

A National Survey of U.S. Social Studies Teacher Educators' Professional Habits and Preferences

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Abstract

Social studies teacher educators represent a small subset of higher education faculty in the United States. However, within this small subset exist a great deal of diversity in terms of habits and preferences of social studies educators. The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the types of research studies most commonly being conducted by social studies teacher educators, preferred research methods, professional organization affiliations, and preferred publication outlets. Findings revealed that social studies teacher educators in the U.S. most commonly conduct qualitative research studies focusing on the secondary (6-12) level. Additionally, insights are provided into which national organizations and journals are most popular among social studies teacher educators in the United States. This study will provide teachers, educators, and scholars from around the world with valuable information regarding the current state of social studies teacher educators' professional preferences in the United States.

Key words: *Social Studies Education, Demographics, Teacher Education, Survey Research*

Introduction

The field of education continues to be a vast and complex landscape around the world encompassing dynamic realms of pedagogy and social justice (Gay, 2018). Since the field's inception, teacher education researchers have sought to answer fundamental questions about how to improve teaching and learning in all aspects of the field. Social studies teacher education certainly contributes another layer of complexity, with scholars and researchers from a variety of social science disciplines seeking to advocate for new approaches to teaching and learning in public schools. As the educational landscape continues to change and evolve with each passing year, so too do the instructional needs of students entering into the P-12 classroom setting (Banks, J.A., 2019; Gay, 2018).

Additionally, increased demographic diversity in P-12 students in the United States (United States Census Bureau, 2010) has influenced social studies education programs and research to emphasize

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multicultural dispositions in pedagogical practice (Banks, J.A., 2019; Gay, 2018) to navigate the chasm of racial disparity between typically White male social studies teachers (Fitchett, 2010; Howard, G.R., 2016; NCES, 2008) and their demographically diverse students (Banks, J.A., 2019; Gay, 2018; Bower-Phipps, Homa, Albaladejo, Johnson, & Cruz, 2013; Sleeter, 2008; Matias, 2013; Waters & Busey, 2016). This work requires a great deal of flexibility, adaptability, and introspection to effectively and appropriately prepare future social studies teachers to navigate a field that is constantly in flux and has an abundance of variables (Adler, 2008; Gay, 2018; Laughter, 2011; Ladson-Billings, 2011). According to a national survey administered by Busey & Waters (2016) preferred research topics among social studies teacher educators showed that 46% of respondents preferred researching democratic and citizenship education; 41% of respondents preferred researching Pre- service/In-service social studies teacher preparation; and 38% of respondents preferred researching instructional methods and social studies education (Busey & Waters, 2016). These research topics demonstrate the various avenues and approaches that social studies education scholars are taking to investigate and address the grander concerns in social studies education and teacher preparation.

In the *Social Studies Research Handbook*, Adler's (2008) conclusions express the significance of well-designed empirical research and its potential contribution to improved practice. However, if we are to envision teachers employing and using the scholarly work being produced to inform their practice, it is imperative to shed light on the professional habits of the researchers and how their habits may in turn influence scholarship and teachers' practice (Adler, 2008). Thus, the purpose of this article is to examine the types of research studies most commonly being conducted by social studies teacher educators, preferred research methods, professional organization affiliations, and preferred publication outlets. While it is common for educators to contribute new knowledge to the field in the form of scholarly articles and conference presentations, what is less known is the type of studies they prefer to conduct and where they prefer to share their work. As the outlets where educators share their work continues to expand (journals, online journals, blogs, editorials, books, textbooks, etc.), we believe it is critical for fields to begin sharing information regarding their professional preferences to help establish reputable outlets to share their work. This is especially critical during times when predatory journals and conferences continue to thrive on the "publish or perish" nature of higher education. Finally, data from this study will be helpful in strengthening the link between research and practice by providing teachers, educators, and scholars

from around the world with valuable information regarding the current state of social studies teacher educators' professional preferences in the United States.

Theoretical Framework

We employed Network Effects Theory (NET) to undergird our study, beginning with the theory's assertion that the value of a "good or service" increases as more people start to use that "good or service" (Clements, 2004; Easley & Kleinberg, 2010; Network Effects, 2017). While the NET framework is traditionally used in economics research (Clements, 2004; Easley & Kleinberg, 2010; Network Effects, 2017), the foundational principles of the theory are germane and translate well to our study, which focuses social studies teacher educator scholarly preferences. Specifically, the types of research studies most commonly being conducted, preferred research methods, professional organization affiliations, and preferred publication outlets (metaphorically and literally) exemplify "goods or services" within the field.

