
Primary School Teachers' Experiences of Implementing the Revised Social Studies Curriculum in Khomas Region, Namibia

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to gain in-depth understanding of experiences of social studies teachers in five schools in Namibia's Khomas area as they implemented the new Social Studies curriculum for the senior primary phase (Grades 4-7). As a theoretical framework for this study, Rogan and Grayson's application of the curricular theory was used. Three social studies teachers from each of the five selected primary schools in the Khomas region, as well as ten members of school management, two from each school, were chosen, using a purposive sampling approach. Open-ended interview questions, document analysis, and classroom observation were used to gather data. Lack of resources, insufficient training, teachers' severe workloads, lack of awareness of the reform, and their readiness for change were recognized as some of the primary issues that hampered the efficient implementation of the updated curriculum, according to the research. If these issues are not addressed, they may have far-reaching effects, not only for the schools, but also for society, as it will negatively affect the quality of the products from the schooling system. Therefore, government should devote resources, time, and dedication necessary to ensure successful implementation of the revised curriculum.

Keywords: Curriculum implementation, Namibia, senior primary phase, social studies, teachers' experiences

INTRODUCTION

Improving the quality of education often is regarded as a priority for many governments to promote long-term economic development (Rogan & Grayson, 2003). The Namibian education system has undergone several transformations in the form of curriculum revision since its political independence from the South African colonial regime in 1990. The latest revision took place in 2013 after a Cabinet directive in response to a resolution from the National Education Conference in 2011, with the purpose to re-align the education system to respond to the demands of the long-term objectives of Namibia Vision 2030, a national goal. The revised curriculum was implemented in 2015 in response to unmet objectives and complaints about inadequate training (Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture, 2012).

According to Rogan and Grayson (2003), government and funding agency activities in developing curricula frequently are overly limited and constrained, while specifics about how the curricula will be implemented at the school level sometimes are overlooked. First and foremost, teachers who are active in classrooms and apply the curriculum on a daily basis are the ones who are accountable for executing the curriculum for successful teaching and learning. There has been a concern regarding the minimal consultation with teachers by curriculum developers. As a result, curriculum implementation becomes ineffective, affecting the quality of teaching and learning. It is essential that the curricula be dynamic and meet the changing needs of the era. According to this principle, it is important to keep up with the changes (Aydin, Ozfidan & Carothers, 2017). Implementation may be hampered by factors such as teachers' lack of

adequate training to apply the curriculum properly. As a result, suitable training and induction must be made available in order to improve teachers' ability to implement the new curriculum effectively. This suggests that teachers need to be trained in such a way that they can even develop their own resource materials; this requires time for teachers to prepare and construct classroom resources.

Badugela (2012) argues that inadequate training of teachers and the lack of resources make it complicated for teachers to learn what is expected from them. According to Alsubaie (2016), getting instructors to participate in and conduct training might be difficult. He furthermore reiterates that the design and the implementation of the curriculum solely are aimed at meeting and responding to the needs of learners and, therefore, the need for teacher training to take place. In Namibia, teacher training for curriculum implementation does not receive much attention when it comes to seeking teachers' perspectives and opinions. Against this backdrop, this study focuses on the experiences of social studies teachers in implementing the redesigned social studies curriculum. As Cobbold (2017) points out, initiatives by both governments and funding agencies all too often focus on and are limited to the development of curricula, while the details regarding the way in which the curricula will be implemented at school level are often neglected.

BACKGROUND

In the Namibian context, much effort and many resources were put into curriculum revision; however, little attention seems to have been paid to the implementation of the curriculum because, in early 2016, only four teachers, namely three heads of departments (HODs) and one teacher, were trained by Senior Education Officers from the National Institute for Educational Development

(NIED) for four days. They then were supposed to train teachers in the senior primary phase teaching social studies in the whole Khomas region. Thereafter, all social studies teachers, cluster by cluster, received two days of training in ways to implement the revised curriculum. The effectiveness in terms of capacitating teachers to implement the revised curriculum successfully after this short period of training is not known.

According to Alsubaie (2016), curriculum is often mis-implemented due to teacher incompetence because of a lack of training on curriculum and discomfort in employing sensitive content. However, no similar studies have been carried out in the Khomas region to understand the experiences of social studies instructors in implementing the updated social studies curriculum. Therefore, this study was conducted with the purpose to examine the social studies teachers' experiences with regard to the implementation of the revised social studies curriculum in the Senior Primary Phase (Grades 4 to 7) in the five selected schools in the Khomas region. In this study the following objectives were pursued:

- a) Explore and establish teachers' experiences and challenges, if any, in the implementation of the revised social studies curriculum;
- b) determine the type of support teachers receive from school management to ensure the effective implementation of the revised social studies curriculum;
- c) explore strategies and best practices that teachers put in place to mitigate challenges experienced during the implementation of the revised social studies curriculum.

