

Research Article

This article is published by Jozac Publishers in the *African Social Science and Humanities Journal (ASSHJ)*. Volume 5, Issue 4, 2024.

ISSN: 2709-1309 (Print)
2709-1317 (Online)

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Article detail

Received: 23 September 2024

Accepted: 23 October 2024

Published: 16 December 2024

Conflict of Interest: The author/s declared no conflict of interest.



Social studies teachers' knowledge base on community resources usage towards teaching and learning: A case study of senior high schools in the Komenda Edina Eguafo Abirem (KEEA) Municipality


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 <https://dx.doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15283250>

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Abstract: This study analysed the knowledge base of senior high school Social Studies teachers on using community resources for teaching and learning within the Komenda Edina Eguafo Abirem (KEEA) Municipality. The study employed a qualitative design, examining multiple cases and adopting a constructivist philosophy. It facilitated the exploration of teachers' integration, access, and perception of these resources within their teaching and learning processes. A semi-structured interview guide was used to collect data from 18 participants, providing the study with a clear insight into the educational significance of community resources to facilitate instructional delivery. The data analysis was done by selecting the varied and uncovering the coding experience. Educators generally actively seek information from various sources, including colleagues and the internet, and recognise the role of community resources in enhancing civic awareness, critical thinking, and student engagement. Community resources also suggest that educational curriculum developers and policymakers integrate approaches supporting community-based learning into their Social Studies curriculum, as this helps enhance engagement and relevance. A professional development program is recommended to equip participants with the skills to utilise the community's resources efficiently and effectively, thereby stimulating students' learning.

Keywords – Community resources, Curriculum integration, Knowledge base, Social studies, Teachers

1. INTRODUCTION

The importance of community resources, such as museums, castles, forts, civic centres, shrines, and mountains, is often overlooked when enriching the teaching and learning experiences that support this education. The dynamics of social studies integrate local and regional contexts to connect real-world applications and theoretical concepts. Knowing about Social Studies community resources is important because it helps improve student involvement and teaching practices. As per the study of Kim, Kim and Jang (2021), Lee, Jang and Kim (2023), and Jang, Bradshaw, Witvliet, Kim, Johnson and Leman (2023), the community resources mainly encompass a vast range of institutional, physical and human elements in the localities, which is also valuable assets for the different educators. These resources include civic organisations, historical landmarks, local experts, and cultural institutions, each providing a

unique opportunity for learning experiences within its landscape. The Social Studies Teacher's Knowledge Base on Community Resources of Teaching and Learning in Senior High Schools in Komenda Edina Eguafu Abirem (KEEA) Municipality provides opportunities for exploring challenges, practices, and perceptions in a practical manner, which also helps in utilising resources effectively.

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Despite the government's efforts and several researchers' workshops promoting social studies education in Ghana, the problems of teaching and learning social studies persist in the country (Brew, 2023). In the learning of Social Studies, it has been observed that students struggle to comprehend the abstract nature of concepts taught in these subjects (Atubi, 2021). One of the significant problems is that teachers have continually used the same traditional methods in teaching Social Studies, relying on the same resources, textbooks, and chalkboards. One of the major problems is that teachers have continuously used the same conventional methods in teaching Social Studies, relying on the same resources, textbooks, and chalkboards. Furthermore, Owan and Ekpenyong (2022) observed that students' interest in Social Studies is decreasing. They attributed this to using a narrative approach rather than interactive learning methods and resources, such as those presented by the community.

That is why there is a need to consider the adoption of resources, such as those found in communities, for teaching social studies concepts. Besides, teaching skills and methods have evolved beyond simply transmitting knowledge, skills, and ideas from teachers to students, to influencing student-centred learning through personal observations and experiences, such as those provided by community resources. Utilising community resources will not only provide solutions to problems of understanding the subject but also motivate and contribute to high learning outcomes for learners (Atubi, 2019). The study explores how social studies teachers in Senior High Schools within the KEEA Municipality integrate, access, and perceive community resources for their teaching practices. The research focuses on analysing the context of the KEEA Municipality, which is primarily known for its diverse community assets, cultural heritage, and historical significance. The aim is to understand the strategies of an effective pedagogy for Social science education in the geographical and socio-cultural context. Despite the several recognised importance of community resources in enriching Social Studies education, there are also some gaps in evaluating the understanding of practical Social Studies teaching at KEEA municipality high senior school while integrating and utilising these resources for teaching practices. Attention is provided under the specific content of the KEEA municipality while engaging with the opportunities and challenges faced by present-day Social Studies educators.

Furthermore, a more comprehensive study is needed, and there are some specific challenges to investigating the Social Studies teacher's knowledge base regarding some of the community resources of KEEA Municipality. Research analysis of broader specific disciplines or educational contexts in Social Studies often neglects the nuanced understanding required to leverage adequate community resources in learning and teaching. The advanced education landscape, characterised by changing community dynamics, technological advancements, and socio-cultural shifts, requires an ongoing exploration of pedagogical approaches that align with local contexts. The current state of utilisation and knowledge of community resources of Social Studies teachers in the KEEA Municipality is essential for informing professional development and evidence-based intervention initiatives, which help to enhance student engagement and teaching effectiveness in Social Studies. The main problem addressed in this study is: What is the social studies teacher's knowledge base regarding the community resources for learning and teaching in senior high schools of Komenda Edina Eguafu Abirem (KEEA) Municipality?

