

Full Length Research Paper

Teachers' concerns about the implementation of the standard-based curriculum in Ghana: A case study of Effutu Municipality

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The successful implementation of a school curriculum depends significantly on the extent of how stakeholders address the concerns of teachers. This study, therefore, investigated the concerns of basic school teachers in the Effutu Municipality towards the implementation of the standards-based curriculum. The explanatory sequential design of the mixed-method approach was adopted. The study randomly selected 197 primary school teachers for the quantitative research method, whilst six teachers were purposively sampled for the qualitative phase of the study. The quantitative data were analyzed through means and standard deviation. The qualitative data were analyzed thematically. The study found that the primary highest concern of the basic school teachers was collaboration and their second-highest concern and lowest concern were focusing and management, respectively. The study further found that age and experience statistically predict the stages of concern of the teachers in the implementation of the standard-based curriculum. However, the gender and educational qualifications of the teachers were not statistically significant predictors of their concerns towards the implementation of the standard-based curriculum. The study recommends that the district training officers should train and sensitize teachers in the various districts to create enabling environments within the different schools for teachers, school authorities and parents to collaborate among themselves in the implementation of the standard-based curriculum.

Key words: Concern, curriculum, implementation, standard-based curriculum.

INTRODUCTION

The best legacy that a country can offer its citizens is a quality education. Malaysia and Singapore show that the development of a nation depends mainly on the calibre of education it provides to its citizens. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the lead agency for the United Nations

Decade for Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) has reiterated the vital role education can play in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. These roles include eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, redressing social inequities, and dealing with other sustainability issues such as health and environmental

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degradation (Down, 2011). Education is, therefore, seen as the vehicle on which the survival and development of an under-developed country rest on.

Irrespective of the above, globalization and modernization are rapidly posing new and demanding challenges to individuals and societies alike (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2019). Given this, countries are increasingly poised to produce students with knowledge that will put them at a competitive advantage over others in the job market. All over the world, educational systems have resorted to curricular changes to realize these educational aims. Countries such as the United States of America, Kenya, Rwanda and others have all undertaken reforming their educational system to ensure the production of highly sophisticated individuals who possess the knowledge and skills necessary for the job market in the 21st Century (Waweru, 2018). It is to this end that the Ministry of Education through the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NaCCA) introduced the Standard-based Curriculum to replace the objective-based curriculum since the introduction of formal education.

In 2017, the Government of Ghana tasked NaCCA to review the pre-tertiary curriculum in Ghana to respond to international best practice. In February 2019, the President of Ghana announced in his Nation Address that a new Standard-based Curriculum was to be introduced in September 2020. Expectedly, the Standard-based Curriculum presents a paradigm shift from the Objective-based Model that the country has adopted since the introduction of formal education in Ghana. According to the Ministry of Education (2018), there was a need for a paradigm shift from the objective based-curriculum to the standard-based approach. The former was fraught with problems such as preparing students for examination at the expense of the acquisition of essential skills for human capital development, content overload and the inability of the assessment system to help improve teaching and learning.

The focus of this new curriculum model, therefore, was to reinforce the acquisition of the 4Rs – Reading, Writing, Arithmetic and Creativity as fundamental skills for lifelong learning and national development (Kpedator, 2019). This new curriculum also intended to promote the acquisition of 21st Century skills such as critical thinking and problem-solving, creativity and innovation, communication and collaboration, cultural identity and global citizenship, personal development and leadership as well as digital literacy (Addai-Mununkum, 2020). Values such as respect, diversity, equity, and commitment to achieving excellence have been incorporated in the curriculum to facilitate the raising of literate, confident, engaged and critical-thinking citizens. Apart from the introduction of new subjects such as History and Our World Our People which hitherto were not part of the primary school curriculum, the new

paradigm also introduced national assessment examinations at Basic two, four and six to replace the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) and this occurs after the final year in the junior high school.

