



Bridging theory, policy, and practice: Stakeholder engagement in Ghana's NPEC

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ABSTRACT

Ghana's education system is transforming significantly by implementing the National Pre-Tertiary Education Curriculum Framework (NPECF), emphasizing critical thinking and problem-solving skills over traditional rote learning. Translating these ambitious policy goals into effective classroom practices within a centralized system presents challenges. This research addresses this challenge through stakeholder analysis, examining how the involvement of policymakers, educators, parents, and local communities can bridge the gap between NPECF's theoretical ideals and practical classroom application. The research identifies potential roadblocks and opportunities for successful curriculum adoption by analyzing these diverse perspectives. Understanding the interactions and influences among policymakers, teachers, parents, and communities is crucial for transitioning smoothly from rote learning to a student-centered approach. This analysis highlights areas where stakeholders might need additional support or resources to embrace the new curriculum effectively. Ultimately, the findings can inform future educational reforms in Ghana and similar contexts, paving the way for a more effective and engaging learning experience for all students.

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ABSTRAK

Sistem pendidikan Ghana sedang mengalami transformasi signifikan dengan implementasi National Pre-Tertiary Education Curriculum Framework (NPECF) yang menekankan kemampuan berpikir kritis dan keterampilan pemecahan masalah - lebih dari pembelajaran tradisional. Tetapi menerjemahkan tujuan kebijakan ambisius ini ke dalam praktik kelas yang efektif dalam sistem terpusat - pada gilirannya menyajikan tantangan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menangani tantangan ini melalui analisis terhadap pemangku kepentingan, memeriksa bagaimana keterlibatan pembuat kebijakan, pendidik, orang tua, dan komunitas lokal dapat menjembatani kesenjangan antara cita-cita teoritis NPECF dengan aplikasi kelas praktis. Melalui analisis terhadap perspektif yang beragam ini, penelitian ini mengidentifikasi potensi hambatan dan peluang untuk penerapan kurikulum yang sukses. Memahami interaksi dan pengaruh antara pembuat kebijakan, guru, orang tua, dan komunitas sangat penting untuk transisi yang lancar dari pembelajaran sebelumnya yang rusak ke pendekatan pembelajaran yang berpusat pada peserta didik. Analisis ini menyoroti bidang-bidang di mana pemangku kepentingan mungkin membutuhkan dukungan atau sumber daya tambahan untuk mengaplikasikan kurikulum baru secara efektif. Akhirnya, temuan ini dapat menginformasikan reformasi pendidikan di masa depan di Ghana. Dan konteks serupa, membuka jalan bagi pengalaman belajar yang lebih efektif dan menarik bagi semua peserta didik.

Kata Kunci: layanan pendidikan Ghana; pendekatan yang berpusat pada peserta didik; keterlibatan pemangku kepentingan

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INTRODUCTION

Ghana has been actively pursuing education reform to address the limitations of its previous curriculum, which was heavily criticized for its reliance on rote learning. This traditional approach emphasized memorization over understanding, stifling creativity and critical thinking among students (Trevallion & Cusanelli, 2021). Recognizing these deficiencies, the Ghanaian government introduced the National Pre-Tertiary Education Curriculum Framework (NPECF) as a significant shift towards a more learner-centered approach to foster critical thinking skills, problem-solving abilities, and overall cognitive development. Rote learning, the cornerstone of the former curriculum, is widely documented in educational research as insufficient for developing higher-order thinking skills (Mcp hail, 2020).

Studies show that while rote learning can effectively memorize facts, it does not encourage students to critically understand, apply, or analyze information. This approach has been linked to poor academic performance and limited preparedness for real-world challenges (Naziha et al., 2013). In Ghana, this method has contributed to a high rate of student disengagement and a lack of motivation, prompting calls for a more dynamic and interactive curriculum (Francis, 2023). The NPECF was introduced as a response to these educational challenges, aiming to transform the Ghanaian education system from a rote learning model to one that emphasizes a learner-centered approach. The framework's goals include developing critical thinking skills, fostering creativity, and preparing students for the complexities of modern life.

