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**The New Standard Based Curriculum in Ghana; Prospects,
Challenges and the Way Forward.**



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The New Standard Based Curriculum in Ghana; Prospects, Challenges and the Way Forward.

 ^{1*}James Nweah-Ackah Mochiah, ² Maria-Goretti Dunyo Adibi

Lecturer, Education Department,

Holy Child College of Education

^{1*}Corresponding Author's Email Address: Jamesna.mochiah@hcce.edu.gh

<https://orcid.org/my-orcid?orcid=0000-0001-9188-5833>

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Abstract

Purpose: The study aimed at assessing the standard based curriculum recently introduced; the training given to teachers and the implementation challenges teachers are confronted with.

Methodology: Descriptive design was employed for the study. Quantitative data was collected from 200 Basic School Teachers in the Western Region of Ghana using a questionnaire. Data on the two research questions were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. Also, One way ANOVA was used to test the two hypotheses formulated for the study.

Findings: The findings of the study showed that teachers were adequately trained on the new standard based curriculum before its implementation. Unfortunately, the study revealed that teachers and students lack the recommended teaching and learning materials. Interestingly, the results showed that there is a significant difference in the implementation of the standard based curriculum among teachers with regards to their level of teaching. On the other hand, the test on teachers' academic qualification showed no significant difference.

Unique contribution to theory, policy and practice: It was recommended that government should provide adequate teaching and learning materials for teachers and students to enhance the successful implementation of the new standard base curriculum. Head-teachers are encouraged to intensify supervision of teachers and provide feedback for smooth implementation of the new standard base curriculum. Finally, National Council for Curriculum and Assessment should constantly evaluate the implementation of the new curriculum to be able to address areas that will more attention for successful implementation.

Key Words: Curriculum, New Standard Based Curriculum, Objective-Based Curriculum, Implementation



INTRODUCTION

Curriculum as an educational concept could historically be traced to the Latin word “educere”, which means “running course” or “race course” (Connelly & Lantz, 1991). There cannot be a formal institution or education without a curriculum. Curriculum spells out the overall experience that learners encounter in the education system. Offorma (2005) defines curriculum from the traditional point of view by stating that curriculum is a planned learning experiences offered to a learner in school. From this perspective, curriculum is specifically planned for learners in school setting. The planning takes into consideration the culture of the society in which the learner lives as well as certain characteristics of the learner that will facilitate the implementation of the curriculum. Wiles and Bondi (2007) reiterate that curriculum pertains to instruction that is planned with associated intended outcomes, recognizing that much more may be unintended. This definition recognizes the fact that the outcomes of the curriculum (both intended and unintended) are catered for the anticipated that planning stage of the curriculum.

In 2019, the Ghana Education Service (GES) in collaboration with the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NaCCA) and the Ministry of Education (MoE) introduced a standard-based curriculum at the primary schools thus from kindergarten to primary six (GES, 2019). Currently, the standard-based curriculum has been extended from the primary school to the secondary school. This curriculum seeks to rebuild character, values, confidence and engages pupils in critical thinking skills to enable them to demonstrate the previous knowledge and skills in the subsequent stages as they ascend the educational ladder. The standard-based curriculum has come to replace the objective-based curriculum. It has restructured basic education to include SHS (GES, 2019). Thus, children would start basic school from kindergarten to SHS. Unlike the previous curriculum, the current standard based requires a slightly different transition means by a final year students at the JHS. Thus, their learning outcomes would be determined by the National Standard Assessment Test (NSAT) which comprises group activities at each phase of the curriculum.

Rationale for Curriculum Review

Before the recent curriculum review, the Ghanaian Pre-Tertiary Education Curriculum, which is officially defined by the subject syllabuses, was based largely on the objective model of curriculum development. The use of the objective model of the curriculum led to an over-emphasis on the products of learning; that is, knowing basic facts, principles, skills and procedures at the expense of the processes of learning which involve higher cognitive competences such as applying, critical thinking, creativity and hands-on; and the personal qualities and social skills required to become competent, engaging and contributing citizens.

A comparison of the Ghanaian pre-tertiary education curriculum with other countries' (e.g. Singapore, Malaysia and South Korea) indicates that objectives-based curriculum design is no

longer favoured in modern educational practice (MoE, 17). Furthermore, the aforementioned countries' practice of consistently evaluating the curriculum to put in place auxiliary interventional modules that support the national and global developmental agenda through the necessary human resources, is currently not being observed in Ghana. Thus, in order to support the Ghanaian learners to acquire the basic skills and competencies needed to meet the National and Global Development Agenda, it calls for a review of the Ghanaian pre-tertiary education curriculum.

