



Religious and moral education pre-service teachers' intention to use existential pedagogy to teach: Altering pedagogies to ensure transformative education in Ghana

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ABSTRACT

The promotion of learner-centred pedagogies has become central to educational reforms aimed at fostering transformative teaching and learning. Within Religious and Moral Education (RME), existential pedagogy provides opportunities for learners to engage critically with religious and moral issues through reflection, dialogue, and personal meaning-making. Despite its pedagogical value, little empirical evidence exists regarding the factors influencing pre-service teachers' intention to adopt existential pedagogy in Ghana. Guided by the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), this study examined the influence of attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control on RME pre-service teachers' intention to adapt existential pedagogy for classroom instruction. A quantitative cross-sectional survey design was employed, involving 183 Level 300 RME pre-service teachers from Colleges of Education affiliated with the University of Cape Coast. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire with acceptable reliability coefficients and analysed using descriptive statistics and simple and multiple regression analyses. The findings revealed that participants exhibited moderate levels of attitude ($M = 3.32$), subjective norm ($M = 3.41$), and perceived behavioural control ($M = 3.36$) towards adapting existential pedagogy, while demonstrating a high intention to use the pedagogy in future teaching ($M = 3.74$). Regression analyses indicated that attitude ($R^2 = .253$), subjective norm ($R^2 = .381$), and perceived behavioural control ($R^2 = .388$) each significantly and positively predicted intention to adopt existential pedagogy ($p < .05$). Collectively, the three TPB constructs explained 47.7% of the variance in behavioural intention ($R^2 = .477$), confirming the applicability of the TPB in explaining pre-service teachers' pedagogical intentions. The study concludes that strengthening positive attitudes, enhancing institutional and professional support, and improving pre-service teachers' confidence and pedagogical competence are critical for promoting the adoption of existential pedagogy in RME. It is recommended that Colleges of Education provide sustained training, practical experiences, and mentoring opportunities that equip future teachers to implement existential pedagogy effectively, thereby advancing transformative and learner-centred education in Ghana.

Keywords: Attitude, Existential Pedagogy, Intention, Perceived Behavioural Control, Pre-Service Teachers, Religious and Moral Education, Subjective Norms

I. INTRODUCTION

Transformative teaching has gained significant attention in the field of education in the 21st century. It emphasises processes that encourage learner independence, engagement, and inclusivity. The approach is expected to incorporate methodologies and pedagogies that support differentiation and scaffolding experiences in teaching and learning, while addressing societal issues related to diversity, inclusivity, equality and equity (Banks, 2015; Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017; Irfan et al, 2020; Ajzen, 2020; Ghana Education Service, 2020). Again, it is expected that teachers in various subject areas possess skills and competencies necessary to employ various pedagogies that foster dynamism in their teaching and students' learning. This should be accomplished in a manner that facilitates effective interactions between teachers and learners. Given that teachers employ diverse teaching methodologies and approaches, there is a continual need to adopt the most effective learner-centred pedagogies within one's specific subject area to foster the development of students' 21st-century skills. Achieving this goal requires a thorough assessment of the roles of pre-service teachers to ensure alignment with expectations, especially during their teacher education.

One of the pedagogies that ensures learner engagement and inclusivity and leads to learner-centred teaching in Religious and Moral Education (RME) is the existential pedagogy. Existentialism as an approach to teaching RME was conceptualised by the renowned psychologist, Michael Grimmer in 1973. The nature of RME makes the existential pedagogy stand out as a distinctive and philosophically oriented approach that can help teachers engage students in thoughtful scrutiny about essential questions on issues of religion and morality. The pedagogy comes in three phases, and each could be adapted to represent any of the teaching phases depending on the aspect of the sub-strand to be taught. The three phases are; depth, symbol and language, and situational themes. In RME, teaching should address the sub-strands from the three mainline religious perspectives in Ghana (African Traditional Religion, Christianity and Islam).

The nature of the RME curriculum necessitates the use of effective, inclusive, diversified and equitable pedagogies such as existential pedagogy. RME pre-service teachers in the Colleges of Education in Ghana are trained in the use of learner-centred pedagogies. Interestingly, literature on the teaching of RME in Ghana suggests that it is teacher-centred (Obeng, 2023; NaCCA, 2020). There are many perspectives developed regarding the teaching and learning of the subject (Mumuni, 2006). In the context of RME, teacher-centred lessons lead to indoctrination (Mensah & Ampem, 2023), which defeats the rationale and aims of teaching the subject. These issues (pressures) related to the teaching and learning of RME culminate into the need to find out if RME pre-service teachers in the Colleges of Education intend to use existential pedagogy to teach. This intention would be established through the lenses of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) developed by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980). The theory relates beliefs to behaviour. There are three main tenets: attitude, subjective norms (SN) and perceived behavioural control (PBC). According to the theory, these three combines to shape a person's intention to take an action. Therefore, pre-service teachers' intention to use the existential pedagogy will be informed by attitudes, SN and PBC towards the pedagogy (Ajzen, 2020). This study predicted that pre-service teachers' intention to adapt the existential pedagogy would lead to actual use in the classroom.

In the domain of RME, there exist opinions suggesting that the space is negatively perceived. There is a wrong, blind and uncritical acquisition of foreign cultural practices and negatively skewed knowledge because of low religious literacy (Mensah et al, 2024; Asante & Kugbey, 2019). This milieu presents the notion that attitude towards RME is not encouraging. This presents a challenge to teachers in considering the adaptation of pedagogies like the existential pedagogy to enhance teaching. Given that there seems to be a paucity of research that has ascertained the attitudes of RME teachers towards adapting the existential pedagogy, it is prudent to do that in this current study.

In addition, educational stakeholders appear to portray negative pressures to curriculum issues, especially in RME as a subject. This is what is referred to as a subjective norm under the TPB (Ajzen, 2020). In most classrooms and schools, there have been reports of inadequate technological resources to support successful and educative religious education at the pre-tertiary levels of education in Ghana (Mensah & Obiri Ampem, 2023; Mensah, 2018; Christensen & Knezek, 2018; Ajzen, 2020). Very little is also known about whether teachers use engaging pedagogies such as the existential pedagogy to teach. The pedagogy appears to be a preferable choice as it gives freedom and does not limit the use of advanced resources in teaching. Even in the absence of resources, it remains beneficial. In-service teachers, who are expected to implement learner-centred pedagogies to serve as a learning platform for pre-service teachers attached to their schools for practice, often do not use these pedagogies. Zonyra (2017) study is the only study conducted in Ghana that focused on the use of the pedagogy in teaching RME. The study, however, did not focus on pre-service teachers' intention to use the pedagogy.

These knowledge, contexts and evidence gaps in literature have necessitated the present study. Addressing these gaps in literature will contribute to the TPB as well as practices in the teaching of RME. Establishing whether pre-service teachers would intend to teach RME using the existential pedagogy or not would help religious educators identify the specific challenges related to using learner-centred approaches to teach RME. Awudi (2019) established that teachers on the field find it difficult to shift from a known pedagogy to a new one. Again, other studies, such as those by Walker and Langan (2016) and Coleman (2007), found that teachers were willing to adapt the inquiry-based learning pedagogies and liberative pedagogies, respectively. It is important to investigate whether the milieu in Ghana would appear as such and whether pre-service teachers are willing to use the pedagogy to teach RME. The study aims to determine the effect of pre-service teachers' attitudes, SN, and PBC on their intention to use existential pedagogy to teach.