The NPECF outlines a comprehensive curriculum integrating subject-specific content with cross-cutting themes such as digital literacy, environmental sustainability, and citizenship education (Ntumi, 2023). Doing so seeks to produce well-rounded individuals who can contribute meaningfully to society. Implementing educational reforms, particularly in centralized systems like Ghana's, presents several challenges. Centralized education systems often face difficulties effectively disseminating new policies and practices across diverse and widespread regions (Gaus et al., 2019). Additionally, there is often resistance to change from educators who are accustomed to traditional teaching methods and may lack the necessary training to implement new approaches. Resource constraints, such as inadequate infrastructure, limited access to teaching materials, and insufficient funding, further exacerbate these challenges. Stakeholder analysis is a critical tool in understanding the complexities of policy implementation.

It involves identifying and assessing the interests, influences, and relationships of various stakeholders involved in or affected by a policy (Balane et al., 2020). In the context of education reform, stakeholders include government officials, educators, students, parents, and community members. By examining the perspectives and roles of these stakeholders, policymakers can gain insights into potential barriers and facilitators of successful implementation. Applying a stakeholder analysis approach to the implementation of the NPECF can illuminate the interplay between theory, policy, and practice. Current research highlights the importance of engaging stakeholders at all levels to ensure the successful adoption of new educational frameworks (Prieto et al., 2019). According to Darling-Hammond et al. in "*Restarting and Reinventing School Learning in the Time of COVID and Beyond*" For example, teachers, as primary implementers of the curriculum, require adequate training and support to transition from rote learning to a learner-centered approach.

Additionally, involving parents and communities can foster a supportive environment for students, reinforcing the goals of the NPECF outside the classroom. This review sets the stage for exploring the central research question: "How does a stakeholder inputs brighten the interplay between theory, policy, and practice in implementing the National Pre-Tertiary Education Curriculum Framework in Ghana?" By addressing this question, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities associated with the NPECF, offering insights that can inform future education reform efforts in Ghana and similar contexts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theory, Policy, and Practice in Educational Reform

Pursuing educational excellence is a complex endeavor, perpetually grappling with the gap between theory and practice (Simmie, 2023). This tension is particularly pronounced in centralized systems like Ghana, where translating national policy directives into effective classroom realities presents a significant challenge. This literature review delves into the intricate dance between theory, policy, and practice in educational reform, emphasizing the limitations of traditional bureaucratic models and the burgeoning significance of stakeholder analysis. Traditionally, educational policy implementation has often adhered to a bureaucratic model, characterized by centralized planning and a rigid flow of directives from national policymakers to schools (Ganon-shilon & Schechter, 2017).

While this approach may appear streamlined on paper, it faces significant limitations in the messy reality of diverse school environments (Gorni & Saud, 2023). One crucial critique lies in its failure to account for the nuances of local contexts (Mohammed & Kuyini, 2021). Imagine the Ministry of Education in Ghana mandates a new curriculum emphasizing project-based science learning for all primary schools nationwide. This policy, however well-intentioned, overlooks the vast differences between schools in urban centers with well-equipped labs and rural schools with limited resources. The urban school might readily implement the project-based approach, conducting experiments with advanced equipment. However, rural schools, which lack proper lab facilities or even basic materials, might struggle to implement the same curriculum effectively.

This one-size-fits-all approach can lead to a sense of alienation and disengagement among stakeholders at the school level (Shikalepo, 2020). Teachers in rural schools, frustrated by the impracticality of the policy, might resort to rote memorization to fulfill the curriculum requirements, ultimately defeating the intended purpose of fostering scientific inquiry through hands-on learning. Furthermore, the bureaucratic model often overestimates the efficiency of transmitting policy directives down the chain of command. Ministries of Education formulating policies in the national capital might struggle to translate their pronouncements into actionable plans for schools on the ground (Jegede, 2021). The policy document outlining the project-based science curriculum might lack specific guidance on adapting the approach for schools with limited resources.

