THE INTRODUCTION OF SOCIAL STUDIES IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the introduction of Social Studies on the national curriculum in secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago. The main objectives of the research were to explore the experiences of participants and the legitimization of the subject. A qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological methodology was utilized to unearth participants' experiences and interpretations. Purposive sampling was used to select five interviewees, who were actively involved in the evolution of the subject. The major investigative tools included in-depth interviews, questionnaires, field notes and document analysis. An adapted version of Creswell's (2012) data analysis procedure was utilized to determine themes and a descriptive report of the findings was formulated. The results of this study cannot be generalized because of the uniqueness of the context. A major conclusion was that a pioneer was responsible for the institutionalization of Social Studies in the secondary school curriculum in Trinidad and Tobago.

Keywords: Hermeneutic phenomenology, Social Studies, experiences

1. INTRODUCTION

Social Studies was introduced as a subject on the national curriculum in Trinidad and Tobago during the early post-colonial period. (The country acceded to political independence from the United Kingdom in 1962.) This is a pioneering study as far as research into the early introduction of Social Studies is concerned. In this historical context, Musgrove's (as cited in Goodson, 1993) observes that it is important to "examine subjects both within the school and nation at large as social systems sustained by communications networks, material endowments and ideologies" (p. 5). The change was perceived as a mechanism to bring about social and economic development in the new nation (Campbell, 1992; London, 2002; Jules, 2008). It is in this atmosphere of change that Social Studies was introduced at the secondary level.

2.   PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the research was to investigate how Social Studies became institutionalized on the national curriculum in Trinidad and Tobago during the immediate post independence era. The investigation placed emphasis particularly on the secondary level of schooling. It explored the experiences and interpretations of participants who were involved in the development of the subject from inception and contributed to its establishment in the secondary curriculum.

3.   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Three research questions framed the focus to the study:

1. What were the experiences of participants in the evolution of Social Studies?

2. What led to the legitimation and introduction of Social Studies on the national curriculum?

3. What factors led to the institutionalization of Social Studies as a subject in the national curriculum in Trinidad and Tobago?

4.   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theories which inform this study include constructivism, post-colonial theory and hermeneutic phenomenology. Lester (2005) advises that, "Not everything we know can be collapsed into a single theory" (p. 460), and "ideas from a range of theoretical sources to suit our goals . . . to deepen our fundamental understanding" (p. 466), should be incorporated. The theory of constructivism is valid as participants create their unique understandings, meanings, interpretations and perspectives from personal experiences.

Hermeneutic phenomenology, based on experience and interpretation (Gadamer, 1976; Heidegger, 1968; Merleau-Ponty, 1962; van Manen, 19 90), forms the core thread of the theoretical framework and methodology of this research. Methodologically, a hermeneutic phenomenological investigation is appropriate as "essence of meanings" (van Manen, 1990) experiences and interpretations of certain individuals are indispensable in this study. The phenomenon studied is the introduction of Social Studies on the national curriculum during the immediate post independence period. The personal experiences of participants who have lived experiences are explored. Laverty (2003) posits "Hermeneutic research is interpretive and concentrated on historical meanings of experience and their developmental and cumulative effects on individuals and social levels" (p. 15). Hatch (2002) agrees with Lincoln and Guba (1998) that, "Hermeneutic principles are used to guide researchers' interpretive co-constructions of participant perspectives" (p. 15).

5. LITERATURE REVIEW

A general understanding of how Social Studies was introduced in some countries around the world is examined. For example one perspective is that Social Studies was a part of the curriculum as early as 1884 (Saxe, 1991) in the United Kingdom (UK). Another view delineates that Social Studies did not yet evolve as a curriculum subject in 1926, but Geography and History, which included components of Civics, were embedded in both primary and secondary schools. According to Lawton (2000) the Social Studies curriculum emerged in the UK around 1944, hand in hand with secondary education for all, because it was identified as the subject to help pupils become socially conscious and responsible members of society (Obebe, 1991). The programme was, however, short-lived as much controversy ensued.

The Crowther (1959) and the Newton (1963) Reports in Britain highlighted the dire need for building national consciousness and a socially humane society in a growing industrial environment. There was strong advocacy through a coalition of support for the re-introduction of Social Studies. Goodson, (2005) notes that during the 1960's and 1970's curriculum introduction and reform in Britain were attributed to the quest for social justice. But, there is little account of the decision making process and stakeholders' experiences, except for perspectives by Goodson (1985).