The introduction of an educational innovation often leads to the arousal of concerns among teachers who are often regarded as the critical determinant of the success or otherwise of the innovation. Various studies report mixed findings concerning the stages of concerns of the teachers during the implementation of an innovation. In Turkey, for instance, a survey conducted by Çetinkaya (2012) revealed that teachers' concerns focused mainly on the personal and collaboration stages of the Concern-Based Adoption Model (CBAM). Arguably, the Turkish teachers used in the study were not resistant to the change, even though they had some confusion about the curriculum; they wanted to learn from what others knew and were doing to increase their knowledge and skills about the implementation of the reformed curriculum. In the same jurisdiction, Gokcek and Baki (2013) found that teachers were mainly concerned about becoming sufficiently informed about the programme; organization and timing issues; and inadequate school conditions and students' backgrounds. They were also concerned about the new instructional materials, although the intensity of their concerns changed over time. Kwok (2014)'s study in Hong Kong revealed that teachers showed intense concern on all the six stages: Informational, Personal, Management, Consequence, Collaboration and Refocusing of the Concern-based Adoption Model. In Lesotho, Tafai (2017) found that the teachers were aware of the new curriculum with their concerns being most substantial in collaboration, refocusing and personal adequacy.

In Ghana, various studies (Ani-Boi, 2009; Ankomah and Kwarteng, 2010; Cobbold and Ani-Boi, 2011; Kwarteng, 2016; Kwarteng, 2018) have been conducted on teachers' concerns on the implementation of the objective-based curriculum at various levels of the Ghanaian educational system. However, these studies often reported different findings on the concerns of the teachers in the implementation of the objective-based curriculum. For instance, whilst Ani-Boi (2009) said that the primary school teachers in the Cape Coast Metropolis had significant concerns at personal, management, consequence and refocusing stages of the concern-based adoption model, Kwarteng (2018) on the other hand found that the senior high school Accounting teachers were mainly non-users of the curriculum. However, they had both the primary and secondary concerns at the awareness and informational stages of the accounting curriculum. There are inconsistent findings as far as teachers' concerns in the implementation of the objective-based curriculum at different levels of education in Ghana are concerned. The success or otherwise of an educational innovation depends significantly on the extent to which stakeholders

address the concerns of other stakeholders such as teachers. It is therefore essential that data is collected on the concerns of teachers in the implementation of innovation to furnish curriculum development agencies with information that can be relied on to address the concerns of teachers.

Besides, studies have also reported inconsistencies concerning how teachers' demographic characteristics affect their concerns towards the implementation of an innovation. For example, Çetinkaya (2012)'s study in Turkey revealed that teachers' level of education and experience in implementing a reformed curriculum do not predict the concerns of teachers with the new curriculum. However, teachers' concerns change across teaching experience and gender, though these differences are not significant. Tafai (2017)'s study also found that their stage of concern differed by gender, teaching experience and educational qualification. Donkoh (2016) found that concerns were independent of their level of education, subject specialization and teaching experience. Agormedah et al. (2019) also reported in their study that characteristics (gender, age and teaching experience) of business teachers have no association with their concerns. It, however, appears that with the introduction of the standard-based curriculum for primary schools in Ghana, no empirical studies have been conducted to ascertain the stage of concerns of the primary school teachers in the implementation process and the extent to which their concerns could be predicted by the demographic characteristics. It is against this background that this study adopted the Concern-based Adoption Model to fill the identified lacuna in the literature.

Statement of the problem

To prepare teachers adequately for the implementation of the standard-based curriculum, the Government of Ghana organized five days training workshop for 152000 primary school teachers across the country. Even though the workshops were generally successful, Kpedator (2019) postulates that various unfortunate incidents characterized the government's refusal to listen to the multiple complaints of the teachers during the training. The most scathing criticism of the teachers related to lack of learning materials to support the implementation of the curriculum as well as a limited congenial atmosphere that would enhance the successful implementation of the curriculum. Even though the government promised to supply the needed teaching and learning materials within the shortest time to support the teachers in the implementation process, anecdotal records and narratives from teachers in the classrooms indicate that the teaching and learning materials have not been provided.

Extant literature also suggests that the success of an educational innovation depends on the degree to which

teachers embrace and adopt it in the classroom (Adentwi and Sarfo, 2011; Nnabuike et al., 2016). However, teachers are often neglected when designing the school curriculum in centralized jurisdictions such as Ghana (Carl, 2005; Oloruntegbe et al., 2010; Abudu and Mensah, 2016). The neglect of teachers to the periphery in curriculum design enterprise often leads to the development and arousal of concerns (Kwarteng, 2009). The results of various studies point to the fact that the concerns of the implementers of the innovation are critical to the success of the implementation process (Fuller, 1969; Richardson, 1990). Van den Berg and Ros (1999) indicate that though the characteristics of innovation such as the cooperative network and financial arrangements are necessary for the achievement of the objectives of the innovation, the more pressing factors that might affect the implementation are the concerns of the actors involved in the implementation and their characteristics.