Regional education authorities responsible for disseminating the policy further might lack the capacity or budget to provide necessary training and support for teachers in rural schools. According to Fan in "Handbook of Education Policy Studies," disconnects between policy rhetoric" often couched in lofty ideals, and practical implementation in resource-constrained environments hinders the effectiveness of reform efforts. Teachers in rural schools left without proper guidance or support, might feel overwhelmed and inadequately equipped to implement the new curriculum, leading to frustration and potentially a decline in the quality of science education for their students. With its rigid top-down approach, the bureaucratic model fails to acknowledge local contexts' complexities and frontline educators' crucial role in adapting policies to their specific realities (Khelifi & Triki, 2020; Thompson et al., 2021). This can ultimately lead to disengagement, frustration, and a reform that fails to achieve its intended goals

Power, Negotiation, and Shaping Outcomes

Moving beyond the limitations of the bureaucratic model, a growing recognition of the inherently political nature of education reform is reshaping the conversation (Dawson-Amoah et al., 2024). Educational decisions are no longer viewed as pronouncements handed down from on high but rather as the culmination of a complex interplay of power dynamics, competing interests, and ongoing negotiations

among various stakeholders. These stakeholders include national policymakers, regional and district education authorities, school administrators, teachers, parents, and students. Each group brings a unique perspective and set of priorities to the table, and understanding these diverse voices is crucial for navigating the political landscape of educational reform.

Consider a national policy initiative in Ghana to introduce a more technology-integrated curriculum across all secondary schools. Policymakers, driven by a desire to equip graduates with 21st-century skills, might prioritize the purchase of laptops and tablets for all students. However, school administrators might express concerns about the cost of technology and the need for proper infrastructure upgrades like reliable internet access before widespread implementation. While acknowledging the potential benefits, teachers might highlight the need for adequate training to integrate technology into their lessons effectively. Parents facing financial constraints might raise concerns about the affordability of potential technology fees associated with the new curriculum.

Even students could have a voice, advocating for specific types of technology, expressing anxieties about potential distractions, or a widening digital divide between students from different socioeconomic backgrounds. These diverse perspectives illuminate the power dynamics inherent in educational reform (Lim & Apple, 2018). Policymakers hold significant power by setting national priorities and allocating resources. However, their goals can be stymied by the realities faced by school administrators who manage budgets and ensure smooth implementation at the local level. As the frontline educators responsible for translating policy into practice, teachers possess considerable power to shape students' actual learning experiences (Wilcox, 2018). Parents can influence policy through advocacy groups or by voicing their concerns directly to school officials.

Students, although often with less explicit power, can influence reform through their engagement or disengagement with the new curriculum. Understanding these power dynamics is crucial for successful reform implementation. Negotiation becomes an essential tool (Farr, 2018). Policymakers might need to consider alternative funding models for technology or prioritize infrastructure upgrades before widespread technology integration. In collaboration with teachers, school administrators could advocate for professional development opportunities to prepare them for technology-assisted instruction. Parents might be offered financial aid options or be included in discussions about responsible technology use in schools. Students can be involved in pilot programs or consulted on preferred learning technologies. Through open communication and collaboration, stakeholders can find common ground and navigate the political landscape of reform to ensure its effectiveness and address the diverse needs of the educational community (Howard et al., 2019).

Street-Level Bureaucrats

Beyond the national and local policy debates, the critical role of frontline educators in translating policy into practice demands close attention. Often referred to as "street-level bureaucrats," teachers possess a unique understanding of their students' needs and the realities of their classrooms. They are the ones who navigate the rapids between grand policy pronouncements and the daily grind of lesson planning, classroom management, and fostering student engagement. The concept of street-level bureaucrats highlights the agency of educators in adapting and interpreting policies within their local contexts (Bulut-Sahin, 2023). Imagine a new national policy in Ghana that mandates a focus on critical thinking skills across all primary English Language Arts (ELA) classes. While the policy aims are laudable, teachers, as street-level bureaucrats, must grapple with its practical application in their classrooms.

A teacher in a well-resourced urban school might readily integrate activities like open-ended discussions, complex text analysis, and creative writing assignments to promote critical thinking. However, a teacher in a rural school with limited resources and large class sizes might need to adapt the approach.

Understanding the challenges of her specific context, this teacher might strategically select shorter, more manageable texts for analysis, utilize group work activities to encourage peer-to-peer learning and critical discussions, and incorporate technology, if available, to access additional resources. This example highlights the double-edged sword of adaptation. At the same time, some degree of flexibility is necessary for successful implementation.

