

Teacher Education and Curriculum Alignment in History Education: A Bridge to Enhanced Learning Outcomes

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Abstract

Education in Ghana faces a structural crisis rooted in a persistent misalignment between what colleges of education teach and what basic schools actually require. Despite this being a well-documented concern in Ghanaian education more broadly, no systematic study has examined the specific disconnect in history education. Colleges of education prepare history specialists for Junior High School teaching, yet history does not exist as a standalone subject at that level. At the same time, primary school teachers, who are required to deliver history as a discrete subject, receive no formal training in the discipline. This study addresses that gap through a mixed-methods investigation involving 100 participants: 50 student-teachers drawn from colleges of education affiliated to five major universities in Ghana, 30 in-service teachers, and 20 education administrators. The findings show that 96% of primary school teachers teach history without any specialised training, while 92% of history specialists reported serious concern about the mismatch between their preparation and available teaching positions. There was strong consensus across stakeholder groups, with 94% calling for systematic curriculum restructuring. Anchored in Biggs and Tang's (2011) Constructive Alignment Theory, the study develops the Teacher Education Curriculum Alignment Model (TECAM) as an analytical tool to examine the structural and functional dimensions of this misalignment. The findings point to the need for mandatory history training within primary education programmes, a revision of the college of education curricula to reflect how history is actually structured in basic schools, and stronger coordination between curriculum development bodies and teacher training institutions.

Keywords: curriculum alignment, history education, teacher education, basic school curriculum, pedagogical content knowledge, Ghana

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Introduction

The quality and effectiveness of history education in basic schools have become increasingly significant concerns in Ghana's educational landscape. History, as a fundamental discipline, plays a crucial role in fostering national identity, promoting cultural awareness, and developing critical thinking skills among students (Adu-Boahen & Essiaw, 2023; Avianto, 2023; Boadu, 2021; Oppong, 2019). Recent studies have further emphasised that effective history education shapes students' perspectives on national development and their understanding of the broader social forces that formed their society (Levstik & Barton, 2022; Nordlund Macdougall, 2024). Realising these outcomes, however, depends heavily on the preparation and competence of teachers responsible for implementing the curriculum at various educational levels. A teacher who lacks grounding in historical content and the pedagogy specific to the subject is unlikely to foster genuine historical thinking in learners, regardless of how well the curriculum itself is designed (Harris & Bain, 2011; Tuithof et al., 2023). The Ghanaian pre-tertiary education system has undergone several reforms in the past decades, with varying emphasis on history education at different levels (Adu-Gyamfi et al., 2016). These reforms have repeatedly repositioned history within the school curriculum, at times integrating it into broader social science subjects and at other times reinstating it as a standalone discipline. The 2019 curriculum reforms marked a significant turning point, formally reintroducing history as a core subject at the Primary School level after years of marginalisation, thereby providing students with foundational historical knowledge and cultural awareness during their formative years (NaCCA, 2019). At the Junior High School (JHS) level, however, historical content was not accorded the same treatment. Instead, it was integrated into the Social Studies curriculum rather than existing as a separate subject (NaCCA, 2020). This means that while primary school pupils receive dedicated history lessons, JHS students encounter historical content only as one strand within a broader integrated framework, an arrangement that has created unique challenges in teacher preparation and deployment across both levels of basic schooling.

These challenges become most visible when the teacher education system is examined alongside the curriculum structure. Most colleges of education in Ghana offer specialised history education programmes primarily focused on preparing teachers for Junior High School level instruction (Ministry of Education, 2017; Oteng et al., 2023). This creates a significant problem, as trained history teachers graduate to find that history is not taught as a standalone subject at the JHS level but is instead integrated into Social Studies. Conversely, teachers trained for Primary Education, where history is taught as a standalone subject, receive minimal to no formal training in history education during their professional preparation (Ministry of Education, 2017). The outcome is a structural incongruence in which colleges of education prepare history teachers for a level where the subject is not standalone, while primary school teachers who are responsible for teaching history as a discrete subject lack the necessary training in historical content and subject-specific pedagogical approaches.

This misalignment carries far-reaching implications for the quality of history education in Ghanaian basic schools. Research indicates that teachers' subject-matter expertise and pedagogical content knowledge significantly influence student learning outcomes (Gess-Newsome et al., 2019). At the primary level, teachers without specialised historical training are nonetheless responsible for delivering history as a core subject, a situation that potentially compromises the depth and quality of instruction students receive. History specialists trained for the JHS level face a different but equally problematic reality, as they often find themselves teaching integrated content or

struggling to adapt their specialised knowledge to educational contexts for which they were not prepared, leading to reduced teacher effectiveness and job satisfaction (Oppong & Adjepong, 2022). Taken together, these conditions point to a system in which neither level of basic schooling is adequately served by the current teacher preparation arrangements.

This misalignment has far-reaching implications for the quality of history education in Ghanaian basic schools. Research indicates that teachers' subject-matter expertise and pedagogical content knowledge significantly influence student learning outcomes (Gess-Newsome et al., 2019). The current situation potentially compromises the quality of history education at the primary level, where teachers without specialised historical training are responsible for delivering the curriculum. Furthermore, history specialists trained for JHS level often find themselves teaching integrated content or struggling to adapt their specialised knowledge to different educational contexts, leading to reduced teacher effectiveness and job satisfaction (Oppong & Adjepong, 2022).

Despite the evident importance of this issue, there has been limited systematic research investigating the extent and impact of this misalignment in the Ghanaian context. Previous studies have primarily focused on general curriculum alignment issues or broader educational reforms without specifically addressing the unique challenges in history education (Adu-Gyamfi et al., 2016; Adu-Gyamfi & Anderson, 2021; Kuyini, 2013). This research aims to analyse the current structure of history education in teacher training programmes and the basic school curriculum while assessing the impact of curriculum misalignment on teaching quality. By exploring stakeholder experiences and perspectives, the study seeks to develop evidence-based recommendations for better alignment between teacher education programmes and the basic school curriculum in history education. Specifically, the research examines the extent of misalignment between the College of Education history programme and the basic school curriculum, investigates how this misalignment affects the quality of history education in Ghana, and identifies potential strategies to bridge this curricular gap.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in the Constructive Alignment Theory (CAT) developed by John Biggs (1996). The theory draws on two complementary traditions in educational scholarship. The first is constructivism, which holds that learners actively construct meaning through their own engagement with content rather than passively receiving knowledge transmitted by a teacher. The second is instructional design, which emphasises the importance of aligning the objectives of a course with the methods used to teach it and the tasks used to assess it. Biggs (1996) argues that when these three components work in harmony, learning outcomes improve significantly. When they do not, the system defaults to lower-level performance regardless of the quality of individual components. In the context of this study, the theory is extended beyond its original application in higher education to examine the alignment between teacher preparation programmes and actual curriculum implementation in basic schools, where a similar logic applies: misalignment between what teachers are prepared to teach, where they are deployed, and what the curriculum requires of them produces systemic inefficiency and compromised educational quality (Biggs & Tang, 2011).

