

# Chapter 7

## Experiences of the Pre-Tertiary Ghanaian Teacher Teaching Amidst a Pandemic

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### ABSTRACT

*Numerous empirical studies have been conducted recently, focusing on strategies to ensure students can consistently access high-quality and equitable education during the pandemic. However, research on the role of teachers in this context has been relatively limited. Some of the few studies that delved into the teacher's role during the pandemic have been conducted in countries such as Spain, China, and the Arab regions. In Africa, UNESCO organised a webinar to explore the provision of psychosocial support for teachers amidst the challenges posed by COVID-19. Additionally, in the Ghanaian context, the Institute of Statistical, Social, and Economic Research (ISSER) conducted a comprehensive study addressing the plight of private school teachers during the pandemic. This study shines a spotlight on the Ghanaian teacher and seeks to assess how COVID-19 has impacted their professional lives. Data collection was conducted through a combination of paper and online questionnaires, garnering responses from 4,480 teachers across various settings, including public and private basic and secondary schools spanning 10 regions and 80 districts in Ghana. The analysis of this data revealed that Ghanaian teachers experienced varying levels of stress and anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic. Notably, these experiences were influenced by factors such as the type*

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*of school, geographical location, school category, and gender of the respondents. Furthermore, the study unveiled the diverse extent of learning loss experienced by students, an issue that directly affected teachers in their roles. Considering these findings, the study recommends that key stakeholders in education, including the Ministry of Education, the Ghana Education Service, and Teacher Unions, should prioritise and incorporate provisions for psychosocial support for teachers as an integral component of various teacher welfare schemes. This step is seen as essential in addressing the well-being of educators and, by extension, ensuring the continued delivery of quality education students in these challenging times.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has reverberated across every facet of our lives, touching upon economic, health, familial, and social dimensions. In education, its effects have been especially pronounced, manifesting as significant disruptions to the normal functioning of schools and the teaching-learning process. At the zenith of the pandemic's grip in 2020, schools worldwide had to shut their doors, aligning with guidance from the World Health Organization (2020). According to estimations, the closure of educational institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic adversely affected a staggering number of individuals. Over 1.5 billion students and 63 million educators across 188 countries found themselves impacted by these necessary measures (UNESCO, 2020; Özer, 2020). By March 2020, COVID-19 had escalated to a global pandemic, with approximately 23,057,288 documented cases and a tragic toll of around 800,906 lives lost due to COVID-19-related complications worldwide.

In the case of Africa, about 1,187,937 COVID-19 cases with 27,779 deaths and 906,691 recoveries as of March 2020 (Africa Centre for Disease Control, CDC, 2020). Following the rapid spread of COVID-19 in the country, Ghana's government had to put in place measures to ensure public safety, and this occasioned lockdowns and the closure of schools in the country. The closedown of schools came at a time when the Ministry of Education in Ghana was introducing the new standards-based curriculum in the Ghanaian school system. This was after using the objectives-based curriculum for a long period. The change in the curriculum meant that teachers change their pedagogy to ensure that learners are part of the teaching and learning process from inception to conclusion and that certain core competencies are imbibed by the learner at the end of the instructional session. This placed the Ghanaian teachers in a challenging position because they needed to adapt to the changes in the instructional process as instituted in the new curriculum and, at the same time, be worried about teaching amidst a pandemic.

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