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Policy Reform Implementation in Ghanaian pre-service Teacher Education: Experiences, Challenges, and Outcomes from Key Stakeholders' Perspectives

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Abstract: **Education policy reform in pre-service teacher education in Ghana seeks to enhance the quality of teachers via competency-based training, ICT integration, and better experiences in practicum programs. This research examined the experiences, challenges, and achievements regarding these educational reforms from the perspectives of teacher educators, administrators, and pre-service teachers. A qualitative exploratory research design was adopted for Colleges of Education in Ghana. The purposive sampling method was used to select participants who had experience with the educational reform process. Data were gathered using semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. A thematic analysis approach was applied to identify recurring themes in the responses of different stakeholders. Findings suggest that there were both positive and negative experiences. Teacher educators experienced an increase in workload and a lack of support. However, professional standards were positively affected. The administrators acknowledged improvement in quality assurance and physical infrastructure. However, lack of funds and inconsistent policies were cited among the challenges. Pre-service teachers had improved their pedagogic and ICT competencies. But challenges of ICT and high stress were observed. The identified challenges included limited resources, inadequate training, poor communication, supervision problems, and differences among regions.**

Keywords: **Policy reforms; pre-service teacher education; experiences of stakeholders; implementation challenges; Ghana.**

1. INTRODUCTION

The education system in Ghana has undergone continuous transformation over the years, influenced by historical developments and the need to respond to changing national and global demands. During the colonial period, formal education was introduced by the British primarily to train a small elite group for administrative purposes, which limited access for the majority of the population, especially those in rural areas (Osei-Owusu, 2022). This created long-standing inequalities in access to education, which later became a major focus of post-independence reforms.

After independence in 1957, the Government of Ghana implemented several educational reforms aimed at expanding access and improving equity in the education system. One of the most significant interventions was the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) policy introduced in 1996, which sought to ensure that all children had access to basic education regardless of socio-economic background (Salifu et al., 2018). While this reform significantly increased enrolment, it also created challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, a shortage of qualified teachers, and limited teaching and learning resources.

In recent years, Ghana has continued to reform its education system with a strong emphasis on improving both access and quality (Salifu et al., 2018). The education structure currently consists of basic education (kindergarten, primary, and junior high school), secondary education (senior high school), and tertiary education (universities, colleges of education, and

technical institutions) (Abreh et al., 2018). Within this structure, teacher education plays a central role in ensuring the delivery of quality education and the achievement of national development goals. Teacher education institutions are responsible for preparing competent teachers who can effectively respond to the demands of modern classrooms and global educational standards (Abudu et al., 2025).

Teacher education is widely recognized as a key determinant of educational quality, as the effectiveness of teachers directly influences student learning outcomes (Osei-Owusu, 2022). In Ghana, reforms in teacher education have therefore become a major policy priority (Admin, 2020). The introduction of the National Teacher Standards (NTS) and other reform initiatives aims to improve teacher competencies, standardise training, and promote professional development among pre-service teachers (Nkrumah et al., 2026). Despite these efforts, challenges such as inadequate resources, limited practical training, and inconsistencies between policy and implementation continue to affect the effectiveness of teacher preparation.

Educational policy reforms such as the 1987 Education Reform, FCUBE, GETFund, and the Teacher Education Development Project (TEDP) have significantly shaped the structure and functioning of teacher education in Ghana (Adjei-Boateng et al., 2026). These reforms were introduced to improve curriculum relevance, expand access, and enhance the quality of teacher training institutions. However, evidence suggests that gaps still exist in implementation, particularly in translating policy intentions into effective classroom practice and sustainable institutional development (Quansah, 2025). Given these developments, it is important to examine how these educational policy reforms are experienced and implemented within teacher education institutions, the challenges encountered during implementation, and the perceived outcomes on the quality of pre-service teacher education. Understanding these issues is essential for informing future policy directions and improving the effectiveness of teacher preparation in Ghana.

1.1 Problem Statement

Ghana has implemented several educational policy reforms over the past decades aimed at improving the quality and effectiveness of teacher education. Key reforms such as the 1987 Education Reform, the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) policy, the Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFund), and the National Teacher Standards (NTS) were introduced to strengthen pre-service teacher education and enhance the production of competent teachers (Abudu et al., 2025). These reforms have contributed to changes in curriculum structure, institutional organization, and teacher preparation practices in Colleges of Education and universities (Admin, 2020). However, despite these developments, concerns remain about the extent to which these reforms have effectively improved the quality of pre-service teacher education in Ghana.

A major gap in the literature is the limited attention given to the experiences and perceptions of key stakeholders, including teacher educators, administrators, and pre-service teachers, regarding the implementation of these reforms (Adjei-Boateng et al., 2026). While policy intentions are well documented, less is known about how these reforms are understood and applied at the institutional level (Nkrumah et al., 2026). In addition, several challenges continue to affect implementation, including inadequate resources, limited infrastructure, insufficient professional development opportunities, and a persistent gap between policy expectations and classroom practice (Adjei-Boateng et al., 2026). These challenges raise concerns about the effectiveness of reform implementation in teacher education institutions.

Furthermore, the perceived outcomes of these reforms on the quality of pre-service teacher education remain unclear. Although some improvements have been reported in curriculum development and professional standards, other studies highlight persistent issues such as inconsistent implementation, overcrowded institutions, and limited practical training experiences. This mixed evidence makes it difficult to determine the overall impact of educational policy reforms on teacher preparation in Ghana. Therefore, there is a need for a study that explores the experiences and perceptions of key stakeholders, examines the challenges in implementing educational policy reforms, and assesses their perceived outcomes on pre-service teacher education in Ghana.

1.2 Research questions

1. What are the experiences and perceptions of key stakeholders (teacher educators, administrators, and pre-service teachers) regarding the implementation of educational policy reforms in teacher education?

2. What challenges and barriers have emerged in the implementation of educational policy reforms within pre-service teacher education programs in Ghana?

