

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Omission of Area of Specialisation in Ghanaian Senior High School Visual Art Curriculum: Its Implications

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Abstract

This study examines the omission of areas of specialisation in the newly introduced Senior High School (SHS) Visual Arts curriculum in Ghana and its implications for teachers and students. Historically, art education in Ghana emphasised “hand and eye” training, later evolving to incorporate creativity, cultural awareness, and nation-building values. However, the current NaCCA curriculum emphasises broad competencies in design thinking, communication, and digital literacy, with limited provision for the eight specialised disciplines in art. Using a convergent parallel design, the study employed document analysis of the SHS Visual Arts curriculum, semi-structured interviews with sixteen Visual Arts teachers across Ghana’s sixteen regions and an online questionnaire. Thematic and one-way ANOVA analysis revealed key challenges, including restricted subject offerings, misalignment of teacher specialisation and deployment, inadequate infrastructure, and limited professional development opportunities. Teachers reported that the absence of specialisation reduces student engagement, creativity, and preparedness for higher education and professional careers. The findings highlight systemic inequalities, where well-resourced schools benefit more than rural ones. The study concludes that the omission of specialisation undermines teaching quality and learning outcomes. It recommends curriculum reforms, equitable

resource distribution, and targeted teacher training to ensure depth of expertise and foster the holistic development of Ghanaian art students and the inclusion of available options later in the final year of study for learners.

Introduction

Tracing back to the early 20th century, Visual Art education kick-started with the introduction of “hand and eye” training, emphasising its role in enhancing coordination and creativity, which involves the students copying various shapes and lines to enable the development of their coordination (Edusei, 2005). A conclusion drawn from a study on the evolution of art education in Ghana by Bodjawah et al. (2019) contextualises art education and incorporates historical, regional, and global perspectives to dissect the intersections between Ghanaian art education and other contexts. “Visual arts education is important in developing students’ creativity, critical thinking, and cultural awareness” (Kpodo et al., 2024. p.1) and apart from the creativity, Diabour et al (2021) opined that it aims at developing the intellectual, moral, social, and physical characteristics of the learners so that they could be able to enjoy a living as a people, support themselves adequately as adults, and contribute sufficiently to nation-building. Art students’ self-creativities, intellectual developments, and cultural and intellectual developments are sufficiently achieved once students narrow their focus and break their tasks down into small and achievable goals (Shannon, 2024).

Narrowing art students' focus areas in studies makes them gain deep expertise, Shannon concluded. Strong artistic identity which marks another essence of area of specializing amongst Ghanaian art students is illustrated that “the goal of the artist manager is to help the artist get to a place where they say, ‘Oh, this is who I am; this is what I am supposed to be doing; this is what I want to say.’” (Belfiore, 2022; Harvey & Rietzschel, 2022; Throsby & Petetskaya, 2017; Lingo & Tepper, 2013, p. 5).

Statement of the Problem

However, art education significantly enhances employability by equipping individuals with both creative and practical skills required in various fields (Digital Learning Edge, 2024), and in support of this, The Hindu (2023) stated that art education encourages students to explore new ideas, experiment with different materials, and think outside the box... all of which fosters inventive thinking. In a similar vein, “art education trains the brain to approach challenges from diverse perspectives... These skills also translate into better decision-making, enhancing careers in fields like business, science, and technology.” (Liat, 2025). But in contrast, Digital Learning Edge (2024) argues again that in specialising one’s skill in a specific area of study, mentorship in arts education significantly enhances networking opportunities, allowing mentees to connect with established professionals in that field. Some concerns about the introduction of the new art curriculum by NaCCA have been that the sudden swap to the new

curriculum has imposed difficult financial and technical challenges on members (Safo, 2019), while the structure of the school curriculum does not encourage the use of books outside the school. Children and students are not encouraged to read books (Ghana Publishers Association, 2024). Furthermore, Cromwell (2024) lamented that it would not be fair to work with an organisation that has openly declared its intention to support a particular publisher, encourage the Ministry of Education to produce its own textbooks, and use all state power and resources allocated for the implementation of its mandate for such a self-serving agenda. Cromwell (2024) continued that there were complaints about the delayed distribution of curriculum materials and teacher manuals. Additionally, some stakeholders questioned if teachers, artists, and university art educators were adequately involved in the curriculum design, raising concerns about whether the curriculum meets practical and professional realities in the field of art education and on a more elaborative note, Ghana Publishers Association (2024) argues that some educators have questioned whether the new curriculum adequately reflects Ghanaian cultural contexts or overemphasizes foreign concepts. There are also concerns about whether the curriculum is developmentally appropriate for different grade levels. It is concluded by the Ghana Publishers Association that the structure of the school curriculum does not encourage the use of books outside the school, which means that students are not encouraged to read other books. Ampomah et al. (2023) investigated the assessment practices used by creative arts teachers in Ghana and found that while teachers could assess learners' creative activities and artworks, they faced challenges with certain assessment methods. Besides, as an identified gap, it is critically observed that the new Art curriculum does not allow any area of specialisation for learners to specialise in during their course of study in the Ghanaian schools. This design differs from other project-based courses in the Ghanaian schools, which are either designed to strengthen or provide options for specialisation areas of study. This paper critically examines the extent to which the new SHS Arts curriculum supports or neglects specialisation. The research questions for the study were:

1. What are the implications of the current Art curriculum structure on teachers and students?
2. To what extent does the new curriculum provide for specialisation?
3. What are the perceptions of Visual Art teachers on the implementation of the SHS Art and Design Curriculum?
4. To what extent would the SHS visual art curriculum impact students?
5. What are the perceived implications of the SHS visual art curriculum on tertiary education?

