

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA



**EXPERIENCES OF PRE-SERVICE SOCIAL STUDIES
TEACHERS ON SUPPORTED TEACHING IN SCHOOLS (STS)
IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN THE EASTERN AND
GREATER ACCRA REGIONS OF GHANA**



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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA



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EDUCATION IN EASTERN AND GREATER ACCRA REGIONS OF GHANA**



**A thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the award of the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(Social Studies Education)**

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION
FACULTY OF LIBERAL AND SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

AUGUST, 2025

DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

I, Cynthia Anim, declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Supervisors' Declaration

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of the thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

Name: Professor George Kankam (Principal Supervisor)

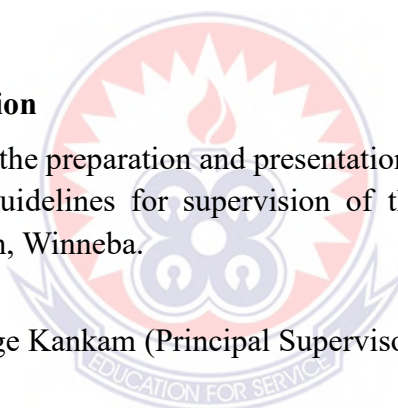
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Name: Professor Isaac Eshun (Co-Supervisor)

Signature: _____

Date: _____



DEDICATION

To the memory of my late grandmother, Obapanyin Mary Adwoa Werekoa, whose love and support have been a source of inspiration to me.



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To God alone be all the glory.

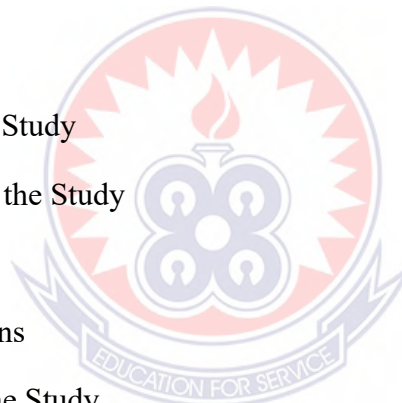
TABLE OF CONTENTS

| Contents | Page |
|---|-------------|
| DECLARATION | iii |
| DEDICATION | iv |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | v |
| TABLE OF CONTENTS | vi |
| LIST OF TABLES | x |
| LIST OF FIGURES | xi |
| ABSTRACT | xii |
| | |
| CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| 1.1 Background to the Study | 1 |
| 1.2 Statement of the Problem | 6 |
| 1.3 Purpose of the Study | 9 |
| 1.4 Research Objectives | 9 |
| 1.5 Research Questions | 9 |
| 1.6 Significance of the Study | 10 |
| 1.8 Delimitation of the Study | 11 |
| 1.9 Operational Definition of Terms and Acronyms | 11 |
| 1.10 Organisation of the Study | 14 |
| | |
| CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW | 16 |
| 2.0 Introduction | 16 |
| 2.1 Theoretical Review | 16 |
| 2.2 History of Social Studies | 28 |
| 2.3 Scope of Social Studies Education | 35 |
| 2.4 Change and Continuity in Social Studies | 37 |
| 2.5 Benefits of Social Studies Education Among Pre-service Teachers | 40 |

| | | |
|------|---|----|
| 2.6 | Role of Pre-service Teachers in Implementing Social Studies Instruction | 41 |
| 2.7 | Curriculum Development in Social Studies | 45 |
| 2.8 | Assessment and Evaluation in Social Studies | 46 |
| 2.9 | Integration of Technology in Social Studies Education | 48 |
| 2.10 | Cultural Responsiveness in Social Studies Education | 49 |
| 2.11 | Global Perspectives in Social Studies Education | 50 |
| 2.12 | Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving in Social Studies | 52 |
| 2.13 | Teacher Professional Development in Social Studies | 53 |
| 2.14 | Community Engagement and Social Studies Education | 55 |
| 2.15 | Social Studies Education and Civic Engagement | 56 |
| 2.16 | Future Directions in Social Studies Education | 58 |
| 2.17 | Teacher Education in Ghana | 60 |
| 2.18 | Theoretical-Practical Gap | 66 |
| 2.19 | History of Supported Teaching in School Programme in Teacher Education Globally | 68 |
| 2.20 | History of Colleges of Education in Ghana | 71 |
| 2.21 | Historical Development of Teacher Training in Ghana | 72 |
| 2.22 | Reforms and Upgrading of Teacher Training Colleges (1990s - Present) | 74 |
| 2.23 | The Need for 21st-Century Education and Training of Teachers | 75 |
| 2.24 | The Implications of 21st-Century Education for Students | 77 |
| 2.25 | History of Teacher Internship Programmes | 80 |
| 2.26 | History of Supported Teaching in School Programme in Teacher Education in Ghana | 83 |
| 2.27 | The Scope of Supported Teaching in Schools | 85 |
| 2.28 | Concept of Supported Teaching in Schools (STS) | 89 |
| 2.29 | The Benefits of Supported Teaching in Schools to Pre-Service Teachers | 91 |
| 2.30 | Prospects of Supported Teaching in School (STS) Programme in Teacher Education | 94 |

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|-----|
| 2.31 | Implications for the STS Programme | 98 |
| 2.32 | Challenges of Supported Teaching in School (STS) Programme in Teacher Education | 102 |
| 2.33 | The Role of Pre-Service Teachers in STS Implementation | 109 |
| 2.34 | Ways of Enhancing the Supported Teaching in Schools (STS) Programme in Ghana | 110 |
| 2.35 | Challenges Faced by Student Teachers During Internship | 117 |
| 2.36 | Quality of Teacher Education Programmes | 121 |
| 2.37 | Theoretical-Practical Gap | 123 |
| 2.38 | Resource Constraints in Colleges of Education | 123 |
| 2.39 | Teacher Motivation and Retention | 124 |
| 2.40 | Conceptual Framework | 125 |
| 2.41 | Summary of Literature Review | 125 |
| CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY | | 127 |
| 3.0 | Introduction | 127 |
| 3.1 | Philosophical Underpinning | 127 |
| 3.2 | Research Approach | 129 |
| 3.3 | Research Design | 130 |
| 3.4 | Population of the Study | 132 |
| 3.5 | Sample and Sampling Procedures | 133 |
| 3.6 | Data Collection Instruments | 134 |
| 3.7 | Pre-testing of Instruments | 137 |
| 3.8 | Data Collection Procedures | 143 |
| 3.9 | Data Analysis Procedures | 145 |
| 3.9 | Ethical Considerations | 147 |
| 3.10 | Summary | 150 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION | 151 |
| 4.0 Introduction | 151 |
| 4.1 Response Rate | 151 |
| 4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents | 151 |
| 4.3 Research Questions raised for the Quantitative aspect of the study | 153 |
| 4.4 Research Question Two | 162 |
| 4.5 Research Question Three | 167 |
| 4.6 Research Question Four | 175 |
| 4.7 Discussions of Findings | 182 |
| CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS | 187 |
| 5.0 Introduction | 187 |
| 5.1 Summary of the Study | 187 |
| 5.2 Key Findings of the Study | 190 |
| 5.3 Conclusions | 192 |
| 5.4 Recommendations | 194 |
| 5.5 Limitations of the Study | 197 |
| 5.6 Suggestions for Further Studies | 197 |
| REFERENCES | 199 |
| APPENDICES | 225 |



LIST OF TABLES

| Table | Page |
|---|-------------|
| 4.1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents | 152 |
| 4.2: Perspectives on Pre-service Social Studies Teachers on STS | 153 |
| 4.3: Benefits of assessment support on STS Programme | 162 |
| 4.4: Descriptive Statistics on the Prospects of the STS Programme | 168 |
| 4.5: Descriptive Statistics on the Challenges Confronting the STS Programme | 176 |



LIST OF FIGURES

| Figure | | Page |
|---------------|--|-------------|
| 1: | Danielson's Framework for Professional Development (Danielson, 1996) | 17 |
| 2: | Conceptual Framework for Supported Teaching in Schools | 125 |



ABSTRACT

This study explored the perspectives and lived experiences of pre-service Social Studies teachers regarding the Supported Teaching in School (STS) programme implemented in Colleges of Education in Ghana's Eastern and Greater Accra Regions. Based on Danielson's (1996) Framework for Professional Development, it used a pragmatist research paradigm with a sequential explanatory mixed-methods approach to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. The sample for the quantitative phase included 487 participants selected through census sampling, while 15 participants were chosen via convenience sampling for the qualitative phase. Out of 487 questionnaires distributed, 397 were returned and analysed, resulting in an 81.5% response rate. Data collection involved questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Quantitative analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) with SPSS version 28, while qualitative data were analysed thematically. Results indicated that pre-service Social Studies teachers experienced the STS programme differently. Content and pedagogical application were most prominent, whereas resource utilisation was less so. The programme offered benefits such as gaining professional knowledge, vocational satisfaction, learning and professional growth, and socio-emotional gains. The study also identified potential advantages, including serving as a model for reforming teacher education in Ghana, reducing new teachers' attrition due to unpreparedness, promoting reflective practice, and influencing policy decisions on teacher education structure and content. It aligns with global trends emphasising practice-based experiences. Challenges identified included geographical and cultural barriers; lack of teaching aids; negative attitudes and expectations; difficulties in assessing and evaluating the programme; limited understanding of the programme; and weak mentor-mentee relationships. Based on these findings, it is recommended that the Colleges of Education in these regions collaborate with teacher education experts to develop professional development and refresher training programs on the STS. Such initiatives are essential to sustain, enhance, and strengthen the programme's various facets as outlined in the study.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Formal education is widely recognised as a key driver of personal development and national social, economic, and political advancement. Scholars argue that education equips individuals with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to contribute meaningfully to societal development and to adapt to the demands of rapidly changing societies (Amajuoyi, 2022; Assumpta & Chimezie-Mathew, 2022). Ashun (2022) affirms that, globally, formal education has become the central pillar around which development revolves, making it a critical investment for national progress. Across Africa, similar views prevail, with education widely regarded as a catalyst for poverty reduction, social cohesion, and sustainable development, particularly in low- and middle-income countries striving to strengthen human capital. Consequently, education is regarded as a vital asset to both individuals and countries, with the expectation that sustained investment will yield improved development outcomes (Hoque et al., 2020).

In Ghana, education is constitutionally recognised as a fundamental human right. Agbenyega (2007) notes that the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana guarantees access to education for all citizens. In line with this mandate, Ghana, like many other African countries, has pursued policy initiatives aimed at expanding access to basic education in order to compete in the global knowledge-based economy. Internationally, initiatives such as Education for All (EFA), launched in Jomtien in 1990, and the Millennium Development Goal on education (MDG 2) emphasised universal access to primary education

(UNESCO, 2006). Across Africa, countries such as Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, and Tanzania similarly aligned their education reforms with these global frameworks, prioritising universal basic education. Locally, Ghana has implemented several reforms since independence, including the Accelerated Development Plan (ADP), which abolished tuition fees to improve access to basic education, and more recent interventions such as the capitation grant, school feeding programme, and the provision of free exercise books and uniforms (Akyeampong et al., 2007).

While these access-oriented policies have succeeded in increasing enrolment, concerns have been raised about their implications for educational quality. Buregeya (2011) observes that rapid expansion in access has often been accompanied by challenges such as overcrowded classrooms and declining academic performance. Similar challenges have been documented in several African education systems, where increased enrolment has placed pressure on infrastructure, teaching personnel, and learning resources. Staff (2011) cautions that efforts to achieve universal access should not compromise other critical quality indicators. These continental concerns have redirected attention towards the quality of teaching as a key determinant of learning outcomes.

Teachers are widely acknowledged as the most critical agents in the implementation of educational reforms. Warman et al. (2021) emphasise that teachers translate curriculum intentions into classroom practice through lesson planning, instructional delivery, and learner engagement. Donkor and Banki (2017) further argue that the effectiveness of educational reforms largely depends on the quality and preparedness of teachers. Across African contexts,

studies consistently show that teacher quality remains one of the strongest predictors of student achievement, particularly in resource-constrained environments. As such, teacher effectiveness has become a key indicator for assessing the success of educational systems worldwide, including across the African continent (Assumpta & Chimezie-Mathew, 2022). This recognition underscores the need for robust teacher preparation programmes that adequately equip teachers with both theoretical knowledge and practical competence.

In response, scholars highlight the importance of preservice teacher education in developing competent, reflective, and professionally grounded teachers. Pre-service teacher training institutions play a crucial role in shaping prospective teachers by providing them with the pedagogical knowledge, professional values, and practical skills required for effective classroom practice (UNESCO, 2022; Orland-Barak & Wang, 2020). Across Africa, countries have increasingly restructured initial teacher education programmes to strengthen school-based training and align teacher preparation with competency-based curricula. Jordan et al. (2018) argue that initial teacher education programmes are fundamental to producing teachers who demonstrate high levels of professionalism, commitment, and instructional competence. Central to these programmes is the practical component, which enables preservice teachers to apply theory to real classroom contexts and to develop confidence and professional identity (Camp, 2011; Maranan, 2017).

In Ghana, the Supported Teaching in Schools (STS) programme was introduced as a core practical component of the new four-year Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) curriculum. The STS programme aligns with broader African trends in

teacher education that emphasise extended, school-based practicum models, similar to teaching practice structures implemented in countries such as South Africa, Uganda, and Kenya. The STS programme is designed to align preservice teacher preparation with the National Teachers' Standards (NTS) by providing extended school-based experiences throughout the training period. According to T-TEL (2018), the programme allows preservice teachers to observe, plan, teach, and collaborate with mentors and peers in diverse school settings, thereby enhancing their understanding of teaching and learning processes. The Ministry of Education (MOE, 2017) notes that STS aims to support preservice teachers in acquiring professional values, attitudes, knowledge, and practices expected of beginning teachers. Under the programme, preservice teachers are expected to spend approximately 30 per cent of their training in schools, with clearly defined competencies to be achieved at each stage.

Research generally suggests that school-based teaching practice programmes across Africa contribute significantly to the professional development of preservice teachers. Studies indicate that such programmes support the integration of theory and practice, improve pedagogical skills, and enhance classroom management and lesson planning competencies (Babaoglu, 2021; Grima-Farrell, 2015). Teaching practice has also been associated with the development of professional identity, influencing preservice teachers' beliefs, decision-making, and long-term commitment to the profession (Hong et al., 2017; Thomas & Beauchamp, 2007). These findings position STS within a broader continental effort to strengthen teacher preparedness through practice-based learning.

However, evidence on the impact of field-based experiences is not entirely consistent. Some studies from both Ghana and other African contexts report limited or insignificant effects of teaching practice on preservice teachers' performance, attitudes, and self-concept (Al-Qirim et al., 2017; Bacher-Hicks et al., 2014). Al Mohsem (2022) similarly notes that the influence of field experience on preservice teacher development is not uniformly emphasised across contexts. These mixed findings highlight the importance of examining teaching practice programmes within specific national, institutional, and subject-based contexts.

In addition, the effective implementation of teaching practice programmes across African teacher education systems is often constrained by similar challenges. Studies have identified issues such as inadequate resources, heavy mentor workload, limited administrative support, poor orientation, language barriers, and weak collaboration between training institutions and host schools as major obstacles (Aldabbus, 2018; Amankwah et al., 2017; Mahmood & Iqbal, 2018). Comparable challenges, including limited instructional materials, learner discipline issues, and reluctance of some schools to accept preservice teachers, have been reported in countries across sub-Saharan Africa (Nkambule & Mukeredzi, 2017; Nketsia et al., 2021). These challenges may limit the extent to which preservice teachers fully benefit from school-based training programmes such as STS.

Although studies on the STS programme have been conducted in Ghana (Coffie et al., 2021; Danquah et al., 2020), most have examined the programme in general terms without focusing on specific subject specialisations.

Consequently, little is known about the experiences of preservice Social Studies teachers within the STS framework. Situating Ghana's experience within broader African trends in teacher education highlights both shared challenges and contextual differences, underscoring the need for subject-specific and context-sensitive research. Given the mixed evidence in the literature and the challenges associated with teaching practice across the continent, this study therefore sought to provide empirical evidence from Colleges of Education in the Eastern and Greater Accra Regions of Ghana to contribute to policy, practice, and the improvement of preservice teacher education.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Teacher education plays a crucial role in equipping pre-service teachers with the necessary pedagogical knowledge, skills and professional attitudes essential for effective teaching and learning (Hoque et al., 2020). In Ghana, teacher education reforms have prioritised the development of competent and innovative educators through various practical training initiatives, one of which is the Supported Teaching in Schools (STS) programme (Danquah et al., 2021). According to the Transforming Teaching, Education & Learning (T-TEL) (2018), the STS programme is an integral part of the four-year Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) curriculum and was designed to enhance pre-service teachers' classroom experiences by bridging the gap between theory and practice through mentorship, collaboration and hands-on teaching opportunities. STS enables pre-service teachers to familiarise themselves with real classroom situations, refine their teaching strategies and develop professional confidence (T-TEL, 2018). While this initiative aims to improve teaching effectiveness and instructional delivery, its implementation and impact

on pre-service Social Studies teachers in Colleges of Education in Ghana remain underexplored.

Despite its potential advantages, the STS programme faces several challenges that may impede the professional development of pre-service teachers. Researchers have identified issues such as inadequate mentorship, limited teaching resources, insufficient administrative support, language barriers and a reluctance among some schools to host pre-service teachers for training (Aldabbus, 2018; Amakwah et al., 2017; Mahmood & Iqbal, 2018). These factors hinder pre-service teachers from effectively applying theoretical knowledge in practical settings, ultimately restricting their pedagogical growth. Furthermore, some studies have indicated that field experiences like STS do not necessarily lead to enhanced pedagogical competence or the development of professional identity among pre-service teachers (Al-Qirim et al., 2017; Bacher-Hicks et al., 2014). This raises concerns regarding the adequacy of the STS programme in equipping Social Studies teachers with the necessary exposure to thrive in diverse classroom environments.

Research on teacher education in Ghana has offered valuable insights into the overall implementation of the STS programme. However, there has been limited focus on subject-specific experiences, particularly within the Social Studies discipline (Coffie, Doe, & Tabi, 2021). The teaching of Social Studies necessitates an interactive and multidisciplinary approach, requiring pre-service teachers to cultivate skills in critical thinking, classroom management and student engagement (Ariza-Quinozes et al., 2021). Nonetheless, empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of the STS programme in equipping Social

Studies teachers to fulfil these demands is lacking. In the absence of targeted interventions, Social Studies teachers may find it challenging to implement inquiry-based and participatory teaching strategies, which are crucial for promoting critical analysis and civic consciousness among learners.

A notable gap in the existing literature pertains to the degree to which the Student Teaching and Supervision (STS) program aligns with the National Teacher Standards (NTS) in promoting professional growth among pre-service Social Studies teachers. Although the STS program is designed to provide sustained, practical engagement in schools, research on its effectiveness in preparing Social Studies teachers for the evolving educational landscape of Ghana remains limited (Nketsia et al., 2021). Furthermore, the relationship between mentorship effectiveness and the ability of pre-service teachers to transition into confident and competent educators has not been thoroughly examined. The quality of mentorship and supervision during STS placements can play a crucial role in shaping the learning experiences of pre-service teachers. However, challenges such as inadequate mentor training, inconsistencies in feedback mechanisms and insufficient collaboration between Colleges of Education and partner schools have been identified as barriers to effective teacher preparation (Nadeem et al., 2021; Boudersa, 2016).

In light of these gaps identified above, this study aims to explore the experiences, benefits and challenges of the STS programme among pre-service Social Studies teachers in Colleges of Education in Ghana. It will investigate how these teachers navigate the STS programme, the pedagogical competencies they acquire and the systemic constraints they face.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the views and experiences of pre-service Social Studies teachers on the Supported Teaching in Schools (STS) programme in Colleges of Education in the Eastern and Greater Accra Regions of Ghana.

1.4 Research Objectives

The following research objectives guided the study:

1. To explore the perspectives of pre-service Social Studies teachers on the Supported Teaching in Schools (STS) programme.
2. To investigate the views of pre-service Social Studies teachers on the benefits of assessment and support by mentors in enhancing their professional development through the (STS) programme.
3. To explore the views of pre-service Social Studies teachers on the prospects of the Supported Teaching in Schools (STS) programme.
4. To assess the challenges encountered by pre-service Social Studies teachers during the Supported Teaching in Schools (STS) programme.

1.5 Research Questions

In line with the objectives, the following research questions guided the study:

1. How do pre-service Social Studies teachers perceive Supported Teaching in Schools (STS) programme?
2. What are the views of pre-service Social Studies teachers on the benefits of assessment and support by mentors in enhancing their professional development through the STS programme?

3. What are the views of pre-service Social Studies teachers on the prospects of the Supported Teaching in Schools (STS) programme?
4. What challenges are encountered by pre-service Social Studies teachers during the Supported Teaching in Schools (STS) programme?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The outcome of the study would have both theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, it is hoped that the results of the study would help in obtaining contextual data to shed more light on the theories underlying the concept of the Supported Teaching in Schools (STS) programme, thereby expanding the frontiers of knowledge in the field, especially from the context of Colleges of Education. This would help to either confirm or disconfirm the applicability of prevailing theories on Supported Teaching in Schools (STS) programmes within the context of Colleges of Education.

Besides, it is envisaged that the findings of the study would be beneficial to various stakeholders in education. Firstly, the findings of this study would serve as a reference document for teacher training institutions to guide them to understand and practice the effective Supported Teaching in Schools (STS) programme in their various institutions. Secondly, the findings of the study would be beneficial to the Ghana Education Service to determine the experiences of preservice teachers on the effective implementation of Supported Teaching in Schools (STS) programmes in their various institutions. Thirdly, the study would benefit the teacher training institutions to understand and appreciate the need for the Supported Teaching in Schools (STS) programme and its impact on preservice teachers' training. Lastly, the findings of the study

would benefit teacher-training institutions because it would expand knowledge of the experiences, benefits, prospects and challenges associated with the Supported Teaching in Schools (STS) programme.

1.8 Delimitation of the Study

The study was delimited to the pre-service Social Studies teachers in Colleges of Education within the Eastern and Greater Accra Regions of Ghana. The reason for the selection of the Eastern and Greater Accra Zone was because of the cosmopolitan nature (peri-urban) of the regions, and also the fact that they are the regions that are populated with social studies pre-service teachers. Scientifically, research in this area was also dominated by colleges within the other four zones, hence the choice of Eastern and Greater Accra. **The** scope of the study involved their experiences regarding the Supported Training in Schools programme, which has been a crucial component of the Standards-Based Curriculum. Specifically, the study was delimited to uncover the experiences of preservice teachers in the Supported Teaching in Schools (STS) programme. Specifically, it discusses their experiences on the benefits, prospects and challenges associated with the practice of the Supported Teaching in Schools (STS) programme. This study was conducted during the 2023-2024 academic year because that was the year the researcher collected data for the study; therefore, the views of the respondents before this period did not constitute the focus of this study. Data was collected once to provide a snapshot of the variables outlined in the study.

1.9 Operational Definition of Terms and Acronyms

Definition of Key Concepts

For this study, the following operational definitions have been used:

Supported Teaching in Schools (STS): A structured, school-based component of teacher education designed to provide pre-service teachers with practical teaching experiences under mentorship.

Lived Experiences: The personal and subjective experiences of individuals, often explored through qualitative research to understand their meaning and impact.

Pre-service Teachers: Individuals enrolled in teacher training programs who have not yet obtained full teaching certification but are undergoing practical training.

Teacher Education in Ghana: The historical and contemporary processes of training educators in Ghana, including policy reforms and curriculum development.

Colleges of Education: Refers to an academic institution that offers educational courses to would-be teachers at the diploma and bachelor of education level, either through regular or distance learning modes.

Social Studies: Is an academic discipline that explores human relationships, societies, and the way people interact with their environment. It combines various fields like history, geography, political science, sociology, economics, and anthropology to provide a comprehensive understanding of cultural, social, and political systems. Essentially, Social Studies help us understand the past, analyse the present, and plan for the future in a connected and informed way.

Social Studies Teachers: Educators who specialise in teaching Social Studies, which typically includes history, geography, civics, and other social sciences.

Ghana: Ghana is a country located in sub-Saharan Africa, specifically, West Africa. The country currently has 16 Administrative Regions with Accra as the Capital. It is bounded to the North by Burkina Faso, East by the Republic of

Togo, and West by the Ivory Coast and South by the Gulf of Guinea. The farthest point of Ghana in the north is marked by a latitude of 11.5° N. The country covers an area of 238,305 km (GSS 2010).

Self-Efficacy: A teacher's belief in their ability to effectively manage a classroom and deliver lessons, influencing teaching performance and student engagement.

Reflective Practice: The process by which teachers critically analyse their teaching experiences to improve instructional methods and professional development.

Mentorship in Teacher Education: A support system in which experienced teachers guide pre-service teachers in instructional techniques, classroom management, and professional growth.

Teacher Education in Ghana: The historical and contemporary processes of training educators in Ghana, including policy reforms and curriculum development.

21st Century Teacher Education: Educational reforms aimed at equipping teachers with modern pedagogical strategies, digital literacy, and adaptive teaching methods.

Teacher Motivation and Retention: Factors influencing teachers' job satisfaction and long-term commitment to the profession, including incentives, working conditions, and career progression.

Qualitative vs. Quantitative Research in Education: Two research methodologies, where qualitative research explores in-depth perspectives through interviews and observations, while quantitative research analyses numerical data to identify trends and patterns.

Census Sampling: A research technique involving the selection of an entire population for a study to ensure comprehensive data collection and representation.

Convenience Sampling: A non-random sampling method where participants are selected based on availability and accessibility, commonly used in qualitative research.

Constructive Feedback: The process of providing meaningful, actionable insights to pre-service teachers to enhance their teaching skills and professional growth.

1.10 Organisation of the Study

The study was organised into five chapters. Chapter One serves as the introduction and background to the study, and Chapter Two presents a review of the related literature. Here, relevant theoretical and empirical literature were reviewed to throw more light on the variables under study and to identify gaps that the current study sought to fill. It examined concepts such as the meaning of the Supported Teaching in Schools programme, its benefits, prospects, and challenges affecting its smooth implementation, using literature from books and other studies related to the topic. Chapter Three describes the methodology used in the study. It discussed issues relating to the research paradigm, research approach, research design, population, sample, and sampling procedures, as well as methods of data collection and data analysis. It also touched on instruments used in data collection, their validity and reliability, and the techniques used in analysing the data. Ethical issues were also discussed. Chapter Four presented the data analysis and discussion of the findings based on the research questions and hypotheses. Finally, Chapter Five provides the

summary of the study, the implications of the findings, the conclusions drawn, and the recommendations made based on the findings of the study, and suggestions for further studies to be conducted.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the literature review of scholarly materials associated with the topic under review. The review of literature is organised under three main themes. The first theme dwells on the theoretical framework of the study as well as an explanation of concepts and theories relevant to supported teaching in schools. The second theme delves into the empirical review of previous studies about the variables contained in the study. Lastly, the chapter discusses the conceptual framework of the study. The chapter ends with a summary.

2.1 Theoretical Review

This section discusses the study's theoretical perspectives. These include Danielson's Framework for Teaching, Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, and Dewey's 1963 Pragmatic Theory of Experience.

2.1.1 Danielson's Framework for Professional Development

Danielson's Framework for Teaching (FFT) is widely acknowledged as a comprehensive model for evaluating and enhancing teaching practices (Danielson, 1996). The framework outlines the professional responsibilities and competencies teachers must possess, promoting professional growth across four key domains: Planning and Preparation, The Classroom Environment, Instruction and Professional Responsibilities (Danielson, 1996). Supported Teaching in Schools (STS) is a vital element of teacher preparation programs, providing pre-service teachers with mentorship, practice-based training and formative assessments to strengthen their pedagogical skills (Vygotsky, 1978).

Danielson's (1996) framework provides a structured approach to professional teaching practice. Using the framework to assess the lived experiences of the pre-service teachers on the STS programme provides an evaluation of what is being done. The adapted Danielson's (1996) framework is indicated below in Figure 1:

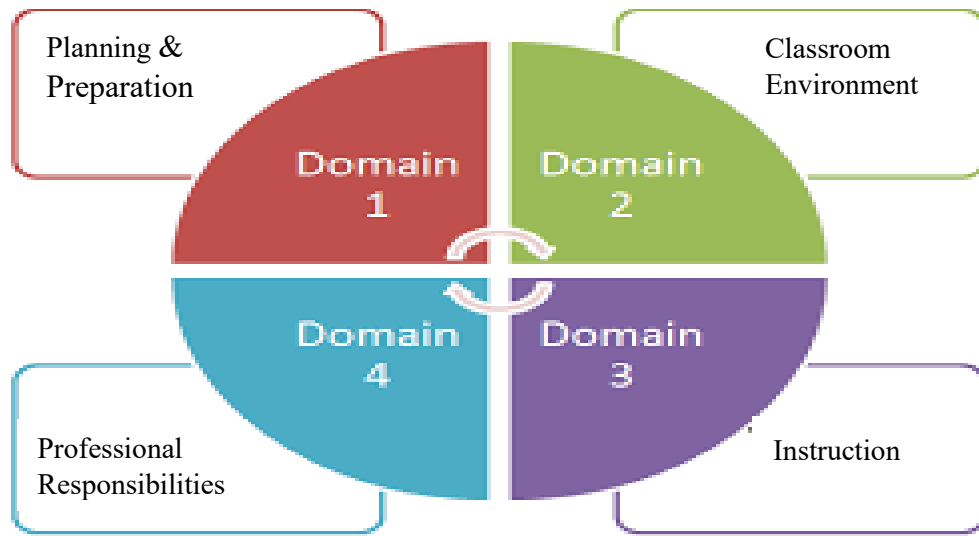


Figure 1: Danielson's Framework for Professional Development (Danielson, 1996)

The framework comprises four major domains, each with specific components:

2.1.1.1 Planning and Preparation

This domain highlights the importance of how teachers organise their lessons before entering the classroom. According to Danielson's (1996) framework, planning and preparation encompass a deep understanding of subject content, awareness of students' backgrounds, establishment of instructional goals, selection of appropriate teaching materials and design of effective assessments. This domain requires teachers to demonstrate knowledge of content, students, instructional objectives, available resources, coherent instruction and assessment strategies (Danielson, 1996). Within the STS context, pre-service

teachers develop lesson plans under the guidance of mentor teachers, ensuring alignment with curriculum standards and addressing students' learning needs (Ball & Forzani, 2009). Research indicates that structured lesson planning in STS enhances pedagogical reasoning and fosters the ability to adapt teaching strategies according to student diversity (Grossman et al., 2009). Danielson's planning components could be linked to STS, because pre-service teachers develop expertise in creating meaningful learning experiences, utilising differentiated instruction and applying formative assessments to guide their teaching (Shulman, 1987).

2.1.1.2 The Classroom Environment

The Classroom Environment emphasises the significance of cultivating a positive climate within educational settings. This involves fostering respectful relationships, setting high expectations, managing classroom procedures effectively, maintaining discipline and ensuring a safe and engaging learning space (Danielson, 1996). In the context of Student Teaching Schools (STS), pre-service teachers learn to create an environment that enhances student engagement, discipline and motivation. Research indicates that novice teachers often face challenges with classroom management, making STS a critical phase for developing these essential competencies (Marzano et al., 2003).

Mentorship during STS is crucial in guiding pre-service teachers through the complexities of real-world classroom challenges. Experienced mentors demonstrate effective behaviour management strategies, assist teachers in implementing culturally responsive practices and provide constructive feedback to enhance classroom interactions (Jones & Jones, 2018). Mirroring Danielson's

framework within STS, pre-service teachers acquire practical experience in establishing a supportive learning atmosphere while addressing student diversity and promoting inclusive education (Tomlinson, 2014).

2.1.1.3 Instructional Practices and Student Engagement

This domain pertains to the fundamental process of teaching. It encompasses clear communication, the use of thought-provoking questions, active student engagement, effective utilisation of teaching resources and constructive feedback to support learning progress. Effective instruction is central to Danielson's Domain 3, which includes clear communication, questioning techniques, student engagement and assessment (Danielson, 1996). STS provides pre-service teachers with a valuable opportunity to refine their instructional methods, experiment with various pedagogical strategies and receive constructive feedback from mentors.

Empirical studies demonstrate that incorporating active learning strategies, such as collaborative learning and inquiry-based instruction, significantly enhances pre-service teachers' ability to engage students in meaningful ways (Bransford et al., 2000). The iterative nature of STS allows teachers to assess their instructional effectiveness, adjust their approaches and develop professional competencies in line with Danielson's instructional components (Hattie, 2009).