3. What perceived outcomes, both positive and negative, have resulted from educational policy reforms in relation to the quality and effectiveness of pre-service teacher education?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Educational policy reforms in Ghana have played a central role in shaping teacher education, particularly through initiatives such as the 1987 Education Reform, FCUBE policy, GETFund, and the National Teacher Standards (NTS). These reforms were introduced to improve access, quality, and relevance of education, with a strong focus on strengthening teacher preparation. However, while policy intentions are well documented, less attention has been given to how these reforms are experienced by key stakeholders, the challenges encountered during implementation, and the actual outcomes on the quality of pre-service teacher education. This section reviews literature based on these three key areas.

2.1 Experiences and Perceptions of Key Stakeholders on Policy Implementation

The implementation of educational policy reforms in teacher education is largely experienced by three main groups: teacher educators, administrators, and pre-service teachers. Literature indicates that these stakeholders often perceive reforms differently based on their roles within the education system. Teacher educators, for instance, are directly responsible for translating policy into classroom practice and therefore experience reforms through changes in curriculum, teaching methods, and assessment approaches (Adjei-Boateng et al., 2026). Many teacher educators acknowledge that reforms such as the shift to competency-based education and the introduction of the NTS have improved clarity in teaching expectations and professional standards. Administrators in Colleges of Education and universities tend to focus on policy compliance, resource management, and institutional restructuring. Studies suggest that administrators generally view reforms as necessary for aligning teacher education with national development goals, although they often express concern about limited resources and increased workload associated with implementation (Abudu et al., 2025). On the other hand, pre-service teachers experience reforms primarily through changes in training structure, teaching practice requirements, and assessment systems. Some studies report that pre-service teachers appreciate the inclusion of practical teaching experiences and ICT integration, which they perceive as beneficial for classroom readiness (Osei-Owusu, 2022). Despite these positive perceptions, literature also shows variation in stakeholder understanding of reforms. While some stakeholders view reforms as improving teacher preparation, others feel that implementation is inconsistent and poorly communicated. This suggests that stakeholder experiences are shaped not only by policy content but also by institutional support and clarity of implementation strategies.

2.2 Challenges and Barriers in Implementing Educational Policy Reforms

Although Ghana has made significant progress in reforming teacher education, several challenges continue to hinder effective implementation. One major barrier identified in the literature is inadequate resources. Many Colleges of Education face shortages of teaching materials, ICT infrastructure, and accommodation facilities, which limits their ability to fully implement competency-based curricula and practical training requirements (Quansah, 2025).

Another significant challenge is the gap between policy formulation and classroom practice. While reforms emphasise learner-centred and competency-based approaches, many teacher educators still rely on traditional lecture-based methods due to large class sizes, limited training, and insufficient professional development opportunities (Adjei-Boateng et al., 2026; Admin, 2020; Salifu et al., 2018). This creates a mismatch between policy expectations and actual practice in teacher education institutions.

Additionally, administrative and financial constraints also affect implementation. The dependence on government funding through mechanisms such as GETFund is often insufficient to meet the growing demands of expanding teacher education programs (Jacob & Samuel, 2020). Furthermore, frequent policy changes without adequate training and orientation for implementers contribute to confusion and inconsistent application of reforms (Osei-Owusu, 2022). Resistance to change is another challenge highlighted in the literature. Some teacher educators and institutions are slow to adopt new teaching approaches due to a lack of familiarity with reform expectations or limited capacity to adjust teaching practices. These challenges collectively hinder the effective realization of reform objectives in pre-service teacher education.

2.3 Perceived Outcomes of Educational Policy Reforms on Teacher Education

The literature indicates that educational policy reforms in different countries have produced both positive and negative outcomes in relation to the quality and effectiveness of pre-service teacher education. On the positive side, reforms have contributed to improved access to teacher education through the expansion of Colleges of Education and increased enrolment (Adjei-Boateng et al., 2026; Nnadozie & Chinomona, 2024). The introduction of degree-awarding programs has also elevated the academic status of teacher education and enhanced professional recognition of teachers (Buabeng et al., 2020).

Furthermore, reforms such as the National Teacher Standards have improved the standardization of teacher competencies, ensuring that teacher education programs are more structured and outcome-oriented (Chisholm, 2020). The inclusion of ICT and practical teaching experience has also enhanced pre-service teachers' preparedness for modern classroom environments. These improvements suggest that reforms have contributed to strengthening the relevance and quality of teacher preparation.

Conversely, certain adverse effects have been noted as well, such as overcrowded classrooms resulting from increased enrollment rates and lack of corresponding resources, inequitable reform implementation, and insufficient practical experiences due to lack of competencies developed (Buabeng et al., 2020; Edison et al., 2025; Ogembo, 2025). Although the reforms introduced into the education sector in Ghana have improved the structure of the curriculum, teaching methodologies, and professionalism standards, there are barriers to its success as well.

Importantly, there remains limited in-depth research focusing on the lived experiences of teacher educators, administrators, and pre-service teachers in relation to reform implementation. There is also insufficient evidence on how these reforms collectively influence the overall effectiveness of pre-service teacher education. This study therefore, seeks to address these gaps by examining stakeholder experiences, implementation challenges, and perceived outcomes of educational policy reforms in Ghana's teacher education system.

2.4 Theoretical foundation

The study adopted two major theories. The first theory adopted for this research is Fullan's change theory. According to (Fullan, 2016), the adoption of change in educational reform cannot be viewed as easy because it involves interactions between policy, practice, and contexts. The success of such change in educational reforms depends on institutional capacities, teachers' involvement, and systemic assistance. This theory was used in the explanation of variations in the adoption of policies in Colleges of Education in Ghana with respect to resource endowments, staff members, and institutional readiness. The second theory considered for this research is social constructivist theory which originated from the works of Vygotsky and Bruner. It entails viewing learning process as social and interactive whereby learners actively construct their knowledge (Bruner, 1996; Vygotsky, 1978). It emphasizes the importance of learner-centred pedagogy in pre-service training that includes teamwork, reflective journaling, micro-teaching, and practicum, among others.