The United States of America

Many commentators have affirmed that Social Studies evolved in the 1890s in the United States of America (USA) from the history programme. Gross and Dynneson (1983) reveal that "Social studies was first the child, then the step-child of the American Historical Association" (p. 33). But Saxe (1991) disagreed stating that Social Studies "did not begin with or extend from the development of the traditional history curriculum. Instead the birth and growth of the Social Studies movement had its own set of unique beginnings" (Saxe, 1991, p. 1). Mraz (2004) suggests,
No one has been able to pinpoint the moment that the social studies became a viable part of the school curriculum . . . debates on the origins of social studies will continue . . . and it could be suggested that Rugg and his associates developed the first course in social studies. (p. 1)
There were common concerns about citizenship, increased urbanization, immigration, industrialization, and general dissatisfaction with the direction of the society. However, there are conflicting perspectives and no clear accounts on how Social Studies was introduced.

Germany

With unification of East and West Germany in 1990, curriculum introduction encompassed a search for compatibility and advancement aligned with economic and technological developments. Weiler (1983b) contends that significant controversy ensued in Germany for the introduction of subjects especially German and Social Studies (Citizenship Education in some states). He notes that some of the most serious confrontations occurred about the introduction of German and Social Studies. Engel and Hinderliter (2009) outline, "Today, citizenship education curricula in Germany has been "reshaped and reconfigured by a broader focus on Europe and the global community" (p.

195). The German situation is very complex (Sweeney, 1993) and there is much information on reform, but little on the introduction of Social Studies and how it was introduced in the curriculum, except that there was much discord, and various committees participated in its development.

Botswana

Tabulawa (2009) bemoans that the populace have internalized deep British ideologies because of its colonial legacy, and there is public resistance when change is advocated. He gives the example of the introduction of Social Studies which was designed to replace geography and history, so that students may be equipped with the requisite skills for responsible national participation. Clarken (1990) quoted the goals from the National Commission on Education, 1977, as "enabling learners to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes behavior that will give them a full, successful life and continued personal growth; and equipping them to participate effectively in a rapidly changing society" (p. 23). What remains a mystery is how the teamwork and decision making process evolved in the introduction of Social Studies not only in Botswana but in other African nations.

Hong Kong

Deng (2007) indicates that the country was subjected to British rule, and a centralized, bureaucratic, tightly controlled system of education was institutionalized. He argues that the educational structure and curriculum content were designed to "minimize threats to the legitimacy of the colonial government" (p. 587) and complains that an 'abstract Chinese identity' (p. 587) developed. Initially the government introduced Social Studies, and other disciplinary subjects including Liberal Studies which became compulsory to promote students' holistic development, their Chinese identity, and national awareness (Deng, 2007). In Hong Kong there were also internal challenges (Morris, Mc Clelland & Ping Man, 1997) as the country had to grapple with issues such as social injustice, inequitable distribution of wealth and inadequate social welfare provisions.

Therefore, the catalyst for the introduction of Social Studies in the country arose to indigenize curricula in order to meet the needs of the society. Bray (1997) agrees with Deng (2007) that Social Studies, introduced in 1975, was designed to replace colonial content with material that will build self confidence in the youths and give them a sense of national identity. However, information on the actual process and the experiences of stakeholders have not been articulated.

Singapore

With an influx of a multitude of immigrants, "The social studies curriculum was developed within the context of National Education (NE), which was launched in 1997, as a nation-building initiative by the government" (Tan & Strathdee, 2010, p. 77). The primary aim was "cultivating national loyalty, patriotism and a sense of belonging" (Tan & Strathdee, 2010, p. 79). But there are limited reports of how Social was introduced and the lived experiences of participants have not been explored.

Social Studies as a mechanism for promoting citizenship education, and nationalism is a goal that is pervasive throughout the literature for all countries, particularly those with a colonial legacy. But there are many controversial reports of the early beginning of Social Studies in different parts of the

world. Even though the subject has been retained on the national curriculum in many countries there is little exploration of the experiences of stakeholders in the introduction of the subject, hence the importance of this study.