2.1.1.4 Professional Responsibilities

The final domain of Danielson's framework emphasises the importance of professional growth, collaboration and ethical practice. This includes reflecting on teaching methods, maintaining accurate student records, collaborating with colleagues, engaging with families, pursuing continuous professional

development and upholding ethical standards. In the context of STS, pre-service teachers participate in reflective practice, self-assessment and collegial discussions to enhance their teaching effectiveness (Zeichner & Liston, 2013). The mentorship structure within STS aligns with Danielson's focus on professional learning communities, promoting ongoing improvement through peer collaboration and constructive feedback (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

An expanding body of research indicates that reflective journaling, action research and coaching conversations significantly contribute to the professional development of novice teachers (Schön, 1983). In STS, teacher educators help pre-service teachers cultivate lifelong learning habits, ethical teaching practices and a steadfast commitment to student success (Feiman-Nemser, 2001).

2.1.1.5 Strengths and Criticisms of Danielson's Framework

Danielson's framework has garnered acclaim for its comprehensive approach, providing a structured method for teacher evaluation and professional development. Research indicates that this framework enhances instructional effectiveness by establishing clear performance criteria, promoting reflective practice and fostering professional collaboration (Darling-Hammond, 2017). It also encourages consistency in teacher evaluations, mitigating bias through the use of standardised performance indicators (Stronge, 2018). Furthermore, the framework's focus on student engagement, differentiation and assessment renders it adaptable to various educational settings. Numerous school districts and teacher preparation programs have successfully incorporated the framework to improve teacher competency and student outcomes (Goe et al., 2008).

However, despite its advantages, some scholars have criticised Danielson's framework for being overly prescriptive, which could constrain teacher creativity and autonomy (Hallinger, 2011). Certain educators contend that the framework's rigid evaluation criteria fail to fully capture the complexity inherent in teaching, especially within diverse and innovative classrooms (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). Additionally, critics argue that the framework's emphasis on standardised assessments may unintentionally pressure teachers to prioritise measurable outcomes over holistic student development (Ravitch, 2020). Others question whether the framework adequately considers contextual factors, such as socioeconomic disparities and cultural influences, that shape teaching and learning experiences (Milner, 2010).

2.1.2 Social Cognitive Theory and Support Teaching in Schools: Learning through Observation and Modelling

STS offers pre-service teachers the chance to observe experienced educators in their teaching environment. According to Sociocultural Theory (SCT), observing skilled teachers enables novice educators to grasp effective instructional strategies, classroom management techniques and methods for engaging students (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Research indicates that pre-service teachers who engage in observation and subsequently apply these strategies in their practice cultivate more effective teaching behaviours (Lortie, 1975).

Developing Self-Efficacy in Teaching

Self-efficacy is essential for a teacher's ability to effectively manage classrooms and deliver lessons (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). In the Support Teaching Service (STS), pre-service teachers cultivate confidence through guided teaching experiences, constructive feedback and mentorship from seasoned educators. Research shows that teachers with higher self-efficacy tend to be more adaptable and resilient in overcoming challenges within the classroom (Goddard et al., 2004).

The Role of Feedback and Reflection

STS encourages self-reflection and feedback, which are essential components of SCT. Constructive feedback from mentors helps pre-service teachers refine their teaching methods and build confidence (Zeichner & Liston, 2013). Reflection enables teachers to assess their strengths and areas for improvement, reinforcing learning through experience.

Motivation and Continuous Improvement

Studies on SCT indicate that motivation plays a significant role in shaping learning outcomes. In the context of STS, pre-service teachers cultivate their motivation through mastery experiences, support from mentors and the observation of effective teaching practices. Teachers who achieve incremental success in their practice are more inclined to persist in enhancing and refining their instructional techniques (Schunk & Pajares, 2002).

Strengths and Criticisms of Social Cognitive Theory

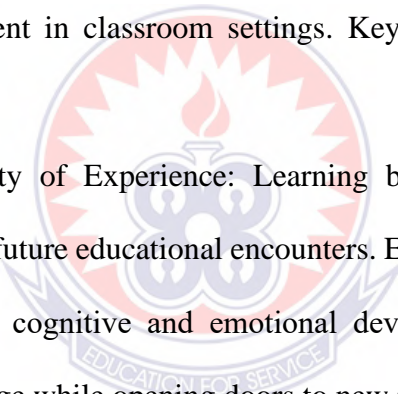
SCT provides a strong foundation for understanding learning in teacher education. It highlights the importance of role models, practice and self-belief in developing teaching skills (Bandura, 1997). The theory is widely applicable in education, as it explains how teachers learn from their environment, adapt to challenges and grow professionally (Darling-Hammond, 2017).

Additionally, SCT aligns with modern teaching practices that emphasise collaboration, mentorship and experiential learning. It recognises that learning is not only an individual process but also influenced by interactions with others, making it relevant to STS programs (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Despite its strengths, SCT has been criticised for focusing too much on external influences and underestimating individual differences in learning styles (Zimmerman, 2000). Critics argue that while modelling and observation are important, intrinsic motivation and personal experiences also shape learning outcomes (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Furthermore, SCT assumes that all learners will benefit equally from observational learning, but research suggests that different people require varied instructional approaches (Ormrod, 2014). Another limitation is that SCT does not fully address emotional factors that influence learning, such as anxiety or stress, which are common in teaching environments (Pajares, 1996).

2.1.3 Pragmatic Theory of Experience (Dewey, 1963)

John Dewey's Pragmatic Theory of Experience, initially introduced in his early works and later expanded upon in 1963, emphasises the importance of learning through real-world interactions. According to Dewey (1963), education is most

effective when learners actively engage with their environment, deriving meaning from experiences that link theory to practice. He regarded experience as the cornerstone of learning, suggesting that knowledge is not simply received but is actively constructed through these interactions. The learning process involves continuous cycles of action and reflection, during which individuals refine their understanding based on practical engagement and critical thinking. This theory has profoundly influenced modern educational practices, championing an interactive learning process where knowledge is actively built rather than passively absorbed. This aligns with STS, which provides pre-service teachers with hands-on experience, allowing them to learn through direct engagement in classroom settings. Key principles of Dewey's theory (1963) include:

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- i. **Continuity of Experience:** Learning builds upon prior experiences, shaping future educational encounters. Each experience plays a role in a learner's cognitive and emotional development, reinforcing existing knowledge while opening doors to new insights.
 - ii. **Interaction:** Learning occurs as individuals engage with their environment, shaping their understanding through reflection and practice. Meaningful interactions among learners, educators and their surroundings create a dynamic process that fosters deeper comprehension.
 - iii. **Democratic Education:** Education should equip individuals for active participation in society by promoting problem-solving and critical thinking. Dewey argued that schools ought to function as miniature

democratic communities, where students learn through discussion, collaboration and hands-on problem-solving.

2.1.3.1 Dewey's Theory of Experience and Supported Teaching in Schools

Experiential Learning

STS programs provide pre-service teachers with invaluable practical experience, enabling them to connect theoretical knowledge with real-world classroom practice. Dewey's theory underlines this approach, positing that authentic learning occurs when individuals engage in meaningful and reflective experiences. Osei-Tutu (2021) examined access and equity in education in Ghana, drawing on Dewey's educational philosophy as a framework. The study highlighted the significance of experiential learning in fostering inclusive education, proposing that Dewey's principles could inform reforms aimed at achieving educational equity in Ghana.

Aboagye and Yawson (2020) examined teacher education policies and practices in Ghana, highlighting the shift towards more practical, experience-based training for pre-service teachers. Rather than relying exclusively on textbooks and lectures, STS immerses aspiring educators in genuine educational settings where they can implement instructional techniques, adapt to various student needs and cultivate problem-solving skills. Research indicates that teachers who learn through hands-on practice develop more effective instructional strategies, improve classroom management skills and enhance student engagement techniques (Zeichner, 2010). The STS ensures that teachers not only grasp pedagogical theories but are also prepared to apply them successfully in diverse classroom environments.

Reflection and Continuous Learning

Dewey (1963) highlighted the significance of reflection in the educational process, asserting that genuine learning necessitates critical analysis of personal experiences. STS programs motivate pre-service teachers to engage in reflective practices by examining their teaching experiences, pinpointing areas for enhancement and adjusting their methodologies accordingly. Tools such as reflective journaling, mentor feedback and peer discussions play a vital role in fostering self-aware and adaptive educators (Schön, 1983). Through ongoing reflection, teachers gain a deeper insight into their instructional approaches, enabling them to refine their teaching methods, address student challenges and implement innovative strategies that improve learning outcomes.

Collaboration and Social Learning

STS promotes collaboration between pre-service teachers, mentors and students. Dewey believed learning was a social process, where individuals construct knowledge through interaction. Learning is most effective when it occurs within a community, where educators and learners share knowledge, provide feedback and work together to solve educational challenges. Studies indicate that collaborative teaching environments enhance professional growth and instructional effectiveness (Darling-Hammond, 2006). When pre-service teachers engage in teamwork, observe different teaching styles and share classroom experiences, they gain diverse perspectives that shape their professional identity. Collaboration fosters an environment where learning is reciprocal, as experienced teachers also benefit from fresh insights brought by new educators.

Student-Centered Teaching Approaches

Dewey's theory advocates for student-centred learning, where teachers serve as facilitators of exploration rather than merely transmitters of knowledge. STS programs are designed to help pre-service teachers cultivate inquiry-based and problem-solving approaches, ensuring that education remains dynamic and attuned to students' needs (Vygotsky, 1978). Unlike traditional rote learning, student-centred methods promote critical thinking, creativity and active engagement. Educators trained within STS frameworks develop the skills necessary to tailor lessons to various learning styles, integrate interactive teaching strategies and nurture an inclusive classroom environment. These approaches align with Dewey's belief that effective education must be meaningful, engaging and connected to real-life experiences.

Criticism of Dewey's Theory of Experience

Critics claim experiential learning can be unstructured, leading to inconsistent educational outcomes (Hirsch, 1996). Without clear guidelines, experiential learning models may result in gaps in knowledge and inconsistent teacher preparedness. Applying Dewey's principles requires extensive resources and teacher training, which may not always be available (Noddings, 2007). Many schools face logistical constraints that hinder the full implementation of experiential learning models. Some researchers suggest that too much focus on experience may overlook essential theoretical foundations (Bruner, 1960). While experiential learning is valuable, it should be complemented with structured academic study to ensure a balanced education.

2.1.4: Integration of the Danielson framework (1999) and the two

Theories. (Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) and Pragmatic Theory of Experience (PTE))

The four domains of the Danielson framework, which were adapted, are Planning and Preparation and Classroom Environment. Instruction and Professional responsibilities are the main processes that the pre-service teacher goes through for adequate preparation before becoming a professional teacher. The two theories were therefore woven and integrated to address the weakness of the framework and also to provide wider tenets for the components of the STS processes to fit in. For instance, under the first domain, which is planning and preparation, the Social Cognitive theory (SCT) provided much explanation and flexibility addressing what is required of the pre-service teacher during the STS programme.

Figure 2 shows the adapted Danielson framework for teacher preparation, curriculum, instruction, and assessment with district goals and provides a framework for ongoing professional learning for pre-teachers.

2.2 History of Social Studies

Social Studies, which is a blend of various educational areas, came into being in the early 1900s as a reaction to increasing societal intricacies and the necessity for education focused on democratic citizenship (Evans, 2017). It draws from key subjects like history, geography, economics, and civics, and was designed to develop civic skills and promote an aware and active citizenry (Barton & Levstik, 2018). The 1916 Report of the Committee on Social Studies, a notable document in U.S. education, highlighted that the goal of Social Studies was to prepare young individuals to become responsible citizens (NCSS, 2016).

The early 1900s saw the establishment of Social Studies in school curricula, especially in North America and Europe. During the Cold War, international tensions led to a focus on national history and civic loyalty (Thornton, 2020). However, after the 1960s, there were significant educational changes influenced by civil rights movements and global connectedness. Social Studies began to cover topics like multiculturalism, gender equality, and environmental sustainability (Banks, 2016).

Over time, Social Studies has played a role that extends beyond being an academic subject; it has served as a means to impart social values, ethical standards, and perspectives on the world. Its official inclusion in curricula in the early 20th Century was aimed at readying students for informed and responsible democratic engagement. This approach aimed to provide students with the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes to participate effectively in a complex and ever-changing society (Blevins & LeCompte, 2016; Parker, 2018).

Nonetheless, the conceptual goals behind Social Studies did not arise in isolation. Educational practices in North America, particularly during the colonial period, had long incorporated civic and moral instruction. For example, early educational statutes in the United States emphasised religious and ethical teachings. Latin grammar schools in New England taught catechism, biblical studies, moral philosophy and geography, all of which laid the groundwork for civic learning (Evans, 2017). Nationalistic and civic education became increasingly central in public schooling from the late 1700s onward, themes that continue to shape the modern Social Studies curriculum (Banks, 2020).

The term “Social Studies” was reportedly first introduced by Thomas Jesse Jones in *Social Studies in the Hampton Curriculum* (1906). Jones highlighted the need for marginalised populations, such as African Americans and Native Americans, to understand the societal forces influencing their lives and to develop the ability to navigate those structures. His vision reflected a belief in education as a means of social integration and empowerment.

The contemporary framework of Social Studies took form with the publication of the 1916 Report of the Committee on Social Studies by the National Education Association (NEA). This report established both the nomenclature and the curricular sequence that would shape the discipline’s identity for the decades to follow (Evans, 2017; Kissling, 2019). Since then, the field has witnessed ongoing tension between advocates of a history-dominant curriculum and proponents of a more integrative, interdisciplinary approach to addressing contemporary social issues (Whelan, 2016).

Whelan (2016) notes that the modern iteration of Social Studies draws from two key sources: the educational reform movements that championed the academic study of history, especially through the efforts of the NEA’s Committee of Ten (1893) and the American Historical Association’s Committee of Seven (1899) and progressive reform agendas concerned with social improvement and civic development. These dual influences continue to inform the nature and scope of Social Studies education today, as educators and policymakers strive to balance historical knowledge with critical engagement in current societal issues (Pace, 2021).

Modern conceptions of Social Studies view the field as inherently interdisciplinary. It amalgamates insights from anthropology, political science, sociology and cultural studies, thus preparing learners for complex societal challenges (Parker, 2020). This interdisciplinarity is exemplified in contemporary curricula that integrate themes such as human rights, migration and digital citizenship (Merryfield & Wilson, 2020).

2.2.1 History of Social Studies in Ghana

The inclusion of Social Studies in Ghanaian schools can be traced back to the period after gaining independence in the 1960s. During the colonial era, education largely emphasised memorisation and content centred around European perspectives. In contrast, the newly independent Ghana aimed to create a curriculum that incorporated local knowledge systems and supported national development aims (Fobih & Amuah, 2016). The Dzobo Committee of 1974 suggested the integration of Social Studies as a fundamental subject in the basic school curriculum.

The 1987 Education Reform Program (ERP) initiated by the Ghana Education Service (GES) signified a major transformation in both the format and substance of basic education, striving to align curriculum content with both personal development and societal needs (GES, 1993). Though these modernising reforms were significant, the focus on history within the Social Studies curriculum was limited, especially concerning the depth, range, and teaching methods used. Five foundational goals were proposed to guide the selection and organisation of Social Studies content. These goals included positioning history and geography as the integrative core of the curriculum, complemented by

themes from economics, political science and the social sciences. Furthermore, it was recommended that Social Studies be delivered coherently from kindergarten through senior high school, promoting civic competence, global awareness and depth over superficial breadth in content delivery (Mullins, 1990). Although initially envisioned as a key pillar of the curriculum, history's role in developing learners' historical consciousness and critical thinking remains a subject of ongoing educational debate.

In practice, history is often taught through passive reception, students listening to or reading pre-constructed narratives rather than through active historical inquiry (Lee & Weiss, 2007; Nokes, 2010). When students perceive history merely as a collection of factual events to be memorised, rather than as interpretations derived from evidence, their understanding becomes limited and devoid of critical engagement (VanSledright, 2002), to counter this, researchers advocate for an instructional model where students interact with primary sources, artefacts and diverse historical texts (Paxton, 1999; Wineburg, 1991), thereby fostering interpretive skills grounded in real inquiry.

Studies have shown that historical content can be made accessible to learners if the material resonates with their experiences and cognitive development (Thompson, 1972). As Nokes (2011) contends, instruction must not only match children's prior knowledge but also address and challenge their misconceptions. Without access to nuanced narratives or primary documents, students are deprived of balanced perspectives, which significantly hampers the cultivation of critical historical thinking (Wineburg & Martin, 2009). Compounding this issue is the peripheral role that history continues to play in elementary

education, a trend documented by Lintner (2006) and McMurrer (2008). These circumstances underscore the urgency of embedding historical thinking within early education (Bickford, 2013).

The promotion of historical inquiry in history education is therefore essential. Just as inquiry is central to disciplines like science and mathematics, it should likewise inform the pedagogy of history. The process of historical thinking encompasses a range of cognitive tasks, framing questions, analysing sources, recognising causality and formulating arguments based on evidence (Nokes, 2011; van Drie & van Boxtel, 2008). However, these skills do not emerge innately through developmental progression. Rather, they must be deliberately nurtured through structured and engaging learning experiences (Wineburg, 2001). As Scott (2014) argues, students need opportunities to engage in logical, evidence-based reasoning that allows them to interpret the past meaningfully and draw connections to the present. Chowen (2005) further emphasises that such engagement fosters historical consciousness, enabling students to apply historical knowledge to contemporary issues.

Age-related trends in students' historical reasoning have also been identified. As learners progress, they increasingly exhibit skills such as recognising the significance of events, corroborating sources and critiquing narratives (Nokes, 2017). Parker (2018) categorised learners' engagement with history as either absorbing, accepting others' historical interpretations, or constructing narratives themselves through inquiry. Historical inquiry thus entails the systematic investigation employed by historians, involving the examination of archives, critical dialogue and synthesis of diverse sources to create interpretive accounts.

Motivating students to engage in comparable methods suited to their age fosters profound understanding and heightened critical consciousness. As Bransford et al. (2000) suggest, actively engaging learners greatly boosts educational results in various subjects, among them history. It is also worth mentioning that history and Social Studies, while frequently mistaken for one another, are separate areas with unique beginnings and developments depending on the country. The meanings of both fields have changed, influenced by continuous scholarly conversation.

This evolution has contributed to conceptual ambiguities in curriculum development and students' understanding of the two subjects. In Ghana, Social Studies is conceptualised as a subject concerned with societal challenges. It provides learners with an understanding of cultural principles, social challenges, and future ambitions (Curriculum Research and Development Division [CRDD], 2010). Globally, the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) describes the subject as naturally multidisciplinary, incorporating elements from history, geography, sociology, economics, psychology, and civics, and it is recognised in education systems worldwide (NCSS, 2013).

Due to its comprehensive and interdisciplinary nature, Social Studies is broadly recognised as an effective means of citizenship education. Biesta (2006) and Mukhongo (2010) highlight the subject's potential to nurture socially responsible individuals, particularly when teaching methods are student-focused and address real-world issues. Consequently, Social Studies is uniquely positioned to promote democratic values, critical thinking, and civic engagement among students.

Educational reforms in Ghana, such as the 1987 Education Reform Programme and the 2007 reform under the New Education Act, stressed the importance of Social Studies in advancing national unity, civic duty, and socio-economic progress (Ministry of Education, 2017). Social Studies transformed from a vaguely defined topic into a well-structured discipline with specific learning objectives and teaching methods. Cultural values, national identity, and Pan-Africanism have influenced the content and teaching methods of Social Studies in Ghana. Cultural values, national identity, and Pan-Africanism have influenced the content and teaching methods of Social Studies in Ghana.

Teachers use local case studies, folk narratives and historical events, such as the struggles of independence and traditional chieftaincy systems, to contextualise key concepts (Agbesi, 2019). Such culturally responsive approaches enhance learner engagement and promote cultural continuity.

2.3 Scope of Social Studies Education

Social Studies Education is a broad and interdisciplinary field that integrates social sciences and humanities to prepare learners for active and responsible citizenship. It encompasses a variety of disciplines, including history, geography, political science, economics, sociology, and civics, all connected through thematic and pedagogical strategies designed to foster a holistic understanding (Kankam, 2016). This interdisciplinary approach ensures that students not only acquire factual knowledge but also develop critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and social awareness—essential attributes for navigating contemporary societal challenges.

The themes within Social Studies education are diverse, addressing issues such as environmental concerns, population dynamics, cultural heritage, moral values, and civic responsibilities (Salia-Bao, 1990). These themes are presented through various pedagogical approaches, such as inquiry-based learning, discovery methods, and reflective inquiry, all aimed at encouraging active engagement and critical analysis among learners (Barr et al., 1997). For example, the reflective inquiry approach emphasises students identifying social problems, considering potential solutions, and evaluating their own perspectives, thus nurturing reflective and autonomous thinkers (Thornton, 2005).

The importance of Social Studies education in fostering informed, engaged, and critical-thinking citizens cannot be overstated. As articulated by the National Council for Social Studies (1994), its primary goal is to promote civic competence, empowering individuals to participate effectively in democratic processes. Social Studies addresses societal, political, and economic issues while cultivating an understanding of interdependence and social justice. Ultimately, it equips learners with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to contribute meaningfully to their communities and society at large, aligning with Ghana's educational aims of producing humane and rational citizens (Ghana Education Service [GES], 1987).

Social Studies education covers a wide range of themes and disciplines, including history, geography, civics, economics, anthropology, and sociology. This expansive scope is designed to address the multidimensional aspects of human society, including spatial, temporal, political, economic, and cultural

dimensions (NCSS, 2016). The integration of themes such as identity, power, conflict, governance, and interdependence allows learners to analyse both local and global issues from multiple perspectives. Various instructional strategies are employed in Social Studies, including inquiry-based learning, cooperative learning, role-play, project-based learning, and problem-solving activities (Parker, 2020). These approaches help foster critical thinking, empathy, and communication skills among learners. The goal is not merely to acquire knowledge but to actively engage with democratic values and civic life.

An essential component of Social Studies is the cultivation of responsible citizenship. Students are encouraged to participate in community projects, debate public policy issues, and reflect on civic responsibilities (Banks, 2017). In an increasingly globalised world, Social Studies education also aims to develop global competence, understanding global interconnections, cultural diversity, and sustainable development (Merryfield & Wilson, 2020).

2.4 Change and Continuity in Social Studies

Social Studies has witnessed both significant change and notable continuity, shaped by evolving societal needs and persistent educational values. Parker (2017) argues that while the content of Social Studies adjusts to contemporary realities, such as globalisation, digital citizenship and environmental sustainability, the core aim of cultivating informed, thoughtful citizens remains unchanged. An illustrative example is the integration of climate change into geography lessons, which signifies curriculum evolution, yet this still aligns with the longstanding civic mission of Social Studies. In one high school in Accra, a teacher described how she juxtaposed traditional lessons on local

governance with simulations of the UN Climate Summit, thereby ensuring both continuity in pedagogical intent and responsiveness to current global issues.

Civic competence is foundational in pluralist democracies, where diverse cultural, ethnic and ideological groups coexist. According to Banks (2017), Social Studies equips students with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to navigate complex democratic processes. In one anecdote from a middle school in Johannesburg, a teacher organised a mock election where students created political parties reflecting their community's real-world diversity. Through this simulation, students practised compromise, deliberation and policy analysis, nurturing a democratic disposition. Research by Torney-Purta et al. (2019) supports this, highlighting that civic engagement rises when students participate in authentic, collaborative political experiences in school.

Social justice is both a goal and a guiding principle of modern Social Studies. Ladson-Billings (2018) advocates for a “culturally relevant pedagogy” where students engage with issues of inequality, power and systemic discrimination. A compelling example comes from a Social Studies teacher in Minnesota who used the Black Lives Matter movement as a case study to examine civil rights, justice and police reform. Students interviewed local community members, analysed policy and presented proposals to their school board. This type of teaching transforms classrooms into spaces of critical inquiry, as students learn not only to understand injustice but to act against it (Picower, 2020).

The demand for accountability in education has transformed how Social Studies is assessed. While multiple-choice tests still dominate in many contexts, there is a growing push for authentic assessments that reflect real civic competencies.

According to Grant (2016), portfolio assessments, document-based questions and performance tasks better measure students' critical thinking and historical reasoning. A case from a Ghanaian junior high school shows how teachers implemented debates and essay-based reflections instead of standardised tests. These methods allowed students to articulate their understanding of colonial history and its implications for national identity. However, as Schneider (2021) notes, accountability systems often underfund and undervalue such qualitative assessments, creating tension between meaningful learning and bureaucratic oversight.

Disciplinary literacy in Social Studies emphasises learning to think like historians, geographers, economists and political scientists. Wineburg and Reisman (2020) emphasise the “Reading Like a Historian” model, which engages students in sourcing, contextualisation and corroboration. An anecdote from a U.S. classroom highlights this: when students analysed conflicting newspaper reports on a protest, they learned to scrutinise bias, purpose and reliability. This method contrasts starkly with rote learning, as students become active knowledge constructors. In Ghana, some Social Studies teachers are now using local newspapers and community stories as primary sources to teach historical interpretation, bridging the global with the local.

The digital revolution has reshaped the information ecology in Social Studies. Students today are bombarded with information, misinformation and deep fakes. McGrew et al. (2019) assert the urgency of teaching digital literacy alongside traditional content. For example, in a Canadian classroom, students were tasked with fact-checking social media posts related to a recent election. They discovered not only how easily falsehoods spread, but also how to use

tools like reverse image search to verify claims. This experience empowered them to become critical consumers and ethical producers of information—a crucial skill in the digital age. However, Selwyn (2021) warns that unequal access to digital tools can exacerbate learning gaps, stressing the need for equitable technology integration.

Effective Social Studies instruction depends heavily on teacher preparation and continuous professional development. According to Fitchett and Heafner (2017), pre-service teachers often enter classrooms underprepared for culturally responsive teaching or inquiry-based instruction. In one teacher training programme in South Africa, trainee teachers were placed in schools with histories of racial tension and were tasked with developing inclusive lesson plans. The challenges were significant, and faced resistance from students and staff, but the learning was profound. These experiences, as Hess and McAvoy (2019) suggest, are essential for building the pedagogical courage and skills needed to teach controversial issues and promote democratic engagement.

2.5 Benefits of Social Studies Education Among Pre-service Teachers

2.5.1 Civic Knowledge and Democratic Engagement

Pre-service teachers benefit from Social Studies education by gaining foundational civic knowledge and an appreciation for democratic practices. Such knowledge is crucial for their roles as future educators and facilitators of civic discourse (Blevins & LeCompte, 2016). They develop the ability to guide discussions on societal issues, promote justice and uphold constitutional values in the classroom.

2.5.2 Cultural Competence and Social Empathy

Engagement with Social Studies helps pre-service teachers build cultural awareness and empathy. Through the study of diverse cultures, historical injustices and global challenges, they become more sensitive to learners' backgrounds and better prepared to create inclusive learning environments (Gay, 2018). This competence is particularly important in multicultural and multilingual settings like Ghana.

2.5.3 Analytical and Pedagogical Skills

Social Studies education enhances critical thinking, communication and analytical skills. Pre-service teachers learn to evaluate multiple sources of evidence, interpret historical narratives and apply pedagogical techniques to foster inquiry and discussion. These competencies are essential for designing interactive and reflective Social Studies lessons (Levstik & Barton, 2018).

2.6 Role of Pre-service Teachers in Implementing Social Studies

Instruction

The integration of Social Studies in elementary education could be seen as crucial in equipping learners with the knowledge, skills and dispositions required for informed civic participation. Pre-service teachers, as future custodians of this critical subject, are very instrumental in delivering meaningful and transformative Social Studies instruction. Their role is not only to deliver content but also to model the pedagogical strategies that encourage critical thinking, problem-solving and civic responsibility among young learners.

2.6.1 Curriculum Mediation and Instructional Delivery

Pre-service teachers serve as key mediators of the curriculum. Their understanding of subject content and pedagogy directly influences how Social Studies concepts are delivered in classrooms (Shulman, 1986). Effective implementation involves aligning instructional objectives with students' realities and using engaging teaching methods to promote understanding.

A foundational aspect of effective Social Studies instruction is the formation of a strong professional identity among pre-service teachers. Hubbard (2019) posits that professional identity development, supported by quality training, reflective practice and organisational networks, enables pre-service teachers to engage students more effectively in civic-oriented learning. Fauzi et al. (2024) reinforce this view, asserting that pre-service teachers with a robust sense of identity and pedagogical clarity are more capable of adopting innovative instructional strategies that align with national education goals.

However, the marginalisation of Social Studies in primary curricula, often due to an overemphasis on literacy and numeracy, has led to reduced instructional time and diminished teacher confidence (Hubbard, 2013). Heafner et al. (2014) highlight how examination policies and curriculum prioritisation significantly impact the opportunities teachers have to facilitate engaging Social Studies learning, limiting the scope for critical thinking and active inquiry.

2.6.2 Fostering Critical Thinking and Democratic Participation

Methods such as debates, simulations and community-based projects help learners develop critical thinking, problem-solving and collaborative skills. These activities prepare students for meaningful participation in democratic life

(Parker, 2020). For example, student-led town hall simulations can cultivate negotiation and advocacy skills among learners.

Nganga's (2019) study provides a compelling framework for Social Studies instruction by advocating the integration of the 4Cs: Critical thinking, Communication, Collaboration and Creativity. These competencies foster learners' ability to explore multiple perspectives, engage with controversial issues and construct well-reasoned arguments, all of which are vital to civic participation. Pre-service teachers trained under such frameworks are better equipped to challenge simplistic worldviews and guide students towards a deeper understanding.

For instance, role-plays and mock trials used in teacher preparation programmes, such as re-enactments of the Montgomery Bus Boycott or a mock trial of Christopher Columbus, allow pre-service teachers to simulate historical events and analyse them from diverse perspectives (Nganga, 2019). These methods require learners to apply critical thought, evaluate evidence and consider ethical implications, thereby nurturing both cognitive and affective domains essential for civic engagement.

Fauzi et al. (2024) also highlight gamification as an emerging strategy that boosts motivation and creative engagement among pre-service teachers. This instructional innovation, by making learning both enjoyable and competitive, strengthens problem-solving skills and increases the likelihood of student retention and participation.

2.6.3 Fostering Civic Engagement and Global Mindedness

A central goal of Social Studies is the cultivation of civic-minded, socially responsible individuals. Nganga (2019) argues that preservice teachers must be prepared to teach global mindedness and social justice, as today's learners operate in an interconnected and culturally diverse world. Through instructional practices that emphasise empathy, equity and global interdependence, pre-service teachers help learners to see themselves as global citizens. In practical terms, activities such as comparative cultural studies, critical analyses of children's literature and the design of globally-focused teaching units are effective in helping learners appreciate cultural diversity and understand global inequalities. Participants in Nganga's study, after engaging in such activities, developed increased awareness of social injustices and proposed ways to address them in future classrooms.

Furthermore, discussions and threaded online reflections offered safe spaces for pre-service teachers to wrestle with controversial topics and articulate their developing philosophies. This reflective process is crucial for helping teachers to transform personal insights into pedagogical strategies that are both culturally responsive and socially just (Brookfield, 1986; Vygotsky, 1978).

2.6.4 Reflective Practice and Continuous Improvement

Reflective practice is an essential aspect of pre-service teacher development. Teachers are encouraged to assess the effectiveness of their instructional strategies, adapt to learners' needs and stay informed about current events and innovations in Social Studies pedagogy (Zeichner & Liston, 2017). Such reflection fosters professional growth and enhances educational outcomes.

2.7 Curriculum Development in Social Studies

The development of Social Studies curricula is a deeply contested and ideologically charged process that has evolved in response to social, political and educational imperatives (Ross, 2020). At the heart of Social Studies curriculum development lies a fundamental tension between competing visions of citizenship, ranging from the transmission of nationalistic values to the nurturing of critical, reflective and socially engaged citizens. As Ross (2020) illustrates, curriculum development is not merely a technical endeavour but a cultural and political act shaped by differing views on what knowledge is of most worth.

Stakeholders involved in the development of Social Studies curricula typically include government agencies, curriculum experts, educators, scholars, textbook publishers and community groups. These stakeholders influence the construction of curriculum frameworks that often reflect prevailing ideological trends. For instance, Ross (2020) details the history of multiple standards frameworks in the U.S., such as those by the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), the National Centre for History in the Schools and the American Psychological Association. The resulting fragmentation has led to overlapping and sometimes conflicting curricular expectations.

Curriculum development in Social Studies has historically revolved around three dominant paradigms: cultural transmission, social science education and reflective inquiry (Barr et al., 1977; Martorella, 1996). Ross (2020) extends this framework by incorporating informed social criticism and personal

development, thereby acknowledging the broader sociopolitical goals of social transformation and learner agency.

The curriculum frameworks often promote specific thematic strands such as time, continuity and change, people, places and environments and global connections (NCSS, n.d.). However, as Ross (2020) contends, these frameworks can either enhance or hinder educators' ability to cultivate critical engagement, depending on the degree of state standardisation and assessment alignment. Moreover, national controversies such as the backlash against Harold Rugg's textbooks or the National History Standards demonstrate how curriculum development is inextricably linked to societal power dynamics and political agendas.