2.1. Significance of the study

It is envisaged that the findings of this study will provide information to social studies teachers to help them appreciate the beauty and simplicity of community resource usage for effective instruction. Moreover, it will help Social Studies teachers fully integrate community resources into their teaching, making lessons more enjoyable and easier to understand and bridging the gap between what is learned in class and what happens in our communities.

The findings of this study will help the Ghana Education Service (GES) and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NaCCA) to initiate programmes that enable teachers to enhance their ability to utilise community resources and promote their use, ensuring that Social Studies objectives are met. The study's outcome will help the Ghana Education Service (GES) collaborate with all teacher training institutions that train Social Studies teachers to develop teacher development programs, such as workshops and short courses, for these teachers. It is also hoped that the findings of this study will provide Social Studies teachers with opportunities to develop awareness of community resources, their roles, and their importance in the teaching of Social Studies. Furthermore, due to the inadequate scholarly attention on teachers' use of community resources in teaching Social Studies concepts, this study's findings will contribute to the existing literature. Therefore, other scholars interested in investigating issues related to community resources and teaching social studies concepts can use these findings. That is foundational literature for future researchers.

3. LITERATURE SURVEY

3.1. Theoretical framework

The Community of Practice (CoP) theory, developed by Wenger (1998), posits that knowledge sharing and learning occur within individual communities that share a common profession or interest. According to Wenger (1998), community members who participate in community practices engage in activities, develop a repertoire, and share resources that contribute to a collective identity and a learning process. CoP Theory in education is used to comprehend how teachers share knowledge, engage, and collaborate in the professional learning dynamic (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015; McDonald & Mercieca, 2021). Hoadley and Kilner (2005) and Langley, Patel and Houghton (2017) espouse that the platforms of CoPs can help teachers access resources, develop innovative teaching practices, and exchange ideas. Additionally, Lave and Wenger (1991) and Cushion and Townsend (2016) attest that participating in a practice community helps facilitate identity formation and teachers' socialisation, leading to professional growth and a sense of belonging. For this study, this theory helps gain insight into the collaboration between Social Studies teachers and community members to utilise, access, and identify resources while teaching. Wenger (1998) and Farnsworth, Kleanthous, and Wenger-Trayner (2016) highlight the opportunities CoPs offer as a means for members to share expertise, resources, and local knowledge, thereby enriching teaching and learning experiences. McDermott and Archibald (2010) focus on evaluating the role of informal networks of Communities of Practice (CoPs) in facilitating professional development and knowledge exchange among teachers. The implementation of CoP theory, which utilises community resources to facilitate instruction, resides within the domains of community and practices (Wenger, 1998). The domain highlights the environmental boundaries and the contextual framework that possess those elements of interest. Through these elements, participants develop a sense of belonging, identity and motivation to stimulate their contribution. As the domain is well-established, the community refers to teachers engaging in joint activities and exploring how to construct knowledge through collective learning.

While implementing the framework of Community of Practice, the study has a diverse process of implications for promoting collective knowledge, harnessing collaborative learning, understanding the dynamics of informal education, fostering professional development, and enhancing the knowledge exchange:

- **Promoting Collective Knowledge:** The framework emphasises the significance of tapping into community members' and social studies teachers' expertise and collective knowledge. Teachers access various resources to enhance their teaching practices by leveraging professional relationships and informal networks.
- **Harnessing Collaborative Learning:** By adopting the Community of Practice framework, this paper recognises the importance of collaborative learning among the Social Studies teachers at KEEA Municipality and acknowledges teachers as part of a larger community where knowledge is shared and exchanged to promote professional development.

- **Understanding the Dynamics of Informal Learning:** The CoP framework provides insight into the dynamics of informal learning in teacher communities. It also enables learning through day-to-day interactions, collaborative problem-solving, and discussions rather than relying solely on professional development sessions and formal training.
- **Fostering Professional Development:** This study explores the implications of professional development initiatives by examining professional relationships and informal networks, thereby facilitating the exchange of teacher knowledge. This dynamic also suggests that knowledge-sharing and fostering collaboration among teachers lead to effective student outcomes and improved pedagogical practices. By adopting the CoP framework, the study evaluates collaborative learning dynamics in the KEEA Municipality. It also offers insights that help foster the enhancement of social studies education while promoting the professional growth of teachers.
- **Enhancing Knowledge Exchange:** Through examining the Social Studies teachers help to collaborate with the community members to utilise, identify and access the community resources, the study explores the importance of knowledge exchange while enriching through the teaching practices and sheds light on the reciprocal relationship of the community and teachers, where both of the parties help to contribute and evaluating the benefit from some of the shared experiences of learning.