6. METHODOLOGY

Qualitative Paradigm - Hermeneutic Phenomenology

This study inheres in the qualitative paradigm since it investigates meanings, personal experiences (van Manen, 1990) and interpretations constructed by individuals in a particular setting during the 1960s. A hermeneutic phenomenological approach (Gadamer, 1976) is deemed appropriate as participants' subjective lived experiences from the past and their interpretations form the essence of the study.

Husserl (1970) advises researchers to 'bracket' or suspend their biases or preconceived notions to unearth true meaning and view the studied phenomena unambiguously. Heidegger (1962) argued that hermeneutics and 'exegesis' or interpretation incorporate the full gamut of the interpretive process including verbal, nonverbal and written communication while Hans-Georg Gadamer contends that language is the primary mechanism for understanding and interpretation, and "pre-understandings" (Slattery, 2006, p. 131) undergird interpretation. He believed that the hermeneutic experience incorporating understanding and interpretation are inextricably bound together in a continuous, evolving process and questioning is an essential aspect of the interpretive process to make new understandings possible.

Participants

"Interviewees, informants or conversational partners" (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 14) who possess first-hand information about the phenomenon were selected. Five informants were chosen based on their experiences, interpretations, involvement and intimate knowledge of the introduction of Social Studies during the period of the study. Creswell (1998) suggests, "In some studies, you may have a limited number of participants who are conveniently available to study" (p. 146). While guidelines are offered for the sample sizes, qualitative research allows for variation and according to Lichtman (2011) sample size is dependent on the judgement of the researcher. In addition, the methodology, the detailed nature of the information required and the number of persons who have the requisite experiences may determine the size of the sample (Merriam, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

The job positions of the respondents are shown in Table 1 below, with each interviewee labelled and given "coded names" including PS, CEO, SS, SP and CL respectively. The aim was to maintain anonymity and confidentiality of the participants. Some informants held very influential positions at the Ministry of Education which gave them power and authority to make decisions, for example, the Chief Education Officer, and the Permanent Secretary who reported to the Minister of Education. All participants were males which reflected the male dominated, patriarchal society that existed

during the period of this study. The "coded names", as shown below, are used to identify participants in the rest of the study.

Table 1. Data about Participants

Participant	Job Position	Coded Names Used in Study
1	Former Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Community Affairs	PS
2	Former University Lecturer/ Vice Principal of Teachers' College/Curriculum Officer/ School Supervisor/ Director of Curriculum/ Chief Education Officer	CEO
3	Former Secondary School Teacher/ Curriculum Officer/ School Supervisor	SS
4	Former Secondary School Teacher/ Secondary School Principal	SP
5	Former Secondary School Teacher/ Teachers' College Lecturer	CL

Data Collection

Different data collection techniques included in-depth interviews, semi-structured interviews, document analysis and questionnaires with open ended questions. In conducting in-depth interviews, the aim was to build rapport with the participants (Creswell, 2012) and engage them in dialogue to elicit information that may be recondite in their consciousness and allow them to detail information in an uninhibited manner. In addition, journaling, field notes, and memos were kept, and documents such as *the Draft Plan for Educational Development in Trinidad and Tobago, 1968-1983 (1974)* were analysed. The policy document was used as a strategy for checking consistency of data to reduce systemic bias (Patton, 2002; Hall & Stevens, 1991).

The multiple data collection procedures allowed for triangulation (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007) which established authenticity of the data and the research findings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Creswell, 2012). With the permission of all participants, the interviews were audio taped, transcribed verbatim and returned to respondents in a timely manner for verification. Interviewees were asked to verify transcripts as a method for validating the accuracy of data (Lichtman, 2006; Merriam, 1998) as well as to establish credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1998), confirmability (Patton, 2002) and trustworthiness (Creswell, 2012).

Data Analysis

Researchers such as Moustakas (1994), Boyatzis (1998), and Lichtman (2006) agree with Merriam's (1998) explanation that, "The best that any book can do, is to introduce options for how to proceed, delineate strategies that have worked for the author, and provide illustrative examples. The real learning can only take place in doing" (p. 156). My approach in the data analysis process was to utilize guidelines from the literature and the principles of the hermeneutic-phenomenological method. I used an adaptation of Creswell's (2012) model (Fig.1) which is comparable with that of Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014).