1.1 Research Questions

- i. What is the level of RME pre-service teachers' attitude towards adapting existential pedagogy?
- ii. What is the level of RME pre-service teachers' SN towards adapting existential pedagogy?
- iii. What is the level of RME pre-service teachers' PBC towards adapting existential pedagogy?
- iv. What is the level of RME pre-service teachers' intention towards adapting existential pedagogy?

1.3 Research Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no statistically significant effect of RME pre-service teachers' attitudes on their intention to adapt existential pedagogy.

Ho₂: There is no statistically significant effect of RME student SN on their intention to adapt existential pedagogy.

Ho₃: There is no statistically significant effect of RME pre-service teachers' PBC on their intention to adapt existential pedagogy.

Ho₄: There is no statistically significant effect of RME pre-service teachers' attitude, SN and PBC on their intention to adapt existential pedagogy.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 The Theory of Planned Behaviour.

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), developed by Icek Ajzen in 1991, is a widely influential model in social psychology that seeks to explain and predict human behaviour. It builds on the earlier Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) by incorporating an additional component: perceived behavioural control. TPB suggests that three primary factors (attitude toward the behaviour, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control) directly influence an individual's intention to perform a behaviour, affecting their actual behaviour. Attitude refers to the individual's positive or negative evaluation of performing the behaviour. If a person perceives the behaviour as beneficial or desirable, they are more likely to engage in it. A subjective norm reflects the perceived social pressure to perform or refrain from a behaviour; shaped by beliefs about whether important others (e.g., family, friends, or colleagues) approve or disapprove of the behaviour. Perceived behavioural control involves an individual's perception of their ability to perform the behaviour, which can be influenced by internal factors like self-confidence, as well as external factors such as available resources or opportunities (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1977; Ajzen, 1985; Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen et al., 2018).

According to TPB, intention is the immediate predictor of behaviour. The stronger the intention to engage in a behaviour, the more likely it is that the behaviour will be performed, although external factors, such as time or opportunity, can still influence the outcome. The theory posits that behavioural intention is influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. In turn, actual behaviour is not only determined by intention but also by any external constraints that may affect one's ability to act on that intention. TPB has been used in various contexts to explain a wide range of behaviours, from health-related actions to academic performance (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1977; Ajzen, 1985; Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen et al., 2018).

Despite its widespread application, TPB has been subject to criticism. One limitation is its over-reliance on intention as the predictor of behaviour. In some cases, people may act impulsively or without forming a clear intention, which can reduce the model's predictive power. Another critique concerns the concept of perceived behavioural control, which can be difficult to measure distinctly from intention, as it involves both internal and external factors. Furthermore, TPB has been criticised for not adequately accounting for broader environmental, cultural, or situational influences that may affect behaviour, such as institutional policies or societal norms. Lastly, the theory assumes that behaviour is rational and planned, yet some behaviours are habitual, emotional, or impulsive, which may not always align with the model's framework (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1977; Ajzen, 1985; Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen et al., 2018).

The TPB presents a strong framework to help teacher training institutions to comprehend factors that may influence the adaption of the existential pedagogy by RME pre-service teachers. In the context of this, present study, TPB helps explain how pre-service RME teachers' attitudes towards adapting the existential pedagogy, the social pressures they perceive from peers and authorities, and their perceived ability to adapt the existential pedagogy determine their intention to adapt the pedagogy. This resulted in the formulation of the hypothesis by researchers that attitude, SN, and PBC of RME pre-service teachers will influence their intention to adapt the existential pedagogy. As a theory to predict behaviour performance (Ajzen, 2012), it is expected that pre-service teachers would align to existential pedagogy to teach learners in the classrooms, irrespective of the attitudes society has about the subject area and its teaching, challenges, and inadequate resources available for the teaching and learning of RME.

2.2 Empirical Review

2.2.1 Pre-Service Teachers' Attitude Towards Adapting Existential Pedagogy

Existential pedagogy is a personal and holistic educational approach in which educators intentionally engage with and support the child, fostering the child's personal development, growth, and self-realisation (Siller & Waibel, 2018). The approach recognises learners as unique individuals with the freedom and responsibility to construct meaning, make authentic choices, and develop their personal identities. Empirical evidence indicates that teachers generally demonstrate a positive attitude toward the adoption of existential pedagogy. For instance, Siller and Waibel (2018) examined the influence of existential pedagogy on pedagogues' and teachers' attitudes and teaching practices using a qualitative approach. The findings revealed that teachers generally held positive attitudes towards existential pedagogy because it enabled them to build meaningful relationships with students, strengthen students' self-esteem, and identify meaningful ways of connecting learning content with students' experiences. Tsigbeson (2019) also examined existential

education as a pedagogical strategy for teaching RME in Ghana using a quantitative approach. The findings indicated that RME teachers held a favourable view of learners' ability to engage in independent thought. This finding implies that teachers demonstrated a positive attitude towards adapting existential pedagogy, particularly its emphasis on promoting learners' independent thinking and autonomy.

Also, Nekhorosheva (2020) examined the creation of security in teacher-student relationships from an existential-analytical perspective using a qualitative phenomenological design. The findings revealed that teachers experienced difficulties in understanding and practising personalised care, while professional boundaries often limited opportunities for meaningful emotional engagement with students. These findings imply that pre-service teachers may have a cautiously positive but constrained attitude towards adapting existential pedagogy, recognising the importance of meaningful teacher-student relationships but potentially facing challenges in translating its relational and personalised principles into practice. In a similar qualitative study, Osbeck et al. (2025) interviewed middle-school teachers on their goals and their experiences of pupils' existential concerns from religious education classrooms. The study's results revealed that teachers perceived that pupils' personal concerns and questions were largely absent from their religious education classrooms, suggesting limited attention to learners' individual experiences and existential concerns in classroom practice. The teachers' perception that pupils' personal concerns and questions were largely absent from religious education classrooms implies a favourable attitude towards adapting existential pedagogy, as teachers may recognise the need for an approach that places greater emphasis on learners' personal experiences, concerns, and existential questions in the teaching and learning process.

Last but not least, Appiah (2022) examined the pedagogical knowledge base of RME teachers in assessing students' academic performance using a quantitative correlational design. The findings revealed that RME teachers held high views of their pedagogical knowledge ($M = 3.71$, $SD = .98$). This finding implies that pre-service teachers may demonstrate a positive attitude towards adapting existential pedagogy, as a strong perception of pedagogical knowledge may enhance their confidence and readiness to adopt innovative and learner-centred approaches in RME instruction. Taken together, these studies provide valuable evidence on teachers' perceptions of principles associated with existential pedagogy but leave an important empirical gap concerning RME pre-service teachers' attitudes towards adapting the approach. In particular, limited attention has been given to whether pre-service RME teachers, as prospective practitioners, view existential pedagogy positively and feel prepared to incorporate its relational, personalised, and autonomy-oriented principles into RME teaching. This gap is particularly significant within the Ghanaian context, where empirical evidence on pre-service teachers' readiness to adopt existential pedagogy remains limited.

