

Experiences of Teachers Implementing the Standards-Based Curriculum in La-Nkwantanang, Ghana: Should the Experiences be Overlooked?

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Abstract

Pre-tertiary teachers in La-Nkwantanang, Ghana, have raised concerns about how the lack of training, consensus, and resources affect the implementation of a standards-based curriculum. This study employed Knoster's (1991) change management theory to evaluate teachers' concerns about the implementation of the Ghanaian curriculum. Few studies have examined teachers' concerns in Ghana (Apau 2021). This qualitative study used a descriptive phenomenological design. La-Nkwantanang is a municipality in Accra, Ghana. The participants included a circuit supervisor, a head teacher, and seven teachers. Interviews, document analysis, and observations were used to collect data. The findings affirmed that when there is a lack of consultation, training, and resources, teachers have challenging experiences that can affect curriculum implementation. Teachers recommended for curriculum evaluation, retraining, narrowing the curriculum, parental involvement, and provision of resources. The results revealed that the Knoster (1991) model is effective for evaluating teachers' concerns, and such concerns should not be overlooked.

Keywords: La-Nkwantanang, standard-based curriculum, pre-tertiary teachers, Knoster management model, phenomenology, curricula reforms, and experiences

Introduction

Globally, educational organizations are moving from an objective-based curriculum that meets specific local goals to a standards-based curriculum that meets international standards set to meet 21st-century challenges (Cheptoo & Ramadas, 2019). Pre-tertiary schools in Ghana have moved from an objective-based curriculum to a standards-based one (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment [NACCA], 2018). The objectives of this reform, according to the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (2018), are to a) ensure the provision of life skills training and management for the areas of personal hygiene, fire safety, environment, sanitation, and climate change, b) Improve pedagogy with a special emphasis on learning, and c) Promote the Learning of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) subjects at all levels. Educational leadership expects that by 2030, education in Ghana will meet global standards.

Research Problem

The problem is that despite the objectives of this new curriculum (2019), pre-tertiary teachers in Ghana have raised concerns about how lack of training, consensus, and teaching and learning resources was negatively affecting the implementation of the new curriculum (Aboagye & Yawson, 2020; Adokwei, 2021; Apau, 2021; Anti, 2020). A handful of studies have been done regarding the experiences of teachers during reforms in Ghana; however, existing literature showed the following gaps; a) only few research works have looked at the concerns of teachers regarding the implementation of the new curriculum in Ghana (Agormedah, Ansah, Betakan & Parker, 2019; Ani-Boi, 2009; Ankomah & Kwarteng, 2010; Apau, 2021; Cobbold & Ani-Boi, 2011; Donkoh, 2016; Kwarteng, 2016 & 2018); b) majority of these works were based on the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM), c) literature that used change management models treated the concerns of teachers as one-dimensional concerns

which progressed through stages, and d) Not much work has been done using the Knoster's model. The Knoster (1991) management model (Holthaus & Vandepol, 2021; Kirchner, 2023; Paway, 2020; Rajapakse, 2015; Travers, 2021) has been proven to be effective in evaluating experiences during reforms; however, this model has been underutilized in curricula reforms. Therefore, Knoster's (1991) management model was used to evaluate pre-tertiary teachers' experiences in La-Nkwantanang, Ghana. The results of this study add to the existing literature that the Knoster (1991) model is an effective tool to evaluate teachers' concerns during reforms. This study revealed that teachers' concerns during curriculum reforms are not sequential or fixed; they are caused by underlying factors that make their concerns multidimensional or complex.

Literature Review

Numerous studies have discussed curriculum reform worldwide. Even though most of these works do not conclude without mentioning that teachers experience challenges during curriculum reforms, only a handful of research talks extensively about these experiences. Fuller (1969) initiated the idea of seeking to understand teachers' experiences during curriculum change. Fuller's (1969) *Concerns of Teachers: A Developmental Conceptualization* used the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM).