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The Coding Process

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Initially read through text data
Divide the text into segments of information
Label the segments of information with codes
Reduce overlap and redundancy of codes, *categories and subcategories*
Reduce overlap and redundancy codes, categories and subcategories
Collapse *categories* into themes

Figure 1. A Visual Model of the Coding Process in Qualitative Research (Adapted from Creswell, 2012, p. 244)

I began analysis of the data even during the initial interviews (Merriam, 1998; Lichtman, 2006)) while making notes, journaling and writing memos (Saldana, 2009; Creswell, 2012). I remained aware of, and engaged in "bracketing" (Husserl, 1970) my personal pre-conceived notions, prejudices and assumptions, an exercise Husserl (1970) described as "epoche". I engaged in continuous reflection, which I documented as the study progressed. "Reflexivity means that researchers reflect on their own biases, values and assumptions and actively write them into their research" (Creswell, 2012, p. 626).

I carried out the first step "*Initially read through text data*" (adapted from Creswell, 2012, p. 244) in a variety of ways as recommended by van Manen (1990), namely, 'detailed or line by line'; 'selective or highlighting'; 'sentence/sentence cluster'; 'paragraph'; and 'full interviews' (p. 93). I then embarked on the second stage "*Divide the text into segments of information*" (adapted from Creswell, 2012, p. 244) searching not only for similarities but redundancies. In the third stage I re-read, rechecked, modified and formed categories to "*Label the segments of information with codes*" (adapted from Creswell, 2012, p. 244).

Afterward, I proceeded to the fourth stage to "*Reduce overlap and redundancy of codes, categories and subcategories*" (adapted from Creswell, 2012, p. 244). I thus engaged in grouping associated, common categories or sub-themes together. In the penultimate stage, I repeated

Creswell's fourth stage to "*Reduce overlap and redundancy codes, categories and subcategories*" (adapted from Creswell, 2012, p. 244). I compared the relevant codes, categories and subcategories to ensure that they were synchronized and congruent. In the process, I searched for inconsistencies and redundancies, and in some cases reviewed categories. In the final stage, in order to generate concepts I began to "*Collapse categories into themes*" (adapted from Creswell, 2012, p. 244). I rigorously compared the categories, sorted out irrelevant information, and formed an amalgamation of similar ideas to arrive at themes. I remained aware of the "crisis of representation" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 4), and the need to align the data and "findings". Finally I formulated descriptive report with relevant discussion. Three themes that emanated from the data include:

1. A Pioneer for Social Studies

2. National Consciousness

3. Educational Expansion

7. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Theme 1 – A Pioneer for Social Studies

I unearthed true meaning and interpretation by reiteratively examining the verbatim accounts as relived by the participants in the study, Statements by participants convey the essence of meaning (van Manen, 1990), interpretation and experiences. All interviewees credited the Chief Education Officer (referred as the CEO) as a pioneer for the introduction, growth and development of Social Studies at secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago. The data points to him as epitomizing the role of leader, change agent, activist and protagonist.

Informant, PS stated that the CEO, "*assisted in the development of the Social Studies curriculum and would have supervised its implementation in the schools . . . with his (*the CEO's) *push its* (Social Studies) *inclusion would have been expedited*".

The CEO confirmed, "*I provided leadership . . . went to the schools . . . worked with commitment, dedication and creativity to develop Social Studies*".

Participant, SS remarked, "*It (Social Studies) could not have happened without him (*the CEO*) . . . He breathed life into Social Studies . . . He employed a system to develop Social Studies*".

Interviewee, SP added that the CEO "*developed the subject . . . was the curriculum for Social Studies . . . He visited all the schools . . . He did a fabulous job . . . He was the brainchild . . . without him the subject would be lost*".

Another respondent, CL stated, "*The CEO was the pioneer of Social Studies throughout Trinidad and Tobago . . . the mastermind. He was the soul of Social Studies . . . He walked and talked, lived and ate, slept and drank Social Studies*".

In essence the CEO was the primary advocate for success in the development of Social Studies. Ornstein and Hunkins (2009) note that, "Millions of dollars were being spent to develop curriculum projects, especially for reading and mathematics, yet many of the projects did not succeed" (p. 250). All interviewees agreed that the CEO was responsible for the success of Social Studies and epitomized the characteristics of an astute decision-maker. The CEO demonstrated passion, a keen interest and vision while focussing on a goal from which he never deviated. He said, *"If you are committed to something and you have a goal, you don't want to hear about the detractors. I used to pay them little heed"*. He was assertive, confident, committed, dedicated, creative and aggressive in his drive to success. However, he exerted his power and influence as Chief Education Officer for the successful introduction of Social Studies on the national curriculum.

