

## Teachers' Receptivity toward System-Wide Curriculum Change in the Implementation Stage

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### Abstract

*A few studies deal with teachers' receptivity toward the curriculum change in its implementation stage, especially in a Southeast Asian cultural context like Myanmar. The purpose of this study specifically focuses on investigating primary teachers' receptivity toward implementing the new curriculum and on understanding the factors influencing it. A questionnaire survey with open-ended questions (n=627) is employed to examine teachers' receptivity in the region of Naypyitaw Union Territory located in the central part of Myanmar, during the academic year 2021-2022. Results indicate that teachers have high positive receptivity (attitudes and behavioral intentions) toward implementing the new curriculum, but the insufficient number of teaching staff, particularly in rural and primary schools, might reduce the levels of teachers' receptivity. The findings reveal that non-monetary cost-benefit analysis and issues of concern are the important predictors of teachers' receptivity. Based on the findings, several recommendations for educational administrators are provided for enhancing teachers' receptivity.*

Keywords: Teachers' receptivity; Curriculum change; The implementation stage; Myanmar

### Introduction

In any educational curriculum changes, teachers are the main implementers at school or classroom levels (Berman and McLaughlin, 1980; McLaughlin, 2004; Fullan, 2007; Ma et al., 2009; Lee et al., 2011). Curriculum change gives rise to cultural changes in classrooms or schools, changes in goals, skills, and also changes in teachers' philosophy or beliefs, their behavior and their practices. Throughout the change process, school teachers' commitment and acceptance are not very strong and they are likely to revert to their pre-existing practices unless there is more support through addressing their skills, attitudes, beliefs and level of commitment (Wedell, 2009). Teachers' receptivity is an essential matter in determining the success or failure of curriculum change (Lee, 2000; Waugh, 2000; Ma et al., 2009, Rashid and Pyng, 2019). In this sense, individual classroom teachers with positive receptivity will be more likely to implement the curriculum changes with more commitment (Rashid and Pyng, 2019) as the degree of their implementation is determined by differences in their receptivity (Fleming 1992). Therefore, a thorough understanding of teachers' receptivity toward system-wide curriculum change is said to be crucial for educational administrators as well as researchers so that effective change management could be tailored for the successful implementation of curriculum change.

According to Fullan (2007), for better examining the process of curriculum change, it can be identified into three stages: initiation stage; implementation stage; and institutionalization stage. Different factors influence in different stages (Fullan, 2007; Ma et al., 2009). This makes researchers aware that a more systemic analysis of teachers' receptivity in different stages should be explored. There are many studies on teachers' receptivity to

change not only at the initiation stage (Collins and Waugh, 1997; Ma et al., 2009, Thomas, 2014) but also at the implementation stage (Waugh and Punch, 1985, 1987; Fleming, 1992; Waugh and Godfrey, 1993; Moroz, 1999; Lee, 2000; Ha et al., 2010; Lee et al., 2011; Cheng, Chou and Cheng, 2014; Shapiro, 2018).

As yet, there is a current lack of research on exploring teachers' receptivity toward system-wide curriculum change in Myanmar as a major variable, and there are many gaps in the awareness of teachers' receptivity levels in the implementation stage. This study attempts to bridge these gaps. To be specific, this study aims to investigate primary teachers' receptivity to the curriculum change at its implementation stage in Myanmar, and understand the factors influencing their receptivity.

## Literature review

### Teachers' receptivity toward system-wide curriculum change

Many studies have focused on teachers' receptivity to curriculum change increasingly since the late 1980s (Waugh and Punch, 1985, 1987; Fleming, 1992; Waugh and Godfrey, 1993; Collins and Waugh, 1997; Moroz, 1999; Lee, 2000; Ma et al., 2009; Ha et al., 2010; Lee et al., 2011; Cheng, Chou and Cheng, 2014; Thomas, 2014; Shapiro, 2018). The meaning of receptivity is clear if it is compared with the term "resistance", i.e., teachers with positive receptivity might have a low resistance to the curriculum change. Lee (2000) defined teachers' receptivity as their general disposition, including positive attitudes and behavioral intentions. Teachers' positive attitudes cannot predict directly their implementation behavior of curriculum change (Ma et al., 2009; Yin, Lee and Jin, 2011). But the study by Thorsen-Spano (1996) showed a strong positive correlation between teachers' attitudes and curriculum implementation. Ajzen (2005) also showed there is a strong positive correlation between people's behavioral intentions and their actual behavior.