LITERATURE REVIEW

It was important to review the literature related to this study to determine what is known and what is not known as yet about the study topic. This section presents the findings of the literature related to this study. Several facets of curriculum implementation were explored, including the theoretical framework, constructions and views on curriculum implementation, challenges to curriculum implementation, and strategies for mitigating such challenges.

Perspectives on curriculum implementation

The implementation of the curriculum refers to the ways in which teachers deliver instruction and conduct assessment by means of specified resources provided in a curriculum. Curriculum designs generally provide instructional suggestions, scripts, lesson plans and assessment options related to a set of objectives. Such designs focus on consistency to assist the successful implementation and maintain the curricular structure in order to meet various objectives (Wiles & Bondi, 2014). If the curriculum is to work effectively, it must make a genuine contribution in the school and classroom, regardless of which education level it is designed for (Syomwene, 2013). With reference to this statement, Fullan (2007) agrees that a curriculum can never be complete when the true drivers, the teachers, are not properly involved. It is common practice that in any given curriculum, different methods and strategies, such as orientation and training, are to be employed for proper implementation. This is well supported by a study by Alsubaie (2016) who advocates that different methodologies for implementation need to be followed; for example, aspects and processes begun in curriculum dissemination must be continued during implementation.

Mazieobi (2007) indicates that every 21st century teacher must be prepared to face challenges in the classroom. However, Barret (2011) emphasizes that, with proper and prior training and induction in curricular and instructional change, teachers will be readier to face challenges head-on, regardless of the nature of such challenges. These challenges could be teacher readiness for the implementation of the curriculum, a lack of educational resources and materials, the lack of parental support, untrained or unqualified teachers and a difficult learning environment (Barret, 2011). Important resources, relevant to educational policy, are human resources, equipment and facilities, as well as space and monetary resources (Wadesango, Rembe & Chibaya, 2005). These resources are the major factors that add to successful implementation, and are relevant, especially in the Namibian context, because the implementation of the curriculum depends on the availability of resources, such as textbooks and other relevant learning materials.

Challenges to curriculum implementation

Curricular experts consider the process of translating curriculum goals into practice, or going from page to playground, to be the most crucial part of the educational transition process. It is frequently beset by obstacles and limitations that, if not addressed quickly, can lead to implementation failure - a common occurrence with most educational breakthroughs and changes (Mazieobi, 2007; Cobbold, 2017). However, Barret (2011) emphasises that, with proper and prior training and induction in curricular and instructional change, teachers will be ready to face challenges head-on, regardless of the nature of such challenges. These challenges could be teacher readiness for the implementation of the curriculum, a lack of educational resources and materials, the lack of parental support, untrained or unqualified

teachers and a difficult learning environment (Barret, 2011). According to the literature reviewed for this study, the implementation of a new curriculum normally holds challenges for teachers. These may be grouped into three main categories, namely (i) factors that have a direct impact on the implementation of a curriculum, such as teachers' severe workloads, insufficient comprehension of the reform, and teacher preparedness for change; (ii) factors that are mostly connected to the curriculum implementation procedure or system, such as developing curriculum policies, communicating changes to stakeholders, and providing essential learning materials; and (iii) factors relating to the creation of the curriculum or to the students, such as curriculum content and student preparedness for change (Mazieobi, 2007).

Furthermore, drawing on the literature on curriculum implementation and using evidence from curriculum implementation studies conducted in Ghana, Cobbold (2017) identified four factors which affect curriculum implementation, namely (1) the necessity and significance of the change; (2) clarity regarding the programme's aims and means; (3) complexity; and (4) the programme's quality and practicality. The perceived or felt need of those who execute the curriculum is referred to as need and relevance. A broad sentiment or assertion of need by certain political parties or academia usually is insufficient; rather, this need must be understood by the stakeholders actually involved in the execution. If instructors believe the curriculum is relevant to them or recognize the need for change, for example, the degree of implementation will be higher. As a result, a thorough analysis of whether or not the adjustment satisfies priority demands is critical both before and throughout the curriculum's creation phase. It also is indicated that during the implementation phase constant communication and open

debate of the curriculum's suitability for dealing with felt needs must be maintained and developed (Singh, 2012).