In 1969, Fuller proposed a three-stage developmental model for teachers: self-concern, concerns about tasks, and concerns about impact. According to Fuller (1969), pre-service and early in-service teachers typically go through these stages in a sequence, starting with self-concerns, then moving on to concerns about tasks, and finally addressing concerns about impact. Most of the subsequent studies (Alshammari 2000; Ani-Boi, 2009; Ankomah & Kwarteng, 2010; Apau, 2021; Christou, Eliophotou-Menon & Philipou 2004, Cobbold & Ani-Boi, 2011; Kwarteng, 2016 & 2018; McCulloch and Thompson 1981; McKinney, Sexton, and Meyerson 1999; Min 2017; Lo 2018; Ramnanan 2014; and Rust 1988) used the CBAM.

Conway and Clark (2003) re-examined Fuller's work (1969) and found that teachers' concerns are cyclic, not hierarchical. Kwok (2014) revealed that the assumption that teachers' experiences regarding reforms unfold in a fixed developmental progression must be revisited, because his work revealed that the stages of teacher concerns are dependent on the context. Cheung and Yip (2004) also tested the validity of the structure of the CBAM which expected that teacher concerns that progressed from self-concern stage to task concern and finally to impact concern revealed that this structure of CBAM about teacher concerns was not valid. Another study by Min (2017), which challenged the generalization of the progression of teacher concerns by CBAM, also revealed that CBAM could not fully explain the progression of teacher concerns in the face of reforms.

Charalambous and Philipou (2010), who employed the CBAM model, argued that after finding the stages of teachers' concerns, the qualitative aspect of their mixed-methods research showed that teachers' concerns were multidimensional and not hierarchical. They argued that the multidimensional nature of teachers' concerns may cause the internal inconsistency observed between their work and that of Shostberg and Crawford (1999). According to Charalambous and Philipou (2010), while some teachers were concerned about insufficient time, others were concerned about how the reform affected them. This indicates that teachers' concerns are affected by multidimensional factors, and these factors determine the stages of their concerns.

In Ghana, research conducted (Agormedah, Ansah, & Betakan, 2019; Ani-Boi, 2009; Ankomah & Kwarteng, 2010; Apau, 2021; Cobbold & Ani-Boi, 2011; Donkoh, 2016; Kwarteng, 2016 & 2018) have revealed that the assumptions of CBAM cannot be generalized. These researchers used CBAM to ascertain teachers' concerns regarding curriculum reforms at various levels and disciplines. Apau (2021) found that teachers' concerns started from impact concerns, then to task concerns, and finally to self-concerns, while Kwarteng (2016) found that

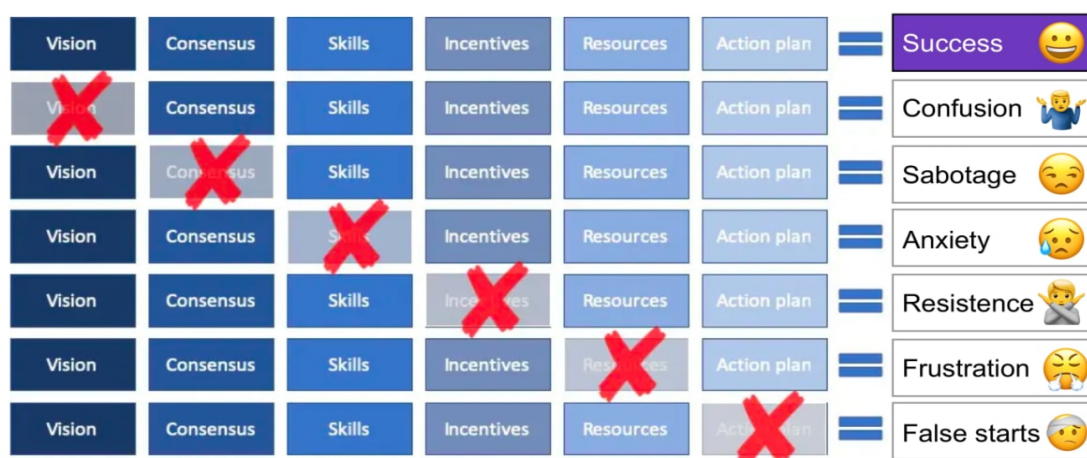
teacher concerns progressed from self to impact concerns. These studies were conducted in Ghana; however, they had inconsistent findings, making it difficult to generalize the assumptions of CBAM. Kwarteng (2016) found in his quantitative work using CBAM that teachers' concerns progressed from self to impact. However, in another study, Kwarteng (2018) found in the quantitative results that teachers' concerns progressed from awareness to the informational stage. Both studies were conducted in Ghana but in different settings. These inconsistencies in the available studies make it difficult to generalize the assumptions of the CBAM.

