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Curriculum Integration of History and Social Studies in Primary Education: A Theoretical Framework for Pedagogical Coherence Revised Version

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Abstract

This paper examines the integration of History and Social Studies within the primary education curriculum from a theoretical perspective, with the aim of establishing a framework for pedagogical coherence. The persistent separation of these closely related disciplines has resulted in content fragmentation, duplication of themes, and limited opportunities for learners to develop a holistic understanding of society and citizenship. Drawing on interdisciplinary theory, constructivist learning principles, and social reconstructionist perspectives, the paper argues that curriculum integration provides a more meaningful and context-driven approach to teaching and learning at the basic education level. The study conceptually clarifies the key constructs of History Education, Social Studies Education, and curriculum integration, while tracing the historical development of both subjects within the primary school curriculum. It further explores various models of curriculum integration, identifying the interdisciplinary approach as the most suitable for fostering connections between historical knowledge and contemporary societal issues. The paper highlights the pedagogical implications of integration, particularly in promoting inquiry-based learning, critical thinking, and the use of local historical contexts to enhance relevance. The paper also identifies significant challenges, including inadequate teacher preparation, rigid curriculum structures, and assessment constraints. It emphasizes the central role of teacher competence in

successfully implementing an integrated curriculum. The paper concludes that effective integration of History and Social Studies is essential for achieving pedagogical coherence and meaningful citizenship education. It recommends curriculum redesign, strengthened teacher education programmes, and supportive policy frameworks to facilitate sustainable integration in primary education.

Keywords: Curriculum Integration, History Education, Social Studies Education, Pedagogical Coherence, Primary Education, Teacher Competence

Introduction

The growing complexity of contemporary societies has intensified the need for an education system that equips learners with integrative knowledge, critical thinking skills, and civic competence. Within this context, the interface between History and Social Studies education has become increasingly significant, particularly in primary education where foundational knowledge, values, and attitudes are formed. In Nigeria, both History and Social Studies are central to fostering national consciousness, cultural identity, and responsible citizenship. However, their effective integration within the curriculum largely depends on teachers' competence in curriculum implementation. This paper examines teachers' competence in integrating History and Social Studies within the implementation of the Nigerian primary school curriculum, with a focus on the conceptual, pedagogical, and practical dimensions of such integration.

Historically, Social Studies emerged as an interdisciplinary field designed to address societal issues by drawing content from various disciplines, including History, Geography, Economics, and Political Science (Atah & Bessong, 2025)). In Nigeria, Social Studies was formally introduced into the school curriculum in the late 1960s and gained prominence after the 1969 National Curriculum Conference, which emphasized the need for education to address national unity and development (Anyanwu & Njoku, 2023)). Conversely, History, which had earlier been marginalized in the Nigerian basic education curriculum, has recently been reintroduced as a distinct subject due to its critical role in promoting national identity and historical consciousness (Ekeh & Ramsaroop, 2023). Despite their distinct identities, History and Social Studies share overlapping objectives, particularly in the areas of citizenship education, value formation, and the understanding of societal processes.

The integration of History into Social Studies teaching is widely recognized as essential for meaningful learning. History provides a temporal perspective that enables learners to understand the evolution of social institutions, cultural practices, and national development, while Social Studies contextualizes this knowledge within contemporary societal issues (Hattan et al., 2025). Effective integration, therefore, requires teachers to possess not only content

knowledge in both disciplines but also the pedagogical skills necessary to connect historical narratives with present-day realities. This aligns with the concept of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), which emphasizes the teacher's ability to transform subject matter into teachable and meaningful learning experiences.

In the Nigerian primary school context, the National Policy on Education underscores the importance of functional and integrated learning experiences that promote national development and social cohesion. The Basic Education Curriculum further reflects this by embedding elements of History within Social Studies topics such as culture, governance, and national values. However, the success of this integrative approach is contingent upon teachers' competence, which encompasses their knowledge, skills, attitudes, and ability to effectively implement the curriculum. Unfortunately, several studies have identified gaps in teachers' competence, including inadequate subject mastery, limited pedagogical skills, and insufficient professional development opportunities (Meldina et al., 2020).