Furthermore, users' understanding of the curriculum's aims and methods is defined as clarity. Studies on curriculum implementation revealed instances of educational innovations in which practitioners were unsure of what they were supposed to do differently, or what change meant in reality (Makewa & Ngussa, 2015). Teachers like concreteness and tangibility, at least in the early phases of implementation (Singh, 2012). They anticipate that teaching methods will be clearly articulated and that content will be well-considered. Teachers attempting to execute the curriculum may experience tremendous anxiety and frustration as a result of unclear and unexplained aims and approaches. The difficulty and scope of change brought on by those responsible for implementation is referred to as complexity, indicating the extent of new skills, beliefs, and materials that an invention necessitates. Simple modifications may be easier to implement, but they may not have a significant impact. Complex adjustments promise to achieve more, but they also need more work and a higher cost of failure. In general, it appears that the more difficult an idea is, the more likely it is to be implemented (Badugela, 2012).

In addition, the curriculum's quality and practicality are factors to consider when implementing a new curriculum. It is vital to note that the quality of the curriculum is determined not by what a panel of curriculum creators thinks of it, but by how the key actors who are expected to apply it see it (Nsibande, 2002). Thus, one can speak of contextual suitability, which means that the proposed innovation must be matched to available funds, specific student characteristics, teaching materials and technologies,

language patterns in communities, teachers' abilities, parents' expectations, and cultural values, among other factors (Makewa & Ngussa, 2015).

Finally, if change is to be real, district administrators, inspectors, and others must have a positive attitude toward the local implementation process (Van der Westhuizen, 2004). According to Alade (2011), change may occur among individual teachers or single schools without the cooperation of district officials, but it will most likely remain isolated in select inventive enclaves without changing the wider system. Furthermore, a critical set of criteria for implementation is teachers' commitment and attitudes, competences, and interaction patterns (Park & Sung, 2013). The importance of both individual and group dynamics cannot be overstated. Teachers' attitudes toward innovations have been found to be influenced by a history of negative experiences with previous implementation attempts, which is an unfavourable condition for change, because system members may have developed a cynicism or apathy toward change regardless of the merits of the new idea. In addition, implementation is more likely to succeed at a school with more change-oriented teachers than in a school with more change-resistant teachers. Ono and Ferreira (2010) argue that teachers' interests appear to shift at different stages of implementation. The influence of government and other external agencies is also important in successful implementation of a new curriculum (Cheung & Wong, 2012). If it so happens that a lack of role clarity and ambiguity exist regarding expectations, as well as a lack of frequent interpersonal communication forums and ambivalence between authority and support roles, this may have a negative impact on the degree of implementation (Badugela, 2012).

Support rendered to teachers in the implementation of the curriculum

For educational programmes to be successfully implemented, ongoing interaction between policymakers and implementers is necessary. Ngara, Ngwarai and Ngara (2013) indicate that programme coordinators need assistance and guidance when a new programme is being implemented. Interaction can be made meaningful when research or assessments are carried out formatively while programmes are being implemented. They furthermore note that the provision of support services enhances the implementation of a programme, and support can also be given through programme monitoring, thus paving the way for adjustments as implementation goes on.

Training and support: It is vital that teachers be motivated to promote the successful implementation of reforms. Teachers need to be involved in the policy-making process which is aimed at introducing curriculum change, and their views must be considered. The availability of resources, funding, training, educators, and a pleasant school atmosphere were found equally critical for the success of curriculum implementation (Badugela, 2012). In the Namibian context, Senior Education Officers, previously known as Subject Advisors, provide teachers with the support they need. Mdutshane (2007) notes that subject specialists need to support teachers and undertake a monitoring process in order to obtain a clear picture of what is happening in classroom situations. Mdutshane (2007) also adds that, due to lack of training for teachers, they must be encouraged to form clusters (intermediate phase clusters) because by doing that, they can share ideas and experiences regarding the implementation of the curriculum by reviewing their teaching

styles, teaching resources and school functioning.