3.2. Teachers' Knowledge of Community Resources

Integrating community resources in Social Studies is widely recognised as an effective strategy for enriching teaching. However, the success of this approach largely depends on teachers' knowledge of the concept and their awareness of the resources available in their local communities. In a study by Segkulu (2023), the use of community resources in Senior High Schools in Ghana was investigated through a survey of 40 Social Studies teachers. The results highlighted that teachers viewed these resources as essential tools for enhancing the effectiveness of Social Studies instruction. The teachers noted that community resources deepened students' understanding of their immediate environment and sustained their interest throughout lessons. Similarly, Atubi (2021) conducted a study in Delta State, Nigeria, assessing the perception and usage of community resources among 196 Social Studies and Civic Education teachers. He employed a survey design and questionnaire for the data collection. Like Segkulu's study, the study found that most teachers acknowledged the significant role community resources played in fostering student-centred learning and improving students' understanding of their communities. However, the teachers also expressed concerns about the time, effort, and expertise required to incorporate these resources into their lessons effectively.

The findings from Atubi (2021) and Segkulu (2023) suggest that teachers know the benefits and challenges of utilising community resources in Social Studies instruction. They recognised that these resources can enhance lesson effectiveness, foster student-centred learning, and deepen students' understanding of their communities. However, they also acknowledged the challenges, including the time and effort required to incorporate these resources into Social Studies lessons. Additionally, the perception that only experienced teachers can effectively utilise community resources indicates that teachers are aware of the need for specific skills or expertise to maximise their use. These findings suggest that the teachers had a balanced understanding of the advantages and challenges of utilising community resources in teaching.

Another study by Mensah, Swanzy-Impraim, Marfo, and Adiza Babah (2023) examined integrating community resources in teaching Social Studies in junior high schools in the Greater Accra region of Ghana. The researcher employed an expressive survey design, gathering data from 40 students and one social studies teacher. The teacher's data revealed the incorporation of community resources into Social Studies lessons through educational trips to national museums and castles and invitations to resource persons. The students confirmed this finding by reporting their engagement in educational trips and visits to local places, such as the palace, police station, post office, library, and education office, and by interacting with resource persons, including chiefs, police officers, parents, and health

professionals, during Social Studies lessons. It can be inferred from the study findings that the teacher involved is aware of the available community resources and knows how to incorporate them into Social Studies lessons effectively. Using diverse resources, such as educational trips and engagement with resource persons, indicates the teacher's ability to identify and leverage relevant community-based learning opportunities to enhance instruction. Furthermore, the alignment between the teacher's practices and students' experiences suggests that Social Studies teachers' knowledge of community resources is theoretical and actively applied in the classroom. However, the involvement of only one teacher in the study signals the need to explore whether this knowledge and application are widespread among other Social Studies teachers.

Brew (2023) examined the knowledge base of Social Studies teachers regarding the use of community resources in teaching Social Studies concepts at a junior high school in Winneba. The study employed a single case study design, utilising interviews as the primary data collection method. Two Social Studies teachers were purposively selected as participants. The study revealed that while both respondents affirmed knowing community resources, further probing revealed their superficial understanding. They demonstrated a limited awareness of the scope and application of these resources. The findings from this study signify that there may be significant gaps in both teachers' knowledge and practical application of community resources. This finding suggests that many teachers, although they may be familiar with the concept of community resources, may not fully understand the variety of resources available in their communities or how to integrate them into their instruction to enhance student learning effectively. While the reviewed studies provide valuable insights into integrating community resources in Social Studies instruction, there are notable limitations in the research designs employed, particularly in the studies by Mensah, Swanzy-Impraim, Marfo, and Adiza Babah. (2023), Segkulu (2023), and Atubi (2021) primarily relied on surveys and questionnaires, which, while helpful in gathering quantitative data, may not fully capture the depth of teachers' knowledge or their engagement with community resources. These methods can overlook the nuances of teachers' experiences and the context in which they operate (Nardi, 2018). Conversely, despite its strengths, Brew's (2023) qualitative approach was limited by using a single case study with only two teachers, reducing the findings' scope and generalizability. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of teachers' knowledge and engagement with community resources in social studies, the researcher concludes by employing a multiple-case study design. This design helped provide more prosperous and varied insights by exploring a broader range of teachers across different educational settings, offering a more holistic view of Social Studies teachers' knowledge based on community resources used in Social Studies instruction.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The philosophy employed in this study was constructivism, which enabled individuals to actively construct their understanding of the world through their interactions and experiences (Hayes, 2016; Patton, 2002). Guba and Lincoln (1994) emphasise the importance of constructivist epistemology in qualitative research, advocating for understanding participants' perspectives and meanings. Their framework supports the study's focus on exploring the lived experiences of Social Studies teachers concerning community resources, highlighting the co-construction of knowledge between researchers and participants. Vygotsky's (1978) constructivist learning theory posits that social interaction and cultural context are vital for cognitive development, aligning with the study's exploration of how Social Studies teachers utilise community resources. His emphasis on the importance of collaborative learning and scaffolding supports the research's focus on teachers' engagement and knowledge exchange within their educational communities. This study aligns with constructivism and acknowledges the subjective nature of knowledge, which helped evaluate Social Studies teachers' utilisation of community resources during teaching and learning. A qualitative research paradigm was adopted to explore the subjective perspectives and meanings associated with the phenomenon under investigation (Bradshaw, Atkinson & Doody, 2017). According to Mahajan (2018), qualitative research allows for the in-depth examination and interpretation of social phenomena within their natural context. As a result, this study focused on understanding the lived experiences and practices of Social Studies teachers regarding

utilising community resources for instruction. A qualitative approach enabled the researchers to delve deeply into the complexities and nuances of teachers' perceptions and behaviours (Meydan & Akkaş, 2024). Stake (1995) emphasises the importance of the researchers' context and the participants' experiences, which adds depth to case studies by focusing on the meaning of those experiences. Yin (2003) contributes rigour through a systematic framework for case study design and analysis, promoting thorough data collection and verification techniques.