Building on this foundation, the study proposes the Teacher Education-Curriculum Alignment Model (TECAM) as a framework for analysing the specific misalignment in Ghana's history education system, as illustrated in Figure 1. The TECAM is structured around three interconnected dimensions: teacher preparation as input, curriculum structure as process, and educational

outcomes as output. This structure makes the framework well-suited to examining both the structural and functional aspects of the misalignment under investigation. When analysing how history teachers are prepared for Junior High School instruction but find the subject integrated into Social Studies upon graduation, the framework helps identify the gap between teacher preparation and curriculum structure. Similarly, when examining how primary school teachers without specialised history training are required to teach the subject as a standalone discipline, the framework draws attention to the consequences of that gap for educational outcomes.

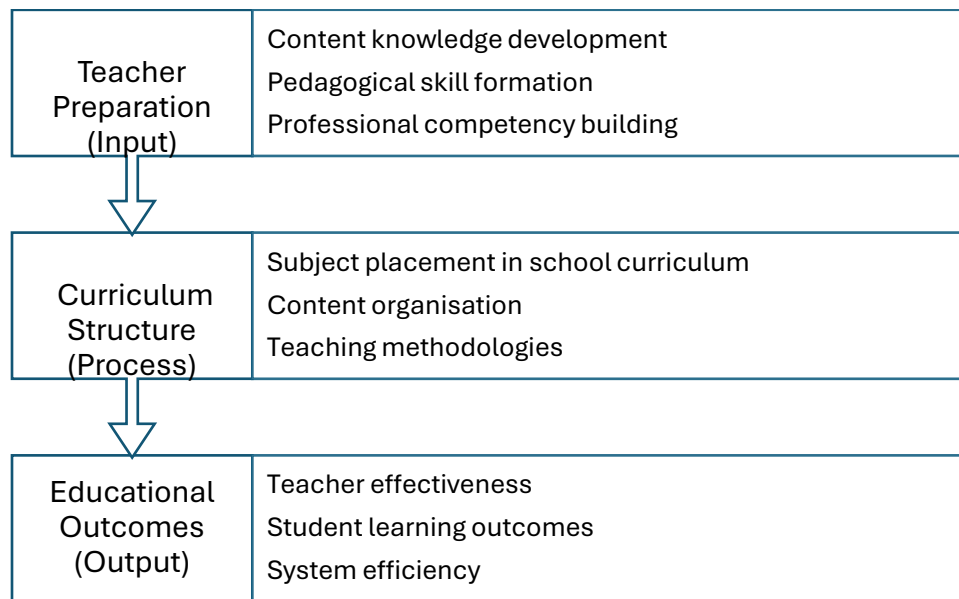


Figure 1: The Teacher Education-Curriculum Alignment Model (TECAM)

Source: Author's construct (2026).

The TECAM also draws on van den Akker's (2003) work on curriculum coherence, which holds that curriculum alignment must be examined at multiple levels: the intended curriculum as planned in teacher education, the implemented curriculum as delivered in schools, and the attained curriculum as experienced by students. This multi-level perspective is important for understanding the full complexity of the misalignment in Ghana's history education system, since the problem does not reside at a single point but runs across the entire chain from teacher preparation through to classroom delivery and student learning. Additionally, the framework incorporates Shulman's (2015) concept of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK), which stresses that effective teaching requires teachers to possess both subject matter knowledge and the pedagogical skills to make that content accessible to learners. This dimension is directly relevant to this study, given that the misalignment under examination affects precisely the kind of content-specific pedagogical preparation that history teachers at both primary and JHS levels need. Together, these theoretical resources provide a structured and analytically coherent basis for examining the research problem and developing evidence-based recommendations for reform.

Teacher Education and Curriculum Alignment

Curriculum alignment between teacher education programmes and school curricula represents a fundamental aspect of educational effectiveness. As Tekir and Akar (2019) explain, this alignment encompasses both the coherence between what teachers learn during their preparation and what

they are expected to teach in schools, and the consistency between different levels of education. Where this alignment holds, teacher preparation reinforces curriculum delivery and produces improved educational outcomes. Where it breaks down, the consequences extend from individual classrooms to the broader quality of the education system. What the literature consistently reveals, however, is that such breakdown is not an aberration. It is a recurring condition that has persisted across different national contexts and historical periods, suggesting that the problem is structural rather than incidental.

Jacobs (2013) offers an important historical perspective on this point. His documentary study of social studies teacher education in early twentieth-century America demonstrated that disarray in the social studies field was as much a product of disorder within teacher preparation programmes as it was of disagreements among curriculum designers and policymakers. Teacher education institutions were often resistant or ill-equipped to respond to curriculum reforms in schools, and this inertia meant that even well-intentioned curriculum changes failed to take root at the classroom level. Jacobs (2013) argues that the relationship between teacher education and curriculum reform is reciprocal: changes in what schools teach ought to shape how teachers are prepared, and changes in teacher preparation ought to feed back into curriculum practice. When this reciprocity breaks down, curriculum reform stalls regardless of how sound the policy intentions may be. This historical lesson is directly relevant to the present day, as it establishes that the failure of teacher education to keep pace with curriculum change is not a new problem but a deeply embedded one that requires deliberate structural intervention.

The consequences of this structural disconnect have been documented across multiple international contexts. As Banjal et al. (2025) demonstrate through an extensive analysis of teacher education programmes that misalignment between preparation and practice creates significant challenges for new teachers. One specific and well-documented manifestation of this misalignment is the phenomenon of out-of-field teaching, where teachers are assigned to deliver subjects for which they have received little or no formal preparation. Ingersoll (2000) demonstrated that this phenomenon is widespread and that its root cause lies not primarily in the qualifications of individual teachers but in how teacher deployment is managed at the institutional level. Highly qualified teachers can effectively become unqualified when assigned to subjects outside their area of training, and this misassignment directly undermines student achievement. Critically, Ingersoll (2000) found that out-of-field teaching persists even in fields where there is no shortage of trained candidates, meaning that the problem cannot be attributed solely to supply constraints. It is a systemic management failure that mirrors what this study identifies in the Ghanaian context, where structurally misaligned deployment rather than an absence of trained personnel lies at the heart of the problem.