2.2.2 Level of Pre-Service Teachers' SN Towards Adapting Existential Pedagogy

SN refers to the perceived social pressure or influence that individuals experience from significant others regarding whether they should engage in a particular behaviour (Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen et al., 2018). In the context of adapting existential pedagogy, RME pre-service teachers' SN reflect the extent to which their decision to adopt the approach is influenced by the expectations, encouragement, or approval of teacher educators, mentors, colleagues, school authorities, and other relevant stakeholders. Empirical evidence indicates that teachers generally exhibit high levels of SN regarding the adoption of a particular educational pedagogy. For instance, Lenski et al. (2019) conducted a quantitative study involving 1,660 German secondary school mathematics teachers to investigate the determinants of competency-based instruction within the framework of the Theory of Planned Behaviour. The findings showed that teachers reported relatively high levels of SN towards implementing competency-based instruction, with mean scores ranging from 2.64 to 3.07. This finding implies that teachers perceived considerable social expectations, encouragement, or support from significant others and the broader educational environment to adopt competency-based instructional practices. Extending to existential pedagogy, the finding suggests that when teachers perceive that lecturers, colleagues, school authorities, and other important referents support or expect the adoption of existential pedagogy, they may be more inclined to view its implementation favourably and consider adapting it in their future teaching practice.

Also, Gülsün et al. (2026) investigated the factors that influence teachers' intention to employ inclusive pedagogy strategies in inclusive classroom settings using structural equation modelling (SEM). The descriptive findings indicated that teachers reported a high level of SN regarding the use of inclusive pedagogy, with a mean score of 3.83 ($SD = .61$). The high level of teachers' SN towards inclusive pedagogy implies that teachers perceive support and encouragement from significant others and the broader educational environment to adopt inclusive teaching practices. By extension, this suggests that when teachers perceive strong social expectations and support for learner-centered approaches, they may be more inclined to adapt pedagogical practices such as existential pedagogy. Although previous studies have reported high levels of teachers' SN toward adopting pedagogical approaches such as competency-based instruction and inclusive pedagogy, these findings do not provide evidence regarding existential pedagogy. The pedagogical principles, instructional expectations, and teacher-learner interactions underpinning existential pedagogy differ from those of other teaching approaches, making it inappropriate to generalise existing findings. To date, no empirical study appears to have directly examined the level of pre-service teachers' or teachers' SN toward adapting

existential pedagogy. Consequently, there is a knowledge gap regarding the extent to which significant others, including lecturers, peers, school leaders, and the wider educational environment, influence intentions to adopt existential pedagogy.

2.2.3 Level of Pre-Service Teachers' PBC Towards Adapting Existential Pedagogy

PBC is the degree to which a person believes they can carry out an action effectively (Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen et al., 2018). In the context of adapting existential pedagogy, RME pre-service teachers' PBC reflects the extent to which they believe they possess the knowledge, skills, confidence, and access to the necessary resources and opportunities to successfully adopt and implement the approach in their future teaching practice. Empirical studies on teachers' PBC toward adopting a particular educational pedagogy have consistently reported high levels of perceived social influence to adopt the pedagogy. For instance, Lenski et al. (2019) conducted a quantitative study involving 1,660 German secondary school mathematics teachers to examine the determinants of competency-based instruction within the framework of the Theory of Planned Behaviour. The findings indicated that teachers reported a relatively high level of PBC towards implementing competency-based instruction, with mean scores ranging from 2.65 to 3.20. This finding implies that the teachers generally felt capable of implementing competency-based instructional practices and perceived fewer barriers to doing so. In extending this finding to existential pedagogy, the finding suggests that teachers who perceive themselves as having the requisite knowledge, skills, resources, and opportunities to implement existential pedagogy may demonstrate greater confidence in their ability to adapt and apply the approach in their future teaching practice.

Lastly, Gülsün et al. (2026) examined the factors influencing teachers' intention to implement inclusive pedagogy strategies in inclusive classroom contexts using SEM. The descriptive results showed that teachers reported high levels of PBC in relation to instructional strategies ($M = 4.64$, $SD = .57$) and collaboration ($M = 4.65$, $SD = .60$). These findings imply that teachers generally felt confident in their ability and possessed the necessary capacity to implement inclusive pedagogical practices. Similarly, the high level of PBC may suggest that teachers who feel capable and equipped to implement learner-centered approaches are more likely to perceive themselves as able to adapt and apply existential pedagogy in their teaching practice. Although previous studies have reported high levels of teachers' PBC toward implementing pedagogical approaches such as competency-based instruction and inclusive pedagogy, these findings cannot be directly extended to existential pedagogy because of its unique philosophical orientation and instructional requirements. To date, no empirical study has specifically examined the level of pre-service teachers' or teachers' PBC toward adapting existential pedagogy. Consequently, there is a knowledge gap regarding whether prospective teachers perceive themselves as having the knowledge, skills, resources, confidence, and opportunities necessary to implement existential pedagogy effectively.

2.2.4 Level of Pre-Service Teachers' Intention Towards Adapting Existential Pedagogy

Behavioural intention is a central construct of the Theory of Planned Behaviour and represents an individual's readiness or willingness to perform a particular behaviour (Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen et al., 2018). Accordingly, empirical studies have examined teachers' levels of intention to adopt various educational pedagogies, providing a useful basis for understanding pre-service RME teachers' intention to adapt existential pedagogy. For instance, Siller and Waibel (2018) explored the impact of existential pedagogy on educators' and teachers' perspectives and instructional practices through a qualitative research approach. The study found that teachers expressed positive views towards existential pedagogy, recognising its potential to promote deeper interpersonal connections with learners, enhance students' confidence and sense of self-worth, and facilitate the meaningful integration of instructional content with learners' lived experiences. These positive perceptions indicate that teachers were likely to demonstrate a strong intention to incorporate existential pedagogy into their classroom practices. Also, Lenski et al. (2019) conducted a quantitative study involving 1,660 German secondary school mathematics teachers to examine the determinants of competency-based instruction within the framework of the Theory of Planned Behaviour. The findings showed that teachers reported a high level of intention to implement competency-based instruction ($M = 3.12$ – 3.33). This finding implies that teachers demonstrated a strong willingness and readiness to adopt competency-based instructional practices in their teaching. In the context of existential pedagogy, the finding suggests that when teachers exhibit a strong intention to embrace innovative and learner-centred pedagogical approaches, they may similarly be more willing to adapt existential pedagogy in their future classroom practice.

Lastly, Gülsün et al. (2026) examined the factors influencing teachers' intentions to implement inclusive pedagogy strategies in inclusive classroom settings using structural equation modelling (SEM). The descriptive results showed that teachers reported a high level of intention to teach in inclusive classrooms ($M = 5.82$, $SD = .75$). This finding implies that teachers demonstrated a strong willingness and readiness to adopt inclusive pedagogical practices, suggesting that teachers who express a strong intention to implement learner-centered approaches may also be more likely to consider adapting existential pedagogy in their classroom practice. Although previous studies have reported

high levels of teachers' intention to adopt pedagogical approaches such as competency-based instruction and inclusive pedagogy, and qualitative evidence suggests favourable perceptions of existential pedagogy, no empirical study has directly measured pre-service teachers' or teachers' level of intention to adapt existential pedagogy. Consequently, there is a knowledge gap regarding the extent to which pre-service teachers intend to adapt existential pedagogy in their future teaching practice.