Teacher competence in curriculum implementation goes beyond mere content delivery; it involves the ability to interpret curriculum objectives, select appropriate instructional strategies, utilize relevant teaching materials, and assess learners effectively. In the context of integrating History and Social Studies, teachers must be able to design lessons that reflect interdisciplinary connections, employ inquiry-based and learner-centered approaches, and facilitate critical discussions on historical and contemporary issues. This requires continuous professional development and institutional support to enhance teachers' capacity for effective curriculum delivery (Omoniyi,2020).

Furthermore, the challenges associated with integrating History and Social Studies in Nigerian primary schools are multifaceted. These include overcrowded classrooms, inadequate instructional resources, insufficient training in integrative teaching methods, and the persistence of traditional, teacher-centered pedagogies (Syah et al., 2025).Such challenges hinder the realization of the curriculum's objectives and limit learners' ability to develop a holistic understanding of societal issues. Addressing these challenges necessitates a critical examination of teachers' competence and the factors influencing it.

Given the centrality of teachers in the curriculum implementation process, this paper argues that enhancing teachers' competence is pivotal to achieving effective integration of History and Social Studies. It is against this backdrop that the study explores the nature of teachers' competence, the dynamics of curriculum integration, and the implications for improving educational practice in Nigerian primary schools. By providing a theoretical analysis of these issues, the paper contributes to ongoing discussions on curriculum reform, teacher education, and the promotion of quality basic education in Nigeria.

History Education

History education refers to the structured teaching and learning of past human experiences with the aim of developing learners' understanding of historical events, processes, and interpretations. It goes beyond the mere transmission of facts and dates to include the

cultivation of historical thinking skills such as sourcing, contextualization, corroboration, and interpretation (Clark, 2021). Through history education, learners engage with evidence from the past, analyze multiple perspectives, and construct reasoned narratives about historical developments.

Scholars emphasize that history education plays a critical role in shaping learners' identity, civic consciousness, and critical awareness of societal change. It enables individuals to understand continuity and change over time, recognize cause-and-effect relationships, and appreciate the complexity of human actions. In the context of schooling, history education also serves as a vehicle for transmitting cultural heritage and fostering national unity, particularly in plural societies like Nigeria (Barton & Levstik, 2021).

Thus, history education can be conceptualized as both a disciplinary field and a pedagogical practice aimed at equipping learners with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to interpret the past and apply such understanding to present and future societal challenges.

Social Studies Education

Social studies education is an interdisciplinary field concerned with the study of human society and social relationships, integrating knowledge from disciplines such as history, geography, economics, political science, and sociology. Its primary goal is to prepare learners to become informed, responsible, and active citizens in a democratic society. Unlike history education, which is discipline-specific, social studies education adopts a problem-solving and issue-based approach to understanding societal phenomena. It emphasizes the development of civic competence, critical thinking, decision-making, and participatory skills necessary for addressing contemporary social issues (Avery & Levy, 2021).

In the Nigerian educational context, social studies education is particularly significant for promoting national integration, value re-orientation, and citizenship education. It addresses societal concerns such as unity, cultural diversity, governance, and social responsibility (Passe & Fitchett, 2023).

Curriculum Integration

Curriculum integration refers to the deliberate organization of learning experiences in a way that connects knowledge, skills, and values across subject boundaries to enhance meaningful learning. It involves blending content from different disciplines to address common themes, concepts, or real-life problems (Drake & Reid, 2020).

This approach challenges the traditional fragmented curriculum structure by promoting holistic learning and relevance. Integrated curricula allow learners to see relationships among different areas of knowledge, thereby improving understanding and retention. For instance, integrating history and social studies enables learners to connect past events with contemporary societal issues, fostering deeper comprehension and application.

Curriculum integration can take various forms, including multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary approaches. While multidisciplinary integration maintains distinct

subject boundaries, interdisciplinary integration merges concepts and skills, and transdisciplinary integration focuses on real-world problems beyond disciplinary confines (Vars, 2021). In essence, curriculum integration is a pedagogical strategy that enhances coherence, relevance, and learner engagement by linking diverse knowledge domains into a unified learning experience.