The corresponding hypotheses for the above research questions are stated below:

1. There is no difference in the perceptions of Visual Art teachers on the implementation of the SHS Art and Design Curriculum.

2. There is no impact of the SHS visual art curriculum on students.
3. There is no implication of the SHS visual art curriculum on tertiary education.

Pedagogical Content Knowledge Theory

The pros and cons of this study are supported by the pedagogical content knowledge theory, which has been reinterpreted to include curriculum thinking by Deng (2018), who advocated and emphasised the integration of subject matter expertise with pedagogical strategies to help learners master specific subject areas in learning. Shifting curriculum focus from one perspective to another is usually fixed with the constructivist learning theory, which reveals that constructivist learning theories have massively influenced today's curriculum design by shifting its objectives from passive knowledge transmission to active, student-centred learning (Yakubu et al., 2025). It is emphasised that curricula that are informed by constructivist principles incorporate inquiry-based learning, problem-solving approaches, and authentic assessment methods to foster critical thinking and lifelong learning, and this aligns with McLeod (2024), who claimed that the zone of proximal development, introduced by Vygotsky, supports learners' specialisation by identifying the tasks learners can perform with guidance. This scaffolding helps develop deeper expertise. Gustafsson (2024) also illustrated that one of the characteristics of constructivism is that knowledge is built based on experience or previous knowledge, learning a personal interpretation of the world, an active process in which meaning is developed through experience.

Tyler's Model of Curriculum Development and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

To examine the perception of teachers on the new Ghanaian SHS visual art curriculum, this study employed a dual lens, blending Tyler's model of curriculum development (1949) and Human Capital Theory (1964). Tyler's model offered a systematic framework for assessing whether the SHS visual art curriculum achieves its intended outcomes in preparing SHS students with the needed foundational and practical skills necessary for tertiary education and professional practice in Ghana. This model provided the study to critically evaluate the impact of the omission of specialisation in the visual art between the stated objectives (preparing students for advanced study) and actual competencies students require or outcomes (self-employment). Additionally, the human capital theory is grounded in the work of Becker (1964), opining that education is an investment that equips students with knowledge and skill sets, to enhance productivity, employability and long-term economic growth. The absence of specialisations can create a gap in developing students' competencies and career readiness for enrolment into tertiary institutions and career paths. Also, students may graduate from SHS with great deficits in students' technical competencies needed for tertiary education or the creative world. Without this specialisation, tertiary institutions may need additional resources in training underprepared SHS students to bridge foundational gaps in visual art. Reintroduction of specialisation at the SHS visual art

curriculum not only yields educational reforms but also strengthens the economic fortunes of the creative art industry, which enhances national and international development. This dual framework establishes pedagogical misalignment and economic consequences that this current SHS visual art curriculum poses, underscoring the need for reforms to balance structured skill development to achieve broader educational goals.

Evolution and Review of Trends in Secondary Art Education

Basically, perspectives that collectively illustrate the rich identity of Visual Arts education in Ghana, highlighting its historical roots, challenges and ongoing evolution, Marifah et al. (2025) and Bodjawah et al. (2019) argued for a curriculum that affords students and teachers a better understanding of the colonial education system, its objectives and implications by critiquing the lingering colonial influences in Ghana's art education, emphasizing the need for curricula that embrace diverse media and critical content. Pokuaa et al (2015), in exploring the Asante context, highlighted the educational role of visual and performing arts in traditional politics, noting that these arts "offer more than just entertainment and communication and also play a motivational and educational role" (p. 117). Ayim (2017) also emphasised and stated that we have to provide the context and the paradigms for the production of indigenous knowledge systems in art education. Seid'ou (2014) challenged colonial art education policies, asserting that the Educational Code lacked a real policy for artistic development in the Gold Coast and ignored indigenous arts. Within the evolution periods, Quarcoopome (2022), Adom (2021), Quarcoopome (2019), and Labi (2016) discussed the foundational role of Achimota School in formal art education, noting that Stevens, as mentioned earlier by Seid'ou (2014), introduced art history lessons into the art curricula and utilised reproductions of European artworks to illustrate artistic merit. This reflected the zeal for specialisation in some course areas in the study of art. Adjei (1990) underscores the significance of Visual Arts in pre-university education, arguing that art is essential to national development and acts as the flesh to the bony disciplines such as engineering, medicine or physics. One comprehensive guide that underscores the importance of subject-specific expertise in art education was addressed by Addison and Burgess (2021) who illustrated that it provides a conceptual and practical framework for understanding the diverse nature of art and design in the secondary school curriculum, and by this, specialist knowledge enables teachers to better motivate and engage students in creative processes whilst in Ghanaian primary schools, Creative Art is taught by generalist classroom teachers who lack the specialized training, knowledge, skill and experience to identify efficient teaching-learning strategies that allow pupils to actively participate in art making experiences (Opoku-Asare et al., 2015). Comparatively, a perspective that encourages educators, whether generalists or specialists, to integrate diverse visual experiences into the curriculum is stated by Freedman (2025) that visual culture, including popular culture and fine art, is socially constructed and has become pervasive, shaping all aspects of public behaviour and influencing conceptions of self. These perspectives encouraged art educators, whether generalists or specialists, to integrate diverse visual experiences into the curriculum.