Anecdotally, many educators report struggling with the rigidity of state-mandated curricula that limit opportunities for innovative and contextually relevant instruction. This sentiment echoes Ross's (2020) critique of the standards-based reform movement, which often prioritises testable content over democratic engagement and critical inquiry.

2.8 Assessment and Evaluation in Social Studies

Assessment and evaluation in Social Studies education are vital for understanding how learners engage with historical, civic and cultural content. Unlike subjects with fixed answers, Social Studies often necessitate assessment tools that capture critical thinking, ethical reasoning and interpretive skills. As Darling-Hammond (2017) argues, effective assessment in Social Studies should move beyond rote memorisation to include performance tasks, essays and portfolio assessments that reflect real-world applications.

Ross (2020) critiques the prevalence of standardised testing in Social Studies, which he believes narrows the curriculum and limits teachers' ability to foster democratic thinking. Similarly, Au (2013) warns that corporate-driven accountability reforms have led to 'curricular reductionism' in which teachers feel compelled to teach to the test. These concerns are supported by Shepard (2000), who emphasises that high-stakes assessments often distort instruction and can disproportionately disadvantage students from diverse backgrounds.

In contrast, formative assessment practices such as student-led discussions, reflective journals and peer evaluations are increasingly recognised as effective tools for gauging deeper understanding (Black & Wiliam, 2009). These strategies align with constructivist principles, supporting learners in constructing meaning through inquiry, debate and dialogue. For instance, Sadler (1989) highlights the importance of criteria-based assessment where students understand what quality work looks like and how to improve toward that standard.

Moreover, performance-based assessments, such as simulations, role-plays and civic action projects, are particularly relevant in Social Studies. They enable students to apply concepts in context, encouraging agency and civic responsibility (Torney-Purta et al., 2007). A teacher implementing a mock United Nations debate, for example, may assess students on their ability to research, collaborate, articulate arguments and reflect on global perspectives. These skills are difficult to capture through traditional tests. However, such assessments require careful planning and institutional support. Teachers often cite constraints such as large class sizes, limited preparation time and pressure

to meet externally imposed standards as barriers to effective assessment (Grant, 2006). This illustrates the structural tensions that shape assessment practices in Social Studies classrooms.

2.9 Integration of Technology in Social Studies Education

The integration of technology in Social Studies education has emerged as both a necessity and a transformative force. Digital tools now enable students to access primary source documents, participate in virtual simulations and collaborate globally in ways that were previously inconceivable (Hicks et al., 2004). This technological shift supports constructivist approaches to learning, allowing students to engage critically with historical evidence and contemporary issues.

Ross (2020) acknowledges that although technology presents vast opportunities for engagement and exploration, its use in Social Studies classrooms remains limited due to structural and ideological constraints. This includes disparities in access to technology, professional development gaps and the persistence of traditional textbook-based instruction.

Meaningful technology integration requires more than just hardware; it demands pedagogical shifts. Swan et al. (2007) emphasise that the use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS), digital storytelling and online archives can enrich students' historical understanding and promote spatial reasoning. Similarly, Martorella (1997) describes technology as the 'sleeping giant' of Social Studies, largely underutilised yet brimming with potential.

Educators must also navigate the challenges of digital literacy. As Wineburg and McGrew (2017) caution, students are often ill-equipped to critically evaluate online information, making media literacy a crucial component of modern citizenship education. Social Studies curricula must, therefore, integrate skills for sourcing, contextualising, and corroborating digital content. Ultimately, the integration of technology in Social Studies is not a panacea but a tool that, when used thoughtfully, can support inquiry, engagement and empowerment. Professional development, equitable infrastructure and curricular freedom are critical to realising its full potential.

2.10 Cultural Responsiveness in Social Studies Education

Cultural responsiveness in Social Studies education involves recognising and valuing the diverse cultural backgrounds and lived experiences of learners. It seeks to create inclusive classrooms where all students can see themselves reflected in the curriculum while also gaining insights into the lives and histories of others (Gay, 2010). As Social Studies engages with themes of identity, citizenship and history, it is uniquely positioned to address issues of race, culture, power and representation.

Ladson-Billings (1995) introduced the term culturally relevant pedagogy to describe instructional practices that promote academic success, cultural competence and critical consciousness. In the context of Social Studies, this means moving beyond Eurocentric narratives to include multiple perspectives, particularly those of historically marginalised communities. Ross (2020) also argues that Social Studies should challenge dominant ideologies and affirm

students' cultural identities as part of a broader commitment to democratic education.

One strategy for achieving cultural responsiveness is the inclusion of counter-narratives and local histories in the curriculum. Howard (2003) emphasises the importance of making content relevant to students' cultural contexts and using current social issues to spark dialogue and reflection. For example, integrating African history, indigenous knowledge systems, or the perspectives of immigrant communities allows students to examine whose stories are being told and why.

Anecdotal accounts from educators show that when students see their cultures acknowledged in the classroom, engagement and motivation increase. A Ghanaian junior high school teacher shared that incorporating traditional proverbs and oral storytelling into lessons on civic responsibility helped students connect moral values with cultural heritage, deepening their understanding of democratic ideals. However, implementing culturally responsive Social Studies requires more than content changes. Teachers must undergo reflective practice to examine their biases and assumptions. Sleeter (2011) advocates for sustained professional development focused on equity and social justice to prepare teachers for this complex work.

2.11 Global Perspectives in Social Studies Education

Incorporating global perspectives into Social Studies education is essential for preparing students to navigate an increasingly interconnected world. Global education encourages learners to think beyond national borders, fostering awareness of international issues, intercultural understanding and a sense of

global responsibility (Merryfield & Wilson, 2005). As global events such as pandemics, climate change, migration and political conflict increasingly impact local contexts, the need for globally competent citizens has become more urgent.

Ross (2020) affirms that a globally oriented Social Studies curriculum enhances students' critical consciousness by situating national histories and civic responsibilities within broader global narratives. This approach challenges parochialism and ethnocentrism, promoting a sense of shared humanity. Students are encouraged to understand the roots and consequences of global inequality, human rights violations and transnational cooperation through comparative analysis and case studies.

According to Banks (2008), global perspectives in education must go beyond tokenism. Instead of adding occasional lessons on international cultures, global education should be integrated throughout the curriculum. This includes using primary sources from diverse regions, engaging with international news and connecting learners with students across the globe via digital platforms. When done effectively, such strategies promote empathy, ethical reasoning and critical thinking. However, integrating global perspectives is not without challenges. Teachers often lack access to quality global education resources or the training to deliver them effectively. Gaudelli (2003) highlights the tension between national curriculum mandates and the broader goals of global citizenship, noting that global education is often marginalised in standards-driven contexts.

2.12 Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving in Social Studies

Critical thinking and problem-solving are foundational skills in Social Studies education, essential for fostering informed, reflective and responsible citizenship. The ability to critically analyse historical sources, evaluate arguments and make evidence-based decisions lies at the heart of democratic participation. Dewey (1938) argued that education should prepare individuals to address social problems through inquiry and reflective action, a principle that remains central to contemporary Social Studies pedagogy.

Engle and Ochoa (1988) proposed a model of Social Studies instruction based on decision-making, where students are presented with real or simulated public issues requiring analysis and judgment. This approach moves beyond content recall and encourages learners to interrogate assumptions, weigh competing values and consider consequences. Ross (2020) supports this tradition of reflective inquiry, noting that Social Studies must prepare students not just to know about democracy but to do democracy.

Stanley and Nelson (1986) further advanced the concept of “informed social criticism,” which situates critical thinking within a framework of ethical deliberation and social justice. In this view, students do not merely solve problems; they engage with the root causes of social inequities and work toward transformative change. This model aligns with critical pedagogy and positions the classroom as a space for civic imagination and action.

In practice, strategies for promoting critical thinking in Social Studies include Socratic seminars, structured academic controversy, deliberation and historical inquiry methods. Wineburg (2001) emphasised teaching students how to “think

like historians” to source, contextualise, corroborate and interpret texts. These skills are transferable across disciplines and essential in combating misinformation in a digital age.

Anecdotal evidence from a civic education project in Kumasi illustrates the impact of problem-based learning. Students were tasked with identifying a community issue and proposing actionable solutions. One group investigated poor sanitation in their neighbourhood, surveyed residents and presented their findings to the municipal assembly. The teacher noted that students showed increased confidence, collaboration and interest in local governance. Despite these successes, challenges remain. Many teachers face constraints such as rigid curricula, large class sizes and pressure to cover broad syllabi that leave little room for deep exploration of complex issues (Grant, 2006). Moreover, some educators may lack confidence in facilitating open-ended discussions or controversial topics.

2.13 Teacher Professional Development in Social Studies

Professional development (PD) for Social Studies teachers helps improve instructional quality, stay current with disciplinary scholarship and implement innovative pedagogies. As the field continues to evolve in response to societal changes, global challenges and technological advancements, the role of professional learning becomes even more significant (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Ross (2020) contends that one of the enduring challenges in Social Studies education is the lack of sustained, subject-specific PD. Many teachers rely heavily on textbooks or outdated materials due to limited access to training in critical pedagogy, historical thinking, or culturally responsive instruction.

This situation is exacerbated in regions where Social Studies is viewed as secondary to STEM subjects, leading to underinvestment in its professional infrastructure. Effective professional development is continuous, collaborative and grounded in classroom practice. According to Desimone (2009), high-impact PD includes five key features: content focus, active learning, coherence, sustained duration and collective participation. In the Social Studies context, this means workshops that not only cover content knowledge but also provide strategies for engaging students in discussion, inquiry and civic action.

One successful model is the Teaching American History grant programme in the United States, which paired historians with teachers to deepen both content understanding and pedagogical skills. Similarly, the Library of Congress Teaching with Primary Sources programme provides educators with training and resources to teach historical analysis using authentic documents. These initiatives have demonstrated that when teachers feel supported and intellectually stimulated, student outcomes improve significantly (VanSledright, 2002).

Anecdotal accounts from teachers in Ghana indicate that peer-led communities of practice have been particularly effective. For instance, a facilitator described how regular lesson-sharing meetings helped integrate role-play and project-based learning into Social Studies lessons. Teachers reported greater confidence and student enthusiasm as a result. Nonetheless, barriers persist. In many contexts, PD is episodic, generic and driven by compliance rather than professional growth. Teachers may attend one-off workshops with limited relevance or follow-up, leaving them ill-equipped to adapt new methods to their

classrooms (Kennedy, 2016). Moreover, rural and under-resourced schools often lack funding and logistical support for ongoing training.

2.14 Community Engagement and Social Studies Education

Community engagement is a vital but often underutilised dimension of Social Studies education. It involves connecting classroom learning to the lived experiences, knowledge systems and civic realities of local communities. When students interact meaningfully with their communities, they develop a deeper understanding of social issues, cultural identity and democratic responsibility (Epstein & Sanders, 2006).

Ross (2020) emphasises that Social Studies should not be confined to textbooks and classroom walls but must extend into the world students inhabit. He argues that democratic education requires learners to live, understand power structures and contribute to the common good. Community partnerships with organisations such as museums, NGOs, local government agencies and elders can help achieve this goal.

Service-learning, oral history projects and local action research are among the most effective models of community engagement. According to Wade (1997), service-learning not only reinforces academic content but also promotes empathy, civic skills and a sense of agency. For example, students might explore water access issues in their community by conducting surveys, interviewing local leaders and proposing viable solutions, thereby combining social inquiry with civic participation.

Anecdotal accounts from some educators show the transformative impact of community involvement. One Social Studies teacher collaborated with a local chief and youth leader to host a town hall debate on environmental sanitation. In addition, oral history projects allow students to document and preserve the narratives of elders and marginalised voices, promoting intergenerational learning and cultural continuity. Banks and Banks (2004) note that these projects can challenge dominant narratives and foster respect for diverse histories and identities.

Despite the benefits, several challenges limit community engagement in practice. Teachers may face rigid curriculum structures, a lack of time and limited administrative support. Furthermore, there may be a disconnect between schools and communities stemming from mistrust or differing educational priorities (Shields & Sayani, 2005).

2.15 Social Studies Education and Civic Engagement

Civic engagement is at the heart of Social Studies education. The subject is uniquely positioned to prepare students for active participation in democratic life by fostering knowledge, skills and dispositions needed for informed and responsible citizenship. As Ross (2020) contends, the overarching aim of Social Studies should be to enable learners to do democracy, not just study it.

Civic engagement in Social Studies spans a spectrum of activities from voting and volunteering to advocacy and social justice movements. Westheimer and Kahne (2004) identify three typologies of citizenship promoted through education: the personally responsible citizen, the participatory citizen and the justice-oriented citizen. These models differ in their emphasis on compliance,

involvement, or critical transformation of societal structures, with the latter reflecting the goals of critical pedagogy.

Ross (2020) warns that many civic education programmes promote a narrow and domesticated vision of citizenship that discourages dissent and critical inquiry. Instead, he advocates for a justice-oriented approach that encourages students to question systemic inequalities, engage in public debate and take action to redress injustice. This aligns with the broader goals of democratic education, as articulated by scholars like Dewey (1916) and Freire (1970).

Effective civic education integrates both content knowledge and participatory experiences. According to Torney-Purta et al. (2001), students are more likely to develop civic competence when they engage in classroom discussions about political and social issues, participate in simulations of democratic processes and have opportunities to express their views. These experiences should be complemented by instruction in constitutional principles, human rights and the functioning of governmental institutions.

In practice, many schools incorporate civic engagement through mock elections, student government and community service projects. Anecdotal reports from a junior high school in the Eastern Region of Ghana highlight how a school-wide civic action day inspired students to clean up a nearby marketplace and hold a forum on local governance. Teachers reported that the activity not only built student confidence but also strengthened ties between the school and the local assembly. However, barriers to effective civic education persist. These include overloaded curricula, teacher reluctance to discuss controversial issues and political constraints that discourage critical engagement

(Hess, 2009). Moreover, in settings with weak democratic institutions, civic education may be co-opted to reinforce conformity rather than democratic agency.

To fulfil its democratic mission, Social Studies education must go beyond passive instruction in civic knowledge. It should cultivate the critical thinking, communication and ethical reasoning skills required for meaningful participation in public life. As Ross (2020) notes, in a time of growing political polarisation and disinformation, the need for transformative civic education is more urgent than ever.

2.16 Future Directions in Social Studies Education

As societies face increasing complexity due to globalisation, technological advancement and social change, the future of Social Studies education lies in its ability to remain relevant, responsive and transformative. Ross (2020) cautions that without deliberate efforts to modernise the field, Social Studies risks becoming outdated, failing to prepare students for the civic, ethical and global challenges of the 21st Century.

One emerging trend is the integration of media and digital literacy. With the rise of misinformation and echo chambers, students must be taught how to critically evaluate sources, detect bias and participate ethically in digital spaces. Wineburg and McGrew (2017) argue that this form of literacy is as essential today as reading and writing. In response, many Social Studies programmes are incorporating lessons on digital citizenship, online activism and algorithmic awareness.

Interdisciplinary learning is another direction gaining momentum. Scholars such as Journell (2017) advocate for blending Social Studies with science, the arts and literature to explore complex issues such as climate change, migration and identity. These interdisciplinary approaches help students see connections between historical patterns and contemporary realities, fostering a more holistic understanding of society.

Restorative and justice-centred pedagogies are also shaping the future of the discipline. Inspired by the work of Freire (1970) and Ladson-Billings (1995), these approaches encourage educators to address racism, colonialism and inequality head-on. Culturally sustaining pedagogies promote diverse epistemologies and challenge the marginalisation of non-dominant voices in curriculum content (Paris & Alim, 2014).

It could be said that student agency and voice are expected to play an increasing role in shaping curriculum and assessment. Participatory curriculum design, youth-led inquiries and project-based civic learning could empower students to become co-creators of knowledge. This is especially important in contexts where learners are disengaged due to rote instruction or a perceived lack of relevance.

Technological innovation also presents opportunities and challenges. Artificial intelligence, virtual and augmented reality and gamified platforms have the potential to enhance engagement and experiential learning. However, their implementation must be guided by pedagogical intent rather than novelty. As Hicks et al. (2014) caution, technology alone does not guarantee deeper learning; it must be thoughtfully integrated into meaningful inquiry.

Finally, the field must contend with ongoing political and ideological pressures. Controversies around curriculum content, patriotism and critical histories often reflect broader struggles over national identity and collective memory. As Ross (2020) notes, the future of Social Studies education depends on its ability to resist reductive narratives and to foster inclusive, dialogic and democratic learning environments.

2.17 Teacher Education in Ghana

Historically, teacher education in Ghana transitioned from missionary-led institutions to government-controlled training colleges. The inception of early teacher training institutions occurred during the colonial era, primarily aimed at preparing educators for primary education. The curriculum at this time was significantly shaped by the British education system (McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh, 1975). Teacher training colleges emphasised rote learning and strict adherence to set syllabi during this period. Following Ghana's independence in 1957, initiatives were implemented to expand teacher education to address the increasing demand for qualified educators. The introduction of the Accelerated Development Plan for Education (ADPE) in 1951 established a framework for large-scale teacher training efforts (Adu-Gyamfi et al., 2016). Over the years, the system evolved from certificate-based qualifications to diploma and degree-level training, reflecting global trends in teacher education.

The history of teacher education in Ghana is a rich and evolving narrative that mirrors the country's socio-political transformations, educational reforms and pursuit of quality education (Addae-Kyeremeh & Boateng, 2024). This history can be traced through several key periods: the pre-colonial era, the colonial

period, the post-colonial era and contemporary reforms (Adu-Gyamfi & Otami, 2020). Each of these periods has played a significant role in the development of teacher education, influencing its current structure and addressing enduring challenges (Adu-Gyamfi & Anderson, 2021; Adu-Gyamfi & Otami, 2020).

In the pre-colonial era, education in Ghana was predominantly informal, grounded in indigenous practices. Communities prioritised oral traditions, apprenticeships and the transmission of culture (Baidoo-Anu & DeLuca, 2023). However, the arrival of European missionaries in the 19th Century heralded the emergence of formal education (Prosperetti, 2023). These missionaries established schools and recognised the necessity for qualified teachers to staff them, marking the inception of formal teacher education in Ghana. According to Mereku (2019), one of the earliest institutions dedicated to teacher training was the Presbyterian Training College (PTC), founded by the Basel Mission in Akropong in 1835. This institution played a crucial role in establishing the foundations of teacher education in Ghana, with a focus on producing educators equipped to impart both religious and secular knowledge (Mereku, 2019; Asare-Danso, 2014). Additionally, other missionary groups, such as the Wesleyan Methodists and the Anglicans, influenced teacher training by creating their colleges, which were vital in disseminating Western education and paving the way for a formalised system of teacher education in Ghana.

During the colonial period, the British colonial administration significantly influenced the development of teacher education in Ghana (Asare-Danso, 2014). The colonial government acknowledged the importance of education in creating a workforce that could sustain the colonial economy. However, the

emphasis was predominantly on basic education, particularly literacy and vocational skills (Danilova, 2024). A more structured approach to teacher education was introduced, leading to the establishment of teacher training colleges aimed at preparing teachers for primary schools. These institutions were modelled after British teacher training programs and prioritised practical skills alongside moral education. The curriculum was heavily shaped by British educational ideals, focusing on equipping teachers to impart fundamental literacy and numeracy skills (Danilova, 2024; Asare-Danso, 2014). Nonetheless, the quality of teacher training faced criticism, and the curriculum failed to address the local context adequately (Asare-Danso, 2014). Furthermore, the colonial administration's focus on preparing teachers solely for primary education restricted the breadth of teacher education, with little attention given to secondary or higher education.

The post-colonial era represented a pivotal moment in the history of teacher education in Ghana. Following the country's independence in 1957, the government emphasised education as a key instrument for national development (Asare-Danso, 2014). This shift in focus transitioned from basic education to a more comprehensive system that encompassed secondary and higher education. To address the increasing demand for educators, the government established additional teacher training colleges aimed at producing teachers for both primary and secondary schools. The curriculum was broadened to include a wider array of subjects, with an increased emphasis on preparing teachers who could actively contribute to the nation's development (Mereku, 2019). A significant initiative during this time was the establishment of the University of Education, Winneba (UEW), which emerged as a leading institution for teacher

education. The university introduced innovative programs, such as the "Student Internship" program, designed to provide teacher trainees with practical experience in real classroom environments (Amedeker, 2005).

The transformation of teacher education institutions was formalised with the passage of the Colleges of Education Act (Act 847) in 2012. This legislation elevated teacher training colleges to tertiary status, enabling them to award diplomas and degree certificates (Ministry of Education, Ghana, 2019). The transition aimed to enhance the quality of teaching personnel by aligning teacher education with higher education standards. This transformation also required curriculum revisions, improved pedagogical strategies, and the introduction of professional licensing examinations. The Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC) now regulates teacher education, ensuring compliance with national standards. Furthermore, the National Teaching Council (NTC) was established to oversee the processes of teacher certification and licensure (National Teaching Council, 2022).

2.17.1 Contemporary Reforms on Teacher Education in Ghana

In recent years, Ghana has undertaken significant reforms in teacher education to address the challenges of the 21st Century (Addae-Kyeremeh & Boateng, 2024). According to Addae-Kyeremeh and Boateng (2024), these reforms have been driven by the need to produce high-quality teachers who can meet the demands of a rapidly changing world. One of the most notable reforms is the introduction of the Bachelor of Education (BEd) degree program in Colleges of Education (CoEs). This program replaced the Diploma in Basic Education (DBE) and marked a significant shift towards tertiary-level education for

teachers. The new curriculum emphasises the development of critical thinking skills, subject-specific knowledge and practical teaching skills (Addae-Kyeremeh & Boateng, 2024; Asare & Nti, 2014).

Another key reform is the introduction of teacher licensure. The National Teaching Council (NTC) has mandated that all teachers must pass a licensure examination before being certified to teach (Buabeng et al., 2020). This initiative aims to ensure that teachers meet minimum standards of competence and professionalism (Acquah, 2019). In addition to these reforms, there has been a growing emphasis on reflective practice in teacher education. Reflective practice encourages teacher trainees to critically reflect on their experiences and develop a deeper understanding of their role as educators. This approach has been integrated into the curriculum of many teacher training institutions in Ghana (Amakyi & Ampah-Mensah, 2014).

In response to concerns about educational quality and learning outcomes, Ghana has implemented several reforms in teacher education. One of the most notable initiatives is the Transforming Teacher Education and Learning (T-TEL) programme, launched in 2014 with support from UK Aid (Akyeampong, 2007). T-TEL sought to enhance the training of teachers by improving curriculum content, instructional methodologies, and institutional governance.

2.17.2 Upgrading to Degree-Level Training

A significant reform in teacher education has been the transition to a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) programme. This change, which took full effect in 2022, made the B.Ed. A degree is the minimum qualification for primary and junior secondary teachers (Awuah, 2024). The aim was to ensure that teachers received

comprehensive pedagogical training, integrating theoretical knowledge with practical teaching skills.

The new curriculum focuses on learner-centred approaches, digital literacy, and competency-based assessment techniques. Additionally, colleges of education have been affiliated with universities to enhance academic rigour and research opportunities (Saaka, 2024). Despite these efforts, the transition has faced challenges, including resource constraints and resistance from some educators.

2.17.3 Professional Licensing and Quality Assurance

To standardise teacher quality, the National Teaching Council (NTC) introduced a mandatory licensure examination for newly trained teachers. The examination assesses candidates' knowledge of subject content, pedagogical skills, and professional ethics (National Teaching Council, 2022). While the initiative has been praised for promoting accountability, it has also faced criticism. Some educators argue that the licensing process places an additional burden on graduates, particularly those from under-resourced training institutions. Regulatory oversight has also been strengthened through the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC). This body ensures that teacher education programmes meet national and international accreditation standards. However, there is a need for continuous monitoring to prevent disparities in training quality across institutions (Ministry of Education, Ghana, 2019).

2.17.4 Challenges in Teacher Education in Ghana

Ghana continues to face several challenges despite the advancements made in teacher education (Boadu, 2021). One significant issue is the quality of teacher education programs. Many colleges of education grapple with insufficient

resources, outdated curricula and a deficiency of qualified faculty (Asare & Nti, 2014). In their view, Asare and Nti (2014) further revealed that these challenges compromise the calibre of teachers being trained and, in turn, affect the overall quality of education in schools. Additionally, the low status of the teaching profession in Ghana poses another hurdle. Teaching is often viewed as a last resort for individuals unable to secure other employment. This perception has resulted in a lack of motivation among teachers and a high turnover rate within the profession. (Chung & Lee, 2022; Asare & Nti, 2014).

According to Eshun and Ashun (2013), the implementation of the "In-In-Out" program is another area that needs attention. This program entails two years of on-campus training followed by a year of practical teaching; however, it has faced criticism regarding its effectiveness. Some mentors have been deemed insufficient in their support for trainees, and the program has been further constrained by a lack of instructional materials and time limitations (Eshun & Ashun, 2013; Abudu & Donkor, 2014).

2.18 Theoretical-Practical Gap

One of the foremost concerns in teacher education is the ongoing disconnect between theory and practice. Many teacher training programs prioritise academic content at the expense of practical pedagogical training (Poku et al., 2013). Consequently, newly graduated teachers often face challenges with classroom management, differentiated instruction, and student engagement. While initiatives such as extended teaching practicums have been introduced to bridge this gap, persistent issues like inadequate mentorship and limited access to contemporary teaching resources continue to impede progress (Awuah,

2024). To effectively address this issue, a more structured approach to experiential learning within teacher training institutions is essential.

2.18.1 Resource Constraints in Colleges of Education

Many colleges of education face infrastructural and financial limitations. The shortage of modern instructional materials, well-equipped laboratories, and digital learning tools affects the quality of training provided (Ministry of Education, Ghana, 2019). Additionally, funding for research and faculty development remains inadequate, limiting the ability of institutions to adopt innovative teaching methodologies.

2.18.2 Teacher Motivation and Retention

Issues surrounding teacher motivation and retention continue to be a significant concern. Although efforts to enhance teacher remuneration have been made, many educators still face low job satisfaction resulting from poor working conditions and limited opportunities for professional development (Aziabah, 2018). The disparity in teacher distribution between rural and urban areas further exacerbates this issue, as rural schools often struggle to attract and retain qualified educators (Adjei, 2021).

Policies designed to improve teacher welfare, such as housing initiatives and career advancement opportunities, can boost job satisfaction and strengthen retention rates. Additionally, providing targeted incentives for teachers in underserved areas can help mitigate disparities in educational access.

2.19 History of Supported Teaching in School Programme in Teacher Education Globally

The Supported Teaching in School Programme (STS) has become a crucial aspect of teacher education worldwide, addressing the changing needs of educational systems and the professional development of educators. As noted by Cruz et al. (2023), this program integrates theoretical knowledge with practical classroom experiences and boasts a rich history that has evolved over several decades. The concept of supported teaching emerged in the mid-20th Century alongside a growing recognition of the necessity for practical, school-based training for pre-service teachers. During this time, various models surfaced that highlighted the significance of hands-on experience in teacher education. The supported teaching model was initially shaped by the progressive education movement, which aimed to foster more dynamic and student-centred learning environments (Cruz et al., 2023).

Sahay and Khound (2024) describe one of the earliest forms of supported teaching as the "apprenticeship model," where student teachers are trained under the guidance of experienced educators. This approach was particularly common in European countries, as teacher education was closely aligned with the practical demands of the classroom. The model emphasised the importance of mentorship and the development of teaching skills through direct observation and active participation (Sahay & Khound, 2024). Sahay and Khound (2024) highlighted that the 1960s and 1970s marked a significant expansion of supported teaching programs, particularly in North America and Europe. During this time, universities and colleges of education began to formalise partnerships with local schools, establishing structured programs that combined theoretical

coursework with practical teaching experiences. These initial programs were typically small in scale and focused on preparing teachers for specific subject areas or grade levels (Sahay & Khound, 2024).

The globalisation of education in the late 20th and early 21st centuries significantly contributed to the widespread adoption of supported teaching programs. As educational systems worldwide became increasingly interconnected, there was an enhanced awareness of the necessity for standardised approaches to teacher education. This recognition prompted the adaptation and implementation of supported teaching models across a range of cultural and educational contexts (Cruz et al., 2023). In numerous countries, supported teaching has emerged as a fundamental aspect of teacher education reform. For instance, in Finland, the focus on collaborative learning and professional development has facilitated the inclusion of supported teaching within the national teacher education framework. Likewise, in Singapore, the program has been tailored to emphasise the cultivation of subject-specific pedagogical skills, aligning with the nation's commitment to academic excellence (Syzdykbayeva et al., 2024).

The globalisation of supported teaching has also fostered the establishment of international networks and partnerships. These networks have enabled the sharing of best practices and the adaptation of supported teaching models to cater to the specific needs of diverse educational systems. For example, the "Professionalitet" model in Russia highlights the importance of integrating practice-oriented training with sector-specific personnel development, thereby

creating a framework for regional professional growth (Kovalenko & Korchak, 2024).

The emergence of technology in the 21st Century has profoundly transformed the landscape of supported teaching. Digital tools and platforms have made it possible to create more flexible and adaptive learning environments, enabling pre-service teachers to participate in virtual classrooms, simulations and a variety of innovative learning experiences (Saravanakumar et al., 2023). In China, for instance, the Instruction Teaching Support System (ITSS) has gained widespread adoption to enhance teacher competency. This system merges traditional mentorship with technology-driven resources, offering teachers access to diverse training initiatives and well-defined development paths. The ITSS has played a pivotal role in assisting educators to meet the evolving demands of contemporary education, particularly regarding the integration of digital tools and innovative pedagogies (Ma & Casihan, 2024).

In Ethiopia, the incorporation of technology into supported teaching programs has been motivated by the necessity to bridge the digital divide and enhance access to quality education. The study underscores the significance of technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK) in improving teacher effectiveness and the overall quality of education (Legesse et al., 2024).

Another significant trend is the integration of continuous professional development (CPD) into supported teaching programs. In countries like Japan and the Netherlands, CPD models have been crafted to foster lifelong learning and adaptability. For instance, the Japanese Lesson Study model and the Dutch

personal learning budgets have been recognised as innovative approaches to teacher development (Syzdykbayeva et al., 2024).

Despite its numerous successes, the supported teaching model encounters several challenges. One major issue is the lack of standardised implementation across various countries and regions. While some nations have well-structured programs with robust support systems, others struggle with limited resources and inadequate infrastructure (Edmond & Felix, 2024). Additionally, there is a pressing need for greater emphasis on applying theoretical knowledge in practical contexts. Research indicates that while pre-service teacher education programs often provide a strong theoretical foundation, there exists a gap in the application of these theories within real-world classrooms (Kausar & Ajmal, 2024).

2.20 History of Colleges of Education in Ghana

The history of Colleges of Education in Ghana is deeply rooted in the nation's socio-political and economic transformations. The transition from colonial-era teacher training initiatives to the contemporary colleges of education reflects significant educational reforms aimed at enhancing teacher professionalism and improving basic education. Education has long been a priority in Ghana, dating back to the pre-colonial period when informal education was transmitted through apprenticeship systems (Adu-Gyamfi, Donkoh, & Addo, 2016). The formalisation of teacher training began with European influences, particularly through missionary activities in the 19th Century (Graham, 1971). Since then, successive governments have implemented reforms to improve teacher training and address the nation's educational needs. The history of teacher education in

Ghana is therefore linked to the country's broader socio-political evolution, from colonial rule to independence and subsequent modernisation efforts.

Teacher education plays a fundamental role in the development of human capital, as teachers are the cornerstone of any educational system. The establishment of Colleges of Education in Ghana was necessitated by the need to professionalise teaching and to meet the increasing demand for qualified educators. This review aims to present a comprehensive analysis of the historical development, policy reforms, and contemporary challenges facing Colleges of Education in Ghana.

2.21 Historical Development of Teacher Training in Ghana

Colonial and Missionary Foundations (19th - Early 20th Century) The Portuguese were among the first Europeans to introduce formal education in Ghana in the 15th Century. However, structured teacher training was largely initiated by British missionaries in the 19th Century (Graham, 1971). Missionary societies, such as the Wesleyan and Basel missions, established schools and informal teacher training programs to produce educators for their mission schools. These institutions primarily focused on literacy, religious instruction, and basic pedagogy.

The missionary schools established along the coast sought to produce catechists and clerks who could assist in administrative duties. In the early 1900s, formal teacher training institutions were established by the colonial government to standardise education and to support the expanding network of mission and government schools. The first Government Training College (now Achimota College) was established in 1909 in Accra (Adu-Gyamfi et al., 2016). This

marked the beginning of a formalised teacher education system in Ghana. By 1930, teacher training had become an integral part of the education system, with efforts focused on producing qualified personnel for both primary and secondary education.