The need for continuous professional development (CPD): Coetzer (2001) defines CPD as any activity aimed at enhancing the knowledge and skills of teachers by means of orientation, training and support. The development is also likely to affect attitudes and approaches and may, therefore, contribute to the improvement of the quality of the learning and teaching process (Early & Bubb, 2004). According to Kyahurwa (2013), changes in education with regard to the curriculum require of teachers to expand their knowledge and skills at all levels. According to Gray (2005), CPD embraces the idea that individuals aim for continuous improvement in their professional skills and knowledge, beyond the basic training initially required to carry out the job. In teaching, such development used to be called 'in-service training', or INSET, with the emphasis on delivery, rather than on outcome. Similarly, Reimers (2003) emphasizes that CPD is viewed as the professional growth that a teacher achieves as a result of gaining increased experience and examining his or her teaching systematically. Continuous professional development, as one of the key areas of teacher training, cannot be overemphasized.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The framework for curriculum implementation developed by Rogan and Grayson (2003) was used to design the research instrument and guide the analysis. Three components are at the centre of the framework, namely a Profile of Implementation, Capacity to Innovate, and Outside Support. Figure 1 shows the Framework of Curriculum Implementation (Rogan & Grayson, 2003).

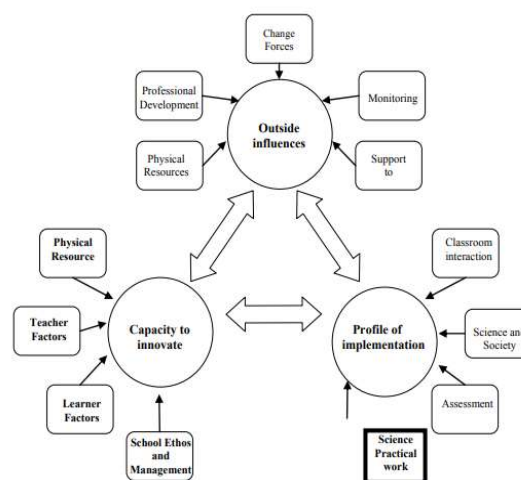


Figure 1: Framework of Curriculum Implementation

Source: Rogan and Grayson (2003)

As indicated in Figure 1, each of the three categories may be used to better comprehend, analyse, and articulate the extent to which a curriculum's goals are being realized in practice - in this example, the new social science curriculum. Rogan and Grayson (2003) point out that physical resources, teacher factors, learner factors, and school ethos and administration are the four sub-constructs of the construct 'Capacity to Innovate.' Professional development, availability of resources essential for innovation, forms of pressures and support brought to bear (change forces), direct assistance to learners, and monitoring techniques are the five sub-constructs of the construct 'Outside Influences.' The character of classroom interaction (what teachers and students do in relation to one another), usage and type of science practical work, incorporation of science in society, and assessment procedures are the four sub-constructs of the 'Profile of Implementation'. Each sub-construct is divided into four levels, with level 4 representing advanced learner-centred activities (Hattingh, Aldous & Rogan, 2007). According to Makewa and Ngussa (2015), as learners go through the stages, the emphasis shifts away from

teacher-centred techniques and toward learner-centred approaches. The profile, unlike previous developmental models, does not entail 'progressing' from one level to the next, and so is not linear. The upper levels, on the other hand, include the lower practices. As a result, the levels do not dictate what should be done at any one time, but rather reflect mastery of an ever-expanding variety of teaching and learning techniques. This means that a teacher may, for example, shift from level 2 to level 4 practices and then back to level 3, depending on the scenario. It is vital to highlight that level-4 activities, such as teacher-led demonstrations in large groups, are not better than level-1 practices. In social science practical work, all methods are worthy and may be utilized to attain social science curricular aims.

METHODOLOGY

There were approximately 50 primary schools, with plus-minus 170 teachers for social studies, in the Khomas education region at the time of this study. This study employed a descriptive case study design and adopted a qualitative research approach. This design and approach were found to be most suitable for gaining an in-depth understanding of social studies teachers' experiences in implementing the revised social studies curriculum for the senior primary phase (Grades 4 to 7) in five selected schools in the Khomas region of Namibia. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select three social studies teachers from each of the five selected primary schools in the Khomas region, and ten members of

school management, two from each school. The sample comprised fifteen participants in total. Data were generated by means of open-ended interview questions, document analysis and classroom observation. Interviews were used as the primary method of data collection, because they provided the opportunities for probing and obtaining in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study, that is, participants' experiences with and perceptions on the implementation of the revised social studies curriculum. Document analysis was used as a secondary method of data collection to validate data collected through interviews. Documents that were analysed included the social studies curriculum, subject policies, classroom observation sheets, school-based moderation tools, minutes of meetings concerning the curriculum, and curriculum management tools, as applicable in each school.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