3. METHODS AND MATERIALS

3.1 Research design

A qualitative descriptive research design was used for this study in order to explore the experiences and views of the teacher educators, administrators, and preservice teachers on the implementation of educational policy reforms in teacher education programs in Ghana. This research design allowed a more in-depth investigation into the experiences of the different stakeholders, the difficulties encountered in implementing the reforms, as well as the benefits and disadvantages that the reforms had created.

3.2 Study site

This research was carried out in six different regions of Ghana: Ashanti, Greater Accra, Northern, Central, Eastern, and Volta. The regions selected for this study were chosen purposely to ensure that different contexts that influence teacher education have been considered. While Greater Accra and Ashanti provide information about well-resourced contexts, other regions like Northern, Volta, and Eastern give an understanding of what happens in less resourced contexts.

3.3 Population and Sampling

For this study, the population comprised teacher educators, institution administrators, and pre-service teachers in selected Colleges of Education and universities in Ghana. These populations were considered ideal since they play a crucial role in the implementation of the educational policies in teacher education and are, therefore, affected by the reform process. The selection of these individuals helped the study explore their experiences of the reform process, any barriers and challenges associated with it, and the effects of the reform process on the quality of teacher education.

In order to obtain participants with first-hand experience of the reforms, the study adopted the purposive sampling method. By adopting the purposive method, information power would be maximized in the analysis. In other words, only individuals knowledgeable about the reform process were targeted. Participants in both resource-rich and resource-poor settings were targeted to capture contextual variations. The sample comprised a total of 65 participants, following the principle of information power provided (Malterud et al., 2016).

3.4 Data Collection Techniques

Three main techniques were employed to collect data in line with each research question. These included semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and document analysis.

Semi-structured interviews with the teacher educators and administrators aimed at capturing their experiences and perspectives concerning policy reforms in teacher education (RQ1). These interviews were used to find out about the challenges involved in the process of implementing these reforms (RQ2), together with the observed effects of the reforms on the quality of pre-service teacher education (RQ3). Pre-service teachers participated in FGDs aimed at exploring how policy reforms have affected their learning experiences in terms of curriculum, methodology, use of ICT in teaching, and readiness for inclusivity. FGDs also facilitated finding out the positive and negative effects of the reforms (RQ3), together with challenges in training (RQ2). In addition to interviewing the participants, some policy documents, like the 1987 Education Reform Policy, FCUBE Policy, and GETFund Act, were analysed. This provided a basis for contextualising the participants' views about the intended goals behind the reforms. In an effort to enhance the data collection process, two research assistants were recruited and trained on different areas, such as qualitative data collection techniques, data collection ethics, interviewing skills, note-taking, and consistent data collection methods. This was necessary in order to guarantee standardization during the entire data collection process.

3.5 Reflexivity and researcher positioning

The place of reflexivity and researcher positioning in the process of collecting and analyzing data was also examined in light of any bias that could influence the process (Berger, 2015). Reflexive thinking was performed to guarantee that the perceptions of the subject were captured accurately. This helped satisfy the ethics required for research validity.

3.6 Data analysis

This research made use of thematic analysis according to the suggestions provided by (Braun & Clarke, 2023). Thematic analysis is done through six steps that include data familiarization, code generation, theme search, theme review, theme definition and naming, and finally report writing. The analysis strategy was used to extract, organise, and interpret patterns within the qualitative data collected. Thematic analysis targeted interview transcripts, focus group discussion data, and policy documents in an attempt to answer the three research questions presented at the outset of this paper. First, it allowed for the investigation of the views and experiences of policy changes and reform initiatives (RQ1); second, it facilitated the identification of obstacles encountered during the process (RQ2); and third, it provided insight into the consequences of the policy changes for the quality of pre-service teacher education (RQ3). The analysis involved an inductive coding scheme whereby codes were developed from the raw data and then iteratively reviewed and refined with each subsequent read. The resulting codes were aggregated into higher-order categories and then further organised into themes that captured the central themes that emerged from the data set.

3.7 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness of this research was maintained following four aspects, including credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability (Stahl & King, 2020). First, credibility was achieved following the technique of methodological triangulation that included semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and analysis of documentary evidence that offered several perspectives on the research topic. Member checking was performed to check whether participants' statements and interpretations were accurate. Second, for achieving dependability, an audit trail was established covering all stages of research, from data collection to theme generation. Third, transferability of results was guaranteed through the provision of thick description of the research context and participants involved in the study. Fourth, the aspect of confirmability was achieved by making sure that all findings generated during this research were grounded in participants' stories.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was first granted by Zhejiang Normal University. Further administrative approval was also acquired from relevant regional and institutional authorities in the study locations of Ghana before data collection. The study abided strictly by all ethical standards to safeguard all participants' welfare and interests. All participants provided their fully-informed consent after being enlightened regarding the purpose of the study and their rights as participants. Participants had the freedom to voluntarily decline participating in the study and could leave the research at any time without suffering any repercussions. Confidentiality and anonymity of all participants were assured through the de-personalisation of all data and subsequent substitution of all personal identifiers with pseudonyms.