Comparative evidence from Asia and East Africa further reinforces the international scope of this challenge. Banjal et al. (2025) examined curriculum misalignment in the Philippines through the lens of Constructive Alignment Theory and found that teacher education programme coordinators faced multifaceted challenges arising from conflicting directives between regulatory bodies, outdated and fragmented curriculum content, and significant difficulties in aligning syllabi with the competencies actually assessed in licensure examinations. Their study demonstrated that misalignment is rarely the product of a single failure point. Rather, it accumulates across the entire chain from curriculum design through to assessment and deployment. Owino and Mayoyo (2026) documented a closely analogous situation in Kenya, where the implementation of the Competency-

Based Curriculum has exposed a persistent mismatch between the subjects university graduates are trained to teach and the subjects they are actually assigned to deliver in junior and senior schools. Their findings showed that teachers trained in narrow disciplinary specialisations were routinely deployed into integrated or interdisciplinary teaching contexts for which they had received no preparation, leading to reduced instructional quality, professional demoralisation, and heavy reliance on textbooks rather than pedagogical strategy. These studies from the Philippines and Kenya demonstrate that curriculum-teacher preparation misalignment is a systemic challenge with recognisable patterns across developing and transitioning education systems.

Within the Ghanaian context specifically, Buabeng et al. (2020) demonstrated that Ghanaian teacher education programmes frequently fail to adapt to curriculum changes at the basic school level quickly enough. This allows preparation gaps to accumulate in ways that short-term professional development cannot easily address. Teacher education programmes in Ghana have tended to operate in isolation from basic school curriculum developments, and this isolation is particularly acute in subject-specific preparation, where the assumptions embedded in training rarely reflect what teachers will actually encounter in schools. Understanding how this systemic isolation developed requires attention to the historical trajectory of history education itself, a subject that has been repeatedly repositioned within the Ghanaian curriculum and whose teacher preparation arrangements have never been fully realigned to match those repositioning.

Taken together, this body of international and Ghanaian scholarship establishes a consistent pattern: teacher preparation systems tend to develop institutional inertia, and curriculum reforms in schools rarely trigger the corresponding reforms in teacher education that would be needed to keep the two in alignment. The present study is situated within this pattern but addresses a dimension that the existing literature has not yet examined directly. While previous studies have documented general misalignment between teacher education and curriculum requirements in Ghana, none have investigated the specific structural inversion in which history specialists are trained for a level where history does not exist as a standalone subject, while the primary school teachers who are actually required to teach history as a discrete subject receive no subject-specific preparation at all. This study addresses that gap by providing systematic empirical evidence of the misalignment, its scope, and its consequences for the quality of history education in Ghanaian basic schools.

History Education in Basic Schools

History education in basic schools serves multiple critical functions, including developing national identity, critical thinking skills, and cultural awareness. Boadu (2021) traced the evolution of history education in Ghana through an analysis of historical records, cultural traditions, and teacher interviews, revealing that the subject has undergone significant transformations shaped by three main forces: Western historiographical perspectives, colonial imperialism, and post-independence political reforms. While history education initially suffered under colonial rule with its emphasis on European narratives, it later gained prominence under Nkrumah's leadership before experiencing a sharp decline following the 1987 education reforms, when it was merged into Social Studies. Boadu's (2021) study shows that history education is now regaining ground with its reintroduction as a core subject at the primary level in 2019, though significant challenges remain, including inadequate teacher preparation, overcrowded curriculum content, and persistently low enrolment at the Senior High School level, where history remains an elective subject. This

historical context is essential for understanding why the current curriculum arrangement carries such weight. The repositioning of history in 2019 represented a genuine policy commitment to the subject, yet the teacher preparation system has not been restructured to match it.

The structural consequences of this gap have been examined directly by Oppong and Adjepong (2022), whose work on the missing link in Ghana's basic school history education exposed the depth of the problem following the 2019 reforms. Their research revealed that while history was successfully reintroduced as a core subject at the primary school level (B1-B6), its complete absence at the Junior High School level creates a significant educational discontinuity. They found that this arrangement undermines the development of historical consciousness and nation-building values at a crucial developmental stage. Drawing on episodic memory theory, they demonstrated that JHS students are actually better positioned developmentally to retain and understand historical concepts compared to primary school students, making the current curriculum structure particularly problematic from a learning science perspective. Their analysis further showed that the primary school history curriculum contains national-level content that would be more appropriately taught at the JHS level, while primary education should focus more on local history to build foundational understanding. These findings reinforce the urgency of addressing not only where history is taught but also how teachers at each level are prepared to teach it.

The importance of subject-specific teacher preparation in history has been well established in the international literature. VanSledright (2011) argues that effective history education requires teachers with specific pedagogical content knowledge in history, encompassing an understanding of historical thinking concepts and appropriate discipline-specific teaching methodologies. This requirement becomes particularly challenging in contexts where teachers lack specialised training in the subject, as their instruction tends to default to factual recitation rather than the development of historical reasoning. The positioning of history within the basic school curriculum, therefore, has significant implications for how the subject is taught and learned, and for the kind of teacher preparation that is needed to support quality instruction at each level.

Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods research design to investigate the misalignment between teacher education programmes and the basic school curriculum in history education in Ghana. A mixed-methods approach was chosen because the research problem requires both breadth and depth: quantitative data captures the scale and distribution of misalignment across stakeholder groups, while qualitative data projects the lived experiences and contextual meanings that numbers alone cannot convey. This combination also supports methodological triangulation and strengthens the trustworthiness of the findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

Data were collected through three methods: document analysis, stakeholder surveys, and open-ended qualitative responses. The document analysis examined three key curricular documents: the College of Education History Curriculum, the Primary School History Curriculum, and the JHS Social Studies Curriculum, focusing on structural elements, content organisation, and pedagogical approaches across educational levels. This analysis provided an empirical baseline against which stakeholder perceptions could subsequently be interpreted.

Building on this documentary foundation, the survey component engaged three distinct participant groups, totalling 100 respondents. The first group comprised 50 student-teachers selected through

stratified random sampling from colleges of education affiliated to five major universities in Ghana (see Table 1). These five universities were selected for two reasons. First, their affiliated colleges of education run specialisation programmes in history education, meaning that these are the specific institutions responsible for training history teachers designated for Junior High School teaching. Second, they collectively operate the largest networks of affiliated colleges of education in Ghana and account for the substantial majority of trained history and social studies teachers entering the basic school system each year (Ministry of Education, 2017; PRINCOF, 2023). Out of the 50 student-teachers, 25 student-teachers specialised in history and 25 in social studies. This equal split was deliberate, since the misalignment affects each group differently. History specialists face a structural mismatch between their training and available teaching positions, while social studies specialists receive no history content courses during their preparation, leaving them without the subject knowledge needed to teach the history strand embedded in the JHS Social Studies curriculum. An unequal distribution would have compromised this comparative strand of the analysis.

