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The History Curriculum and Inculcation of National Consciousness in History Students in Ghana

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Cover Page Footnote

References Adjepong, A and Kwarteng, K. O (2017). "Resuscitating 'Clio' for the Development of Twenty-First-Century Ghana and Beyond: Arguments in Defence of the Government's Decision to Reintroduce National History as a Separate Subject in the Pre-tertiary School Curriculum". *Journal of Education and Practice*, 8(6), 19–44. Akande, A. (2009). The inculcation of national security consciousness values in the learners in Nigeria. Lagos: Nelson Publishers. Allen, J. (1994). If this is history, why isn't it boring? In S. Steffey and W. J. Hood (Eds.), *If this is social studies, why isn't it boring?* (pp. 1-12). New York, MA: Stenhouse. Amatti, M. (1993). Fostering unity and integration in the nation-state through the inculcation of attitudes. *The Educator*, 2 (2), 478-490. Anderson, B. (1983). *Imagined communities: Reflection on the origins and spread of nationalism*. London: Verso. Archard, D. (1999). Should we teach patriotism? In *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 18, 157-173. Brown, G. (2006). The future of Britishness. Speech to the Fabian Society New Year conference (14 January, 2006). London: Fabian Society. <http://www.fabian-society.org.uk> Bryman, A. (2004). *Social research method methods* (2nd Ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press. CESAC (1985). *Moral education for junior secondary schools*. Ibadan: Evans Brothers. Chang'ach, J. K. (2011). History teaching in Kenyan secondary schools, for peace, reconciliation and national integration. *US- China Education Review*, 5(2), 688-694. Clark, A. (2009). Teaching the nation's history: Comparing public debates and classroom perspectives on history education in Australia and Canada. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 41(6), 745-762. Cobbold, C., and Oppong, A. C. (2010). Assessing instructional resource and methods of teaching history in senior high schools in the Central Region of Ghana. *International Journal of Educational Leadership* 3(3). Crookall, R. E. (1975). *Handbook for history teachers in Africa*. London: Evans. Dance, E. H. (1970). *The place of history in secondary teaching: A comparative study*. London: George G Harrap & Co. Dance, E. H. (1975). *Imagining the past: History as a tool for inculcation of patriotism*. London: Albert Limbach Verlag Denzin, N. K. (1978). *The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological method methods*. (2nd Ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill. Eboh, S., and Ukpog, U. E. (1993). *Social studies education for Nigerian Universities*. Owerri: Whyte and Whyte Publishers. Ellsworth, E. (1997). *Teaching positions: Difference, pedagogy and the power of address*. New York: Teacher College Press. Habermans, J. (1984). *The theory of communicative action: Reason and the rationalization of society*. Boston: Beacon. Hebert, Y. (2001). *Citizenship in transformation: Issues in education and political philosophy*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. Lewis, W. A. (1965). *Theory of Economic Growth: Eighth Impression*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd. Low-Ber, A. (2003). School history, national history and the issue of national identity. *International Journal of Historical Learning, Teaching and Research*, 29(2), 153-169. Matereke, K. F. (2011). "Whipping into line": The dual crisis of education and citizenship in post-colonial Zimbabwe. In *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 20, 84-99. Mezieobi, D. I., and Onyeausi, O. C. (2011). Repositioning of social studies education in Nigerian tertiary institutions for the attainment of vision 20:2020 in Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Social Studies and Civic Education*, 1(1). Mezieobi, K. A. (2012). New frontier areas in social studies education in Nigeria. Owerri: Priscilla Acadeppeak Publishers. Moi, D. (1986). *Kenyan African Nationalism. Nyayophilosophy and principles*. London and Basingtoke: Macmillan. Ogot, B. A. (1996). *Ethnicity, nationalism and democracy in Africa*. Maseno University: Institute of Research and Post Graduates Studies. Okilo, E. E. (1993). Social studies so far: A transactional survey. *Nigeria Journal of Social Studies Review* 4(1), 78-86 Ozumba, G. O. (2014). National consciousness, value reorientations and identity: An integrative humanist approach. *Journal of Integrative Humanism*, 46, 340-350. Philips, R. (1998). *History teaching, nationhood and the state: A study in educational politics*. London: Cassell. Ryle, G. (1962). *The*