Together, they enhance the credibility and interpretative richness of this study's qualitative case study approach by ensuring a balanced focus on context and methodological rigour. Searle (1995) provides insights into how shared social constructs shape individual perceptions and interactions. This can help understand the collective meanings that Social Studies teachers assign to community resources. This perspective aids in analysing how these constructed realities influence pedagogical practices and teacher engagement with the resources in the study. A multiple-case study research design was employed to facilitate in-depth analysis of various cases (in this case, senior high schools) and gain insights into participants' utilisation of community resources for teaching and learning purposes (Galorio & Bauyot, 2024). This design allowed for the exploration of variations across cases and the identification of common patterns and themes. Constructivism emphasises that knowledge is constructed through experiences and interactions, directly influencing methodological decisions in qualitative research. In data gathering, this philosophy supports the use of semi-structured interviews, which allow participants to share their perspectives and reflections in their own words. For data analysis, constructivism encourages iterative coding processes that reveal patterns and themes emerging from the participants' narratives, thus reflecting their constructed meanings. Interpretation within a constructivist framework involves understanding the context and dynamics of these interactions and valuing subjective insights and perspectives. A multiple case study design is justified in a constructivist paradigm as it facilitates in-depth exploration across different contexts. It allows researchers to investigate diverse perspectives and the nuanced complexities of participants' experiences with community resources in Social Studies Education (Bradshaw, Atkinson & Doody, 2017; Hayes, 2016; Patton, 2002).

The population for this study consisted of 18 social studies teachers from three Senior High Schools in the KEEA Municipality. A purposive sampling technique was used to select teachers from Edinaman, Abirem Agona, and Komenda Senior High Schools for the study, specifically those involved in Social Studies. Schools were purposively selected as the municipality's sole government senior high schools. Based on the inclusion criteria, seven, six, and five participants were purposively selected from Edinaman Senior High School, Komenda Senior High/Tech School, and Eguafu-Abrem Senior High School, respectively. Within these schools, the study involves eighteen Social Studies teachers who meet the inclusion criteria of having professional qualifications and at least three years of teaching experience in Social Studies at the senior high school level. Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the eighteen (18) SHS Social Studies teachers within three Senior High Schools in the KEEA Municipality.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the participants

Pseudonym	Senior High School	Sex	Form	Years of teaching experience
Participant 1	Edinaman Senior High School	Female	2	10
Participant 2	Edinaman Senior High School	Male	2	15
Participant 3	Edinaman Senior High School	Male	1	12
Participant 4	Edinaman Senior High School	Female	2	4
Participant 5	Edinaman Senior High School	Male	2	6
Participant 6	Edinaman Senior High School	Female	3	4
Participant 7	Edinaman Senior High School	Female	1	7

Participant 8	Komenda Senior High/Tech School	Female	2	6
Participant 9	Komenda Senior High/Tech School	Female	2	7
Participant 10	Komenda Senior High/Tech School	Male	3	6
Participant 11	Komenda Senior High/Tech School	Male	3	4
Participant 12	Komenda Senior High/Tech School	Male	1	5
Participant 13	Komenda Senior High/Tech School	Male	2	5
Participant 14	Eguafo-Abrem Senior High School	Female	3	6
Participant 15	Eguafo-Abrem Senior High School	Female	3	7
Participant 16	Eguafo-Abrem Senior High School	Male	3	8
Participant 17	Eguafo-Abrem Senior High School	Female	2	9
Participant 18	Eguafo-Abrem Senior High School	Male	3	10

Source (Field Data, 2024)

The primary research instrument for data collection was a semi-structured interview guide. The semi-structured interview guide was designed to explore teachers' perceptions related to the utilisation of community resources in teaching Social Studies. The participants were informed about the purpose of the study, as they are the primary users of the various community resources available for instructional purposes. This exercise enabled participants to provide informed consent and voluntarily participate in the study. The data collection exercise lasted twelve days, from April 15 to April 30, 2024. On average, each interview session lasted from 25 minutes to 35 minutes. A recorder was used to record all the interview sessions, enabling the researchers to obtain the actual responses from the participants. Based on the inclusion criteria of only SHS Social Studies teachers who possess professional qualifications in the subject area and at least have taught Social Studies for three years in the SHS, the adequacy of the purposive sampling ensured that all the participants qualified to participate in this study was selected (Francis, Johnston, Robertson, Glidewell, Entwistle, Eccles & Grimshaw, 2010). The researchers addressed their backgrounds, assumptions, and potential biases in the study by employing a constructivist framework that advocates for acknowledging the subjective nature of knowledge. They facilitated a transparent interpretation process through member checking, where participants reviewed and validated transcribed interviews, ensuring that the findings accurately reflected their experiences and reducing the potential for researcher bias in data interpretation.