To study teachers' receptivity toward change, Waugh and Punch's (1985, 1987) study proposed a model by introducing the theory of reasoned action which considers behavioral intention as the central determinant of human behavior. It also provided empirical support for a variety of variables in predicting teacher's receptivity toward system-wide educational change. By detecting several changes faltered in the implementation stages while change process is divided into stages, Waugh and Godfrey's (1993) model of teacher receptivity initiated the useful understanding of the main variables that only referred to the implementation stage of system-wide curriculum change. Their model also assumed that teacher receptivity to the curriculum change varies due to the fundamental variables: feelings towards the previous system compared to the old one; personal teacher variables relating to the change such as non-monetary cost-benefit and concerns about important issues of change; teacher/student variable such as practicality in the classroom; teacher/school variables such as participation in decisions affecting the school and the classroom in relation to the change; alleviation of concerns regarding the change through school support and perceived teachers and other support for the change (Waugh and Godfrey, 1993).

Waugh and Godfrey's (1993) study on teacher receptivity to the unit curriculum system reported that 56% of the variance in teachers' attitudes and 59% in their behavioral intentions to the curriculum change was predicted from non-monetary cost benefit, perceived participation in the change decisions, perceived support from senior teachers and principal, and feelings about the previous educational system. Moroz's (1999) study combined the most significant variables from Waugh and Godfrey (1993) with additional work organization variables, and analyzed school teachers' receptivity to the implementation of student outcome statement. It also suggested that with a relatively large sample, the situation variables might have a strong influence on teachers' receptivity. Lee's (2000) study on Hong Kong teachers' receptivity to the implementation of environmental education found out that the identical variables from the model proposed by Waugh and Godfrey (1993), such as perceived non-monetary cost-benefit, practicality, school and other support, and issues of concern, predicted teachers' behavioral intentions to the curriculum change. It also confirmed that Waugh and Godfrey's (1993) model of teacher receptivity is applicable to the context of curriculum change in East Asian countries. This model was modified and applied in studies of the senior secondary education curriculum reform in the initiation stage in Mainland China (e.g., Ma et al., 2009), implementation of Physical Education in Hong Kong (e.g., Ha et al., 2010), implementation of national curriculum reform in basic education in Mainland China (Lee et al., 2011), implementation of arts infused curricula in Taiwan (Cheng, Chou and Cheng, 2014), the integrated Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics education in the initiation stage (Thomas, 2014), and the Next Generation Science Standards in the US (Shapiro, 2018).

In addition, many studies on teachers' receptivity toward change (referring to their attitudes and behavior intentions) proved that their behavior intentions to implement educational changes at the school/classroom level could be predicted by the cost-benefit appraisal of the change, practicality of the change and support in schools. These three factors respectively, had compatibility with the fundamental determining constructs within the theory of planned behavior, i.e., the constructs for attitudes (positive evaluation of behavior), subjective norms, and the perceived behavioral controls (Lee et al., 2011). Therefore, the connection between the theory of planned behavior and teachers' receptivity to the curriculum change could be assumed that if a teacher had a positive evaluation towards the curriculum change (attitude), was supported and encouraged by all stakeholders, especially close peers and administrators (subjective norm), and had confidence in his/her ability to undertake such change successful (perceived behavioral control), it might ensure teachers' improved motivation (behavioral intentions) with corresponding their positive receptivity to the curriculum change for successful implementation (Ogbodoakum and Abiddin, 2017).

### **Implementation of Basic Education KG+12 Curriculum Change in Myanmar**

Education reform became a national priority as the newly democratic government of Myanmar formed in 2016. The most significant education reform in recent times is the basic education curriculum change for the new basic education system. Myanmar has experienced some actions to upgrade the curriculum: once in Academic Year (AY) 1998-1999; and a second time in AY 2008-2009, by means of only just adding some school activities and some subjects related to general studies, aesthetic education, physical education, environmental education and so on. That is why major problems such as teacher-fronted 'chalk and talk' teaching and rote-learning, the exam-based system, the curriculum lack of clearly defined standards, better descriptions of learning outcomes and competencies, the curriculum content demanding 21st century student outcomes and so on, still exist in Myanmar's basic education curriculum.