Theme 2 - National Consciousness

In the 1960s, Trinidad and Tobago was a newly emergent post-colonial society and local educators became increasingly concerned about the lack of patriotism in Trinidad and Tobago. Bacchus (1990) posits, "The educational system and the content of education offered in schools . . . were essentially part of the infrastructure of the colonial state" (p. 2). Social Studies was viewed as the medium to foster nationalistic values.

The PS observed,
It (Social Studies) *was an important area . . . for the people of the country to understand what is meant by independence . . . As citizens, they don't know what their rights are . . . Civic education is subject that would be included in the Social Studies and that is a very important subject for the young people in Trinidad and Tobago.*

The CEO confirmed,
Some educators began to express concerns about that sense of nation . . . they felt we needed to build that sense of nationalism". He added, "We attained independence . . . but we were not seeing that sense of belongingness to Trinidad and Tobago . . . That sense of belonging and personal identity . . . that crisis . . . had to be addressed . . . Social Studies was about citizenship education . . . making good citizens in the society.

The SS indicated,

Building Trinidad and Tobago was at the forefront . . . The everyday reality had to be understood . . . What did children know about Trinidad and Tobago? Social education was the subject to promote worthy citizens . . . to understand their roles.

The SP affirmed,
One of the problems encountered, was that people did not understand independence and self-governance . . . Social Studies was more relevant to the child for living . . . It was an attempt to

develop knowledge and understanding of the local culture and sensitization to localized cultural patterns.

The CL proclaimed,
It was really a humanitarian thing . . . it was about the life of children, parents, the community and the nation . . . nation building . . . It was about people, their actions, reactions and interactions, how we socialize . . . socialization plays an important role in human development . . . Something was missing . . . no belonging, no sense of belonging.

One of the recommendations the Draft Plan for Educational Development in Trinidad and Tobago 1968-1983 (1974) was "to promote a close identity of pupil with his environment and with the national effort at development" (p. 20). The document identified Social Studies as "a concept of growth and change . . . for the development of new attitudes and approaches" (p. 6). Another objective was, "To provide opportunity for social participation and social action in real life situations" (Seepersad & Beddoe, 1985, p. 71). Social Studies, was therefore geared towards the promotion of civic-mindedness, social awareness, nation building, national consciousness and the development of a sense of belonging to Trinidad and Tobago. Its introduction was aligned with the social, economic and educational development of the country.

Theme 3 – Educational Expansion
The educational reality in Trinidad and Tobago was that the majority of the population was denied access to secondary education. The CEO affirmed, "*Up to 1962, only 5000 students went to secondary school because there were few schools.* He continued, *"That meant that you had a lot of children in primary school, children up to 15 years of age, who could not access secondary education".* It meant that the existing schools could not meet the increasing demand for secondary education by the masses.

In the 1960s the Draft Plan for Educational Development in Trinidad and Tobago 1968-1983 (1974), recommended by UNESCO, was adopted as policy by the government. The educational policies outlined a new paradigm of a two tiered secondary education, that is, the Junior Secondary and the Senior Comprehensive Schools, which served to increase enrolments at the secondary level. Those recommendations were timely as the populace was clamouring for opportunities and social advancement. The government had to respond to the mounting pressure from the population seeking secondary education for their children. Campbell (1996) observes:
The major achievement of these years was the beginning of educational planning marked by the publication of the Draft Fifteen-Year Education Plan 1968-1983. The plan defined the nature of a two-cycle secondary education system, comprising the junior secondary schools for children 12-15 years of age, and the senior secondary school for those between 15 and 18 years. (p. 292)

The CEO mentioned, *"You had schools built like San Fernando Secondary and Point Fortin Secondary . . . Penal, Diego Martin and Curepe Junior Secondary".* Campbell (1996) writes, "The showpiece of expansion was a spectacular array of new junior secondary and senior secondary schools" (p. 292). Rapid social change was also taking place in the society amidst increased

educational opportunities. Braithwaite (1976) points out that, "Secondary education is now being expanded to embrace those who a few short years ago would have been incapable of it" (p. 22).