For this study, three participants were selected from each of the five selected primary schools. Codes were utilised, as shown in Table 1, to represent a school and the teachers who participated. For example, the letters V, W, X, Y, Z, represented the different schools, whereas the P1, P2, P3 represented participating teachers from different schools and SMT- V, SMT- W, SMT- X, SMT- Y, and SMT- Z represented HODs who were part of the School Management Team at the different schools. A summary of the coding information of these participants is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: The coding of the participants for one-on-one interviews

SCHOOLS	PARTICIPANTS				
SCHOOL, V	P1	P2	P3	SMT-V1	SMT-V2
SCHOOL, W	P1	P2	P3	SMT-W1	SMT-W2
SCHOOL, X	P1	P2	P3	SMT-X1	SMT-X2
SCHOOL, Y	P1	P2	P3	SMT-Y1	SMT-Y2
SCHOOL, Z	P1	P2	P3	SMT-Z1	SMT-Z2

Teachers' experiences in implementing the revised social studies curriculum

One of the objectives of this study was to explore the teachers' experiences in implementing the revised social studies curriculum. Teachers had different experiences, with some noting adverse shortages in teaching and learning materials. Participants from all the schools (Schools V, W, X, Y, and Z) respectively, were of the opinion that there seemed to be a misfit between the content that was to be taught and the time available for the attainment of curriculum, as can be seen in the participants' responses.

School V: P1= My experience is that the curriculum has too much content to all the grades and this really impacts the learners and the teacher, with regard to the time to deliver and assess and the time for the learners to master everything

School W: P1= The challenging part was just how topics were arranged, which makes it a bit difficult for learners, especially when a most challenging topic has to be taught first in the first term instead of the second term. My experience is that nothing has changed much but just the rearrangement of the topics.

School X: P1= The curriculum consists of too much content for the learners.

School Y: P1= Too many topics with big numbers of learners to cater for - 180 learners, grades 6A-6F for one teacher.

P3 = The content of the subject is too long.

SMT Z= This is the first time I am teaching Social Studies as a subject and therefore I have no prior experience in the subject whatsoever.

Though most of the participants had different and unique experiences regarding implementing the revised social studies curriculum, not all were pessimistic or negative, as indicated by the following participants' responses:

School V: P3= The revised social studies curriculum is well organized, points are straight-forward.

SMT Y= Everything is fine with me when it comes to the revised curriculum as far as social studies is concerned; all areas were addressed.

School Z: P2= I think it is very well understood by my learners and the content is very straight to the point.

The results indicate that most of the participants had different experiences, with some less experienced teachers finding the content too cumbersome to teach in the given time frames. Among the reasons given by teachers for problems with implementation were that the classrooms were overcrowded, the curriculum included unnecessary topics, and topics were arranged in the syllabus without proper coherence. The study also found that those participants who utilised additional material for teaching navigated easily through the content and their learners understood the lessons better. Participants pointed out that the government had stopped releasing teachers to attend workshops during the morning hours by scheduling workshops in the afternoons. This appeared to be a factor that affected the morale of teachers regarding the implementation of the curriculum. The participants, furthermore, argued that three days of training was not sufficient, seeing those expectations to teach learners effectively with the knowledge gained in such a short period of time were high. This is in accordance with what Makewa and Ngussa (2015) assert, namely that teachers will

implement a curriculum according to their levels of motivation. Though it was not clear whether the participants' morale was affected by the lack of training and support, the participants' uneasiness was prevalent when they mentioned that they had to provide their own refreshments when attending workshops after a day of teaching when they were usually exhausted.

Challenges that social studies teachers experienced in teaching social studies

Another objective was to explore challenges experienced by the social studies teachers when teaching social studies. According to Rogan and Grayson (2003), the capacity to support innovation, as the second construct of the implementation of the curriculum, considers aspects that either support or hinder the implementation of innovation. The aspects are divided into 1) physical resources, such as class-rooms and textbooks; 2) teacher factors, such as teacher qualifications, training and level of confidence and their commitment to teaching; 3) learner factors and the school ethos, such as learners' proficiency in the language of teaching and learning; 4) ecology and management, such as the commitment by everybody to make the school work. The revised curriculum represented a paradigm shift from content-based teaching and learning to a more learner-centred approach where learners are active participants in the learning process. According to the participants, they experienced many challenges such as that the social studies content becomes more and difficult for each next grade - for which they had not been prepared adequately. Therefore, there is a need for updating the skills of teachers to be able to cope with the new curriculum demands.

