

CLINICAL RESEARCH

Post-Election Anxiety on Academic Performance Among Senior High School Teachers and Students in Ghana: A Case of Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District, Central Region

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ABSTRACT

Elections serve as a fundamental element of democracy and frequently induce strong emotions and political tensions, which can greatly affect societal well-being like education. This research examines post-election anxiety among senior high school teachers and students, specifically in Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District in the Central Region of Ghana. It focuses on its psychological, social, and educational consequences. Although there is extensive global research regarding election-related anxiety, there has been limited focus on its impact on educational stakeholders in sub-Saharan Africa. This study addresses this gap by examining the experiences, coping strategies, and educational consequences of post-election anxiety in Ghana. This study employed a qualitative research design based on phenomenology. The study gathered insights from 10 teachers and 15 students through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. These participants were carefully and purposefully selected to ensure a range of perspectives. Thematic analysis showed that post-election anxiety negatively affected the mental health of both teachers and students, which hampered teacher effectiveness and reduced student engagement and academic performance. Teachers reported feeling emotionally drained and less motivated, whereas students encountered increased anxiety and a diminished ability to concentrate on their studies. Coping strategies differed because teachers often found comfort in social interactions and political discourse, while students had difficulty managing their anxieties. The results highlight the pressing need to incorporate mental health and emotional resilience programs into educational policies because it will help lessen disruptions in the teaching and learning process to preserve academic outcomes. This research illustrates the link between political events and educational well-being, calling for proactive measures to foster a supportive learning environment. Policymakers and educational leaders need to prioritise mental health resources in schools to ensure resilience during election periods. Educational institutions can sustain continuity and promote a more stable and effective

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academic environment in times of political instability when post-election anxiety is addressed to the barest minimum.

KEYWORDS

Academic performance; Coping mechanisms, Emotional well-being; Mental health; Political stress; Post-election anxiety

INTRODUCTION

Elections, which are frequently praised as a pillar of democracy, have a significant impact on the welfare of society. Beyond its political implications, elections have the potential to cause fear and uncertainty in the populace, which may have an impact on several areas of life of which education is not excluded. As essential members of any community, teachers and students are not exempted from these consequences because it clarifies the psychological, social, and educational aspects of post-election anxiety in a local setting. Fostering resilience in educational institutions and creating focused interventions that lessen detrimental effects on the teaching and learning processes need an understanding of this phenomenon [1].

Political tensions are frequently elevated during election seasons, and they can intensify into circumstances that cause anxiety. According to research, post-election stress can cause disruptions in day-to-day living, as seen by a rise in anxieties about socioeconomic stability, fear of violence, and uncertainty [2]. These fears may show themselves in ways that impair mental health, focus, and involvement in the classroom for both teachers and learners [3]. Studies on election-related anxieties have been conducted all over the world in a variety of settings, but little is known about how these experiences connect to particular populations, such as teachers and students. Examining these dynamics is especially pertinent in Ghana, where there is a high level of political engagement and election results frequently arouse strong emotions.

Even if the psychological effects of elections are becoming more well-acknowledged, less focus is placed on how these dynamics particularly impact the education sector. Students, as the workforce of the future, and teachers, as leaders in the classroom, are vital to the growth of the country. However, little is known about how post-election worry affects their coping mechanisms, mental health, and academic performance. There is little empirical data to support the anecdotal evidence that political events before and after elections in the Central Region of Ghana, especially in Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District, may make teachers and students more anxious. Attempts to create efficient support systems at educational institutions are hampered by this knowledge gap.

Although post-election anxiety has been studied worldwide, a large portion of it focuses on Western settings [4]. Research on sub-Saharan Africa frequently ignores the complex experiences of certain groups, such as teachers and students, in favour of concentrating on political violence and the wider societal effects [5,6]. There has not been much empirical research done in Ghana on this topic because most of these studies concentrate on voter behaviour and election results [7]. To comprehend the localised effects of post-election anxiety, especially in educational settings, this study gap must be filled. The importance of this study is demonstrated by data from early interviews conducted in the district, where participants identified stress, absenteeism, and poor academic performance as common issues.

Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District offers a distinctive case study for post-election anxiety because of its thriving political scene and varied educational environment. During previous elections, the region saw fierce political campaigning, which frequently caused division among the local populace. Teachers and students must balance the emotional toll of election results with the need to continue achieving academic success in a cutthroat learning environment. The selected district is a perfect setting for examining the relationship between politics and education since anecdotal accounts indicate that these concerns interfere with regular school operations.

This study is to examine the lived experiences of teachers and students in the aftermath of the election, with particular attention to how they perceive anxiety, the coping strategies they use, and the effects on learning activities. It specifically aims to determine the emotional and psychological ramifications of post-election worry in both pupils and instructors, examine the coping mechanisms used by these groups to deal with the stress of the election and examine how teacher efficacy and student learning results are affected by post-election worry. With an emphasis on its experiences, coping strategies, and educational effects, this research aims to present a thorough understanding of post-election anxiety among Senior High School teachers and students in Ghana. By doing this, the study hopes to reduce the detrimental effects of elections on education in comparable situations by informing policy suggestions and initiatives.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

Research Design

The experiences, coping strategies, and educational effects of post-election anxiety among SHS teachers and students in Ghana were examined in this study using a qualitative research approach. A qualitative technique was used because it can capture the richness and depth of participants' lived experiences and perspectives [8]. Rich insights into the socio-psychological effects of post-election stress were provided by the design, which made it possible to examine subjective experiences and coping mechanisms [9]. This strategy enabled in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, which helped comprehend human behaviour in particular socio-political situations, which gives this study a dynamic and delicate character [10]. The study employed a phenomenological approach to explore the common experiences of teachers and students navigating the aftermath of the national elections. Understanding people's lived experiences and the meanings they ascribe to them is a key component of phenomenology, which is essential for this study of the emotional and cognitive reactions to post-election worry [11].

Study Area

The Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District (THLDD) is one of the 22 administrative districts in the Central Region of Ghana, carved out from Twifo Atti-Morkwa District in 2012. The district capital is Twifo Hemang. The HLDD is located in the western part of the Central Region of Ghana and occupies a landmass of 575.5 square kilometres, making it one of the biggest districts in the Central Region. It shares common boundaries on the north with the Twifo Atti-Morkwa District, on the south with Cape Coast Metropolis, on the west with Wassa Amenfi and Wassa Mpohor Districts, and on the east with the Assin South District [12].

Jukwa and Hemang are the towns in THLDD in the Central Region of Ghana, which serve as the study area. The people of Jukwa and Hemang are mostly dependent on agriculture and small-scale commerce, and the region is distinguished by its varied socio-economic structure. These towns are politically engaged and frequently have high voter turnout during national elections. Like many in rural Ghana, the area's educational system has problems

with infrastructure, teacher-student ratio mismatches, and scarce resources, all of which can exacerbate the consequences of political stress [13]. Jukwa and Hemang offer an appropriate context for comprehending how post-election anxiety impacts teachers and students as it is a microcosm of Ghana's larger political and social environment. The research area was selected because it combines semi-urban and rural features, which may lead to distinct perspectives on political stress [14].

Data Source and Sampling Procedures

For this study, teachers and students provided the primary data. Due to their direct engagement in the educational process and their possible exposure to stress in both their personal and professional lives following an election, teachers were chosen. The purpose of selecting students was to document the effects of political anxiety on students, particularly their behaviour in class, mental health, and academic achievement. Participants were chosen using a purposive sample approach, which made sure they fit the study's requirements. According to Palinkas et al. [15], this method enabled the researchers to concentrate on participants who had firsthand knowledge of post-election worry. For the teacher sample, 10 participants were selected from the schools. This variety ensured the inclusion of diverse perspectives on how post-election stress affects different grades and subject areas. In the case of the student participants, 15 students from various academic backgrounds were chosen to provide a wide-ranging account of the anxiety's impact across different learning stages. In-depth interviews were conducted with each teacher and student, lasting between 30 minutes to 45 minutes, while focus group discussions were held separately for teachers and students to capture collective views on coping mechanisms and educational impacts. These data collection methods were chosen for their ability to facilitate interaction, discussion, and sharing of personal insights, which are crucial for understanding complex emotions and behaviours [16]. The sample size, while relatively small, was deemed sufficient for the depth of analysis required in qualitative research [17]. Ethical approval for the study was obtained. Informed consent was sought from all participants, and their anonymity was maintained throughout the study. Participants were assured that their responses would be used solely for research purposes and would be kept confidential [8].

