentiality, individual contributors are identified by codes, and data from the interviews and FGD are internally coded utilizing the uncomplicated coding scheme detailed in **Table 5**.

Table 5. Codes representing JHS and departmental heads.

Interviewee	Code	Meaning of code
*JHS Head (District 1)	JH1 (1-2)	JHS Head respondents one to two of District one.
JHS Head (District 2)	JH2 (1-2)	JHS Head respondents one to two of District two.
JHS Head (District 3)	JH3 (1-2)	JHS Head respondents one to two of District three
JHS Head (District 4)	JH4 (1-2)	JHS Head respondents one to two of District four.
JHS Head (District 5)	JH5 (1-2)	JHS Head respondents one to two of District five.
Dep Head (District 1)	DH1 (1-2)	Departmental Head respondents one to two of District one.
Dep Head (District 2)	DH2 (1-2)	Departmental Head respondents one to two of District two
Dep Head (District 3)	DH3 (1-2)	Departmental Head respondents one to two of District three.
Dep Head (District 4)	DH4 (1-2)	Departmental Head respondents one to two of District four
Dep Head (District 5)	DH5 (1-2)	Departmental Head respondents one to two of District five

*District 1 = Tamale Municipal, District 2 = West Mamprusi, District 3 = East Mamprusi, District 4 = Kumbungu, District 5 = Tolon.

3.3.1. Experience in the Interview and Focus Group Discussion

According to [5], the curriculum materials used in Social Studies education in Northern Ghana often lack diversity and inclusivity, perpetuating dominant cultural narratives. Despite these challenges, there are opportunities for cultural exchange and understanding, promoting empathy and critical thinking among students. This section illustrates the perspectives of participants regarding the challenges and opportunities for incorporating diverse cultural perspectives into Social Studies Education in Northern Ghana. From the interview and focus group discussion with the school administrators, the following views were gathered:

Talking about the challenges and opportunities, JH1, 1 & 2 were of the view that,

The Social Studies curriculum in Northern Ghana is too rigid to accommodate diverse cultural perspectives. However, there are opportunities to partner with local communities to develop culturally responsive curricula and learning activities that reflect the diversity of Northern Ghana. Incorporating diverse cultural perspectives into social studies education can promote critical thinking and cultural awareness among students.

The above-stated opportunity supports the views of [27] who recommended a partnership with local communities to develop culturally responsive curricula.

Other views expressed by some of the respondents are as follows:

JH2, 1 stated that,

There is lack of resources and support for incorporating diverse cultural perspectives into social studies education. One opportunity, however, is that local languages and dialects can be used to teach social studies, promoting linguistic diversity and cultural relevance. The use of local case studies and examples can make social studies education more relevant and engaging for students from diverse cultural backgrounds.

JH2, 2 was of the view that,

Teachers in Northern Ghana lack the training and expertise to incorporate diverse cultural perspectives into social studies education. All the same, some opportunities for incorporating diverse cultural perspectives into Social Studies Education in Northern Ghana include cultural festivals and celebrations and storytelling. If we incorporate cultural festivals and celebrations into the curriculum, we will be able to promote cultural awareness and appreciation. In addition to that, if we use storytelling and oral traditions to share cultural experiences, traditions, and values from diverse communities in Northern Ghana, we will see changes.

JH3, 1&2 were of the view that,

The dominant culture in Northern Ghana is often prioritized over other cultural perspectives in social studies education. However, there are some opportunities; for instance, we can collaborate with local museums and cultural centers to develop culturally responsive curricula and learning activities. We can also use our own locally authored textbooks and materials that reflect the cultural diversity of Northern Ghana, promoting cultural awareness and inclusion.

The above views are consistent with earlier recommendations by [28] to partner with local museums and cultural centers to develop culturally responsive curricula and learning activities. According to [29], incorporating diverse cultural perspectives into textbooks and materials, developing and using textbooks and materials that reflect the cultural diversity of Northern Ghana could promote cultural awareness and inclusion.

JH4, 1&2 were of the view that

There is a lack of community involvement and engagement in incorporating diverse cultural perspectives into social studies education.

According to JH5, 1 &2,

One major challenge is that, there is limited representation of diverse cultures in curriculum materials.

This observation is consistent with the views of [27] that the social studies curriculum in Ghana tends to prioritize dominant cultures, marginalizing minority groups.

3.3.2. Some of the Views Shared by the Departmental Heads Are as Follows

DH1, 1&2 indicated that,

Generally, teachers hardly get the necessary training and support to effectively incorporate diverse cultural perspectives into their teaching practices.

DH2, 1&2 mentioned limited resources and materials and Cultural bias and stereotypes: according to them,

Teachers often lack access to resources and materials that reflect the cultural diversity of Northern Ghana. Teachers may unintentionally perpetuate cultural bias and stereotypes in their teaching, which can reinforce cultural divisions and exclusion. However, nowadays, there are opportunities, to make use of technology to incorporate diverse cultural perspectives into the curriculum.