Philosophy of the Curriculum

Underpinning the National Pre-Tertiary Education embodied in this framework is a philosophy of learning and teaching that responds to the opportunities and challenges facing Ghana currently and possibly the future. Essentially, the philosophy requires the harmonious development of the physical, mental and spiritual capabilities of learners who undergo studies based on the NCCSD. In this way, Ghana's educational system will epitomize 'the creation of well-balanced (intellectually, spiritually, emotionally, and physically) individuals with the requisite knowledge, skills, values and aptitudes for self-actualization and for the socio-economic and political transformation of the nation' (Anamuah-Mensah Committee Report, 2002). The education system will produce honest, creative and responsible citizens for both Ghana and the world.

Within the philosophy of the harmonious development of the individual is the belief that, irrespective of the diverse needs of learners in Ghana's classrooms, every student should be supported and given the opportunity to achieve their full potential and become a productive citizen. This philosophy requires that:

1. The educational system is flexible and encourages teachers to engage in innovative teaching to meet the unique needs of learners;
2. Classrooms should be learner-centred where learners are actively engaged in the learning process as a result of teachers adopting appropriate approaches to planning and classroom practice;
3. Teaching and learning approaches and programmes are appropriately differentiated to meet the needs of learners;
4. Schools shift from an emphasis on summative assessment to the formative, a philosophy that espouses the need to employ multiple sources of evidence about learning, which will guide instructional decisions and support each learner's learning trajectory;
5. Schools should be teacher-centred with its related practices (teacher self-evaluation, performance appraisal/professional review, effective use of assessment data, strong curriculum subject knowledge, use of appropriate pedagogy, accountability, continuing professional development, work-life balance and well-being) adopted so that a culture of high challenge, high trust and high performance in a professional environment is established – from which every student benefits (Sherrington, 2016).
6. Appropriate pedagogies are employed in the curriculum delivery. Because schools are teacher-centred, teachers are able to use pedagogies, equipment, and materials of

instruction that transform classrooms from the traditional teacher-centred classrooms to environments that provide opportunities for the use of dialogic learning and teaching approaches – the use of inquiry-oriented learning approaches, thematic teaching, independent projects, computer simulations and technological devices such as phones, cameras, tablets and computers.

1.2 Statement of the study

The government has spent a lot of resources in developing the new standard based curriculum (MoE, 2019). Curriculum implementation involves translating the content of the curriculum into its practical form through combined efforts of teachers, learners and other stakeholders of education with the view that it will lead to some significant results (Glatthorn, Boschee & Whitehead, 2007). They went on to ascertain that teachers do the major work in the implementation of the curriculum. Therefore, the successful implementation of a curriculum demands the full knowledge and understanding of teachers on the rationale, vision, mission, philosophy and content of the curriculum to be implemented. Consequently, the questions that come to mind are; how are the Ghanaian Basic School teachers managing in the implementation of the new standard base curriculum? Has the implantation process been smooth? If not, what are the challenges and how can these challenges be managed for a successful implementation? Hence, this study seeks to find answers to the questions posed.

1.3 Research Questions

1. To what extent were the Ghanaian Basic School teachers trained to implement the new standard base curriculum?
2. What challenges do Ghanaian Basic School teachers face with the implementation of the standard-based curriculum?

1.4 Hypothesis

1. There is no difference exit in the perspective of the Ghanaian Basic School teachers on the standard base curriculum with regard to their level of teaching?
2. There is no difference exit in the perspective of the Ghanaian Basic School teachers on the standard base curriculum with regard to their qualification?

2.0 Methodology

Descriptive survey was employed as the research design for the study. Quantitative data was gathered from Basic School Teachers in the Western Region of Ghana. The teachers were selected using a multistage sampling involving random sampling to select a district from the region, proportionate stratified to select 50 teachers from each circuit within the selected district and finally used random sampling to select individual teachers from the various schools. In all, 200 teachers were selected.