Analysis

Trustworthiness

To ensure the validity of the findings, the theme analysis was reviewed by a peer-review procedure. This included looking at the methods used for research, data analysis, and decision-making at each stage of the study. Along with having a deep awareness and comprehension of the phenomena being studied, the researchers also had a good deal of information about the local population. The interview procedure proceeded smoothly and successfully because of the participants' prior knowledge and comprehension, which also made it simpler to establish rapport with them.

Participants

Ten teachers participated in the interview. They were questioned about how they experienced and perceived the impact of post-election anxiety on their relationships with students, teaching environment, and mental health. Interviews with fifteen students were conducted. Finding out how political events affected students' emotional states and how that impacted their behaviour and academic performance was the goal.

KEY FINDINGS

Theme 1: Psychological and Emotional Impact on Teachers and Students

Stress and Anxiety

After the election season, teachers' stress levels noticeably increased. Several participants expressed feeling overpowered by the unpredictability of the election outcome and the ensuing shifts in the political environment. One teacher said:

I felt like I had to tread carefully after the election. The media and political debates were so fierce that it was difficult to concentrate on teaching. I've never felt this kind of stress before. I was worried about the future because of the election results and the conversations that surrounded them. I was worried about what would happen next, which made it difficult to concentrate on my lectures. Both outside and in the staff area, the tension was evident. Everyone seemed to be waiting for something to go wrong, which had an impact on our instruction and the reactions of the pupils.

A lot of students expressed feeling more anxious, especially in the days after the election. The main causes of this were worries about the election's effects on their academic environment, the nation's stability, and their future. As one student put it:

My thoughts about what would happen to me if there were issues in the nation continued after the election. I found it difficult to focus on my schoolwork after the elections. I was constantly hearing rumours about what would happen if particular parties prevailed, and that just made me anxious about what lay ahead. Among my pals, there was a lot of conversation, and some of them were even afraid of potential violence. I struggled to concentrate on my coursework and tests.

Sleep Disturbances and Fatigue

A lot of teachers had trouble sleeping. Others said they had trouble falling asleep because they were thinking too much or talking about politics late at night. Their general energy levels were influenced, which therefore affected how well they taught. As one teacher pointed out:

I struggled to fall asleep, which made me feel exhausted and unable to perform at my best in class. The next day, I would be exhausted from staying up late watching the news or talking politics with coworkers. Being emotionally exhausted made it difficult for me to perform at my best.

Academic Distraction

Students reported that they were frequently sidetracked from their studies by the political atmosphere and media attention. Many students acknowledged that anxiety, gossip, and political conversations among their peers made it hard for them to focus on their studies.

With everyone talking about politics, it was difficult to concentrate on schoolwork. We all seemed to be in a strange reality where politics was the only importance. I felt like I wasn't giving my best effort in school because of all the anxiousness, and it truly diverted me from my academics.

Peer Influence and Social Media Stress

Social media contributed significantly to the spread of worry, as students pointed to postings, conversations, and comments about the election that made them feel more stressed. Another element that surfaced was peer pressure, as students talked more freely about their emotional states with their peers, which occasionally made anxiety worse. One student observed that:

Everyone was discussing who had won and who had lost. Since nobody could predict what would happen next, it made me nervous. Social media conversations were constant, and I felt as though I was unable to get away from the tension.

Frustration and Sense of Disconnect

Many teachers were frustrated because they felt that the general fear in society was undermining their duties in the classroom. They saw a feeling of powerlessness when it came to attending to the emotional needs of students while attempting to maintain objectivity in contentious political debates.

I felt powerless. I was supposed to be teaching, but it was difficult to maintain objectivity in such a tense environment. Despite my best efforts to protect them, the pupils were emotionally impacted, and it seemed that the external concern was too much to ignore.

The political situation produced an emotional barrier that caused some teachers to feel emotionally distant from their students. When students were distracted by political anxiety, it was difficult for teachers to have meaningful discussions about academic subjects.

Students were so emotionally invested in the election that it was difficult to reach them. Their minds were elsewhere, and I felt cut off from them. It seemed as though the political atmosphere had forged a barrier that prevented me from effectively involving them in the learning process.