Table 1: Distribution of Student-Teacher Participants by Affiliated University and Specialisation

University	History Specialisation	Social Studies Specialisation	Total
University of Ghana (UG)	5	5	10
University for Development Studies	5	5	10
University of Education, Winneba	5	5	10
AAMUSTED (now USTED)	5	5	10
KNUST	5	5	10
Total	25	25	50

The remaining two participant groups were selected through purposive sampling to ensure representation across relevant levels of the education system. The second group consisted of 30 in-service teachers, of whom 16 (53.3%) were primary school teachers and 14 (46.7%) were junior high school teachers (see Table 2). This distribution reflects the study's primary analytical focus on the preparation gap at the primary level while retaining sufficient JHS representation for meaningful cross-level comparison. The third group comprised 20 education administrators drawn from four administrative levels (see Table 3).

Table 2: Characteristics of In-Service Teacher Participants

Teaching Level	Number of Teachers	Percentage	Teaching Experience Range
Primary School	16	53.3%	3-8 years
Junior High School	14	46.7%	5-15 years
Total	30	100%	3-15 years

Table 3: Distribution of Education Administrator Participants

Administrative Level	Number of Participants	Positions
School Level	5	Headmasters/Assistant Headmasters
District Level	5	District Directors/ School Improvement Support Officers (SISOs)
Regional Level	5	Regional Directors/officers
National Level	5	GES, NTC, NaCCA officials
Total	20	

Surveys were administered first, followed sequentially by the open-ended qualitative component. The quantitative data provided an initial structural mapping of stakeholder perceptions, which then informed the depth and focus of the qualitative responses. The quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, with mean scores calculated for Likert-scale items to assess participants' perspectives on curriculum alignment, teaching preparedness, and professional development needs. Instrument reliability was established through a pilot study with ten participants from institutions not included in the main study. Cronbach's alpha coefficients of .87 for student-teachers, .84 for in-service teachers, and .82 for administrators were obtained, indicating high internal consistency. Qualitative data underwent thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2013) six-phase approach. To establish inter-rater reliability, two independent coders analysed a randomly selected 30% subset of the qualitative data, with disagreements resolved through discussion. Cohen's kappa yielded a coefficient of .81, indicating strong coding agreement (Cohen, 1960). Document analysis findings were used throughout to contextualise and triangulate the survey and qualitative data. Content validity was established through expert review by three curriculum specialists and two teacher educators, whose feedback led to modifications in the wording and structure of the questions. Construct validity was strengthened by the convergence of evidence across all three data sources. To adhere to established ethical guidelines, the necessary permissions from participating institutions and informed consent from all participants were obtained. Confidentiality was maintained through the use of participant codes, and all data were stored securely in accordance with institutional research protocols.

Results

Structure of history education in College of Education programmes and the basic school curriculum

Figures 2, 3, and 4 present the structural organisation of history education across the Primary School History Curriculum, the Junior High School (JHS) Social Studies Curriculum, and the College of Education History Curriculum, respectively. The analytical focus here is on what the structural relationships between these three levels reveal about the nature and consequences of the misalignment.

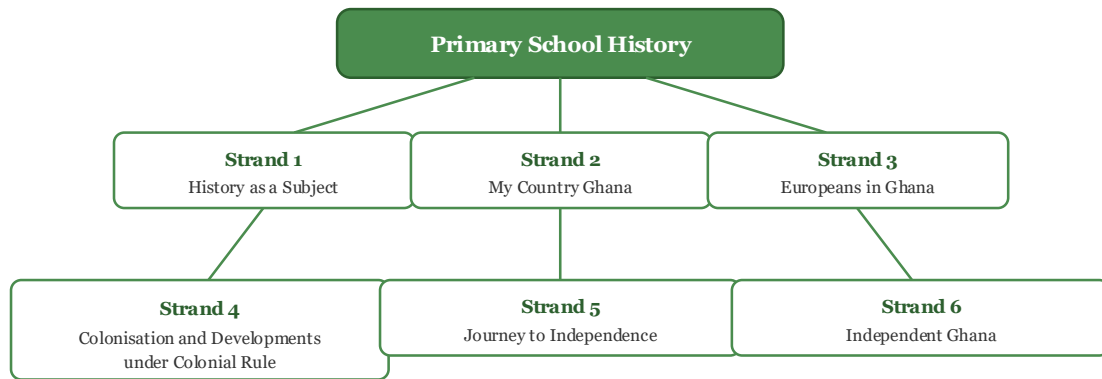


Figure 2: Structure of Primary School History Curriculum (Standalone subject - Basic 1 to 6)
Source: (NaCCA, 2019)

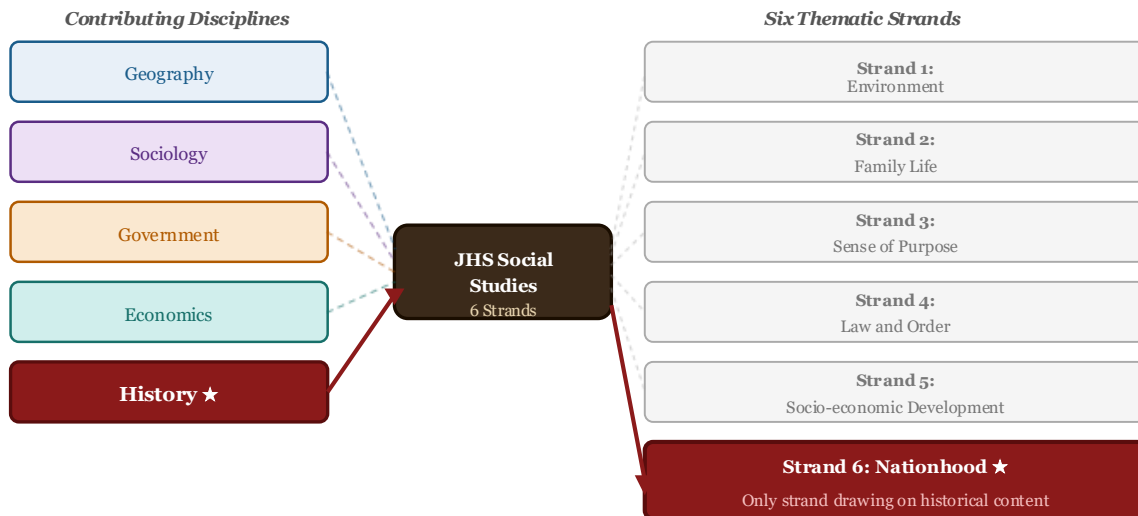


Figure 3: Structure of the JHS Social Studies Curriculum and the Place of History