The researchers interviewed all eighteen participants for more comprehensive and accurate data reflecting the community resources' diversity, depth, and nuance for instructional purposes. Researchers used field notes to document thoughts, experiences, and potential biases throughout data collection and analysis of the participants. These reflective practices help maintain awareness of the researcher's influence on the study and facilitate a more nuanced interpretation of the data. A thorough exploration of these methods would strengthen the rigour of the findings. The data collected were analysed thematically through a two-stage process of selective coding and interpretative analysis (Brocki & Wearden, 2005). In the selective coding phase, interview transcripts and document excerpts were systematically analysed to identify key concepts, categorisations, and patterns of cases. The interpretative analysis includes synthesising coded data to develop overarching themes and foster the dynamic of interpretations that capture the essence of teachers' practices and experiences. A follow-up session was conducted with the participants to share the transcribed version of the recorded interview session. This ensured that the transcribed interview accurately reflected the informants and the nuances of the data gathered for analysis. This allowed the participants to verify, validate, and clarify their responses after the researchers had transcribed the recorded interview session. Selective coding was appropriate for this study as it allowed for a focused analysis of

key themes related to Social Studies teachers' knowledge and use of community resources. This method facilitated the integration of diverse insights from participant interviews, highlighting significant patterns in their experiences. Categories were derived from emergent themes identified in participants' responses, ensuring the analysis remained grounded in accurate data.

Additionally, insights gained from existing literature provided a contextual framework for understanding these themes. The research questions guided the selective coding process, ensuring relevance to the study's objectives and enhancing the overall validity of findings. Ultimately, this approach led to a comprehensive understanding of the complexities of utilising community educational resources. Researchers triangulated findings with existing literature to contextualise themes and ensure their validity. Member checking was conducted, allowing participants to verify the accuracy of their represented experiences. Iterative discussions among researchers also facilitated the identification of potential biases and alternative views. This comprehensive approach bolstered the rigour and reliability of the final themes. Ethical clearance was sought from the Institutional Review Board of the University of Education, Winneba, with the reference number UEWEC/24. This ensured that the researchers complied with institutional and national ethical standards to protect participants' rights and maintain their confidentiality and privacy.

5. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

5.1. Data Analysis

5.1.1. Understanding of Community Resources

This sub-theme was identified by evaluating teachers' conceptualisations of "community resources" terms for teaching Social Studies. The main question, "How would you describe your understanding of the term 'community resources' in the context of teaching Social Studies?" elicits an insightful response that unveils teachers' perceptions. The Social Studies teachers had a broad and general understanding of resources in the community. They also need a consistent and precise definition of the teaching and learning process of Social Studies. The participants also focused on describing community resources, such as opportunities and several assets, sources of knowledge and information, and community elements utilised to enhance the dynamic of social studies education. Some provided an operational and precise definition of community resources, which also helped guide their integration, identification, and selection of resources. A participant from Edinaman Senior High School stated that,

"I can understand the dynamics of community resources as the several assets and opportunities within a local community used to enhance the learning and teaching dynamic of Social Studies. Community resources can be human, physical, or cultural institutions that provide students with relevant and authentic learning experiences."

This response focuses on illustrating an understanding of the community resources while emphasising the richness of the embedded local community, which leverages the purpose of education. Cultural institutions emphasise the importance of recognising several key elements contributing to diverse learning environments. This response indicates that the teacher identifies the nature of community expertise and resources, encompassing a range of physical characteristics. The implication is that the teacher with understanding will likely integrate several resources, making lessons more applicable and engaging in real-life scenarios.

Another participant from Abirem Agona Senior High School stated that,

"My understanding of the community resources is that they are rooted in the sources of perspectives, available knowledge, information, skills, and values in a community that can support the learning and teaching of Social Studies. Community resources can be tangible or intangible, and they can help students connect Social Studies concepts to their own lives and interests."

This response examines the inclusive nature of community resources, extending beyond physical aspects to encompass community members' collective knowledge, skills, and expertise. The inference is that this teacher recognises the holistic nature of community resources, incorporating both tangible and intangible elements. The

implication is that such an understanding may lead to a more varied and inclusive integration of resources, fostering a deeper connection between theoretical concepts and real-world applications. A participant from Abirem Agona Senior High School said,

"For me, community resources are the elements of a community that can be used to enrich the teaching and learning of Social Studies. Community resources can be material or immaterial, and they can foster critical thinking, inquiry, and problem-solving skills among students. These could be anything from local government structures and community organisations to natural resources. It is about connecting theory with practice.

This assertion underscores the teacher's emphasis on real-life examples and the connection between theoretical concepts and practical applications. The suggestion of natural resources demonstrates an awareness of the diverse components contributing to community resources. The deduction is that this teacher views community resources as tools for making abstract concepts tangible.