The different results have shown that CBAM theory cannot be generalized; however, most researchers seem more interested in the stages of teacher concerns than the causes. Surprisingly, more attention is given to the stages of teachers' concerns than the underlying causes of these concerns. Apau (2021), for instance, found that teachers in Effutu, Ghana, may have impact concerns due to a lack of training. Suppose that the underlying factors are capable of causing inconsistencies in the stages of teacher concern. In this case, it is ideal for educational leadership to focus more on the underlying factors instead of the stages. Various change management theories are non-sequential and designed to address the underlying factors of concern, such as the Knoster management model.

Despite the simplicity and success rate of Knoster's (1991) change-management model, it has been underutilized in education. Only a few studies have used the Knoster (1991) model. The results of such studies indicate the validity of Knoster's (1991) model in managing educational reforms. Travers (2021) used Knoster's (1991) model to implement a school's curriculum. Knoster's (1991) model states that for any reform to be successful, there should be the provision of

vision, incentives, resources, consensus, skills, and action. Before implementing the school curriculum, he presented all six components of Knoster's (1991) model. At the end of the program, responses from both teachers and students indicated a positive reaction toward this new curriculum compared to the previous one, which did not follow the principles of Knoster's (1991) model. Kirchner (2023) also paired the practice profile of structured literacy with the components of Knoster (1991) in mixed-method research to find out the extent to which practice profile alone could determine the success of educational reform. At the end of the study, the results revealed that documenting educational policies was insufficient to determine a program's success.

However, providing the six components of Knoster's (1991) model to educational policies was very important to the program's success. Ebert (2018) also conducted research using Knoster's (1991) model. He wanted to determine the impact of these six components on instructional technology coaches during the evolution of Pennsylvania. At the end of the research, the results revealed that the six components of Knoster's (1991) model, in addition to time, communication, educational leader support, and monitoring, significantly impacted teachers during the reform. The available literature has shown consistency, which makes it easy to generalize the assumptions of Knoster's change management theory when managing curriculum implementation. The validity and applicability of the Knoster change management model are the reasons behind the selection of teachers' experiences in implementing the new curriculum based on the assumptions of Knoster (1991). Figure 1 illustrates Knoster's change management theory.

Figure 1*Lippit-Knoster Model for Managing Complex Change*

Knoster's (1991) management model assumptions were employed to evaluate pre-tertiary teachers' experiences regarding the implementation of the new curriculum. According to Knoster (1991), the absence of just one of these elements: consensus, skills, vision, incentives, action plan, and resources will cause reform implementers to have negative experiences such as a) anxiety, b) sabotage, c) frustration, d) treadmill, e) confusion, and f) resistance during reforms. However, when there is a vision, resources, action plan, skills, consensus, and incentives, there will be a positive experience of success. Therefore, the researchers of this study ascertained how the provision of resources, consensus, and skills contributed to teachers' experiences in implementing the new curriculum. The following research questions were asked:

1. How have teachers' experiences with the implementation of the new curriculum been?
2. How does the provision of consensus contribute to teachers' experiences regarding implementing the new curriculum?
3. What role does the provision of skills play in teachers' experiences regarding implementing the new curriculum?