The above-mentioned opportunity corroborates the views of [29] who recommended that using technology and digital resources can provide access to a wide range of diverse cultural perspectives and resources for social studies education.

DH3, 1&2 indicated that,

Schools in Northern Ghana may face resource constraints, including limited textbooks, technology, and infrastructure, making it difficult to incorporate diverse cultural perspectives. The use of technology to incorporate diverse cultural perspectives into the curriculum could be a way out.

According to DH4, 1&2,

Teachers often have large class sizes and limited time to incorporate diverse cultural perspectives into their teaching. There is, however, an opportunity for Social Studies teachers to do community engagement and participation. This means that they can engage with local communities and involve them in the development of curricula and learning activities.

The above statement supports the views of [30] who recommended that engaging local communities and involving them in the development of curricula and

learning activities, promotes cultural relevance and responsiveness.

3.4. Research Question Three: What Are the Practices of Social Studies Teachers in Northern Ghana Use to Incorporate Diverse Cultural Perspectives into Their Teaching?

The study investigated the practices that Social Studies teachers in Northern Ghana used to incorporate diverse cultural perspectives into their teaching, as reported by the Curriculum Specialists. To maintain participant anonymity and confidentiality, codes identify the curriculum specialists, and data from their interviews are internally coded utilizing the uncomplicated coding scheme detailed in **Table 6**.

Table 6. Codes representing curriculum specialists.

Interviewee	Code	Meaning of code
*Curr Spec (Dist. 1)	CS1 (1-2)	Curriculum Specialist respondents 1-2 of District one.
Curr Spec (Dist. 2)	CS2 (1-2)	Curriculum Specialist respondents 1-2 of District two.
Curr Spec (Dist. 3)	CS3 (1-2)	Curriculum Specialist respondents 1-2 of District three.
Curr Spec (Dist. 4)	CS4 (1-2)	Curriculum Specialist respondents 1-2 of District four.
Curr Spec (Dist. 5)	CS5 (1-2)	Curriculum Specialist respondents 1-2 of District five.

*District 1 = Tamale Municipal, District 2 = West Mamprusi, District 3 = East Mamprusi, District 4 = Kumbungu District 5 = Tolon.

Some of the responses of the Curriculum Specialists are as follows:

CS1, 1&2 mentioned that some Social Studies teachers use storytelling to share cultural experiences, traditions, and values from diverse communities in Northern Ghana.

CS2, 1 indicated the use of local case studies by Social Studies teachers in incorporating diverse cultural perspectives into their teaching. According to him,

To best of my knowledge, some Social Studies Teachers use local case studies to illustrate cultural diversity and promote critical thinking and analysis.

CS3, 1&2 mentioned the use of cultural festivals and celebrations as some of the practices for incorporating diverse cultural perspectives into their teaching. According to them,

Some Social Studies Teachers incorporate cultural festivals and celebrations into their teaching to promote cultural awareness and appreciation while others engage students in community-based learning activities, such as field trips and community service projects, to promote cultural immersion and understanding.

These practices are consistent with recommendations by [29] and [30].

In the views of CS4, 1&2, some Social Studies Teachers incorporate local languages and dialects as well as local resources and materials in incorporating diverse cultural perspectives into their teaching. According to them,

Some Social Studies Teachers incorporate local languages and dialects into their teaching to promote linguistic diversity and cultural relevance while others use local resources and materials, such as traditional clothing, artifacts, and music, to illustrate cultural diversity and promote cultural awareness.

CS5, 1&2 mentioned that Social Studies teachers encourage student reflection and discussion as a means of incorporating diverse cultural perspectives into their teaching. According to them,

Some Social Studies Teachers encourage their students to reflect on their own cultural experiences and engage in discussions about cultural diversity and inclusion.

These practices confirm recommendations by Adu-Yeboah *et al.* (2020).

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1. Conclusion

This study investigated the state of multicultural education within the Social Studies curricula in Northern Ghana. It highlighted both challenges and opportunities for including diverse cultural perspectives, as well as teachers' practices regarding this inclusion. The findings showed that, while there is acknowledgment of the need for multicultural education, the current Social Studies curriculum falls short of representing diverse cultural viewpoints adequately. Teachers encounter obstacles such as a lack of resources, insufficient training, and cultural biases, which limit their ability to incorporate diverse perspectives. However, there are promising opportunities for enhancing community-based learning, embracing local languages and dialects, and utilizing storytelling and oral traditions to foster cultural awareness and inclusivity.

4.2. Recommendations

Based on the findings, here are some recommendations:

- 1) The Ghana Education Service and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment should take a fresh look at the Social Studies curriculum to better represent a range of cultural perspectives.
- 2) It is important for teachers to get training and support to boost their cultural competence, helping them bring diverse cultural viewpoints into their classrooms.
- 3) GES should create teaching materials that showcase the rich cultural diversity of Northern Ghana, fostering cultural awareness and inclusion.
- 4) Community-based learning activities should be promoted by NCCA to enhance cultural understanding and inclusivity.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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