2.21.1 Pre-Independence Teacher Training Reforms

By the early 20th Century, the British colonial administration recognised the need for a structured teacher training system. In 1909, the first formal teacher training college, the Government Training College (now Achimota College), was established in Accra (Adu-Gyamfi et al., 2016). By the 1950s, teacher training had expanded significantly, with 30 training colleges operating across the country, enrolling over 4,000 students (Stratton, 1959).

With the expansion of education, the colonial government introduced more structured training curricula, including practical teaching methods and examinations. The teacher training curriculum was largely British-oriented, with minimal attention paid to African culture and indigenous pedagogical methods. Teachers were trained primarily to facilitate rote learning and basic literacy rather than to encourage critical thinking or innovation.

2.21.2 Post-Independence Expansion and Reforms (1957 - 1980s)

Following independence in 1957, the government of Dr Kwame Nkrumah implemented the Accelerated Development Plan for Education (1951) and the Education Act of 1961. These reforms aimed to provide universal primary education and increase the supply of trained teachers (Akyeampong, 2017). Several teacher training colleges were established, and the curriculum was

restructured to incorporate African cultural identity alongside pedagogical training.

During the 1970s, the Dzobo Committee recommended the restructuring of the education system, introducing the concept of Junior Secondary Schools (JSS) and reforming teacher training programs to include more practical teaching methodologies (Owusu-Mensah, 2008). Teacher education became a critical component of national development strategies, with emphasis placed on competency-based training, pedagogical skills, and subject specialisation. The teacher training colleges were expanded to accommodate the increasing demand for qualified teachers due to the growing student population.

2.22 Reforms and Upgrading of Teacher Training Colleges (1990s -

Present)

In the 1990s, efforts were made to enhance teacher education quality. The introduction of the Diploma in Basic Education (DBE) in 2004 upgraded teacher training colleges to diploma-awarding institutions (Adu-Agyem & Osei-Poku, 2012). Further reforms culminated in the Colleges of Education Act of 2012, which formally converted all teacher-training colleges into Colleges of Education, granting them tertiary status.

Under the Free Senior High School (SHS) policy introduced in 2017, the demand for trained teachers surged, leading to increased government investment in teacher education. In 2018, Colleges of Education transitioned to a four-year Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) degree program, in affiliation with public universities, to enhance teacher professionalism (MoE Ghana, 2018). These changes positioned Colleges of Education as key institutions in the

production of high-calibre educators equipped with contemporary teaching skills.

Despite progress, challenges persist in teacher training, including inadequate infrastructure, disparities in rural and urban teacher deployment, and evolving pedagogical demands due to digitalisation (UNESCO, 2019). Funding constraints, outdated curricula, and limited professional development opportunities for teacher educators also hinder progress.

2.23 The Need for 21st-Century Education and Training of Teachers

The rapid transformation of education has necessitated the adaptation of pedagogical strategies to meet the evolving demands of 21st-Century learning environments (Mynbayeva, Sadvakassova, & Akshalova, 2018). Teachers are now required to develop new competencies, including digital literacy, critical thinking facilitation, and research-based instructional methods, to prepare students for dynamic societies and global economies (Schleicher, 2012).

Quality teaching in this context aims to equip learners with life and career skills, technological competence, and the capacity for innovation, collaboration, and creativity (Wagner, 2016). Effective teaching involves structured engagement with students, research-based instructional approaches, and the integration of technology to enhance learning outcomes (Carver & Feiman-Nemser, 2009). To achieve this, teacher education programmes must provide continuous professional development, emphasising innovative pedagogy, differentiated instruction, and performance-based assessments (Wei, Darling-Hammond, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009).

A targeted needs assessment helps identify gaps in teacher competencies and informs the design of training initiatives that align with educational standards and organisational goals (Jannetti, 2017). Contextualised professional development equips teachers to manage diverse classroom dynamics, including differentiated instruction for learners with special needs (Saavedra & Opfer, 2012). Competency-based, inquiry-oriented approaches, combined with ICT integration, collaborative learning, and project-based activities, support the development of higher-order thinking skills and learner autonomy (Scott, 2015; Redecker & Punie, 2013).

The implementation of 21st-Century education requires teachers to be proficient in formative and summative assessment strategies, reflective practice, and continuous professional learning to refine instruction and improve learner outcomes (National Research Council, 2012; Tabassi, Mahyuddin, & Hassan, 2012). At the same time, personal development, including stress management, communication, and work-life balance, is crucial for teacher resilience, motivation, and job satisfaction (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009; Falola, Osibanjo, & Ojo, 2014).

In the context of the Supported Teaching in Schools (STS) programme, the need for 21st-Century teacher competencies underscores the importance of practical, school-based experiences. The STS programme allows preservice teachers to apply contemporary pedagogical strategies, integrate digital tools, and develop professional and personal skills within real classroom settings. By linking theory to practice, STS ensures that preservice teachers are not only aware of modern instructional methods but are also capable of implementing them

effectively, thereby contributing to high-quality education in line with global 21st-Century standards.

2.24 The Implications of 21st-Century Education for Students

The 21st Century has ushered in profound transformations in education, necessitating a shift in pedagogical approaches to prepare students for the evolving global landscape. Rapid advancements in technology, globalisation, and economic demands have reshaped the learning environment, requiring students to develop new competencies, including digital literacy, critical thinking, collaboration, and adaptability (Cahya, Astari, & Susanto, 2023).

Educational institutions have undergone significant curricular reforms to align with 21st-Century learning objectives. Traditional rote learning is being replaced by competency-based education, which emphasises creativity, problem-solving, and interdisciplinary learning (Sugiyarti, Arif, & Mursalin, 2018). The incorporation of student-centred approaches, such as project-based learning and inquiry-based instruction, fosters independent thinking and enhances students' ability to apply knowledge in real-world contexts (Montessori, Murwaningsih, & Susilowati, 2023). These reforms ensure that students are equipped with the skills necessary to navigate complex global challenges.

Moreover, curriculum innovation involves the integration of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines, enabling students to develop a multidisciplinary understanding of real-world issues. The inclusion of arts (STEAM) further enhances creative problem-solving and innovation, allowing students to approach challenges with a broader

perspective. Personalised learning experiences, facilitated by adaptive learning technologies, ensure that students' progress at their own pace, addressing individual strengths and learning gaps.

The integration of digital technology in education has significantly influenced student learning experiences. E-learning platforms, interactive media, and artificial intelligence-powered educational tools facilitate personalised learning pathways, enabling students to learn at their own pace (Arifin, 2023). The ability to access educational content from anywhere has democratised learning opportunities, reducing geographical and socioeconomic barriers (Naibaho, 2023). However, this shift also presents challenges, including digital distractions and the necessity for critical media literacy to discern credible information from misinformation.

Technology has also introduced gamification and virtual reality into the learning process, making education more engaging and immersive. Virtual simulations and online laboratories provide students with hands-on experience in subjects like science and engineering, bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. Additionally, artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning algorithms help educators track student progress and tailor instruction to meet individual learning needs, ensuring a more effective educational experience.

Despite the increasing reliance on technology, social interaction remains a fundamental aspect of 21st-Century education. Collaborative learning approaches, such as cooperative group projects and peer-to-peer mentoring, promote teamwork, communication skills, and emotional intelligence (Siregar,

2021). Research suggests that students who engage in collaborative learning environments exhibit higher levels of engagement, motivation, and retention of knowledge (Sijabat et al., 2023). Moreover, fostering a culture of respect and inclusivity within classrooms enhances students' social development and prepares them for diverse workplace environments.

Social-emotional learning (SEL) has gained prominence in modern education, emphasising the development of self-awareness, empathy, and conflict-resolution skills. Students are encouraged to work in diverse teams, learning to navigate different cultural perspectives and interpersonal dynamics. Schools are also implementing community service and experiential learning projects, providing students with opportunities to engage with real-world problems and contribute positively to society.

In an era of rapid change, students must cultivate essential 21st-Century skills to thrive in both academic and professional settings. The Four Cs: critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity serve as foundational competencies for modern learners (Andrian, 2019). Critical thinking enables students to analyse problems and make informed decisions, while collaboration fosters teamwork and conflict resolution. Effective communication skills are vital for expressing ideas clearly, and creativity drives innovation and adaptability in an ever-changing world (Ayu, 2019).

Beyond these core skills, students must develop resilience, adaptability, and lifelong learning habits to succeed in an unpredictable future. The concept of metacognition—being aware of one's thought processes plays a crucial role in self-directed learning, helping students evaluate their strengths and areas for

improvement. Additionally, financial literacy, entrepreneurial skills, and environmental consciousness are becoming essential components of a well-rounded 21st-Century education.

Globalisation has significantly impacted education by expanding students' exposure to diverse cultures, ideas, and perspectives. Cross-cultural collaboration through virtual exchanges and international study programmes fosters global awareness and intercultural competence (Hariyanto & Jannah, 2020). Additionally, multilingual education initiatives equip students with the linguistic skills necessary for participation in the global workforce (Muhtar, Herdin, & Kurniasih, 2020). However, globalisation also demands resilience and adaptability, as students must navigate complex socio-economic landscapes with a broader worldview.

Civic education and ethical reasoning are critical in this context, ensuring that students become responsible global citizens. Schools are increasingly incorporating discussions on global issues such as climate change, social justice, and economic disparities into their curricula, encouraging students to think critically about their roles in shaping a more equitable and sustainable world.

2.25 History of Teacher Internship Programmes

The evolution of teacher internship programmes from their historical foundations to contemporary structures underscores the dynamic and responsive nature of teacher education. Traditionally, teacher preparation in Ghana and beyond was largely theoretical, with limited emphasis on practical engagement in classroom settings (Anamuah-Mensah, 2009). This approach often resulted in pre-service teachers entering the profession without adequate hands-on

experience in managing real classroom complexities. However, the shift in educational paradigms, coupled with a growing appreciation of the interplay between theory and practice, has led to a more integrated model of teacher training (Osei, 2010). This transformation aligns with global trends that advocate for the seamless blending of pedagogical knowledge and its practical application in authentic classroom contexts (Amoako, 2018).

A comparative analysis of teacher internship programmes globally reveals the increasing recognition of their centrality in the professional development of educators. Historically, the reliance on theoretical models of teacher training gradually gave way to practice-oriented frameworks, reflecting a fundamental shift in teacher preparation strategies. Internationally, this evolution has been shaped by sociocultural, institutional, and pedagogical factors (Darling-Hammond, 2006). For instance, the Finnish model, widely acknowledged for its effectiveness, integrates theoretical learning with extensive practical training, ensuring that pre-service teachers develop both pedagogical expertise and contextual adaptability (Sahlberg, 2011). Similarly, in the United States, residency models such as the Urban Teacher Residency focus on immersive teaching experiences, particularly in under-resourced schools, to equip teachers with the competencies required to address educational inequities (Grossman et al., 2009).

In Ghana, teacher internship programmes have undergone significant reforms to bridge the gap between theoretical training and classroom realities. The introduction of the Supported Teaching in Schools (STS) model exemplifies a structured approach that allows pre-service teachers to engage in extended

school-based teaching experiences under the mentorship of experienced educators (Kuyini, 2016). This initiative aligns with the broader educational philosophy of experiential learning, which emphasises reflective practice, mentorship, and the contextual application of pedagogical theories (Tamakloe, 2019). By providing a scaffolded transition from pre-service training to professional teaching, internship programmes enhance teacher efficacy and confidence in managing classroom challenges (Adu-Gyamfi & Donkor, 2020).

Furthermore, teacher internship schemes have been instrumental in addressing teacher attrition and shortages, particularly in rural and underserved communities (Bennell & Akyeampong, 2007). By offering pre-service teachers a realistic preview of the profession, these programmes help mitigate early-career attrition and promote long-term commitment to the teaching profession (Owusu, 2021). As Anamuah-Mensah (2009) asserts, a well-structured internship programme not only equips teachers with the requisite skills for effective instruction but also fosters resilience and adaptability in the face of educational challenges.

The evolution of teacher internship programmes in Ghana reflects a broader commitment to strengthening teacher education by reinforcing the integration of theory and practice. As research suggests, experiential learning remains a cornerstone of teacher preparation, ensuring that educators are well-equipped to navigate the complexities of contemporary classrooms (Osei, 2010; Adu-Gyamfi & Donkor, 2020). Moving forward, sustained investment in internship models that emphasise mentorship, reflection, and contextual adaptation will be

crucial in enhancing teacher quality and improving educational outcomes across diverse learning environments.

2.26 History of Supported Teaching in School Programme in Teacher

Education in Ghana

Teachers are trained to teach at the elementary school level in post-secondary institutions known as the College of Education (CoE). According to Buabeng et al. (2020), there are currently 48 CoEs in Ghana, an increase from 38 in 2014, as the government absorbed 10 private CoEs to expand their infrastructure. These institutions used to offer three-year Diploma in Basic Education (DBE) programs before the reforms began in 2014. Additionally, two universities, the University of Cape Coast and the University of Education, Winneba, serve as traditional teacher education institutions, preparing teachers for various educational levels, including elementary schools.

The focus on teacher education remains prominent in current literature. This is largely driven by the understanding that the academic success of students, particularly those from marginalised communities, is significantly impacted by the quality of their educators. The effectiveness of the educational system plays a pivotal role in shaping these outcomes (Archibald, 2006; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). According to Buabeng et al. (2020), the educational system of a nation serves as a reflection of its future and plays a crucial role in shaping the workforce. Consequently, the quality of Ghana's citizens, who are a product of its educational system, has a direct bearing on the country's ambition to become an industrialised nation. It is evident why Ghana has embarked on various reforms in teacher education in recent decades.

Teacher education in Ghana has evolved significantly in recent years (Buabeng et al., 2020). These changes are ongoing as the system continues to undergo restructuring to produce educators who can enhance teaching and learning outcomes (Mereku, 2019). Acheampong (2003) and Amakyi and Ampah-Mensah (2014) characterised these developments in teacher education as varied, as the programs are tailored to address the country's evolving needs. These needs in basic education are dynamic and require comprehensive training to elevate the quality of teaching. For instance, preschool teachers need practical skills to effectively teach fundamental concepts in basic education for students to develop a solid understanding (Mereku, 2019). Edmond and Felix (2024) noted that one notable reform in teacher education is the introduction of the four-year Bachelor of Education (B. ED) program in colleges of education.

The colleges of education's program curriculum includes a component aimed at revolutionising initial teacher education. This component ensures the training of highly qualified, motivated new teachers who can inspire their students to achieve better outcomes in basic education (Edmond & Felix, 2024). As part of the B. ED program, teacher trainees are required to engage in Supported Teaching in Schools (STS) to gain practical experience and bolster their confidence as educators (Transforming Teacher Education and Learning/Ministry of Education, 2018). STS involves placing trainees in classrooms under the guidance of experienced teacher-mentors to develop essential skills, knowledge and attributes for fostering honest, creative and responsible citizens in Ghana's Basic Schools, as outlined in the National Teachers' Standards (NTS) (T-TEL/MOE, 2018).

The National Teachers Standards (NTS) outlines the principles that guide the professional development of teachers in Ghana, focusing on their attitudes, knowledge and practice (Ministry of Education, 2017). The Standards serve as a framework for both pre-service and in-service teachers. Throughout the STS program, teacher trainees actively engage with mentor teachers, participating in classroom activities and gradually taking on greater responsibilities such as lesson planning, leading classes, assessing assignments and managing student behaviour (T-TEL/MOE, 2021). The program, as described by T-TEL/MOE (2021), is designed to integrate theoretical knowledge into practical teaching, providing trainees with constructive feedback to enhance their skills and fostering professional relationships within the school community.

2.27 The Scope of Supported Teaching in Schools

STS is widely recognised as a fundamental aspect of teacher education across various countries. It serves as a means to equip prospective teachers with classroom management skills, instructional strategies, and assessment techniques. In many nations, STS is integrated into teacher training curricula to provide student teachers with hands-on experience in real classroom settings (Dorsah et al., 2023). The programme varies in structure, duration, and implementation, depending on national education policies and institutional frameworks. However, a common feature across different countries is the emphasis on mentorship, reflective practice, and continuous professional development.

Ghana's STS programme has undergone significant transformation over the years to ensure that teacher trainees receive extensive practical exposure in real classroom settings. The initiative serves as a key bridge between theoretical knowledge acquired in colleges of education and the practical demands of classroom instruction. The following paragraphs elaborate on the various aspects of STS in Ghana, including its structure, objectives, and role in professional teacher preparation.

The STS programme in Ghana is a fundamental aspect of the four-year Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) degree. It allows student teachers to build their confidence and teaching expertise gradually. Beginning in their first year, student teachers are introduced to classroom observation, where they familiarise themselves with the school environment, teaching styles, and learner engagement. As they progress, they take on more responsibilities, eventually leading full lessons and conducting assessments under the supervision of experienced mentors (Abudulai, 2021).

A distinctive feature of STS in Ghana is its integration with national educational policies, particularly the National Teachers' Standards (NTS) and the National Teacher Education Curriculum Framework (NTECF). These policies ensure that student teachers are equipped with the necessary competencies to foster learner-centred teaching approaches, manage diverse classrooms, and effectively assess students' learning outcomes. The programme also emphasises inclusive education, enabling student teachers to adapt their teaching strategies to accommodate students with special needs and varied learning abilities (Dorsah et al., 2023).

Mentorship plays a central role in the STS programme. Experienced teachers in partner schools serve as mentors, guiding student teachers through lesson planning, classroom management, and effective pedagogical techniques. These mentors provide constructive feedback and support, enabling student teachers to refine their teaching practices. However, challenges such as mentor absenteeism, lack of adequate training for mentors, and the absence of well-defined mentoring frameworks hinder the effectiveness of this aspect of STS (Dorsah et al., 2023).

The STS programme in Ghana also promotes reflective practice. Student teachers are encouraged to assess their teaching experiences through reflective journals, discussions with peers, and feedback from mentors and college tutors. This approach enhances their critical thinking skills and fosters continuous professional development. Reflection sessions often focus on classroom management techniques, lesson effectiveness, and areas for improvement, allowing student teachers to refine their instructional strategies (Abudulai, 2021).

Despite its numerous benefits, STS in Ghana faces several challenges. One major issue is the inadequate allocation of teaching and learning resources in partner schools. Many student teachers struggle with limited access to textbooks, lesson guides, and technological teaching aids. This scarcity impacts the quality of instruction and limits opportunities for student teachers to integrate innovative teaching methodologies into their practice (Dorsah et al., 2023). Additionally, communication gaps between colleges of education and

partner schools sometimes lead to student teachers receiving insufficient support during their placements.

Another challenge relates to the placement of student teachers in rural and underserved communities. While STS aims to expose student teachers to diverse teaching environments, those placed in remote areas often face difficulties such as inadequate accommodation, long commuting distances, and limited mentor availability. These issues affect their ability to engage with the teaching experience fully and may impact their overall learning outcomes (Abudulai, 2021).

To enhance the effectiveness of STS in Ghana, several recommendations have been proposed. Strengthening partnerships between colleges of education and partner schools is essential to ensure that student teachers receive adequate support and mentorship. Additionally, providing targeted professional development for mentors will help them better guide student teachers in their learning journey. Increasing investment in educational resources and infrastructure within partner schools will also improve the overall quality of the STS experience (Dorsah et al., 2023).

The Ghanaian government, in collaboration with educational institutions, has invested in the STS programme to improve teacher quality. Colleges of Education work closely with partner schools to facilitate smooth implementation. However, challenges such as mentor absenteeism, insufficient resources, and communication gaps between colleges and schools persist (Dorsah et al., 2023). Addressing these challenges is essential for optimising the effectiveness of STS.

2.28 Concept of Supported Teaching in Schools (STS)

The STS programme, which replaces the off-campus teaching practice, has about 30% (165) credit hours and assessments in the Colleges of Education Curriculum (T-TEL/MOE, 2018). According to T-TEL/MOE (2018), pre-service teachers are allowed to do one day of supported teaching in schools every week for a 6-week duration in every semester from level 100 to 300 (first semester) to interact with teachers, mentors, pupils and discuss observations in the school (including challenges and recommendation) and put their findings into their STS journal for assessment. In the level 300 second-semester programme, the pre-service teachers stay off campus for 6 weeks for co-planning and co-teaching programmes in partner schools. The level 400 extended teaching programme is characterised by 12 weeks of practice off the college campus. These are the expected periods of College-Based, School Training for pre-service teachers across the duration of the study (T-TEL/MOE, 2018).

Each academic year has its intended purpose/target, which builds on the outcome of the previous year. According to T-TEL/MOE (2018), the first year, termed as 'beginning in teaching', is characterised by the pre-service teachers' experiences in inclusive education as a cross-cutting issue in schools, school curriculum and approaches to teaching, expectations for the learning and progress of learners in different subjects. "In the second year (developing teaching), the pre-service teacher is expected to identify and assess weaknesses and barriers to learning for learners and carry out small-scale action classroom inquiry under the guidance of mentors" (T-TEL/MOE, 2018). In the third year, embedding teaching seeks to equip the pre-service teacher with the skills to co-

plan and co-teach groups of learners, carry out small-scale classroom inquiries and provide evidence of working towards meeting the NTS (T-TEL/MOE, 2021). In year 4, extended teaching, “pre-service teachers plan, teach and assess their learners independently and with increasing consistency; exhibit the ethical codes of conduct, values and attitudes expected of a teacher; carry out extensive action research projects and provide evidence of meeting the NTS fully” (T-TEL/MOE, 2021).

To accomplish all facets of the programme, each College of Education has its specific day(s) within the week in each semester, incorporated into the colleges' timetable, for students to visit respective partner schools for the programme and return for reflective practice (Ananga, 2021). Priya et al. (2017) categorised the reflective practice as a tool for pre-service teachers to explore themselves, enabling them to develop professionally. As a result, there is a need for all students to visit basic schools on the designated day(s) and report on the visit.

Assessment of the STS in COE is strongly guided by the National Teacher Education Assessment Policy (NTEAP) (Priya et al., 2017). The NTEAP is planned to certify that all teachers completing their initial teacher training are assessed against the National Teachers' Standards (NTS), Ministry of Education (MOE, 2017). Therefore, the policy provides a criterion for assessment and grading of pre-service teachers, teachers based on their professional values and attitudes, professional knowledge, professional practices and other cross-cutting issues (MOE, 2017). The policy directs that progression from one level to another in COE depends largely on passing STS (T-TEL/MOE, 2021). Hence,

an overall weighting of 30% is recommended for STS across the four years in terms of credit hours and assessment (MOE, 2017).

According to NTEAP, this weighting indicates the importance placed on extended periods of STS and the emphasis on a more interactive learner-focused approach to training teachers through formative assessment of coursework with a focus on performance. According to Ananga (2021), these are aimed at supporting pre-service teachers to provide the appropriate evidence against the three domains of the NTS in the classroom through the exhibition of the requisite skills, knowledge and attributes essential for nurturing honest, creative and responsible citizens in Ghana's Basic Schools. College tutors, lead mentors and mentors assess pre-service teachers based on the NTS and the NTEAP.

According to Ferdinand (2020), the assessment of students on STS each semester is based on their findings in the schools during the observations, which include their challenges and recommendations. In response, Edmond and Felix (2024) asserted that pre-service teachers are scored and graded based on attendance at reflective practice seminars after visiting schools, reports from schools in STS journals and punctuality to schools of practice.

2.29 The Benefits of Supported Teaching in Schools to Pre-Service

Teachers

Supported teaching is a crucial aspect of teacher education programs as it offers pre-service teachers valuable classroom experience, enhancing their professional readiness. This approach effectively connects theoretical knowledge with practical application. Firstly, supported teaching makes a significant contribution to professional development. Through hands-on

teaching experiences, pre-service teachers acquire essential skills in classroom management and pedagogy. According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), these practical engagements help build confidence and competence, both of which are essential for effective teaching. Furthermore, Hudson and Hudson (2017) emphasise that structured practicums further enhance self-assurance, which is vital for successful classroom performance.

In addition, supported teaching bridges the gap between theoretical concepts and real-world applications. According to Cochran-Smith and Villegas (2015), pre-service teachers can put the theories they learn in their coursework into practice in actual classroom settings, making their learning more relevant and practical. This hands-on experience deepens their understanding and improves their ability to implement effective teaching strategies. Moreover, mentorship and feedback are crucial components of supported teaching. Experienced educators provide pre-service teachers with valuable guidance and constructive criticism, which are essential for their professional development. Wang and Odell (2002) underscore the importance of such mentorship in refining teaching practices and promoting growth.

The concept of supported teaching encompasses classroom management and adaptability. “Pre-service teachers gain valuable experience in handling diverse classroom behaviours and challenges, which is crucial for creating a positive learning environment”, as noted by Koehler (2011). Day (2013) also highlights the importance of exposure to various teaching environments in equipping pre-service teachers with the flexibility to address different student needs effectively.

Additionally, supported teaching fosters reflective practice, enabling pre-service educators to evaluate their teaching experiences critically. As highlighted by Farrell (2015), this process aids in identifying areas for improvement and formulating strategies for future instructional endeavours, thereby facilitating sustained professional development. The cultivation of professional relationships is effectively nurtured through supported teaching. Pre-service teachers actively forge connections with mentors, colleagues and school administrators, essential for networking and career advancement (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). These relationships, in turn, provide vital support and avenues for collaboration, significantly enhancing the overall teaching experience.

Exposure to diverse student populations during supervised teaching is crucial for pre-service teachers to develop a thorough understanding and genuine appreciation of student diversity. Gay (2018) strongly emphasises that recognising cultural and individual differences is indispensable for effective teaching in multicultural classrooms. As a result, pre-service teachers can confidently adapt their approaches to meet the diverse needs of their students effectively.

Similarly, Shulman (1987) underscores the vital importance of delivering curriculum content effectively, while Black and Wiliam (1998) emphatically highlight the crucial role of formative assessment in enhancing student learning. As a result, practicum experiences provide invaluable opportunities to design and implement assessments that substantively support student progress. Supported teaching provides a significant benefit through technological

integration. According to Koehler and Mishra (2009), technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK) is crucial for modern teaching. During their practicum, pre-service teachers gain hands-on experience in seamlessly incorporating technology into their teaching practices, effectively preparing them to meet the demands of contemporary education.

The development of a professional identity is a significant outcome of supported teaching. Beijaard et al. (2004) assert that hands-on teaching experiences are instrumental in helping pre-service teachers cultivate a strong sense of their professional role and a deep commitment to the teaching profession. Therefore, this professional identity is vital for their long-term dedication to teaching.

In addition, guided teaching effectively equips pre-service teachers with the skills necessary to tackle the challenges of the profession. Johnson et al. (2012) emphasise that real classroom experiences foster resilience and problem-solving abilities, which are vital for long-term success in teaching. Furthermore, supported teaching instils a strong commitment to lifelong learning. Avalos (2011) has demonstrated that pre-service teachers who actively participate in reflective practice and continuous learning during their practicum are significantly more likely to seek ongoing professional development.

2.30 Prospects of Supported Teaching in School (STS) Programme in

Teacher Education

The Supported Teaching in Schools (STS) program in Ghana is designed to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge acquired in teacher training institutions and the realities of the classroom. The programme provides pre-service teachers with structured opportunities to apply pedagogical theories in

authentic learning environments. However, the effectiveness of STS depends on the alignment of its objectives with implementation practices, particularly regarding mentorship, institutional support, and school collaboration (Orland-Barak & Wang, 2020). The prospects of the STS program are promising, as it aligns with global trends in teacher education that emphasise the importance of practice-based experiences (Cochran-Smith et al., 2015).

One of the key prospects of the STS program is its potential to improve the quality of teaching in Ghanaian schools. An empirical study by Agyeman and Adu-Yeboah (2020) has shown that teacher education programs that incorporate practical experiences are more effective in preparing teachers for the complexities of the classroom. The STS program, by providing a structured platform for pre-service teachers to engage in supported teaching, is likely to enhance the pedagogical competencies of future teachers. A primary expectation of STS is the provision of competent mentorship to pre-service teachers. Ideally, mentors should model effective teaching practices, provide constructive feedback, and facilitate reflective practice (Garza & Harter, 2016). However, the document reveals that many mentors are frequently unavailable or lack sufficient knowledge of the STS framework, leading to inconsistent support for pre-service teachers (Dorsah et al., 2023).

Another prospect of the STS program is its ability to foster a culture of reflective practice among pre-service teachers. Reflective practice is crucial for teacher development, as it enables teachers to critically examine their teaching methods and make informed adjustments (Koranteng & Adu-Yeboah, 2019). The mentorship component of the STS program, where experienced educators guide

pre-service teachers, is expected to encourage reflective practice and contribute to the professional growth of the teachers. The STS framework anticipates that pre-service teachers will engage in structured reflection, facilitated by college tutors (Halim et al., 2011). Reflective practice is essential for developing pedagogical competence, yet some college tutors fail to provide adequate guidance, reducing the effectiveness of post-lesson reflections (Zahid & Khanam, 2019).

The STS program also has the potential to address the issue of teacher attrition in Ghana. Studies have indicated that inadequate preparation for the realities of the teaching profession is a significant factor contributing to teacher turnover (Koranteng & Adu-Yeboah, 2019; Owusu-Ansah, 2018). By offering a more practical and supportive teacher education experience, the STS program may reduce the likelihood of new teachers leaving the profession due to a lack of preparedness. The STS programme assumes that partner schools will provide adequate teaching resources, including textbooks, teaching and learning materials (TLMs), and conducive learning environments (Oakes & Saunders, 2002). However, findings indicate that many partner schools face shortages of essential resources, which impede the ability of pre-service teachers to engage in effective instruction (Ndirangu & Udoto, 2011).

In addition, the STS program plays a crucial role in advocating for the use of innovative, child-centred teaching methods in Ghanaian classrooms. Research indicates that these methods are more effective in engaging students and enhancing learning outcomes (Ampadu, 2017). The hands-on approach of the STS program enables pre-service teachers to explore and proficiently employ

these teaching strategies under the supervision of their mentors. The long-term sustainability of the STS program is also an important consideration. For the program to have a lasting impact, it must be integrated into the broader educational system and supported by key stakeholders. Collaborations between teacher education institutions, schools and government bodies are fundamental for the enduring success of the STS program (Owusu-Ansah & Mereku, 2015).

In terms of policy implications, the STS program could serve as a blueprint for overhauling teacher education in Ghana. The program's success has the potential to influence policy decisions regarding the structure and content of teacher education programs, emphasising the need to enhance the practical components of teacher training (Ghana Education Service, 2013). Furthermore, the STS program holds promise for elevating the quality of education for Ghanaian children. By ensuring that teachers are better prepared and more effective in their instruction, the program can contribute to overall improvements in educational outcomes (Agyeman & Adu-Yeboah, 2020). Another expectation is that STS will be integrated with contemporary curriculum standards to ensure that pre-service teachers are adequately prepared to teach in evolving educational contexts (Buabeng, Ntow, & Otami, 2020). However, the document highlights a lack of familiarity among mentors with the new Bachelor of Education Curriculum, which limits their ability to provide informed guidance (Hall et al., 2008).

Moreover, the STS program contributes to the professional growth of mentor teachers. By taking on mentoring roles, experienced educators have the opportunity to enhance their teaching methods and remain abreast of current

educational developments (Koranteng & Adu-Yeboah, 2019). The program's focus on mentorship and collaboration also cultivates a more collegial and supportive teaching environment, which is favourable for the professional advancement of all teachers, including both pre-service and mentor teachers (Owusu-Ansah, 2018).

The STS program is in line with global trends in teacher education, emphasising practical experience and reflective practice, positioning it as a forward-thinking initiative in Ghana's education sector (Ampadu, 2017). However, the success of the STS program relies on various factors, including adequate resources, dedicated mentors and supportive school environments. Without these elements, the program may not achieve its intended outcomes (Owusu-Ansah & Mereku, 2015).

2.31 Implications for the STS Programme

2.31.1 Policy and Its Influence on STS Education

Educational policy serves as a foundational framework that shapes the structure, effectiveness, and sustainability of the Science, Technology, and Society (STS) program in Ghana. The introduction of the National Teacher Education Curriculum Framework (NTECF) and the National Teachers' Standards (NTS) signifies a paradigm shift in teacher education to enhance pedagogical competence, subject knowledge, and reflective practice (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2017). These policies present a structured approach to STS education by integrating interdisciplinary perspectives and promoting critical thinking.

However, despite these advancements, inconsistencies in policy implementation present significant challenges. Frequent political transitions have often resulted

in abrupt educational reforms, which disrupt continuity and create gaps in the professional development of STS educators (Buabeng, Ntow, & Otami, 2020). Additionally, the lack of alignment between policy expectations and the infrastructural realities of many schools leads to a discrepancy between theoretical aspirations and practical execution (Asare & Nti, 2014). Addressing these inconsistencies necessitates a stable policy environment, increased governmental commitment, and strategic stakeholder engagement to ensure the long-term sustainability of STS education.