Collectively, the responses indicate an understanding among Social Studies teachers regarding community resources. The emerging theme recognises the complex nature of these resources, including physical landmarks, local expertise, and various community elements. This suggests that "teachers perceive community resources as integral to effective Social Studies education. The importance placed on these resources aligns with the broader educational goals of fostering practical understanding, community engagement, and civic responsibility among students". It underlines the transformative potential of community resources in shaping a meaningful and relevant Social Studies curriculum.

5.1.2. Examples of Relevant Community Resources

This subtheme examines teachers' ability to identify and provide examples of community resources they consider relevant to teaching Social Studies concepts. This subtheme aims to uncover the specific resources teachers envision incorporating into their lessons and the reasoning behind their choices. During the study, Social Studies teachers provided examples of community resources that they believed were relevant to teaching Social Studies concepts. However, the examples varied regarding the type of resources, scope, and quality. All participants from Edinaman Abirem Agona and Komenda senior high schools mentioned examples of community resources, such as libraries, museums, historical sites, cultural centres, civic organisations, religious groups, media outlets, local leaders, experts, activists, elders, volunteers, events, festivals, ceremonies, rituals, and traditions. For example, a participant from Edinaman Senior High School articulated that,

Some examples of community resources relevant to teaching Social Studies concepts are local museums, historical sites, cultural centres, civic organisations, religious groups, media outlets, and resource persons. Students can learn about different communities and regions' history, culture, politics, economy, and society. Additionally, field trips can provide students with first-hand experiences."

This response highlights the teacher's emphasis on first-hand experiences by incorporating field trips to historical sites, local museums, and cultural centres. The examples provided are ingrained in the regional context, offering students concrete connections to the past. The inference is that the teachers recognise the value of experiential learning and believe that engaging with local experts (resource persons) and historical sites can significantly enhance the understanding of Social Studies concepts. The implication is that "incorporating such resources can make lessons more immersive and memorable for students". A participant from Komenda Senior High School posits that

Local leaders, experts, activists, elders, volunteers, and other professionals are some community resources relevant to teaching social studies concepts. These resources can help students interact with and learn from individuals with firsthand experience and knowledge of various Social Studies topics and issues.

This emphasises the integration of economic concepts through collaboration with local businesses. The examples provided involve practical applications, such as visits to local markets and interactions with entrepreneurs, aligning with the curriculum. The assumption is that this teacher recognises the potential of community resources to illustrate economic concepts directly. A participant from Abirem Agona Senior High School shared that.

Some community resources relevant to teaching Social Studies could include collaborating with local cultural events, such as festivals, ceremonies, rituals, and traditions. These help students observe and participate in different communities and groups' social and cultural practices. "

This response emphasises the importance of cultural events, guest speakers (resource persons), and community resources. The emphasis on relating global concepts to immediate surroundings suggests a desire to make Social Studies more relatable and connected to students' experiences.

The finding from this sub-theme suggests that Social Studies teachers in the KEEA Municipality can identify diverse and contextually relevant community resources. The examples include various subjects, including culture, history, and economic events. The teachers illustrate their intention to make social studies concepts and awareness of the local context relatable by incorporating specific community resources. However, with the examples that could have a more comprehensive dynamic, some of the resources are more general and abstract than concrete and specific. Some resources are more reliable and accessible than others, and some are more dynamic. Additionally, some resources are more integrated and aligned with the curriculum and the needs of students than others. This dynamic suggests that "the participants had a recognition and uneven awareness of community resources suitable and available for the Social Studies classes".

5.1.3. Seeking Information on Community Resources

The study examined the proactive approach of teachers to stay informed about resources from potential community partners that integrate Social Studies lessons. This study's subtheme examines teachers' strategies to stay updated on available resources and their perceived importance in seeking information. In this study on social studies, teachers asked students to seek information about community resources that integrated the social studies lesson. The responses from participants mainly suggested that "they saw information on community resources which can be integrated into the lessons of Social Studies, but the method, sources and frequency for seeking information which had a different paradigm among participants". These participants state that "they also sought information on community resources on a basis, occasional motivation, depending and regular. The participants reported the use of various sources of information, like books, journals, colleagues, newspapers, administrators, community members and the internet while depending on their trustworthiness, convenience and preference". The participants reported, "They also use various methods for seeking information, like visiting, contacting, researching and consulting depending on their effectiveness, efficiency and feasibility". A participant from Edinaman Senior High School stated that:

"I regularly seek information on the community resources integrated into my Social Studies lessons. I utilise various sources, including books, newspapers, the internet, and magazines, to find suitable resources for my Social Studies classes. I also consult with my colleagues to gather recommendations and feedback on the community resources I can utilise.

Another participant from Abirem Agona Senior High School postulates that,

"I seek information about the community resources which can help integrate my social study lessons. I use sources like the internet and textbooks that are accessible and relevant to my classes in Social Studies."

These observations suggest proactive approaches that facilitate seeking information through newspapers, the internet, and books, including collaboration with fellow teachers and active participation in workshops and community events. Teachers also recognise the value of continuous effort while staying informed about the potential resources that can help enhance teaching practices. The teacher also emphasises the importance of adapting teaching materials, which allows for including the most relevant and latest resources. The inference from the responses is to recognise the teacher's value of collaboration and seek information on the adaptive process.