4. What role does the provision of resources play in teachers' experiences regarding implementing the new curriculum?

Methodology

This study used a qualitative research approach. According to Merriam (2002), qualitative research seeks to make meaning of any phenomenon through the perceptions of participants. The authors gathered in-depth information on the nature of pre-tertiary teacher experiences from teachers implementing the new curriculum (2019) in La-Nkwantanang Municipality in Ghana.

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive phenomenological research design. Tymieniecka (2003) argued that the core of phenomenology is an attempt to understand and describe phenomena. The implementation of the 2019 curriculum in pre-tertiary schools in Ghana is a new phenomenon with challenges, concerns, and experiences that need to be understood. Phenomenology was used to gather in-depth information and describe the experiences of pre-tertiary teachers in implementing the new curriculum (2019). Using descriptive phenomenology helped to undertake a study that is void of inaccuracies because it demanded that researchers follow these steps of inquiry: a) bracketing,

b) analyzing, c) intuiting, and d) description, as prescribed by Swanson-Kauffman and Schonwald (1988).

Research Setting

The context of this study is the La-Nkwantanang municipality, a suburb of Accra in Ghana. La-Nkwantanang municipality has a geographical size of approximately 67.88/km² and a population of 244,676 people, with about 63.3% being youth (Ghana Statistical Service, 2021). The capital of La-Nkwantanang Municipal is Madina. According to the Composite Budget for the La-Nkwantanang Municipal Assembly (2020), 72% of its population is literate. This study was conducted in four public pre-tertiary (kindergarten to junior high) schools in La-Nkwantanang, Ghana. The municipality has approximately 1,426 public pre-tertiary teachers, 1,387 (97.26%) trained teachers, and only 39 (2.73%) untrained teachers. It also has nine educational circuits: Madina, Fire Armor, Nkwantanang, New Road, Presec, Estate, Pantang, and Oyarifa.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

Nine public pre-tertiary teachers from four schools participated in this study. They comprised one circuit supervisor, a headteacher, and seven teachers teaching in the preschool, primary, and junior high schools in the La-Nkwantanang municipality. According to the Ghana National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (2018), pre-tertiary schools in Ghana should include preschool, primary, junior high, and senior high schools. At the time of this study, only primary and junior high schools had implemented the new curriculum. A criterion sampling method was used to select teachers as participants. According to Korstjens and Moser (2017), the criterion sampling technique is suitable for phenomenology because it allows the researcher to select participants who have already experienced the phenomena. Nine public-trained teachers with five or more years of experience were purposively selected. All selected teachers were using the new curriculum.

Data Collection Methods

Semi-structured interviews, observations, and document analysis were used to collect information on teachers' concerns regarding the implementation of the new pre-tertiary curriculum in the La-Nkwantanang Municipality. A pilot interview test was conducted to check for mistakes, ambiguities, and clarity. After the pilot study, approval was obtained from the educational heads before selecting the participants. All nine participants provided their consent before the interviews were conducted and audio-recorded. The audio recording lasted a maximum of ten minutes. The responses were transcribed for data analysis. Textbooks, notebooks, training manuals, the national pre-tertiary curriculum, the Education Sector Medium-term Development Plan (2018-2021), the Educational Strategic Plan (2018-2030), and the teachers' resource packs were analyzed to cross-check the validity of the responses given to avoid bias. The researchers observed classroom teachers to gather additional information. These three data-collection methods were used to ensure data triangulation.