Questionnaire was used in collecting the data. The questionnaire (TPNC) is a four-point Likert scale with 28 items. In computing for the practice of teachers, the mean of their responses was computed for and interpreted. In interpreting the practice of respondents to a particular item, the mean score of the responses was compared with 2.5 ($[1+2+3+4]/4=2.5$) (Green & Neil, 2014). Mean scores less than 2.5 will show a disagreement of teachers whereas mean scores above 2.5 show an agreement of teachers to that particular item. For the interpretation of individual scores, the mean of the obtained scores is also compared with 2.5.

The alpha coefficient for Cronbach was used to ensure the internal consistency of the instrument. The alpha coefficient for Cronbach was .789.

3.0 Results

This section presents the results of the analysis from the research questions and hypothesis guiding this study.

Research question one: To what extent were the Ghanaian Basic School teachers trained to implement the new standard base curriculum? The results are presented in table 1.

Table 1: Teachers Responses on Training on the Standard-Base Curriculum

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
There is provision for TLM before the implementation of the standard based curriculum	1.82	.835
I had the textbooks needed for the implementation of the standard based curriculum	1.87	.874
I lack teaching and learning materials	2.20	.750
I was given the softcopy of the standard based curriculum on the subject I teach	2.25	.971
I had understanding on the content of the standard based curriculum before the implementation	2.60	.862
Teaching and learning resources were available during the training	2.65	1.016
The training prepared me well for the implementation of the standard based curriculum	2.78	.653

I was given the printed copy of the standard based curriculum on the subject I teach	2.85	.939
I was trained on the assessment procedures for the implementation of the standard based curriculum	2.88	.511
The resource pack I was given is useful for the successful implementation of the standard based curriculum	2.97	.690
The training has helped me in the implementation of the standard based curriculum	2.98	.726
The training gave me knowledge on the pedagogical strategies to be used in the implementation of the standard based curriculum	3.00	.634
Mean of means	2.57	1.680

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Sample size (n=200).

From table one, the overall results ($M = 2.57$, $SD = 1.680$) shows that to some extent the teachers were given training on the standard base curriculum before it implementation. The teachers disagree that there were provision for TLM before the implementation of the standard based curriculum ($M = 1.82$, $SD = .835$). Also, teachers disagree to the statement that they had the textbooks needed for the implementation of the standard based curriculum ($M = 1.87$, $SD = .874$). The *78 4teachers also disagree that “I was given the softcopy of the standard based curriculum on the subject I teach” ($M = 2.25$, $SD = .971$). However, the teachers agree that they had understanding on the content of the standard based curriculum before the implementation ($M = 2.60$, $SD = .862$). Also, teachers agree to the statement that they were given the printed copy of the standard based curriculum on the subject I teach ($M = 2.85$, $SD = .929$). The teachers also agree that the training gave them knowledge on the pedagogical strategies to be used in the implementation of the standard based curriculum ($M = 3.00$, $SD = .864$).

Research question two: What challenges do Ghanaian Basic School teachers face with the standard-based curriculum? What challenges do Ghanaian Basic School teachers face with the implementation of the standard-based curriculum? The results are presented in table 2.

Table 2: Challenges Teachers Face in the Implementation of the Standard-Base Curriculum

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
I lack content knowledge of the subject that I teach	1.82	.835

I don't have the copy of the standard based curriculum on the subject I teach	1.90	.919
Lack pedagogical knowledge for the implementation of the new curriculum	1.93	.879
The content of the standard based curriculum make it difficult to use practical teaching	1.95	.923
I do not understand the philosophy of the new curriculum	2.00	.839
I lack knowledge on the assessment procedures for the implementation of the standard based curriculum	2.00	.839
It is difficult preparing lesson plan with the new curriculum	2.05	.976
Difficult to conduct assessment with the new curriculum	2.28	.838
I lack teaching and learning materials	2.80	.750
The standard based curriculum caters for the needs of all learners	2.98	.910
The standard based curriculum contains a lot of workloads	3.02	.882
Tasks and activities in the syllabus have been well sequenced	3.07	.756
The implementation of the standard based curriculum has extend the instructional period	3.08	.879
Activities in the syllabus are 'communicative' enough	3.10	.540
There are no textbooks for students	3.15	.728
The standard based curriculum promotes inclusive education	3.30	.642
Mean of means	2.53	.956

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Sample size (n=200).