The subtheme findings indicate that "Social Studies teachers in the KEEA Municipality exhibit an intentional and proactive approach that helps them seek information on community resources." The teachers are engaged in different strategies, including active participation in community events, networking with local resources and collaboration

with peers. The findings of this study suggest that a proactive approach helps individuals seek information, and it is also perceived as a crucial dynamic for staying updated on relevant materials and enhancing overall teaching quality.

5.1.4. Importance of Community Resources Knowledge

The study explored teachers' opinions on the significance of being knowledgeable and utilising community resources in teaching practices. The teachers are also asked to explain the importance of social studies teachers being knowledgeable and utilising the community resources for teaching. The responses by teachers suggested that "they recognised the benefits and importance of being knowledgeable and utilising the community resources for their teaching, but their perceived benefits and level of importance are varied among participants". The participants also expressed that social studies teachers need to be knowledgeable about the utilisation process of community resources in their teaching dynamic, depending on their values, beliefs, and attitudes. The participants expressed that "using community resources in their teaching process provides benefits, like providing engaging and meaningful learning experiences, inquiry skills and fostering critical thinking, social responsibility and enhancing civic engagement, collaboration skills and developing communication, inspiring and motivating students, increasing student retention and achievement, improving student interest and attitudes, enriching instruction and curriculum, and strengthening partnerships of school-community, depending on their experience, perception and expectation".

On the subject, all the participants from Edinaman, Abirem Agona and Komenda senior high schools responded that,

"Social Studies teachers need to know about and utilise the community resources. These resources bridge the gap between real-world applications and theoretical concepts while making the learning experience more relevant and engaging for students. Community resources help teachers of Social Studies to align with the instruction and curriculum with the standards and goals of Social Studies Education."

This response underscores the teachers' belief in the importance of utilising and knowledge about community resources. This dynamic emphasis on bridging the gap between real-world applications and theoretical concepts indicates a recognition of the transformative impact on the learning experience.

A participant from Edinaman Senior High School stated that,

"Knowledge of the community resources is paramount for the Social Studies teachers. It adds authenticity to lessons and helps students see the direct impact of their learning on their dynamic and immediate surroundings. It also fosters a sense of community and connection engagement."

This response emphasises the importance of knowledge about community resources to add authenticity to a lesson. These remarks on the direct impact of immediate surroundings and fostering a sense of community engagement and connection suggest belief in the broader societal implications while utilising the community resources. The participants inferred that knowledge about community resources is crucial for incorporating authentic lessons and fostering community engagement and connection. Thus, such an understanding led to intentional efforts that help incorporate community resources directly resonating with students in their immediate surroundings, enhancing their educational experience. A participant from Komenda Senior High School also stated that,

The teachers of Social Studies should be well-versed in community resources. Community resources help empower students to participate and enrich their learning experience within the community. They also cultivate a civic awareness and a sense of responsibility among the students."

It suggests a strong belief in the importance of teachers of Social Studies being well-versed in the community resources. The reference helps empower students and enrich their learning experiences, enabling them to become active participants in their community, cultivate a sense of responsibility, and develop a broader perspective, thereby indicating civic awareness of the impact of community resources. This belief can motivate teachers to actively integrate community resources actively, fostering a social and holistic understanding of the educational experience.

The findings of the subtheme reveal that "Teachers of Social Studies in the Komenda Edina Eguafu Abirem Municipality are attributed to the immense importance of being knowledgeable and utilising the community

resources in their teaching practices. The teachers also believe that community resources are helping to bridge the gap between real-world applications and theoretical concepts, fostering authentic lessons that add a sense of community engagement and connection while empowering students to participate actively in their community. These findings enable teachers to perceive community resources as integral to creating a socially and transformationally conscious learning environment.

5.2. Discussion

The study's findings focus on social studies teachers' knowledge of community resources for learning and teaching within senior high schools in the Komenda Edina Eguafu Abirem (KEEA) Municipality. The discussion employs the theoretical framework of Community of Practice (CoP) to gain insight into how teachers understand, evaluate, access, and identify community resources and their importance to their teaching practices. Understanding Community Resources: Social Studies teachers possess diverse knowledge about community resources, local expertise, and cultural institutions, including physical landmarks. These resources are also aligned with the CoP Theory principles, emphasising the shared identity and collective understanding of the community of practice (Wenger, 1998; Jewson, 2013). Nuanced perceptions of teachers of community resources reflect an engagement in collaborative learning processes and the multifaceted nature of their recognition of the resources available in the local context.

Examples of Relevant Community Resources: The study identifies a range of community resources that support the teaching of social studies, including cultural centres, museums, local experts, and libraries. These examples illustrate teachers' efforts to integrate real-world experiences into their teaching practices, fostering experiential learning opportunities for students. These initiatives align with the principles of the CoP Theory, which emphasises the importance of participation in authentic practice and situated learning (Wenger, 1998). The results further support the findings of Mensah et al. (2023), which indicated that Social Studies teachers incorporate community resources, such as museums, local libraries, and guest speakers, into their instructional practices. By leveraging local resources, teachers create a meaningful connection between students' lived experiences and theoretical concepts, thereby enhancing the applicability and relevance of social studies education.