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Abstract

National consciousness plays an important role in socio-economic and political developments in many nations. Mostly, national consciousness promotes national unity, sustainable development, peace, respect for diversity, patriotism, and others. Undoubtedly, most of the variables mentioned are acquired through the study of national history. This study stems from the motivation to find out whether the Ghanaian senior high school history curriculum addresses the canons identified as variables of national consciousness. The study, therefore, aimed at examining the content of the Ghanaian history syllabus, as a curriculum document, whether it inculcates national consciousness or otherwise. 125 Form Three history students in all the six senior high schools in the Koforidua Metropolis in the Eastern Region of Ghana were used to satisfy the quantitative requirements of the study. Content analysis was done by examining the history syllabus for qualitative requirements too. Both quantitative and qualitative data established that the history curriculum inculcates national consciousness values. However, it was noted from the content analysis that there are not enough topics on the history of Ghana. It is, therefore, recommended that any review of the history curriculum should have enough topics related to the history of Ghana. This would help instill common values and deepen the understanding of national issues in the learners.

Keywords: The history curriculum, national consciousness, awareness, identity, patriotism

Introduction

Linguistic, archaeological and oral tradition accounts indicate that before colonization, the territory we now know as Ghana was occupied by a plethora of ethnic groups speaking many different languages and holding sway over various parts of this territory. British colonial rule, which started in 1874 in Southern Ghana, however, brought all these ethnic groups together into one political unit with the name, Gold Coast colony. Later, after independence in March 1957, the country took the name Ghana. It must be emphasized that this was a totally artificial entity created by the British, with boundaries drawn by the European colonial powers in Africa, and not a nation-state arising organically from the Ghanaian people themselves. This is true across Africa. There was, and still is, a

tendency for each of the various ethnic groups to look first to what is best for themselves before considering what might be best for the nation as a whole. It was partly in an attempt to end these ethnic barriers and thinking, particularly in Ghana, that history, as a school subject, was introduced into the school curriculum after independence (Cobbold & Oppong, 2010).

The main intent for the introduction of history was to encourage the people to think of themselves as Ghanaians, and not as differing and unrelated ethnic groups. The long-term objective was to promote national consciousness after colonial rule. Dance (1975) admits that the introduction of a nation's history as a school subject is intended to promote national consciousness in learners. Adjepong and Kwarteng (2017) also emphasize that one of the strongest bonds uniting large social groupings is the members' consciousness of a common history, without which people could not easily acknowledge the claims on their loyalty of large abstractions. When the citizens are patriotic, they become conscious about their nation, ensure national integration, and assist in advancing the course of national development. When people are conscious of their nation, they contribute to its survival, growth and development (CESAC, 1985).

In fact, several past societies, including the Western Sudanese societies and the states, kingdoms and empires of pre-colonial Ghana, exploited the awareness of their common ancestry and history to ensure unity among the members of their groups in their attempts to achieve advanced political, economic and social development (Adjepong & Kwarteng, 2017). The consciousness of sharing a common ancestry and history made them regard themselves as one people with a common destiny. This historical consciousness reduced the rate of rivalries among the citizens in their efforts to build their societies. This provides us with evidence to maintain that consciousness of common identity and history removes some of the causes of strife because the people who share these common features have less to quarrel about, and may develop a habit of tolerance (Lewis, 1965). The inculcation of national consciousness in the citizens of Ghana has become an urgent task. There is the need to imbibe in Ghanaian citizens values that enable them to prioritize national interest before those of their individual ethnic groups. Chang'ach (2011) suggests that creating a national consciousness helps to trump politics of ethnic division by persuading the youth not to vote for their ethnic group as happened in 2008 in Kenya, but for a political party whose political

platform promotes national development. Politics of competence is achieved over ethnic consideration when citizens are conscious of national development.