Pedagogical Coherence

Pedagogical coherence refers to the alignment and consistency among curriculum content, instructional strategies, learning objectives, and assessment practices to ensure effective teaching and learning outcomes. It emphasizes the need for instructional practices to be logically connected and mutually reinforcing (Fullan et al., 2021).

A coherent pedagogy ensures that what is taught (curriculum), how it is taught (instruction), and how learning is assessed are harmoniously aligned. This alignment helps to minimize contradictions in teaching practices and enhances learners' ability to make meaningful connections across concepts (Hammerness, 2020).

In the context of curriculum integration, pedagogical coherence is essential for ensuring that integrated content is delivered in a structured and purposeful manner. Without coherence, integration may result in superficial connections that fail to achieve intended learning outcomes. Teachers play a critical role in achieving pedagogical coherence by carefully planning lessons, selecting appropriate teaching methods, and designing assessments that reflect integrated learning objectives.

Theoretical Foundations for Curriculum Integration

Curriculum integration is grounded in several educational and learning theories that explain how knowledge is constructed, organized, and transmitted across disciplines. The study is anchored on the following theories.

1. Constructivist Learning Theory: Constructivist Learning Theory was propounded by Jean Piaget (1952); and Lev Vygotsky (1978). The theory states that learners actively construct knowledge through interaction with their environment rather than passively receiving information. Piaget emphasized individual cognitive development, while Vygotsky introduced the social dimension of learning through concepts such as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and scaffolding.

Constructivism learning theory is relevant to this study because it supports curriculum integration by promoting active, meaningful learning where students connect ideas across disciplines. In History and Social Studies, learners can construct understanding by linking historical events with contemporary societal issues. Integration allows learners to build coherent knowledge structures, enhancing critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

2. Social Reconstruction Theory: George Counts was the one that postulated the Social Reconstruction Theory in 1932. The Social Reconstruction Theory states that education should address societal issues and contribute to social reform. It emphasizes preparing learners to

critically examine and transform their society. This theory is highly relevant to integrating History and Social Studies because both subjects inherently deal with societal development, citizenship, and social issues. Integration enables learners to analyze historical roots of current social problems and develop informed civic perspectives, aligning education with societal transformation goals.

3. Systems Theory: Systems Theory was propounded by Ludwig von Bertalanffy in 1968. Systems Theory views education as a complex system with interrelated components that work together to achieve common goals. It emphasizes interdependence and holistic understanding. Curriculum integration reflects a system approach by linking subjects into a unified whole rather than treating them as isolated units. In the context of History and Social Studies, this theory underscores the interconnectedness of historical events, cultural practices, political systems, and social structures.

Among the theories discussed, Constructivist Learning Theory is the most relevant to the integration of History and Social Studies. Reasons for this include the following:

1. Knowledge Construction Across Disciplines: It directly supports the blending of subjects by emphasizing that learners build understanding through connections.
2. Learner-Centered Approach: Integration requires active learner participation, which is central to constructivism.
3. Contextual Learning: History and Social Studies are best understood when linked to learners' social realities, a key principle of constructivism.
4. Collaborative Learning: Vygotsky's emphasis on social interaction aligns with discussions, debates, and group work typical in integrated classrooms.

Historical Development of History and Social Studies in Primary Education Curriculum

The historical development of History and Social Studies in Nigeria's primary education reflects the country's broader search for an education system capable of promoting national identity, unity, and functional citizenship. In the immediate post-independence period, curriculum content remained largely colonial in orientation, emphasizing European history and values with limited relevance to Nigerian realities. This concern culminated in the landmark 1969 National Curriculum Conference, which marked a turning point in Nigeria's educational development by advocating for a curriculum that would reflect indigenous culture, societal needs, and national aspirations (Barton & Levstik, 2021). The outcome of this conference significantly influenced the formulation of the National Policy on Education (1977), which provided the philosophical and structural basis for modern curriculum development in Nigeria. Within this framework, Social Studies emerged as an innovative and integrative subject designed to promote citizenship education, social awareness, and value orientation among young learners (Bolick & McGlinn Manfra,2020).