Importance of Specialisation in Creative Skill Development

Specialisation in a course of study plays a vital role in the development of creative skills across diverse disciplines in art education. This is identified by Heard et al. (2025), who stressed that "specialisation in creative thinking allows for the development of observable skills and teachable strategies, enhancing students' creative capacities" (p. 5). De Valverde et al. (2020) pointed out that "specialisation in creative domains can guide individuals toward careers that align with their unique creative strengths" (p. 12). In areas of economic development, it is opined that "urban areas with specialised artistic concentrations experience significant economic development benefits" (Markusen & Schrock, 2006, p. 14). Zhou (2017, p. 22) argues that "developing creative problem-solving skills requires specialised training that fosters specific cognitive strategies" and, as it stands, Marr (2023) claims that to be creative means to go through two processes, such as thinking and then producing. Therefore, it is recommended to understand that specialisation in creative education is crucial for preparing students for the demands of the 21st-century workforce and academic fraternity (Ayyildiz & Yilmaz, 2021; Gube & Lajoie, 2020; Bonnardel & Didier, 2020; Wright & Wrigley, 2019; Harris, 2016).

Methodology

This study employed a convergent parallel mixed-method design, which enabled the simultaneous collection of qualitative and quantitative data. A qualitative descriptive study design was used for this study, as Creswell and Creswell (2017) suggested that this approach particularly suits education policy research, where the goal is to provide evidence of how curricular changes are perceived or experienced by those affected (Ayton, 2023; Turale, 2020; Willis et al., 2016). Data was collected via document analysis of the SHS Visual Arts curriculum guide by NACCA, semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions from 16 SHS Visual Arts Teachers, each from the 16 regions in Ghana. Data was analysed thematically using data collected through interviews, together with content analysis of the curriculum documents. Content analysis method was used to analyse qualitative data in an inductive and deductive way, which is used to describe phenomena and allows researchers to use existing theory or develop theory (Kyngäs, 2020a; Kyngäs, 2020b; Lindgren et al., 2020; Armat et al., 2018). Again, a descriptive survey ingrained in the quantitative approach was employed to examine the perspectives and perceptions of visual art teachers from secondary high/ technical schools (SHTS), technical vocational education and training (TVET), colleges of education (COE), technical universities (TU), and traditional universities (TU) from all the 16 regions in Ghana, on the new SHS visual art curriculum. The teachers were selected using a multistage sampling involving cluster sampling to select teachers from the various levels of education, stratified to select 91 SHTS/TVET, 3 COE, 15 TU and 3 TU teachers from each level and simple random to select individual teachers from the various schools based on first-come, first-served using an online Google form. In all, 112 teachers were selected. An a priori power analysis was conducted using GPower 3.1 (Faul et al., 2009) to determine the required sample size for a

one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) with four groups. The analysis specified a medium effect size ($f = 0.25$; Cohen, 1988), an alpha level of .05, and a desired statistical power of .95. Results indicated that a total sample size of 112 participants would be required to achieve adequate power, corresponding to an uneven participants per group. This calculation was based on numerator degrees of freedom = 3, denominator degrees of freedom = 108, a critical F value of 2.69, and a noncentrality parameter $\lambda = 17.92$. The actual power achieved with this sample size was .95. Also, the study adapted the Curriculum Changes Perception Scale (CCPS) questionnaire, a five-point Likert scale with 22 items (Kayir & Toraman, 2021). In the computer-based practice of teachers, the mean of their responses was computed and interpreted using Jamovi App (version 2.7.6). In interpreting the practice of teachers' respondents to a particular item, the mean score of the responses was compared with 2.5 (Kayir & Toraman, 2021). Mean scores less than 2.5 show a disagreement of teachers, where a mean score above 2.5 shows an agreement of teachers to that particular item. For the interpretation of individual scores, the mean of the obtained scores is also computed with 2.5. The alpha coefficient for Cronbach's α and McDonald's ω was employed to ensure the internal consistency of the instrument. The alpha coefficient for Cronbach's α and McDonald's ω were 0.818 and 0.841, respectively, demonstrating good internal consistency, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70. However, the overall mean score was 3.61 (SD=0.63), indicating that respondents generally endorsed the items at a moderately high level.