In most countries, the rationale for introducing a citizenship education subject into the curriculum, which emphasizes the nation's history, was because the youth had lost anchorage in who they were, and the countries' leaders felt the need to instill in the youth a sense of identity and belonging (Archard, 1999). Perhaps, as Herbert (2001) argues, if today's education curriculum disregards history, the political heritage and the values that mould the society would have little influence on the country's advancement and improvement. Indeed, we know history as a subject that imparts knowledge, skills, and positive political, economic, social and administrative cultures to the citizens of a state for national development and national consciousness (Williams & Humphrys, 2003). Certainly, one of the ultimate goals of history education is to develop citizens and students alike who display appropriate national values and participate effectively in public discourse for nation-building.

The idea that secondary school history should promote national consciousness in the nation's students has received attention from political leaders across the globe. For instance, the inculcation of national consciousness topped the national agenda and discourse in the United Kingdom shortly after terrorist attacks on London occurred in July 2005. Gordon Brown, then Prime Minister, called for a revival of British national consciousness, to be achieved in part by a history curriculum centered on the British national story. "I propose that British history should be given much more prominence in the curriculum – not just dates, places and names, nor just a set of unconnected facts, but a narrative that contains our history that will stimulate in citizens national identity and consciousness" (Brown, 2006, p. 10). In this, the former Prime Minister suggested a general concern of the government; a concern that ordered a review of how British history could be inserted into the history curriculum purposely to invigorate national consciousness. Similar references could be found in Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Nigeria, among others, who after experiencing different forms of mutiny and attacks resorted to reviewing their history curricula. The call for national consciousness and the reengineering of the polity of these and other countries became essential in their national lives as part of the ways of unraveling the possible causes, solutions and forward-looking prescriptions that would reposition their nations for future development. In all these,

national history inserted into the curriculum was seen as the central tool in bringing about the appropriate national consciousness.

The teaching of history at all levels of education, obviously, becomes necessary (Cobbold & Oppong, 2010) as it would spur national consciousness in the citizens who pass through the various levels of education. In countries where the learning of history is underrated, the issue of national consciousness becomes a challenge to the state. An education that requires teachers to “select, exaggerate, forget, mythologize, fictionalize, and lie” is, as Archard insists, an education “unworthy of its calling” (Archard, 1999, p. 166). Hence, education for good citizenship in a democratic setting requires opportunities to participate in a democratic process and democratic tenets that can be achieved through the learning of history by the citizens (UNESCO, 2005). For Okilo (1993), history education has an influence on the quality of a society and the history curriculum has, in many instances, been used in search of a better world for people. Steeves (1998) also indicates that it is expected that through the teaching of history, the nation would produce responsible citizens who are well informed about national consciousness. Similarly, the Shanker Institute’s report (2009) perceives the study of history as a means to bind people together, create a common civic identity based on national consciousness and unite people in the shared undertaking for future development. These authors acknowledge the indispensable role of history in the promotion of national consciousness for nation-building. The study of history, therefore, has the potential to bring individual citizens together for the common good of society.

In political and public discourses, media fora, and academic engagements, the various epistemic communities have expressed their expectations that high school history contribute to national consciousness. Phillips (1998) rightly notes that the teaching of history in schools is a recurrent topic of academic and public discussion. However, no substantive evidence exists currently to suggest that the history curriculum in modern democracies contribute to national consciousness, particularly in Ghana. While there is plenty of political and media energy spent on national consciousness issues, no significant evidence concerning the impact of the history curriculum in the inculcation of national consciousness is established. Thus, studies that have evaluated Ghana’s history curriculum and its promotion of national consciousness are rare. Therefore, a study to test popular assumptions about the power of the

history curriculum in building national consciousness in Ghana's modern multicultural democracy is necessary. For this reason, this study examines the content of Ghana's history syllabus as a curriculum document to determine if it inculcates national consciousness or not. In this paper, I use curriculum and syllabus interchangeably.