Data Analysis

Saldana's (2013) sub coding technique of extensive indexing, categorizing, and sub categorizing data into ranks was employed in the data analyses. Charmaz (2001) described coding as finding a link between the data collected and its meaning. Coding in this study was performed manually with the aid of pencils, colored pencils, and hard copies of all data gathered through interviews, observation, and document analysis. Codes were identified and grouped into categories, and finally, categories were reduced into themes. Data were analyzed manually because the responses were (few) from only nine participants, and it was ideal to analyze them manually, as advised by Saldana (2013).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues were assured through informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality, appropriate data analysis, and dissemination of information. A letter of permission was sent to

the Municipal Education Director for approval. A briefing method was used to screen all selected participants for their readiness and qualifications. Participants signed consent forms before being interviewed and observed. The selected participants had the right to withdraw from the interview. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, the names, schools, classes, responses, and other identifiable cues of the participants were withheld. Audio recordings were stored on a different storage device and kept away from the reach of other people during and after the transcription. Audio recordings were deleted after the transcription. Hard and soft copies of the data were kept safe and destroyed after three months.

Researchers' Reflexibility

Before conducting this research, the authors had much knowledge about the importance of a standards-based curriculum for 21st-century learners. However, little attention has been paid to the challenges of a standards-based curriculum until issues concerning implementing the standard-based curriculum in Africa and beyond have

been dug deeper. The authors were surprised to discover issues surrounding the implementation of standards-based curricula, particularly in Africa. This became worrying when the findings from the current study aligned with results from other countries. These authors silently wished that teachers' experiences in Ghana would differ from findings from other African countries, especially after discovering the dire consequences of these challenges on the curricula of other countries. The researchers used triangulated sources of data to control personal bias.

Results

Table 1 presents the findings from the participants' responses to the four research questions. There were nine pre-tertiary teachers: one head teacher, one circuit supervisor, and seven teachers involved in this study. The findings included data from interview questions, observations, and document analysis. The themes were manually generated. The identified codes were grouped into categories, which were further reduced into themes.

Table 1

Summarized Data of Findings

Research questions	Themes	Categories	key Concepts
1. How have teachers' experiences with the implementation of the new curriculum been?	challenging experiences	Lack of resources Inadequate training lack of teacher consultation	Lack of TLMs, infrastructure, and time. Rushed over salient points implemented the curriculum in a rush. No individual teacher consultation
2. How does the provision consensus contribute to teachers' experiences regarding implementing the new curriculum?	Challenging experiences due to Lack of individual teacher consultation	Needs of learners not considered, Imposed on us	struggling to teach new content, learners do not understand new content.
3. What role does the provision of skills play in the kind of experiences teachers have regarding implementing the new curriculum?	Challenging experiences due to Insufficient acquired skills	Lack of full knowledge about the curriculum Non Interactive learners	No change-readiness time, lack of ability to differentiate between the old and the new curriculum methodology. Training not based on subjects, and Training did not consider teacher needs (age), Three days to five days workshop, Skills deficiency, reverted to Old Methodology, and Struggling to write personal lesson notes. Learners are not engaging

Research questions	Themes	Categories	key Concepts
4. What role does the provision of resources play in teachers' experiences regarding implementing the new curriculum?	Challenging experiences due to Lack of Resources	Lack of learner centered infrastructure Lack of approved teaching & learning material Short lesson periods	Unconducive classroom environment, Lack of furniture No audio-visuals, No smart boards or screens, No access to Internet, No approved textbooks, Conflicting information from private textbooks and on the internet. Running shift, large content to be taught within a short period

From Table 1, the theme deduced from the responses to question 1 was *Challenging Experience*. The categories to back this theme were *lack of teacher consensus, inadequate skills, and lack of teaching and learning resources*. The second theme was *challenging experiences due to lack of individual teacher consultation*, and the categories deduced were *Needs of learners not considered and imposed on us*. The third theme was *challenging experiences due to insufficient acquired skills*, and the categories were *non-interactive learners and lack of full knowledge about the curriculum*. The fourth theme was *challenging experiences due to lack of resources*, and the categories were *lack of learner-centered infrastructure, lack of approved teaching learning material, and short lesson periods*.