Findings and Discussion

What are the implications of the current structure on teachers and students?

One of the strongest concerns raised relates to curriculum design and subject offerings. Teachers, particularly from the Ahafo, Bono, Bono East, Savanna, and Western North regions, explained that the present curriculum does not adequately allow for specialisation. In many schools, especially those in rural and peri-urban settings, students are restricted to a narrow range of electives. Such limited exposure prevents them from exploring diverse Visual Arts disciplines and denies them the opportunity to fully develop their creative abilities. As Becky (2025) observes, when curricula privilege traditional academic subjects over the arts, students' potential for creativity and innovation is constrained, ultimately affecting their preparation for future artistic and vocational careers.

A second issue identified was the misalignment between teacher deployment and specialisation. Teachers in the Oti, Upper West, and Upper East regions reported that many of their colleagues are often assigned to teach outside their areas of expertise. Whereas urban schools are more likely to have teachers delivering within their specialisations, those in less-endowed communities frequently rely on teachers handling subjects in which they were not trained. This misplacement compromises the quality of instruction and limits the depth of subject knowledge delivered to students. Nti (2021) highlights this as part of a broader

challenge in Ghanaian education, where inadequate training and lack of resources contribute to weak academic outcomes, a situation clearly mirrored in the Visual Arts sector.

The lack of resources and infrastructure emerged as another pressing theme. Teachers from Bono and the North East regions described how the absence of well-equipped studios, adequate tools, and necessary materials hinders the effective teaching of practical subjects such as ceramics, sculpture, and related fields. Consequently, teachers trained in these disciplines are unable to apply their expertise fully in the classroom, leaving students with little opportunity for hands-on practice. This deficiency, as Lukaka (2023) affirms, significantly obstructs the role of art education in nurturing creativity, expressive skills, and critical thinking.

Professional development and support for teachers also appear insufficient. Respondents from the Volta, Greater Accra, Western, Western North, and Central regions indicated that few opportunities exist for workshops, seminars, and in-service training. This lack of professional development makes it difficult for teachers to keep pace with curricular changes, particularly in newer areas such as Art and Design Foundation, Design Communication Technology, and Performing Arts. Without systematic training and continuous capacity building, teachers struggle to implement these new subjects effectively, undermining the intentions of curriculum reform.

Finally on student engagement and motivation, teachers from the Northern, Eastern, and Ashanti regions noted that students are less likely to show enthusiasm for Visual Arts when their schools provide limited subject options and poor facilities. Many students with strong interests in specific disciplines lose motivation when they cannot pursue their preferred fields meaningfully. This observation resonates with See and Kokotsaki (2016), who argue that restricted access to specialised arts programmes exacerbates educational inequalities. Similar findings by Gbadegbe et al. (2024), Obeng (2024), and Koranteng et al. (2020) confirm that restricted elective choices limit students' acquisition of skills and knowledge, leaving those in well-resourced schools at a distinct advantage.

Conclusively, the analysis highlights the significant challenges that the omission of adequate specialisation areas in the Visual Arts curriculum poses for both teachers and students. While teachers struggle with deployment mismatches, lack of resources, and minimal professional support, students face reduced exposure, limited subject options, and declining motivation. The result is a widening educational inequality, where students in better-endowed schools benefit disproportionately from curriculum reforms, while those in less-resourced schools continue to be disadvantaged.

To what extent does the new curriculum provide for specialisation?

The newly launched curriculum by NaCCA (2023) for Art and Design Foundation, Art and Design Studio, and Design and Communication Technology did not provide opportunities for specialisations but rather focused towards reforms that will improve learning through the

introduction of innovative pedagogies that encourage critical thinking and problem-solving. This is to do away with and discourage learners’ way of memorising facts and figures, which does not develop their analytical and practical skills. It also “prioritises assessing learners’ knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values, emphasising their achievements” (p. 3). In another paragraph, the curriculum specifies that, “every learner needs to be equipped with skills and competencies of interest to further their education, live a responsible adult life or proceed to the world of work.” (p. 8). However, there are no specifications to expose the learners to their interests such as the painting, sculpture, basketry, jewelry, graphic design, ceramics, pottery etc, but to generally study the broadly established learning contents as stated in by Ministry of Education (2024) which regulated that learners of Art would be empowered through visual literacy, critical design thinking, communication and collaboration, and digital literacy to create design solutions in a learner-centred environment leading to creative local and global citizenship as their philosophy and vision for the art curriculum. In addition, provision is made for the needs of gifted and talented learners. The question is, how will a gifted sculptor and graphic designer be guided without a specialised curriculum and syllabus for such a specific learner who is either gifted or talented?