Context

To be *conscious* of something (*consciousness*) could mean to *find out* something, to *realize* something, to *discover* something, and to *feel* something or *be sensitive* or *sentient* (Ryle, 1962). In general, however, to be conscious of something is to *be aware* of something, so that *consciousness* is usually considered as a synonym for *awareness*. Consciousness is seen "as the state of being conscious, that is, the physical and mental state of being awake and fully aware of one's environment, thoughts and feelings" (Allen, 1994, p. 288). Ozumba (2014) also defines consciousness as the intangible awareness of being and necessary belongingness to the world of existence. National consciousness, therefore, relates to the state of awareness of one's environment and the necessary feeling of collective identity, unity and bonding among the people within a particular country.

National consciousness implies that individuals see themselves as part of a particular group (Anderson, 1983). This means a communal understanding that a group of people shares common ethnic, political and cultural background that reflects national consciousness. Thus, within the concept of 'national consciousness', there is a belief in the existence of national awareness of a collective will of a people claiming that without "them" there is no "us". This awareness permits people to have a "collective identity" of not only who they are, but also how others around them are significant for nation-building. National consciousness provides a specific core of values for nation-building. To be nationally conscious, therefore, is to encourage citizens to think of themselves as Ghanaians first, and members of their ethnic group second.

Within the concept of national consciousness, awareness, bonding, identity, and patriotism have been identified as key elements. A nation should possess an identity that wields a collective spirit towards common destiny. National consciousness creates a common identity, which in turn drives the spirit of the nation to national prominence. Consciousness

binds people to the metaphysical and physical life of the nation and urges them to identify with the nation in all its struggles. To develop national consciousness, the history curriculum instills knowledge of the country, and pride and respect for the environment, aspirations, and traditions of the country. While promoting national unity, patriotism and national pride, the history curriculum should also encourage respect for, and acceptance of, those belonging to other cultures and ethnicities. It further strengthens the students' attributes of patriotism and national pride. The feeling of overall oneness of the nation leads to fostering national integration (Ogot, 1996).

National consciousness also provides a sense of national identity. Tate (1996) observes that a society that is not passionate about its history is in danger of losing its identity. This validates Low-Beer's (2003) claim that creating and sustaining national identity have always been important reasons for the inclusion of history in the school curriculum. National identity reflects in citizens' actions, thoughts, aspirations and behaviours (Ozumba, 2014). The identity awakens patriotic sensitivities, and the sensitivities, in turn, strengthen the consciousness of the citizens. The teaching of history, therefore, inspires students with a sense of patriotism to their motherland (Crookall, 1975). Of course, patriotism is the positive extreme of nationalism and so its development on the part of citizens of the nation-state is an important element in the progress of every country. Adjepong and Kwarteng (2017) have rightly maintained that the study of history is the playground of patriotism. They further argue that the great statesmen of past societies were successful in their careers because they thought historically and appreciated that history was the most important discipline for the citizens of every free republic, due to its inculcation of the spirit of patriotism in students.

Indeed, when history was first introduced as a school subject, patriotism was one of its main objectives (Dance, 1970). People educate their young ones about a nation's past to equip future generations with the knowledge and skills they need if the life of the society is to be carried on (Crookall, 1975). Every generation encourages its youth to emulate the patriotic features of the founders of their nation-states by exposing the wonderful deeds of great heroes and heroines who contributed significantly to the defence and development of their societies. The ancient Greeks and Romans, for instance, related fascinating stories about their past heroes to their youth at home with the intent that the youth would emulate the examples of

these great personalities of the past (Adjepong & Kwarteng, 2017). Such training or education prepares people to ‘die’ for their nation in one way or the other. It also compels people to contribute to nation-building since the lessons in history unearth the enormous contributions of their forefathers (Cobbold & Oppong, 2010). All these canons of national consciousness as discussed provide the basis for national integration, bonding and coalescing that reduces the differences among ethnic groups to the barest minimum and encourages them to work together to advance the nation’s political, cultural, economic, social or psychological needs.