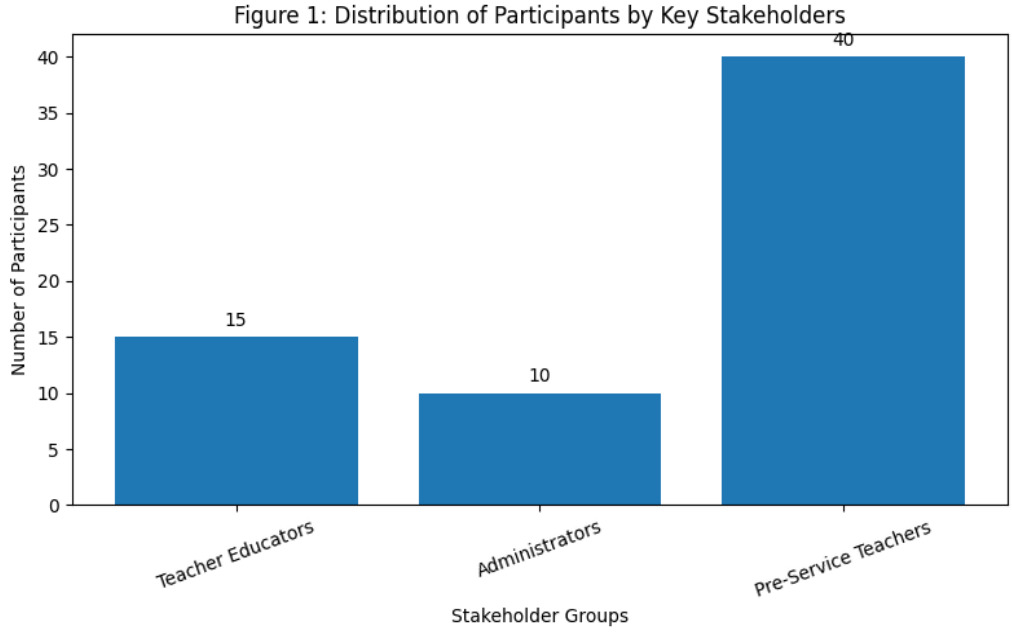
4. RESULTS

Socio-demographic background of participants

The respondents for this research included teacher educators, administrators, and pre-service teachers with a view to generating varied opinions concerning the educational policy reform processes in Ghana. Fifteen teacher educators who had Master's or PhD degrees and had between five and twenty-eight years of experience participated in the study and were selected from colleges of education institutions and universities where they implemented curriculum programs, lectured, and supervised practical sessions. Ten administrators, such as vice principals, heads of department, deans, and quality assurance personnel, who had between ten and thirty-five years of experience, participated in the study. Moreover, forty pre-service teachers whose ages ranged from nineteen to twenty-six years old took part in the study (Table 1).

Table 1: Participant Demographics Summary

Participant Group	Code Range	Total (N)	Gender (M/F)	Age Range	Highest Qualification	Years of Experience	Institution Type	Region
Teacher Educators	TE01–TE15	15	09-Jun	32–58	M.Ed (7), M.Phil (6), PhD (2)	5–28 yrs	Colleges of Education (10), Universities (5)	Ashanti, Greater Accra, Northern
Administrators	AD01–AD10	10	07-Mar	38–62	M.Ed (4), M.Phil (3), PhD (3)	10–35 yrs	Public Colleges (8), Universities (2)	Central, Eastern, Volta
Pre-Service Teachers	PST01–PST40	40	18/22	19–26	Diploma (20), B.Ed (20)	N/A	Level 200–400	All regions
TOTAL	—	65	34/31	—	—	—	—	—



4.1 Themes and subthemes

The results from the thematic analysis of the research revealed three major themes and nine minor themes associated with educational policy reforms at Ghana's teacher training institutions. These encompass stakeholder experiences with regard to the reform process, barriers to the reform process, and the consequences of the reforms. In general, there were positive effects like enhanced teacher professional development and negative issues like lack of resources, communication and workload, which led to mixed perceptions (Table 2).

Table 2: Main themes and sub-themes from study findings

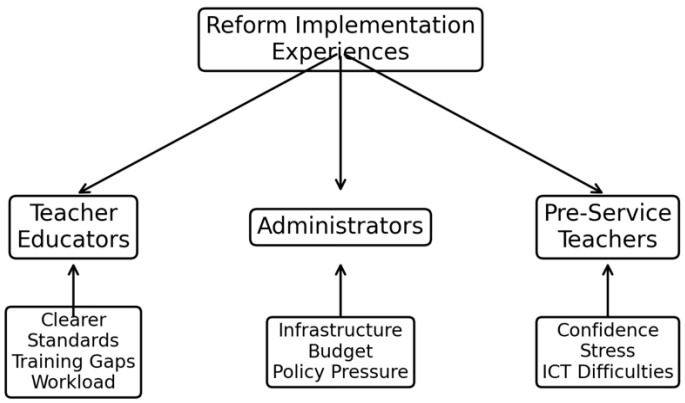
Main Themes	Sub-themes
1. Experiences of Key Stakeholders in Implementing Reforms	• Experiences of teacher educators (workload, limited support, unclear policies, improved standards) • Experiences of administrators (infrastructure gains, quality control, funding constraints, policy inconsistencies) • Experiences of pre-service teachers (improved pedagogy and confidence, ICT challenges, stress, practicum experiences)
2. Challenges Hindering Implementation of Educational Reforms	• Limited teaching and learning resources • Insufficient professional development • Communication and policy interpretation gaps • Practicum supervision challenges • Regional and socio-cultural inequalities
3. Outcomes of Educational Reforms	• Positive outcomes (improved teacher quality, standardization, strengthened professional identity) • Negative/unintended outcomes (increased workload, stress, uneven implementation) • Mixed stakeholder perceptions of reforms

4.2 Experiences of key stakeholders in implementing reforms

Participants were asked to share their views on pre-service teacher education reforms in Ghana, and a key theme that emerged was the experiences of key stakeholders in implementing the reforms. Teacher educators reported improved training quality but also increased workload, limited support, and unclear policies. Administrators noted some infrastructure improvements and better quality control, but also highlighted funding constraints and policy inconsistencies. Pre-service teachers reported improved pedagogical skills and confidence, but also faced stress, ICT challenges, and uneven practicum supervision. While reforms are viewed positively, their implementation experiences vary across stakeholders due to resource, policy, and institutional challenges (Table 3).

Table 3: Stakeholder Perspectives on Reform Implementation

Stakeholder Group	Positive Experiences	Negative Experiences	Implementation Challenges	Representative Quotes
Teacher Educators	Clearer teaching standards; improved pedagogy	Increased workload; insufficient PD	Poor communication from MoE	TE06: "Reforms help, but we lack training."
Administrators	Infrastructure improvements; enhanced quality control	Budget shortages; staff resistance	Inconsistent policy directives	AD03: "Policies arrive too quickly."
Pre-Service Teachers	Better practicum; improved teaching confidence	Stress; ICT challenges	Limited support in rural postings	PST19: "We feel prepared but overwhelmed."