Social Studies was introduced into the Nigerian primary curriculum in the early 1970s through collaborative curriculum development efforts, notably the 1971 Ahmadu Bello University conference, which produced one of the earliest structured Social Studies curricula for schools

(Fitchett et al., 2020). The subject drew heavily from interdisciplinary perspectives, incorporating elements of History, Geography, Civics, and Anthropology to provide learners with a holistic understanding of society. As a result, History, which had previously existed as a distinct subject focusing on chronological narratives of past events and cultural heritage, gradually became integrated into Social Studies. This integration was consistent with global trends in curriculum design that emphasized thematic and problem-solving approaches over rigid subject boundaries (Harris & Burn, 2021). However, while this approach enriched Social Studies, it also led to concerns about the erosion of historical depth and the weakening of learners' understanding of Nigeria's past.

Subsequent policy shifts further reinforced this integrative orientation. With the introduction of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in 1999 and the development of the 9-Year Basic Education Curriculum by the Nigeria Educational Research and Development Council in 2007, the structure of basic education was reorganized to include nine years of continuous schooling (primary and junior secondary levels). Within this curriculum framework, History was effectively removed as a stand-alone subject and its content absorbed into Social Studies and Civic Education (Journell, 2022). The rationale for this reform included the need to reduce curriculum overload, promote integrated learning, and address declining student interest in History as a discipline. Despite these intentions, scholars and educators criticized the policy for marginalizing History and contributing to a decline in historical consciousness among Nigerian youths (Lee & Shemilt, 2020).

The marginalization of History within the basic education curriculum sparked sustained advocacy from historians, educators, and professional bodies who argued that the absence of History undermined national identity formation and civic awareness. These concerns became more pronounced in the 2010s, as evidence emerged that many students lacked basic knowledge of Nigeria's historical development, including key events, figures, and cultural heritage (Nokes, 2021). In response to these criticisms, the Nigeria Educational Research and Development Council initiated curriculum reviews aimed at restoring History to its rightful place within the education system. This process involved stakeholder consultations, curriculum redesign, and teacher capacity development programmes to ensure effective implementation.

The reintroduction of History into the basic education curriculum marked a significant policy reversal and a renewed recognition of the subject's importance. Approved by the Federal Government and implemented in phases from 2018, History was reinstated as a compulsory subject from Primary One through Junior Secondary School Three (Seixas & Morton, 2020). The revised curriculum emphasizes Nigerian history, African heritage, and global connections, covering themes such as pre-colonial societies, colonial experiences, independence movements, and contemporary national development. This reform aligns with the objectives of the National Policy on Education, particularly its emphasis on fostering national unity, patriotism, and cultural awareness (Thornton, 2021).

In contemporary practice, History and Social Studies now coexist within the primary curriculum, each fulfilling complementary roles. While Social Studies continues to provide an integrated platform for addressing societal issues and promoting civic competence, History offers disciplinary depth, chronological understanding, and critical reflection on past events. The renewed emphasis on History is widely seen as essential for developing informed citizens who can engage meaningfully with Nigeria's socio-political realities. Overall, the trajectory of these subjects illustrates a dynamic interplay between integration and specialization in curriculum design, shaped by evolving national priorities and educational philosophies.

Rationale for Integrating History and Social Studies

The integration of History and Social Studies within the school curriculum is grounded in both pedagogical logic and practical necessity. As interdisciplinary fields concerned with human experiences across time and space, History and Social Studies share overlapping content, complementary objectives, and a mutual commitment to developing informed, responsible citizens. Integrating these subjects therefore represents a strategic response to curriculum fragmentation, while enhancing the relevance and coherence of learning in the basic education context.