Methodological approach

The methodological approach used for this study combined quantitative and qualitative paradigms. A questionnaire was developed to collect quantitative data from Form Three history students in six senior high schools in the Koforidua Metropolis in the Eastern Region of Ghana. The choice of Form Three students was informed by the belief that these were students who had been exposed to all the content of the history syllabus and were preparing to write their final examinations. Therefore, they were in a better position to provide appropriate evaluative responses.

Second, a qualitative interpretive inquiry that uses content analysis as a tool to examine documents was also employed in the examination of the history syllabus. Qualitative content analysis, as Bryman (2004, p. 542) explains, is an “approach that emphasizes the role of the investigator in the construction of the meaning of texts.” When used to analyse documents, it allows the researcher(s) to construct categories or themes out of the data, which can then be interpreted in the light of the research objective. In this regard, the Ghana senior high school 2010 history syllabus was considered critical and adequate for the analysis of what it was that the history curriculum wanted the students in Ghana to think about, be aware of, and be contributing to.

With the content analysis, the themes that the data lent itself to were developed and examined to identify the symbolic meanings of how the syllabus contained contents that were national in nature on the basis of Habermas's (1984) notion of dominant discourses and Ellsworth's (1997) modes of address. Topics in the history syllabus that had elements of

national consciousness were identified. The topics were understandably those that focused on Ghana's history. Furthermore, the topics were separated into three categories: (i) explicit, (ii) implicit (both of which included topics that advanced national consciousness); and (iii) a category of those that were not related to national consciousness. Explicit topics are topics that specifically provide national conscious elements while implicit topics do not, on face value, contain national conscious elements. By separating topics into these three categories, it was possible to unearth those discourses that related, explicitly or implicitly, to national consciousness. The collection of quantitative data allowed frequencies and percentages to be determined, which gave direction to the results.

Limitations

Every research methodology has its limitations; however, the present research incorporates a number of strategies to increase the validity and reliability. To maximize the reliability of the data, both (quantitative and qualitative) data and methodological triangulation procedures were used (Denzin, 1978). One limitation was the non-involvement of history teachers, which might have cleared up or explained some of the observations. A follow-up study, using history teachers or both teachers and students, may provide further answers.

Findings

The quantitative result of the study is presented in Table 1. The result evolved from the responses provided by the history students. The qualitative data is also presented thereafter.

Table 1: Students' views on how the Ghanaian history syllabus inculcates national consciousness

S/NO	Statement	Agree N (%)	Disagree N (%)
1	Peaceful education for national coexistence is advance in the teaching of history	111(88.8)	14(11.2)
2	The history subject substantially reflects issues on national identity	101(80.8)	24(19.2)
3	Positive attitudinal change towards other ethnic groups is part of history instruction	108(86.4)	17(13.6)
4	History teaches national integration	125(100.0)	0(0.0)
5	History instruction exposes the learner enough to national issues	104(83.2)	21(16.8)
6	Patriotism is at the heart of the History subject	111(88.8)	14(11.2)
7	History instruction teaches human relations education	63(50.4)	62(49.6)
8	History instruction prepares the learner's creative initiative for the maintenance of effective national coexistence	100(80.0)	25(20.0)
9	History instruction awakens (uplifts) one's spirit to serve the nation	94(75.2)	31(24.8)
10	History instruction assimilates the spirit of nationhood	104(83.2)	21(16.8)
11	Values for functional citizenship are incorporated into History instruction	87(69.6)	38(30.4)
12	History instruction promotes an awareness of national identity	111(88.8)	14(11.2)
13	The History subject enables learners bond with each other regardless of ethnic background	101(80.8)	24(19.2)

With the exception of item 7, the majority of the respondents agreed that the history curriculum of Ghana inculcated learning experiences for sensitizing national consciousness. It is, therefore, inferred from the data that learners were exposed to national consciousness issues in the history classroom. From the respondents’ viewpoint, the research found that enormous learning experience is real when we teach children about national consciousness in the history curriculum. Perhaps, the inclusion of national consciousness related topics in the history curriculum is to inform students of the existence of nationhood. Specifically, the finding is suggestive that topics dealing with national consciousness inculcate into students the appropriate national values that enable students to participate effectively in public discourses and contribute to the community and nation-building.