4.2.1 Experience of Teacher Educators

The efforts made by teacher educators in implementing the changes were very significant and varied, depending on whether positive or negative perceptions were considered. The majority of teacher educators found it quite rewarding to introduce the National Teacher Standards since it was quite beneficial in enhancing alignment and clarity in the teaching process. However, it faced several obstacles, such as heavy workloads, a lack of adequate information regarding the policy, and inadequate professional development opportunities.

"The National Teacher Standards brought clarity and structure to teaching and assessment of competencies." (TE06, Male, 14 years of experience, Institution B)

In conclusion, the study revealed that teacher educators play a significant role in translating educational policies and reforms. Teacher educators' experiences during the reform implementation process played an important role in its effectiveness. Although the introduction of National Teacher Standards improved clarity in curriculum delivery, several barriers to change implementation remained. Lack of adequate professional development opportunities and limited understanding of the policy hindered uniform implementation of the changes. Effective change implementation requires continuous professional development activities and appropriate channels for communicating the policy.

"Limited understanding of some reform components made consistent implementation difficult among teacher educators." (TE02, Female, 10 years of experience, Institution C)

4.2.2 Experiences of Administrators

The other major stakeholder group in the process of implementation of reforms was the college administration, which demonstrated an absolute dedication to meeting reform objectives. According to the data presented in Table 4, they saw the introduction of reforms as both timely and necessary in order to ensure better teacher education. In addition to recognising the positive role that reforms could play in promoting accountability, transforming teaching, and enhancing teacher preparation programmes, they also pointed to some problems in the process of their implementation.

"The inconsistencies of policy design and implementation meant some reforms did not have guidelines, time frames, and training." (AD09, Male, 5 years of experience, Institution D)

One of the major barriers that the administration recognized was the problem of financial constraints. These constrained the efforts of some colleges, specifically those that were either new or located in rural areas, to successfully implement reforms related to ICT and practicum.

"Financial constraints significantly hindered the implementation of ICT and practicum reforms in the rural areas."(AD04, Female, 12 years of experience, Institution A)

It can be argued that, although administrators were generally positive about the reforms, they encountered difficulties during the process of implementation due to insufficient policy communication and inequality in resource distribution.

4.2.3 Experiences of Pre-Service Teachers

Pre-service teachers stated that the reforms enhanced their pedagogical skills in areas such as lesson planning, micro-teaching, reflective learning, and learner-centred teaching methods. Most of them expressed that their confidence level was elevated during the practicum period, where theory was implemented practically with guidance, as evidenced in Table 5. Nevertheless, there were certain obstacles that the participants encountered, which included the need for higher assessment, stress from constant evaluation, and insufficient use of ICT infrastructure for completing assignments and presentations. This is illustrated in Figure 5 below.

"….practicum experiences helped pre-service teachers apply theory into real classroom practice under supervision." (PST05, Male, 1 years of study, Institution D)

It can be noted that although reforms have enhanced the pedagogical proficiency of pre-service teachers, these developments are associated with rising academic stress and inadequate resources. In summary, reforms are generally perceived favourably by teacher educators, who need greater assistance; administrators encounter difficulties with implementing reforms and financing, while pre-service teachers benefit from improvements in their pedagogical skills but also face learning stresses.

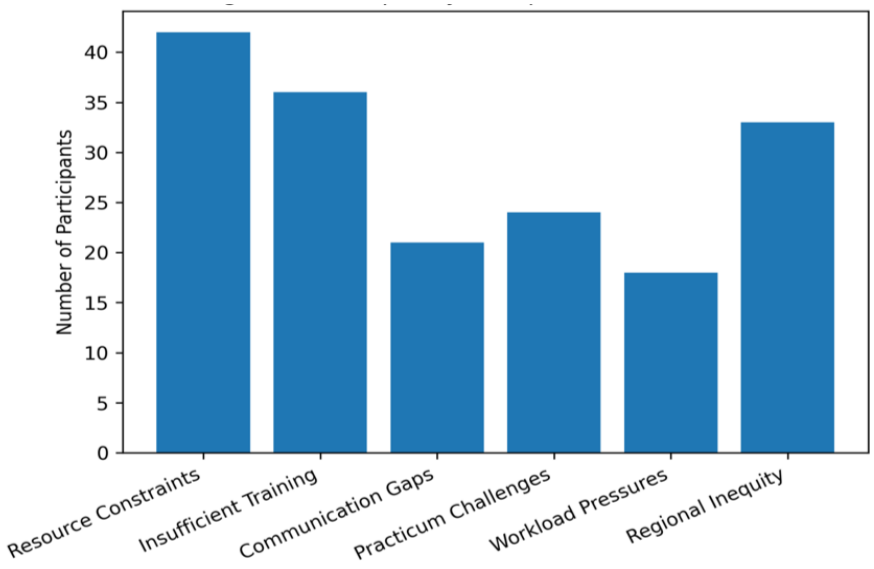
"….continuous assessments and limited ICT access created stress and affected learning activities." PST11, Female, 3 years of study, Institution B)

4.3 Challenges hindering the process of implementing reform

The fifth theme outlines systemic, institutional, and context-based challenges that affect the implementation of policies in education. Although the earlier themes reflect on improvement in terms of curriculum, methodology, and stakeholders' collaboration, this theme indicates challenges that limit the realization of all the objectives. As shown by the findings in Table 6 and Figure 6, the mentioned challenges are widespread among all institutions, although at different levels of intensity. It becomes evident that implementing reform is a continuous process influenced by resources, expertise, communication mechanisms, and other factors.