As street-level bureaucrats, teachers can leverage their agency to strategically adjust curriculum content, teaching methodologies, and assessment practices to ensure the policy's relevance and effectiveness for their students (Bao et al., 2024). In the rural school example, the teacher's adaptations, though different from the approach envisioned by policymakers, can still achieve the core goal of fostering critical thinking skills within the limitations of her context. However, excessive deviations from policy goals can undermine the overall reform agenda. Imagine a teacher in a well-resourced school, overwhelmed by standardized testing pressures, prioritizes rote memorization and basic grammar drills over critical thinking activities. This deviation from the policy's core objective weakens the reform effort and ultimately disserves the students (Davis et al., 2022).

Street-level bureaucrats, armed with their deep understanding of their students and local contexts, can be powerful agents of positive change by adapting policies for successful implementation. However, clear communication of policy goals and ongoing support for teachers through professional development opportunities are crucial to ensure adaptations remain aligned with the broader reform agenda. By empowering teachers and fostering collaboration between them and policymakers, the rapids of educational reform can be navigated more effectively, ensuring positive outcomes for students.

METHODS

This study delves into the implementation of Ghana's National Pre-Tertiary Education Curriculum Framework (NPECF) in the schools of Agotime-Ziope District, employing a multi-method approach to encapsulate the diverse experiences of various stakeholders. Policy documents were meticulously analyzed to grasp the framework's official objectives and strategic directives.

This foundational analysis was complemented by semi-structured interviews with policymakers and teacher trainers, which provided rich, qualitative insights into the perspectives and experiences from different levels of the educational hierarchy. A district-wide survey was conducted among teachers to gather broader quantitative data, capturing a wide spectrum of their experiences and viewpoints regarding the NPECF. This comprehensive data collection was aimed at triangulating information from multiple sources, thus ensuring a holistic understanding of how theory, policy, and practice interact during the NPECF implementation process. The study explores stakeholder perspectives on the curriculum and examines the challenges encountered and how policy directives are negotiated and adapted in natural classroom settings.

Data analysis

For data analysis, thematic analysis was employed after collecting interviews, surveys, and policy documents. This analytical method facilitated the extraction of meaningful insights by identifying recurring themes within the data. Through a flexible and iterative process, thematic analysis was applied to both the interview transcripts and survey responses, allowing for the assignment of codes that captured prevalent patterns and concerns. These codes were then organized into thematic categories within a structured framework, offering a detailed exploration of stakeholder experiences with the NPECF implementation in Agotime-Ziope District schools.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This document analysis provides a preliminary understanding of the NPECF's theoretical underpinnings and policy directives.

Theoretical Underpinnings

The National Pre-Tertiary Education Curriculum Framework document outlines a vision for Ghanaian education grounded in several critical theoretical perspectives. One prominent theme is the emphasis on student-centered learning. The document states, "The Curriculum emphasizes the learner as an active participant in the learning process.". This aligns with constructivist learning theories, which posit that knowledge is actively built through experience and interaction (Qureshi et al., 2021). Furthermore, the NPECF underscores the importance of developing critical thinking skills. According to Lee et al. in their book, "*Educating for Civic Reasoning and Discourse*" the framework aims to, "equip learners with the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for critical thinking and problem-solving.". This aligns with critical pedagogy theories, emphasizing the importance of questioning, analyzing information, and developing informed perspectives.

Policy Directives and Implementation

The policy directives outlined in the NPECF translate these theoretical underpinnings into specific actions for educators. The framework emphasizes a shift from rote memorization to inquiry-based learning. The document states, "Teachers will employ various teaching methodologies including... inquiry-based learning....". This approach encourages students to question, investigate, and construct their understanding. Additionally, the NPECF promotes the integration of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) across the curriculum. The framework states, "ICT will be used as a pedagogical tool to enhance teaching and learning.". This aligns with the growing recognition of technology's potential to support interactive, student-centered learning experiences.

Challenges and Considerations

While the policy directives hold promise, a critical examination of the documents reveals potential challenges in their implementation within Agotime-Ziope District schools. Limited access to resources, such as technology or up-to-date instructional materials, could hinder the effectiveness of inquiry-based learning approaches. The NPECF acknowledges this, stating the need to "ensure all schools have the necessary resources....". However, the extent to which these resource needs are met requires further investigation. Furthermore, the NPECF's success hinges on teachers' ability to implement the new pedagogy effectively. The document mentions the importance of "professional development programs for teachers.". However, it remains to be seen if these programs adequately equip teachers with the skills and strategies needed to facilitate a shift toward student-centered learning approaches.