Substantial research exists on the concerns of teachers in the implementation of various innovations in the Ghanaian school system. For example, Ani-Boi (2009), Ankomah and Kwarteng (2010), Cobbold and Ani-Boi (2011), Kwarteng (2016) used the Concern-based Adoption Model to track teacher concerns on the 2007 educational reform whilst Donkoh (2016) followed social studies, Kwarteng (2009) – Accounting teachers, Agormedah et al., (2019) – Business Studies teachers. With the introduction of the Standard-based Curriculum, however, it appears that little or no empirical study has been conducted to ascertain the concern of primary school teachers in Ghana. It is this dearth in the knowledge that has necessitated this study to address the following research questions.

1. What are the stages of concerns of the Basic School teachers regarding the standards-based curriculum?
2. What is the relative contribution of teachers' demographic characteristics on the Stages of Concern in the Implementation of the Standard-based Curriculum?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: CONCERN-BASED ADOPTION MODEL (CBAM)

The study adopted the Concern-Based Adoption Model (CBAM). CBAM is used as a blueprint to gauge staff concerns on the implementation of educational innovation. Though the CBAM has three diagnostic dimensions: Innovation Configuration (IC), Levels of Use (LoU) and Stages of Concern (SoC), this study is grounded in the latter (SoC). The SoC in the CBAM enables developers of innovation to identify teachers' attitudes and beliefs towards an educational innovation: CBAM.

In Figure 1, the SoC model classifies and distinguishes seven different stages of concerns that the implementers

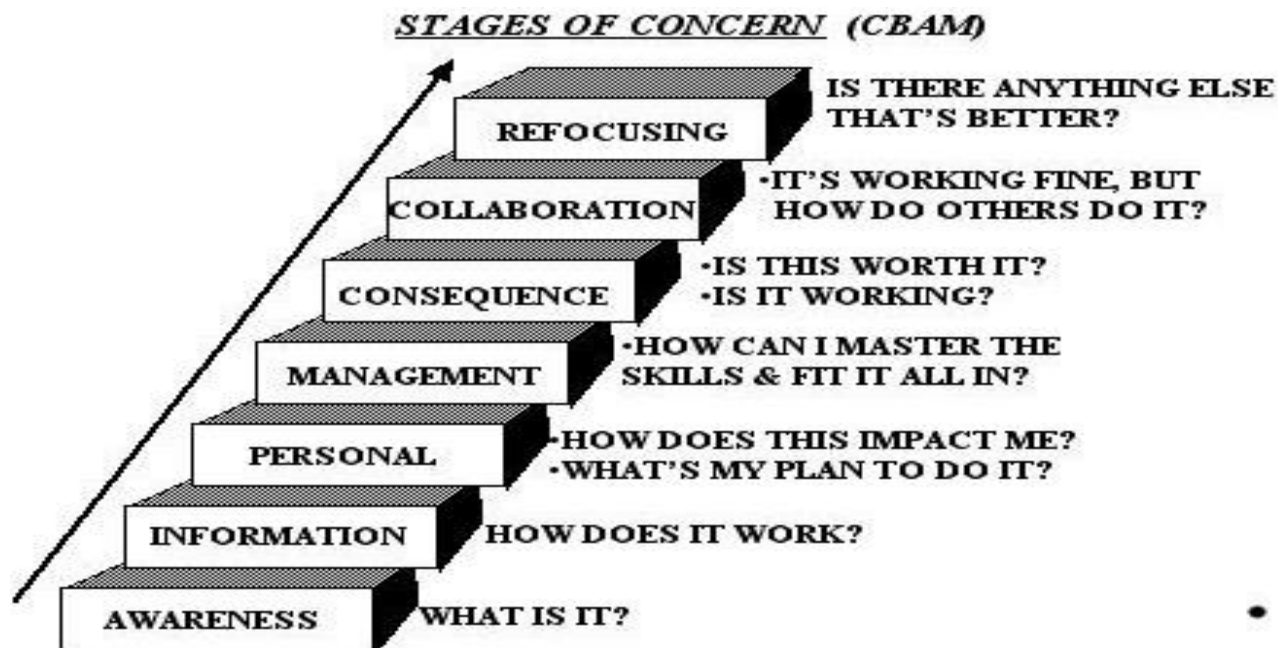


Figure 1. The Concern-Based Adoption Model (Hall, 1979).