2.31.2 Exposure to Diverse Teaching Contexts

The STS programme requires a pedagogical approach that links scientific and technological concepts to real-world applications. This approach demands that teachers be adaptable and responsive to the diverse environments present in their classrooms. In Ghana, the teacher education model mandates extended school-based practicums, enabling trainee teachers to engage with a variety of educational settings, from urban schools equipped with advanced facilities to rural institutions with limited resources (MoE, 2017). This initiative promotes experiential learning and equips educators to effectively address contextual challenges.

However, discrepancies in teaching environments impede the consistent acquisition of STS-related competencies. Numerous rural schools are devoid of essential laboratory equipment, lack internet access, and do not have up-to-date instructional materials, which restricts teachers' ability to deliver inquiry-based, technology-integrated lessons (Asare & Nti, 2014). Moreover, the absence of structured mentorship programmes intensifies the challenges faced by novice teachers, hindering their capacity to implement STS methodologies successfully

(Darling-Hammond, 2006). To address these issues, teacher education institutions must forge strong partnerships with schools, offering targeted professional development, sufficient resources, and mentorship initiatives that bolster STS instruction across all educational contexts.

2.31.3 Integration of Technology in STS Instruction

Technology plays a vital role in contemporary STS education, facilitating dynamic, interactive, and contextually relevant teaching methods. Ghana's educational reforms emphasise the integration of information and communication technology (ICT) as a fundamental competency in teacher training (MoE, 2017). Digital tools such as virtual laboratories, simulation software, and online collaborative platforms can greatly enhance students' grasp of STS concepts.

Notwithstanding, the integration of technology remains inconsistent across Ghanaian schools, primarily due to infrastructural challenges, insufficient teacher training, and financial constraints (Buabeng et al., 2020). Many institutions struggle with unreliable internet connectivity, inadequate computing facilities, and limited access to current digital resources, hindering the effective use of ICT in STS education. Moreover, teacher educators frequently lack the necessary digital pedagogical skills, leading to a superficial adoption of technology rather than a meaningful transformation in instruction (Conner & Sliwka, 2014).

Overcoming these barriers necessitates a comprehensive strategy that includes enhanced investment in digital infrastructure, compulsory ICT training for educators, and the creation of open-access digital learning resources specifically

designed for STS instruction. Additionally, incorporating blended learning models that merge traditional teaching methods with technology-driven techniques can promote gradual adaptation and enhance accessibility for a wider audience.

2.31.4 Teacher Attrition and Its Effect on STS Education

Teacher attrition poses a significant challenge within Ghana's education sector, adversely impacting the sustainability of the STS programme. High turnover rates can be attributed to inadequate remuneration, limited opportunities for career advancement, and challenging working conditions, particularly in under-resourced rural schools (Asare & Nti, 2014). The continual loss of trained STS educators disrupts curriculum continuity, hinders student engagement, and diminishes overall instructional quality.

Furthermore, the financial and logistical burdens associated with recruiting and training new teachers place additional strain on educational institutions. The departure of experienced educators restricts mentorship opportunities for novice teachers, thereby exacerbating gaps in pedagogical competence and content delivery. To address teacher attrition, policies must focus on offering competitive salaries, structured professional development pathways, and improved working conditions (Ell & Grudnoff, 2013). Implementing incentives such as housing allowances, rural service bonuses, and career advancement frameworks can significantly enhance retention rates and ensure the long-term success of STS education.

2.32 Challenges of Supported Teaching in School (STS) Programme in Teacher Education

According to the literature, the Supported Teaching in Schools (STS) programme in Ghana, which aims to provide practical teaching experience to pre-service teachers under the guidance of experienced educators, faces several challenges. These challenges can impact the effectiveness of the programme and its ability to prepare teachers for the realities of the classroom. Some of the key challenges from the literature include:

Shortage of Qualified Mentors

The STS program in Ghana suffers from a lack of experienced and qualified mentors to guide pre-service teachers. Agyeman and Adu-Yeboah (2020) found that this shortage can significantly impede the professional development of pre-service teachers, as they may not receive the necessary support and guidance to navigate the complexities of the classroom. Additionally, Owusu-Ansah (2018) noted that the limited number of mentors can lead to an insufficient support system, which is crucial for the success of the STS program. This shortage not only affects the quality of mentorship but also the capacity of the program to accommodate all pre-service teachers effectively.

Inadequate Resources

Schools in Ghana often lack the necessary resources to facilitate the STS program. Ampadu (2017) observed that the shortage of teaching and learning materials limits the practical experiences of pre-service teachers. Furthermore, Agyeman and Adu-Yeboah (2020) highlighted that inadequate resources can prevent mentors from demonstrating effective teaching practices, which are essential for the professional growth of pre-service teachers. This resource

constraint can create a gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, undermining the program's objectives.

Variation in Teacher Education Quality

The quality of teacher education programs in Ghana varies, which poses a challenge for the STS program. Owusu-Ansah (2018) discussed how this variation leads to pre-service teachers entering the program with different levels of preparation. Additionally, Agyeman and Adu-Yeboah (2020) noted that inconsistent teacher education quality can result in disparities in the support needs of pre-service teachers, making it difficult to provide a standardised mentorship experience. Addressing this issue requires efforts to ensure that all pre-service teachers receive a high-quality education that adequately prepares them for the practical aspects of teaching.

Resistance to New Teaching Methods

Pre-service teachers may encounter resistance when introducing innovative teaching methods. Koranteng and Adu-Yeboah (2019) found that traditional teaching practices are deeply entrenched in the Ghanaian education system, leading to reluctance to adopt new approaches. Moreover, Ampadu (2017) observed that this resistance can stem from both school staff and students, potentially undermining the goals of the STS program. Overcoming this challenge necessitates not only the support of mentors but also the engagement of the broader educational community.

Logistical Challenges

Coordinating the STS program involves various logistical complexities. Owusu-Ansah and Mereku (2015) pointed out that without effective coordination, the program can become disjointed, affecting the learning experience of pre-service teachers. Additionally, Agyeman and Adu-Yeboah (2020) noted that logistical challenges can include aligning the program with academic calendars and ensuring compatible schedules for mentors and pre-service teachers. Effective coordination is essential to maintain the integrity and effectiveness of the STS program.

Sustainability

The lack of sustained funding and policy support threatens the long-term viability of the STS program. Agyeman and Adu-Yeboah (2020) emphasised that without consistent financial backing, the program may struggle to maintain its operations and impact. Moreover, Owusu-Ansah (2018) noted that policy changes can affect the program's structure and focus, requiring adaptations that may not always be feasible without adequate support. Ensuring the sustainability of the STS program is crucial for its continued success and contribution to teacher education in Ghana.

Assessment and Evaluation

Developing fair and reliable assessment tools for the STS program is a complex task. Agyeman and Adu-Yeboah (2020) highlighted the challenges in measuring the practical skills and reflective practices gained by pre-service teachers. Additionally, Owusu-Ansah (2018) noted that the assessment process must be both valid and manageable, which can be difficult to achieve given the diverse contexts in which pre-service teachers are placed. Effective assessment and

evaluation are essential for understanding the program's impact and identifying areas for improvement.

Attitudes and Expectations of Pre-Service Teachers

Pre-service teachers may enter the STS program with unrealistic expectations or preconceived notions about teaching. Agyeman and Adu-Yeboah (2020) found that these attitudes can affect their receptiveness to mentorship and their ability to adapt to the realities of the classroom. Moreover, Owusu-Ansah (2018) noted that addressing these attitudes is crucial for the professional development of pre-service teachers. Mentors play a key role in helping pre-service teachers align their expectations with the realities of teaching.

Geographical Barriers

Pre-service teachers placed in rural or remote schools face unique challenges due to geographical barriers. Ampadu (2017) observed that these teachers may have limited access to the support and resources available to their counterparts in urban areas. Additionally, Agyeman and Adu-Yeboah (2020) noted that geographical barriers can affect the quality of mentorship and the practical experiences of pre-service teachers. Addressing these barriers is essential for providing equitable learning opportunities for all pre-service teachers.

Teacher Attrition

High rates of teacher attrition can negate the investments made in pre-service teachers through the STS program. Owusu-Ansah (2018) discussed the factors contributing to teacher attrition, such as working conditions and remuneration, which can dissuade newly qualified teachers from remaining in the profession.

Agyeman and Adu-Yeboah (2020) emphasised the importance of creating supportive environments that encourage teachers to stay in the profession.

Integration of Technology

The digital divide between urban and rural areas in Ghana can limit the use of technology in the STS program. Koranteng and Adu-Yeboah (2019) found that this divide can affect both the teaching practices of pre-service teachers and their professional development opportunities. Additionally, Ampadu (2017) observed that the integration of technology is crucial for preparing teachers for the modern classroom, and efforts must be made to bridge this digital divide.

Policy Environment

Changes in education policy can have significant implications for the STS program. Agyeman and Adu-Yeboah (2020) noted that policy shifts can require pre-service teachers and mentors to adapt to new guidelines and expectations, which can be disruptive. Moreover, benefits emphasised the importance of aligning the program with national education policies to ensure its relevance and effectiveness.

Exposure to Diverse Teaching Contexts

Ensuring that pre-service teachers are exposed to a variety of teaching contexts is essential for their professional growth. Owusu-Ansah and Mereku (2015) discussed the challenges in providing diverse teaching experiences, which are crucial for developing adaptable and versatile educators. Additionally, Agyeman and Adu-Yeboah (2020) noted that exposure to different teaching contexts can enhance pre-service teachers' cultural competence and their ability to teach in various settings.

The Role of Colleges of Education in STS Implementation

Colleges of Education are pivotal in ensuring the success of STS by providing structured training, facilitating partnerships, and equipping student teachers with essential teaching tools. Their contributions can be categorised into several core areas:

Professional Development of Student Teachers

Colleges of Education provide a structured curriculum that blends pedagogical theories with practical applications. The STS program, integrated within the Bachelor of Education (B. Ed) curriculum, enhances the capacity of student teachers to create lesson plans, employ effective teaching methodologies, and adapt to a variety of classroom settings (National Teacher Education Curriculum Framework [NTECF], 2017). Research indicates that student teachers who participate in STS develop increased confidence in managing classrooms, implementing inclusive teaching strategies, and effectively assessing learner progress (Dorgbetor, 2019).

Establishing Sustainable School Partnerships

A vital aspect of the implementation of STS is the development of robust and sustainable partnerships between Colleges of Education and basic schools. These collaborations allow student teachers to engage in structured teaching placements under the guidance of experienced educators (T-TEL, 2018). Strong institutional connections ensure that student teachers receive ongoing support, which helps them refine their teaching skills and align their practices with Ghanaian education standards (Addai-Munumkum, 2019).

Mentorship and Pedagogical Support

Effective mentorship is vital for the success of School-based Teacher Supervision (STS). Colleges of Education bear the responsibility of training mentors who support student teachers in their professional growth. Lead mentors and tutors play a pivotal role in shaping the pedagogical perspectives of student teachers, offering constructive feedback and promoting reflective teaching practices (Bani, 2019). However, challenges such as inconsistent mentor engagement and a lack of structured mentorship frameworks have been identified as obstacles to effective STS implementation (Abudulai, 2021). To address these issues, it is essential to provide regular training for mentors and establish clear mentorship guidelines.

Curriculum Design and Resource Allocation

Colleges of Education have the crucial role of developing curricula that effectively integrate theoretical knowledge with practical teaching experiences. The School-Based Teaching (SBT) programme mandates that student teachers spend approximately 30% of their training period engaged in classroom placements, where they observe and conduct lessons under supervision (T-TEL, 2018). The successful implementation of this programme hinges on the adequate provision of teaching materials, including syllabi, instructional handbooks, and digital resources. However, research indicates that many partner schools lack sufficient teaching resources, which undermines the effectiveness of the STS programme (Abudulai, 2021). This situation underscores the need for strategic interventions by education policymakers to ensure a more equitable distribution of resources.

2.33 The Role of Pre-Service Teachers in STS Implementation

Pre-service teachers are the primary stakeholders in the STS program, responsible for applying pedagogical knowledge, engaging with learners, and demonstrating professional ethics. Their roles can be categorised into several key areas:

Application of Pedagogical Knowledge

STS offers pre-service teachers a valuable opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge in practical classroom settings. Through the design of lesson plans, the implementation of effective instructional strategies, and the assessment of student progress, pre-service teachers cultivate the competencies necessary for successful teaching, as outlined in the National Teacher Education Curriculum Framework (NTECF, 2017). Research indicates that pre-service teachers who actively participate in STS exhibit greater confidence in delivering lessons, engaging learners, and adapting their teaching approaches (Dorgbetor, 2019).

Classroom Management and Learner Engagement

Pre-service teachers are instrumental in cultivating positive learning environments by implementing effective classroom management techniques. This encompasses maintaining discipline, utilising inclusive teaching strategies, and promoting student-centred learning (T-TEL, 2018). Their capacity to manage diverse classrooms and address individual learning needs is vital for the success of student teaching staff (STS).

Reflective Practice and Professional Growth

A crucial aspect of STS is the focus on reflective practice, in which pre-service teachers examine their teaching experiences, pinpoint areas for improvement, and make necessary adjustments to enhance student outcomes (Bani, 2019). This reflective process promotes ongoing professional development, allowing pre-service teachers to adapt to the changing demands of education and the diverse needs of learners.

Collaboration with Mentors and Stakeholders

Pre-service teachers engage closely with mentors, cooperating teachers, and educational supervisors to enhance their teaching practices. Effective collaboration facilitates the receipt of constructive feedback, guidance, and support, which are essential for developing their instructional skills (Addai-Munumkum, 2019). Nevertheless, inconsistencies in mentorship and the limited availability of trained mentors present significant challenges in this area of student teaching supervision.

2.34 Ways of Enhancing the Supported Teaching in Schools (STS)

Programme in Ghana

Strengthening Mentorship Programmes

Effective mentorship is crucial in bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical teaching experience. However, many mentors lack the requisite training to provide structured guidance to pre-service teachers. To address this, professional development workshops should be organised to equip mentors with essential supervisory skills (Garza & Harter, 2016). Additionally, clear guidelines and expectations should be established to ensure consistency in mentoring practices (Orland-Barak & Wang, 2020). Providing incentives such

as recognition awards and career advancement opportunities can also motivate mentors to commit to their roles fully.

Improving Resource Allocation

A significant limitation of the STS programme in Ghana is the inadequate availability of teaching and learning materials (TLMs). Partner schools must be adequately resourced with textbooks, instructional materials, and digital tools to support pre-service teachers in delivering effective lessons (Oakes & Saunders, 2002). Government and institutional policies should prioritise infrastructure development, including the provision of adequate classroom furniture and learning aids (Ndirangu & Udoto, 2011). Expanding access to digital teaching resources will further enable pre-service teachers to integrate modern pedagogical approaches into their practice.

Enhancing Curriculum Familiarisation

The lack of alignment between the STS programme and contemporary curriculum standards is a major concern. Many mentors are unfamiliar with the new Bachelor of Education Curriculum, limiting their ability to provide informed guidance. Training sessions should be organised to familiarise mentors with curriculum developments and pedagogical innovations (Buabeng et al., 2020). Strengthening partnerships between colleges and partner schools can facilitate a cohesive approach to STS implementation, ensuring that pre-service teachers receive relevant training (Hall et al., 2008). Additionally, integrating subject-specific pedagogical training will equip pre-service teachers with specialised instructional skills required for diverse classroom settings.

Promoting Reflective Practice and Professional Growth

Reflective practice is an essential component of teacher education, enabling pre-service teachers to analyse their teaching experiences and improve their instructional strategies critically. Structured reflection sessions facilitated by trained college tutors can enhance the pedagogical competence of pre-service teachers (Halim et al., 2011). Encouraging peer collaboration through discussion forums and workshops can also foster experiential learning and continuous professional development (Zahid & Khanam, 2019). Furthermore, the introduction of mentorship assessment frameworks can help evaluate mentor effectiveness and identify areas for improvement.

Strengthening Institutional Collaboration

The effectiveness of STS is contingent on strong institutional partnerships between colleges of education and partner schools. Enhancing these partnerships through formal agreements such as Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) can clarify the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders, ensuring sustained engagement and support for pre-service teachers (T-TEL, 2018). Additionally, increasing government and non-governmental funding for STS-related activities will provide the financial stability necessary for programme sustainability and expansion. Collaborative initiatives between educational institutions and policymakers can further drive improvements in STS implementation and effectiveness.

2.34.1 Experiences of Pre-Service Teachers on Supported Teaching in School (STS) Programme

Through structured placements in diverse school settings, pre-service teachers engage in real-world teaching, applying pedagogical theories, developing instructional strategies, and refining professional skills (Darling-Hammond, 2006). This hands-on approach enhances confidence, adaptability, and problem-solving abilities, essential for effective teaching (Ell & Grudnoff, 2013). However, disparities in school resources and infrastructure, particularly in rural areas, present significant challenges (Asare & Nti, 2014). Many schools lack essential teaching aids, laboratories, and digital tools, which negatively affect the quality of learning experiences (Buabeng et al., 2020). The experiences of pre-service teachers in the STS program are varied and can significantly influence their preparedness for future teaching roles. One of the primary experiences for pre-service teachers in the STS program is the opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge in practical settings. According to a study by Adu-Yeboah and Ahia (2013), this application phase is crucial for pre-service teachers as it allows them to see the relevance of their academic learning in real-world teaching contexts. The study highlights that pre-service teachers often struggle with classroom management initially but improve significantly with continued practice and mentorship.

Mentorship is another key aspect of the STS program. Agyeman and Okyere (2014) found that the guidance and support provided by mentor teachers are invaluable for the professional development of pre-service teachers. Mentors not only assist with pedagogical techniques but also help pre-service teachers navigate the social and emotional aspects of teaching. This mentorship is

essential for building the confidence of pre-service teachers, as noted by Owusu-Ansah and Mereku (2015), who observed a positive correlation between mentorship quality and pre-service teachers' self-efficacy.

Additionally, mentorship plays a pivotal role in STS, guiding experienced educators to support knowledge transfer, classroom management, and pedagogical refinement (Conner & Sliwka, 2014). Nevertheless, inconsistencies in mentor availability and expertise impact the uniformity of support received by trainees, with some reporting inadequate supervision and limited constructive feedback (Asare & Nti, 2014). Another challenge arises in the implementation of learner-centred teaching methods, as large class sizes, insufficient materials, and rigid curriculum structures often compel trainees to adopt traditional lecture approaches instead of interactive and inquiry-based learning (MoE, 2017). Limited exposure to technological tools further restricts innovation in lesson delivery, highlighting the need for enhanced ICT integration (Buabeng et al., 2020).

Beyond pedagogical competencies, the STS programme plays a vital role in shaping the emotional and professional development of pre-service teachers. Engaging with classroom realities such as behavioural challenges, workload management, and administrative responsibilities cultivates resilience and adaptability (Ell & Grudnoff, 2013). Although many trainees initially experience anxiety, ongoing engagement and reflective practices foster confidence (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Those placed in under-resourced schools often face increased stress, highlighting the urgent need for robust

psychological support systems, peer collaboration, and structured mentoring (MoE, 2017).

To enhance the effectiveness of the STS programme, several measures should be implemented: reinforcing mentorship structures with clear guidelines for mentor selection and training (Conner & Sliwka, 2014), improving resource allocation to address urban-rural disparities (Buabeng et al., 2020), expanding ICT-based instructional training (MoE, 2017), introducing psychological support initiatives (Ell & Grudnoff, 2013), and promoting reflective practice through structured analysis sessions (Darling-Hammond, 2006). By addressing these challenges through policy refinements and enhanced support mechanisms, the STS programme can continue to produce highly skilled and well-prepared educators, ultimately contributing to improved teaching and learning outcomes in Ghana.

The STS program also exposes pre-service teachers to the diverse learning needs of students in Ghanaian classrooms. Twum-Danso (2018) conducted a study that revealed how this exposure fosters empathy and a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by students from different socio-economic backgrounds. This awareness is crucial for developing inclusive teaching practices that cater to the needs of all learners.

While the STS program offers numerous benefits, pre-service teachers face resistance from some experienced teachers who view them as inexperienced or a burden. Additionally, the logistical challenges of integrating pre-service teachers into schools, such as finding adequate supervision and resources, impact the effectiveness of the program. A study by Asare and Bennell (2017)

highlighted these challenges and called for a more structured and supportive integration process. Despite these challenges, the STS program has been successful in providing pre-service teachers with a realistic preview of their future profession. The program equips them with the practical skills and experiences necessary to transition smoothly into their roles as qualified teachers. As the educational landscape continues to evolve, the STS program remains a vital component in the preparation of future educators in Ghana.

Numerous studies underscore the positive impact of the STS Programme on student learning outcomes. According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), students taught by educators who have engaged in structured teaching practice tend to achieve better academic performance than those instructed by teachers with limited practical training. The STS Programme fosters the creation of instructional strategies that cater to diverse learning needs, thereby enhancing student understanding and engagement (Zeichner, 2017). Additionally, the programme improves classroom management skills, which directly affect student discipline and attentiveness. Research by Grossman et al. (2009) demonstrates that effective teacher training, supported by teaching practice, boosts student motivation and participation, leading to higher retention rates and greater academic success.

The relationship between effective teaching and student academic achievement is well established. The STS Programme allows pre-service teachers to refine their teaching methodologies, resulting in enhanced student performance. A meta-analysis conducted by Hattie (2009) indicated that teacher expertise plays a significant role in influencing student outcomes, with direct instructional support from trained educators leading to improved results. Furthermore,

research by Ronfeldt et al. (2014) demonstrates that pre-service teachers who engage in extensive field experiences during the STS are better prepared to tackle diverse learning challenges, ultimately contributing to improved student test scores and holistic development.

2.35 Challenges Faced by Student Teachers During Internship

The transition from theoretical learning to practical teaching during internship is a crucial phase in the professional development of pre-service Social Studies student teachers. Research highlights classroom management as a fundamental yet challenging component of effective teaching (Opoku-Asare et al., 2014). Studies by Anamuah-Mensah (2009) and Osei (2019) reveal that student teachers often struggle to balance classroom authority with fostering a conducive learning environment. These challenges include setting behavioural expectations, handling disruptions, and sustaining learners' engagement.

Maintaining discipline within the classroom is a critical challenge during an internship (Agbenyega, 2012). The ability to manage classroom behaviour effectively has implications for both student learning outcomes and teacher confidence. According to Amedahe and Gyimah (2016), many student teachers find it difficult to implement discipline strategies effectively, often due to a lack of prior experience in managing diverse learner behaviours. Furthermore, Amponsah et al. (2020) emphasise that classroom management skills are crucial for teacher retention, as ineffective discipline management contributes to professional dissatisfaction and attrition.

Lesson planning also presents a significant hurdle for student teachers (Essel et al., 2017). While teacher education programmes provide theoretical knowledge on curriculum design, the practical application in diverse classrooms remains a challenge. As Ofori and Yeboah (2021) note, the gap between ideal lesson plans formulated in teacher training institutions and the dynamic realities of classrooms often causes difficulties in lesson execution. Additionally, designing lessons to accommodate varied learning needs demands adaptability, a skill that many student teachers struggle to master (Nyamekye, 2018).

Differentiated instruction adds another layer of complexity to the internship experience (Sarfo & Adusei, 2015). Effective teaching requires tailoring instructional strategies to address diverse learning styles, abilities and needs within a single classroom. According to Donkor (2019), this challenge underscores the practical application of pedagogical theories in real classroom settings, requiring student teachers to develop a nuanced understanding of learner diversity. The need for inclusive education further heightens this challenge, as student teachers must cater to students with special educational needs (Ametepee & Anom-Owusu, 2017).

The pedagogical challenges encountered during internships underscore the transformative nature of this phase in teacher preparation. The difficulties associated with classroom management, lesson planning, and differentiated instruction highlight the complex transition from theory to practice. As student teachers navigate these pedagogical intricacies, their experiences contribute to ongoing discourse on teacher preparation and curriculum improvement in Ghanaian teacher education.

Interpersonal challenges significantly shape the internship experience, influencing student teachers' ability to foster effective relationships within the educational environment. Research underscores the importance of developing positive student-teacher relationships for successful teaching and learning (Tamakloe, 2020). Establishing rapport with students is essential for creating an inclusive and engaging classroom atmosphere (Owusu-Mensah, 2015). However, many student teachers struggle with this aspect due to limited experience in handling student dynamics (Adu-Gyamfi & Adinkrah, 2022).

Asserting authority while maintaining a supportive classroom environment is another common challenge (Oppong-Sekyere et al., 2019). The intern-teacher dynamic necessitates balancing discipline with approachability, a task that requires both confidence and adaptability. Odoom (2020) asserts that student teachers must cultivate professional assertiveness while ensuring mutual respect in their interactions with learners.

Additionally, effective communication with parents and colleagues presents further interpersonal complexities (Budu, 2016). Building strong relationships with parents enhances student learning, yet many student teachers feel unprepared to engage parents constructively (Asare & Amoako, 2021). Moreover, collaboration with mentor teachers and school administrators is crucial for professional development (Essuman & Ankomah, 2020). Studies indicate that challenges in adapting to school cultures and seeking guidance from experienced educators impact the internship experience (Ofori-Danso, 2018).

The interpersonal dimension of teaching extends beyond instructional concerns to encompass the socio-emotional aspects of education. Emotional intelligence, empathy, and cultural competence are essential for navigating these challenges (Sarfo, 2019). Developing these skills during an internship is vital for fostering inclusive and effective learning environments, ultimately shaping the long-term success of pre-service teachers.

Beyond pedagogical and interpersonal difficulties, the emotional toll of teaching during internships is a critical concern. The profession's demands necessitate resilience, as student teachers encounter varied stressors in classroom settings (Agyemang, 2017). Emotional strain arises from managing student behaviour, workload pressures, and self-doubt regarding instructional efficacy (Tawiah & Boateng, 2021).

Handling classroom-related stress requires emotional regulation and coping strategies (Osei, 2020). Research by Ofori and Asante (2019) reveals that student teachers often experience anxiety due to performance expectations, leading to feelings of inadequacy. Emotional highs and lows are inherent to teaching, with moments of fulfilment from student progress juxtaposed with frustrations over classroom challenges (Amoako et al., 2018).

Furthermore, balancing professional boundaries while maintaining personal investment in students' well-being adds to the emotional burden (Opoku & Adjei, 2022). Developing emotional resilience is essential for navigating these challenges effectively. As Aikins (2021) suggests, student teachers must cultivate strategies for managing stress, seeking mentorship, and maintaining a healthy work-life balance to sustain long-term career satisfaction.

Despite the advancements made in teacher education, Ghana continues to face numerous challenges that hinder the effective training and professional development of educators (Boadu, 2021). These challenges range from inadequate resources and outdated curricula to low teacher motivation and retention. Addressing these issues is critical to ensuring the production of well-trained teachers who can deliver quality education at all levels.

2.36 Quality of Teacher Education Programmes

A major challenge confronting teacher education in Ghana is the quality of training programs offered by colleges of education. Many institutions struggle with insufficient resources, outdated curricula, and a shortage of qualified faculty (Asare & Nti, 2014). These deficiencies undermine the effectiveness of teacher training and ultimately impact the quality of instruction provided in classrooms. Asare and Nti (2014) further assert that these challenges compromise the calibre of teachers being trained and, in turn, affect the overall educational standards in schools.

Furthermore, many teacher education programs in Ghana place a strong emphasis on theoretical knowledge, often at the expense of practical training. While efforts have been made to improve hands-on experiences, such as incorporating extended teaching practicums, the implementation remains inconsistent. Many student teachers struggle with real-world classroom challenges due to inadequate preparation in areas such as lesson planning, differentiated instruction, and effective classroom management (Awuah, 2024).

2.36.1 Low Status of the Teaching Profession

Another critical issue affecting teacher education is the low status of the teaching profession in Ghana. Teaching is frequently perceived as a fallback career for individuals who fail to secure employment in other sectors. This perception has led to a decline in the enthusiasm and commitment of aspiring teachers. According to Chung and Lee (2022), as well as Asare and Nti (2014), this negative societal perception contributes to low motivation among teachers and a high attrition rate within the profession.

Moreover, many teachers experience job dissatisfaction due to poor remuneration, limited career growth opportunities, and challenging working conditions. The lack of incentives, professional recognition, and structured career progression further deters talented individuals from pursuing or remaining in the teaching profession. Addressing these concerns through salary improvements, better career prospects, and enhanced professional recognition is essential to elevating the status of teaching and attracting high-calibre individuals into the profession.

2.36.2 Implementation Challenges of the "In-In-Out" Program

The "In-In-Out" program, which entails two years of on-campus training followed by a year of practical teaching, has been criticised for its shortcomings. Eshun and Ashun (2013) highlight that some mentors assigned to guide trainees provide inadequate support, reducing the effectiveness of the program. The lack of instructional materials and time constraints further exacerbate these challenges, making it difficult for trainee teachers to gain meaningful hands-on experience (Eshun & Ashun, 2013; Abudu & Donkor, 2014).

For this program to be effective, there is a need for structured mentorship programs, well-defined assessment frameworks, and sufficient instructional resources. Additionally, collaboration between teacher training institutions and schools should be strengthened to ensure that trainee teachers receive adequate guidance and practical exposure.

2.37 Theoretical-Practical Gap

One of the most pressing concerns in teacher education is the persistent disconnect between theoretical instruction and practical classroom application. Many teacher education programs focus heavily on academic content, leaving trainees ill-prepared for real-world teaching challenges. As noted by Poku et al. (2013), newly trained teachers often struggle with essential teaching skills such as classroom management, student engagement, and adaptive teaching methods.

Although initiatives like extended teaching practicums have been introduced to bridge this gap, they face significant obstacles. Limited access to modern teaching resources, insufficient mentorship, and inadequate opportunities for experiential learning continue to impede progress (Awuah, 2024). To address this issue, teacher training institutions must integrate experiential learning approaches, encourage active mentorship, and provide access to contemporary pedagogical tools.

2.38 Resource Constraints in Colleges of Education

Many colleges of education in Ghana face serious infrastructural and financial limitations. The scarcity of modern instructional materials, outdated teaching methodologies, and a lack of digital learning tools significantly affect the quality of teacher training (Ministry of Education, Ghana, 2019). Additionally,

inadequate funding for research and faculty development restricts the ability of institutions to innovate and implement best practices in teacher education.

The absence of well-equipped libraries, laboratories, and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) facilities further weakens teacher education.

With the increasing importance of technology in education, teacher training institutions must be equipped with up-to-date technological resources to prepare teachers for 21st-Century classrooms.

2.39 Teacher Motivation and Retention

The issue of teacher motivation and retention remains a major concern. Despite efforts to improve teacher remuneration, many educators continue to experience low job satisfaction due to poor working conditions, a lack of professional development opportunities, and limited career advancement prospects (Aziabah, 2018).

One of the most significant challenges in teacher retention is the uneven distribution of teachers between rural and urban areas. Rural schools often face difficulties in attracting and retaining qualified educators, leading to disparities in educational quality (Adjei, 2021). Teachers posted to remote areas frequently experience inadequate housing, poor infrastructure, and limited access to essential services, making these locations less attractive for long-term service.

2.40 Conceptual Framework

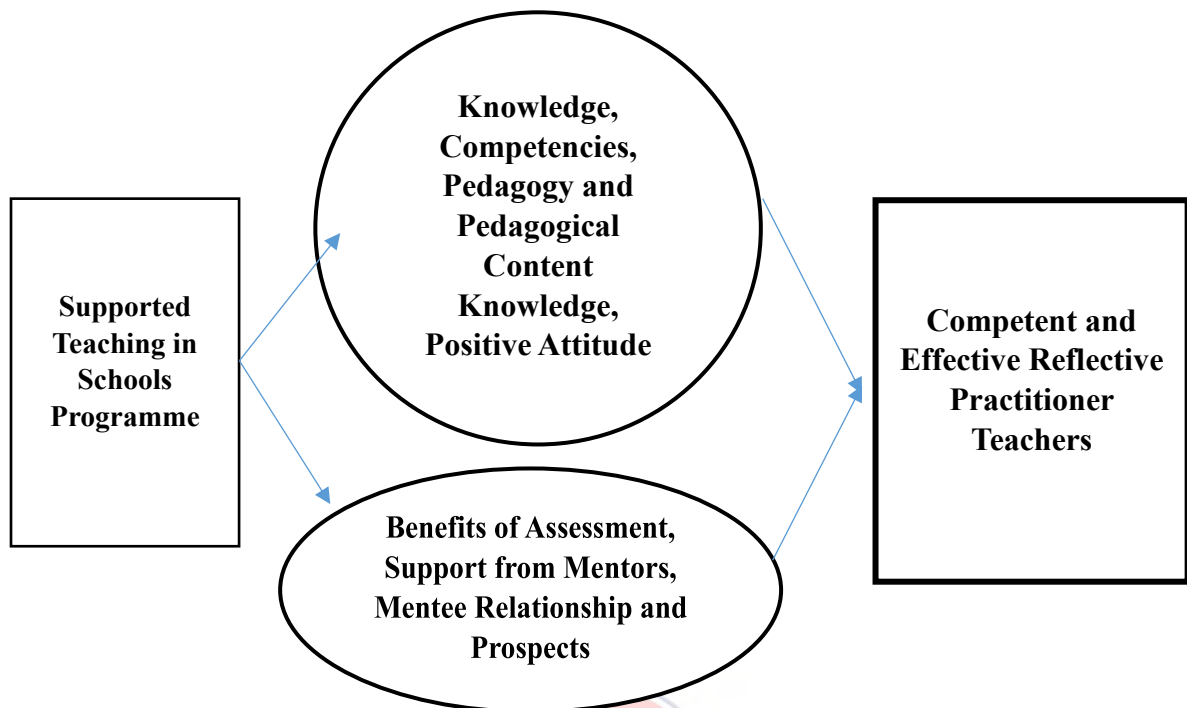


Fig. 2: Conceptual Framework for Supported Teaching in Schools

Source: Researchers' Construct (2024)

As schematically presented in the Conceptual Framework, supported teaching in schools is the focus of the study, which is meant to bridge the gap between theory and practice in teacher preparation and development. The schematic diagram shows the views of student teachers as to how supported teaching helps them to acquire the needed knowledge, competencies and values; the benefits, assessments and support received from mentors and the prospects of the STS. Ultimately, a combination of all these factors should help the trainee teachers become competent and effective reflective practitioners.