Impact on School Environment

Teachers worked to provide a secure and encouraging environment in the classroom despite their stress. Using their roles, several educators mediated conversations about the election by giving tips on how to control one's emotions and keep the emphasis on education. One teacher said:

I made an effort to motivate my pupils to maintain composure and concentrate on their academics. We spoke about how to manage our emotions during such a turbulent period and how to respect one another's viewpoints.

Although it wasn't simple, I wanted to ensure that the classroom remained a secure learning environment.

Social differences among students were also brought to light during the election. Students who belonged to opposing political groups frequently got into contentious debates, which occasionally resulted in confrontations. During class discussions and group projects, these conflicts were evident.

Some of my students and I had political disagreements, which made it hard to get along with them. Because of our political division, class discussions became more difficult. It seemed as though the election was the only topic we could discuss.

Theme 2: Coping Strategies to Navigate Election-Related Stress

When faced with election-related stress, research participants adopted a range of coping mechanisms to reduce the tension and anxiety brought on by political environments. Distancing oneself from the political drama, taking care of oneself physically and mentally, establishing supportive settings, and controlling media intake are some of the sub-themes that these tactics come under.

Distancing Oneself from Political Drama

Some participants emphasised how crucial it is to concentrate on their main duties and stay away from the overpowering effect of political turmoil. A teacher stated:

Sometimes, the tension is too much to handle, particularly when the political situation grows tight. I make an effort to keep my distance from the political drama. I remind myself of the larger goal of my position in the classroom while concentrating on my kids. I use constructive self-talk; when I start to feel anxious, I remind myself that the election process is essential, whatever the difficulties it may provide. Instead of being sucked into

the political polarisation, I also attempt to maintain objectivity in my contacts with students and inspire them to think critically about political problems.

In a similar vein, a student argues that restricting exposure to the never-ending stream of political discourse, particularly at critical academic times, helps people preserve their energy and mental focus.

I try to keep my news exposure to a minimum, especially while studying, to cope. Spending too much time watching political programs interferes with my ability to focus. I also frequently discuss it with my pals. We express our worries and let them out. I believe it helps to have someone to talk to who is sympathetic to your situation. We try to establish common ground while talking about how politics impacts our lives and reminding ourselves not to let it interfere with our academic work.

Physical and Mental Self-Care

The majority of individuals stress how important physical activity is. This demonstrates how exercise has a positive impact on mental and physical health and provides a healthy way to decompress from the tension that comes with the post-election period. One teacher stated:

Throughout the day, I occasionally take little pauses to recharge. I take a big breath and go outdoors. In addition, I make it a point to work out in the evenings by going for a little jog or a stroll. My thinking is clearer after working out. I also read motivational books or watch inspiring stuff to help me redirect my energies and ideas. During such a demanding time, maintaining mental fitness is essential.

A student also shares a similar sentiment by noting that:

I occasionally write down my ideas in a journal. I can digest my feelings and let things out, thanks to it. Additionally, I've learned to use music. When I'm feeling stressed, I find that listening to peaceful music helps me relax. Many of the students I know manage by just spending time with their loved ones or friends. Taking your mind off things is crucial, particularly when the news is tense and ambiguous.

Creating Supportive Environments

Teachers emphasised how crucial it is to establish secure and encouraging spaces where students communicate their fears. Students express their worries and feel supported because of the comfortable environment this method creates. They assert that:

My open dialogue with my students is one of my coping mechanisms. I reassure them that it's normal to have anxiety or uncertainty, but we should acquire healthy coping mechanisms. I urge them to discuss their worries and anxieties over the elections in a setting that is secure and judgment-free. They get a sense of comfort when they communicate their frustrations or fears because it makes them feel heard.

A student also emphasises the value of social support. Having dependable people to confide in offers comfort and a forum for group coping, reducing tension and fostering camaraderie. According to her:

I believe that having friends and family support is the most crucial factor. Talking to individuals you trust might help you avoid being sucked into arguments during elections. Occasionally, my buddies and I sit down and attempt to divert our attention by cracking jokes or viewing amusing videos. I find that tension is reduced when we make each other laugh.