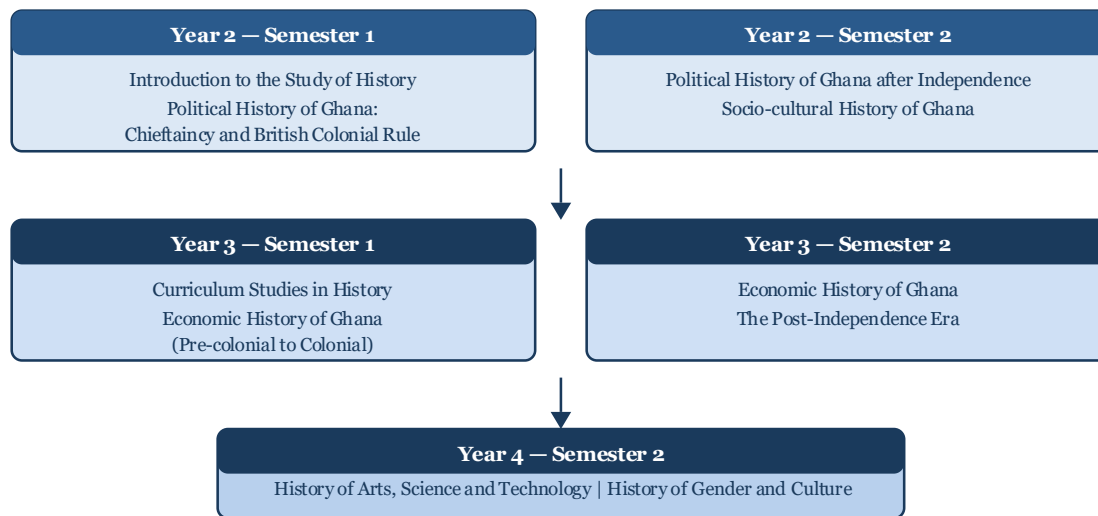


Figure 4: College of Education History Curriculum
Source: (Ministry of Education, 2017; UEW, 2018)

As shown in Figure 2, history at the primary level is organised as a standalone subject with six sequenced content strands, requiring teachers with dedicated subject knowledge and history-specific pedagogical preparation. Figure 3 reveals a fundamentally different arrangement at the JHS level. The Social Studies curriculum draws on five disciplines, namely Geography, Sociology, Government, Economics, and History, organised into six thematic strands. Historical content is confined to Strand 6 (Nationhood), while the remaining five strands draw on the other four disciplines. History is therefore not a discrete subject at JHS, and the bulk of the Social Studies curriculum makes no direct use of historical content. Figure 4 shows that despite this structural reality, the College of Education history curriculum is a four-year specialised programme explicitly oriented toward JHS level instruction, covering political, socio-cultural, and economic history in depth across multiple semesters.

A comparative analysis of these three figures exposes a structural inversion in the history teacher education system in Ghana. The most prominent misalignment is in the relationship between teacher preparation and actual teaching requirements. The College of Education curriculum provides extensive specialised training in history, preparing teachers with advanced historical analysis skills and specialised teaching methodologies primarily aimed at JHS instruction. However, these trained history teachers graduate to find that history is not a standalone subject at the JHS level but is integrated into Social Studies. At the same time, history exists as a standalone subject at the primary level, yet teachers at that level receive no specialised training in history education. This creates a paradoxical situation where teachers with specialised historical training are placed at a level where history is integrated into Social Studies, while teachers without specialised historical training are tasked with teaching history as a discrete subject. The depth and complexity of historical content across these levels also reveals significant disparities. The College of Education curriculum emphasises advanced historical analysis, theoretical frameworks, and sophisticated historical methodologies, which stands in stark contrast to what is required at the primary level and is largely redundant within the integrated Social Studies framework at JHS.

The survey and qualitative data across all three stakeholder groups provide consistent and mutually reinforcing evidence of how this structural inversion is experienced across the system. Four major interconnected themes emerged from the thematic analysis of stakeholder responses: curriculum-practice misalignment, professional preparation gaps, implementation challenges, and stakeholder recommendations for reform. Each theme emerged consistently across all stakeholder groups, though with varying emphases based on participants' roles and experiences. The quantitative data from the surveys complements and substantiates these themes at each turn, and the analysis below presents both strands of evidence together under each thematic heading.

Curriculum-Practice Misalignment

The qualitative analysis identified curriculum-practice misalignment as the most prominent theme across all stakeholder groups, and the quantitative data provides direct empirical support for this finding at every level. Among student-teachers, 92% of history specialists expressed serious concern about the disconnect between their specialised training and the teaching positions available to them upon graduation. Table 4 captures the quantitative dimensions of this concern.

Table 4: Mean Scores for Student-Teachers' Perceptions by Specialisation

Question Focus	History Specialists (n=25)	Social Studies Specialists (n=25)	Overall Mean	SD
Curriculum Alignment	1.8	1.4	1.6	0.72
Primary School Preparedness	1.6	1.3	1.45	0.68
JHS Preparedness	3.8	2.1	2.95	1.12
Programme Satisfaction	2.1	1.8	1.95	0.83
Impact of Misalignment	4.7	4.5	4.6	0.54
Employment Concerns	4.8	3.9	4.35	0.76

Scores based on 5-point Likert scale (1 = Very Low, 5 = Very High)

History specialists reported significantly higher preparedness for JHS teaching ($M = 3.8$, $SD = 1.12$) compared to Social Studies specialists ($M = 2.1$, $SD = 1.12$), which reflects their focused preparation for that level. However, both groups reported very low preparedness for primary school teaching ($M = 1.45$, $SD = 0.68$), with Social Studies specialists reporting even lower confidence ($M = 1.3$, $SD = 0.68$). Employment concerns were particularly great among History specialists ($M = 4.8$, $SD = 0.76$), reflecting the structural absence of dedicated history teaching positions at JHS. These scores reflect a clear-eyed reading of a system in which specialist preparation leads to a level where the subject being prepared for does not exist as a discrete course. As one student-teacher explained, "We are being trained extensively for JHS level history teaching, but ironically, there is no standalone history subject at that level. This makes our specialised training seem futile" (ST 17). The situation among in-service teachers tells a parallel story from within the system rather than at its entry point. Table 5 presents the quantitative data for this group.