Challenging Experiences Due to Lack of Teacher Consultation

Teachers believed that they had a challenging experience because of a lack of individual teacher consultations. Teachers admitted that there could never have been any policy without stakeholder consultation. However, they emphasized the importance of individual classroom teacher consultations during curriculum changes. The teachers emphasized that their views as classroom teachers matter in curriculum development.

We did not have any say in the development of the curriculum. Lack of teacher consultation affects us significantly because, as implementers,

we should have a say in these policies. For instance, some topics such as software development have been introduced for upper primary computing, but these learners do not have the basics for software development. When we go to class, it is like showing a movie. The policy looks good, but the implementation rollout was just wrong. Because we were not involved, it is like they asked us to do it, so we are doing it. (Teacher 5, Interview 7: Folder 1).

Teacher 5's response indicated that they had a challenging experience because of a lack of individual teacher consultation. This revealed that if individual classroom teachers' consultations had transpired locally, policymakers would have known learners' strengths and weaknesses (needs) that could have guided content selection. Tyler (1947) admonished curriculum developers to select curriculum content based on the needs of learners. Majoni (2017) found that not allowing teachers to narrow down the national curriculum to suit the needs of their schools has adverse effects on curriculum implementation. Analysis of the Educational Strategic Plan 2018- 2030 buttressed the category of *no individual teacher consultation* by revealing that, *Stakeholder consensus went on; however, individual teacher consultation did not transpire (Document Analysis, Folder 3: Bulletin 1).*

The Educational Strategic Plan 2018-2030 showed that there were stakeholder consultations. Stakeholder consultation is good, but do their opinions represent the views of all the teachers?

How did those consulted know the needs of every student? Why was not every teacher consulted if this new curriculum (2019) preached learner-centeredness? Individual teacher consultation would have revealed the capabilities of every learner to policymakers. Educational leaders must train teachers to participate in curriculum design discussions, dissemination of information, implementation, and evaluation (Ramparsad, 2001). Alsubaie (2016) found that effective curriculum implementation is achieved through teachers' involvement in the development process. Teachers must have the knowledge and skills to participate in curriculum development and meet the needs of society and learners.

Challenging Experiences Due to Lack of Teaching and Learning Resources

Teaching and learning resources play an essential role in curriculum implementation success. Teaching and learning resources are the material, media, tools, audio, and visual, soft, and hard copies used in lesson delivery to achieve maximum teaching and learning outcomes. Knoster (1991) argues that when change leaders fail to provide the needed resources at the beginning and during any reform, change implementers experience frustration, eventually leading to the failure of the reform. According to the Headteacher, the lack of teaching and learning resources made implementing the new curriculum (2019) challenging.

The introduction of the new curriculum has been good, but there are challenges. Every new thing has its ups and downs. The management of these challenges will make the system far better. Previously, the system we were using was not the best. That is, it will be good if we can get the resources. It will be good. (H.T., Interview 2: Folder)

The headteacher faced challenges in implementing the new curriculum, not because they did not like the program, but because of a lack of teaching and learning resources. The headteacher's response indicated that the new curriculum could improve the education sector.

However, the absence of teaching and learning resources poses challenges to its implementation. The repetition of *it will be good* to indicate the kind of experiences (negative experiences) teachers had due to a lack of resources. The headteacher believed that the implementation would have been smooth if they had the resources and would have improved their system. From the response given, the lack of teaching and learning resources was making it a challenge to implement the new curriculum. Knoster (1991) argued that without resources, change implementers will be frustrated and it will be very difficult for the reform to be implemented. Knoster's statement indicates that even if agents of change provide vision, consensus, action plan, incentives, and skills but fail to provide resources, the reform will fail. When the Teacher Training Manual was analyzed, it revealed that,

Teachers were supposed to obtain new lesson notebooks and approved textbooks before September 2019, when the implementation took place. However, Teachers were using online weekly lesson plans and private textbooks because they did not have the approved textbooks and lesson notebooks as promised three years ago (Document Analysis, Folder 3: Bulletin 12).