Teachers' resistance to change

Change, according to Fullan (1998), is a complex and risky journey, as it involves several components, such as altering teachers' belief systems, behaviour and teaching approaches, which are difficult to control. Supporting this assertion, Mafora and Phorabatho (2013) assert that if implementation plans do not match the specific context of schools, curricular reforms are most likely to fail. They further maintain that knowledge, skills and attitude are essential for educational innovation and to enhance effective curriculum management. Accordingly, participants in this study had the following to say concerning the changes to the curriculum:

School W: P1 = The challenging part was just how topics were arranged, which makes it a bit difficult for learners, especially when a most challenging topic has to be taught first in the first term instead of the second term. My experience is that nothing has changed much but just the rearrangement of the topics.

SMT W= New topics are somehow lengthy and need extra classes (afternoons) to complete as terms are short.

It is clear from these findings that participants experienced challenges with regard to making sense of curriculum alignment. Therefore, it is important for curriculum developers to ensure constructive alignment of the curriculum (well-organized, consistent) and to make explicit the goals and methods of teaching and learning (obvious, visible).

Heavy workloads (Content and syllabus challenges)

Excessive teacher workload now represents the biggest threat to staff retention (Makewa & Ngussa, 2015). Participants in this study offered the following accounts:

School V: P1= Yes, time to teach the content, overloaded content, lack of teaching aids (teaching resources).

School X: P1 = It is impossible to finish the content on time and it forces the teacher to rush, and not do their job fully. Learners missed the stage of the grade 6 work, and this led to learners not knowing what they are taught in grade 7.

School X, SMT 2 = We have too much work, especially administrative. This wastes a lot of time for teaching.

School Y, P1 = Too much work

P3 = Yes. Time, the learners to adapt to the work.

As indicated by participants from Schools V, X, and Y, the content to be taught appeared to be extensive with only little time available for teaching and learning. This will make it difficult for effective implementation of the curriculum and difficult for the learners to grasp the taught curriculum, making it almost impossible for effective learning and, consequently, will compromise the successful implementation of the curriculum. The process of change which was introduced by policy makers created an enormous burden for teacher implementers who discovered that their skills and knowledge no longer matched the new demands of the revised curriculum. Therefore, there is a need to invest in technology, adopt policies that promote better work-life balance, and introduce a teaching assistant model in an attempt to reduce the burden of teacher workloads.

Challenges regarding resources and materials

Participants were asked to state resource-related challenges that they experienced when implementing the revised curriculum. Participants raised the concern that implementation was compromised by the lack of resources, most particularly the

shortage of textbooks. A recent study on curriculum implementation by Makeleni and Sethusha (2014), confirm that countries such as Brazil, Ghana, Guinea and the Philippines have shown improvement in learner performance due to the sufficient supply of textbooks. The participants commented as follows concerning textbooks:

School V: P3= We lack textbooks, and globes that may be used during lessons in determining locations of different continents, and also to show learners the lines of latitude and longitude.

SMT Y= Yes. Lack of textbooks.

According to the participants, there were also not enough textbooks for their learners, and learners ended up sharing textbooks. Participants, furthermore, argued that it was the responsibility of the Education Directorate to ensure that resources were distributed properly, because without proper distribution schools could experience difficulties in implementing the revised social studies curriculum effectively. In this study it was noted that the absence of enough teaching and assistive material, such as textbooks for learners, posed a serious challenge for effective teaching and learning. This lack of resources also affected the successful implementation of the revised social studies curriculum. According to Van der Nest (2012), sufficient facilities, such as classrooms, halls, libraries, laboratories and playing fields, serve as the main elements in implementing curricula successfully. Van der Nest (2012) further found that constraints, such as lack of workbooks, number of schools, classroom sizes and the condition of schools have an effect on the efficient implementation of curriculum change. Fullan (2007) raises the same issue, stating that government agencies must be aware of the necessity of and difficulties in implementing the curriculum without the appropriate

resources. As indicated by the participants' responses, most learners from the five participating schools were sharing textbooks. This greatly affected the teaching and their learning, and hindered the successful implementation of the curriculum. The shortage of teachers in schools also was an issue because teachers ended up teaching more than two grades and more than two subjects. This indicates that a shortage of teachers and the lack of learning and teaching support materials was an issue in the implementation of the curriculum.

Limited knowledge and understanding of the implementation of curricula

Rogan and Grayson's theory (2003) of curriculum implementation proposes that for effective implementation, schools need to have teachers who are qualified, motivated and competent, who accept innovation and are committed to teaching. Particularly, in this case, "teacher factors", as it seems, become a challenge to teachers who have limited knowledge and understanding of curriculum implementation as can be deduced from the following response by a participant, *Sometimes I struggle with the syllabus, some topics are difficult to teach, for example, evolution (School Y, SMT 2)*. The response by this participant shows that some teachers lack understanding of some topics, and this may cause problems in implementing the curriculum effectively.