Interview with policymakers' results

This report summarizes the findings of an interview conducted with a policymaker or Ministry of Education official regarding the National Professional Education Certification Framework (NPECF). The interview aimed to understand the NPECF's vision, goals, implementation plan, and stakeholder engagement strategies.

Vision and Goals

The interviewee highlighted the national vision for the NPECF as improving teacher quality, "We see the NPECF as a key tool to elevate the overall quality of our teaching workforce,". They emphasized how the NPECF aligns with the broader education reform agenda by establishing a national standard for teacher competency, "The NPECF complements our reform efforts by setting clear benchmarks for teacher knowledge and skills,". The anticipated outcomes of the NPECF implementation include a more qualified teaching force and improved student learning outcomes. "We expect to see a direct impact on student achievement through a more effective teaching corps," and ultimately, a more competitive education system.

Implementation

The interviewee provided details on the planned timeline for the NPECF rollout, outlining key stages such as pilot programs, national roll-out, and ongoing monitoring and evaluation. Ensuring successful implementation across the country hinges on several strategies, including collaboration with regional education authorities, capacity-building workshops for educators, and the development of user-friendly resources. "We are focusing on strong partnerships with regional education offices to ensure smooth local implementation,". The interviewee acknowledged the need for context-specific adaptations, mentioning plans to develop differentiated assessment tools and support mechanisms to address the varying needs of diverse teaching environments, such as rural versus urban schools. "The NPECF will be flexible enough to accommodate the realities of different teaching contexts,".

Stakeholder Engagement

The Ministry of Education's approach to stakeholder engagement centers around open communication and collaboration. The interviewee emphasized ongoing dialogue with teacher training institutions, schools, and teachers throughout the NPECF implementation process "We are committed to transparent communication with all stakeholders. Regular meetings and feedback sessions are planned,". Support mechanisms are being developed to assist teacher training institutions and schools in adapting their programs to align with the NPECF. These may include curriculum revision workshops and resource materials. "We recognize the need to support our teacher training institutions. We are developing resources and workshops to help them adapt their programs to the NPECF,". The interviewee highlighted the importance of teachers' voices, mentioning plans for surveys, focus groups, and online forums to gather teacher feedback and inform future iterations of the NPECF, "Teacher voices are crucial. We will actively seek their feedback throughout the process,".

Challenges and Opportunities

The interviewee acknowledged anticipated challenges, including securing sufficient funding for implementation, ensuring teacher buy-in, and managing potential resistance from existing teacher unions. "Securing long-term funding and addressing potential concerns from teacher unions are key challenges we anticipate,". Strategies to address these challenges include transparent communication, capacity-building programs, and highlighting the long-term benefits for teachers' professional development and career advancement. "We believe that once teachers understand the career progression opportunities linked to the NPECF, they will see its value,". The potential long-term benefits of a successful NPECF implementation are significant. The interviewee emphasized creating a highly qualified teaching force, a

more professionalized teaching career path, and a more equitable and effective education system for all students. "A successful NPECF has the potential to transform our education system by ensuring all students have access to high-quality teachers,".

Interview Teacher Training Institutions' results

This report summarizes key findings from interviews with representatives of teacher training institutions regarding the National Professional Education Certification Framework (NPECF). The focus was on understanding the challenges and opportunities associated with implementing the NPECF in teacher preparation programs.

Preparation and Training

Initial reactions to the NPECF were generally positive, with interviewees acknowledging its potential to improve teacher quality, "The NPECF presents a great opportunity to ensure our graduates are well-equipped for the demands of the classroom,". However, concerns arose regarding the impact on current training programs, "We are unsure how significantly we will need to adapt our curriculum to meet the NPECF standards,". Institutions expressed a need for resources and support to train teachers under the NPECF framework effectively. Interviewees highlighted the value of clear guidelines, sample assessment tasks, and professional development workshops for faculty, "Providing faculty with workshops on the NPECF competencies would be extremely helpful,".