From table 2, the overall results ($M = 2.53$, $SD = .956$) shows that the teachers are facing some challenges with the implementation the standard base curriculum. The teachers agree to the statements; I lack teaching and learning materials ($M = 2.80$, $SD = .750$), There are no textbooks for students ($M = 3.15$, $SD = .728$), The standard based curriculum contains a lot of workloads ($M = 3.02$, $SD = .882$), The implementation of the standard based curriculum has extend the instructional period ($M = 3.08$, $SD = .879$). However, the teachers disagree to the statements; I lack

content knowledge of the subject that I teach ($M = 1.82$, $SD = .835$), I don't have the copy of the standard based curriculum on the subject I teach ($M = 1.90$, $SD = .919$), Lack pedagogical knowledge for the implementation of the new curriculum ($M = 1.93$, $SD = .879$), I lack knowledge on the assessment procedures for the implementation of the standard based curriculum ($M = 2.00$, $SD = .839$), It is difficult preparing lesson plan with the new curriculum ($M = 2.05$, $SD = .976$).

Hypothesis one: There is no difference exit in the perspective of the Ghanaian Basic School teachers on the standard base curriculum with regard to their level of teaching?

This hypothesis was tested using one way ANOVA. As part of the request, the normality test and test of homogeneity of variance were conducted, which showed that the variance are not assumed equal. For the robust nature of the ANOVA, the test was conducted and the descriptive results are in table 3.

Table 3: The Descriptive Statistics for Hypothesis one

Level of Teaching	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Minimum	Maximum
Early Grade	45	34.22	2.601	.388	29	37
Lower Primary	45	33.11	4.965	.740	20	37
Upper Primary	55	31.64	3.285	.443	27	37
JHS	55	30.00	5.660	.763	20	37
Total	200	32.10	4.593	.325	20	37

From table 3, the descriptive results indicated that early grade ($M = 34.22$, $SD = 2.601$) lower primary ($M = 33.11$, $SD = 4.965$), upper primary ($M = 31.64$, $SD = 3.285$) and JHS ($M = 30.00$, $SD = 5.660$). The descriptive suggest that there are differences between the means and the standard deviation for the implementation of the standard based curriculum with regards to the teachers' level of teaching.

To determine either the difference in the descriptive is statistically significant or not, the ANOVA test result is presented in table 4.

Table 4: ANOVA Test

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	503.051	3	167.684	8.895	.000

Within Groups	3694.949	196	18.852
Total	4198.000	199	

From the table 4, the results show that there is a statistically significance difference in the implementation of the standard based curriculum among teachers from the level of teaching, $F(3, 196) = 8.895$, $Sig. = .000$, $p. = 0.05$. Since there was a statistically significance difference, a follow-up test or a Post Hoc test was conducted using Games-Howell to find out which pairs of means are statistically different. The results of the Post Hoc test is presented in table 5.

Table 5: Multiple Comparisons

(I) Level of teaching	(J) Level of teaching	Mean of Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Early Grade	Lower Primary	1.111	.836	.547	-1.09	3.31
	Upper Primary	2.586*	.589	.000	1.05	4.12
	JHS	4.222*	.856	.000	1.98	6.47
Lower Primary	Early Grade	-1.111	.836	.547	-3.31	1.09
	Upper Primary	1.475	.862	.326	-.79	3.74
	JHS	3.111*	1.063	.022	.33	5.89
Upper Primary	Early Grade	-2.586*	.589	.000	-4.12	-1.05
	Lower Primary	-1.475	.862	.326	-3.74	.79
	JHS	1.636	.882	.255	-.68	3.95
JHS	Early Grade	-4.222*	.856	.000	-6.47	-1.98
	Lower Primary	-3.111*	1.063	.022	-5.89	-.33
	Upper Primary	-1.636	.882	.255	-3.95	.68

From the post hoc, there is no statistically significant difference in the means of teachers in early grade and lower primary ($p = .547$). Also, there was no statistically significant difference in the mean of teachers in lower primary and upper primary ($p = .326$). Again, there was no statistically significant difference in the mean of teachers in JHS and upper primary ($p = .255$). But there was statistically significant difference in the mean of teachers in early grade and upper primary ($p = .000$). Also, there was statistically significant difference in the mean of teachers in early grade and JHS ($p = .000$). Again, there was statistically significant difference in the mean of teachers in lower primary and JHS ($p = .022$).

Hypothesis two: There is no significant difference exit in the perspective of the Ghanaian Basic School teachers on the standard base curriculum with regard to their academic qualification. One way ANOVA was used to test the hypothesis and the descriptive results was presented in table 6.