While the Draft Plan for Educational Development in Trinidad and Tobago 1968-1983 (1974), proposed most curricula of the past, it specified "Social Studies", an area that was not in existence prior to independence. Thus Social Studies formed an integral part of the recommended core curricula programme for Junior Secondary schools. "All pupils must follow the same overall course with the same subject emphasis" (Draft Plan for Educational Development in Trinidad and Tobago, 1968-1983 (1974, p. 19), which included Social Studies. One objective outlined in Section 3.11 (9) in the Draft Plan for Educational Development in Trinidad and Tobago 1968-1983 (1974) includes:

Social Studies – to provide an acquaintance with environmental factors which explain the bases of society and its operations in particular the geographical and historical influences; to explain the structure of modern day social and political operations and the part played by the individual in maintaining and promoting the character of the society; to impart some skills in the assessment of social issues and in bringing various factors to bear on the examination of social issues; and to provide a good foundation in geography and aspects of history of relevance to the children of Trinidad and Tobago. (p. 20)

This was *in tandem* with educational expansion and the need to develop citizens with the requisite skills needed for participation in national development.

The PS indicated that although the government was provided with sound technical or professional advice, the political directorate had the prerogative to make decisions that were politically expedient (Lawton, 2012). That was best exemplified in the decision to send all students from the Junior Secondary Schools to the Senior Comprehensive Schools. Bacchus (1990) notes, "Local political leaders saw education as a useful instrument for the political socialization of the newly independent masses through which they could strengthen support for their own government (p. 296), while fulfilling the expectations of the population.

The PS delineated,

I took the action of having a new department established . . . to deal with subject matter teaching . . . I insisted that the secondary schools must be departmentalized . . . schools had to deal with thousands of new students entering the Junior Secondary and Senior Comprehensive schools.

The CEO specified,

The Cabinet, under the Prime Minister made some major decisions on the implementation of the 15-Year Plan, and gave new directions for the growth of the secondary school system . . . When the full set of Junior Secondary children reached Form Three, the question was asked: Where do they go? . . . especially the 10,240 students expected to leave the Junior Secondary schools in September . . . One shift had 950 students . . . and there were 20 Junior Secondary Schools . . . Now the Draft

Plan for education had envisaged that only a certain percentage will go forward to form 4 and 5 . . . But the politics of the day . . . the government said all will proceed.

The SS advised,

Educational expansion was inevitable . . . Places had to be found for students . . . How could so many thousands of students be denied a secondary education? The junior secondary schools were designed . . . to educate the masses.

The SP affirmed,

One of the issues that arose, was that the majority of students did not have access to secondary education . . . "Prestige" schools were the norm with limited places . . . In an effort to increase the number of school places, the new Junior Secondary schools were built.

The CL advised,

It was about creating places for students . . . it was really about those children who never had an opportunity for secondary education . . . through the junior sec (secondary) *. . . it was about expanding education . . . parents wanted secondary education for their children.*

Some of the recommendations of the Draft Plan for Educational Development in Trinidad and Tobago 1968-1983 (1974) were officially accepted and instituted by the government. Two major decisions included the expansion of education and the introduction of Social Studies at the Junior Secondary level.

Based on political expediency, the government made a political decision to promote all students, given that a general election was due. Lawton (2012) posits that curriculum decisions are political decisions which occur in the shadow of elections. The CEO commented, *"Those were the years in which the Senior Comprehensive schools were built - Fyzabad, Siparia and you have others all over, Princes Town, St Augustine and Malick"*. That meant that Social Studies would have been automatically placed a subject on the time-table of the Senior Comprehensive Schools, as mandated by a decision made by the political directorate.

CONCLUSIONS

This descriptive study gave an overview of the introduction of Social Studies, in Trinidad and Tobago during the immediate post-colonial period. Data were drawn from the past experiences of persons who were instrumental in its introduction on the national curriculum. A hermeneutic-phenomenological approach was used to capture the experiences, interpretations and reflections of the major stakeholders. One limitation of the study is that the findings and themes cannot be generalized but the research provides a basis for the introduction of subjects in the future.

Recommendations

The following areas should form thought provoking investigations:

1. The future of Social Studies as a subject on the national curriculum

2. How new subjects are currently introduced on the national curriculum.

2. A comparative study with the introduction of technology.

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