Table 5: Mean Scores for In-Service Teachers' Assessment by Teaching Level

Question Focus	Primary Teachers (n=16)	JHS Teachers (n=14)	Overall Mean	SD
Teacher Preparation Adequacy	1.4	2.3	1.8	0.76
Teaching Confidence	1.8	2.7	2.2	0.94
Impact of Misalignment	4.8	4.5	4.7	0.52
Importance of Specialised Training	4.9	4.7	4.8	0.41

Scores based on 5-point Likert scale (1 = Very Low, 5 = Very High)

Primary school teachers reported significantly lower preparation adequacy ($M = 1.4$, $SD = 0.76$) compared to JHS teachers ($M = 2.3$, $SD = 0.76$), and lower teaching confidence ($M = 1.8$, $SD = 0.94$) compared to their JHS counterparts ($M = 2.7$, $SD = 0.94$). With 96% of primary teachers report that they teach history without any specialised training. These scores do not just represent a marginal inadequacy but a near-total absence of subject-specific readiness. One primary school teacher captured the practical consequences of this directly:

“As a primary school teacher, I am required to teach history as a standalone subject, yet I received absolutely no training in history education. This is a serious oversight in our teacher preparation programme” (PST 9).

Both groups rated the impact of misalignment and the importance of specialised training very highly ($M > 4.5$), indicating that however differently the misalignment is experienced at each level, its significance is felt with equal force across the system. The analysis of educational administrators' quantitative ($n = 20$) responses revealed varying perspectives across different administrative levels, with some notable patterns in their assessment of the situation. Table 6 presents the responses from the administrative levels.

Table 6: Mean Scores for Educational Administrators' Assessment by Administrative Level

Question Focus	School Level	District Level	Regional Level	National Level	Overall Mean	SD
Teacher Education Familiarity	3.6	4.2	4.6	4.8	4.3	0.52
Basic School Curriculum Familiarity	4.8	4.6	4.4	4.2	4.5	0.48
Extent of Misalignment	4.6	4.7	4.8	4.9	4.75	0.44
Impact on Quality	4.7	4.8	4.8	4.9	4.8	0.41
Initiative Effectiveness	2.1	2.3	2.2	2.4	2.25	0.62
School-Institution Collaboration	1.8	2.0	1.9	1.7	1.85	0.58
Developer-Educator Collaboration	1.9	1.8	2.0	1.8	1.875	0.54
Future Outlook	2.8	2.6	2.4	2.2	2.5	0.66

Scores based on 5-point Likert scale (1 = Very Low, 5 = Very High)

Analysis reveals an inverse relationship between administrative level and familiarity with different aspects of the education system. School-level administrators showed higher familiarity with the

basic school curriculum ($M = 4.8$, $SD = 0.48$) but lower familiarity with teacher education ($M = 3.6$, $SD = 0.52$), while national-level administrators demonstrated higher familiarity with teacher education ($M = 4.8$, $SD = 0.52$) but lower familiarity with the basic school curriculum ($M = 4.2$, $SD = 0.48$). This inverse pattern means that those with the greatest authority over curriculum and deployment policy have the least direct exposure to how misalignment plays out in classrooms. A National-Level Administrator acknowledged this structural gap:

“There is a clear lack of coordination between curriculum planning bodies, leading to these misalignments in teacher preparation and curriculum implementation” (NLA 2).

District and regional-level administrators further emphasised how the misalignment affects teacher deployment and resource allocation in ways that national-level figures are less well-positioned to observe. Across all three groups, the extent of misalignment was rated consistently high, with mean scores exceeding 4.5 on a five-point scale. This consensus across student-teachers who have not yet entered schools, in-service teachers working within the system daily, and administrators responsible for its management, confirms that the structural inversion identified in the curriculum analysis is not a perception held by one group but a condition experienced and recognised throughout the system.

Professional Preparation Gaps

The quantitative and qualitative data together reveal that the consequences of the structural inversion extend well beyond employment and deployment concerns into the professional identities and classroom capabilities of teachers. School-institution collaboration received notably low ratings ($M = 1.85$, $SD = 0.58$), indicating poor coordination between teacher training institutions and schools, while developer-educator collaboration showed similarly weak results ($M = 1.875$, $SD = 0.54$). These figures point to an institutional environment in which preparation gaps are unlikely to be identified and addressed through ongoing dialogue between the bodies responsible for designing curricula and those responsible for implementing them.

Among student-teachers, history specialists (88%) consistently reported concerns about the mismatch between their specialised training and available teaching opportunities, not only in terms of where they could be deployed but also in terms of how little of their preparation would be relevant in the integrated Social Studies context they would encounter at JHS. As one student-teacher put it,

“We need to revise the curriculum to create teaching opportunities for history specialists. Currently, our expertise is not being utilised effectively” (ST 4).

The quantitative data on low primary school preparedness ($M = 1.45$, $SD = 0.68$) adds a further dimension to this: these student-teachers are not only over-prepared for one level but wholly unprepared for the level where their intervention is most needed.

Among primary teachers, 95% indicated severe content knowledge gaps, a qualitative finding that maps directly onto the low teaching confidence scores ($M = 1.8$, $SD = 0.94$) recorded in the quantitative analysis. Their testimonies revealed that the absence of history training during initial teacher education left them without the content knowledge and the methodological language to teach history as a discipline. One primary school teacher described it this way:

“Teaching history without proper training feels like walking blindfolded. We need specialised training to do justice to this important subject” (PST 13).

This metaphor appeared repeatedly across primary teacher responses in various forms, pointing to a widespread sense of professional inadequacy that the quantitative confidence scores corroborate. The preparation gaps identified here extend beyond content knowledge to include pedagogical skills, assessment approaches, and understanding of historical thinking concepts, affecting not only teaching quality but also teacher confidence and professional identity.

Implementation Challenges

The low collaboration scores documented in the quantitative data find their classroom expression in the implementation challenges reported qualitatively. The analysis revealed that 92% of teachers relied heavily on textbooks as their primary teaching resource, while 78% engaged in self-directed learning to compensate for their lack of formal preparation. These are not professional preferences; they are adaptive responses to a structural deficit, and they are consistent with the very low preparation adequacy scores ($M = 1.4$, $SD = 0.76$) recorded among primary teachers. One primary teacher explained the day-to-day reality of this position:

“Without any formal history training in my teacher education programme, I find it extremely challenging to teach history as a standalone subject. I often struggle with content knowledge and proper teaching methodologies” (PST 7).

The reliance on textbooks and self-directed learning was particularly pronounced in rural areas, where access to additional resources and professional development networks was more limited, compounding the structural disadvantage already built into primary teacher preparation.