Emerging New Technologies

The role of emerging technologies in educational settings is another challenge for curriculum implementation and instruction (Aydin, Ozfidan & Carothers, 2017). Social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn have become an integral part of the youth's daily lives. Furthermore, according to Badugela (2012), the advancement of educational technology is

altering our perceptions of how learning occurs, resulting in increasing government pressure and a move away from teacher-centred to learner-centred methods of instruction. However, the use of technology in Namibian schools has not grown to the expected level. Furthermore, there are disparities in how technology is used by teachers and learners of different generations. This has been defined as a difference between instructors who are "digital immigrants" and their pupils who are "digital natives" (Aydin, Ozfidan & Carothers, 2017).

Participants revealed that most teachers and learners did not have adequate skills in using technology in teaching and learning. *Availability of hardware and software for teaching and learning is also a challenge in Namibian public schools (School Y, P1)*. To close these gaps, this study suggests that government should invest more in educational technology infrastructure and teacher training so that teachers and learners are better prepared to utilise technology. As a starting point, schools could also implement "bring your own device" (BYOD) strategies for learners to bring their laptops, iPads and smartphones to class and use them for educational purposes. Encouraging learners to use their own devices with the purpose of improving learner involvement will lower government expenses on technology.

Support rendered to teachers when implementing the revised social studies curriculum

In the first construct of their curriculum implementation theory, Rogan and Grayson (2003) state that support from outside agencies focuses on the support given by organisations outside the school, for example, government departments, non-governmental organisations and teacher unions, as well as internal, school-based support mechanisms that work together with

the school to support innovation. The researchers asked the participants whether they had received any training relating to the implementation of the revised social studies curriculum. All three participants agreed that they did receive training, but they indicated that the training received was not sufficient for them as curriculum implementers. They also expressed concern that subject advisors, even though they were present during the training, were only casually involved as most of the training was conducted by teachers.

This study contends that the teacher is, without a question, the most crucial individual in the curriculum implementation process. Teachers are essential to any curriculum development endeavour because of their knowledge, experience, and abilities. Better teachers support better learning, because they are most knowledgeable about the practice of teaching and are responsible for introducing the curriculum in the classroom (Alsubaie, 2016). If the curriculum has been developed by another party, the teachers must be trained to learn and comprehend it. Furthermore, teachers need to be actively involved in the development of curricula. Teachers' thoughts and opinions, for example, should be included in the curriculum for effective implementation of such a curriculum.

An analysis by Badugela (2012) reveals that participation is a crucial source of legitimacy for policy decisions, especially in educational policy, in order for the curriculum to be implemented successfully. Badugela (2012) found that teachers were not involved in the decision to adopt a new curriculum in South Africa. Badugela also added that, even though teachers were called on to become involved in the elaboration and the implementation of the curriculum, the decision to proceed had already been made. Furthermore, participation sometimes is confused with consultation. As can be

deduced from the responses from both participants from School W, it is clear that rather than participation in the implementation of the curriculum, the actual decision to involve teachers at the last minute, was simply consultation as opposed to participation.

School W: P1= I have only attended one workshop and a cluster meeting regarding the revised Social Studies curriculum. I have learned how to tackle the most difficult topics from grade 4-7.

P3= A three halve-day workshop when the revised curriculum was out

Similarly, as noted by Angula (2015), the school management, advisory teachers and inspectors should manage the process of teaching and learning in the schools in accordance with the curriculum policy documents and other policies. Monitoring and supporting the implementation of the curriculum are among the roles of the school management, advisory teachers, and inspectors. Perhaps it would have been so much better, had the authorities conducted follow-up workshops for the social studies teachers to keep them abreast of any challenge that pertains to the implementation of the revised curriculum.

The study also revealed that schools needed much support, including financial support, either from the government, private sector or parents in order to implement the revised curriculum effectively. The government, in many instances, came through with this funding, but the study found that, in many cases, the government would be slow in the payment of grants to schools, resulting in delays in acquiring the necessary support materials. This hampered the prompt implementation of the revised curriculum. Financial assistance from private businesses to all schools could not be

guaranteed, because this depended on the financial performance of the different private companies. Similarly, some parents did not have money to support the education of their children. With the implementation of free education, the mindset of many parents towards financial support and contributions towards the upkeep of the schools changed, leaving this burden to the government alone. These funds, however, were required and necessary for purchasing learning and teaching support materials and organising educational excursions. It was also needed to acquire encouraging reading materials and weather instruments for real-life lesson presentations, as well as the setting up of weather stations for real-time learning. This became evident through the lack of textbooks and other necessary learning and teaching materials. The existence of such deficiencies and shortages can be seen in the following responses:

School X: P2= None have textbooks and atlas. Have attended in-service training. Cannot remember, it was way back, map work was good.