What are the perceptions of Visual Art teachers on the implementation of the SHS Art and Design Curriculum? The results are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Teachers' Perceptions on SHS Art and Design Curriculum

Statement	N	Mean	SD
I am familiar with the current SHS Visual Arts curriculum.	11 2	3.2 4	1.47 8
Areas of specialisation (e.g., Painting, Sculpture, Textile) are essential for skill development in SHS art education.	11 2	4.3 3	1.21 1
The omission of specialisation was influenced by national curriculum reforms.	11 2	3.7 8	1.43 8
Lack of specialisation reduces students’ ability to identify their artistic strengths	11 2	4.0 8	1.37 6
The current SHS curriculum provides adequate practical training, even without specialisation.	11 2	2.1 8	1.39 6

Table 1. Teachers' Perceptions on SHS Art and Design Curriculum

Statement	N	Mean	SD
Mean of Means	11	3.5	0.75
	2	2	2

Source: Field Survey (2025)

From Table 1 above, teachers' perceptions of the SHS Art and Design curriculum reflected a generally critical stance, with an overall mean of means of 3.52 (SD = 0.75). Respondents reported moderate familiarity with the current curriculum (M = 3.24, SD = 1.48), indicating variability in awareness across the sample. There was strong agreement that areas of specialisation, such as Painting, Sculpture, and Textile, are essential for skill development in SHS art education (M = 4.33, SD = 1.21), suggesting that teachers view specialisation as a critical component of effective training. Again, teachers agreed that the omission of specialisation was influenced by national curriculum reforms (M = 3.78, SD = 1.44), reflecting recognition of policy-level drivers behind the change. Importantly, respondents perceived that the lack of specialisation reduces students' ability to identify their artistic strengths (M = 4.08, SD = 1.38), highlighting concerns about the developmental implications of the reform. In contrast, teachers strongly disagreed that the current curriculum provides adequate practical training without specialisation (M = 2.18, SD = 1.40), underscoring scepticism about the curriculum's capacity to foster practical skill acquisition. Overall, the findings indicate that while teachers acknowledge the reform context, they largely perceive the absence of specialisation as detrimental to students' artistic growth and practical readiness within SHS art education.

To what extent would the SHS visual art curriculum impact students?

The results are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 2. Perceived Curriculum Change Impact on Students

Statement	N	Mean	SD
It would be difficult to implement changes in the new art and design curriculum	11	2.7	1.47
	2	1	4

Table 2. Perceived Curriculum Change Impact on Students

Statement	N	Mean	SD
Curriculum changes help to increase student motivation	11	2.6	1.36
	2	5	0
Curriculum changes improve classroom management	11	3.0	1.42
	2	8	1
When the curriculum changes, the quality of the learning environment improves	11	2.6	1.36
	2	5	7
Curriculum changes help to reveal students' interests and abilities.	11	2.8	1.43
	2	7	6
Curriculum changes make the course content more relevant and up to date.	11	3.0	1.40
	2	4	1
Since global information is constantly changing, the curricula must also change to meet global demands	11	3.8	1.34
	2	1	6
Mean of Means	11	2.9	0.97
	2	7	1

Source: Field Survey (2025)

It can be inferred from Table 2 above that teachers' perceptions of the impact of curriculum change on students were generally moderate, with a mean of means of 2.97 (SD = 0.97), suggesting ambivalence toward the benefits of the new art and design curriculum. Respondents did not strongly agree that implementing changes would be difficult (M = 2.71, SD = 1.47), indicating that while some challenges were acknowledged, teachers did not perceive implementation as overwhelmingly problematic. Similarly, teachers expressed low agreement with the idea that curriculum changes increase student motivation (M = 2.65, SD = 1.36) or improve the quality of the learning environment (M = 2.65, SD = 1.37), suggesting scepticism about the direct positive effects of reform on student engagement and classroom atmosphere. Perceptions of curriculum change as a means of improving classroom management (M = 3.08, SD = 1.42) and making course content more relevant and up to date (M = 3.04, SD = 1.40) were slightly more favourable, though still only moderate. Teachers also showed limited agreement that curriculum changes help reveal students' interests and abilities (M = 2.87, SD = 1.44), reflecting uncertainty about whether reforms adequately support individualised learning. The strongest endorsement was for the statement that curricula must change to meet global demands, given the constant evolution of global

information (M = 3.81, SD = 1.35). This indicates that while teachers were cautious about the immediate classroom-level benefits of curriculum change, they recognised its necessity in aligning education with broader global trends. In all, the findings suggest that teachers perceive curriculum change as globally necessary but remain unconvinced of its effectiveness in enhancing student motivation, classroom management, or the quality of the learning environment at the SHS level.

What are the perceived implications of the SHS visual art curriculum on tertiary education?

The results are presented in Table 4 below.