Administrative perspectives revealed that the barriers to reform are not only pedagogical but institutional. Regional and district-level administrators identified bureaucratic complexity as a significant obstacle to change, with a Regional Director observing that

“complex bureaucratic processes and multiple oversight bodies make it difficult to implement necessary changes quickly” (RLA 1).

The quantitative data gives weight to this observation: the effectiveness of current reform initiatives was rated at only $M = 2.25$ ($SD = 0.62$) across all administrative levels, indicating that existing efforts are not perceived as adequate responses to the scale of the problem. A total of 85% of administrators identified limited funding and insufficient training resources as significant barriers to improvement. This suggests that even where the political will to reform exists, the material conditions for doing so are constrained.

Stakeholder Recommendations

Despite the severity and systemic nature of the challenges documented above, the data reveals a strong and consistent consensus across all groups on what needs to be done. Curriculum restructuring emerged as the highest priority, with 94% of stakeholders calling for systematic reform. This figure reflects the breadth of dissatisfaction documented across both the quantitative preparedness data and the qualitative accounts of classroom experience. The recommendation was particularly strong among student-teachers and in-service teachers, the groups who experience the consequences of misalignment most directly. Teacher training reform received strong support

(92%) across all stakeholder groups, with emphasis on practical preparation and specialised history education at the primary level. A district-level administrator stated directly,

“Mandatory history training for primary teachers must be implemented alongside a comprehensive review of teacher preparation programmes” (DLA 1).

Professional development enhancement was identified as a crucial priority by 91% of stakeholders. This shows a recognition that reform of initial teacher education alone is insufficient given the large number of in-service teachers already operating within the system without adequate preparation. Resource development and equitable distribution was raised by 88% of stakeholders as a necessary component of any reform effort, with particular attention to addressing urban-rural disparities in access to teaching materials and professional support. These recommendations in a whole, does not just represent merely a list of desiderata but rather a coherent reform agenda that emerges from the convergence of quantitative ratings and qualitative reasoning across all three stakeholder groups.

Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that the misalignment between teacher education programmes and the basic school curriculum in history education in Ghana is structural rather than incidental. Interpreted through Biggs and Tang’s (2011) Constructive Alignment Theory, the problem represents a system-level failure in which teacher preparation, curriculum structure, and educational outcomes are misaligned, and improvement at the level of any individual institution cannot resolve a mismatch that is built into the architecture of the system itself. The TECAM framework developed in this study makes this cross-level misalignment analytically visible in a way that single-programme applications of constructive alignment do not, and this constitutes the primary theoretical contribution of the work. Biggs (1996) originally developed constructive alignment to examine coherence within a single educational programme, focusing on the alignment between learning outcomes, teaching and learning activities, and assessment. This study demonstrates that the same logic applies across levels of an education system, where the absence of alignment between what is taught in teacher preparation and what the school curriculum actually requires produces predictable and compounding failures that neither level can resolve independently.

The TECAM framework conceptualises the relationship between teacher preparation, curriculum structure, and educational outcomes as three interconnected dimensions: input, process, and output. Examining the findings through each of these dimensions reveals not three separate problems but three expressions of the same structural misalignment operating simultaneously. At the input dimension, the college of education history curriculum is designed to produce specialist history teachers oriented toward JHS instruction. However, this input is directed toward a level that does not receive it as intended. JHS does not offer history as a standalone subject, so the specialist preparation that enters the system as input at the teacher education level finds no corresponding structural home at the curriculum level. Meanwhile, the primary school level, which does require standalone history teaching, receives no specialist input at all. The input dimension is therefore not simply underpowered but misdirected.

At the process dimension, the curriculum structure that teachers encounter in schools does not correspond to the preparation structure they received in training. Van den Akker (2003)

distinguishes between the intended curriculum, the implemented curriculum, and the attained curriculum, arguing that alignment must be examined at all three levels. In the case examined by this study, the intended curriculum at the primary level assumes a level of historical subject knowledge and pedagogical preparation that the teacher preparation system does not provide. The implemented curriculum, what primary teachers actually deliver in classrooms, is consequently shaped more by textbook content and individual improvisation than by informed subject pedagogy. At JHS, a different process-level failure operates: history specialists implement a Social Studies curriculum in which their specialist knowledge is largely peripheral, confined to one strand among six, and the depth of historical understanding they were trained to develop in students is structurally underutilised.

At the output dimension, the consequences of both process-level failures compound. Primary school students receive history instruction from teachers who lack the subject-specific competencies that quality history education requires, while JHS students encounter history only as a minor component of a broader integrated curriculum. The low teaching confidence scores among primary teachers and the high employment concern scores among history specialists are not merely individual responses to difficult circumstances; they are output-dimension indicators of a system in which alignment between preparation, curriculum, and outcomes has broken down at every level simultaneously. What TECAM contributes analytically is the ability to see these three failures not as separate problems requiring separate solutions but as interconnected consequences of a single structural misalignment. This has direct implications for how reform is conceived.

The structural inversion at the centre of this study, has parallels in other national contexts, though its particular form is especially pronounced. Ingersoll (2000) identified a related dynamic in the United States, showing that out-of-field teaching persists even where qualified teachers exist because the root cause is systemic management failure rather than a shortage of trained personnel. Owino and Mayoyo (2026) documented similar consequences in Kenya, where teachers trained in narrow disciplinary specialisations were deployed into integrated curriculum contexts, resulting in reduced instructional quality and professional demoralisation. The high employment concern scores among history specialists in this study and the pattern of textbook reliance and self-directed learning among primary teachers reflect the same underlying dynamic in the Ghanaian context. What distinguishes the situation in Ghana is that the misalignment is not simply a consequence of deployment decisions made at the institutional level, it is encoded in the curriculum and training structures themselves, making it considerably more resistant to resolution through routine administrative adjustment.

The institutional inertia that has allowed this misalignment to persist following the 2019 curriculum reforms is equally significant. The college of education history curriculum was not redesigned in response to the reintroduction of history as a standalone subject at the primary level. It preceded those reforms and remained unchanged following them. Buabeng et al. (2020) found that teacher education programmes in Ghana tend to fail to adapt quickly enough to curriculum changes at the basic school level, allowing preparation gaps to accumulate in ways that short-term professional development cannot easily address. Jacobs (2013) identified a historically similar pattern in the early development of social studies teacher education in the United States, where institutional resistance within teacher preparation bodies allowed misalignment to become embedded over time even as curriculum frameworks at the school level evolved. The present study provides direct empirical evidence of this accumulation in a contemporary Ghanaian context, in

which a large cohort of practising primary teachers currently deliver history instruction without any subject-specific preparation while a corresponding cohort of history specialists enter a system that has no dedicated role for their training.