Seek Information on Community Resources: Social studies teachers exhibited proactive strategies for seeking information on community resources by utilising different sources, such as community members, the internet, and colleagues. This approach helps reflect teachers' engagement in knowledge-sharing activities with the professional community, as emphasised by the CoP Theory (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015). Through actively collaborating and seeking information with teachers and peers, the teachers focus on expanding the repertoire of resources and enriching their teaching practices, ultimately benefiting students' learning outcomes.

Community Resources Importance: The study emphasised the importance of knowledge and utilising community resources in Social Studies teaching. Teachers have been recognised for the transformative potential of community resources, which leverage the power of bridging the gap between real-world applications and theoretical concepts, fostering civic engagement, authenticity, and connection among students. These findings resonate with the core principles of CoP Theory, emphasising the shared role of collective engagement and learning experiences in shaping professional practices and identities (Wenger, 1998). Additionally, the findings align with those of Segkulu (2023) and Atubi (2021), which collectively emphasise the importance of Social Studies teachers' awareness of the benefits of using community resources in Social Studies instruction. These benefits include, but are not limited to, enhancing the effectiveness of Civic Education.

Practice Implications: The integration of CoP Theory in discussion highlights the significance of collaborative learning dynamics, professional development implications, and informal knowledge exchange in Social Studies education. By leveraging the principles of the CoP Theory, educational stakeholders support the development of different learning communities among social studies teachers, enhance student outcomes, and facilitate continuous improvement in teaching practices. This study aims to develop a deeper understanding of the collaborative learning dynamics that influence educational outcomes and teaching practices in senior high schools of KEEA Municipality

by analysing the teachers' knowledge and the perceived importance of community resources through CoP Theory and information-seeking behaviours.

6. RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

Educational authorities offer social studies teachers opportunities for capacity-building initiatives and professional development. This helps to enhance their confidence, skills, and knowledge in effectively integrating, identifying, and accessing resources into their teaching practices. Training programs, seminars, and workshops equip teachers with the strategies and tools to leverage community assets for a better student learning experience. The curriculum developers consider resources for integrating the community into the Social Studies curriculum and provide material support that helps teachers incorporate these lessons. Aligning these curriculum objectives with local contexts helps foster interdisciplinary connections and promotes the applicability and relevance of Social Studies education for curriculum designers. Schools can actively engage with cultural institutions, local community organisations, and experts to establish opportunities and collaborative partnerships that allow students to interact with and learn from community resources. Schools can help foster meaningful connections between students and their local communities by facilitating community-based projects and internships and promoting civic engagement, social responsibility, and service-learning initiatives.

7. CONTRIBUTIONS TO SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The study on the knowledge of Social Studies teachers regarding community resources in the KEEA Municipality. It contributes to the scientific community by providing empirical data that enriches the existing literature on Social Studies education within a specific context. The study highlighted the unique opportunities and challenges teachers face in the region while offering an understanding of the influence of local contexts and educational practices. The study is grounded in the Community of Practice (CoP) framework and constructivist philosophy. The research methodology enables the study to understand the collaborative dynamic, enhancing teaching practices.

The study underscores the importance of community engagement and social interactions in education. The qualitative study design, featuring multiple cases, provides an in-depth exploration of teachers' practices and perceptions while demonstrating the value of qualitative research in understanding educational phenomena and utilising community resources. The study suggested a research evaluation to assess the impact of integrating community resources into Social Studies education on student learning engagement, civic participation, and outcomes, informing evidence-based practices for future implementation.

8. CONCLUSION

Teachers of Social Studies have developed an appreciation for and a diverse understanding of utilising community resources to enhance the concept of learning and teaching in the subject. Teachers can also integrate resources like events, local experts, cultural centres, and museums to create a meaningful learning experience for students. Teachers also aim to provide students with a practical application of social studies concepts by integrating guest speakers, community-based projects, and field trips into their assessments and instruction. The teacher recognises the imperative of community resources for bridging the gap between real-world applications and theoretical concepts while fostering civic engagement, authenticity, and connection among students. This emphasises the integral role of community resources while promoting civic responsibility, student engagement, and critical thinking in education.

Educational authorities' initiatives offer opportunities for capacity-building and professional development for social studies teachers. This helps to enhance their confidence, skills, and knowledge in effectively integrating, identifying, and accessing resources into teaching practices. Training programs, seminars, and workshops equip teachers with the strategies and tools to leverage community assets for a better student learning experience. Curriculum developers consider resources for integrating the community into the social studies curriculum and provide materials that help teachers incorporate the lessons. Aligning these curriculum objectives with local contexts

helps foster interdisciplinary connections and informs curriculum designers, promoting the applicability and relevance of Social Studies education. Schools can actively engage with cultural institutions, local community organisations, and experts to create opportunities and collaborative partnerships that allow students to interact with and learn from the community's resources. Schools help foster meaningful connections between students and their local communities by facilitating community-based projects and internships, promoting civic engagement, social responsibility, and service-learning initiatives.

9. FUNDING

This study received no external or internal funding.

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