of an educational innovation are likely to have (van den Berg et al., 2000). These stages are:

1. *Awareness* (Stage 0): At the awareness stage, teachers may not have any knowledge about innovation. Therefore, they may not be ready to use the innovation in the classroom or even show interest in the innovation. At the extreme, teachers may even resist innovation.
2. *Informational* (Stage 1): At this stage, teachers show the desire to know more about the innovation. Openly, teachers may become curious about what the innovation entails. Teachers may further seek opportunities to discuss innovation and how their colleagues in the common room are doing and feeling.
3. *Personal* (Stage 2): Teachers at this stage may know how the innovation would affect their work and the kind of changes that may occur in their practice as a result of the innovation.
4. *Management* (Stage 3): The implementers of the innovation devote their attention to solutions to the problems that regularly occur in the implementation process. Teachers become more concerned with practical solutions on how innovation can best be utilized for its purpose.
5. *Consequences* (Stage 4): At this stage, teachers become interested in how innovation would benefit students. Teachers begin to consider how innovation can be refined to have more impact on the students.
6. *Collaboration* (Stage 5): At this stage of the Model, teachers begin to consider how they would share lessons with other teachers about innovation. Interestingly, teachers become concerned with how they can offer

technical support to other teachers to enhance the implementation of the innovation.

7. *Refocusing* (Stage 6): At this stage, users of innovation are interested in other alternatives to the programme. Generally, teachers implementing a new curriculum begin to think about how the curriculum could be modified or replaced with a more effective and robust one. In the case of the standard-based curriculum, the teachers might consider the use of other innovations that are more powerful than what is being used currently.

As a theoretical lens for this study, it is argued that the stage of concern of teachers is pertinent to achieving the rationale of the curriculum as it would enable the developers of the Standard-based curriculum to develop strategies that would address the concerns of the implementers of the curriculum.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design

The study adopted the pragmatist philosophy drawing data from both quantitative and qualitative paradigms to help evaluate and interpret results (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004) obtained via the two approaches (Creswell and Creswell, 2017). This approach helped the researcher to obtain different but complementary data on the concerns of the teachers towards the implementation of the standard-based curriculum (Morse, 1991). Again, the researcher chose the mixed-methods approach in order to address the weaknesses of the quantitative method with the strengths of the qualitative method (Patton, 1990). The mixing occurred at three

stages: sampling, instrumentation and data analysis. Specifically, the study employed the explanatory sequential (QUAN + qual) design. Data collection and analysis were done in a sequence where the quantitative data were collected first and analyzed for which the outcome informed the qualitative dimension of the study.

Population

The target population for the study was public primary school teachers in the Effutu Municipality who are involved in the implementation of the standard-based curriculum. The accessible population was 240 basic school teachers at the primary school level (Kindergarten and Basic 1-6).

Sample and sampling procedures

In this study, 197 Basic school teachers were involved. According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970), it is appropriate to sample 148 participants when the population is about 240. The study increased the sample size to 197 to increase the external validity of the findings. For the qualitative phase of the study, six participants were enough to reach saturation in the interview. These teachers were purposively sampled for the study.

Data collection methods

The Stage of Concern (SoC) questionnaire adapted from George, et al. (2008) was used to gather data on the SoC of the Basic School teachers. Subsequently, a semi-structured interview guide was designed based on the findings of the quantitative data to collect an in-depth explanation from the teachers. After the quantitative data had been analyzed, a qualitative instrument (semi-structured interview guide) was administered to selected teachers. The quantitative data and results provided a general picture of the concerns of the teachers towards the implementation of the standards-based curriculum and through the qualitative data enabled the researcher to explain the general picture (Subedi, 2016). Again, the in-depth data collected via the interview guide enhanced and enriched the findings that emerged from the quantitative data (Mason, 2006).