2.2.5 Influence of Teachers' Attitude, SN, and PBC on their Intention Towards Adapting Existential Pedagogy

According to the Theory of Planned Behaviour, intention to perform a behaviour is jointly determined by an individual's attitude towards the behaviour, SN, and PBC (Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen et al., 2018). Accordingly, empirical studies have examined how teachers' attitudes, SN, and PBC influence their intention to adopt various educational pedagogies, providing a basis for understanding pre-service RME teachers' intention to adapt existential pedagogy. For instance, Lenski et al. (2019) conducted a quantitative study involving 1,660 German secondary school mathematics teachers to examine the determinants of competency-based instruction within the framework of the Theory of Planned Behaviour. The findings revealed that teachers' intention to implement competency-based instruction was significantly and positively predicted by perceived behavioural control ($\beta = .33, p < .001$), attitude ($\beta = .11, p < .05$), and subjective norm ($\beta = .08, p < .01$). The results imply that teachers who hold positive attitudes towards competency-based instruction, perceive greater social expectations and support for its implementation, and feel more capable of carrying it out are more likely to develop stronger intentions to adopt the practice. In the context of existential pedagogy, these findings suggest that favourable attitudes towards existential pedagogy, supportive SN, and a strong sense of perceived behavioural control may similarly enhance RME pre-service teachers' intention to adapt existential pedagogy in their future teaching practice.

Dierendonck et al. (2024) examined the factors influencing teachers' intentions to implement recommended teaching practices, specifically competency-based practices (CBP), differentiated instruction (DI), and formative assessment (FA), using the Theory of Planned Behaviour and SEM. The findings indicated that attitude ($\beta = .321, p < .001$), subjective norm ($\beta = .095, p < .05$), and perceived behavioural control (PBC) ($\beta = .579, p < .001$) significantly predicted teachers' intention to implement CBP. Similarly, attitude ($\beta = .567, p < .001$), subjective norm ($\beta = .315, p < .001$), and PBC ($\beta = .327, p < .001$) significantly predicted intention to implement DI. For FA, attitude ($\beta = .352, p < .001$) and PBC ($\beta = .568, p < .001$) were significant predictors of teachers' intention, whereas subjective norm was not a significant predictor. These findings imply that teachers' favourable attitudes towards recommended teaching practices, perceived social expectations and support, and confidence in their ability to implement such practices generally contribute to stronger intentions to adopt them. In relation to existential pedagogy, the findings suggest that pre-service teachers who develop positive attitudes towards existential pedagogy, perceive encouragement from significant others and the educational environment, and believe they possess the necessary capacity and resources to implement it are more likely to form stronger intentions to adapt existential pedagogy in their future teaching.

Gülsün et al. (2026) investigated the factors influencing teachers' intention to implement inclusive pedagogy strategies in inclusive classroom contexts using structural equation modelling (SEM). The findings showed that attitude ($\beta = .17, SE = .01, p < .001$), SN ($\beta = .38, SE = .01, p < .001$), and perceived behavioural control ($\beta = .36, SE = .01, p < .001$) each had a significant positive effect on teachers' intentions to teach in inclusive classrooms. These findings imply that teachers who hold favourable attitudes towards inclusive pedagogy, perceive greater social support and expectations from significant others, and feel more capable of implementing inclusive practices are more likely to intend to adopt such approaches. By extension, the results suggest that positive attitudes towards existential pedagogy, supportive SN, and a strong sense of behavioural control may similarly enhance teachers' intention to adapt existential pedagogy in their classroom practice. Although previous studies have consistently demonstrated that teachers' attitude, SN, and PBC significantly predict their intention to adopt pedagogical approaches such as competency-based instruction, differentiated instruction, formative assessment, and inclusive pedagogy, no study has specifically examined these relationships in the context of existential pedagogy. Consequently, there is a knowledge gap regarding the extent to which pre-service teachers' attitude, SN, and PBC influence their intention to adapt existential pedagogy. It is based on this narrative that this study sought to address this gap by providing empirical evidence to validate the applicability of the Theory of Planned Behaviour to existential pedagogy.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Procedures

A Cross-sectional survey under the quantitative approach to research was employed to conduct this study. This gave a snapshot of information about pre-service teachers who have been introduced to the existential pedagogy within the period of the collection of the data. This survey was also cost-efficient and allowed the researchers to gather data from a wide range of respondents with relative ease (Cohen et al., 2018). Using the proportionate simple random sampling technique (Adam, 2020; Krejcie & Morgan, 1970 in Cohen et al., 2018), Data was collected from 183 level

300 RME pre-service teachers out of 320 from the Colleges of Education affiliated to the University of Cape Coast. The level 300 students were deemed an appropriate source of data because they have been taken through all the courses that expose them to pedagogies like the existential pedagogy. These respondents were randomly selected from 8 Colleges of Education offering Bachelor of Education (Junior high school education) for the 2022/2023 academic year.

The researchers obtained ethical clearance with reference number UCCIRB/CES/2023/29 from the Institutional Review Board of the University of Cape Coast to ensure that no ethical issues were breached. The ethical permit was to ensure that the study would not pose any danger to respondents. In addition, an introductory letter from the Department of Business and Social Sciences Education was obtained to inform the Colleges of Education about the researchers' intention to use their pre-service teachers as respondents for the study. Written informed consent was also obtained from participants. All the 183 RME pre-service teachers provided their consent by signing the form. The data collection spanned over nine days. All the instruments were crosschecked to ensure the respondents responded to all items provided on the questionnaire.

3.2 Measures

A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from RME pre-service teachers. It was developed by the researchers based on the contents of the variables in the conceptual framework. The self-administered questionnaire was categorized under five sections: demographic information of the respondent; RME pre-service teachers' attitude; SN; PBC and intention to adapt the existential pedagogy to teach. Section A had 4 items on the demographic data of the respondents. Section B consists of 8 items measuring attitude towards adapting the existential pedagogy on a scale of 1–5 (1=Undecided; 2=Strongly Disagree; 3=Disagree; 4=Agree and 5=Strongly Agree). Section C consists of 11 items that measured SN towards adapting the pedagogy on a scale of 1–5 (1=Undecided; 2=Strongly Disagree; 3=Disagree; 4=Agree and 5=Strongly Agree). Section D consists of 10 items that measured PBC towards adapting the existential pedagogy on a scale of 1–5 (1=Undecided; 2=Strongly Disagree; 3=Disagree; 4=Agree and 5=Strongly Agree). Section E consist of 8 items that measured intention to adapt the existential pedagogy on a scale of 1–5 (1=Undecided; 2=Strongly Disagree; 3=Disagree; 4=Agree and 5=Strongly Agree).

3.3 Validity and Reliability

For content and construct validity, there were two-member expert reviews. Subsequently, there was a pilot test using 30 level 300 RME pre-service teachers from the University of Cape Coast to ascertain the instrument's reliability (Baker, 1994). A further reliability test was conducted on each of the variables as well as the whole instrument. The Cronbach's Alpha for attitude, SN, PBC and intention were 0.65, 0.66, 0.74 and 0.72, respectively. The overall Cronbach Alpha was 0.8, which was above the Cronbach Alpha of 0.7; therefore, the instrument had appropriate or acceptable reliability to be used in the collection of data (Athnasiou & Mavrikaki, 2014).