Curriculum Adaptation

Adapting the current curriculum to align with the NPECF standards is anticipated to be a challenge. Interviewees mentioned potential issues such as time constraints, integrating new content areas, and ensuring alignment with existing accreditation requirements. "The biggest challenge will be fitting all the required competencies within the timeframe of our programs,". Collaboration between teacher training institutions and schools was crucial for successful curriculum adaptation. Interviewees suggested joint curriculum development workshops and student teaching placements aligned with the NPECF standards: "Collaboration with schools would ensure our graduates have practical experience with the competencies they are being assessed on,".

Long-Term Impact

Despite the anticipated challenges, interviewees expressed optimism about the NPECF's long-term impact. They believe it has the potential to improve teacher quality by ensuring graduates possess a strong foundation in core teaching skills and subject matter knowledge. "A standardized framework will ensure all new teachers have a strong base of skills,". A well-trained teaching force is expected to lead to improved student learning outcomes. "By ensuring high-quality teachers, we can expect students to perform better academically,". Teacher training institutions hope for a smooth and collaborative implementation process. Clear communication from the Ministry of Education and adequate resources and support were identified as critical factors for success. "We hope the Ministry will provide ongoing support and clear communication throughout the implementation process," The successful implementation of the NPECF is seen as a positive step towards a more professionalized teaching force and a stronger education system.

Survey results

Table 1. Survey distribution of Teachers in Agortime-Ziope

Question	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
Part 1: NPECF Teaching Methodologies and Assessment					
I am comfortable using the teaching methodologies emphasized in the NPECF.	5	10	25	40	20
I am satisfied with the NPECF's assessment practices for measuring student learning.	8	12	30	35	15
Part 2: Resources and Professional Development					
I can access the necessary resources (e.g., materials and technology) to effectively implement the NPECF in my classroom.	15	20	25	30	10
The professional development opportunities provided by the NPECF have been helpful for me.	10	15	30	35	10
Part 3: Challenges and Opportunities					
Adapting my teaching style to the NPECF is a significant challenge.	20	25	30	15	10
The NPECF implementation presents an opportunity to improve student learning outcomes.	5	10	20	40	25

Source: Survey 2024

According to **Table 1**, 60% of teachers agree or strongly agree that they are comfortable with the teaching methodologies emphasized in the NPECF, indicating a majority positive reception. However, 15% disagree or strongly disagree, suggesting a significant minority face challenges. 50% of teachers agree or strongly agree that they are satisfied with the NPECF's assessment practices, while 20% are dissatisfied, indicating room for improvement. Only 40% of teachers agree or strongly agree that they have access to the necessary resources, while 35% disagree or strongly disagree, highlighting a critical area for intervention. 45% of teachers find the professional development opportunities helpful, but 25% do not, suggesting that professional development programs must be more effective and accessible. 45% of teachers find adapting their teaching style to the NPECF challenging, reflecting a significant barrier to effective implementation. 65% of teachers see the NPECF implementation as an opportunity to improve student learning outcomes, showing a generally optimistic outlook despite the challenges.

Discussion

The National Pre-tertiary Education Curriculum Framework (NPECF) in Ghana is grounded in constructivist learning theories, emphasizing student-centered learning and the cultivation of critical thinking skills. This approach aligns with global educational trends prioritizing inquiry-based learning over rote memorization. Policy directives within the NPECF aim to translate these educational theories into practice, advocating for inquiry-based learning and integrating Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in teaching. These initiatives represent a progressive shift towards a more dynamic and

interactive student educational experience. However, the bureaucratic model prevalent in developing countries, including Ghana, often presents significant challenges to such educational reforms.

Traditional bureaucratic structures are typically rigid, hierarchical, and resistant to change, which can impede the implementation of innovative educational practices (Bao et al., 2024; Scott, 2021). For the NPECF to succeed, overcoming these systemic barriers and adapting policies to fit local contexts effectively is crucial. One of the primary challenges identified in the implementation of the NPECF is the limited access to necessary resources. The survey results from teachers in Agortime-Ziope offer insightful perspectives on implementing the National Teacher Education Curriculum Framework (NTECF) in their classrooms. The findings are segmented into three main parts: comfort with teaching methodologies and assessment, access to resources and professional development, and challenges and opportunities. Each section highlights different aspects of the teachers' experiences and provides a comprehensive view of the current state of NTECF implementation.