2.41 Summary of Literature Review

The literature review sheds light on issues relating to teacher turnover as determined by the research questions. The review was organised into three themes. These were theoretical review, empirical review, and conceptual review.

From the literature reviewed, it was evident that pre-service Social Studies teachers had varied experiences with the STS programme. There is a plethora of research findings that indicate that the STS programme provides an enormous benefit to pre-service Social Studies teachers. It is gleaned from the literature that even though the STS programme is saddled with some challenges, it has numerous prospects in shaping teacher education in Ghana. This view is stressed in the literature that getting more teachers, more qualified and 21st-Century teachers with 21st-Century competencies requires programmes such as the STS. This implies that attention should also be focused on making the STS programme effective to produce the benefits thereof for teacher education in Ghana.



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology that was employed in carrying out the study. It begins with the philosophical underpinnings of the study, research approach, research design, population of the study, as well as the sampling techniques that were used in choosing the sample for the study. Thereafter, it discusses the research instruments as well as their validity and reliability, data collection procedures, and data analysis. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the ethical issues that were adhered to during the study's conduct.

3.1 Philosophical Underpinning

Research philosophy underpins how a study views reality, generates knowledge, and selects appropriate methods. This study explicitly states its philosophical orientation to ensure methodological coherence and credibility. The study was anchored in the pragmatist research philosophy. Pragmatism assumes that social reality is both objective and subjective, depending on the nature of the problem under investigation. The researcher, therefore, applies what is appropriate and practicable for the study. Rather than committing exclusively to either positivism or interpretivism, pragmatism prioritises the research problem and supports the use of multiple approaches to generate practical and meaningful solutions.

The adoption of pragmatism is appropriate for this study because it seeks to investigate both measurable patterns and lived experiences of pre-service Social Studies teachers regarding the Supported Teaching in Schools (STS)

programme. While some aspects of the study require objective measurement, such as identifying general trends and shared experiences through questionnaires, other aspects demand an in-depth understanding of participants' subjective meanings, perceptions, and contextual realities, which are best captured through qualitative methods. Pragmatism legitimises the integration of these approaches within a single study.

From an ontological perspective, this study aligns with constructionism, which assumes that reality is socially constructed through human interaction and experience. The experiences of pre-service teachers regarding STS are not fixed or uniform; rather, they vary depending on school context, mentorship relationships, institutional support, and personal expectations. Recognising these multiple realities allows the researcher to meaningfully interpret participants' accounts instead of imposing a single objective explanation.

Epistemologically, the study acknowledges that knowledge can be generated both through objective measurement and subjective interpretation. This position supports the use of questionnaires to obtain generalizable insights while also employing interviews to co-construct meaning with participants. Methodologically, the study adopts a mixed methods approach, consistent with the pragmatist worldview. The combination of multiple methods also enhanced the credibility of the findings through triangulation.

Despite its strengths, the pragmatist and mixed methods approach is not without limitations. One notable weakness is the complexity involved in integrating quantitative and qualitative data, which demands careful planning and methodological rigour. However, given the exploratory and experience-based

nature of this study, these limitations are outweighed by the approach's flexibility and practical relevance.

3.2 Research Approach

This study was rooted in mixed-method approach. The rationale for employing the mixed method in the present study was to reconcile the quantitative data with the qualitative data of the respondents for in-depth understanding and credible results on the experiences of pre-service Social Studies teachers on the STS programme. According to Bryman (2008), "by combining the two methodologies in a single study, the researcher's claim for the validity of his/her conclusions is enhanced; they can be shown to provide mutual confirmation" (p.131). The mixed method approach was deemed appropriate because, with it, it is possible to describe the conditions, situations and events of the phenomenon (Supported Teaching in Schools) in the chosen colleges without manipulating any variable. More so, the researcher believes that a combination of both qualitative and quantitative designs avoids the shortcomings of using a single design by supplementing a survey questionnaire with an interview component to strengthen the findings (Cresswell, 2009).

The decision to use these combined approaches for the study also allowed the researcher the opportunity to explore the research hypothesis of the study from more than one angle for a better and broader understanding of issues about a social phenomenon (Creswell, 2009; Bryman, 2008; Grix, 2004). This implies that the multiple methodological approaches enhanced more reliable information on the study of the experiences of pre-service Social Studies teachers on the STS programme. This study, therefore, adopted a quantitative

priority where a greater emphasis was placed on the quantitative methods (descriptive and inferential statistics), and the qualitative method (interview schedule) was used in a secondary role. The overall purpose of this design was to use a qualitative strand to verify initial quantitative results (Creswell, 2003), which fits the mixed-methods approach. The strengths and weaknesses of this mixed-methods design have been widely discussed in the literature (Creswell, 2003, 2005). Its advantages include straightforwardness and opportunities for the exploration of the quantitative results in more detail. This design can be especially useful when unexpected results arise from a quantitative study (Morse, 1991). The limitations of this design are the lengthy time and the availability of resources to collect and analyse both types of data. It is not easy to implement. To overcome this limitation, the quantitative and qualitative data were collected concurrently.

3.3 Research Design

The study employed the sequential explanatory mixed design. Morgan (2007) observed that the sequential explanatory design is the most commonly used mixed methods approach in studies. Creswell (2009) explained that this design follows in two distinct interactive phases. It commences with the collection and analysis of quantitative data to address the research questions. This is followed by the subsequent collection and analysis of qualitative data, which emanates from the findings of the first quantitative phase. Thus, the qualitative data are collected and analysed second in the sequence and help explain or elaborate on the quantitative results obtained in the first phase (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011). It is construed from the preceding views that the sequential explanatory design involves both the quantitative and qualitative approaches in a single

study and that qualitative data and their analyses are derived from the quantitative results with the intent to validate the previous results. However, there is an imbalance in weight apportioned to the two phases, where more weight is usually accorded to the quantitative element of the study than the qualitative element (Andrew & Halcomb, 2009). In essence, the qualitative phase supplements the results attained in the previous quantitative phase.

This design was deemed fit for the study because the researcher believed that the views and experiences of pre-service Social Studies teachers already exist, and therefore could be investigated through the quantitative approach. The qualitative approach became necessary to throw more light on their views and experiences, which resulted in the results at the quantitative stage. Even though this design helps to enhance, complement, and in some cases follow up on unexpected quantitative findings (Creswell, 2009), it is not without challenges. Halcomb and Andrew (2009) noted that the sequential explanatory design requires sufficient time and resources for the collection and analysis of one data set before commencing the second data collection. Being aware of these challenges, the researcher considered the duration of the study, and it was assured that the time was adequate for the study to be completed without delay. Besides, the researcher was convinced that the resources available would support the completion of the study.

3.4 Population of the Study

The population of this study comprised all the pre-service Social Studies teachers in the Colleges of Education in the Eastern and Greater Accra Regions of Ghana. The forty-six (46) Colleges of Education in Ghana comprise five major zones.

The EGA (All College in Eastern and Greater Accra of Ghana), the ASHBA (All colleges in the Ashanti and Brong Ahafo of Ghana), the CENTWEST (All colleges in the Central and Western of Ghana), the VOTI (All the colleges in the Volta and Oti Regions of Ghana) and the North Zone (All the colleges in the Northern of Ghana) Among the five (5), only one zone was selected and this was the EGA zone, thus, Eastern and Greater Accra Regions of Ghana. Therefore, the total population for the study was all Level 300 pre-service Social Studies in the Colleges of Education in the Eastern and Greater Accra Regions of Ghana. The colleges within the population for the study were nine (9), with level 300 students of approximately 4,630 students. The reason for the selection of the Eastern and Greater Accra Zone was because of the cosmopolitan nature (peri-urban) of the regions, and also the fact that they are the regions that are populated with social studies pre-service teachers. Scientifically, researches in this area were also dominated by colleges within the other four zones, hence the choice of colleges in the Eastern and Greater Accra regions.

The target population is therefore a subset of the total population. The accessible population, on the other hand, is a portion of the population after taking out all individuals of the target population who will or may not participate or who cannot be accessed during the study period (Bartlett et al., 2001). Therefore, the

accessible population is the final group of participants from which data is collected by surveying either all its members or a sample drawn from it. The accessible population is therefore a subject of the target population. Hence, in this study, the accessible population included all level 300 pre-service teachers in the Colleges of Education within the Eastern and Greater Accra Regions of Ghana who were offering Social Studies at the time of data collection. The reason behind this choice of population is that pre-service teachers should experience the STS programme for at least two years before they can adequately share their views and experiences of the programme.

3.5 Sample and Sampling Procedures

The study adopted a mixed methods design involving both quantitative and qualitative phases. Accordingly, different sample sizes and sampling procedures were used for each phase to address the specific purposes of the study.

For the quantitative phase, the sample comprised all four hundred and eighty-seven (487) pre-service Social Studies teachers drawn from four (4) Colleges of Education in the Eastern and Greater Accra Regions of Ghana. These colleges were Presbyterian College of Education, Akropong; Mount Mary College of Education, Somanya; Abetifi Presbyterian College of Education; and Accra College of Education. The decision to include all 487 pre-service teachers was to ensure full representation of the target population within the selected colleges.

For the qualitative phase, a smaller sample of fifteen (15) pre-service Social Studies teachers was selected from the same group of 487 participants. This number was considered adequate for obtaining in-depth insights into

participants' experiences while allowing for manageable data collection and analysis. Two sampling techniques were employed in this study: census sampling and convenience sampling. For the quantitative phase, census sampling was used. This involved collecting data from all 487 pre-service Social Studies teachers in the four selected Colleges of Education. The use of census sampling ensured that every member of the target population had the opportunity to participate in the study, thereby enhancing the representativeness of the findings.

For the qualitative phase, convenience sampling was employed. From the quantitative sample, fifteen (15) pre-service Social Studies teachers who were lead mentees and were readily available and willing to participate were selected for interviews. The interviews were conducted after school hours to avoid disruption of academic activities. This approach allowed the researcher to engage participants who could provide rich and relevant information about their experiences with the Supported Teaching in Schools (STS) programme.

3.6 Data Collection Instruments

Two instruments were used for collecting data for the study. These were questionnaires and a semi-structured interview guide. Kothari (2004) observed that a questionnaire provides the opportunity to use large samples in collecting data that are more reliable. Therefore, the use of the questionnaire is economical in terms of the expenditure of resources in a study.

Another rationale which informed the choice of the questionnaire in this study was based on Parahoo's (2006) assertion that the questionnaire was appropriate to collect information on the views and experiences of participants. This study

was concerned with the views and experiences of pre-service Social Studies teachers on Supported Teaching in Schools. Another justification for the use of the questionnaire was its ability to ensure anonymity and authenticity in data collection. This claim was alluded to by Bryman (2008), who maintained that the questionnaire affords freedom for respondents to give their answers without being interfered with or influenced by the researcher, and thus enhances more thoughtful answers (Bryman, 2008). Despite these merits, the use of the questionnaire has weaknesses. Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh and Sorensen (2006) cited low response rates and possibly unreliable responses as drawbacks of using the questionnaire. However, the researcher endeavoured to increase the response rate by encouraging respondents to fill out the questionnaires and submit them promptly. Besides, the questionnaire items were simple and few to encourage quick response and submission.

The questionnaire items were closed-ended. The closed-ended questionnaire was chosen because it helped to reduce the burden of respondents providing their answersthe quick collection of quantifiable data for statistical analysis (Polit & Beck, 2010). Except for the socio-demographic information, the rest of the questionnaire items comprised the Likert-type items. Sarantakos (2005) supported the choice of the Likert-type scale in terms of a high degree of validity, even if the scale contains a few items, and has a very high reliability.

The questionnaire was made up of four sections. Section A gathered information on the respondents, such as gender, age, and level. These variables were categorical, such that respondents were required to tick only one option as related to them. Section B contained items on the views of pre-service Social

Studies teachers on the benefits of the Supported Teaching in Schools programme. The questionnaire asked the participants to rate their views on the benefits, which were measured on a 5-point Likert scale such that Strongly Agree (SA) = 5, Agree (A) = 4, Neutral (N) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2, and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1. Section C of the questionnaire gathered the views of the participants on the prospects of the Supported Teaching in Schools programme. This contained items on a 5-point Likert scale such that strongly agree (SA) = 5, Agree (A) = 4, Neutral (N) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2, and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1. The respondents were required to choose only one option to reflect their views. Section D of the questionnaire was on the challenges of the Supported Teaching in Schools programme. These items were also measured on a 5-point Likert scale such that Strongly Agree (SA) = 5, Agree (A) = 4, Neutral (N) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2, and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1. The respondents were asked to choose only one option for each item to reflect their perception. Finally, Section E contained items that solicited the views of the respondents on measures that could be implemented to improve the Supported Teaching in Schools programme.

A structured interview guide was used to collect qualitative data from selected pre-service Social Studies teachers during the second phase of the study. The guide contained predetermined questions designed to elicit detailed information on participants' experiences of the Supported Teaching in Schools (STS) programme. The questions in the interview guide focused on key issues such as participants' experiences during STS, the support received from mentors and schools, challenges encountered, and perceived benefits of the programme. The interview guide ensured that the same set of questions was administered to all

participants, thereby maintaining consistency across interviews while allowing respondents to explain their views in detail.

The interview guide also allowed the researcher to seek clarification where necessary and to probe responses for further explanation in order to obtain rich and relevant data. The interviews were conducted face-to-face at times convenient to the participants and were guided strictly by the interview schedule.

3.7 Pre-testing of Instruments

The pre-testing of the instruments was done among pre-service Social Studies teachers in L300 in the Colleges of Education in the Central Region of Ghana. The choice of L300 pre-service Social Studies teachers in Colleges of Education in the Central Region of Ghana was based on the views of Kusi (2012) that participants in a pilot study should have similar characteristics as those in the study. The sample size for the pre-test was 60 participants, which was within Cooper and Schilder's (2011) rule of thumb that 10% of the sample (487) should constitute the pre-test.

3.7.1 Validity

Polit and Beck (2010) defined the validity of an instrument as the degree to which the instrument measures what it is intended to measure. This implies that the validity of an instrument refers to the extent to which it measures exactly the underlying construct in a study. In other words, the instrument should accurately and adequately address all aspects of the concepts being studied. Parahoo (2006) noted that face validity and content validity are the validity issues most frequently reported in the literature.

Face validity checks that the instrument appears to measure the concept being studied (LoBiondo-Wood & Haber, 2010). The researcher followed the suggestion of Jones and Rattray (2010) that face validity can be ensured by getting friends to test-run the instrument to see if the questions appear to be relevant, clear and unambiguous. Therefore, the instruments were given to course mates on the Doctor of Philosophy programme in the Department of Social Studies Education, University of Education, Winneba, to read through the items, and their views on the length of some items and ambiguities were considered in fine-tuning the instrument.

According to Sekaran (2006), “content validity ensures that a measure includes an adequate and representative set of items to cover a concept, and it can be ensured by expert agreement.” This indicates that content validity is concerned with the extent to which an instrument comprehensively measures the issues contained in a study, and it requires the expertise of people who are knowledgeable in the field of study. Therefore, the instruments were submitted to the supervisors to check that the questions reflect the concepts being studied and that the scope of the questions is adequate. These supervisors were lecturers and researchers who were deemed to have gained sufficient research experience on the Supported Teaching in Schools Programme. Hence, they made suggestions on the adequacy of the instruments in measuring the variables outlined in the study.

3.7.2 Reliability

Reliability refers to the stability and consistency with which an instrument measures a concept and produces similar results over repeated trials (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). In this study, the reliability of the questionnaire was assessed through internal consistency, which examines the extent to which the items in the instrument are uniform and reflect the same underlying construct (Cooper & Schindler, 2011). Cronbach's alpha, the most commonly used statistic for measuring internal consistency (Field, 2005), was employed for this purpose. Values of Cronbach's alpha between 0.7 and 0.8 are generally considered acceptable, while values above 0.8 indicate good internal consistency (Field, 2005).

The results of the reliability analysis showed that the sections of the questionnaire demonstrated acceptable to good internal consistency. For instance, the section on demographic information yielded an alpha of 0.75, perceptions of the STS programme recorded 0.82, benefits of mentor support scored 0.79, and challenges encountered during the STS programme achieved 0.81. These results indicate that the questionnaire items were sufficiently consistent in measuring their intended constructs, thereby confirming the reliability of the instrument for collecting data in this study.

3.7.3 Trustworthiness Criteria

Unlike quantitative researchers who rely on validity and reliability criteria to assess the quality of their research, qualitative researchers use the trustworthiness criteria. Even though researchers may differ in their terminologies, the most widely used criterion for evaluating qualitative researchers is trustworthiness, developed by Lincoln and Guba (1985). "The

purpose of trustworthiness in qualitative research is to support the argument that the inquiry's findings are worth paying attention to" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Initially, the trustworthiness criteria include credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability.

Credibility "refers to establishing that the outcomes of qualitative research are true from the perspective of the participants in the research" (Trochim, 2006). It is inferred from this view that since a qualitative study is subjective, the researcher ought to demonstrate that the findings are accurate reflections of reality. The purpose of qualitative studies is to understand a phenomenon of interest from the participants' perspective. Therefore, Trochim (2006) argued that it is only the participants who can correctly judge the credibility of the results. This is the parallel criterion to internal validity. Credibility refers to establishing that the outcomes of qualitative research are accurate from the perspective of the participants in the research (Trochim, 2006). The author states that "it is only the participants who can. It emphasises ensuring that the representations of the research participants' socially constructed realities actually match what the participants intended. A range of techniques to ensure this match includes:

- lengthy research involvement to build trust and rapport and to collect sufficient data;
- use of reflection using a different person to discuss ideas and test out findings;
- developing a thorough analysis that accounts for negative cases by refining the analysis to produce the best possible explanation of the phenomenon being studied;

- checking data, analysis and interpretations with participants;
- making sure that the researchers' preconceived expectations about what the research will reveal are not privileged over the social constructions of the participant by regularly recording these and challenging them during the analysis of the data."

Credibility can also be established through member checking (Miles & Huberman, 1984). It is a process by which data, analytic categories, interpretations and conclusions were made available to the participants from whom data were collected to check their intentions and detect errors. The researcher ensured the credibility of the results by asking the interviewees to read the interview transcripts, which contained the information shared during the interview, and affirmed that they were true representations of their views. Indeed, Shenton (2004) maintained that this is one of the ways credibility can be addressed.

Dependability refers to the stability of data over time and under different conditions (Trochim, 2006). According to Riege (2003), dependability is similar to the notion of reliability in quantitative research, which shows indications of stability and consistency in the process of inquiry. To ensure dependability, the interview guide was pre-tested to ensure that data collection was systematic. That is to say, care was taken to ensure that the research process was logical, observable, and documented reflexively by giving a detailed account of the research process.

Confirmability refers to objectivity, which is the potential for congruence between two or more independent people about the data's accuracy, relevance, or meaning (Polit & Beck, 2010). It is also described as the standard to which the results could be confirmed or corroborated by others (Trochim, 2006). To

achieve this, the researcher documented the procedures for checking and rechecking the data throughout the study. Besides, the development of the interview questions was based on theoretical foundations as discussed in Chapter Two.

Trochim (2006) stated that transferability refers to the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be generalised to other contexts or settings. The qualitative researcher can enhance transferability by doing a thorough work of describing the research context and the assumptions that were central to the research so that the person who wishes to transfer the results to a different context is then responsible for making the judgment of how sensible the transfer is (Trochim, 2006). In essence, from a qualitative perspective, transferability is primarily the responsibility of the one doing the generalising. Even though the researcher did not intend to generalise the findings of this study, the setting for the study was vividly described so that anybody who wishes to generalise the findings to other contexts could identify the similarities in the settings.

Dependability refers to the parallel to reliability in quantitative studies. Dependability refers to whether the findings are consistent and whether the same findings would be repeated given the same circumstances or context. This is slightly different from reliability, where the same findings would be expected from a different context or investigator, as is the case with a survey. Given these considerations, qualitative researchers tend to see reliability and validity as far fewer clear-cut concepts than quantitative researchers do. Dependability calls for recording all of the changes to produce a reliable/ dependable account of the emerging research focus that may be understood and evaluated by others.

3.8 Data Collection Procedures

According to Kombo and Tromp (2006), data collection is the process of gathering specific information to prove or refute some facts. Polit and Beck (2010) also defined data collection as the gathering of information needed to address a research problem. Therefore, data collection is the process of generating information through the use of research instruments such as the interview guide, questionnaire, and observation checklist. Researchers like Saunders et al. (2012) opined that a gatekeeper can initially be used to get access to research sites and respondents. Therefore, the researcher had an introductory letter from the Department of Social Studies Education, University of Education, Winneba, which helped to get access to the Colleges. The researcher contacted the College Principals, discussed the purpose of the study with them, and sought permission to carry out the study. Having secured permission, the researcher then visited the Department of Social Sciences and discussed the study with the Heads of Departments and the pre-service Social Studies teachers, after which their consent was sought.

The researcher distributed the questionnaires to the respondents and encouraged them to answer and return them immediately. The presence of the researcher at the time of data collection ensured that any issues that arose were addressed. The prompt response and collection of the questionnaires helped to increase the response rate. However, some of the respondents were unable to fill in the questionnaires and return them on the same day. Therefore, the researcher made follow-up visits to the colleges to collect the questionnaires. The colleges were reminded through phone calls and text messages to assist the pre-service Social

Studies teachers in completing the questionnaires and submitting them. The returned questionnaires were enveloped and sealed.

After the administration of the questionnaires, the interviews were conducted. The interviews were carried out after school to forestall the disruption of instructional time. The researcher and the interviewee agreed on a venue for the interview, which was carefully selected to ensure confidentiality. Before the actual interview, the researcher developed a rapport with the interviewees through exchanging pleasantries and self-introductions. The researcher outlined the purpose of the interviews and explained the procedure for the interactions. Based on the expert opinion that a face-to-face interview is more personal and affords easier exploration of respondents' experiences in-depth (Macnee & McCabe, 2008), the researcher adopted the face-to-face interview protocol, where the researcher asked questions, and the respondents provided their opinions on them. Besides, the face-to-face nature of the interviews made the interaction more natural and conversational. To ensure that the researcher paid attention to the interactions, the interviews were videotaped after permission was sought and granted by the respondents. The interviews were also audiotaped to serve as backup in the event of data loss or mechanical malfunction of the gadgets.

However, the researcher made a few notes to supplement the video and audio tapes. After each interview session, the tapes were played to the respondents to confirm that the opinions expressed during the interviews were the true reflections of their views. The interviewees were allowed to alter their views or rephrase their opinions when they raised concerns. When all necessary additions

and modifications were done and affirmed by the interviewees, the researcher thanked them for ending the sessions.

3.9 Data Analysis Procedures

The quantitative data was collected, followed by the qualitative data analysis. Moreover, the analysis of data was made regarding the research questions. At the quantitative stage, the researcher read through all the filled-in questionnaires and eliminated those which were not answered as well as those that had a lot of missing data. This was done to make sure that the missing data would not distort the findings of the study. The questionnaires were then coded. According to Boeije (2010), coding is the process of categorising, assigning, or labelling segments of data with a word, a short phrase or a short name. This means that coding helps to group data for identification. In this study, the data were coded using numbers. For instance, the variable gender was coded such that 1 represented male and 2 represented female.

The data were then imputed into the Statistical Product for Service Solutions (SPSS) version 28. SPSS is an analytical software commonly used in the analysis of quantifiable data. The choice of SPSS was influenced by the advantages enumerated by statisticians in using SPSS for analysis, such as the ability to process large amounts of data, provide a more convenient platform for performing statistical tests, and its ability to link numerically coded data to its original meaning (Robbins, 2012). In inputting the data into SPSS, the codes were fed into the software to represent each variable. For instance, for the variable gender, 1 was entered into the software to represent males, and 2 was entered to represent females. After all the data were entered into the software,

preliminary analyses were run to check missing data, outliers, and test assumptions that underlie parametric statistics. These assumptions included equality of variance required for the independent samples t-test and analysis of variance (ANOVA). Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data and provide answers to the research questions. According to Field (2005), researchers use descriptive statistics to present data in an organised and reduced manner. The descriptive statistics used included mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentages, and the data were organised in tables.

Analysis of the Qualitative Data

The qualitative data were analysed manually. The researcher, after transcription, played and listened to the recorded tapes, after which the verbal information was transcribed. Data transcription involves listening to each of the interviews and writing the information verbatim into text (Polit & Beck, 2010). The researcher, therefore, wrote the verbal information captured in the video and audio tapes into text data for analysis. After the transcription, the researcher played the tapes and compared the information to the texts, and all omissions were identified and corrected. The texts were read through thoroughly, and all spelling errors were corrected. Open coding was therefore carried out by identifying the recurring words, followed by axial coding. The thematic approach was therefore used to analyse the text data. Braun and Clarke (2006) noted that thematic analysis involves a detailed method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. The thematic approach was chosen because the analysis of the interview data was done according to the research objectives and questions, which constituted themes. The researcher

looked for patterns that described the themes that emerged from the data and aligned them with the research objectives and the questions.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

In research, it is pertinent that researchers adhere to ethical issues when their intended research involves human beings (Polit & Beck, 2010). Research ethics refers to a system of moral values that is concerned with the degree to which research procedures adhere to professional, legal and sociological obligations to the study participants (Polit & Beck, 2010). The ethical issues relate to the researcher's ability to protect the participants from harm, respect their privacy and dignity, and ensure that no participant suffers any discomfort as a result of the information offered during the study. The ethical issues complied with in this study included access, informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity.

About Saunders et al. (2012), who view that a gatekeeper can initially be used to get access to other respondents, the researcher had an introductory letter from the Department of Social Studies Education, University of Education, Winneba, which gave the researcher access to the Colleges of Education and the participants. Informed consent requires that participants have adequate information regarding the research, are capable of understanding the information contained in the study, and have the power of free choice, enabling them to consent or decline participation in the research (Polit & Beck, 2010). This implies that the participation of the teachers in the study was voluntary after all relevant information concerning the study was provided. Therefore, before consent was sought, the researcher gave details of the nature and purpose of the research, those who would have access to the data, and the intended

outcome of the study. The participants were given adequate time to consider their participation, and those who agreed to participate in the study signed a consent form.

Confidentiality is maintained by not disclosing the information shared to any other parties without consent, and by avoiding attributing information in the findings which would identify the participants (Parahoo, 2006). To maintain confidentiality, all pre-service teacher interviews were conducted after school. The information provided in the questionnaire and interviews was kept safe from public access by protecting it on the computer with passwords and destroying all questionnaires after the data were fed into SPSS. The video and audio tapes were also deleted after the study. Anonymity occurs when nobody, including the researcher, is able to link a participant to the information for that person (Polit & Beck, 2010). To achieve this, no names of the participants were written on the questionnaires or mentioned during the interviews. Instead, codes which had no resemblance to the participants were used to protect participants' identities as suggested by Lodico, Spaulding and Voegtler (2010).

Confidentiality ensures that the researcher does not disclose information provided in a study to other persons without the consent of the research participants (Tabatabaei & Tayebi, 2022; Bachman & Schutt, 2020). In other words, confidentiality involves keeping any information in a study classified from others (Dubey & Kothari, 2022). Prospective participants of a study will decline to participate in a study when they feel that their confidentiality is compromised, which means the researcher would divulge information given out in a study to authorities (Silverman & Patterson, 2022). These authors admonish

researchers to uphold the confidentiality of research participants because a betrayal of confidentiality could occasion legal proceedings against researchers. According to van Thiel (2022), researchers need to have an agreement with research participants about how data generated in a study will be used. Therefore, the researcher informed the participants that the information gathered from the study was for academic purposes, particularly for this thesis. The researcher also ensured that the data provided in the study were protected in a safe that was inaccessible to others. Also, data captured in SPSS on the laptop was protected with passcodes. This study ensured the confidentiality of the information shared by the respondents by not sharing such data with any third party. Also, the data collected was used for the purpose of the research only.

Anonymity ensures that the participants are not linked to the data provided in a study (Hair et al., 2020). Anonymity means that no recognising evidence, such as the name and phone number of research participants, is collected, so the data collected cannot be associated with a particular participant (Cirucci & Pruchniewska, 2022). These authors explain that research that involves questionnaire administration about participants' opinions, attitudes, and habits enhances anonymity. Cirucci and Pruchniewska (2022) further recommend that anonymity is enhanced when information collected in a study is publicly reported in aggregates, and pseudonyms are used in place of the real names of the participants. Anonymity in research is vital because it enhances participants' willingness to provide candid data for a study (Brough, 2019). To ensure anonymity of the participants, the researcher assigned number codes to label

participants in the study, and the names of the schools and individuals were omitted in the questionnaires as well as in the final report.

3.10 Summary

This chapter discussed the methodological procedure that was followed in the study. Issues relating to population, sampling procedures, instrumentation, data collection and analysis, as well as ethical principles, were discussed. It was stated that the pragmatist philosophy guided the study, which allowed the researcher to collect both quantitative and qualitative data by adopting the sequential explanatory mixed method approach. The mixed method research design was employed, and 487 pre-service Social Studies teachers in the COE within the Eastern and Greater Accra Region of Ghana were sampled for the study. The next chapter presents the data and the discussion of the findings. These participants were selected through the census and convenience sampling techniques, respectively. Questionnaires and interview guides were used to generate data for the study, which were analysed by both descriptive statistics, such as mean and standard deviation, while qualitative data were analysed thematically. The quantitative data were analysed by descriptive statistics, such as mean and standard deviation.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter is devoted to findings and their discussion. It is presented in four subsections. Section one presents and discusses the response rate, while the second section examines the demographic composition of the sample. The third section presents the data on the research questions. It presents the data for the quantitative aspect of the study, followed by qualitative data. Finally, the fourth section discusses the results.

4.1 Response Rate

A response rate of about 81.5% was realised in this study because, from a total of four hundred and eighty-seven (487) questionnaires distributed, 397 questionnaires were used for the analyses. This response rate was achieved because 55 questionnaires were not returned, and 35 questionnaires were poorly answered, so they were not included in the analysis. However, the response rate was appropriate for statistical analysis based on the suggestion of Dillman (2000) that a response rate of 70% is adequate in surveys.

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The demographic characteristics of the respondents were examined, and the results are shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

| Variables | Categories | Frequency | Per cent |
|--------------------------|--------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Sex | Female | 202 | 50.8 |
| | Male | 195 | 49.2 |
| | Total | 397 | 100.0 |
| Age | Less than 20 years | 49 | 12.3 |
| | 21 to 25 years | 206 | 51.8 |
| | 26 to 30 years | 95 | 24.0 |
| | 31+ years | 47 | 11.9 |
| | Total | 397 | 100.0 |
| Nature of Entry | WASSCE | 238 | 60.0 |
| | Total | 238 | 100.0 |
| Nature of College | Mixed Sex | 295 | 74.3 |
| | Single Sex | 102 | 25.7 |
| | Total | 397 | 100.0 |

Source: Fieldwork Data, 2024

As indicated in Table 4.1, the study involved a fairly balanced number of male and female pre-service Social Studies teachers, with females slightly outnumbering males (50.8% and 49.2% respectively). The age distribution revealed that the majority of respondents (51.8%) were within the 21–25 years bracket, followed by 24.0% who were between 26–30 years, 12.3% who were below 20 years, and 11.9% who were 31 years or older. Regarding entry qualifications, more than half of the respondents (60.0%) entered the Colleges of Education with WASSCE results. In terms of the type of college attended, most respondents (74.3%) were from mixed-sex institutions, while about a quarter (25.7%) came from single-sex colleges.

The demographic distributions of the pre-service Social Studies teachers were crucial to the study because they showed that data were collected from respondents with diverse backgrounds, making the data rich and devoid of bias. This enhanced the authenticity of the data and their findings.