To know the challenges and gaps of the present education system, the Ministry of Education (MOE) conducted the Comprehensive Education Sector Review (CESR) that focused on subsequent areas such as policy, legislation, management and finance, basic education, teacher education, non-formal education, technical vocational education and training (TVET), higher education, and information and communication technology (ICT) (UNESCO, 2014; Soe et al., 2017). The major achievement of the CESR initiatives was the National Education Law (NEL) in 2014 and the amendment of the NEL in 2015 (Soe et al., 2017). According to the NEL, Myanmar basic education system was restructured from an 11-year system (5-4-2) (grade 1 to 5 for primary level, grade 6 to 9 for lower secondary level, and grade 10 to 11 for upper secondary level) to the KG+12 system (kindergarten plus 12 years) (5-4-3) in order to align with ASEAN members. The KG+12 system included kindergarten, 5 years for primary level, 4 years for lower secondary level and 3 years for upper secondary level.

Furthermore, the significant output of CESR was the sector-wide National Education Strategic Plan (NESP) for the period 2016-2021. According to the NESP and due to the alteration of school structure in the basic education system, basic education curriculum reform became one of the transformational shifts in basic education sector reforms. The MOE issued Myanmar's basic education curriculum implementation schedule that was approved by the National Curriculum Committee (Ministry of Education, 2016). With regard to the schedule, each of the new curriculum for kindergarten in AY2016-2017, for Grade 1 in AY2017-2018, Grade 2 in AY2018-2019, Grade 3 and 6 in AY2019-2020, and Grade 4, 7 and 10 in AY2020-2021 had been implemented nationwide. The remaining new curricula for Grade 5, 8 and 11 in AY2021-2022 and Grade 9 and 12 in AY2022-2023 have been implementing. Accordingly, from 2015 on, new textbooks and teachers' guides for certain grade levels have been introducing to all basic education schools (including all government schools, monastic schools and private schools) in each specific year. The main reforms result in the new textbooks that are colorful with full of pictures and photos to stimulate students' interest in learning, the contents that are integrated with five soft skills essential for students' life (namely, the 5C such as collaboration, communication, critical thinking and problem solving, creativity and innovation, and citizenship), and also the detailed teachers' guides for each subject that assist teachers to abandon using rote learning. The reforms include overhauling not only the curriculum and assessment system, but also training in-service teachers in a new pedagogy to deliver the new curriculum and prepare students for the new assessment system (Lall, 2020). In this regard, a series of cascade training courses were implemented from the central level to the regional/state levels, district levels, and township levels. Following this, the nationwide in-service teacher training for each specific Grade level was conducted and has been implementing each year.

Basic education initiatives in six sub-sectors were included in six transformation shifts: preschool and kindergarten education; basic education access, quality and inclusion; basic education curriculum; student assessment and examinations; and teacher education and management. In order to develop all school children's knowledge, skills, attitudes and competencies that might be relevant to their lives and to the socio-economic development needs of 21st century Myanmar, a systematic change of curriculum reform was aimed to bring through the following strategies: (a) redesigning the basic education curriculum that emphasizes 21st century skills, soft skills and higher-order thinking skills, (b) building the professional capacity of Curriculum Development Teams, and (c) implementing the new curriculum through the strengthened curriculum management, dissemination, and monitoring and evaluation system.

It is manifested that the KG+12 curriculum change in Myanmar's new basic education system meets the two criteria of large-scale educational changes since the focus of reform is an entire system, and/or a minimum of 50 or more schools and 20,000 or more students are involved (Ma et al., 2009). In order to know teachers' receptivity to this system-wide curriculum change in its implementation stage, the researcher conducted the present study.

### **Methodology**

The aim of this study is to investigate the levels of primary teachers' receptivity toward implementing the new curriculum in Myanmar and to understand the factors influencing their receptivity. This study employed the survey research design to measure teachers' receptivity toward curriculum change. On the basis of the theoretical models suggested by Waugh and Godfrey (1993) and Lee (2000), the questionnaire used in this study contained 62 items, on a 7-point Likert scale, which were adapted from the validated Waugh and Godfrey's (1993), Lee's (2000) and Shapiro's (2018) 'receptivity to change' instruments. The questionnaire contained the following nine variables such as teachers' receptivity defined as attitudes and behavioral intentions, perceived non-monetary cost-benefit, perceived practicality, perceived school support, perceived other support, perceived participation in decision-making, issues of concern, and feeling compared to the previous system. Variation in teachers' receptivity toward implementing the new curriculum was assumed to be related to the situation variables (i.e., school size, location, number of teaching staff, gender, age, status, school work area, years of serving as a teacher, years of experience with the KG+12 curriculum implementation). Moreover, the questionnaire also included two open-ended questions to understand the significant concerns and obstacles teachers face when they were implementing the new curriculum at school levels.