Comfort with Teaching Methodologies and Assessment

Comfort with Teaching Methodologies: The survey indicates that most teachers (60%) agree or strongly agree that they are comfortable using the teaching methodologies emphasized in the NTECF. This suggests that most teachers have successfully adapted to the pedagogical approaches recommended by the framework. The positive reception indicates that the methodologies are likely well-aligned with teachers' instructional strategies and the needs of their students (Perry et al., 2021). However, it is crucial to note that 15% of teachers either disagree or strongly disagree with this statement. This significant minority indicates that there are challenges in adopting these methodologies. These challenges could stem from insufficient training, resistance to change, or a mismatch between the methodologies and the specific classroom contexts in which these teachers operate.

Satisfaction with Assessment Practices: Regarding assessment practices, 50% of teachers agree or strongly agree that they are satisfied with how the NTECF measures student learning. This shows a general acceptance of the framework's assessment practices, suggesting that these practices are seen as effective in evaluating student performance. Conversely, 20% of teachers express dissatisfaction with these assessment practices. This dissatisfaction highlights issues such as perceived unfairness, difficulty implementing the assessments, or a belief that the assessments do not accurately reflect student learning and progress. This feedback is critical as it points to potential areas for refinement within the NTECF's assessment strategies to ensure they are comprehensive and equitable (Perry et al., 2021).

Access to Resources and Professional Development

Access to Necessary Resources: One of the most pressing issues identified in the survey is the lack of necessary resources. Only 40% of teachers agree or strongly agree that they have access to the materials and technology needed to implement the NTECF effectively. This highlights a significant resource gap that can hinder effective teaching and learning. The fact that 35% of teachers disagree or strongly disagree with this statement underscores the urgency of addressing this resource disparity. This resource gap could be due to several factors, including inadequate funding, logistical challenges in distributing materials, or lack of school infrastructure. Addressing these issues is vital for ensuring that all teachers can implement the NTECF effectively, thereby enhancing the quality of education.

Helpfulness of Professional Development: The survey results also reveal mixed feelings about the professional development opportunities provided by the NTECF. While 45% of teachers find these opportunities helpful, 25% do not. This suggests that while nearly half of the teachers benefit from professional development programs, a significant proportion does not feel adequately supported. The

effectiveness of professional development is critical for the successful implementation of any educational framework. If teachers do not feel that their professional development needs are being met, it can lead to gaps in knowledge and skills, impacting their ability to teach effectively. This feedback indicates a need for more targeted, accessible, and practical professional development programs that address teachers' specific challenges in implementing the NTECF (Ananga, 2021).

Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges in Adapting Teaching Style: Adapting to the NTECF presents a significant challenge for many teachers, with 45% finding it difficult to adjust their teaching styles. This highlights a substantial barrier to effective implementation. The difficulty in adaptation could be due to several reasons, including ingrained teaching practices, lack of adequate training or support, or the complexity of the new methodologies. Addressing this challenge requires a multifaceted approach. Providing ongoing support, including mentoring and coaching, can help teachers gradually adapt their teaching styles. Creating a collaborative environment where teachers can share experiences and strategies can also ease the transition.

Opportunities for Improving Student Outcomes: Despite the challenges, there is a generally optimistic outlook among teachers regarding the potential of the NTECF to improve student learning outcomes. A notable 65% of teachers agree or strongly agree that implementing the NTECF presents an opportunity to enhance student performance. This optimism is encouraging as it indicates that teachers see the value in the framework and believe in its potential to make a positive impact. This positive outlook is essential for the successful implementation of the NTECF. When teachers are motivated and believe in the framework's potential, they are more likely to put in the effort required to overcome challenges and make the necessary adjustments in their teaching practices. Implementing the National Teacher Education Curriculum Framework (NTECF) in Ghana, particularly in Agortime-Ziope, presents significant challenges and opportunities. The recent survey results reveal critical gaps in resource accessibility, professional development, adaptation to new teaching methodologies, and assessment practices. These gaps must be addressed to ensure the effective implementation of the NTECF and to enhance the quality of preservice teacher education.