The questionnaire was administered to the respondents from May to June 2020. During this period, the COVID-19 was peaking in Ghana. The researcher, therefore, created a digital version of the questionnaire using Google Forms. The sampled respondents were sent the digital instrument of which they were required to fill and return instantly. Subsequently, the researcher interviewed the six selected teachers via telephone. The participants for the qualitative data were given prior notice of the interview. They were as well informed that the interview was going to be recorded for just an academic purpose. Each of the telephone interviews lasted three hours and 30 min for each participant.

Data analysis

The quantitative data collected from the field were first collated, sifted and cleaned up. After winnowing, the data were coded and entered into the Statistical Package and Service Solutions (SPSS) software version 25. With the aid of the software, the data were analyzed using descriptive (Means and Standard Deviations) and inferential Statistics (Multiple Linear Regression). In the second stage, the researcher studied the field notes, transcribed the audio recordings of the interview and analyzed the data thematically. The

integration of the data was achieved by using the qualitative results to support the quantitative results in the discussion phase of the study.

RESULTS

This section deals with the results of the data collected from the field. The demographic characteristics of the respondents were first presented, followed by the data to answer the research questions that guided the study.

Demographic characteristics

Data were collected on the sex, age, teaching experience as well as educational qualification of the respondents. The results are presented in Table 1.

From Table 1, it is evident that 115(58.4%) of the respondents were females, whilst 82(41.6%) were males. This means that more males participated in the study than females. Impliedly, the Ghanaian educational system continues to show inequality in gender distribution even in the Colleges of Education as more males are trained for the teaching profession than females. The table further shows that 39(19.8) of the respondents were between 25-30 years, 60(30.5%) were between 31-35 years, 43(21.8%) were between 36-40 years, 31(15.7%) were between 41-45 years, 14(7.1%) were between 46-50 years whilst 10(5.1%) were 51-50 years. It is clear from the results that none of the respondents was above 55 years, even though the retirement rate for civil servants is 60 years. Irrespective, the age distribution of the respondents means that they are in the prime years of their lives. At this stage in their lives, their concerns are very crucial in determining the success or otherwise of the curriculum. Their age affects their experience. The results from this study show that 2(1.0%) of the respondents had taught for less than a year, 52(26.4%) had taught for 1-5 years, 55(27.9%) had taught 6-10 years, 48(24.3%) had taught for 11-15 years, 17(8.6%) had taught for 16 years and 23(11.7%) had taught for either 20 years or more. Research has shown that teachers gain skills and knowledge through experience (Olivia, 1988). It is envisaged that the majority of these teachers who are involved in the implementation of the standard-based curriculum possess enormous experience under their long service in the teaching profession that would place them at a vantage in the implementation of the standard-based curriculum (Muroto, 2001). The qualification of the respondents also shows that all the teachers involved in the study had obtained the minimum qualification required to teach at a primary school in Ghana. The table shows that 6(3.0%) of the respondents had "Cert A", 96(48.7%) had Diploma, 78(39.6%) had a degree whilst 17(8.6%) had a Master's Degree.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Variable	Sub-scale	N (%)*
Sex	Male	115(58.4)
	Female	82(41.6)
Age (years)	25-30	39(19.8)
	31-35	60(30.5)
	36-40	43(21.8)
	41-45	31(15.7)
	46-50	14(7.1)
	51-55	10(5.1)
Experience (years)	<1	2(1.0)
	1-5	52(26.4)
	6-10	55(27.9)
	11-15	48(24.)
	16-20	17(8.6)
Highest qualification	>20	23(11.7)
	Cert A	6(3.0)
	Diploma	96(48.7)
	Degree	78(39.6)
	Master's	17(8.6)

Source: Field Data, 2020 *Percentages in parenthesis.

SoC of basic school teachers in the implementation of the standard-based curriculum

Research question one sought to find out the stages of concern of the primary school teachers in the Central Region of Ghana in the implementation of the standard-based curriculum. The views of teachers are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 presents the views of the teachers on their concerns in the implementation of the standard-based curriculum. It is evident from Table 2 that the teachers find themselves at the collaborative stage (Mean = 4.31, SD = 1.11) of the Concern-based Adoption Model. The teachers confirmed from the interview that they need many collaborative activities to achieve the objective of the curriculum. For instance, a Classroom Teacher (CT) 1 said:

I always seek support from other teachers and community members to implement most of the contents in the standard-based curriculum.