Following this theory, the more social studies teacher educators select certain outlets to publish scholarship, conduct certain types of studies, employ certain research methods, attend certain conferences, and join certain organization affiliations, the more valuable and appealing these preferences become in moving the field forward. This in turn, attracts more social studies teacher educators to these specific scholarly outlets and habits. Thus, these scholarly outlets and habits continue to increase in value and attract more social studies teacher educators simultaneously.

We maintain that the NET theoretical framework provides a necessary contextual lens to guide our study and aid readers in conceptualizing our findings beyond just reported social studies teacher educator scholarly preferences. Rather, we aim to employ NET to be able to provide theory-laden rationalizations for why these scholarly preferences among social studies teacher educators help explain the current focus of the field. Processing the data through this framework allows us to demonstrate to the reader how and why the types of research studies most commonly being conducted, preferred research methods, professional organization affiliations, and preferred publication outlets influences and shapes the field of social studies education research moving forward.

Scholarly Preferences of Social Studies Teacher Educators: A Need for Research

Regardless of an individual's role in the field of social studies education, i.e. teacher educator or pre/in-service teacher, it is important to map the field. Understanding the scholarly preferences of social studies teacher educators conducting research is crucial for both teachers and other teacher educators to discern the direction the field is heading. Moreover, this knowledge is valuable because teachers and scholars alike should be able to identify whether or not the research partialities of social studies teacher educators adequately reflect/align with the diverse nature of multiculturalism needs in 21st century schools (Gay, 2018).

To improve the teaching and learning of social studies, teacher education should be informed by robust research that transcends paradigmatic debates, makes solid contributions to the field that address gaps in the literature, and highlight the in/effectiveness and impact of certain practices and strategies on diverse populations (AERA, 2006; Adler, 2008; Gutierrez, Penuel, 2014; Tarman & Acun, 2010; Zeichner, 2005). Zeichner (2005) called for "multimethodological approaches to studying the complexities of teacher education (p.740)." These considerations for education research are useful for both the pre/in-service teachers, as well as other social studies researchers as they decide to take action to address various needs in the field. This allows other social studies researchers to see what types of studies have been conducted regarding a particular topic, what methodologies have been employed to study particular topics, and what critical areas are still in need of additional research.

Relatedly, understanding preferred research studies and methodologies allows other education scholars and teachers to discern the researcher's world view and ontological and epistemological leanings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), and arguably more important, the generalizability of the results and findings (Adler, 2008; Creswell, 2007; Gay, 2018;). For example, a case study approach may have specific parameters that define the case being studied, therefore the results and findings may not be applicable in all social studies classrooms around the world. Nonetheless, this information should be taken into consideration when evaluating research and deciding whether or not use it to inform pedagogical practice (Adler, 2008).

Professional Organization Preferences

Understanding what professional organizations and associations that social studies teacher educators belong to is important because this indicates where social studies scholars go to collaborate and network. This knowledge is useful to both teachers and scholars that are seeking to break out of isolation in the field and receive professional development, while surrounding themselves with individuals who share similar passions in the field (Lewis, 2015; Lynn, 2002). Professional organizations and associations is also a good indicator of the preferred type of work that the social studies teacher educator engages in for specialized development and sharing their research/scholarship (Eraut, 1994). For example, certain education organizations, such as the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) tend to be geared more towards pedagogical practice and teaching theory (NCSS, 2019), while others, such as the College and University Faculty Assembly (CUFA) are geared more towards higher education and empirical research (CUFA, 2019). Both beneficial to the overall field of social studies education, but some organizations and associations may better suit certain teachers and teacher educators more than others.