A central rationale for integration lies in the significant overlap in content and objectives between History and Social Studies. History focuses on the systematic study of past events, processes, and personalities, while Social Studies adopts a broader, problem-solving approach to understanding human society, drawing from disciplines such as geography, economics, civics, and history itself (Adu-Yeboah & Kwaah, 2021). This intrinsic relationship suggests that History is not merely an adjunct to Social Studies but a foundational component. Both subjects aim to develop critical thinking, inquiry skills, and an understanding of societal values and institutions (Alsubaie,2020). When taught separately, these shared objectives often result in redundancy; however, integration allows for a more unified approach where historical knowledge is applied to contemporary social issues, thereby deepening learners' understanding.

Closely related to this is the role of integration in promoting citizenship education. One of the primary goals of Social Studies education is to prepare learners to become active, informed, and res ponsible citizens (Drake & Reid, 2021). History contributes significantly to this goal by providing learners with a sense of identity, continuity, and national consciousness. Through the study of historical events such as colonialism, independence movements, and nation-building processes, learners gain insights into the evolution of their society and the responsibilities that come with citizenship (Fitchett & Heafner,2022). Integrating History into Social Studies ensures that citizenship education is not abstract but rooted in concrete historical experiences. This alignment strengthens civic competence, fosters patriotism, and encourages learners to engage critically with societal challenges.

Another important justification for integration is the need to avoid duplication and curriculum overload. In many educational systems, particularly in developing contexts like Nigeria, the

curriculum is often criticized for being overcrowded, with multiple subjects competing for limited instructional time (Fraser, 2020). Teaching History and Social Studies as separate subjects can lead to repetition of similar themes such as governance, culture, and social change. Integration helps streamline content, eliminate unnecessary duplication, and make more efficient use of instructional time. This not only reduces the cognitive burden on learners but also allows teachers to explore topics in greater depth rather than superficially covering repetitive material. Consequently, integration contributes to improved curriculum manageability and instructional effectiveness.

Furthermore, integration enhances contextual learning and relevance, which are essential for meaningful education. Social Studies emphasizes the application of knowledge to real-life situations, while History provides the temporal context necessary for understanding present realities. By merging these perspectives, learners are better able to connect past events with contemporary issues, thereby making learning more relevant and engaging (Kang,2021). For instance, discussions on governance in Social Studies become more meaningful when linked to historical developments such as pre-colonial political systems or colonial administrative structures. This contextual approach not only enriches learners' understanding but also promotes the transfer of knowledge across domains, a key objective of modern education.

In addition, integration supports the development of holistic and interdisciplinary thinking. Contemporary global challenges such as climate change, conflict, and economic inequality cannot be adequately understood through a single disciplinary lens. Integrating History and Social Studies encourages learners to draw connections across time and disciplines, fostering a more comprehensive understanding of complex issues (Mutluer,2020). This aligns with current educational reforms that emphasize competency-based learning and the development of 21st-century skills, including critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving.

In the Nigerian context, the reintroduction of History into the basic education curriculum further underscores the need for integration rather than isolation. While the absence of History in the curriculum for several years created gaps in learners' historical consciousness, its reintegration alongside Social Studies presents an opportunity to design a more coherent and enriched curriculum framework (Vars,2021). Rather than treating the subjects as entirely distinct, policymakers and educators are increasingly recognizing the benefits of a complementary approach that leverages the strengths of both disciplines.

Pedagogical Implications for Integration

The integration of History and Social Studies within the primary school curriculum carries significant pedagogical implications for classroom practice, curriculum delivery, and teacher effectiveness. At the core of integration is the shift from fragmented subject teaching to a more connected and interdisciplinary approach that enables learners to make meaningful links between past events, social realities, and contemporary civic life. This shift requires teachers to rethink instructional strategies, assessment practices, and classroom organization in ways that support conceptual coherence and learner-centred pedagogy.

One major pedagogical implication is the need for interdisciplinary teaching strategies that allow historical content and social concepts to be taught in a unified manner. Rather than treating History and Social Studies as separate subjects, teachers are expected to design lessons around common themes such as citizenship, governance, cultural heritage, and social change. This thematic approach enhances knowledge transfer and helps learners understand the relationship between historical events and present-day societal structures. According to Kisida, Godwin, & Bowen,(2020), curriculum integration promotes deeper learning by enabling students to explore issues from multiple perspectives, thereby reducing compartmentalization of knowledge.