4.3 Research Questions raised for the Quantitative aspect of the study

How do pre-service Social Studies teachers perceive Supported Teaching in Schools (STS) programme?

This research question sought to examine the perspectives of pre-service Social Studies teachers on the supported teaching in schools' programme. The perspectives were conceptualised as knowing and valuing students, applying knowledge of content and pedagogy, setting instructional outcomes, effective use of resources, planning coherent instruction, designing and analysing assessments, fostering a culture of learning, and supporting positive student behaviour. The results are presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Perspectives on Pre-service Social Studies Teachers on STS

| Nature of View | N | Min. | Max. | Mean | Std. Dev. |
|--|-----|------|------|------|-----------|
| Applying Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy | 397 | 1 | 5 | 3.90 | 1.30 |
| Planning Coherent Instruction | 397 | 1 | 5 | 3.81 | 1.15 |
| Setting Instructional Outcomes | 397 | 1 | 5 | 3.75 | 1.18 |
| Designing and Analysing Assessment | 397 | 1 | 5 | 3.70 | 1.12 |
| Fostering a Culture for Learning | 397 | 1 | 5 | 3.68 | 0.90 |
| Supporting Positive Student Behaviour | 397 | 1 | 5 | 3.58 | 0.88 |
| Effective Use of Resources | 397 | 1 | 5 | 3.50 | 0.77 |

Source: Fieldwork Data, 2024

The results in Table 4.2 revealed that the pre-service Social Studies teachers rated applying knowledge of content and pedagogy highest ($M=3.90$, $SD=1.30$), followed by planning coherent instruction ($M=3.81$, $SD=1.15$), setting instructional outcomes ($M=3.75$, $SD=1.18$), designing and analysing assessment ($M=3.70$, $SD=1.12$), fostering a culture of learning ($M=3.68$, $SD=1.90$), supporting positive student behaviour ($M=3.58$, $SD=0.88$), and effective use of resources ($M=3.50$, $SD=0.77$). The findings implied that the pre-service Social Studies teachers had diverse and varied perspectives concerning the supported teaching in schools' programmes. However, the information disclosed that applying knowledge of content and pedagogy was the most prevalent perspective, while the effective use of resources was a less pervasive perspective on STS among pre-service Social Studies teachers. However, based on the 5-point Likert scale used in the questionnaire, where the mean score is 3.0 ($(1+2+3+4+5)/5$), similarly, the standard deviation scores of between ± 3 indicated data variability and therefore were normally distributed. As such, it could be said that all the perspectives outlined in the study were rated above average. This implied that all the types of perspectives were common among the pre-service Social Studies teachers.

The qualitative data obtained from the responses of student teacher interviews were used to support the quantitative data. The following seven themes emerged from the study of qualitative data. Further analysis was done based on the responses obtained from the interview sessions concerning the perspectives of the Pre-service Social Studies teachers on STS. Among other things, the following major themes strongly emerged from the individual interviews and focus group discussions:

1. Applying Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy
2. Planning Coherent Instruction
3. Setting Instructional Outcomes
4. Designing and Analysing Assessment
5. Fostering a Culture for Learning

4.2.3 Theme One: Applying Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy

With reference to the perspectives from pre-service teachers on the STS programme, it was realised from the interview sessions that the application of knowledge of content and pedagogy emerged the highest. The interview sessions also revealed that the various courses that student are taken through before and during STS broaden their knowledge base and develop their matter of content for the profession. It was further revealed that pre-service teachers become familiar with the topics in the syllabi and therefore aid their teaching output. The teaching approaches, techniques and strategies learnt according to the participants were applicable to their lessons and therefore helped them tolerate every learner while ensuring an enabling learning environment for all. During the probing for the interview sessions, a pre-service teacher was emphatic that:

My experience with the STS programme has given me the practical feeling of how teaching is actually done. During lectures, you are taught the theoretical aspect of how teaching is supposed to be, but experiencing the STS programme has indeed taught me how knowledge gained during lectures could be transferred to the actual classroom situation (Interview Data, pre-service Social Studies teacher #3).

The above comments suggest that the pre-service Social Studies teacher's perspective on the STS programme focused on how to apply content to pedagogy. They learn how to employ or utilise effective classroom instructions.

Another participant also indicated in his response that, as far as STS in Social Studies is concerned, relating topics appropriately to pedagogy is unique, and this is because there is a constant practice of trying teaching techniques to weigh their strength and weaknesses. He has this to say:

Most of the time, I find it difficult when I explain something, and the students are not getting it. I quickly go back to my notes and change the teaching strategy for better understanding. Hereafter, I have experience in managing the teaching techniques in a particular lesson to allow full participation of students (Interview Data, pre-service Social Studies teacher #1).

4.2.4 Theme Two: Planning Coherent Instruction

The interview responses from the Social Studies teachers revealed that through research and the application of theoretical knowledge acquired during teaching and learning, they are fully utilised for planning coherent instruction before teaching. Additionally, for Social Studies pre-teachers to ensure coherent instruction, they must focus on aligning learning activities with clear instructional objectives, sequencing them logically, and ensuring they connect to previous and future learning outcomes. It was also identified that there are occasions where the teacher is unable to prepare well, and this tends to affect their teaching. A pre-service Social Studies teacher also gave an account of his experience with the STS programme:

My experience with the STS programme is that through the programme, I have realised or experienced the skill of planning coherent instruction. I say so because I have experience in how to use appropriate instructional activities that will cater for the diverse learners in the classroom. Hence, I have experience in how to structure a lesson that allows for varied engagement with diverse learners in the (Interview Data, pre-service Social Studies teacher #1).

Seemingly, this excerpt indicates that the pre-service Social Studies teachers' perspective on how to plan coherent classroom instruction is to deploy instructional activities that meet the diverse needs of the diverse learners in the classroom.

Effective planning requires much time. However, when it is done, lessons are delivered systematically and also involve diverse learners. However, when it is done, lessons are delivered systematically and also involve diverse learners. It helps me to select the appropriate resources and also rehearse on how to incorporate them for effective teaching and learning. I have experienced and reflected on lessons. I can confidently say that the objectives were achieved because the instructions were well planned (Interview Data, pre-service Social Studies teacher #5).

Another pre-service teacher who was interviewed indicated that, most often, they guide them to plan the instruction in the school and then vet their notes before presenting to their various mentors for the teaching sessions. This allows them to be conversant with the plan before the main teaching exercise to avoid many mistakes. In addition to that, the pre-service Social Studies teachers are sometimes made to practice the planned instruction among their peers to gain firsthand experience with the instructional processes before going out.

4.2.5 Theme Three: Setting Instructional Outcomes

On the issue of setting instructional outcomes, the majority of the participants in the focus group attested to the fact that they have much experience in setting correct instructional outcomes. This is indicated in the extract below:

I have experienced how the outcome of any lesson should reflect the important knowledge, competencies and skills needed by my learners. Besides, I have experienced that learning outcomes must be clear for the diverse needs of learners. Besides, my experience with the STS programme over the years has exposed me to the fact that in setting instructional or lesson outcomes for our learners, it should touch on what the learners truly need, thus, the knowledge to be gained, as well as the competencies and skills enshrined in the curriculum for them. This will make

the curriculum fit for purpose (Interview Data, pre-service Social Studies teacher #4).

The remarks above revealed that through the STS programme, the pre-service Social Studies teachers have experienced how learning outcomes must reflect the intended knowledge as well as the core competencies and skills required of them to be able to navigate through this knowledge society, where 21st-Century competencies are crucially needed for survival. It could be inferred from the comments that the STS programme is intended to make the pre-service Social Studies teachers experience how to design learning outcomes to reflect the embedded knowledge, skills and competencies enshrined in the curriculum.

Another pre-service Social Studies teacher commented that:

Through the STS programme, I have experienced learnt how to design appropriate learning outcomes that align with topics and my teaching activities. Additionally, the STS programme has exposed me to outcomes that clearly define my teaching objectives and instructional materials and resources (Interview Data, pre-service Social Studies teacher #8).

Clearly, the position of the above participant perception on the STS programme is not only that she can set good learning outcomes, but also that it helps her to map the teaching objectives, activities and teaching and learning resources with appropriate outcomes.

4.2.6: Theme Four: Designing and Analysing Assessment

Regarding the views of pre-service Social Studies teachers on designing and analysing assessment for teaching, the interview sessions revealed that more often than not, the teacher in their various colleges vet their notes and help them to select appropriate assessment techniques for their instructions. Further interaction with one female pre-service teacher revealed that throughout the STS programme, they collaborate with their mentors in the various schools and

employ appropriate assessment techniques, which are suggested in the teaching manuals, for them to assess their learners. A pre-service teacher had this to say:

Our students are taught how to design and select appropriate assessment tools for each topic. Students are also guided on the steps to assess learners' work and align the teaching objectives with corresponding assessment strategies for easy understanding of content. (Interview Data, Pre-service Social Studies teacher #2).

According to the response generated from the interview, the ability of the pre-service teachers to systematically design and measure students' learning effectively includes the ability to clearly define learning objectives, choose appropriate assessment methods and also develop clear criteria for evaluation, which eventually help to analyse good outcomes to inform future teaching and learning.

Another pre-service Social Studies teacher commented that:

Through the STS programme, I have experienced that the assessment approaches to be deployed in a lesson must reflect the intended learning outcomes. Additionally, my experience with the STS programme has exposed me to the idea that assessment approaches deployed in teaching should be useful in planning for future lessons (Interview Data, pre-service Social Studies teacher #2).

The above comment indicates how a pre-service Social Studies teacher experiences the art of designing and analysing assessments.

4.2.6: Theme Five: Fostering a Culture for Learning

During the phase of the interview with the pre-service social studies teachers, it emerged that the majority of them agreed that the STS programme fosters a culture of learning among learners. Two sub-themes emerged from this theme.

And these were:

- a. Fostering a culture for learning among pre-service teachers
- b. Fostering a culture for learning among learners

During the interview session, it was discovered that the views of the pre-service teachers on the STS programme do not only end with the student teachers, but then it transcends to the learners they go out to teach.

4.2.6.1 Theme Five: Fostering a Culture for Learning among pre-service teachers.

During the phase of the interview with the Social Studies teachers, it emerged that the pre-service teachers are tasked with a sense of responsibility for reading around and discussing among themselves on how to improve their lessons. The STS programme helps the pre-service teachers to develop a culture where they learn from each other through effective interaction and peer teaching. They are also motivated to learn and develop a culture of adequate preparation before teaching. As such, a participant had this to say;

We need to learn among ourselves and discuss the instructional processes before going out to the various practice schools. Students develop an environment, values, and practices that help them to prioritise and support group learning. (Interview Data, pre-service Social Studies teacher #1).

To this pre-service teacher, culture of learning is not only fostered among themselves alone but also among the learners in their various practice schools, which encompasses the shared personal beliefs and attitudes both in the school and their various communities, behaviours that encourage individuals to seek knowledge from within and outside their environment to improve their skills, and adapt to change. In essence, the culture of learning adopted and adapted promotes continuous growth and improvement, both individually and collectively.

4.2.6.2: Theme Five: Fostering a Culture for Learning among learners

Another sub-theme that emerged from the culture of learning is the fact that the pre-service teachers on the STS programme foster a culture of learning among the learners they teach. Another pre-service Social Studies teacher remarked:

I have experienced the culture of fostering learning among learners by expecting to make them proud of themselves and their work, participating in class and paying attention to instruction to attain the highest expected knowledge and competencies. (Interview Data, Social Studies pre-service teacher #1).

This excerpt shows how a pre-service Social Studies teacher views the STS programme as a tool to instil a culture of learning among learners. It is construed from the comment that experiencing the STS programme is crucial for pre-service Social Studies teachers because it could serve as a conduit for fostering learning among learners. Reacting to their experience of the STS programme, a participant had this to say:

I have realised from my experience with the STS programme that teachers are expected and indeed obliged to use preventive, indirect and appropriate measures to monitor learners' behaviour. Besides, they are to use appropriate and effective methods to correct misbehaviour among learners. Besides, my experience with STS has made me aware of the classroom resources that are supposed to be deployed to serve as a conduit to elicit learning and understanding among learners (Interview Data, pre-service Social Studies teacher #2).

The analyses of the qualitative data showed that the pre-service Social Studies teachers have had an array of experiences in the STS programme. The experiences included applying knowledge of content and pedagogy, planning coherent instruction, setting instructional outcomes, designing and analysing assessment, fostering a culture for learning, supporting positive student behaviour and effective use of resources.

4.4 Research Question Two

What are the views of pre-service Social Studies teachers on the benefits of assessment and support by mentors in enhancing their professional development through the STS programme?

The second research question investigated the views of pre-service Social Studies teachers on the benefits they have derived and continue to gain in enhancing their professional development through the STS programme. The benefits that were investigated in this study included vocational fulfilment, learning and professional development, professional knowledge, as well as socio-emotional benefits and the results are presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Benefits of assessment support on STS Programme

| Benefits of the STS Programme | N | Min. | Max. | Mean | Std. Dev. |
|---------------------------------------|----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------------|
| Vocational Fulfilment | 397 | 5 | 5 | 5.00 | 0.00 |
| Learning and Professional Development | 397 | 5 | 5 | 4.98 | 0.08 |
| Professional Knowledge | 397 | 5 | 5 | 4.97 | 0.12 |
| Socio-Emotional Benefits | 397 | 5 | 5 | 4.96 | 0.11 |
| Overall Benefits of STS | 397 | 5 | 5 | 4.98 | 0.07 |

Source: Fieldwork Data, 2024

It is observed from Table 4.3 that pre-service Social Studies teachers held different views in terms of the benefits they derive from the STS programme. However, the findings revealed that respondents rated highest on vocational fulfilment (M=5.00, SD=0.00), followed by learning and professional development (M=4.98, SD=0.08), professional knowledge (M=4.97, SD=0.12), while socio-emotional benefits (M=3.70, SD=0.78) were the least among the benefits, with the overall benefits being (M=4.98, SD=0.07).

The qualitative result analysis on the benefits of assessment support offered by mentors for the pre-service teachers revealed the following themes:

1. Vocational Fulfilment
2. Learning and Professional Development
3. Professional Knowledge
4. Socio-Emotional Benefits

It was evident that vocational fulfilment was the dominant benefit of the STS programme, while the socio-emotional benefits were the least of the benefits of the STS programme, as indicated by the pre-service Social Studies teachers.

4.4.1 Theme One: Vocational Fulfilment

Vocational fulfilment was the highest opinion of the students on the STS programme. Pre-service teachers on the STS programme admitted that the programme serves as a motivation and prepares them for the teaching profession. Although there are challenges, they encounter during the exercises, their fears are curtailed before they go into the main profession. Two of the pre-service teachers had this to say:

The STS programme has helped me discover my passion for teaching and reinforced my commitment to becoming a teacher. Through hands-on experiences, I have gained confidence in my ability to plan and deliver lessons, manage classrooms, and engage with students. This program has given me a sense of purpose and direction in my teaching career. (Interview Data, pre-service Social Studies teacher #2).

This program solidified my decision as to what career I wanted to be in. There is a difference between learning, teaching and experiencing the moment when a student gets their light bulb moment, even in a simulated environment. That experience has given me a strong and good feeling of purpose and satisfaction with the fact that I am in the right direction. (Interview Data, pre-service Social Studies teacher #5).

Another pre-service Social Studies teacher commented thus:

The STS programme has given me the practical feeling of my desired vocation as a teacher. Indeed, I think the saying that everyone can become a teacher is false. Having observed the STS programme for the past two years, I have seen that learning the theories of learning, the principles, and the practice of teaching is not easy for me, so I am happy to go through this STS programme, which has helped me to put theory into actual practice (Interview Data, pre-service Social Studies teacher #2).

This excerpt implies that the STS programme has helped in fulfilling the vocational choice of being or becoming a teacher. In the view of another pre-service Social Studies teacher, the STS programme is key in realising their vocational fulfilment as stated in this comment:

I am happy to have a profession in teaching. I love to learn and share knowledge with people, and I believe choosing teaching as a vocation can help me in this regard. Besides, the joy in seeing and nurturing young ones to grow is something I so much cherish, and I believe teaching can realise this desire. Although the remuneration from teaching is not the best, as many people speak against it, I see it as an opportunity to serve humanity, and the STS programme is so crucial to realise my dream. The STS programme has helped me greatly in terms of my preparation as a teacher (Interview Data, pre-service Social Studies teacher #4).

Another pre-service Social Studies teacher remarked that:

My experience from the STS programme makes me convinced that I have no dream career other than being a teacher. This is because all along in my life I have wanted to be a teacher, and the STS programme has given me the platform to know more details about the teaching profession. Besides personal satisfaction, I see the STS programme with the intent of making me an effective teacher and as a profession that will give me the social status, improve my quality of life, as well as the professional and economic stability to live a fulfilled life (Interview Data, pre-service Social Studies teacher #1).

4.4.2 Theme Two: Learning and Professional Development

When asked to express their opinion on learning and professional development as two of the benefits of the STS programme, one of them had this to say:

I think going through the STS programme gives me the zeal, energy, and fulfilment to practice as a teacher (Interview Data, pre-service Social Studies teacher #1).

It is during this program that my professional growth was accelerated. It was a secure environment to train, to fail and to get better. I discovered the necessary skills, such as time management in a lesson, effective questioning, and improvising the plan on the spot. It was essential to my development as a supervisor that a supervisor provided the necessary responses. (Interview Data, pre-service Social Studies teacher #8).

In the opinion of a pre-service Social Studies teacher, the STS programme has been a source of learning and also a means of his professional development. A participant from the focus group had this to say:

The STS programme has benefited me in terms of my professional development as a would-be teacher. I say so because the STS programme has exposed me to learn how and how to ensure good classroom management, I have also learnt how to adapt my instructional processes, activities and strategies to meet the diverse needs of the diverse learners (Interview Data, focus group).

Another pre-service Social Studies teacher remarked that:

The STS programme has taught me to learn and develop professionally as a would-be teacher. The programme has exposed me to the various learning styles of the diverse learners we have in any classroom. This knowledge will lead me, as a would-be teacher, to plan my instruction or lesson by deploying an array of instructional approaches and strategies that could help learners to learn and acquire all the competencies and skills enshrined in the curriculum (Interview Data, pre-service Social Studies teacher #4).

The above excerpts suggest that the STS programme has been beneficial to the pre-service Social Studies teachers in their learning and professional development to become professionally efficient teachers.

4.4.3 Theme Three: Professional Knowledge

Apart from learning and professional development, the participants indicated that the STS programme has benefited them in terms of their professional

knowledge. Commenting on how professional knowledge, a participant commented thus:

The STS programme has been crucial for me in terms of the professional knowledge I need to function as an effective teacher. Through the STS programme, I have come to understand and indeed appreciate the link between theory and practice. The STS programme has demystified the abstract nature of learning theories and what they actually mean. So, I would say the STS programme has assisted me in practising what I learnt during the lecture (Interview Data, pre-service Social Studies teacher #8).

Another pre-service Social Studies teacher remarked that:

The STS programme has had a great impact on my professional competence as a would-be teacher. Through the STS programme, I have learnt how to prepare coherent learner plans to meet the diverse needs of learners. The STS programme has also taught me how to behave towards my learners, as well as the skill of maintaining effective classroom management practices (Interview Data, pre-service Social Studies teacher #7)

In the same spirit, another pre-service Social Studies teacher had this to say:

The STS programme has helped me greatly in terms of my time management skills as a would-be teacher. The programme has taught me to respect time because instructional time lost could be very difficult to regain, since there are a lot of things to cover. Besides, the STS programme has enhanced my confidence in teaching. Additionally, I have learnt how to prepare teaching aids, assess learners' performance, and manage school records (Interview Data, pre-service Social Studies teacher #9)

The excerpts above indicate how the STS programme has benefited pre-service Social Studies teachers in terms of their professional knowledge development as would-be teachers.

The interview data provided evidence to support the quantitative results, which revealed that organisational structure and policies are precursors of conflict in an organisation, such as the Ghana Education Service. Additionally, these excerpts have provided empirical evidence of the fact that the sources or the precursors of conflict are numerous and diverse in nature. As a result, the

various municipal and district directors of education have to be knowledgeable of them for peaceful and effective conflict resolution to bolster motivation among their staff.

4.5 Research Question Three

What are the views of pre-service Social Studies teachers on the prospects of the Supported Teaching in Schools (STS) programme?

was to solicit the views of pre-service Social Studies teachers on the prospects of Supported Teaching in Schools (STS) programme. Based on the literature reviewed, nine prospects were identified and investigated. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 4.4.



Table 4.4: Descriptive Statistics on the Prospects of the STS Programme

| Prospects of the STS Programme | N | Min. | Max. | Mean | Std. Dev. |
|--|----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------------|
| 1. The STS programme has the prospect of serving as a blueprint for overhauling teacher education in Ghana. | 397 | 5 | 5 | 5.00 | 0.00 |
| 2. The STS programme has the prospect of reducing the likelihood of new teachers leaving the profession due to a lack of preparedness | 397 | 5 | 5 | 5.00 | 0.00 |
| 3. The STS programme has the prospect of fostering a culture of reflective practice among pre-service teachers | 397 | 5 | 5 | 5.00 | 0.00 |
| 4. Teacher education programmes that incorporate practical experiences like STS are more effective in preparing teachers for the complexities of the classroom | 397 | 5 | 5 | 5.00 | 0.00 |
| 5. The STS programme's success has the potential to influence policy decisions regarding the structure and content of teacher education programmes | 397 | 4 | 5 | 4.99 | 0.09 |
| 6. The STS programme is designed to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge acquired in teacher training institutions and the realities of the classroom. | 397 | 4 | 5 | 4.99 | 0.09 |
| 7. The STS programme has the potential to improve the quality of teaching in Ghanaian schools. | 397 | 3 | 5 | 4.94 | 0.32 |
| 8. STS programme fosters reflective practice, enabling pre-service educators to evaluate their teaching experiences to evaluate their teaching critically. | 397 | 3 | 5 | 4.88 | 0.45 |
| 9. The STS programme aligns with global trends in teacher education that emphasise the importance of practice-based experiences. | 397 | 3 | 5 | 4.88 | 0.45 |

Source: Fieldwork Data, 2024

It is observed from Table 4.4 that the STS programme has enormous prospects of ensuring and realising effective teacher education programmes in Ghana. However, the findings revealed that the respondents indicated highest on the highest prospect of the STS programme serving as a blueprint for overhauling teacher education in Ghana ($M=5.00$, $SD=0.00$), followed by the prospect of

reducing the likelihood of new teachers leaving the profession due to lack of preparedness (M=5.00, SD=0.00), the prospect of fostering a culture of reflective practice among pre-service teachers (M=5.00, SD=0.00), the prospect of a teacher education programme to incorporate practical experiences for teacher preparation in order to ensure teachers become ready for the complexities of the 21st-Century classroom (M=5.00, SD=0.00), and the prospect to influence policy decisions regarding the structure and content of teacher education (M=4.99, SD=0.09). The results further revealed that the STS programme has the prospect of bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge acquired during teacher training and the realities in the classrooms (M=4.99, SD=0.09), as well as the prospect of improving the quality of teaching in Ghanaian classrooms (M=4.94, SD=0.32), fostering reflective practice, enabling pre-service educators to critically evaluate their teaching experiences (M=4.88, SD=0.45) and the prospect of aligning with global trends in teacher education that emphasize on the importance of practice-based experiences (M=4.88, SD=0.45). Therefore, it was evident that the STS programme has the prospects of transforming initial teacher training through the acquisition of desirable knowledge and competencies that are critical to their overall effectiveness and efficiency.

The interview data gathered from the participants complemented the quantitative data and indeed threw more light on the quantitative results. The following themes emerged after the qualitative analysis.

1. Serving as a blueprint for overhauling teacher education in Ghana.
2. Fostering a culture of reflective practice among pre-service teachers

3. Incorporating practical experiences, such as STS, is more effective in preparing teachers for the complexities of the classroom
4. Potential to influence policy decisions regarding the structure and content of teacher education programmes

4.5.1 Theme One: Serving as a blueprint for overhauling teacher education in Ghana

In response to the prospects of the STS programme, the programme serves as a blueprint for overhauling teacher education in Ghana, which emerged as the highest and one of the pre-service Social Studies teachers commented that:

In my training as a teacher, I have learnt that the STS programme replaced the one-term/semester out-segment programme where pre-service teachers only went out on internship to have a practical feeling of how teaching is done. However, the introduction of the STS programme has given pre-service teachers more time to have practical experience of how the practical aspect of teaching is done right from level 100. This, I believe, is consistent with global trends as well as teacher education concerns. So, I would say the STS programme has the prospect of translating theory into practice (Interview Data, pre-service Social Studies teacher #9).

From the above excerpt, it could be seen that the pre-service Social Studies teacher indicated the prospect of the STS programme in translating policy and theory into actual practice, thereby bridging the gap between theory and practice. The response below is from the focus group discussion. A few of the pre-service Social Studies teachers also alluded to the fact that the STS programme has the prospect of making them reflective practitioners when they remarked that:

The STS programme has the prospect of making pre-service teachers' reflective practitioners. I say this because the STS programme exposes pre-service teachers to reflect on their teaching by identifying their strengths and weaknesses, as well as diagnosing the weaknesses, soliciting feedback from the learners and devising new ways of improving their lessons the next time. Besides, the STS programme has the prospect of making pre-service teachers assume responsibility or take

charge of their learning and teaching, as well as take action that is consistent with the new and modern trends in teacher education. This, in a way, fosters the culture of reflective practice among pre-service teachers (Focus group).

This comment corroborates that of the quantitative data as captured earlier. It could be inferred from the above comments that the STS programme offers the prospects of enhancing reflective practice skills among pre-service Social Studies teachers. In responding to the prospects of the STS programme, another two pre-service Social Studies teachers commented:

I believe the rationale behind the inclusion of the STS programme in the new curriculum is to provide the pre-service teachers with a practical feeling of how teaching should be done. Therefore, bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and the actual practice of the concept of teaching and learning. Hence, the prospect of the STS programme is that pre-service teachers are exposed to the realities of the classroom, and this, I believe, will shape their thinking and beliefs in teaching (Interview Data, pre-service Social Studies teacher #1).

The STS programme has the potential to serve as a blueprint for overhauling teacher education in Ghana. By incorporating practical experiences into teacher training programs, we can better prepare pre-service teachers for the realities of the classroom and improve the quality of teaching in Ghanaian schools. (Interview Data, pre-service Social Studies teacher #1).

The statements above hint that the STS programme has the prospect of bridging the gap between theory and practice and overhauling the overall initial teacher training. To clarify this statement, one of the pre-service Social Studies teachers who was interviewed remarked:

I have been made aware in my training to become a 21st-century teacher that countries all over the world are revamping their education to meet the contemporary needs of the ever-changing world. In line with that, every discipline is incorporating new trends to meet the new focus. In the case of teaching, the STS programme has been incorporated to enable teachers in initial teacher training possess the knowledge, skills and competencies needed to drive the change we need. Therefore, I see the STS programme to be very helpful in this regard (Interview Data, pre-service Social Studies teacher #12).

The views above suggest that the STS programme has the prospect of imbuing in the pre-service teachers the needed knowledge, skills and competencies that are required to drive learners to acquire 21st-Century competencies needed to navigate through the knowledge society. Throwing more light on the prospect of the STS programme, a pre-service Social Studies teacher commented thus:

In fact, in the past, we were told that many teachers quit the profession because they were not adequately prepared to begin the teaching profession. Therefore, the STS programme holds the prospect of making them adequately prepared to start their profession as teachers. This is because the STS programme begins right from level 100 to 400, and even at level 300, the pre-service teacher begins to teach. So, the STS programme holds the key to making pre-service teachers fully prepared for their profession and gives them all the secrets they need to know before they finish their training and go ahead to teach (Interview Data, pre-service Social Studies teacher #10).

Based on the above comments, there is evidence to conclude that the STS programme has the prospect of curtailing teacher attrition. The interview data also showed that the STS programme has the prospect of improving the quality of teaching and learning:

The STS programme has the potential to ensure effective teaching and learning. This is because the STS programme exposes pre-service teachers to the challenges and difficulties of a typical Ghanaian classroom. This exposure enables them to adequately prepare in terms of the teaching methods, techniques and strategies to deploy to teach to address the various learning difficulties learners face. Hence, the STS programme has the prospect of ensuring effective teaching and learning (Interview Data, pre-service Social Studies teacher #2).

In the foregoing comments, the pre-service Social Studies teacher alluded to the fact that the STS programme remains beneficial to ensure effective teaching and learning in Ghana. The analyses of the interview data pointed out that the STS programme has so many prospects ranging from serving as a blueprint to overhaul Ghana's education landscape, reducing the likelihood of teacher

attrition due to non-preparedness, promoting the culture of reflective practice among teachers, incorporating the practical aspect of teaching aligning to the global trends in education, bridging the gap between theory and practice as well as promoting effective teaching and learning.

4.4.2: Theme Two: Fostering a culture of reflective practice among pre-service teachers

From the interview, it was discovered that the pre-service social studies teachers can develop a habit of personally assessing their teaching and making corrections before the next lesson. This practice, though part of the programme, becomes part of them and they consciously adhere to it. Below are some of their responses to confirm their assertions:

I have developed the ability to evaluate my teaching practices and identify areas for improvement critically. The mentors normally assist us in doing the reflection, and most often among ourselves both formally and informally. (Interview Data, pre-service Social Studies teacher #2).

A few of the pre-service Social Studies teachers also commented on the fact that the STS programme has the prospect of making them reflective practitioners when they remarked that:

The STS programme integrates practical teaching to prepare teachers better for real classroom challenges by experiencing lesson delivery, student behaviour, and workload. Teachers become more adaptable and effective when they rely on theory. (Interview Data, pre-service Social Studies teacher #6).

From the above comment, there is always room for improvement and self-development. The pre-service teachers are made to go through a period of observation before being allowed to practice.

4.5.3 Theme Three: Incorporating practical experiences, such as STS, is more effective in preparing teachers for the complexities of the classroom

The itemize questionnaire on the incorporation of practical experience in STS is the main prospect of the programme. With the interview on effective preparation of teachers for the complexities of the classroom, most of the participants were also consistent with the findings from the quantitative outcome. In accordance, two participants had this to say:

The inclusion of School Teaching Support (STS) or practical experiences enhances teacher readiness. It bridges the gap between academic learning and real classroom complexities, producing teachers who can manage diverse learners, maintain discipline, and apply appropriate teaching strategies. (Interview Data, pre-service Social Studies teacher #1).

Theoretical explanations in a book can only go that far. Practicalities such as these are more effective since you are put under pressure to apply knowledge within the dynamic environment. This is where you can become well-versed in the art of teaching itself- the ability to read your audience and control a live session, which cannot always be taught through reading. (Interview Data, pre-service Social Studies teacher #4).

The findings from the Qualitative and quantitative analyses attest to the fact that pre-service teachers need constant practice both in school and at their practice schools to perfect their profession.

4.6 Research Question Four

What Challenges are Encountered by Pre-Service Social Studies Teachers during the Supported Teaching in Schools (STS) programme?

This research question dwelt on the perception of the pre-service Social Studies teachers on the challenges confronting Supported Teaching in Schools (STS) programme. Eleven challenges were identified in the literature and investigated, and the findings are shown in Table 4.5.

It can be observed from Table 4.5 that the practice of the STS programme is bedevilled with several bottlenecks. However, respondents rated highest on geographical barriers (M=5.00, SD=0.00), followed by lack of teaching aids (M=5.00, SD=0.00), poor attitudes and expectations of pre-service teachers towards the STS (M=5.00, SD=0.00), difficulties in the modalities in assessing and evaluating STS programme (M=5.00, SD=0.00), lack of understanding of the STS programme (M=5.00, SD=0.00), difficulties in dealing with learners during STS programme (M=5.00, SD=0.00), poor mentor-mentee relationship (M=5.00, SD=0.00), lack of proper planning of the STS programme (M=5.00, SD=0.00), sustainability of the STS programme (M=4.94, SD=0.32), insufficient time allocated for the STS programme (M=4.94, SD=0.32) and resistance to new teaching pedagogies ranked as the lowest (M=4.88, SD=0.45) among the challenges confronting the effective implementation of the STS programme.