Table 3. Perceived implications of the SHS visual art curriculum on tertiary education

Statement	N	Mean	SD
Students entering tertiary art programmes may lack basic practical skills because of the omission of specialisation.	112	3.93	1.45
First-year students may struggle to choose a tertiary specialisation due to limited SHS exposure.	112	4.00	1.39
Tertiary instructors have to spend additional time bridging foundational skill gaps.	112	4.18	1.29
The omission may negatively affect students’ career readiness for the creative industry.	112	4.12	1.29
The change may force tertiary institutions to revise course content or teaching methods.	112	4.21	1.22
Mean of Means	112	4.09	1.12

Table 3 above showed that teachers perceived the implications of the SHS visual art curriculum on tertiary education as largely negative, with a high overall mean of means (M = 4.09, SD = 1.12). Respondents strongly agreed that the omission of specialisation at the SHS level creates significant challenges for students transitioning into tertiary art programmes. Specifically, teachers indicated that students may lack basic practical skills (M = 3.93, SD =

1.45) and may struggle to select a tertiary specialisation due to limited exposure at the secondary level (M = 4.00, SD = 1.39).

The results further suggest that tertiary instructors are burdened with bridging foundational skill gaps (M = 4.18, SD = 1.29), highlighting a perceived misalignment between secondary and tertiary curricula. Teachers also agreed that the omission of specialisation negatively affects students’ career readiness for the creative industry (M = 4.12, SD = 1.29), underscoring concerns about the long-term professional implications of the reform. The strongest agreement was with the statement that tertiary institutions may be forced to revise course content or teaching methods to accommodate underprepared students (M = 4.21, SD = 1.22). The findings above indicate that teachers view the absence of specialisation in the SHS visual art curriculum as having substantial downstream effects on tertiary education, necessitating curricular adjustments at the higher education level and potentially undermining students’ readiness for both advanced study and professional practice.

Hypothesis one: There is no difference in the perspective of Ghanaian visual art teachers on the visual art curriculum regarding their level of teaching. This hypothesis was tested using one-way ANOVA. As part of the request, the normality and homogeneity test of variance were conducted, which showed that the variances are not assumed to be equal. For the robust nature of the ANOVA, the test was conducted, and the descriptive results are in Table 4.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics for Hypothesis One

Teaching Institution		N	Mean	SD	SE	
Mean on Perceptions of SHS Art and Design Curriculum	College of Education	3	4.40	0.400	0.2309	
	Senior High / Technical/ TVET	91	3.47	0.782	0.0820	
	Technical University	15	3.64	0.557	0.1437	
	Traditional University	3	3.73	0.306	0.1764	

Table 5. One-Way ANOVA (Welch's)

	F	df1	df2	p
Mean on Perceptions of SHS Art and Design Curriculum	4.16	3	5.85	0.067

Table 6. One-way ANOVA (Between and Within groups)

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	—	3	—	4.16	.067
Within Groups	—	5.85	—		
Total	—	—	—		

Note. Welch’s ANOVA was used to adjust for unequal variances across institutions. Between-groups reflects differences in perceptions across teaching institutions; within-groups reflects variability within each institution.

Table 7. Games–Howell post hoc comparisons for Mean perceptions of SHS art and design curriculum

Comparison	Mean difference	t	df	p
College of Education vs Senior High/Technical/TVET	0.934	3.81	2.53	.114
College of Education vs Technical University	0.760	2.79	3.77	.158
College of Education vs Traditional University	0.667	2.294	3.74	.250
Senior High/Technical/TVET vs Technical University	−0.174	−1.05	24.20	.721
Senior High/Technical/TVET vs Traditional	−0.267	−1.375	2.95	.587

University				
Technical University vs Traditional University		-0.093	-0.410	5.21 .974

Note: No pairwise comparisons reached statistical significance at $\alpha = .05$.

Table 8. One-Way ANOVA

		College of Education	Senior High / Technical/ TVET	Technical University	Traditional University
College of Education	Mean difference	—	0.934	0.760	0.6667
	t-value	—	3.81	2.79	2.294
	df	—	2.53	3.77	3.74
	p-value	—	0.114	0.158	0.250
Senior High / Technical/ TVET	Mean difference		—	-0.174	-0.2674
	t-value		—	-1.05	-1.375
	df		—	24.20	2.95
	p-value		—	0.721	0.587
Technical University	Mean difference			—	-0.0933
	t-value			—	-0.410
	df			—	5.21
	p-value			—	0.974
Traditional University	Mean difference				—
	t-value				—
	df				—
	p-value				—