In practical classroom terms, this implies a shift towards learner-centred pedagogies such as inquiry-based learning, problem-solving, storytelling, and discussion-based instruction. History education, when integrated with Social Studies, benefits significantly from inquiry approaches that encourage learners to ask questions about causes, consequences, and interpretations of events. Similarly, Social Studies content becomes more meaningful when grounded in historical narratives that explain how social institutions and civic norms evolved over time. Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivist theory supports this approach by emphasising that learners construct knowledge through interaction with content, peers, and teachers within a socially mediated environment.

Another important implication is the requirement for pedagogical coherence and curriculum alignment. Teachers must ensure that learning objectives, instructional activities, and assessment methods are logically connected across both subject areas. This demands careful lesson planning that avoids duplication of content while ensuring that key competencies such as critical thinking, civic awareness, and historical reasoning are adequately developed. Tyler's (1949) curriculum model reinforces this need for alignment, stressing that educational objectives should guide the selection and organisation of learning experiences as well as evaluation procedures.

The integration also necessitates a stronger emphasis on contextual and experiential learning. Since Social Studies is inherently concerned with the learner's immediate environment, integrating it with History allows teachers to connect local and national historical experiences to learners' lived realities. For example, teaching colonial history alongside civic education can help pupils understand the origins of contemporary governance systems in Nigeria. This contextualization enhances relevance and improves learner engagement, particularly at the primary level where abstract historical concepts may otherwise be difficult to grasp.

Furthermore, integrated pedagogy encourages the use of diverse instructional resources and media. Teachers are expected to move beyond textbooks to incorporate artefacts, oral traditions, community resources, maps, timelines, and digital media where available. In many African contexts, including Nigeria, oral history remains a powerful pedagogical tool that bridges formal historical knowledge with indigenous knowledge systems. This aligns with the view that effective curriculum integration should reflect cultural relevance and inclusivity in knowledge construction (Popa,2023).

Assessment practices also undergo significant transformation under an integrated approach. Rather than relying solely on traditional examinations that test memorisation, teachers are encouraged to adopt continuous and formative assessment strategies. These include project work, group presentations, portfolios, and reflective exercises that assess learners' ability to connect historical understanding with social reasoning. Such assessment practices not only measure cognitive achievement but also evaluate affective and participatory skills essential for citizenship education.

However, effective implementation of integrated pedagogy places considerable demands on teacher competence and professional development. Teachers are required to possess adequate content knowledge in both History and Social Studies as well as pedagogical skills for interdisciplinary teaching. In many cases, teachers trained in one subject area may lack confidence in integrating content effectively, leading to superficial coverage or dominance of one subject over the other. This challenge highlights the need for continuous professional development programmes focused on curriculum integration strategies, instructional design, and thematic teaching approaches (Smith , et al., 2022).

Another implication is the need for collaborative teaching culture within schools. Integration is most effective when teachers engage in planning and sharing instructional responsibilities across subject boundaries. Professional collaboration allows teachers to harmonise content, share resources, and develop unified schemes of work. This collaborative approach reduces curriculum overload and prevents duplication of content, which is one of the key rationales for integration in the first place.

Finally, the integration of History and Social Studies has broader implications for citizenship education and value formation. Through integrated pedagogy, learners are not only exposed to historical facts but are also guided to develop civic values such as responsibility, tolerance, patriotism, and social awareness. The teacher, therefore, assumes the role of a facilitator of value-based learning, helping learners to interpret historical and social knowledge in ways that inform ethical decision-making and active citizenship.