3.4 Data Analysis

Both descriptive (frequencies, means, and standard deviations) and inferential (multiple and linear regression) statistical tools were used to analyse the data collected. The descriptive tool was used to determine, characterize, and describe the sample and to discuss the data obtained. Inferential statistics was used to determine the influence of the independent variables on the dependent variables. Statistical analyses were conducted on the hypotheses, which were tested at a 0.05 level of significance (Cohen et al., 2018). The following mean interpretation was used for the results related to the research questions: 1.00-1.99 for low, 2.00-3.49 for moderate, and 3.50-5.00 for high.

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

4.1 Findings

4.1.1 Level of RME pre-service teachers' attitude towards adopting existential pedagogy

The first research question of the study was to investigate pre-service teachers' attitudes towards adapting the existential pedagogy to teach RME. Previous studies in RME have established diverse attitudes towards the teaching and learning of the subject and the employment of the pedagogy (Mumuni, 2006; Zonyra, 2017; Mensah & Obiri Ampem, 2023; Appiah, 2022). Perceptions and opinions are what the TPB established as attitudes that behaviour intend to conceptualize on a particular behaviour. There were eight (8) items to measure respondents' attitudes. The mean interpretation was as follows: 1.00-1.99 for low attitude, 2.00-3.49 for moderate attitude, and 3.50-5.00 for high attitude. Table 1 provides the results of the data analysis.

Table 1*Pre-service teachers' attitudes towards Adapting Existential Pedagogy*

Statements	SA/A		D/SD		U		M	SD
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
Schools have the resources to support the teaching of RME	61	33.4	106	57.9	16	8.7	3.0	1.01
I have been taught very well how to use existential pedagogy to teach RME	136	74.3	29	15.8	18	9.8	3.7	1.11
I can use all themes under the existential pedagogy to teach RME strands	114	62.3	24	13.1	45	24.6	3.3	1.41
Existential pedagogy can only be used by a religious educator who is specialized in RME	47	25.7	118	64.5	18	9.8	2.9	1.03
Existential pedagogy can be used to teach the learners expected in RME classrooms.	126	68.8	28	15.3	29	15.8	3.5	1.3
The three (3) themes of the existential pedagogy could always be used together to teach in one lesson.	122	66.7	26	14.2	35	19.1	3.4	1.3
Situational themes could likely indoctrinate learners to catch teachers' values and moral perspectives.	96	52.4	45	24.5	42	23	3.0	1.29
Teachers need to be objective during discussions when using symbol and language theme to teaching RME	143	78.2	24	13.1	16	8.7	3.7	1.03
Average							3.32	1.185

Results from Table 1 show that most RME pre-service teachers (N=143, 78.2%, M=3.73, SD=1.032) either strongly agreed or agreed with the assertion that existential pedagogy requires objectivity in employing one of its themes (symbol and language) to teach. Also, a significant number of the respondents (N=136, 74.3%, M=3.70, SD=1.110) either strongly agreed or agreed to have been instructed on the pedagogy. Additionally, most of the pre-service teachers (N=126, 68.8%, M=3.48, SD=1.292) either strongly agreed or agreed they the pedagogy would suit the learning behaviour of learners in schools. Only a limited number of respondents (N=47, 25%, M=2.93, SD=1.030) either strongly agreed or agreed that the pedagogy could be used by only religious education specialized teachers. This implies that both specialized and unspecialized teachers could implement existential pedagogy. A holistic examination of the responses attested that pre-service teachers' attitudes towards adapting the pedagogy to teach was moderate. This was based on the overall mean interpretation score (M=3.32, SD=1.185).

4.1.2 Level of RME pre-service teachers' subjective norms towards adopting existential pedagogy

The second research question was to investigate respondents' subjective norms towards adapting the existential pedagogy to teach RME. The variable involved the social and curriculum pressures surrounding the intended behaviour a performer desires to act on or refrain from. Participants responded to eleven (11) items to address the research question. The mean interpretation key was established as follows: 1.00-1.99 indicated a low subjective norm (SN), 2.00-3.49 indicated a moderate SN, and 3.50-5.00 indicated a high SN. Detailed results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2*Pre-service teachers' SN towards Adapting Existential Pedagogy*

Statements	SA/A		D/SD		U		M	SD
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
Society looks down on teaching and learning of RME	91	49.7	76	41.5	7	8.7	3.3	1.19
RME prepares learners to be morally sound.	173	94.5	3	1.6	7	3.8	4.4	0.89
Teaching RME requires teaching a teacher's religion of interest	33	18	138	75.4	12	6.6	2.62	0.96
Pre-service teachers see RME to be the easiest course of study	53	29	110	60	20	10.9	2.84	1.10
During STS, teachers are seen using teacher-cantered approaches to teach	82	44.8	92	50.3	9	4.9	3.36	1.03
During STS RME teaching looks like preaching	40	21.8	122	66.7	21	11.5	2.74	0.99
Tutors sometimes use the themes of existential pedagogy to teach lessons in the colleges	150	82	11	6	22	12	3.71	1.12
Colleague RME pre-service teachers have used the existential pedagogy to practice teaching RME	115	62.8	20	10.9	48	26.2	3.19	1.42
Colleague RME pre-service teachers would want to see me use the existential pedagogy	130	71.1	15	8.2	38	20.8	3.40	1.35

Tutors would be happy to see me using the existential pedagogy to teach RME	152	83.1	8	4.4	23	12.5	3.83	1.20
Learners in the schools would be happy that my lessons require their experiences and what they know about RME topics and the society	166	90.7	7	3.8	10	5.5	4.13	0.95
Average							3.41	1.069

Results from Table 2 show that almost all the respondents (N=173, 94.5%, M=4.41, SD=0.896) either strongly agreed or agreed that society perceives the subject as preparing learners to become morally sound. A significant majority (N=166, 90.7%, M=4.13, SD=0.946) either strongly agreed or agreed that learners would expect that their experiences are brought to the learning environment. Therefore, they would be happy to adapt the existential pedagogy. Additionally, the majority of the respondents (N=152, 83.1%, M=3.83, SD=1.201) either strongly agreed or agreed that tutors who had taught the pedagogy would be impressed upon realizing that pre-service teachers intend to adapt the pedagogy to teach. Regarding 'important others' perceiving the teaching of RME to be influenced by the personal religious interest of the teacher, a small number of the respondents (N=33, 18%, M=2.62, SD=0.964) either strongly agreed or agreed that the adaptation of the pedagogy would be indoctrinatory. A conclusive look at the results indicated that RME pre-service teachers have a moderate SN towards adapting existential pedagogy, as evidenced by the overall mean and standard deviation scores (M=3.41, SD=1.069).

4.1.3 Level of RME pre-service teachers' perceived behavioral control towards adopting existential pedagogy

The third research question examined the level of RME pre-service teachers' perceived behavioral control (PBC) towards adopting existential pedagogy. To do that, the respondents were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with items based on the keys: 1=uncertain; 2=Strongly disagree; 3=Disagree; 4=Agree and 5=Strongly agree. Their responses were used to measure the PBC. The results presented in Table 3 are based on the mean interpretation keys: 1.00-1.99 for a low PBC, 2.00-3.49 for a moderate PBC, and 3.50-5.00 for a high PBC.