Managing Media Consumption

The overwhelming effect of continuous media coverage during elections is acknowledged by both educators and students. They stated:

I also stress the significance of controlling media intake. I teach my pupils how to evaluate news sources critically. I advise them to be aware but avoid becoming overloaded with information, particularly on social media. I think that teaching children responsible information-handling techniques can make them feel less stressed than they need to be.

Theme 3: Post-Election Anxiety on Students' Focus, Emotional Well-being, and Academic Performance

Distraction and Focus Issues

Throughout the post-election period, distraction was regularly cited by both educators and learners as a significant obstacle. Students reported having trouble focusing on their schoolwork because they were distracted by political debates and future concerns. A teacher stated that:

I have observed a decrease in my kids' attention spans and level of participation after the elections. They are distracted from their studies by the political climate and the uncertainty that permeates the air. Because everyone is so focused on the current situation, it is difficult to maintain discipline in the classroom, which seems stressful.

One student revealed how her election-related worry interfered with her academic pursuits, resulting in less study time and worse academic results. He said that:

I have had trouble concentrating on my schoolwork because of the post-election anxiousness. Everyone is either discussing current events in the government or checking their phones for news, making it difficult to focus in class.

Emotional and Mental Health Strain

Both teachers and students have serious concerns about the emotional and mental well-being of their students. A teacher noticed that some of the kids were becoming disinterested and reclusive and that their moods varied. He opined that:

I believe that students' mental and emotional health is being negatively impacted by election-related anxieties. Their mood swings a lot, and they appear restless. Their learning results have been affected by this. Some typically industrious pupils, for instance, have retreated and appear disinterested in class.

Some of the students repeated this emotional strain, describing how their nervousness over the possible outcomes of the election made it difficult for them to focus during class and after school.

I believe that my ability to concentrate in class has been hampered by the tension surrounding the elections. When I got home from school, all I could think about was what may occur if the election results produced issues. I would occasionally think about it while lying in bed, and the next day, I would wake up late for class. Even several of my friends who typically enjoy studying have been having difficulties, so it's not just me. Now that they are more distracted, it is obvious that they are not paying attention to the teachings. Because of this constant concern in the back of my mind, I find it difficult to focus when I try to study.

Impact on Academic Performance

Academic performance appeared to suffer as a result of the emotional toll of post-election concern. Students and teachers agreed that learning outcomes were being jeopardised. A teacher said that:

For instance, I had planned to conduct a practical session on chemical reactions last week, but I had to postpone it because the students were more interested in discussing election results and the potential impacts on the country. It's difficult to be effective as a teacher when your students are distracted and worried about things outside the classroom. I remember asking a student about an essay he had written, and he confessed that he couldn't concentrate because he was constantly thinking about the election results and the uncertainty that followed. It's hard to ignore these concerns as an educator, especially when they directly impact the learning process.

Students were worried that if they did not focus and spent less time studying, their grades might drop. Most people said that the atmosphere that resulted from the election made learning less important. They put it as:

It seems like a lot is up in the air, and worrying about the future makes it difficult to concentrate on something like arithmetic. One of my friends' main topics of conversation was the election results. Even though we were meant to be studying, politics would frequently come up in the discussions. To be honest, I haven't been studying as much since the elections, and I believe it will ultimately have an impact on my performance.

Impact on Teacher Effectiveness

Teachers were not exempt from the consequences of political concern. Teachers talked about how their ability to properly lead pupils in stimulating conversations was hampered by the stress of the elections.

From a subject-specific perspective, it has become more difficult to get my students involved in debates that are often thought-provoking during the post-election period. They feel overwhelmed by the real-life ramifications.

Therefore, they are less engaged in the political debates we have in class these days. Their ability to think critically is being impacted by their anxiousness. Even in a topic like social studies, worry and bewilderment may occasionally take centre stage, despite my best efforts to urge students to critically engage with current events. Because they are preoccupied with potential outcomes, they are unable to concentrate on the theoretical elements.

The dynamics of the classroom were altered by this phenomenon as well since students noticed that certain teachers appeared less enthusiastic.

I saw that even some of the teachers appeared to be less motivated following the elections. We had trouble concentrating since they were equally anxious. At this point, I feel as though I am only attending class. When teachers are preoccupied with politics and not giving their all to their lessons, it affects us as students. I used to like history, but nowadays, it seems more like reading a textbook with little conversation. The atmosphere at school seems to be being drained by the emotional weight of the elections, and I just cannot enjoy learning as much as I used to.