Table 6: The Descriptive Statistics for Hypothesis two

Academic Qualification	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Minimum	Maximum
Diploma	50	31.00	5.993	.848	20	37
Degree	130	32.31	4.193	.368	20	37
Masters	20	33.50	1.850	.414	31	36
Total	200	32.10	4.593	.325	20	37

From table 6, the descriptive results indicated that teachers with diploma certificate ($M= 31.00$, $SD=5.993$), teachers with degree ($M= 32.31$, $SD= 4.193$) and teachers with masters ($M=33.50$, $SD= 1.850$). To determine if there is statistically significant different, the ANOVA results presented in table 7 was considered.

Table 7: ANOVA Results

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	105.308	2	52.654	2.534	.082
Within Groups	4092.692	197	20.775		
Total	4198.000	199			

From the table 7, the results show that there is no statistically significance difference in the implementation of the standard based curriculum among teachers from the level of teaching, $F(2, 197) = 2.534, Sig. = .082, p. = 0.05$.

Discussion

How Ghanaian Basic School Teachers were equipped for the New Standard Base Curriculum

The findings of the study showed that the Ghanaian Basic School teachers at each level (early grade, lower primary, upper primary and JHS) were given adequate training before the implementation of the new curriculum. This point to the fact that the successful implementation of a curriculum as suggested by Glatthorn, Boschee & Whitehead, (2007), demands the full knowledge and understanding of teachers on the rationale, vision, mission, philosophy and content of the curriculum to be implemented. Also, it was found that the training offered to the teachers prepared the teachers on the content and the assessment procedure for the implementation of the new standard based curriculum.

Challenges Teachers Face in the Implementation of the Standard-Base Curriculum

The findings of the study revealed that teachers have not been resourced with required teaching and learning materials needed for the successful implementation of the new standard based curriculum. Some teachers rely on the little information in the resource pack given during the training sessions. While others who have access to internet rely on information from the internet which often provides information either above or below the level of the learners. Relatedly, Amofah (2019), indicated that teachers may be given the best training with the required knowledge and skills but will not be able to do their best if they lack the needed teaching and learning materials. Again, the study revealed that the implementation of the standard based curriculum has extend the instructional period and by extension the teachers' workload.

Teachers' Level of Teaching and their Perspective on the Standard Base Curriculum

The study showed a significant different in teachers' level of teaching and their perspective on the standard base curriculum. This suggest that the class teachers have some kind of influence on the way they see and implement the standard base curriculum. Teachers who teach at the early grade and lower primary level seem to have better understanding and perspective on the implementation of the standard base curriculum than their counterparts who teach at the upper primary and JHS level. Abaidoo (2016) contend that attitude is the consistent behavior of one's thinking and beliefs. Deductively, it could be concluded that teachers at lower primary level accepted and embraced the concept of the new curriculum hence their positive perspective on the new curriculum as well it implementation strategies.

Teachers Academic Qualification and their Perspective on the Standard Base Curriculum

The result of the study showed no significant difference in teachers' academic qualification and their perspective on the standard base curriculum. This suggest that the academic qualification of the teacher be it Diploma, first Degree or Masters did not influence the way teachers see and implement the standard base curriculum.

Conclusion

From the results and discussion of the study, it was concluded that teachers were given training before the implementation of standard based curriculum and that the training has help the teachers in the implementation of the curriculum. Though teachers have the required knowledge and skill for the implementation of the curriculum, inadequate teaching and learning materials for both teachers and students is the major challenge for successful implementation of the curriculum. Teachers who teach at the early grade and lower primary level seems to have better understanding and perspective on the implementation of the standard base curriculum than their counterparts who teach at the upper primary and JHS level. Finally, the study indicated that teachers' academic qualification does not significantly influence their role in the implementation of the curriculum.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that government should provide adequate teaching and learning materials for teachers and students to enhance the successful implementation of the new standard base curriculum. Other education stakeholders such as Parents and Teachers Association (PTA) and NGOs are encourage to support the provision of teaching and learning materials needed for the success of the implementation of the new standard base curriculum. Also, it is recommended that National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NaCCA) should work the various District Education Directorates and schools to provide intermittent capacity building programmes for teachers to ensure compliance with the implementation of the new standard base curriculum. Finally, head-teachers are encouraged to intensify supervision of teachers and provide feedback for smooth implementation of the new standard base curriculum.

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