Table 3

Pre-service teachers' PBC towards Adapting Existential Pedagogy

Statements	SA/A		D/SD		U		M	SD
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
Tutors have taught pre-service teachers how to use the pedagogy to teach	149	81.4	20	10.9	14	7.7	3.87	1.06
There are enough books to help in teaching RME using this pedagogy	61	33.3	92	50.3	30	16.4	2.95	1.15
I can use technology with the pedagogy to teach strands	144	78.7	15	8.2	24	13.1	3.69	1.21
My society has enough material resources to help learner centred teaching using the pedagogy	59	32.3	89	48.6	35	19.1	2.83	1.14
I will use learners' experiences and the RME topics to involve learners during teaching and learning even when there is no teaching approach like the existential pedagogy	143	78.1	15	8.2	25	10.9	3.65	1.24
I can teach RME even when I am unprofessional teacher	57	31.1	106	57.9	20	10.9	2.87	1.05
When my mates use the pedagogy successfully to teach, I will be tempted to also use it to teach	120	65.6	31	16.9	32	17.5	3.43	1.36
I think I can teach lessons using only the existential pedagogy	47	25.7	99	54.1	37	20.2	2.76	1.14
Religious education pedagogies that pre-service teachers are exposed to are many	155	84.7	12	6.5	16	8.7	3.93	1.06
I have to be motivated to use existential pedagogy	140	76.5	19	10.3	24	13.1	3.67	1.19
Average							3.36	1.161

Results from Table 3 show that a significant number of respondents (N=155, 84.7%, M=3.93, SD=1.067), either strongly agreed or agreed to be motivated about the number of religious education pedagogies available for implementation. Again, most of them (N=149, 81.4%, M=3.87, SD=1.061) either strongly agreed or agreed that they could use existential pedagogy to teach. The majority (N=144, 78.7%, M=3.69, SD=1.206) either strongly agreed or agreed that they could use technology to facilitate the adaptation of the pedagogy. Additionally, most of the pre-service teachers (N=140, 76.5%, M=3.67, SD=1.191) either strongly agreed or agreed that extra motivation should be provided to influence their adaptation of the pedagogy. A relatively smaller number of respondents (N=47, 25.7%, M=2.76, SD=1.142) either strongly agreed or agreed that they could use other pedagogies to teach besides the existential

pedagogy. A critical look at the analysed results, as evidenced from the overall mean and standard deviation scores ($M=3.36$, $SD=1.161$) confirmed that RME pre-service teachers' PBC toward adapting existential pedagogy to teach was moderate.

4.1.4 Level of RME pre-service teachers' behavioral intention towards adopting existential pedagogy

The fourth research question examined the level of RME pre-service teachers' behavioral intention towards adopting existential pedagogy. Literature indicates that following this variable, a behaviour could either be predicted to be acted upon or not. This objective assessed the respondents' readiness and willingness to perform the teaching behaviour (Ajzen, 2006; 1991; 2020). It was noted to be attained based on adequate resources, effective teaching approaches or practices, and teachers' social well-being. The respondents were made to respond to eight (8) items that were used to determine their intention towards adapting the existential pedagogy to teach. The following were the mean interpretation keys: 1.00-1.99 for a low intention, 2.00-3.49 for a moderate intention and 3.50-5.00 for a high intention. Table 4 has details of the results.

Table 4

Pre-service teachers' Intention towards Adapting Existential Pedagogy

Statements	SA/A		D/SD		U		M	SD
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
I can use the knowledge I have gained from the course on the existential pedagogy to teach RME lessons	167	91.2	4	2.2	12	6.6	4.05	0.97
I will use the existential pedagogy to teach since it brings about learner centred teaching	162	88.5	5	2.7	16	8.7	4.08	1.09
I can devise ways to teach RME using the pedagogy even when there are no or few resources to use (e.g. Videos, resource persons or books)	148	80.9	13	7.1	22	12	3.74	1.13
Teacher-centred teaching is a serious problem for students	143	78.1	28	15.3	12	6.6	3.96	1.10
I can use existential pedagogy to do away with teacher-centred teaching	148	80.9	14	7.6	21	11.5	3.85	1.19
I can teach very well when I use my religious affiliation as an example	96	52.5	68	37.1	19	10.4	3.33	1.18
Of all the religious education pedagogies, existential pedagogy is simplest to use.	117	63.9	30	16.4	36	19.7	3.32	1.30
I can use the three themes of the pedagogy to teach lessons	144	78.7	16	8.7	23	12.6	3.66	1.15
Average							3.74	1.137

Results from Table 4 show that almost all of the respondents ($N=162$, 88.5%, $M=4.08$, $SD=1.087$) either strongly agreed or agreed to be willing to adapt the existential pedagogy because it is considered learner-centred. Again, the majority of them ($N=167$, 91.2%, $M=4.05$, $SD=0.965$) either strongly agreed or agreed that they could apply knowledge gained on the pedagogy to teach. Additionally, a significant number of respondents ($N=143$, 78.1%, $M=3.96$, $SD=1.101$), either strongly agreed or agreed that they have observed the detrimental effect of teacher-centred teaching on learners. A smaller portion of the respondents ($N=117$, 63.9%, $M=3.32$, $SD=1.301$) either strongly agreed or agreed the pedagogy is simple to use. A critical observation of the responses indicated that pre-service teachers have high intention to adapt the existential pedagogy to teach. That was evidenced by the overall mean score ($M=3.74$, $SD=1.137$).

4.1.5 Effect of attitude on RME pre-service teachers' behavioral intention to adopt existential pedagogy

To address the fifth research question, a simple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine whether pre-service teachers' attitude towards adopting existential pedagogy significantly predicted their behavioral intention to adopt the pedagogy. Attitude was entered as the predictor variable, while behavioral intention served as the outcome variable. Using the enter method, the result indicated that pre-service teachers' attitude moderately (Chin, 1998; Hair, et al., 1998) explains 25% of the variance in their intention to adapt existential pedagogy to teach $F=111.560$, $p<0.05$, $R^2=.253$, $R^2_{\text{Adjusted}}=.249$ as shown in Table 7.

Table 7*ANOVA and Model Summary for Attitude and Intention to adapt Existential Pedagogy to teach*

MODEL	DF	MEAN SQUARE	F	SIG.	R	R ²	R ² _{ADJ}
REGRESSION	1	1286.243	61.254	.000 ^b	.503 ^a	.253	.249
RESIDUAL	181	20.999					
TOTAL	182						

The result in Table 8 also indicated that attitude towards adapting existential pedagogy ($\beta = .570$, $t = 7.826$, $p = .000$) significantly predicted pre-service teachers' intention to adapt the pedagogy as presented. The result implied that pre-service teachers' attitude could help predict their intention to adapt the existential pedagogy to teach.