Publication Outlet Preferences

Knowing where social studies teacher educators disseminate their scholarship is also very salient in understanding the field as whole. In the field of education some journals publish “how to” narratives regarding pedagogical strategies and interventions, while others are more research-driven and seek to highlight findings of empirical studies. The type of manuscript produced greatly determines the journal outlet to be selected to disseminate this work (Knight & Steinbach, 2008). This works vice versa also, if a particular journal is selected first, then the manuscript will be tailored to meet the parameters or works typically published in that particular journal (Knight & Steinbach, 2008). For example, in the field social studies education, “Social Education”, the flagship journal of NCSS, is geared more towards practitioner and theory-based publications (Social Education Manuscript Submission Guidelines, 2019). In journals such as “The Journal of Social Studies Research” and “Theory and Research in Social Education”, the publications from these outlets tend to be much more research-laden (JSSR, 2019; TRSE, 2019). Both types of publication outlets serve to inform future social studies teachers and teacher educators but have different missions and visions for how their journals strive to do so. The National Council for the

Social Studies promotes a number of research, theory, and mixed journals that are advantageous for social studies teachers and teacher educators alike (NCSS, 2019).

Rationale for the Study

There is no uniform way to be a social studies teacher educator. There exists a plethora of ways to research phenomena and contribute to the literature, and to organizations that provide professional development and give inspiration to the scholar as they prepare their students. The purpose of this study is not to perpetuate the idea that there is a right way of conducting research, a certain professional organization that should be joined over another, or a “best journal” that should be considered by all scholars. Creativity and diversity in scholarship are useful and necessary to explain a field that is constantly in flux and has so many overlapping areas of interest within diverse fields of research. We aim to unpack this discussion further and investigate the various preferences of social studies education scholars to gauge what social studies teacher educators are doing in regard to scholarship, associations, and dissemination of research.

This study is salient as we seek to extend the conversation a step further and look at what social studies teacher educators are doing to prepare preservice teachers to teach an ever increasing demographically diverse P-12 student population (Gay, 2018; Banks, 2019). This article strives to fill a gap in the literature and highlights the scholarly preferences of social studies teacher educators in the United States and informs those in and entering the field of “what they are doing” as it relates to their role as a researcher and social studies teacher educator.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this descriptive quantitative study was to examine the types of research studies most commonly being conducted by social studies teacher educators, preferred research methods, professional organization affiliations, and preferred publication outlets. To explore this query, the researchers formulated the following research questions to focus to drive the study:

1. How do social studies teacher educators define themselves as researchers with regards to their P-16 level of focus, research concentrations, and preferred research methods and avenues for research dissemination?

In our analysis and findings, we hope to provide teachers, educators, and scholars from around the world with a valuable understanding of the field regarding the current state of social studies teacher educators' professional preferences in the United States. This information could potentially be useful in future studies to glean whether or not social studies teacher educators' research effectively and appropriately informs practice and supports the ever-increasing diverse demographics of 21st century students.

Methods

The questionnaire utilized in this survey research study was constructed by the researchers based on a plethora of peer-reviewed studies focused on collecting demographic data of teachers and teacher educators (Cruse & Hamrick, 1990; Faculty Demographics, 2000; Fitchett & Vanfossen, 2013; Hodgkinson, 2002a; Nelson & Brammer, 2010; Zabel & White, 1988). The questionnaire was piloted with a group of twenty colleagues to assess the reliability and validity of the items on the questionnaire and if any information needed to be removed from the instrument. Additionally, we drew on the work of Creswell (2007), and sought critical peer-reviewers and constant member checking for each item on the questionnaire. After this process, we consulted with colleagues within our departments that were experts in survey research, quantitative research methods, and evaluation for additional input on the questionnaire in this study.

Data Collection

The survey instrument was uploaded into the online platform known as *Qualtrics*, which allowed the researchers the ability to solicit participation from social studies teacher educators across the United States. To identify potential participants for this study, we drew upon multiple listservs which we had access to for professional organizations within the field of social studies teacher education (Journal of Social Studies Research and the College and University Faculty Assembly). Additionally, we manually collected information about possible participants from university websites, social studies publications, editorial review boards, conference programs, and professional relationships we have established with colleagues to construct a detailed database of 258 possible participants. The database of participants excluded graduate students, as they were not the intended audience of this study, which sought to provide data driven evidence of what current social studies teacher educators were doing in relation to professional habits and

preferences. While we recognize the limitations of identifying potential participants in this fashion, our objective was to recruit as many participants as possible, while also focusing in on participants that had a clearly defined association with the field of social studies teacher education (Punch, 2003). We also acknowledge that the use of journal/organization listservs has limitations, as not all scholars in the field are part of those organizations or are on editorial review boards. Again, this method was not meant to be exclusionary, rather, we wanted to begin with a foundation of possible participants from which we could actively work to build a more inclusive database of social studies teacher educators. We invited participants to complete the survey via email once every two weeks for three months. Once someone completed the survey, their IP address was logged in Qualtrics, preventing them from completing the survey multiple times from the same computer.