Table 3: Key Implementation Barriers Identified Across Institutions

Barrier Category	Description	Institutions Affected	Severity Level	Evidence (Code References)
Resource Constraints	Lack of ICT, libraries, teaching materials	B, C, D	High	TE11, AD02
Insufficient Training	Limited PD for NTS, inclusive education	All institutions	High	TE04, TE09
Communication Gaps	Delayed or unclear directives from MoE	A, C, E	Moderate	AD01, AD07
Practicum Challenges	Limited supervision; inadequate partner schools	B, D	High	PST10, PST25
Workload Pressures	Increased assessments, admin duties	A, B, E	Moderate–High	TE08
Regional Inequity	Rural institutions lag behind urban	C, D	Very High	AD06



4.3.1 Limited teaching resources

It was evident that the lack of resource availability was a universal issue among all stakeholder groups. There was a shortage of teaching and learning resources, such as textbooks and reference materials, and, most importantly, there was a scarcity of learning resources in science, mathematics, and information technology subjects, as seen in Table 6 below. Institutions C and D were the worst affected in terms of resource availability. Moreover, the number of pupils in each classroom exceeded 80, making it difficult to implement learner-centred teaching techniques, competency-based evaluation, cooperative learning, and personalized teaching. It is evident from Figure 6 that resource shortage is a prominent theme among stakeholder answers.

"Overcrowded classrooms and a lack of teaching resources prevent the implementation of learner-centred and competency-based techniques". (AD03, Female, 18 years of experience, Institution C)

This finding implies that although there is an excellent policy focus on learner-centred and competency-based education, the resource shortages limit its practical application.

4.3.2 Insufficient Professional Development

Insufficient professional development was identified as one of the main obstacles to the implementation of educational reforms at all institutions under review. According to the findings shown in Table 6 below, the lack of adequate professional development of teachers and administrative personnel, especially with regard to practical, applied training to implement reform, was a common issue. The existing professional development practices were mostly focused on theory, namely awareness of the policies involved; thus, their implementation in classroom teaching and administration was problematic. Teacher educators struggled to assess competencies, use ICTs, and apply inclusive education methods. For their part, administrative personnel struggled with planning, quality assurance, and reporting systems because of insufficient targeted training.

"...professional development was largely theoretical, with limited practical training to support implementation of reforms in classrooms and administration." (TE07, Male, 11 years of experience, Institution A)

Generally speaking, based on the findings, human capacity development issues are an important constraint to the successful implementation of educational reforms, next to problems associated with material and infrastructural aspects.

4.3.3 Challenges Related to Communication and Policy Interpretation

Apart from these barriers, communication problems and issues in the interpretation of policy guidelines issued by the Ministry of Education and other relevant organizations proved to be important obstacles to the reform's implementation process. From the survey results, it is evident that although the administrators were provided with relevant information about the reforms, the information was not sufficiently detailed for them to be able to interpret and apply the reform successfully, as can be seen in Table 6. At the same time, inconsistencies occurred in terms of teacher educators due to ineffective communication channels within institutions, influencing the implementation process at the institutional level. In terms of pre-service teachers, the ambiguity of assessment criteria and practical experience requirements created confusion, complicating their preparation process. Figure 6 demonstrates that communication barriers constituted one of the most common impediments to successful reform implementation.

"Policy guidelines were often insufficiently detailed, making consistent interpretation and application across institutions difficult." AD03, Male, 12 years of experience, Institution D)

These results indicate that the successful implementation of educational reforms cannot take place without sufficient communication structures and processes. Communication channels should be effective and efficient; otherwise, inconsistency in reform implementation will occur.

4.3.4 Regional/Socio-cultural Inequalities

The last sub-theme in challenges is that there were inequalities in the implementation of reform policies based on the regional and socio-cultural factors. From Table 6 below, the institutions that had to go through the process of reforming were facing more problems than urban institutions with regard to ICT facilities, teaching materials, practicum supervision, and community involvement. For example, those who came from rural institutions noted that they were encountering problems from their partner schools because of conflicting ideologies between the traditional method of teaching and the competency-based method. The lack of skilled supervisors hindered the effective implementation of reforms in Institutions C and D compared to the urban institutions.

"Rural institutions experienced greater implementation challenges across ICT, practicum supervision, and teaching resources compared to urban institutions." AD06, Male, 17 years of experience, Institution C)

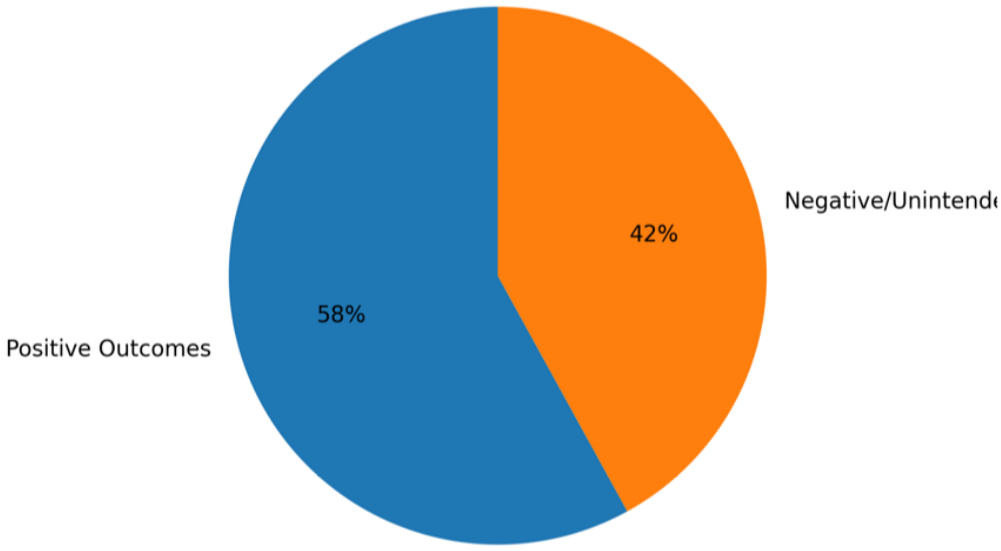
Therefore, without the adoption of context-specific measures during the process of implementing reform measures, there might be an unintended consequence of widening the gap of regional disparities in educational reforms.