A content analysis of the history syllabus was also carried out. The analysis examined the topics in the syllabus, and how these topics addressed national consciousness issues. There are three broad categories of topics in the syllabus: explicit topics and implicit topics that promote national consciousness, and those not related to national consciousness. Table 2 presents only the explicit and implicit topics.

Table 2: Explicit and implicit topics in the Ghanaian history syllabus that inculcate national consciousness

No	Explicit topics	Implicit topics
1	Social and Political Developments: 1500-1900	Introduction to the history of Ghana
2	Social, Economic and Political developments in Ghana: AD 1900 – 1957	Pre-history of Ghana: 50,000B.C to AD 700
3	Independence and After: the Nkrumah era; and Ghana after the Nkrumah era 1966 – 1991	The peopling of Ghana
4		Social and political organizations

It is observed (from Table 2) that there are topics in the syllabus that are explicitly geared towards the inculcation of national consciousness and others that are covert. Topics found to be explicit include Social and Political Developments: 1500-1900; Social, Economic and Political developments in Ghana: AD 1900 – 1957; Independence and After: the Nkrumah era; and Ghana after the Nkrumah era 1966 – 1991. These topics contain specific themes on the development of Ghana and her struggles for independence. They also describe the various upheavals that occurred after independence and the current democratic dispensation. The effects of these various political events that characterized the period are also noted. Teaching these topics, some of the elements of national consciousness, such as patriotism, awareness, and bonding are brought to bear. Although there are implicit topics in the syllabus that are likely to inculcate national consciousness, the curriculum developers seem to have made deliberate efforts at mainstreaming national consciousness issues as evidenced by the presence of topics such as an introduction to the history of Ghana, the pre-history of Ghana: 50,000B.C to AD 700, the peopling of Ghana, and social and political organizations. In studying these topics, students are encouraged to engage in extensive reading that relate to peaceful co-existence among ethnic groups, common identity and other moral values. These topics could be used to enhance national consciousness by encouraging, for example, moral values, tolerance and common identity, although they may not explicitly refer to national consciousness issues.

Discussion

Findings in Table 1 show that the senior high school history curriculum of Ghana explicitly and implicitly creates learning experiences that are appropriate for inculcating national consciousness into students. In studying history, students are equipped with requisite information, knowledge and skills that are framed around the virtues of national consciousness. The findings agree with Eboh and Ukpong (1993), Akande (2009), Mezieobi and Onyeanusi (2011), and Mezieobi (2012), who postulated that history curriculum creates learning experiences on national consciousness. The inculcation of national consciousness helps learners in the discharge of their national duties towards national development. Positioning students to contribute to nation building is part of the core objectives of school

history. Amatti (1993), therefore, indicates that many nations use history to achieve specific national goals. For instance, the fostering of national unity for a common national development agenda is achievable through the study of history. Indeed, when people study history they should recognize their common bonds within a nation (or even as belonging to the global human community), and not see themselves as significantly different from other families, tribes, religions or different from the nation. That is, they should all consider themselves as citizens of the nation to which they belong.

Arguably, when learners are exposed to different cultures as occasioned in a topic like the ‘Peopling of Ghana’, it makes way for cultural accommodation, high level of tolerance, reduction in religious intolerance and conflicts of various magnitudes. This observation is tied to Clark’s (2009) call for the national story that seeks to propagate a particular narrative that reimages the nation in a positive light. In her view, there is a popular understanding that history education comprises the essential facts about the nation, and should thus play a positive and uplifting role in national lives. The Ghana senior high school history curriculum, as discussed in this paper, appears to fit precisely into the metaphor ‘persuading into line’ all citizens (Materoke, 2011), since the history curriculum is used as a vehicle to put students into an assumed common nationhood. This will help them to be nationally conscious and achieve a state of mind that allows them to realize their own objectives in time, as players in a continuous process of nation building.