This finding suggests that educational leadership knew the importance of providing teaching and learning materials to teachers and learners before the commencement of the program. However, the material had not been provided three years after its commencement. Educational leadership is looking forward to achieving the objectives of this curriculum by 2030. How is this possible when teachers are unable to access the correct content and master it through the preparation of personal lesson plans? Teacher 6 also said,

It is making teaching very difficult. More extensive content is taught without textbooks within a brief period, making teaching very difficult. When we assess the children, we realize they do not understand what we teach. (Teacher 6, Interview 8: Folder 1).

Teacher 6 explained how the curriculum content was affected by inadequate lesson periods. Time is often overlooked as an essential resource. The participant believed that inadequate lesson periods work against the effective delivery of the curriculum content. Sagyndykova (2013) indicated that although a double system may be economically advantageous, it hurts learners because there is a low level of concentration and ineffective teaching in the afternoon shift. Bervell, Boadu, and Sam (2013) also concluded their work by saying that double shifts negatively affect teaching and learning, eventually affecting learners' performance in Ghana. Majoni (2017) argued that curriculum overload negatively affects teaching effectiveness in the classroom. From observation, the author saw that:

Some schools in the municipality run double shifts. The morning shift started at 7:00 am and closed at noon with intermittent breaks, while the afternoon shift started at 12:00 pm to 5:00 pm with intermittent breaks (Observation: Folder 2: Bulletin 4).

This observation revealed that the learners had only five contact hours with intermittent breaks. Learners who arrived in the afternoon had to sweep their classrooms and go for assembly before the lesson began. The afternoon shift did not begin precisely at noon. This observation kept the researchers wondering about the harmful impact shift running will have on lesson delivery. How would these learners meet the objectives of the new curriculum? Analysis of the teacher resource pack, however, revealed that,

Teachers were to meet 50 hours of lesson periods per week, which includes 1 hour of compulsory extra-curricular period per week (Document Analysis: Folder 3: Bulletin 13).

It showed that for learners to be able to meet curriculum objectives, they were supposed to have 50 contact hours per week. However, schools that run double shifts had only five contact hours per day and 25 contact hours per week, with a deficit of 25 contact hours per week.

How will these learners compensate for these lost periods to meet curriculum objectives? Majoni (2017) has argued that narrowing the curriculum aids in effectively implementing a curriculum. However, the participants were implementing the national curriculum instead of a localized curriculum that could meet the needs of the school. Paramasivan and Ratnavandive (2018) argued that time allocation plays a significant role in a standards-based curriculum; minimum time allocation means less time for learners to think, solve problems and collaborate critically.

Challenging Experiences Due to Lack of Inadequate Skills

Skills enable a person to effectively and efficiently meet any task's demands. According to Rajapakse (2013), skill is the mastery of one's competencies. Knoster (1991) argued that whenever there is going to be any reform, agents of change must ensure that employees have the required skills to meet the demands of the change. According to Knoster (1991), failing to provide the required skills will cause reform implementers to be anxious. Teacher 4 believed they had a challenging experience implementing the new curriculum because of *inadequate skills*. According to Teacher 4,

The implementation of the new curriculum has not been easy for us. Simply because of the way it was implemented. The quality of training that was required before the commencement of the new curriculum was not enough as we expected. We do not have full knowledge of the curriculum. It has not been easy at all. (Teacher 4, interview 6: Folder 1).

Teacher 4 elaborated on how lack of skills affected the effective implementation of the new curriculum. "It has not been easy" was a repeat in the response. This indicated an emphasis on the fact that they were struggling to implement the curriculum, and the teacher went ahead and said that if they had adequate skills before the commencement of the program, everything would have been smooth. Hiatt (2006) advised that for the successful implementation of a

reform, change leaders should create employee awareness and ensure employees can implement the change. Teacher 3 said,

Using just 3-days to train us on something detailed is not ideal. The teacher has his/her issues, so the 3 days were insufficient for us to fully understand it. They did not even consider our state, our state/condition, and our readiness. They have changed some of the content, too, but they did not take the time to teach us subject- or topic-based. This is affecting learners; sometimes, we teach, and they will just be looking at us. (Teacher 3, Interview 5: Folder 1).