4.4 Outcomes of Educational Reform

The theme is based on the perceived outcome of educational reforms by various stakeholders, such as teacher educators, administration, and pre-service teachers. According to the results, there are positive and negative outcomes of educational policy reforms depending on how well teachers are prepared, professional identity development, institutional culture, and distribution of workload. As indicated in Table 4.7, there are positive and negative outcomes resulting from reforms in different institutions. Moreover, the ratio of positive and negative outcomes is indicated in Figure 6.

Table 4: Perceived Outcomes of Educational Reforms

Outcome Category	Positive Outcomes	Negative/Unintended Outcomes	Stakeholders Reporting	Illustrative Evidence
Teacher Quality	Improved pedagogy; better lesson planning	Pressure to meet standards	TE, PST	TE03, PST14
Standardization	Clear expectations for all institutions	One-size-fits-all limitations	TE, AD	AD05
Practicum Experience	More hands-on exposure	Overcrowded placements	PST	PST08
Professional Identity	Stronger teacher confidence	Anxiety due to reforms	PST	PST22
Institutional Development	More infrastructure via GETFund	Uneven distribution	AD	AD02, AD09
ICT Integration	More digital tools available	Poor digital literacy	TE, PST	TE11



4.4.1 Positive Results

The positive outcome that resulted from the implementation of reforms is the greater standardization of teacher education training within the institutions. This can be seen in Table 7 below where the respondents indicate that there is improvement in terms of coherence in the curricula, alignment to the National Teacher Standards, and the competencies expected from the trainees.

"Alignment to the National Teacher Standards improved coherence and consistency in teacher education delivery across institutions." TE05, Male, 9 years of experience, Institution A)

Another benefit of the reforms that were implemented in the institution is that they helped strengthen the professional identity of pre-service teachers. From the various experiences, such as the practicum, reflective journaling, and collaborative learning, many trainees indicated that they have become more prepared and confident in their ability to perform teaching roles in the classroom.

"…Mh! pre-service teachers felt more prepared and confident in performing professional teaching roles due to practicum, reflection, and collaborative learning experiences." (PST15, Female, 3 years of study, Institution B)

4.4.2 Unintended Effects or Negative Consequences

However, apart from the success of the reforms, some negative impacts were noted in various areas. One problem that arose concerned the increased burden on the shoulders of teacher educators and administrators. From Table 4.7, it is evident that teacher educators felt more pressure in assessing competency-based skills, supervising students' practicums, reporting, and undertaking administrative duties. Likewise, administrators found the reforms challenging and tedious regarding

coordination, reporting, and liaison with external organisations. Pre-service teachers, who enjoyed improved teaching techniques, also faced stressful situations because of constant assessments and reflective learning tasks. Figure 7 further shows that such negative impacts form a considerable percentage of stakeholders' views regarding reforms.

"Implementation of reform increased workload pressures for both teacher educators and administrators about assessment, supervision, and reporting functions." (TE15, Female, 12 years of experience, Institution D)

This finding points out that although education reforms have enhanced teaching and learning methodologies, certain negative implications may hinder efficiency and well-being among other aspects.

4.4.3 Mixed Overall Perception

The most prominent impression that emerges regarding the stakeholder's perceptions towards educational reforms is that the respondents perceive the changes as a mixed bag of benefits and limitations. Despite the fact that stakeholders recognize significant progress made by reforms in terms of teacher preparation, professionalism, and curricular organization, it should be highlighted that these improvements are not equally effective at all institutions due to resource, professional skills, and administrative constraints.

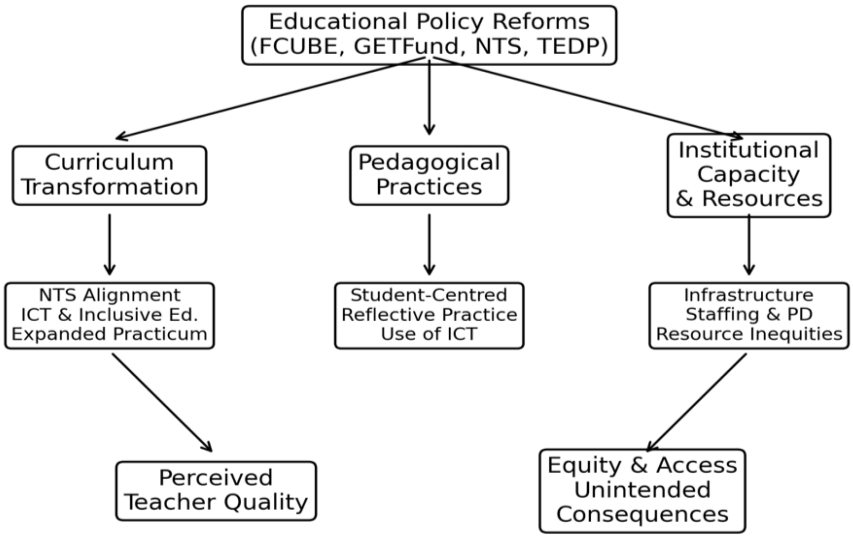
Teacher trainers saw the reforms as innovative and theoretically correct but too challenging to put into practice. Administrators found the reforms critical for the improvement of national teaching standards but believed that the reforms lacked proper funding, coordination, and policy support.

"Continuous assessment pressures often overshadowed the benefits of competency-based learning for pre-service teachers." (TE13, Male, 6 years of experience, Institution A)

Pre-service teachers recognized positive aspects of reforms, such as improved practical training and competency-based learning, yet continuous assessment pressures undermine their learning experience. Figure 7 depicts stakeholders' double impressions towards reforms.

"Stakeholders recognized the value of reforms but noted uneven implementation across institutions." (PST14, Female, 3 years of Study, Institution B)

Sufficiently synthesizing the data above, it should be mentioned that reforms can be seen as a continuous transformation process in teacher education whose effectiveness relies on overcoming certain structural and coordination gaps between institutions.