For high validity, the instrument items were adapted from previous related research done successfully by Waugh and Godfrey (1993), Lee (2000), and Shapiro (2018). Further, the researcher approached three experts, who had special knowledge and experience in the field of study, for the content validity of the research questionnaire that was in line with Myanmar's context. The survey items in English were translated to Myanmar language, and based on the expert judgment and suggestions, some edits and rearrangements were made. After that, a pilot study of the refined instrument was conducted with 47 primary school teachers from 4 government schools (three Basic Education High Schools and one Basic Education Primary School) in one township of Naypyitaw region, Myanmar. The reason why these particular schools were chosen for a pilot study was due to the similar features with sample schools of the study and accessibility to the researcher. Data collected from the pilot study were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). A very common measure of reliability, Cronbach's alpha, was used to assess the internal consistency reliability of the items on the survey instrument. Cronbach's alpha was calculated on the survey items in each group with items and also as a whole. The Cronbach's alpha value of the survey instrument as a whole proved to have excellent reliability (.91,  $\alpha > .9$ ). The reliabilities for each subscale within the instrument are reported in table 1.

Table 1. Reliability of ‘receptivity to change’ instrument and the seven subscales

<i>Subscale</i>	<i>n Items per Scale</i>	<i>Reliability (Cronbach’s <math>\alpha</math>)</i>
Attitudes	10	.96
Behavior Intentions	6	.92
Non-monetary Cost-benefits	6	.71
Perceived Practicality	8	.92
School Support	8	.86
Other Support	4	.90
Participation in Decision-Making	6	.85
Issues of Concern	7	.81
Feelings Compared to the Previous System	7	.73
Total items	62	.91

To obtain the representative sample, the study was conducted in Naypyitaw Union Territory located in the central part of Myanmar. Using the cluster sampling method, townships were grouped into two clusters: District A with four townships and District B with four townships. Among them, two townships were randomly selected from each cluster and then the total of four townships was selected from two clusters in Naypyitaw Region. Several processes for data collection, such as requesting admission from the Department of Basic Education, from the District Education Offices and from four Township Education Offices, printing the questionnaires, and distributing them to the surveyed teachers through the help of education officers and school principals, were conducted. The survey questionnaires were distributed to 900 primary teachers (only kindergarten, Grade-1, 2 and 3 teachers) from government schools in four townships. A total of 627 teachers responded and the response rate was 70%.

The data obtained was analyzed with descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage), and inferential statistics (one-way ANOVA, Pearson product moment correlations, multiple linear regression) by using IBM SPSS Statistic 23 software programs. The descriptive statistics were conducted to investigate the levels of teachers’ receptivity toward implementing the new Curriculum. Furthermore, the inferential statistics were assessed to determine whether their receptivity differed significantly by the situational variables, to know if the independent variables had significant relationships with teachers’ receptivity, and to identify the most powerful and significant predictors of teachers’ receptivity toward the new curriculum at implementation stage in Myanmar.

## Findings and Discussion

### Levels of teachers’ receptivity toward implementing the new curriculum

According to the table2, the mean scores and standard deviations of overall teachers’ attitudes and behavioral intentions scale are  $M = 5.62$ ,  $SD = .75$ , and  $M = 5.18$ ,  $SD = .62$ , respectively. The overall average scores for both attitudes and behavioral intentions toward implementing the KG+12 Curriculum are greater than the scale neutral score of 4.0. This implies that teachers have not only high positive attitudes, but also high supportive behavioral intentions toward implementing the new curriculum. Therefore, teachers are highly receptive toward implementing the new curriculum. With regard to the means and standard deviations of all independent variables, teachers show highly positive perceptions of non-monetary cost-benefits, practicality, school support, other support and participation in decision-making and also feelings toward the new curriculum when it is compared with the previous one. But they had issues highly concerned with implementing the new curriculum at schools.