School Y: P3 = No in-service training attended.

School- Z: P1= No in-service training.

P2= We need support from the ministry seriously. I haven't attended any to be honest, was not at any training.

It can be deduced from the participants' responses that most of them had not attended a workshop to prepare them for the implementation of the revised curriculum, and those who had, attended only for a few days. This suggests that teachers need to be trained in such a way that they can develop their own resource materials; however, teachers need time to prepare and construct classroom resources. According to Badugela

(2012), the inadequate training of teachers and the lack of resources make it complicated for teachers to learn what is expected from them.

Teaching strategies employed by social studies teachers to mitigate challenges in the implementation of the revised curriculum

One of the profiles of Rogan and Grayson's (2003) curriculum implementation theory, focuses on teachers' classroom practices. In other words, it looks at what teachers do or are unable to do in the implementation process. This construct overlaps with the first two in that the ability of teachers to acquire and implement support shapes the profile of implementation. Although the participants overwhelmingly indicated that support from the relevant authorities was not forthcoming, they nevertheless practised innovation and developed strategies to mitigate some of the challenges they faced in implementing the revised social studies curriculum. The responses from the participants were as follows:

Co-teaching

Badugela (2012) define co-teaching as the partnering of a general education teacher or another specialist for the purpose of jointly delivering instruction to a diverse group of learners, including those with disabilities or other special needs, in a general education setting and in a way that flexibly and deliberately meets their learning needs.

School V: P1= If I had any problem, I always ask an experienced teacher in Social Studies teacher, and in his absence, I ask from the facilitator and teachers from other schools.

P3= Co-teaching in topics that are challenging.

Scaffolding instruction

Alsubaie (2016) points out that instructional scaffolding is a method in which a teacher provides supports to students' learning in order to help them master tasks. The teacher does this by building on the pupils' prior experiences and knowledge as they acquire new skills. According to Van de Pol, Volman, and Beishuizen (2012), scaffolding refers to temporary support that is adapted to a student's understanding, which is known to be effective for student learning.

School W: P1= By practising responsive teaching because some learners come from homes where none of their parents are working, and this hinders their learning progress. Scaffold instruction to grade level standard

Alsubaie (2016) indicates that scaffolding discussions can also promote learners' engagement and interactions, especially during discussions. Therefore, teachers in Namibian schools need to adopt scaffolding strategies with their learners to support every student by breaking learning up into chunks and providing a concrete structure for each.

CONCLUSION

The study found some success in the curriculum implementation efforts, which may be ascribed to the programme's clarity for implementers. However, we saw that there were problems with curriculum implementation in Ghana. The lack of alignment between curriculum designers' instructions and the actions of implementers seems to be a serious issue. The study found that the curriculum was not being implemented according to the designers'

specifications. Challenges identified in this study include: A lack of teaching and learning materials; classrooms that are overcrowded; a lack of teaching and preparation time; the difficulty level of the topic; lack of or insufficient training of managers for the transition to the new curriculum; teacher and student unpreparedness to embrace new teaching methods; teachers' workloads; new teaching methods and techniques; the quantity and quality of teachers; lack of in-service training and staff development strategies for instructors on new curriculum, and lack of managerial assistance.

Based on the findings and conclusions reached we recommend that curriculum developers and implementers in Namibia should have a common understanding of not merely the theoretical and conceptual foundations of curriculum implementation, but also the practical implications. The Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, and the National Institute for Educational Development (NIED) should devote resources, time, and commitment necessary to ensure successful implementation of the revised curriculum. Government must invest in teachers' skills development and updating technology infrastructure to effectively put the revised curriculum into practice. Furthermore, teachers are encouraged to be innovative in their lesson preparation and planning, taking into consideration the competencies that are to be taught and learned. School management must always provide leadership, guidance and support for the teachers in their departments by monitoring tasks, assessments and teaching and learning materials. Teachers must be adequately trained to implement the revised curriculum with confidence. It is also critical that school management should provide monitoring and assessment to help with curriculum implementation.

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