DISCUSSION

This research sought to examine post-election anxiety and its impact on the learning environment in Ghana by examining the perspectives of both teachers and students. According to key findings, the aftermath of the elections caused significant disturbances to the mental health and academic attention of both teachers and students. Some teachers reported feeling nervous and having trouble keeping their students' attention, while others reported feeling less energised. The emotional toll that the political situation was taking on them seemed to have an impact on how they taught, which in turn influenced the educational experiences of the students. Students lost interest in their academics and their drive for them. The emotional effect of the elections caused a noticeable change in the educational environment, making it tougher for students to focus and participate in the learning process as they

used to. This implies that the political environment acted as a roadblock to effective teaching and learning opportunities. There were differences in the coping methods used by teachers and students. In an attempt to decompress through social interaction, several teachers found comfort in talking about politics. However, because their academic obligations seemed to be overshadowed by the larger national political environment, many students found it difficult to control their anxieties.

The findings of this research closely mirror earlier studies by Gordijn et al. [18], which explore the significant impact that election processes and changing political environments have on students' academic performance. Numerous studies have shown that politically sensitive events can drastically disrupt education systems, especially by negatively affecting the mental health and well-being of both students and educators. For example, a comprehensive study by Nwachukwu et al. [19] concentrating on Nigerian students during elections revealed that these times are particularly stressful, leading to increased anxiety levels among students. This rise in anxiety not only adversely impacted their academic performance, resulting in lower grades and decreased cognitive involvement, but it also triggered a significant drop in their motivation to attend classes and actively engage in their studies. Alongside the challenges faced by students, the research highlights the emotional strain on teachers during these chaotic periods. Many teachers reported feeling considerable emotional fatigue, marked by a sense of being overwhelmed and depersonalised. This mental exhaustion destabilises their capacity to provide essential support and guidance to their students, resulting in a challenging and less effective classroom environment. Such circumstances can worsen educational challenges, making it progressively harder for students to meet their academic objectives and excel in their studies.

Spector and Kitson [20] examined the importance of socio-political frameworks, emphasising that the anxiety arising from post-election situations and ongoing political instability can significantly disrupt classroom dynamics. This disruption frequently results in a learning environment that is less than ideal, impeding both teaching and learning processes. The results articulated in their research help to support and enhance the findings of Rodríguez, Martínez, and Fernández [1]. Their study highlighted how politically charged incidents can adversely affect educational outcomes by claiming that such events lead to a marked decrease in teacher effectiveness. Additionally, they noted a significant drop in student engagement, which collectively dents the overall quality of the educational experience. These conditions not only jeopardise the immediate learning environment but also pose potential long-term effects on student's academic success and overall well-being [21].

STRENGTHS OF THE STUDY

In areas where political instability or post-election anxiety is prevalent, the findings of this study have significant ramifications for the educational system. This is so because it can have a substantial impact on the quality of education, the emotional and psychological toll that such incidents have on teachers and students must be addressed. Lower academic performance and engagement might result from a decline in teacher vigour and student enthusiasm, which exacerbates educational disparities. Policymakers and educational leaders should think about integrating coping mechanisms and mental health assistance into the educational system during political seasons. Teachers and students may be better equipped to deal with the political environment and its possible effects on education when seminars are provided to emphasise stress management and emotional resilience. Additionally, some of the detrimental impacts on schooling may be lessened by establishing a supportive school climate that recognises the emotional difficulties of post-election times.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Although this study offers insightful information on the experiences of teachers and learners, it must be noted that it has several limitations. First, just two schools were included in the sample, which could not adequately represent the variety of experiences that teachers and students have throughout the nation. As a result, the results could not apply to all SHS students or teachers in Ghana. Furthermore, the study's qualitative design, which depends on subjective viewpoints and personal tales, can make the results less objective. A more thorough understanding of the wider effects of post-election anxiety on schooling may be possible with future studies employing mixed-method techniques and more varied sample sizes.