Table 8*Regression Coefficients of Attitude on Intention to adapt Existential Pedagogy to teach RME*

VARIABLE	B	SE	BETA	T	P	95%CI
CONSTANT	14.851	1.964		7.560	.000	(10.975, 18.727)
ATTITUDE	.570	.073	.503	7.826	.000	(.426, .714)

The results showed that the attitude of RME pre-service teachers is a significant positive predictor of their intention to adapt the existential pedagogy ($B = 14.85$, $SE = 1.96$, $p < 0.05$). This indicates that a higher level of attitude is associated with a higher level of intention to adapt the existential pedagogy.

4.1.6 RME pre-service teachers' SN on their intention to adapt existential pedagogy

Further, a simple linear regression was performed to analyse data on pre-service teachers' SN towards adapting existential pedagogy (predictor variable) and their intention to adapt the pedagogy (outcome variable). Using the enter method, the result indicated that pre-service teachers' SN moderately (Chin, 1998; Hair, et al., 1998) explains 38% of the variance in their intention to adapt the existential pedagogy to teach $F = 111.560$, $p < 0.05$, $R^2 = .381$, $R^2_{\text{Adjusted}} = .378$ as in Table 9

Table 9*ANOVA and Model Summary for SN and Intention to Adapt the Existential Pedagogy*

MODEL	DF	MEAN SQUARE	F	SIG.	R	R ²	R ² _{ADJ}
REGRESSION	1	1939.787	111.560	.000 ^b	.618 ^a	.381	.378
RESIDUAL	181	17.388					
TOTAL	182						

Results from Table 10 also confirmed that pre-service teachers' SN towards adapting existential pedagogy ($\beta = .555$, $t = 10.562$, $p = .000$) significantly predicted their intention to adapt the existential pedagogy. The implication was that the social and curriculum pressures in RME were enough to assist the prediction that pre-service teachers would accrue a high intention to adapt the pedagogy to teach.

Table 10*Regression coefficients of SN on Intention to adapt the Existential Pedagogy*

VARIABLE	B	SE	BETA	T	P	95%CI
CONSTANT	9.156	1.997		4.585	.000	(5.216 13.096)
SUBJECTIVE NORM	.555	.053	.618	10.562	.000	(.451 .659)

The results showed that the SN of RME pre-service teachers is a significant positive predictor of their intention to adapt the existential pedagogy ($B = 9.16$, $SE = 1.99$, $p < 0.05$). This indicates that a higher level of SN is associated with a higher level of intention to adapt the existential pedagogy.

4.1.7 RME pre-service teachers' PBC on their intention to adapt existential pedagogy.

Again, a simple linear regression was performed to analyse data on pre-service teachers' PBC toward adapting existential pedagogy (predictor variable) and their intention to adapt the pedagogy to teach (outcome variable). Using the enter method, the results indicated that pre-service teachers' PBC towards adapting existential pedagogy moderately

(Chin, 1998; Hair, et al., 1998) explains 39% of the variance in their intention to adapt the pedagogy to teach $F=114.925$, $p<0.05$, $R^2=.388$, $R^2_{Adjusted}=.385$ as presented on in Table 11.

Table 11

ANOVA and Model Summary for PBC and Intention to adapt the Existential Pedagogy

MODEL	DF	MEAN SQUARE	F	SIG.	R	R ²	R ² _{ADJ}
REGRESSION	1	1975.574	114.925	.000 ^b	.623 ^a	.388	.385
RESIDUAL	181	17.190					
TOTAL	182						

Again, the results from Table 12 indicated that pre-service teachers' PBC towards adapting existential pedagogy ($\beta=.520$, $t=10.720$, $p=.000$) significantly predicted their intention to adapt the pedagogy to teach. The results imply that PBC toward adapting the pedagogy could assist in predicting pre-service teachers' intention to adapt the existential pedagogy to teach.

Table 12

Regression coefficients of PBC on Intention to adapt the Existential Pedagogy to teach RME

VARIABLE	B	SE	BETA	T	P	95%CI
CONSTANT	12.508	1.660		7.536	.000	(9.233 15.783)
PERCEIVED BEHAVIOUR CONTROL	.520	.048	.623	10.720	.000	(.424 .615)

The results showed that the PBC of RME pre-service teachers is a significant positive predictor of their intention to adapt the existential pedagogy ($B=12.51$, $SE=1.66$, $p<0.05$). This suggests that a higher level of PBC is associated with a higher level of intention to adapt the existential pedagogy.

4.1.8 RME pre-service teachers' attitude, SN and PBC on their intention to adapt existential pedagogy.

Finally, a multiple regression analysis was performed to find out the combined effect of pre-service teachers' attitude, SN, and PBC on their intention to adapt the pedagogy. Using the enter method, RME pre-service teachers' attitude, SN and PBC (predictor variables) moderately (Chin, 1998; Hair, et al., 1998) explains 48% of the variance in their intention (outcome variable) to adapt the existential pedagogy to teach ($F(3,182)=54.347$, $p<.000$, $R=.690$, $R^2=.477$) as presented in Table 13.

Table 13

ANOVA and Model Summary for Attitude, SN and PBC on Intention to Adapt the Existential Pedagogy

MODEL	DF	MEAN SQUARE	F	SIG.	R	R ²	R ² _{ADJ}
REGRESSION	3	808.276	54.347	.000 ^b	.690 ^a	.477	.468
RESIDUAL	179	14.872					
TOTAL	182						

Results in Table 13 indicated that attitude, SN, and PBC ($\beta=.286$; .199; .257, $t=4.180$; 2.667; 3.903, $p=.000$; .008; .000) significantly predicted pre-service teachers' intention to adapt the pedagogy. The results implied that pre-service teachers' attitude, SN, and PBC could help in predicting their intention to adapt the existential pedagogy to transform the teaching of RME.

Table 14

Regression coefficients of Attitude, SN and PBC on Intention towards adapting Existential Pedagogy

VARIABLE	B	SE	BETA	T	P	95%CI
CONSTANT	5.327	2.027		2.628	.009	(1.327 9.327)
SUBJECTIVE NORM	.286	.068	.318	4.180	.000	(.151 .421)
ATTITUDE	.199	.075	.176	2.667	.008	(.052 .347)
PBC	.257	0.066	.308	3.903	.000	(.127 .387)

Also, the results in Table 14 showed that attitude, SN, and PBC of RME pre-service teachers are significant positive predictors of their intention to adapt the existential pedagogy ($B=5.33$, $SE=2.02$, $p<0.05$). This indicates that higher levels of attitudes, SN, and PBC are associated with a higher level of intention to adapt the existential pedagogy.

4.2 Discussion

The moderate attitude RME pre-service teachers have towards the existential pedagogy confirmed that they had been introduced to and have knowledge of the pedagogy. This implies that they could use it to transform teaching in 21st-century classrooms. It contradicted one of the earlier assertions held about RME teachers in the Akatsi district concerning the pedagogy (Zonyra, 2017). It also confirmed Awudi (2019) finding that teachers find it difficult to alter teaching behaviour easily. This explains why, despite pre-service teachers' familiarity with the pedagogy, their attitude toward its implementation remains moderate. Additionally, insufficient instruction on the pedagogy may have contributed to their diminished zeal to teach using the pedagogy (Shardlow & Doel, 1992; Christensen & Knezek, 2018; Ajzen, 2020). Additionally, a lack of adequate resources to support teaching could detrimentally affect their attitude towards use.