5. DISCUSSION

The findings from this paper provide valuable information about the process of educational reforms in the pre-service teacher education program in Ghana. The overall findings indicate that although educational reforms have had positive impacts on teacher preparation and pedagogy, the effectiveness of such reforms has been variable owing to some problems within the system.

The results indicate that teacher educators, administrators, and pre-service teachers encountered educational policy changes differently but at the same time relatedly. The participants agreed on better teacher training and standards. However, the teacher educators particularly valued the new order brought about by the National Teacher Standards even though they experienced more workloads without institutional backing. This is similar to the findings from South Africa indicating that even though the reforms led to structural improvement, they caused greater workloads because of institutional incapability (Chisholm, 2019.; Nnadozie & Chinomona, 2024). Successful policy implementation in Finland relied on enabling environments characterized by institutional support and professional autonomy (Sahlberg & Cobbold, 2021). In the case of India, pre-service teachers indicated improvements in pedagogical competencies but associated the process with stress from continuous assessments and lack of mentorship (Quansah, 2025). In Ghana, the administrators noted improved facilities and quality assurance but were constrained by inadequate finances and inconsistent policies findings which are also applicable in Nigeria (Jacob & Samuel, 2020). Although reforms may promote professionalism and organization, their impact depends on institutional preparedness, resource adequacy, and clear policies. Ghana should emphasize the improvement of support mechanisms for teacher educators, which include continuous professional development and work load management, better policy communication and training, and leadership development to build administrative capacity. These efforts should be supplemented with sufficient resource allocation to facilitate the implementation of reform measures effectively and consistently.

Barriers that have affected the process of reform implementation, such as the lack of adequate resources, inadequate training of teachers, failure to communicate well, difficulty in practicing teaching and regional disparity. The above-mentioned barriers are comparable to those found in other countries like Kenya, where overcrowded classrooms and lack of resources have affected the adoption of competency-based education (Ogembo, 2025; Sagwa et al., 2025). In Uganda, the lack of proper ICT infrastructure and inadequate teacher training had become an obstacle in the success of curricular reforms (Edison et al., 2025). Furthermore, in the case of China, although the government had attempted to enhance teacher education, there is great disparity between urban areas and rural schools in terms of access to ICT infrastructure and supervisory support (Guo & Li, 2024). On the other hand, in Germany, the government did not experience the problem of infrastructure shortage, but it experienced difficulty in changing pedagogy and adopting a competency-based approach (Korthagen, 2017). Successful implementation of reforms requires proper resource allocation, ongoing professional development, and effective communication strategies. This means that there should be deliberate efforts to invest in rural educational institutions, enhance the practical education of teachers, and improve ICT infrastructures in Ghana. Some recommended interventions include enhancing the funding capacity of GETFund, school-based professional development, implementation guidelines, and practicum improvement through better school links and mentoring.

Consequences of educational reforms have been experienced both positively and negatively on the pre-service teacher education in Ghana. Positively, there has been improvement in teacher quality, standardization of teacher education programs, and development of the professional identity of pre-service teachers. This observation concurs with that made in England whereby although there was improvement in standardization of teacher preparation through policy intensification, institutional flexibility was undermined (*Policy and Politics in Teacher Education*, n.d.). In Malaysia and China, although competence-based reform initiatives led to an increase in pedagogical skills and practicum preparation, there was added workload pressure on teachers (Ismail et al., 2019; Ye et al., 2025). Likewise, in South Africa, while reforms had contributed to enhancing reflective practice and professional identity of pre-service teachers, there had been undue pressure caused by continuous assessment practices (Naidoo & Muthukrishna, 2014). In Australia, reform fatigue had also been experienced by teachers amid improvement in professional standards of teachers (Mockler, 2022). In Ghana, similar trends were observed, where improvements in training quality coexisted with greater workloads and stress levels. This indicates that the process of reform should take into account both quality enhancement and the well-being of the stakeholders. In this respect, it is necessary to simplify the assessment procedures, improve teachers' well-being, and tailor implementation processes to institutional settings.

5.1 Limitations of the Study

There are certain limitations associated with this research that must be taken into consideration. Firstly, the study is based on qualitative data gathered at selected colleges of education and universities in Ghana; therefore, not all institutional differences are covered by this work. Secondly, although diversity among respondents has been considered in terms of selecting interviewees, both teachers and pre-service teachers have been involved in the process while other important parties, such as policymakers and supervisors, were not represented in this group. Thirdly, the use of self-reporting methods can make the results subjective and dependent on individual views, perceptions, and even institutional loyalties of

respondents. The last limitation lies in the lack of prolonged engagement with interviewees due to time and budget constraints. Nevertheless, this study gives a great opportunity for understanding how policies are applied in the area under discussion.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

6.1 Conclusion

The policy reforms introduced in the pre-service teacher education programs in Ghana offer significant promise in terms of enhancing the professionalism of teachers and raising standards in teacher training. Nevertheless, their effectiveness does not only rely on good policy formulation but also on the ability of the institution to implement the policies effectively. The analysis shows that sustainable improvements in the teacher education system are dependent on achieving a delicate balance between proper resource allocation, adequate professional development, functional communication systems, and implementation strategies that take into consideration the specificities of the situation. Otherwise, the reform process will continue to yield inconsistent results among institutions.

6.2 Recommendation

1. Improve continuous professional development by implementing competency-based teaching and ICT training by the Ministry of Education, National Teaching Council, and Colleges of Education.

2. Ensure equal distribution of resources, especially in rural settings, by the Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Trust Fund with institutional administration.

3. Improve policy dissemination through clear policies and guidelines by the Ministry of Education and institutional administration.

4. Improve practicum processes through better partnerships with schools and mentor training by the Ghana Education Service, at the district level, and Colleges of Education.

5. Lower workloads through recruitment of staff and better administrative systems by the Ministry of Education, Ghana Tertiary Education Commission, and College Administration.

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