CT 3 remarked:

Most of the contents in the standard-based curriculum require the efforts of parents, teachers and other stakeholders for their achievement. Without their support,

Table 2. Teachers' concerns about the Standard-based Curriculum.

Stages of concern	Mean	Std. deviation	RPI	Rank
Collaboration	4.31	1.11	62	1 st
Focusing	4.30	1.20	61	2 nd
Personal	4.05	1.15	58	3 rd
Awareness	4.03	1.10	58	4 th
Consequence	3.92	1.12	56	5 th
Information	3.80	1.39	54	6 th
Management	3.69	1.31	53	7 th

Source: Field Data, 2020;RPI = Relative percentile Intensity.

I cannot achieve much.

CT 4 commented:

As for me, I understand everything in the curriculum. The only problem I have is how to harness the support of parents, colleague teachers and administrators in the implementation of this new curriculum.

It is seen from these views of the teachers that without support from the stakeholders in the communities on the implementation of the curriculum, there is the likelihood that the curriculum might not achieve its intended goals.

The second-rated stage of concern of the teachers was refocusing (Mean = 4.30, SD = 1.2). The teachers are at the stage of exploring more universal benefits from the innovation, including the possibility of significant changes or replacement with more powerful alternatives (Jalinus and Abrian, 2015). However, the interview with the teachers revealed that some alternatives could have strengthened the curriculum. For instance, CT 2 said:

This curriculum is good. However, I think some elements could have been taking off to pave the way for new features that are adopted in advanced countries.

In support, CT 4 mentioned:

Though there is an attempt to shift the pedagogical practices of teachers from the teacher-centered to learner-centered, I still believe that we could have done a lot more. Most of the resources that were suggested in the curriculum are not available in most schools. I think the curriculum is practically impossible for most schools.

It is seen from the views of CT 2 and CT 4 that programme alternatives exist that align with the resource demands of the schools than the standard-based curriculum that the nation has adopted.

The third highest-rated concern of the teachers was personal (Mean = 4.05, SD = 1.15). Figure 2 is an illustration of the teachers' Relative Percentile Intensity (RPI) of concern about the implementation of the standard-based curriculum.

From Figure 2, the teachers' most intense concern towards the implementation of the standard-based curriculum was at Collaboration (PRI = 62) and Refocusing (PRI = 60). However, since the CBAM