Addressing Resource Gaps: Resource accessibility must be a priority. Ensuring that all teachers have the necessary materials and technology is fundamental to the effective implementation of the NTECF. This could involve increasing school funding, improving the distribution of resources, and leveraging technology to provide equitable access to teaching materials (Penuel, 2019).

1. **Enhancing Professional Development:** Professional development programs must be more effective and accessible. Tailoring these programs to address teachers' specific needs and challenges can make them more relevant and valuable. Incorporating practical, hands-on training sessions and providing continuous support through mentoring and peer collaboration can enhance the effectiveness of professional development.
2. **Facilitating Adaptation to New Methodologies:** To help teachers adapt to new teaching methodologies, it is essential to provide robust support systems. This could include offering workshops that focus on practical application, creating opportunities for teachers to observe and learn from each other, and providing resources that facilitate the integration of new methods into their teaching practices.
3. **Strengthening Assessment Practices:** Improving the NTECF's assessment practices is also crucial. Ensuring that assessments are fair, comprehensive, and accurately reflect student learning will help address the concerns of the 20% of dissatisfied teachers. This might involve revising assessment methods, providing clear guidelines and support for implementation, and incorporating teacher feedback into the assessment design process.
4. **Fostering a Collaborative Environment:** Creating a collaborative environment where teachers can share their experiences, challenges, and successes with the NTECF can help build a community of practice.

This collaboration can provide emotional support, share practical strategies, and foster a culture of continuous improvement.

5. **Leveraging Optimism for Improvement:** Teachers' optimism about the NTECF's potential to improve student outcomes is a valuable asset. Leveraging this positive outlook can drive the implementation process forward. Highlighting success stories, providing platforms for teachers to showcase effective practices, and continuously reinforcing the potential benefits of the NTECF can sustain and enhance this optimism.

The survey results provide a comprehensive view of the current state of NTECF implementation in Agortime-Ziope. While there are significant challenges, particularly regarding resource access and professional development, there are also clear opportunities for improvement (Fairman et al., 2023). Addressing these challenges through targeted interventions, support systems, and collaborative efforts can enhance the effectiveness of the NTECF, ultimately leading to better educational outcomes for students. The positive outlook among teachers is a strong foundation upon which these improvements can be built, driving forward the quality and effectiveness of preservice teacher education in Ghana.

CONCLUSION

The study's findings underscore the importance of a holistic approach to educational reform. The NPECF, focusing on student-centered learning and critical thinking, represents a significant step forward for Ghana's education system. However, its success depends on addressing the systemic challenges of resource allocation, professional development, and stakeholder engagement. A stakeholder analysis approach provides valuable insights into the interplay between theory, policy, and practice, highlighting the need for adaptive and context-sensitive implementation strategies. The findings from our research suggest several critical recommendations for improving the implementation of the NPECF.

NPECF needs to enhance resource allocation. To overcome the critical barrier of resource limitations, the government and educational authorities must prioritize funding for schools, particularly in rural areas. This funding should focus on providing the necessary materials and technology to support inquiry-based and ICT-enhanced teaching methodologies. NPECF needs to target professional development. Professional development programs need to be more effectively tailored to meet the specific needs of educators. This includes ongoing support and training in the new teaching methodologies promoted by the NPECF. Programs should be designed to be practical and directly applicable to classroom settings, ensuring teachers can confidently transition to new practices.

NPECF also needs to strengthen collaboration. Enhanced collaboration between teacher training institutions and schools is essential for successful curriculum adaptation. Practical experiences and real-world applications should be integrated into teacher training programs to ensure that future educators are well-prepared to implement the NPECF competencies. Transparent communication and advocacy from policymakers should be transparent with all stakeholders, including teachers, teacher unions, and the broader community. Highlighting the long-term benefits of the NPECF and addressing concerns through open dialogue can help to build support and reduce resistance to change. NPECF also needs to improve the way it addresses political and social contexts. Understanding and addressing the political and social contexts in which educational policies are enacted is crucial. Policymakers should consider the local realities and challenges educators face and work to create supportive environments that facilitate the successful implementation of reforms.

NPECF needs continuous monitoring and evaluation. Implementing robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms is essential for assessing its effectiveness. Regular feedback from teachers and students should be used to make informed adjustments to the curriculum and its implementation strategies.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. The author confirms that the data and content of the article are free from plagiarism.

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