Interesting findings came out with the content analysis. Only three topics were seen explicitly containing elements of national consciousness. These topics specifically addressed national issues. Others noted as implicit but contain hidden intent on national consciousness were four. Generally, the syllabus has twenty-three topics with eleven topics on Ghanaian history. The rest are split on history generally and early civilizations in Africa and the activities of the European colonial powers; and then, World Affairs. Such privileging of content with regard to what the curriculum wants the students to be and to think can be teased out as follows: First, the overt and covert intents to focus on the country's history suggest the inclusion of certain explicit and implicit national history topics. However, these topics represent a small percentage of the total number of topics within the syllabus. This observation may seem unique to Ghana because the argument by Wang (2008) that all nation-

states place great emphasis on teaching their national history with the aim of consolidating the bond between the individual citizen and the nation-state is not adhered to in this case. From the content analysis, it may thus be argued that the history curriculum for the senior high school in Ghana does not appear to comprehensively tell the story of the nation in order to tighten the tenuous bonds of nationhood - to be achieved through a singular focus on the nation's past.

Second, the philosophical disposition for the inclusion of a lot of topics on African civilization in the history syllabus is of interest. In ideological terms, the syllabus appears to embrace a Pan-Africanist identity. This, to some extent, carries certain furtive curriculum tendencies likely to inculcate national consciousness elements into students. For example, the inclusion of the African civilizations, specifically the western Sudanese states in the syllabus relates to most of Ghana's cultural practices. Therefore, it could be argued that the identified topics in the history syllabus, both explicit and implicit, provide a sample of national consciousness themes that range from continental awareness, through national identity to largely peaceful social and political co-existence on the continent of Africa.

This observation provides an overview of the role of history curriculum in forming national consciousness in a way that affects social and political attitudes within the varied ethnic groupings and political systems that have, within living memory, encountered different models of social and political crises particularly in Ghana, and generally in Africa. From this viewpoint, history is seen as the most symbolic and unifying of all academic disciplines (Moi, 1986). In this regard, the history curriculum could be seen as providing an outlook that widens the circle of peoples' acquaintances, provides material on national consciousness that seeks to cultivate tolerance, national identity, bond and unity. Therefore, the findings from this research make a strong case that the study of history in Ghanaian schools be made compulsory as suggested earlier by Cobbold and Oppong (2010).

Conclusion

The history curriculum equips students with relevant knowledge, skills and values on national consciousness. This is reflected in the responses of the history students who participated in the study. However, an examination of the syllabus reveals that few topics

explicitly address national consciousness issues. Most of the topics have tacit elements on national consciousness in the curriculum. Tacit because those topics are not conspicuous with national consciousness issues; but rather, they contain uncelebrated elements on national consciousness. Notwithstanding the findings from the content analysis, the efforts of the history curriculum towards inculcating national consciousness as evidenced in the discussion seem clear. Possibly, the assumptions about the contribution of high school history curriculum to national consciousness ought to be accepted in the light of this study. Perhaps, the time has come to rescue school history from the perception that it is primarily about dates and names of past figures and events, but a subject that inculcates national consciousness through the fostering of a sense of national identity, awareness, unity and patriotism. It is obvious that the inculcation of national consciousness was/is originally nurtured through the study of a nation's history. This benefit will increase when history is studied at all levels in our education system, and thus have even greater positive implications for the future of the nation's development and advancement.

Recommendation

This researcher is concerned that there are few topics explicitly relating to Ghana's history in the current history curriculum. On a philosophical level, of course, one could argue against making a hard-and-fast distinction between topics related to Ghana's history and those related to different cultures. The combination of increased demand for topics related to Ghana and the flood of topics on other cultures in the history curriculum make the tension particularly critical today. Thankfully, this tension is about balance. Both aspects of Ghana's history and the history of the rest of the world can be included, as it is in the current syllabus, if priority and balance are maintained properly. However, in striking that balance, history curriculum developers must become much more selective in both aspects. As such, it is important that the history curriculum should incorporate a significant number of discussions specifically relating to Ghana's history. This would help enhance, imbibe and deepen the national consciousness awareness for the learners.

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