The near-total absence of subject-specific preparation among primary school teachers is the most consequential finding for teaching quality. Shulman's (2015) concept of pedagogical content knowledge establishes that effective subject teaching requires not only general pedagogical skill but the ability to represent and transform disciplinary knowledge in ways suited to the developmental stage and learning context of students. This is particularly important in history, where Boadu (2020) and VanSledright (2011) argues that effective instruction requires a distinctive set of disciplinary competencies, including historical thinking, source analysis, and contextualisation, none of which can be developed through general teacher preparation alone. The qualitative accounts in this study, and the quantitative confidence and preparation scores that corroborate them, reflect what happens when teachers are required to deliver subject-specific instruction without that foundation. The reliance on textbooks and self-directed learning reported by 92% and 78% of primary teachers, respectively are coping strategies adopted in the absence of adequate preparation, and their prevalence points to a quality deficit that affects every classroom in which history is taught at the primary level.

Beyond the immediate classroom effects, the employment anxieties reported by history specialists raise a concern about the longer-term sustainability of the current arrangement. When trained professionals exit their preparation programmes without a clear occupational pathway for their specialism, the long-term effect is likely to be a decline in the attractiveness of history specialisation as a career choice, which in turn undermines the supply of historically knowledgeable teachers for the system as a whole. Adjepong and Osei Kwarteng (2017), Boadu (2021), Buah (2002) and Dwarko (2007) have all documented the ongoing challenges faced by history education in Ghana, and the findings of this study suggest those challenges have not diminished following the 2019 reforms.

A reasonable counter-argument to the reform position emerging from these findings is that the simplest solution to the primary school gap would be to introduce a compulsory history module within primary teacher education programmes, without any broader restructuring of the system. This argument has practical appeal, particularly given the resource constraints and bureaucratic complexities that administrators in this study identified as significant barriers to large-scale reform. However, as the TECAM analysis makes clear, this intervention addresses only the input dimension at the primary level while leaving every other dimension of the misalignment unchanged. History specialists would continue to be trained for a level where their specialism has no dedicated subject, their employment concerns would remain unresolved, and the structural underutilisation of specialist knowledge at JHS would continue unchanged. Resolving one side of the inversion while leaving the other intact would improve conditions at Shulman (2015) and VanSledright (2011), the primary level, without constituting a solution to the systemic misalignment. There is also a substantive question about the depth of preparation that a single added module within a generalist programme can realistically achieve. van den Akker (2003) cautions that piecemeal curriculum interventions tend to produce surface compliance without meaningful change in what is delivered or learned. A history module inserted into a programme whose overall design, assessment framework, and practicum expectations are oriented toward generalist primary teaching is unlikely to produce the depth of subject-specific pedagogical

competence that is identified as necessary for quality history instruction. Introducing history training for primary teachers is clearly necessary and would represent a significant improvement on the current situation, but it should be understood as one component of a broader reform rather than a sufficient response to the structural problem that this study has identified.

The broader reform that the TECAM analysis points toward requires coordinated action at all three dimensions simultaneously. At the input level, both primary teacher education programmes and college of education history curricula require revision to reflect the actual structure and demands of history in the basic school system. At the process level, stronger and more formalised coordination is needed between the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment and teacher preparation institutions, so that curriculum changes at the school level are accompanied by corresponding adjustments in teacher preparation without the institutional lag documented in this study. At the output level, the large number of practising primary teachers currently compensating for preparation gaps through self-directed learning represents an urgent in-service training need. Structured professional development programmes in history education, delivered through district and regional education structures, would provide a near-term mechanism for improving teaching quality while longer-term structural reforms are developed and implemented. The 94% stakeholder consensus on the need for systematic restructuring, which emerged consistently across student-teachers, in-service teachers, and administrators at all levels, reflects a recognition grounded in lived professional experience that partial measures are insufficient and that the conditions for a more comprehensive reform response are both understood and supported across the system.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study set out to examine the misalignment between teacher education programmes and the basic school curriculum in history education in Ghana, and the findings confirm that the misalignment is both structural and consequential. Colleges of education prepare history specialists for Junior High School teaching, yet history at the JHS level is not a standalone subject but a minor strand within an integrated Social Studies curriculum. Primary school teachers, who are the only teachers in the basic school system required to teach history as a discrete subject, receive no subject-specific preparation during their initial teacher education. This structural inversion produces measurable deficits in teaching quality at the primary level, significant professional dislocation among history graduates, and a system-wide underutilisation of historical knowledge and expertise. The TECAM framework developed in this study provides an analytical tool for understanding this cross-level misalignment and demonstrates that the problem cannot be resolved by targeting any single dimension in isolation. Effective reform requires coordinated attention to teacher preparation, curriculum structure, and educational outcomes simultaneously, and the strong stakeholder consensus documented across all three participant groups indicates that there is broad recognition of this need across the system.

The study has limitations that should inform how the findings are interpreted. The sample was drawn from colleges of education affiliated to five major universities, which represent the mainstream of history teacher preparation in Ghana but do not capture the full range of institutional contexts across the country. The use of purposive sampling for in-service teachers and administrators, while appropriate for the research questions, means that participants who were more aware of curriculum misalignment may have been more likely to engage, and the consensus figures should be read with this in mind. Future research examining a wider range of institutions

and employing longitudinal designs would provide a more complete national picture, particularly as the 2019 curriculum reforms continue to be implemented.

Notwithstanding these limitations, the findings provide a clear empirical basis for reform. The most urgent priority for the Ministry of Education and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment is the introduction of mandatory history content and history-specific pedagogy within primary teacher education programmes. This single intervention would address the most acute dimension of the misalignment and should be accompanied by sufficient resource commitments to support curriculum revision, retraining of teacher educators, and updated practicum requirements. Alongside this, a formal curriculum alignment review mechanism should be established to ensure that future changes to the school curriculum are accompanied by timely corresponding adjustments in teacher preparation, preventing the institutional lag that produced the current situation. For colleges of education, the priority is a substantive revision of both the history specialist and primary education curricula to reflect the actual structure and demands of history teaching in basic schools. History specialists should be prepared for deployment at both primary and JHS levels, and primary education students should graduate with the content knowledge and instructional competence required to teach history effectively as a standalone subject. For district and regional education offices, structured in-service professional development in history education for practising primary teachers represents the most direct near-term mechanism for improving classroom teaching quality while longer-term structural reforms are developed. The success of these efforts will ultimately depend on sustained coordination among policymakers, curriculum developers, teacher educators, and school-level practitioners working toward a system in which teacher preparation and curriculum demand are genuinely and durably aligned.

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