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Assumption testing indicated that the distribution of mean on perceptions of SHS art and design curriculum significantly deviated from normality, $W(112) = 0.94, p < .001$, suggesting a violation of the normality assumption; however, the assumption of homogeneity of variances was satisfied, $F(3, 108) = 1.04, p = .376$. From Table 4, the descriptive statistics showed that participants from Colleges of Education reported the highest mean score ($M = 4.40, SD = 0.40, n = 3$), followed by those from Traditional Universities ($M = 3.73, SD = 0.31, n = 3$), Technical Universities ($M = 3.64, SD = 0.56, n = 15$), and Senior High/Technical/TVET institutions ($M = 3.47, SD = 0.78, n = 91$). Again, in Table 5 above, the Welch's one-way ANOVA indicated that perceptions of the SHS Art and Design curriculum did not differ significantly across the four groups, $F(3, 5.85) = 4.16, p = .067$, although the effect approached significance. The one-way ANOVA in Table 6 revealed that institutional type did not significantly affect Mean on perceptions of SHS art and design curriculum, $F = 4.16, p = .067$. Although in Table 8, the College of Education group appeared to rate Mean on perceptions on SHS art and design curriculum more positively than the other institutions, a Games–Howell post hoc test revealed that none of the pairwise comparisons were statistically significant (all $p > .05$). For example, the mean difference between Colleges of Education and Senior High/Technical/TVET was 0.93, $t(2.53) = 3.81, p = .114$, while differences with Technical Universities (mean difference = 0.76, $p = .158$) and Traditional Universities (mean difference = 0.67, $p = .250$) were also nonsignificant. Overall, these results suggest that while descriptive differences were observed, institutional type did not significantly influence the mean on perceptions of SHS art and design curriculum. Consistently, Games–Howell post hoc comparisons showed that none of the pairwise differences between institutions were statistically significant, as shown in Table 7.

Hypothesis Two: There is no difference in the perspective of Ghanaian visual art teachers on the visual art curriculum change based on their academic qualification. One-way ANOVA was used to test the hypothesis, and the descriptive results were presented in Table 6.

Table 9. Descriptive Statistics for Hypothesis Two

	Highest Academic Qualification	N	Mean	SD	SE
Mean on Perceived Curriculum Change Impact on Students	Degree	79	2.81	1.002	0.113
	MPhil	25	3.42	0.780	0.156
	Masters	5	2.97	0.859	0.384

Table 9. Descriptive Statistics for Hypothesis Two

Highest Academic Qualification	N	Mean	SD	SE
PhD	3	3.62	0.541	0.313

Note. MPhil = Master of Philosophy, PhD=Doctor of Philosophy

Table 10. One-Way ANOVA (Welch's)

	F	df ₁	df ₂	p
Mean on Perceived Curriculum Change Impact on Students	3.83	3	7.39	0.0622

Table 11. One-way ANOVA (Between and Within groups)

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	105.308	3	35.103	3.83	.062
Within Groups	—	—	—		
Total	—	—	—		

Note. Welch's ANOVA was used to adjust for unequal variances across groups. Between-groups reflects differences across academic qualification levels; within-groups reflects variability within each qualification group.

Table 12. Games–Howell Post Hoc Comparisons for Perceived Curriculum Change Impact on Students

Comparison	Mean Difference	t	df	Sig.
Degree vs MPhil	−0.610*	−3.17	51.30	.013
Degree vs Masters	−0.165	−0.41	4.72	.974

Degree vs PhD	-0.813	-2.45	2.55	.269
MPhil vs Masters	0.445	1.07	5.40	.718
MPhil vs PhD	-0.203	-0.58	3.10	.932
Masters' vs PhD	-0.648	-1.31	5.89	.591

Note. $p < .05$ (), $p < .01$ (), $p < .001$. Only the comparison between Degree and MPhil reached statistical significance ($p^* = .013$).

Table 13. One-Way ANOVA

		Degree	MPhil	Masters	PhD
Degree	Mean difference	—	-0.610*	-0.165	-0.813
	t-value	—	-3.17	-0.413	-2.447
	df	—	51.3	4.72	2.55
	p-value	—	0.013	0.974	0.269
MPhil	Mean difference		—	0.445	-0.203
	t-value		—	1.072	-0.582
	df		—	5.40	3.10

Table 13. One-Way ANOVA

		Degree	MPhil	Masters	PhD
Masters	p-value		—	0.718	0.932
	Mean difference			—	-0.648
	t-value			—	-1.308
	df			—	5.89
PhD	p-value			—	0.591
	Mean difference				—
	t-value				—
	df				—
	p-value				—

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Assumption testing indicated that the distribution of Mean on Perceived Curriculum Change Impact on Students did not significantly deviate from normality, $W(112) = 0.99, p = .789$, and the assumption of homogeneity of variances was satisfied, $F(3, 108) = 1.69, p = .174$, supporting the use of parametric analyses. A Welch’s one-way ANOVA in Table 10 revealed no statistically significant differences in Mean on Perceived Curriculum Change Impact on Students across institutional groups, $F(3, 7.39) = 3.83, p = .062$, although the effect approached significance. In Table 9, descriptive statistics suggested that respondents with

higher academic qualifications tended to report more favorable perceptions, with PhD holders ($M = 3.62$, $SD = 0.54$, $n = 3$) and MPhil holders ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 0.78$, $n = 25$) scoring higher than those with Master's ($M = 2.97$, $SD = 0.86$, $n = 5$) and Bachelor's degrees ($M = 2.81$, $SD = 1.00$, $n = 79$). In Table 11, the one-way ANOVA indicated that perceptions did not differ significantly across the four institutional groups, $F(3, df \approx error) = 3.83$, $p = .062$, suggesting only a marginal, nonsignificant trend toward group differences. Post hoc comparisons using the Games–Howell test in Table 12 and 13 indicated that only the difference between Bachelor's degree and MPhil holders was statistically significant (mean difference = -0.61 , $t(51.3) = -3.17$, $p = .013$), while all other pairwise comparisons were nonsignificant (all $p > .05$). Overall, these findings suggest a general trend in which higher academic qualifications were associated with more positive perceptions on Perceived Curriculum Change Impact on Students, though statistically reliable differences were limited.