Table2. Descriptive Statistics (n = 627)

<b>Dependent Variable</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Attitudes	5.62	.75
Behavioral Intentions	5.18	.62
<b>Independent Variable</b>		
Cost-Benefits	5.34	.70
Perceived Practicality	5.24	.61
School Support	5.25	.60
Other Support	4.81	.74
Participation in Decision-Making	5.24	.65
Issues of Concern	4.13	1.01
Feelings compared to Previous System	5.48	.76

In order to get more detailed information of teachers' receptivity and their perceptions on each factor influencing it, table 3 lists the items teachers respond negatively or items with low scores or items with high concerns. According to the table 3, there are teachers who consider that the new curriculum in implementation stage is unsatisfactory, ineffective and complicated, and who intend to oppose to implement it. Teachers' perceptions on some items related to other support variable and issues of concern variable seem to reflect their negative attitudes and unsupportive behavioral intentions toward implementing the new curriculum. It is obvious that teachers think that the new curriculum implementation is not satisfactory or effective or simple enough due to the inadequate support of educational departments, insufficient time and their insufficient subject matter knowledge. Although teachers scored low on some items of attitudes and behavioral intentions toward implementing the new curriculum, they strongly believe that it is highly necessary, permissive, intelligent and realistic, and they support it, praise it and intend to acknowledge that it is flexible, feasible and supportable. Overall, primary teachers in this study show quite positive receptivity (attitudes and behavioral intentions) toward implementing the new Curriculum. These results provide the conclusion that teachers with high positive receptivity could lead to the successful implementation of the new curriculum because their receptivity is a key success indicator for any educational changes (Waugh and Punch, 1985; Fleming, 1992; Waugh and Godfrey, 1993; Collins and Waugh, 1997; Moroz, 1999; Lee, 2000; Ma et al., 2009; Ha et al., 2010; Lee et al., 2011; Cheng, Chou and Cheng, 2014; Thomas, 2014; Shapiro, 2018).

Table3. Summary of items with negative responses or with low scores or with high concerns (n = 627)

<i>Item</i>	<i>Variable</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Unsatisfactory-satisfactory</i>	<i>Attitudes</i>	24	2.8
<i>Ineffective-effective</i>	<i>Attitudes</i>	26	4.2
<i>Complicated-uncomplicated</i>	<i>Attitudes</i>	23	3.7
<i>Probably oppose implementation of curriculum change</i>	<i>Behavioral Intentions</i>	131	20.8
<i>Government departments support implementation</i>	<i>Other Support</i>	207	33
<i>I am concerned on less time available for teaching certain subjects such as Mathematics and Sciences</i>	<i>Issues of Concern</i>	493	78.6
<i>I am concerned on insufficient content knowledge</i>	<i>Issues of Concern</i>	381	59.8

### **Differences in teachers' receptivity toward implementing the new curriculum by situation variables**

As for the situation variables, the findings uncover that teachers' age, gender, status, school work area, years of serving as a teacher, years of experience with the KG+12 Curriculum implementation, school size, and school location did not show significant differences in teachers' receptivity (attitudes and behavioral intentions). However, the number of teaching staff had a significant effect on teachers' attitudes toward implementing the new curriculum. According to the Post Hoc test indicated in the table 4, the comparison of teachers' attitudes among groups with the different number of primary teaching staff implies that teachers from schools with six to ten primary teaching staff have higher positive attitudes than other two groups: teachers from schools with less than six primary teaching staff; and those from schools with more than ten primary teaching staff.

Table 4. Post Hoc test for teachers' attitudes by number of primary teaching staff

	Number of Teaching Staff (I)	Number of Teaching Staff (J)	MeanDifference (I-J)	Error	p
Attitudes	6-10	1-5	.32*	.07	.000**
	6-10	>10	.32*	.11	.008*
	>10	1-5	.01	.09	1.00

Note: \* $p < 0.01$ ; \*\* $p < 0.001$

This can be explained that teachers from schools with insufficient teaching staff seem to believe that the new curriculum implementation is unsatisfactory, ineffective and complicated because teacher shortage, particularly in rural and primary schools, certainly occurs the associated educational issues on insufficient time, teaching aids and practice of child centered approaches (Lall et al., 2013), and large class sizes due to insufficient teachers impede the use of group discussions and other types of child-centered interactions (Lall, 2020). This finding is in line with teachers' open-ended responses on their current difficulties in which teachers revealed that, especially in rural and primary schools with insufficient teaching staff, only one teacher has to take responsibilities for all prescribed subjects of a specific grade level, classroom assessment on them for individual students and preparing teaching aids related to them, and they also have associated challenges with classroom management and students' discussion time due to higher student-teacher ratio. The results also imply that the teacher shortage in schools, especially in rural remote areas, might hinder teachers' positive receptivity for successful curriculum implementation in Myanmar.