Data Analysis

Of the 258 total possible participants, we received a total of 149 completed responses to our survey, for a response rate of 58%. Since the survey was completed anonymously and participants could skip any questions or segments of the survey that they did not want to complete or feel comfortable answering, not all 149 respondents completed every section of the survey. All data from Qualtrics was transported into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), where the researchers ran descriptive statistics to report exactly what the data indicated and not make any broad generalizations or comparisons between different indicators or independent variables.

Limitations

We acknowledge that our study has several limitations. Firstly, compiling a comprehensive database of all faculty, educators, teachers, researchers, and scholars associated with the field of social studies teacher education would be a nearly impossible task, as the field itself has several overlapping areas of interest and responsibilities. While building from a participant pool from selected listservs associated with the field is certainly exclusionary to those not associated with those organizations, this was only used as a starting point for participant recruitment. Other limitations included not inquiring about prior teaching experience in P-12 classrooms (e.g., urban, suburban, rural, private, etc.). We also did not inquire about linguistic backgrounds or why these educators choose to enter into the field of social studies teacher preparation, information which

would certainly prove to be illuminating and insightful. However, no questionnaire can be so comprehensive without being overwhelming to participants and as we were asking for their help and insights, we needed to be mindful of the time required to complete the survey instrument. We encourage future research to include and build upon all of these limitations.

The nature of conducting survey research itself also has substantial limitations. For example, all survey research relies on data that is self-reported by participants. Self-reported data always has the inherent risk of participants not being entirely truthful, a limitation we attempted to moderate by having the survey instrument completed anonymously. Additionally, as referenced above, a larger and more comprehensive population sample could have possibly uncovered different findings. However, the researchers worked to minimize the limitations of this study by aligning our methods with common characteristics associated with high quality survey research (Punch, 2003; Salant & Dillman, 1994). While our population sample certainly does not reflect the entirety of everyone associated with social studies teacher preparation in the United States, it does offer some data driven evidence about what a fair segment of these educators are doing professionally.

Results

What Are We Doing?

In an effort to better understand what social studies educators are actually doing in the field, the researchers collected information on a variety of different topics ranging from preferred methods of research to professional organization associations. One of the first questions the researchers asked the participants to answer was their primary focus area of research in the P-12 school setting. Participants were allowed to select multiple options as their primary area of focus in P-12 research, which lead to percentage responses that total greater than 100%. Of our respondents, 70% (N=82) identified Secondary as their primary area of focus, while 30% (N=35) selected Middle and 27% (N=32) selected Early Childhood and Elementary (see table 1).

Table 1*Primary area of focus in P-12 research*

Grade level	N=	Percentage of respondents
Early Childhood and Elementary	32	27%
Middle	35	30%
Secondary	82	70%

The next series of questions collected information on social studies educators preferred research methodologies, types of research conducted, research topics, and critical areas in need of additional research. Firstly, the researchers asked participants to rank from 1-3 (1 being most preferred and 3 being the least preferred) their research methodologies. 73% of respondents (N=66) identified quantitative as their least preferred methodology. Qualitative was identified as the most preferred methodology by 65% (N=59) of the participants, while Mixed Methods garnered the highest number of “neutral” (2) responses with 66% of participants (N=60) (see table 2). After collecting information on preferred research methodologies, we asked participants to identify what types of research studies they most commonly conduct. Participants in this section of the survey were allowed to choose as many areas as they desired, with no minimum or maximum restrictions. A majority of respondents, 68% (N=78), identified case study research as their preferred study type. Survey and questionnaire research was the second most commonly selected method with 40% (N=46) of respondents, followed closely by action research, selected by 37% (N=42) of respondents. There was a fair amount of consistency and frequency among multiple types of research, as ethnography, grounded theory, historical research, content/textbook analysis, and narrative research each garnered selections by at least 20% of respondents. Self-study research had the lowest frequency of selection with 11% (N=13) respondents (see table 3).