Discussion and Implications

At the SHS level, the findings revealed that teachers held predominantly critical perceptions of the Art and Design curriculum, particularly regarding the omission of specialisation, which they viewed as detrimental to students' artistic growth, practical readiness, and ability to transition into higher levels (tertiary institutions) of study. Teachers emphasised that the absence of specialisation limited students' opportunities to identify and develop their artistic strengths ($M = 4.08$, $SD = 1.38$), which undermines practical training ($M = 2.18$, $SD = 1.40$). These concerns align with Pedagogical Content Knowledge theory, which stresses the integration of subject expertise with pedagogy (Deng, 2018), and with constructivist perspectives that highlight the importance of scaffolding and guided learning for deeper expertise (Yakubu et al., 2025; Gustafsson, 2024; McLeod, 2024). Also, critiques echo longstanding concerns about colonial legacies in Ghanaian art education that marginalised indigenous practices (Bodjawah et al., 2019; Seid'ou, 2014). The strong teacher consensus on the importance of specialisation reflects Addison and Burgess's (2021) argument that subject-specific expertise motivates and engages learners, while also aligning with Heard et al.'s (2025) assertion that specialisation enhances creative capacities and career alignment. At the tertiary including Colleges of Education, Technical Universities and Traditional Universities and industry levels, the results revealed significant downstream implications, including skill gaps ($M = 3.93$, $SD = 1.45$), difficulties in specialisation choice ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 1.39$), and increased burdens on instructors to bridge foundational deficits ($M = 4.18$, $SD = 1.29$). These findings align with Tyler's model of curriculum development, which emphasises aligning objectives with outcomes, and Becker's Human Capital Theory, which frames education as an investment in employability and economic growth. Without specialisation, students risk graduating underprepared for both higher education (tertiary) and the creative industry, necessitating costly adjustments by tertiary institutions. This supports De Valverde et al.'s

(2020) and Ayyildiz and Yilmaz's (2021) arguments that specialisation is crucial for preparing students for 21st-century workforce demands. Moreover, as Freedman (2025) notes, visual culture is pervasive and socially constructed, requiring curricula that integrate diverse visual experiences to remain relevant. Collectively, these findings underscore the need for reforms that balance global responsiveness with structured, locally relevant specialisation, ensuring that Ghanaian art education fosters both critical inquiry and professional competence while contributing to national and international development.

Conclusion and Recommendation

This study revealed that while Ghana's SHS Visual Art curriculum reforms were perceived as beneficial in enhancing motivation, classroom management, and global relevance, the omission of specialisation remains a critical weakness and gap. Teachers consistently emphasised that the lack of subject-specific pathways undermines students' artistic growth, practical readiness, and smooth transition into tertiary education, creating skill gaps that burden higher institutions and limit career preparedness. Although institutional type did not significantly influence perceptions, qualification level mattered: MPhil and PhD holders reported more favourable views than Bachelor's degree holders. These findings underscore the systemic nature of the challenge and the need for reforms that balance global responsiveness with structured, locally relevant specialisation, while also addressing disparities in teacher preparedness across qualification levels. Therefore, to strengthen the SHS Visual Art curriculum and its alignment with tertiary and industry needs, the following actions are proposed. The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NaCCA) should reintroduce Specialisation at SHS (e.g., Painting, Sculpture, Textile) to deepen skill development and career alignment of SHS visual arts for students.

Also, Tertiary institutions should develop short bridging courses in drawing, design, and technical execution to bridge SHS–Tertiary gaps to address foundational deficits and ease student transitions smoothly. Again, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NaCCA) should strengthen teacher capacity by providing targeted and continuous professional development programmes for degree-level teachers, while leveraging MPhil/PhD holders from tertiary levels as mentors and facilitators. Furthermore, NaCCA should teach teachers how to adopt constructivist pedagogies in their instructions by integrating inquiry-based, problem-solving, and scaffolded learning approaches to foster creativity and critical thinking in SHS visual art students. Moreover, NaCCA should contextualise the SHS visual art curriculum reform by embedding indigenous knowledge systems and diverse visual practices to counter colonial legacies and ensure Ghanaian cultural relevance in the SHS visual art curriculum. To promote Industry Ready students for the Ghanaian market, NaCCA should align SHS visual art education with 21st-century creative economy demands by integrating emerging technologies and industry-relevant practices. Finally, NaCCA should create and foster collaboration by encouraging joint workshops, curriculum alignment

meetings, and mentorship programs between SHS and tertiary teachers to ensure continuity and shared ownership of reform.

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