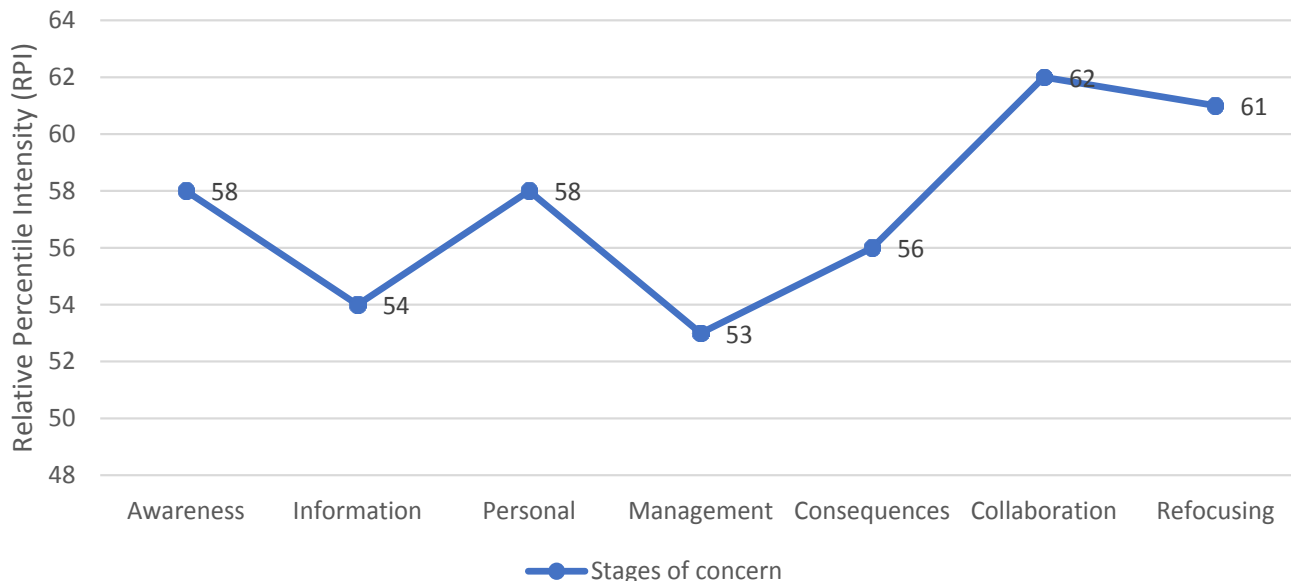


Figure 2. Teachers' relative percentile intensity of concern about the implementation of the standard-based curriculum.

Table 3. Model summary of demographic characteristics that predict teachers stages of concern.

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. error of the estimate	Change statistics				
					R square change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F change
1	.244 ^a	.060	.040	.93444	.060	3.042	4	192	.018

*P<0.05 significant.

categorizes the stages as Self-Concern (Awareness, Information and Personal), Task Concern (Management) and Impact Concern (Consequences, Collaboration and Refocusing), it is argued that the majority of the teachers had Impact Concern about the standard-based curriculum. This was followed by Self-Concern about the Implementation of the standard-based curriculum.

The relative contribution of teachers' demographic characteristics on their SoC in the implementation of the standard-based curriculum

The second research question sought to establish the extent to which the primary school teachers' demographic characteristics could predict their Stage of Concern (SoC) in the Implementation of the Standard-based Curriculum. A Multiple Linear Regression was conducted to establish the predictive power of each demographic characteristic in the Model. The results are presented in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3 shows that the demographic characteristics of the primary school teachers such as age, gender, teaching experience and highest educational qualification

collectively contributed 6% of the variance in the stage of concern which was found to be statistically significant [F (4, 192) = 3.042, p<0.05]. Impliedly, other factors not included in this study were responsible for 96% of the concerns of the teachers in the implementation of the curriculum. Irrespective, the demographic characteristics of the teachers were good predictors of the concerns. Given this, the study further examined the relative effect of each demographic feature on the concerns of the teachers. The results are presented in Table 4.

It is seen in Table 4 that age ($\beta = 0.205$, $t = 2.134$, $p < 0.05$) and teaching experience ($\beta = -0.257$, $t = -2.688$, $p < 0.05$) predicted the stage of concern of the basic school teachers in the implementation of the standard-based curriculum. However, sex ($\beta = 0.95$, $t = 1.338$, $p > 0.05$) and teacher qualification ($\beta = 0.118$, $t = 1.616$, $p > 0.05$) did not significantly predict the stage of concern of the basic school teachers in the implementation of the standard-based curriculum.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study have shown that the first Stage

Table 4. Relative contribution of teachers' demographic characteristics on their concerns.

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. error	Beta		
(Constant)	3.613	.352		10.260	.000
1 Sex	.183	.137	.095	1.338	.183
Age	.140	.066	.205	2.134	.034
Experience	-.187	.069	-.257	-2.688	.008
Highest qualification	.162	.100	.118	1.616	.108

a. Dependent Variable: Stage of Concern (SoC).

of Concern (SoC) of the teachers in the implementation of the standard-based curriculum is the collaborative stage. This means that most of the teachers have an interest in relating what they are doing in their classrooms with the Standard-based curriculum to what their colleagues are also doing with it (El-Saleh, 2011). The teachers may therefore seek opportunities to coordinate and cooperate with others in their use of the standard-based curriculum in their classrooms. This rating from the teachers also presupposes that there is a cooperation between the teachers and parents in the implementation of the standard-based curriculum. It is therefore argued that the success or otherwise of the curriculum depends significantly on the strength of the triad relationship between parents, teachers and school authorities (Kostadinova, 2012).