Table 4.5: Descriptive Statistics on the Challenges Confronting the STS Programme

| Challenges Confronting the STS Programme | N | Min. | Max. | Mean | Std. Dev. |
|---|-----|------|------|------|-----------|
| 1. Geographical barriers as reflected in the cultural backgrounds of the pre-service teachers | 397 | 5 | 5 | 5.00 | 0.00 |
| 2. Lack of teaching aids during the STS programme | 397 | 5 | 5 | 5.00 | 0.00 |
| 3. Poor attitudes and expectations of preservice teachers towards the STS programme | 397 | 5 | 5 | 5.00 | 0.00 |
| 4. Difficulties in the modalities of assessing and evaluating the STS programme | 397 | 5 | 5 | 5.00 | 0.00 |
| 5. Lack of understanding of the STS programme | 397 | 5 | 5 | 5.00 | 0.00 |
| 6. Difficulty in dealing with other students during the STS programme | 397 | 5 | 5 | 5.00 | 0.00 |
| 7. Poor mentor-mentee relationship | 397 | 5 | 5 | 5.00 | 0.00 |
| 8. Lack of proper planning for the STS programme | 397 | 5 | 5 | 5.00 | 0.00 |
| 9. Sustainability of the STS programme | 397 | 3 | 5 | 4.94 | 0.32 |
| 10. Insufficient time allocated for STS observation | 397 | 3 | 5 | 4.94 | 0.32 |
| 11. Resistance to new teaching pedagogies | 397 | 3 | 5 | 4.88 | 0.45 |

Source: Fieldwork Data, 2024

Hence, it was concluded from the quantitative phase of the results that the implementation of the STS programme.

Qualitative data were also collected through interviews on the challenges troubling the effective implementation of the STS programme, and the evidence on each of the themes is presented in the following sections.

The qualitative analysis from the interview was used to support the claim of the quantitative result obtained from the questionnaire. To establish how the challenges confronting the STS Programme participants were interviewed, and their responses revealed emerging views concerning their lived experiences.

Among other things, the participants indicated that there are enormous challenges they face during the STS programme. However, as far as qualitative research is concerned, the following themes emerged strongly:

1. Geographical barriers to Cultural background
2. Poor mentor-mentee relationship
3. Attitude of Mentors and Mentees towards the STS Programme
4. Lack of Proper Planning, Teaching Aids and Timing of STS Programme
5. Insufficient time allocated for STS observation
6. Resistance to new teaching pedagogies

4.6.1 Theme One: Geographical Barriers to Cultural Background

During the interview, Geographical Barriers to cultural background emerged as the highest theme among the challenges of the STS programme. The cultural background of the mentors and the learners make it difficult to implement the STS programme effectively. The following comments confirmed this challenge:

Even though English is the official language of instruction mentor and the learners speak different language than mine and this sometimes create a challenge for me to comprehend what they he and the learners say (Interview Data, pre-service Social Studies teacher #2).

The cultural background that exists where I am makes it challenging for me in terms of the language barrier (Interview Data, pre-service Social Studies teacher #7).

Peace-related issues should be taught continuously in schools and everywhere. This can be done by making peace a compulsory subject. Every student should be made to learn it from the basic level to the higher level (Interview Data, pre-service Social Studies teacher #9).

The respondents were convinced that geographical barriers and cultural differences among the people are a challenge to the smooth implementation of the STS programme in the schools.

4.6.2 Theme Two: Poor Mentor-Mentee Relationship and Attitude

The respondents submitted that the poor relationship that exists between mentors and mentees, and even the general school administration, was a challenge. The subsequent statements were made to explain their point:

There was some unfriendly relationship between the in-service and us, the pre-service teachers. Some mentors are not willing to give us the necessary support needed to help us understand the concept of teaching. Some mentors refuse to explain concepts to us and fail to teach us how to prepare learner plans after they indicate some corrections on them, etc. (Interview Data, pre-service Social Studies teacher #11).

According to the above submission, pre-service teachers potentially feel undervalued, where some mentors feel reluctant to help them address their difficulties in integrating into the school environment of their colleges.

Lack of cooperation among mentors is a threat to the effective implementation of the STS programme. They show us some unwelcoming attitudes, and this makes us not want to approach them for clarification on issues sometimes. Some even expect some monetary gains and even demand some sexual compensation before any assistance is given (Interview Data, pre-service Social Studies teacher #5).

In line with these comments, the participants were convinced that the poor relationship that exists between mentors and mentees is a challenge to the effective implementation of the STS programme.

4.6.3 Theme Three: Attitude of Mentors and Mentees towards the STS

Programme

In the opinion of some of the pre-service teachers, the attitude of some mentors and even the pre-service teachers towards the STS programme leaves much to be desired. These were the views of the participants:

Some of the in-service teachers exhibit a warm attitude towards the STS programme. They do not attach any seriousness to the programme and often assume it is just like one of the normal routines of teaching. This, I think, hampers the real benefits and intent of the programme. (Interview Data, pre-service Social Studies teacher #1).

The attitude of some pre-service teachers towards the STS programme is worrying. Some of my colleagues will not show up for the STS programme and will always manage to produce a report for assessment and will get their grade for the STS course every semester, so they do not attach any seriousness towards the programme (Interview Data, pre-service Social Studies teacher #10).

The above participants were of the view that truancy was a major blight to the STS programme. The majority of students take the programme for granted and do not gain much experience; therefore, they tend to lose the mastery of the programme completely. One of the participants was of the view that;

Some in-service teachers, upon seeing us for the STS programme, will leave the whole class for us to handle. They will tell you to take charge and that they are going to town and will come back. They will only come back after the lesson has ended, or will even come back the next day. At least they should have been around to teach, and we will observe because we have not gotten to the stage where we can teach (Interview Data, pre-service Social Studies teacher #4).

To this pre-service teacher, some mentors see the STS programme as a relief, whereby their tasks are either completely taken over by the pre-service teachers or are done by them. This presupposes that they think

the pre-service teacher is equally capable of teaching and therefore must take over. In so doing, there is no mentor to learn from, reflect with and also offer effective assessment. For instance, a participant of the focus group had this comment;

The attitude of some of the authorities of the STS partnership schools even makes it challenging for them to receive us and give us the professional development training that they ought to give us. They have been complaining that even though there is some form of agreement, the Colleges of Education should pay them (mentors) for the training they are giving to us. Because there is no form of motivation for the mentors, they are also not prepared to receive us, let alone give us professional training (Interview Data, Focus Group).

It is understood from the above comments that the negative attitude of both mentors and mentees towards the implementation of the STS programme affects its effective implementation. There is no doubt about the view of one female pre-service teacher;

My colleagues complain bitterly when they return from the STS programme that the mentors are mostly not ready to receive them. The mentors are not fully prepared to help address our challenges. This is because they feel they are not well treated, and as a matter of fact, the tutors in the various colleges do not make them feel part of the whole programme, but rather push their students to them in the long run (Interview Data, pre-service Social Studies teacher #8).

4.6.4 Theme Four: Lack of Proper Planning, Teaching Aids and Timing of STS Programme

It was found in the study that lack of proper planning, lack of teaching aids and the timing of the STS programme affect its smooth implementation. This is evident in the excerpts below:

The planning and the timing of the STS programme sometimes affect its smooth implementation. I say this because the orientation session organised for us was not carried out properly; we were told we would have more orientation sessions about the whole rationale behind STS, and that has never

happened. We have to learn about it ourselves, and the in-service teachers who are also expected to educate us more on the STS programme are themselves not too knowledgeable about the STS programme, and this, I think, affects the smooth implementation of the STS programme (Interview Data, pre-service Social Studies teacher #6).

Even though we have been informed and indeed gone for the STS programme by way of the visitation to the schools, there are no documents on the STS programme for us to read and be guided by. All the information we got on STS was theoretical, and through the orientation programme we had. There are no documents on the teaching aids required for the STS programme. This makes us do our report in any way we want, or we will copy it from our seniors, who we believe have much more information and experience from the STS programme (Interview Data, pre-service Social Studies teacher #11).

The timing of the STS programme sometimes does not help in its smooth implementation. Sometimes, we are not able to observe the six-week observation because the basic schools where we go and observe are on vacation, so we are told to stop and continue when we also vacate. This makes us not attach any seriousness to the programme (Interview Data, pre-service Social Studies teacher #2).

The findings showed that the lack of teaching aids and the timing of the STS programme sometimes affect its smooth implementation so that the pre-service teachers can realise its full and intended benefits.

4.6.5 Theme Five: Insufficient time allocated for STS observation

One of the challenges of the STS programme in the colleges of Education was that insufficient time was one of the major factors raised. Concerning the view of this participant, there is clear evidence that she was unable to manage time during all the sessions she attended. According to her, the time allocated for the STS is too small and mostly their objectives are not well achieved. She had this to say:

Although it was useful, the program was not without problems. One was time management, which was a huge struggle. The pressure of more lesson planning and coursework was

enormous. The campus environment, though a secure environment, at times, was not like the natural practice school. The experience of teaching situationists and kin to act as students could not adequately substitute the randomness and classroom management complexity of a real school. (Interview Data, pre-service Social Studies teacher #2).

Another male participant also had this to say to confirm what the initial participant remarked.

We are not given enough time to teach. Most of the time, we do not even get the opportunity to achieve our objectives, and also experiment with most of the teaching methods we have learnt in school. These make the STS programme not interesting for us. We are also tempted to repeat lessons since previous lessons did not end well. Another difficulty is getting the opportunity to interact with the learners before leaving the school premises. However, it all boils down to inadequate time. (Interview Data, pre-service Social Studies teacher #2).

Presumably, the response, in this case, not only reveals that the time allocated for teaching the various lessons is insufficient but also the overall time allocated for the programme in the various colleges.

4.7 Discussions of Findings

The first research question examined the experiences of pre-service Social Studies teachers in Colleges of Education in the Eastern and Greater Accra regions of Ghana with the Supported Teaching in Schools (STS) programme. The study revealed that participants had varied experiences, which were categorised as knowing and valuing students, applying content knowledge and pedagogy, setting instructional outcomes, effective use of resources, planning coherent instruction, designing and analysing assessments, fostering a culture of learning, and supporting positive student behaviour. While the quantitative analysis indicated that applying knowledge of content and pedagogy was the most prominent experience and effective use of resources the least, these

differences were practically meaningful. For example, limited engagement with resources suggests that pre-service teachers may be underprepared in using classroom materials effectively, which has implications for policy on resource allocation and STS curriculum design.

Although overall experiences were positive, some negative cases emerged in interviews. For instance, a few pre-service teachers reported that some mentors were unavailable, leaving them to manage entire lessons without guidance. Others indicated that large class sizes or language differences created additional stress, which affected their ability to implement instructional strategies effectively. These negative cases highlight that while STS generally provides beneficial experiences, contextual factors such as school environment, class size, and language barriers influence the extent to which these experiences improve professional readiness. This aligns with Koehler's 2011 theory of teaching adaptability, which emphasises the role of context in shaping teacher performance.

Linking the findings to theory, the experiences described by participants reflect Shulman's 1986 conceptualisation of pedagogical content knowledge. Pre-service teachers developed an ability to translate subject matter knowledge into actionable classroom strategies, particularly when guided by mentors. The role of reflective practice, emphasised by Farrell in 2015, was evident as teachers evaluated their teaching methods and adjusted strategies in real time, demonstrating the practical application of pedagogical content knowledge in a supported environment.

The second research question explored the benefits of mentor support and assessment. Four categories emerged: vocational fulfilment, professional knowledge, learning and professional development, and socio-emotional benefits. Vocational fulfilment was dominant, highlighting that pre-service teachers valued the opportunity to engage with real classroom responsibilities. Interestingly, socio-emotional benefits were the least recognised, suggesting that while STS provides technical and professional growth, emotional support and stress management are underemphasised. Contradictory evidence arose when some participants reported that poorly engaged mentors diminished the potential benefits, creating inconsistencies across schools. These findings reinforce Wang and Odell's 2002 theory of mentoring, which states that mentor quality critically affects teacher development. Contextual differences between institutions, such as mentor availability and school culture, appear to shape the practical significance of these benefits.

Regarding the third research question on the prospects of the STS programme, participants noted multiple long-term benefits: fostering reflective practice, reducing teacher attrition, influencing teacher education policy, improving classroom quality, and aligning Ghanaian teacher training with global practice-based standards. While statistically high ratings indicated strong optimism, practical interpretation suggests that these prospects depend on consistent implementation, mentor engagement, and institutional support. Negative cases were observed where certain colleges faced poor coordination between teacher training institutions and schools, indicating that prospects are not uniform across contexts. These findings are supported by Darling-Hammond and

colleagues in 2017, who emphasised that structured practice-based teacher education enhances professional growth and retention.

The fourth research question investigated challenges encountered during STS. Eleven challenges were identified, including geographical and cultural barriers, lack of teaching aids, poor attitudes of mentors and mentees, inadequate understanding of STS, weak mentor-mentee relationships, insufficient observation time, and resistance to new teaching strategies. Although quantitative means were high across challenges, practical interpretation shows that some challenges, such as mentor-mentee relationships and insufficient time, have a disproportionate impact on learning outcomes. For example, pre-service teachers placed in culturally unfamiliar contexts often struggled to engage learners effectively, suggesting that statistical significance alone does not capture the real-world implications of these barriers.

Institutional variation was also notable. Colleges with structured orientation, stronger collaboration with schools, and access to teaching materials reported fewer challenges, whereas colleges lacking these features reported higher negative impacts. This shows that contextual factors strongly influence the practical effectiveness of STS programmes. The findings also support studies by Koranteng and Adu-Yeboah in 2019 and Owusu-Ansah in 2018, who emphasised that contextual barriers, mentor availability, and attitudes significantly affect pre-service teachers' professional development.

The discussion demonstrates that while the STS programme provides significant professional benefits and practical experience, its success depends on contextual factors, institutional support, and mentor quality. Policymakers

and teacher educators should focus not only on statistically positive outcomes but also on ensuring practical impact through resource provision, mentor training, and careful alignment of STS activities across institutions. By addressing these contextual and practical considerations, the STS programme can more effectively bridge the gap between theory and practice and produce competent, confident, and adaptable teachers.

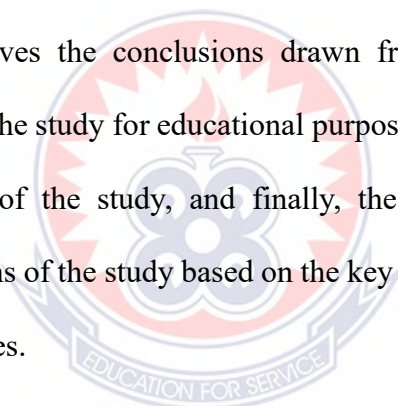


CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter of the study is assigned to the summary, conclusion, and recommendations derived from the findings of the study. The chapter is organised into five sections. The first part discusses the summary of the study, which highlights the steps involved in carrying out the study. Here, the purpose of the study and the methodology employed in carrying it out are stated. The second part consists of a summary of the key findings of the study. It highlights the major findings that emerged from data analysis and their interpretations. The third part involves the conclusions drawn from the study, as well as the implications of the study for educational purposes. The fourth section discusses the limitations of the study, and finally, the fifth section was devoted to recommendations of the study based on the key findings, as well as suggestions for further studies.



5.1 Summary of the Study

My decision to embark on this study was driven by the enormous changes within the education landscape and the growing emphasis on how teachers are trained or produced to acquire the skills and competencies needed to drive home the 21st-Century competencies needed by learners to navigate through this ever-changing world. As such, an assessment of the Supported Teaching in Schools programme, which constitutes 30% (165 credit hours) of the Colleges of Education curriculum, has become pertinent more than ever before. Indeed, there is ample empirical evidence gathered in numerous analytical studies that

either prove or refute the benefits or otherwise of the STS programme in pre-service teacher training. Additionally, there are controversies among researchers and education practitioners about the experiences of pre-service teachers on whether the STS programme supports the growth and development of pre-service teachers. In response to these mounting concerns, this thesis had as its purpose to investigate the views and experiences of pre-service Social Studies teachers on the Supported Teaching in Schools (STS) programme in the Colleges of Education in the Eastern and Greater Accra Regions of Ghana. To realise this, the purpose of this thesis is to investigate the views of pre-service Social Studies teachers on the benefits, prospects, as well as challenges of the STS programme. It was envisaged that the outcome of the study would make valuable contributions towards theory, policy and practice. The study was delimited to pre-service Social Studies teachers within the Colleges of Education in the Eastern and Greater Accra Regions of Ghana for the 2023/2024 academic year.

The theoretical frameworks of the study were based on Danielson's (1996) Framework for Professional Development. The review of the literature was done based on the various concepts outlined in the study. The literature further delved into the empirical studies relevant to the study. The literature review also touched on the gaps and dearth identified in the literature, which the study sought to fill, including the evidence gap, methodological gap, knowledge gap, practical-knowledge gap, population gap, as well as the empirical gap. The chapter ended with the conceptual framework, which highlighted the link between the independent variable and the dependent variable.

The study adopted the pragmatist paradigm and sequential explanatory mixed design, where both quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analysed. The sequential explanatory mixed method research design occurred in two phases. The first phase involved quantitative data collection and analysis, which was followed by the qualitative element of the study. The target population was all four hundred and eighty-seven (487) pre-service Social Studies teachers in Colleges of Education within the Eastern and Greater Accra Regions of Ghana. However, the total sample size used for the study's analysis was 397 preservice Social Studies teachers; hence, a response rate of 81.5% was realised through the census sampling technique, whereas a convenience sampling technique was used to select 15 respondents for the qualitative phase of the study.

The instruments used for data collection were questionnaires as well as an interview guide. The instruments were pre-tested by sixty (60) participants who were pre-service Social Studies teachers in the Colleges of Education in the Central Region of Ghana, where the validity and reliability of the instruments were assessed. The rationale behind the choice of Colleges of Education in the Central Region of Ghana was based on the fact that the respondents share some similar characteristics with their counterparts in the Eastern and Greater Accra Regions of Ghana. Face, content and construct validity were ensured, whereas the Cronbach alpha coefficient was used to assess the internal consistency in ensuring the reliability of the questionnaire. At the same time, rigour. At the same time, trustworthiness criteria were followed to ensure rigour. In contrast, the Cronbach alpha coefficient was used to assess the internal consistency in

ensuring the reliability of the questionnaire. At the same time, trustworthiness criteria were followed to ensure rigour for the interview data.

Before the data analysis, filled questionnaires were checked to identify those that were either poorly answered or not answered at all. The questionnaires were coded and fed into Version 28 of Statistical Product for Service Solutions (SPSS). The data was then explored to identify missing data, which were corrected using descriptive statistics such as percentages and means. In analysing the demographic factors, descriptive statistics like percentages and frequencies were used. Additionally, descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation were used for analysing the quantitative phase of the study, while the qualitative data were analysed thematically. Ethical principles underlying the conduct of research, such as access, confidentiality, anonymity, informed consent, and deception, were all adhered to.

5.2 Key Findings of the Study

The major findings of the study derived from the analysis of data were the following:

- i. The study's findings revealed that pre-service Social Studies teachers had varied experiences with the STS programme. These experiences were conceptualised as knowing and valuing students, applying knowledge of content and pedagogy, setting instructional outcomes, effectively using resources, planning coherent instruction, designing and analysing assessments, fostering a culture of learning, and supporting positive student behaviours. However, it was discovered that the experience of applying knowledge of content and pedagogy was the

most dominant, while the effective use of resources was the least dominant in terms of pre-service teachers' experiences of the STS programme. Nevertheless, the findings further showed that all the various experiences outlined in the study were rated above average and, therefore, experienced by pre-service teachers on the STS programme within the Eastern and Greater Accra Regions of Ghana.

- ii. The findings of the study revealed four primary benefits in terms of pre-service Social Studies teachers' engagement in the STS programme. The four main benefits included professional knowledge, vocational fulfilment, learning, and professional development, as well as socio-emotional benefits. However, the study indicated that vocational fulfilment was dominant among the benefits of the STS programme, followed by learning and professional development, and professional knowledge. In contrast, socio-emotional benefits were least among the benefits of engaging in the STS programme as indicated by pre-service Social Studies teachers within the Eastern and Greater Accra Regions of Ghana.
- iii. Additionally, the findings of the study indicated that the STS programme has several prospects ranging from serving as a blueprint for overhauling teacher education in Ghana, reducing the likelihood of new teachers leaving the profession due to a lack of preparedness, fostering a culture of reflective practice among pre-service teachers, potential to influence policy decisions regarding the structure and content of teacher education programmes, potential to improve the quality of teaching in Ghanaian schools as well as the prospect of aligning with global trends

in teacher education that emphasise the importance of practice-based experiences.

- iv. The study also revealed that the STS programme is faced with several challenges. These challenges included Geographical barriers as reflected in the cultural backgrounds of the pre-service teachers, lack of teaching aids during the STS programme, poor attitudes and expectations of preservice teachers towards the STS programme, difficulties in the modalities in assessing and evaluating the STS programme, lack of understanding of STS programme, poor mentor-mentee relationship as well as insufficient time allocated for STS observation and resistance to new teaching pedagogies.

5.3 Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

Pre-service Social Studies teachers in Colleges of Education within the Eastern and Greater Accra Regions of Ghana had varied experiences with the STS programme. These experiences were conceptualised as knowing and valuing students, applying knowledge of content and pedagogy, setting instructional outcomes, effective use of resources, planning coherent instruction, designing and analysing assessments, fostering a culture of learning, and supporting positive student behaviour exhibited firm self-efficacy beliefs. The varied experiences suggest that the pre-service teachers have benefited from and understand the STS programme, which is crucial to the development and training. Furthermore, it could be inferred that the pre-service Social Studies teachers can manage and understand the classroom dynamics, which is critical to their effective functioning as potential teachers.

The varied scope of benefits of the STS programme gives an indication that suggests that pre-service Social Studies teachers have been groomed to understand their role as teachers and execute their responsibilities effectively to realise educational goals and objectives. The benefit of vocational fulfilment being ranked highest suggests that the pre-service Social Studies teachers have developed a deep sense of contentment from their role as tomorrow's teachers, who have both the practical and emotional components of feeling their role as teachers aligns with their career objectives, abilities, and personal beliefs. Therefore, they would be inspired, involved, and satisfied in their work as teachers, and this has implications for their general well-being and job happiness. The learning and professional development benefits suggest that the pre-service Social Studies teachers are poised for improved efficiency in their teaching, such as dedication to professional development, personal and professional fulfilment, as well as career advancement and other potentials that align with the attainment of educational goals and objectives. Besides, it could be said that the pre-service Social Studies teachers are proactive and forward-thinking individuals who are positive about their work and uphold the highest level of professional values. The professional knowledge benefit suggests that pre-service Social Studies teachers have gained the competence and commitment to learning, and possess problem-solving skills, abilities, values and knowledge that are crucial for driving personal and collective progress in teaching.

The prospects of the STS programme remain bright in fostering innovation in initial teacher training and development. In essence, the STS curriculum fosters collaboration, addresses systemic issues in education, bridges the gap between

theory and practice, and has the potential to transform teacher education completely. Hence, the STS require consistent funding, cooperation from all parties involved, and a dedication to removing obstacles to fair and efficient execution to succeed.

Finally, it could also be inferred that there are significant obstacles that could prevent the Supported Teaching in Schools (STS) programme from being implemented successfully. Key among the challenges are geographical barriers as reflected in the cultural backgrounds of the pre-service teachers, lack of teaching aids, poor attitudes and expectations of the pre-service teachers, poor mentor-mentee relationship, lack of proper planning, insufficient time allocated to the STS programme, as well as resistance to new teaching pedagogies. Addressing these challenges requires increased investment in education and a shift in perception to value the role of the STS programme, and stronger support for pre-service teachers' career growth and development.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the major findings and conclusions drawn from this study, the following recommendations are proposed to Principals and Management of Colleges of Education of Ghana, but more especially those within the Eastern and Greater Accra Regions of Ghana:

1. Strengthen Professional Development Initiatives

Principals and Management of Colleges of Education should collaborate with teacher education specialists to plan and implement structured professional development initiatives for pre-service Social Studies teachers. These initiatives should focus on enhancing experiences in the

STS programme through regular Professional Development Sessions (PDS) and refresher training. The implementation mechanisms should include quarterly workshops, peer-mentoring sessions, and classroom demonstrations. The responsible parties include academic heads, department coordinators for Social Studies, and collaborating teacher educators. Required resources include funding for workshops, training materials, teaching aids, and access to schools for practical demonstrations. Evaluation procedures should involve post-training surveys, observation of pre-service teachers during school placements, and annual review meetings to assess improvements in STS experiences and teaching effectiveness.

2. Enhance Awareness of STS Programme Benefits

Colleges of Education should ensure pre-service teachers understand the full benefits of the STS programme, including professional knowledge, vocational fulfilment, learning and professional development, and socio-emotional growth. Implementation mechanisms may involve interactive seminars, reflective journals, and guided discussions during PDS. Responsible parties are course lecturers, STS coordinators, and experienced mentor teachers. Required resources include seminar facilities, teaching case studies, and digital platforms for reflective exercises. Evaluation procedures should include pre- and post-training assessments to measure understanding and application of STS programme benefits in classroom practice.

3. Integrate STS Principles into Teacher Education Curriculum

Colleges of Education should incorporate STS elements into the formal teacher training curriculum to better prepare pre-service teachers for classroom realities. Reflective practice, supervised teaching hours, and practice-based techniques should be included. Implementation mechanisms include curriculum review committees, alignment with national teacher training standards, and partnerships with schools for practical placements. Responsible parties are curriculum planners, College deans, and the Ghana Education Service. Required resources include curriculum review documents, teaching guides, and additional supervision personnel. Evaluation procedures should involve monitoring the performance of pre-service teachers during STS placements and assessing improvements in teaching competence.

4. Address Challenges in the STS Programme

To mitigate challenges such as cultural barriers, insufficient teaching aids, poor mentor-mentee relationships, and resistance to new pedagogies, Colleges of Education should implement targeted interventions. Implementation mechanisms include orientation programmes on cultural sensitivity, workshops on classroom management, and resource allocation to participating schools. Responsible parties include the College administration, STS coordinators, mentor teachers, and partner schools. Required resources include teaching aids, cultural sensitivity training materials, funding for workshops, and collaborations with NGOs or community organisations. Evaluation procedures should involve feedback surveys from pre-

service teachers, mentor evaluations, and periodic audits of teaching resources.

By adopting these recommendations, Colleges of Education within the Eastern and Greater Accra Regions of Ghana can enhance the effectiveness of the STS programme, improve pre-service teacher development, and contribute to the overall quality of teacher education in Ghana.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

The findings reported in this study were based on the perceptions of the participants, and therefore represented their subjective view at the time of the study. Even though the researcher attempted to reduce the degree of subjectivity of the responses through multiple methods of data gathering, it is difficult to be certain that the findings contained in the study would be consistent with other studies if the study is replicated elsewhere. This is because people's perspectives of issues may differ because of their social and demographic disparities. Therefore, the findings of the study may not be generalised beyond the scope and time of the study.

5.6 Suggestions for Further Studies

After properly acknowledging the study's shortcomings, this thesis offered the following suggestions for additional research:

It is suggested that the study be carried out in the Colleges of Education nationwide to ascertain the experiences of pre-service teachers on the STS programme and how these experiences shape their development as teachers. This would lead to the development and debate of a national strategy to increase teacher effectiveness to accomplish educational goals and objectives.

Since there is little data on whether the experiences gained from the STS programme impact the effectiveness of pre-service teachers during their field teaching, this thesis suggests that longitudinal studies are carried out on pre-service teachers even when they graduate and are teaching after they have been posted to teach. Finally, continuous professional development programmes are required regularly to maintain, improve, and track the level of how the experiences gathered impact the effectiveness of the pre-service teachers.



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APPENDICES

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PRE-SERVICE SOCIAL STUDIES
TEACHERS

This questionnaire aims to solicit your views on the Supported Teaching in Schools Programme. The questionnaire is strictly for an academic exercise, and you are kindly requested to provide accurate and frank information that will assist the researcher in obtaining the correct data for this exercise. Your responses will be treated in strict confidence. You are requested to tick one column that best describes your view. Thank you.

PART ONE

Instruction: Please tick (✓) as appropriate.

1. Sex: Male Female
2. Age: Less than 20, 21 25, 30, 31 and
3. Nature ntry: SSSCE/ WASSCE , Diploma, re, rs
4. Nature ollege: Single Sex Mixed Sex

PART TWO

On a scale of 5 – 1 (5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Undecided, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree), rate your views on the following statements based on your experiences with the Supported Teaching in Schools Programme (STS). There are no right or wrong answers.

| S/N | Through the Supported Teaching in Schools Programme | Please Tick (✓) ONLY ONE option | | | | |
|-----|---|---------------------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| | | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| 1. | I have understood the links between topics, and this knowledge has helped me to ensure understanding by my learners | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. | I can use multiple teaching methods, techniques and teaching aids to ensure understanding among learners | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. | I can teach content that is relevant to my learners' needs | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. | I know the skills and abilities of my learners and use this information to enhance their learning experiences | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. | I have a clear understanding of how learners learn and apply this to enhance students' learning | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. | I have experienced that the outcomes of my lesson objectives are clear for the diverse needs of my learners | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. | I have experienced that the outcomes of my lesson objectives should be balanced for the diverse needs of learners | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. | I have learned to use teaching materials and resources that are appropriate for learners | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. | I have learned that the teaching materials and resources that I use are to enhance learning and understanding among learners | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. | I have learned that the learning activities that I use during instructional periods are to be appropriate for diverse learning objectives | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. | I have learned that the structure of my lessons is to be clear, allowing for the engagement of diverse learners | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. | I have experienced that my assessment approaches should be in line with the learning outcomes | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. | I have experienced that my assessment approaches should be useful in planning future instruction | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. | I have experienced that my learners should actively participate in class to ensure learning | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. | I have experienced that my learners should be proud of their work | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. | I have experienced that I have to follow the routines for handling resources and materials | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17. | I have experienced that my learners work in small groups and actively participate in lessons | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. | I can use preventive methods to monitor students' behaviour | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. | I can use appropriate methods to correct misbehaviour | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

PART THREE

On a scale of 5 – 1 (5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Undecided, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree), rate your views on the following statements on the benefits of undergoing the Supported Teaching in Schools Programme (STS). There are no right or wrong answers.

| S/N | The Supported Teaching in Schools programme has benefited me by: | Please Tick (✓) ONLY ONE option | | | | |
|-----|---|---------------------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| | | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| 1. | Organise and maintain classroom management | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. | adapt my teaching based upon what students currently understand or do not understand | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. | assess student learning in multiple ways | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. | assess student learning in multiple ways | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. | Work closely with experienced teachers, thereby contributing to my development | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. | acquire those valuable and practical skills which are associated with an outstanding teacher | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. | have self-confidence in effective lesson planning and delivery | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. | prepare me for the different challenges of the teaching profession | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. | positively affecting my self-concept and self-efficacy | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. | deal with high levels of psychological weariness associated with teaching | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. | deal with high levels of physical weariness associated with teaching | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. | provide emotional support to my learners | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. | begin to feel like a teacher | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. | fulfil my personal satisfaction and expectations in terms of social status, professional satisfaction and economic security | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. | believe that I have no vocation other than becoming a teacher | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. | believe that teaching is the best profession for me | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

PART FOUR

On a scale of 5 – 1 (5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Undecided, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree), **rate your views on the following statements on the prospects of the Supported Teaching in Schools Programme (STS)**. There are no right or wrong answers.

| S/N | Prospects of Supported Teaching in Schools (STS) Programme | Please Tick (✓) ONLY ONE option | | | | |
|-----|---|--|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| | | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| 1 | The STS program is designed to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge acquired in teacher training institutions and the realities of the classroom. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2 | The STS program aligns with global trends in teacher education that emphasise the importance of practice-based experiences. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3 | The STS programme has the potential to improve the quality of teaching in Ghanaian schools. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4 | Teacher education programs that incorporate practical experiences like STS are more effective in preparing teachers for the complexities of the classroom | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5 | The STS programme has the prospect foster a culture of reflective practice among pre-service teachers | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | The STS programme has the prospect of reducing the likelihood of new teachers leaving the profession due to a lack of preparedness | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7 | The STS programme has the prospect of serving as a blueprint for overhauling teacher education in Ghana. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8 | The STS programme's success has the potential to influence policy decisions regarding the structure and content of teacher education programs | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | The STS programme fosters reflective practice, enabling pre-service educators to evaluate their teaching experiences critically. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

PART FIVE

On a scale of 5 – 1 (5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Undecided, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree), rate your views on the following statements on the challenges you encounter during the Supported Teaching in Schools Programme (STS). There are no right or wrong answers.

| S/N | challenges encountered during the Supported Teaching in Schools (STS) Programme. | Please Tick (✓) ONLY ONE option | | | | |
|-----|---|---------------------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| | | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| 1 | Insufficient time allocated for STS observation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2 | Lack of proper planning for the STS programme | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3 | Poor mentor- mentee relationship | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4 | Lack of teaching aids during the STS programme | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5 | Lack of understanding of the STS programme | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | Difficulty in dealing with other students during the STS programme. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7 | Resistance to new teaching pedagogies | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8 | Sustainability of the STS programme | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9 | Difficulties in the modalities of assessing and evaluating the STS programme | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10 | Poor attitudes and expectations of preservice teachers towards the STS programme | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11 | Geographical barriers as reflected in the cultural backgrounds of the preservice teachers | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

THANK YOU