Table 2*Preferred research methodologies*

Method	1	2	3	Total Responses
Quantitative	16	9	66	91
Qualitative	59	22	10	91
Mixed Methods	16	60	15	91
Total	91	91	91	91

**Respondents were asked to “rank” the methodologies in order of most preferred (1) to least preferred (3).*

Table 3
Preferred types of research

Research type	N=	Percentage of respondents
Action Research	42	37%
Case Study Research	78	68%
Content/Textbook Analysis	29	25%
Ethnography	30	26%
Grounded Theory	28	25%
Historical Research	36	32%
Narrative Research	23	20%
Phenomenology	18	16%
Self-Study Research	13	11%
Survey and Questionnaire Research	46	40%
Other	9	8%

The final section of the questionnaire asked participants to provide information about their professional organization memberships, conferences they are most likely to attend, and professional journals they are most likely to read and/or submit manuscripts to for publication. For the professional organization membership and professional conferences likely to attend sections, the researchers provided participants with a preliminary list of organizations and conferences that they could choose from, while also including an “other” option for write-in responses that may not have been included as one of the provided options. Participants in this section of the survey were allowed to choose as many organizations and conferences as they desired, with no minimum or maximum restrictions. The “National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS)” was the organization most frequently chosen, with 95% (N=106) of respondents claiming to be members of the organization. 78% (N=87) of respondents claimed to be members of the “College and University Faculty Assembly (CUFA),” while 71% (N=79) of respondents claimed to be members of the “American Educational Research Association (AERA) (see table 4). When asked to identify which professional conferences participants attend or are likely to attend for research and collaboration/dissemination, 71% (N=77) of respondents indicated “College and University Faculty Assembly (CUFA).” “American Educational Research Association (AERA)” was chosen by 66% (N=72) of respondents likely to attend, while “National Council for the Social studies (NCSS)” closely behind with 65% (N=71) of respondents likely to attend (see table 5).

To find out what professional journals participants were most likely to read and/or submit manuscripts to for publication, the researchers chose to collect this data by written responses only (no preliminary list of potential journals was provided). The researchers hoped to find out more

information about what journals social studies educators prioritize in terms of reading about and publishing research in the field. Of all the journals provided by respondents, the two most frequently cited were “The Journal of Social Studies Research (JSSR)” 72% (N=71) and “Theory and Research in Social Education (TRSE)” 70% (N=69). Other top choices of respondents included “Social Education” 49% (N=48), “The Social Studies” 36% (N=35), “American Educational Research Journal (AERJ) 27% (N=26), “Action in Teacher Education” 23% (N=23), and “Social Studies Research and Practice” 23% (N=23). It is also important to note that the “other” category for the professional journals likely to read and/or submit manuscripts was expansive, 63% (N=62), because of all the variety contained within the write-in responses. The researchers decided to include only the journals that were identified by at least 5% of respondents (see table 6).

Table 4
Professional organization membership of respondents

Name of Organization	N=	Percentage of respondents
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE)	27	24%
American Educational Research Association (AERA)	79	71%
Association of Teacher Educators (ATE)	15	13%
College and University Faculty Assembly (CUFA)	87	78%
International Society for the Social Studies (ISSS)	29	26%
National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME)	18	16%
National Council for History Education (NCHE)	9	8%
National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS)	106	95%
National Social Science Association (NSSA)	9	8%
State Council for the Social Studies (Acronym dependent upon the state organization in which the participant is active)	53	47%
Other	47	42%

Table 5
Professional conferences likely to attend

Name of Organization/Conference	N=	Percentage of respondents
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE)	13	12%
American Educational Research Association (AERA)	72	66%
Association of Teacher Educators (ATE)	9	8%
College and University Faculty Assembly (CUFA)	77	71%
International Society for the Social Studies (ISSS)	18	17%
National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME)	16	15%
National Council for History Education (NCHE)	6	6%
National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS)	71	65%
State Council for the Social Studies (Acronym dependent upon the state organization in which the participant is active)	40	37%
Other	50	48%

Table 6*Professional journals most likely to read and/or submit manuscripts*

Name of Organization	N=	Percentage of respondents
Action in Teacher Education	23	23%
American Educational Research Journal (AERJ)	26	27%
The History Teacher	9	9%
The Journal of Social Studies Research (JSSR)	71	72%
The Journal of Teacher Education	8	8%
Social Education	48	49%
The Social Studies	35	36%
Social Studies Research and Practice	23	23%
Social Studies and the Young Learner	18	18%
Teachers College Record	7	7%
Teaching and Teacher Education	9	9%
Theory and Research in Social Education (TRSE)	69	70%
Other	62	63%

Professional organizations and research dissemination.