The second-rated stage of concern of the teachers was refocusing. It is evident from the results that the teachers accept the fact that the standard-based curriculum places a premium on the development of students' way of thinking. The standard-based curriculum was adopted to replace the objective-based curriculum due to its propensity to offer the students to develop higher-order thinking skills that have always been lacking in the Ghanaian educational enterprise. Judging from the results, however, the teachers may have other alternatives in mind that could have been more appropriate to Ghanaian classrooms than what the current curriculum provides. This situation is expected given that most teachers are often neglected in the curriculum development discourse (Abudu and Mensah, 2016).

The third highest-rated concern of the teachers was personal. This means that the teachers are focused on the impact of the standard-based curriculum and how it would affect them at their level, their limitations and the changes they are expected to make. This is entirely likely given the fact that the successful implementation of an educational innovation requires a critical assessment of the extent to which the innovation might affect one's personal development. In the case of the classroom, teachers are expected to consider how innovation would affect their classroom practices. The issue may even be that teachers have to seek professional development programmes to match the demands of the innovation.

Undoubtedly, the one-week training workshops organized for the primary school teachers in Ghana might not be enough to adequately prepare them for the needs of the standard-based curriculum especially in the case where the majority of the teachers who attended the training from the early childhood centres were mostly not qualified (Kpedator, 2019). The findings of the study are in line with that of Alshammari (2000), who found that teachers in Kuwait had four high stages of concerns (collaboration, personal, refocusing and informational stages).

The study has established that the majority of the teachers had Impact Concern about the standard-based curriculum. This was followed by Self-Concern about the Implementation of the standard-based curriculum. This means that the teachers are highly concerned about the impact of the implementation of the standard-based curriculum on themselves, their colleagues and their students. The findings of this study collaborate on the results of previous that established that the intensity of teachers concerns in the implementation of the curriculum in Ghana mostly revolved around consequences, collaboration, refocusing, informational and awareness stages (Amankwah et al., 2016; Agormedah et al., 2019).

Undoubtedly, the more teachers teach, the more they gain experience in the field. It is expected that the relatively longer years of service of the teachers involved in the study might correlate positively with their ages. Even though the standard-based curriculum is new in the Ghanaian educational enterprise, the pedagogical and classroom practices of the teachers are not entirely new from the classroom activities and practices that the teachers are already accustomed to. Given this, the teachers might bring to bear the experiences they already have from the implementation of the objective-based curriculum to implement the new curriculum. This position of the teachers disproves the general notion in the literature that old and experienced teachers often resist change in the school (Tůmová, 2012). This result contradicts the findings of Janík et al. (2018) who found that that age and teaching experience did not contribute significantly towards teachers' acceptance of curricular reform. The results of this study, however, show that the gender of the teachers, as well as the educational

qualifications of the teachers, do not contribute significantly to the concerns of the teachers in the implementation of the standard-based curriculum. Arguably, the standard-based curriculum does not demand males and females to perform gender-specific tasks. Similarly, the teachers are supposed to implement the same curriculum irrespective of their qualifications in the school. Therefore, their gender and qualifications might not affect the concerns.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

The current study investigated the concerns of primary school teachers in the Effutu Municipality towards the Implementation of the Standard-based Curriculum in Ghana. The study found that the primary highest concern of the basic schoolteachers was stage collaboration and their second-highest concern and third-highest concern were Focusing and Management respectively. The study further found that age and experience statistically predicted the stages of concern of the teachers regarding the implementation of the standard-based curriculum. However, the gender and educational qualifications of the teachers were not statistically significant predictors of their concerns towards the implementation of the standard-based curriculum. The study, therefore, concluded that though the teachers have adopted and are implementing the curriculum, they would like to develop working relationships with administrators and other change facilitators to bring about the expected changes.

The study recommended that the district training officers should train and sensitize teachers in the various districts to create enabling environments within the different schools for teachers; school authorities and parents to collaborate among themselves in the implementation of the standard-based curriculum. Future workshops and seminars for teachers in the implementation of a curriculum by NaCCA and Ghana Educational Service should consider the age and teaching experience of the implementers of the curriculum since these teachers' characteristics are significant predictors of the concerns of the teachers. This study was limited to the Effutu Municipality of the Central Region, it is suggested that similar studies should be conducted for unique districts and regions and further studies should be expanded to include other neighbourhoods and areas in Ghana. Again, further studies should focus on the different factors that were not included in the class but have the potential to predict teachers' concerns in the implementation of the curriculum.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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