Teacher 3 also believed that they had a challenging experience because the inadequate skills they had acquired made it difficult for them to teach their learners effectively. Participants blamed the inadequate acquired skills on the fact that the training period was too short and they were not psychologically prepared for the change. They wished that they were prepared psychologically and given time to master their content before they were rolled out. The successful implementation of curriculum reform depends not only on teachers but also on learners. A standards-based curriculum is intended to make learners more active in the classroom. However, Teacher 3 stated that the new curriculum rendered learners non-interactive, which was a challenge for teachers. Analysis of the Teacher Training Manual and a Letter inviting all J.H.S. teachers to train towards the implementation of the new curriculum buttressed the fact that:

Educational leadership organized a 3-day non-residential cluster-based training of teachers on implementing the Common Core Program for teachers from 12th to 14th January 2022. All J.H.S. Headteachers and School Improvement Support Officers (S.I.S.O. s) to provide support for teachers and monitor teaching and learning activities in the classroom attended this workshop on the first day, Wednesday, 12th January 2022. (Document Analysis, Folder 3: Bulletin 7).

Document analysis revealed that primary and J.H.S. Teachers and head teachers had short training periods. Primary teachers received five

days of training, while J.H.S teachers received three days of training. Head teachers who were supposed to supervise the effective implementation of the curriculum had only one day of training. If teachers who had 3 to 5 days of training complained of insufficient skills acquired due to short training, what should these head teachers also say? Kroll and Moynihan (2015) suggested that reform training should not only justify the need for reform, but also concentrate on building employee capacities. This statement implies that every change implementer must be trained to implement reforms effectively.

Discussion

It came to light that the teachers in La-Nkwantanang in Ghana had a challenging experience due to a lack of resources, inadequate skills, and a lack of individual teacher consultation. This study has shown that the contributing factors to challenging experiences during this reform are multidimensional and not hierarchical (Charalambous & Philippou, 2010). When the participants had the opportunity to talk about their experiences, they attributed equal importance to all their challenges. The participants placed no order of preference for any of these factors. They showed that the absence of skills, resources, or consensus was capable of creating a challenging experience in their curriculum implementation (Knoster, 1991). This strengthens the argument that until educational leadership stops treating the experiences or concerns of teachers during reforms as hierarchical concerns, these challenging experiences will persist.

There is an indication that until educational leadership provides adequate skills, resources, and consensus, it will be challenging for them to implement the curriculum effectively. These findings are consistent with previous studies (Alsubaie, 2016; Carl, 2009; Ebert, 2018; Handler, 2010; Holthaus & Vandepol, 2021; Kirchner, 2023; Molapo & Pillay, 2018; Paway, 2020; Rajapakse, 2015; & Travers, 2021). This study revealed that each underlying factor affecting the implementation of a standards-based curriculum is too powerful to be unmanaged or

overlooked. It has been shown that educational researchers must divert more attention to the underlying factors that contribute to teachers' experiences than to the stages of teachers' experiences during reforms.

Conclusion

The curriculum cannot be effective unless the teacher can implement it effectively. Participants indicated they had challenging experiences due to a lack of a) resources, b) skills, and c) individual teacher consensus. They showed that each of these factors was very important to them, and their absence adversely affected the implementation of the new curriculum. Therefore, it is recommended that a) there must be a platform for teachers to evaluate the curriculum, b) there must be free constant training, c) teachers must be trained to develop a local curriculum to suit their needs, and d) educational leadership must provide all the required resources. The causes of teachers' concerns regarding implementing a standards-based curriculum are too sensitive to overlook.

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