Implications for Curriculum Planning and Policy

The integration of History and Social Studies within the basic education curriculum carries significant implications for curriculum planning and educational policy formulation. One major implication for curriculum planning is the restructuring of curriculum content to ensure alignment between historical knowledge and broader social science concepts. Traditionally, History and Social Studies have been treated as separate subjects with distinct content boundaries. However, integration demands a careful mapping of overlapping themes such as governance, cultural heritage, citizenship, and societal development. This requires curriculum developers to identify core learning outcomes that transcend disciplinary boundaries while still preserving the unique epistemological contributions of each subject. According to Tyler's curriculum rationale, learning experiences must be organized in a way that facilitates continuity and integration of knowledge (Norman & Wall, 2020). In this regard, curriculum

planners must ensure that History content is not taught in isolation but embedded within broader Social Studies themes to enhance relevance and retention.

Another implication relates to the need for curriculum reduction and prioritization. Integrated curriculum planning helps to minimize content overload, a persistent challenge in many educational systems. When History and Social Studies are separately taught, there is often duplication of content, particularly in areas such as civic education, national identity, and cultural studies. Curriculum integration therefore promotes efficiency by eliminating redundancy and allowing for a more streamlined syllabus. This aligns with the principle of curriculum economy, which emphasizes the need to achieve maximum educational value with minimal unnecessary repetition (Popp et al., 2021). For policy makers, this implies a deliberate effort to revise national curriculum frameworks to reflect integrated learning structures that are both manageable for teachers and meaningful for learners.

From a policy perspective, curriculum integration necessitates the development of clear national guidelines that define the scope, sequence, and standards for teaching integrated History and Social Studies. Educational authorities must provide a policy framework that supports interdisciplinary curriculum design, teacher training, instructional materials development, and assessment practices. Without such policy direction, schools and teachers may struggle with inconsistent implementation, leading to disparities in learning outcomes. Policy coherence is therefore critical in ensuring that integration is not merely theoretical but practically achievable across different levels of the education system.

Furthermore, curriculum planning must take into account the need for contextual relevance. Integrated History and Social Studies curricula should reflect learners' immediate social, cultural, and political environments. This implies that local history, indigenous knowledge systems, and community experiences should be incorporated into the curriculum. Such contextualization enhances learner engagement and fosters a deeper understanding of societal structures and historical developments. As Syah, Kumalasari, Devi, & Lestari (2026) emphasize, learners construct meaning more effectively when new knowledge is connected to their existing experiences. Consequently, curriculum planners must ensure that integration promotes contextual learning rather than abstract memorization of disconnected facts.

Teacher preparation and professional development also emerge as a critical policy implication. Effective implementation of an integrated curriculum depends heavily on teachers' competence in both History and Social Studies content, as well as their ability to apply interdisciplinary pedagogical strategies. Policy makers must therefore invest in continuous professional development programs that equip teachers with the necessary skills for curriculum integration. This includes training in thematic instruction, collaborative teaching methods, and learner-centered pedagogies. Without adequate teacher capacity building, curriculum integration may remain ineffective in practice despite sound policy intentions.

Moreover, curriculum planning must address resource allocation and instructional materials development. Integrated curricula require appropriately designed textbooks, teaching aids, and digital resources that reflect interdisciplinary connections. Policy makers and curriculum

developers must collaborate with educational publishers to produce materials that support thematic teaching rather than subject-bound instruction. Schools also require adequate funding to access and utilize such resources effectively.

Conclusion

The study underscores that the integration of History and Social Studies within the primary curriculum is both a pedagogical necessity and a strategic response to curriculum fragmentation in basic education. By highlighting their overlapping objectives—particularly in fostering citizenship, critical thinking, and socio-cultural awareness—the paper establishes that meaningful integration reduces content duplication while enhancing coherence and relevance for learners. It further demonstrates that such integration is most effective when grounded in sound theoretical frameworks, supported by clear policy direction, and implemented through context-sensitive pedagogical approaches.

However, the success of this integrative effort depends largely on teachers' competence, curriculum clarity, and institutional support. Challenges such as inadequate teacher preparation, limited instructional resources, and ambiguity in curriculum design continue to hinder effective practice. Addressing these constraints requires deliberate curriculum planning, sustained professional development, and policies that prioritize both subject integrity and interdisciplinary collaboration.

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