Again, SN attained moderate results regarding the adaptation of the existential pedagogy. This means that the social pressures that could assist RME pre-service teachers to recognize the need to transform the teaching of RME was minimal and of limited importance. The study confirmed Eshun (2018) finding, which indicated that stakeholders' attitude towards RME exerts relatively low pressure on teachers to inculcate pedagogies that are learner-centred. Additionally, encouragements could be drawn from Cortes' (2016) finding that, when many users of the pedagogy are known, pre-service teachers would be motivated to use the pedagogy and would also rise within the status quo (Wang, Hall & Goetz, 2018). However, some of the pre-service teachers are aware of the challenges associated with teaching and were willing to adapt the pedagogy to teach. These are some of the reasons for the moderate SN observed.

One of the significant factors that enhanced PBC was the fact that pre-service teachers claimed they had been introduced to the pedagogy. This showed willingness or readiness to adapt the pedagogy to teach as indicated in several studies on behaviour performance (Ajzen, 2020). The knowledge should help them transform teaching in the 21st-century classroom as literature has suggested (Yilmaz & Sahin, 2011; Tannerbaum, 2018) and use the resources available (Christensen & Knezek, 2018, 2018). Besides, it has been established that pre-service teachers do not have the technical know-how to go about employing advanced instructional resources to teach. This contributes to the observed moderate PBC to adapt the existential pedagogy.

The results showed that RME pre-service teachers have high intentions to adapt the existential pedagogy, a learner-centred pedagogy, thereby eliminating teacher-centred teaching. However, the literature appears to suggest that the teaching of RME in Ghana is teacher-centred. This leads to teaching based on the teacher's religious inclination, which results in indoctrination (Obeng, 2023; GES, 2020). Again, there have not been enough studies to discuss the importance of using these religious education pedagogies for teaching (Grimmitt, 2000; Ndlovu, 2014). Furthermore, literature confirms that when behaviour performers are clear on what they want, they are likely to perform a behaviour. Thus, the respondents' indication of their willingness to use the pedagogy signifies they have a high intention (Armitage, Norman & Conner 2002; Rhodes, Courneya & Jones 2006; Ajzen 1991, 2020) to adapt the existential pedagogy.

Results from the inferential statistical analysis showed that attitude is a significant predictor of RME pre-service teachers' intention to adapt the existential pedagogy to transform teaching RME in classrooms (Ajzen, 1991). In addition, such knowledge could lead to eliminating teacher-centred teaching. This means that it is essential for pre-service teachers to develop positive opinions and perceptions regarding the use of learner-centred religious education pedagogies such that regular use or adaptation would likely influence a positive attitude. Mumuni (2006) had rejected such milieu because his findings indicated that pre-service teachers do not seem to be ready to use these pedagogies.

Furthermore, SN was also found to have a significant effect on pre-service teachers' intention to adapt the existential pedagogy to transform the teaching of RME. This finding confirms other studies conducted to assess the extent to which SN influences one's intention to perform a said behaviour (Ajzen, 2020). What is happening in society and RME classrooms provides sufficient reason to suggest that pre-service teachers want to transform the teaching space by adapting existential pedagogy. The results indicate a positive influence; a unit increase in SN will result in a unit increase in intention to adapt the pedagogy for transformative teaching in RME. What seems to be a realistic situation is that there are not enough pressures out there to influence pre-service teachers to become accustomed to the practice of using existential pedagogy. It is hoped that these groups of RME pre-service teachers have understood the magnitude of the need to adapt a learner-centred pedagogy to teach and are thus willing to do so (Van Ryn & Vinokur, 1990).

In addition, PBC was confirmed to influence intention as indicated in previous studies (Doll & Ajzen, 1990; Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005). Given that no study has explicitly addressed that in the context of RME, it was prudent to stipulate that even when there is unwillingness to use learner-centred pedagogies to teach, RME pre-service teachers would be persuaded by the challenges associated with teaching to adapt existential pedagogy to teach. This contradicts

Zonyra (2017) who established that RME teachers have no knowledge about how to use the existential pedagogy and that teachers do not implement aspects of the pedagogy well.

Lastly, the results of this study showed that pre-service teachers' attitude, SN and PBC collectively have a significant positive effect on their intentions to adapt the pedagogy to teach. At all levels, a unit increase in any of the predictor variables leads to a unit increase in intention to adapt the pedagogy to teach. This finding confirms existing literature suggesting that, when attitude, SN, and PBC collectively have a positive influence on intention, there is a strong indication that a behaviour is likely to be performed. This is confirmed in numerous studies that employed both linear and multiple regression analyses (Ajzen, 1991; 2006; 2020). The milieu culminated from the variables pinpoints a necessary climate where there ought to be adequate attention to facilitate the implementation of RME just as it has been given to other subject areas. This may engender positive pressures towards the adaptation of the existential pedagogy. Users might find the pedagogy easy to use as deduced from PBC.

V. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

First, based on the findings from the study, it is concluded that the attitude towards adapting the existential pedagogy has not received significant attention and recognition among RME pre-service teachers. This is due to the moderate attitude they have towards adapting the pedagogy to teach. Again, the findings give an indication that the social and curriculum pressures to influence the adaptation of the pedagogy among RME pre-service teachers are not heightened among the 'important others'. For this reason, there seems to be reluctance among individuals to adjust teaching styles to the pedagogy. It can also be concluded that PBC turns out to be a concern because pre-service teachers still seem to lack a solid understanding of the process to adapt the existential pedagogy to teach RME. Further, it can be concluded that RME pre-service teachers would use the pedagogy to teach when there are either resources or motivating factors. This will ultimately lead to the enhancement of the RME pedagogy, fostering a more profound and reflective educational experience for students in the exploration of religious and moral dimensions of life.

Furthermore, it has been concluded that RME pre-service teachers are likely to adapt the pedagogy to teach anytime they have positive attitudes towards the pedagogy. This is because attitude positively influences intention to adapt the pedagogy. In addition, it is concluded that the influence of important people (RME teachers) has not been indenting enough to cause a greater effect on intention. Probably, these important people do not have much knowledge on how to use the existential pedagogy in teaching. Finally, the effect of PBC on intention suggests the possibility that there could be inadequate resources in schools and probably very little motivation to adapt the existential pedagogy. These may be the reasons why there are no or less pressing issues to make existential pedagogy's adaptation a reality or a behaviour. This could account for the moderate effect observed.

5.2 Recommendations

These findings offer valuable insights into the design of teacher training programmes, curriculum development, and educational policies. Therefore, Universities in charge of supervising Colleges of Education that train RME teachers should ensure that their programmes focus on equipping pre-service teachers with the necessary knowledge, skills, and motivations to effectively employ the existential pedagogy to teach. It is also recommended that the Ghana Education Service and National Teaching Council should organise workshops and seminars for RME teachers in schools. The National Council for Curriculum and Assessments and National Teaching Council are called upon to ensure quality curriculum resources are among the important others. They should encourage these important others to make the pedagogy a favourable approach to teaching, especially in the pre-tertiary level of education. Again, the Colleges of Education should ensure that pedagogical knowledge education would entail more subject-related pedagogies to effectively equip pre-service teachers with the necessary understanding of the existential pedagogy. These will ensure high levels of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behaviour control.

Declaration of Interest

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