CONCLUSION

This study emphasises the notable impact of post-election anxiety on both teachers and students in Ghana. The results indicate significant disruptions to the mental health and academic engagement of both populations by highlighting the necessity for focused support within educational settings during politically tense periods. Teachers reported feelings of emotional fatigue and decreased motivation, which adversely affected their teaching effectiveness. In contrast, students encountered increased anxiety and lowered motivation, resulting in clear declines in their academic performance and classroom involvement. These results highlight the profound impact of political events on education and the urgent need for systematic attention to this issue.

The wider implications of this research touch on the relationship between political activities and community well-being. By examining the experiences of a particular educational demographic, this study emphasises the significance of mental health and resilience in preserving educational continuity amid political turmoil. The findings are especially pertinent to regions with high political activity and similar socio-political conditions, offering a framework to understand and alleviate the educational repercussions of post-election anxiety. It is recommended that policymakers and teachers acknowledge the societal importance of mental health resources in schools, as the emotional well-being of both teachers and students is closely intertwined with national development objectives.

This research adds valuable insights to the existing body of literature by focusing on an overlooked dimension of post-election anxiety in educational settings within sub-Saharan Africa. Previous studies have largely centred on political violence or broader societal repercussions, neglecting the specific experiences of teachers and students. Employing a qualitative methodology, this research offers a localised viewpoint by shedding light on the distinct challenges faced by these groups. The study expands the scope of anxiety related to elections and advocates for prioritising mental health considerations in educational policy debates, paving the way for more informed and effective strategies.

Future research should explore the long-term effects of post-election anxiety on academic success and emotional well-being. Using mixed methods and larger groups could enhance the relevance of the findings. Comparative studies of regions with different levels of political stability might reveal factors that worsen the impact of political anxiety on education. Formulating and evaluating interventions, such as stress management courses and mental health programs, could provide practical solutions for teachers and policymakers. These initiatives would contribute to academic discussions while promoting proactive measures to support teachers and students during election seasons.

Moreover, further research studies should also examine how post-election anxiety affects students' academic performance over the long run, with an emphasis on how these emotional disturbances may affect test scores and overall academic success. Examining how school leadership handles political tension in educational institutions might also be beneficial. Furthermore, comparing schools in politically stable and unstable areas may help us better understand how teaching and learning are impacted by various political environments. Lastly, it would be very helpful to research how well certain interventions can lessen the negative impacts of post-election anxiety on schooling. These kinds of research could offer useful suggestions for policymakers and teachers as they get ready for the next elections.

This research highlights the importance of schools addressing the psychological and emotional effects of post-election anxiety. While political events are essential to democratic processes, they can disrupt educational operations, impacting both teaching effectiveness and student engagement. By fostering resilience and incorporating mental health support into educational frameworks, stakeholders can mitigate these negative effects and preserve educational quality. The findings advocate for collective efforts from teachers, policymakers, and researchers to tackle the relationship between politics and education by creating a more supportive and resilient academic atmosphere.

The study concludes by highlighting the substantial effects that post-election anxiety has on teachers and students, both emotionally and academically. According to the findings, the political environment can disrupt the educational process by lowering teacher involvement and student motivation. The significance of treating mental health and emotional well-being in the educational system is highlighted by this study, especially in periods of political unrest.

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ETHICS APPROVAL AND CONSENT TO PARTICIPANTS

Human rights were safeguarded by considering several factors: the right to informed consent, the right to participate in the research, the right to be protected from any harm, and the right to confidentiality and privacy. Participants who chose to take part in the research were required to give their formal consent by signing a familiar agreement form. This document outlined the research questions of the study alongside various clauses aimed at safeguarding the privacy, confidentiality, and identity of the participants. In line with expert recommendations, significant attention was focused on the unequal dynamics between informants and interviewers, as well as potential situations where participants might be vulnerable in public. Consideration was given to the right to informed consent, the right to participate in the study, the right to protection from any form of harm, and the right to confidentiality and secrecy when upholding human rights. Formal consent was obtained from individuals who

voluntarily chose to participate in the research by endorsing a well-explained agreement form. This document included the study's goals and additional stipulations designed to ensure the confidentiality, privacy, and anonymity of the participants. Particular focus was placed on the unequal dynamics between informants and interviewers, as well as the possible scenarios regarding participants' public vulnerability, as indicated by specialised literature.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors declare no competing interest.

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