In the last section of the questionnaire, the researchers wanted to find out more about social studies educators' professional affiliations and publication preferences. The researchers wanted to know where are social studies educators going to disseminate and collaborate about research as well as what research journals are most popular among social studies faculty members. In terms of professional organization membership, respondents indicated that the "National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS)" was by far the most popular with 95% of respondents claiming membership. The "College and University Faculty Assembly (CUFA) was the second most frequently identified, with 78% of respondents claiming membership, followed by the "American Educational Research Association (AERA)" with 71% of respondents claiming membership. The researchers found this data encouraging because it highlights that social studies education faculty members are engaging in collaborative organizations dedicated to advancing the field and improving social studies education. Engagement in collaborative organizations was further demonstrated by the selection of conferences participants were likely to attend, with NCSS garnering (65%), CUFA (71%), and AERA (66%) of respondents claiming they were likely to attend these gatherings to disseminate or collaborate about research. Again, doctoral students or scholars new to the field of social studies may find this data helpful because it offers insight into meeting locations and organizations popular among contemporary social studies education faculty.

The final question on the questionnaire sought to find out what professional journals participants were most likely to read and/or submit manuscripts to for publication. The researchers believed

this data would be helpful to everyone in the field of social studies education due to the increasing number of publication outlets utilized in higher education. The two journals most frequently identified by respondents were “The Journal of Social Studies Research (JSSR)” (72%), and “Theory and Research in Social Education (TRSE)” (70%). The sample population in this study clearly favored JSSR and TRSE, likely because these are two in a small number of peer-reviewed journals dedicated solely to social studies research and some of the participants for this study were recruited using listserves associated with these journals/organizations. Based on the indicated popularity of JSSR and TRSE, it can be assumed that these journals are highly regarded among participants in this study and journals that aspiring scholars and social studies educators should consider reading if they wish to maintain an understanding of contemporary research in the field.

Discussion

Not surprisingly, most of the respondents in this study (70%) classified secondary schools as their primary focus area in P-12 research. This high percentage could be attributed to the fact that social studies classes are only offered consistently at the secondary level. As social studies becomes increasingly and continually absent from the elementary school curriculum (Heafner & Fitchett, 2012), research in this area may prove difficult to conduct. Social studies teacher educators must also seek to differentiate between middle level and secondary education, as the two have different factors to consider in light of adolescent development, cognitive challenges, and overall purposes (Conklin, 2011, 2014).

When asked to rank preferred research methodologies in terms of favorite to least favorite, a large majority of the sample population (65%) identified qualitative as their preferred methodology. The sample population clearly did not prefer quantitative research, with 73% of respondents identifying it as their least favorite research method. Based on these findings, the case could be made that more quantitative focused researchers are needed in the field of social studies education to offer diversity in presentation of research findings. Among all the research types utilized by participants in this study, case study research was the most frequently identified (68%) among social studies educators. Somewhat surprisingly and contradictory, survey and questionnaire research was the second most identified type of study, preferred by 40% of participants. The researchers found the popularity of survey and questionnaire research surprising due to the lack of preference towards

quantitative research found in the previous question. Perhaps participants utilize survey and questionnaire research to inform qualitative studies, as opposed to focusing primarily on quantitative statistical analysis of findings. In all other research areas, there was a great deal of balance among the participants in this study, indicating a good deal of diversity in terms of the methods of research being conducted in the field of social studies. The researchers found the diversity of research types identified among participants as encouraging because it suggests that social studies education faculty are attempting to answer complex issues from a variety of different research paradigms.

Conclusion

This descriptive study was designed to examine the types of research studies most commonly being conducted by U.S. social studies teacher educators, preferred research methods, professional organization affiliations, and preferred publication outlets. The researchers discovered that social studies teacher educators in the U.S. most commonly conduct qualitative research studies focusing on the secondary (6-12) level. Moreover, insights were provided into which national organizations and journals are most popular among social studies teacher educators in the United States. Extrapolating information such as this from a national survey will set up the opportunity for future research to be conducted to examine why U.S. social studies teacher educators have these professional habits and preferences (perhaps a qualitative interview study), as well as offer a model for similar studies to be conducted in other countries around the world. We believe international studies similar to this one that attempt to offer insights into the professional habits and preferences of social studies educators would be a valuable addition to the literature and help scholars from around the world have a more thoughtful understanding of social studies teacher education on an international level.

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