#### Factors influencing teachers' receptivity toward implementing the new curriculum

According to the results of the table 5, the variables of teachers' receptivity, i.e., attitudes toward implementing the new curriculum and behavioral intentions toward it, are positively and significantly correlated ( $p < 0.001$ ) with the variables of non-monetary cost-benefits, perceived practicality of the new curriculum, perceived school support, perceived other support, perceived participation in decision-making, and feelings compared to the previous system. However, the issues of concern are negatively and significantly correlated ( $p < 0.001$ ) with their receptivity toward implementing the KG+12 curriculum. With the highest correlation values, the variables of non-monetary cost-benefits, perceived practicality of the new curriculum, perceived participation in decision-making, and feelings compared to the previous system show a stronger influence on teachers' receptivity than other independent variables.

Table 5. Results of correlation between teachers' receptivity and the independent variables (n = 627)

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable						
	Cost-Benefits	Perceived Practicality	School Support	Other Support	Participation in Decision-Making	Issues of Concern	Feelings compared to Previous System
Attitudes	.58*	.51*	.46*	.15*	.49*	-.21*	.59*
Behavioral Intentions	.65*	.52*	.46*	.16*	.55*	-.28*	.54*

Note: \* $p < .001$

The multiple regression analyses revealed that, when teachers' attitudes toward implementing the KG+12 Curriculum are taken as the dependent variable, the combined effect of non-monetary cost-benefits analysis, issues of concerns, and feelings compared to the previous system are the significant predictors which explained 41% of the variance in their attitudes (see Table 6). This finding supports Moroz's (1999) observation that non-monetary cost-benefits, issues of concern and feelings compared to the previous system were the most important variables of attitudes. The values of unstandardized coefficient indicate that one unit increase in cost-benefits analysis, and also in feelings toward implementing the new curriculum when it is compared to the previous system positively brings 33% and 34% unit of change in teachers' attitudes. Further, it is notable that a unit increase in teachers' issues of concern could bring 7% unit of decrease in their attitudes toward implementing the new curriculum.

When teachers' behavioral intentions toward implementing the new Curriculum are considered as the dependent variable, the combined effect of non-monetary cost-benefits analysis, perceived participation in decision-making, and issues of concern are the significant predictors which account for 46% of the variance in teachers' behavioral intentions. According to the values of the unstandardized coefficient in table 6, one unit increase in cost-benefits analysis and also in perceived participation in decision-making could bring 46% and 16% unit of positive change in teachers' behavioral intentions. Further, a unit increase in teachers' issues of concerns could bring 9% unit of decrease in their behavioral intentions toward implementing the new curriculum. Overall, these findings show that the previous independent variables in the theoretical model of teachers' receptivity toward implementing the system-wide change have a moderate ability to account for the variance of both teachers' attitudes and behavioral intentions toward implementing the KG+12 Curriculum change in Myanmar.

Table6. Regression analysis: Teachers' receptivity and the independent variables (n = 627)

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables							
	Attitudes				Behavior Intentions			
	$R^2$	Adjusted $R^2$	$B$	$\beta$	$R^2$	Adjusted $R^2$	$B$	$\beta$
	.41	.406			.47	.46		
Cost-Benefits			.33	.31**			.46	.51**
Participation in Decision-Making			-.003	-.002			.16	.16*
Issues of Concern			-.07	-.09*			-.09	-.15**
Feelings compared to Previous System			.34	.35**			.03	.04

Note: \* $p < .01$ , \*\* $p < .001$

Perceived non-monetary cost-benefits analysis and issues of concerns are found to be the significant predictors of teachers' receptivity (attitudes and behavioral intentions) toward implementing the new Curriculum in Myanmar. These findings are similar with Lee's (2000) and Shapiro's (2018) studies that non-monetary cost-benefit analysis and issues of concern were the foremost significant predictors of teachers' receptivity to curriculum change in the implementation stage. The personal cost to teachers in implementing the new curriculum includes the amount of energy, time, and difficulty to adapt new curriculum contents, teaching approaches and assessment principles (Waugh and Punch, 1987; Moroz, 1999). The significant rewards in non-monetary terms for most teachers during the curriculum implementation might be students' learning progress through more stimulating learning conditions, teachers' professional development, potential chance of promotions and so on (Stern and Keislar, 1975; Morris, 1987). Since teachers showed a high positive perception of cost-benefits analysis in this study ( $M = 5.34$ ), they seem to believe that the new curriculum implementation is worthwhile due to better student classroom learning, assessment, satisfaction with teaching and teaching styles, and its total benefits for students, even though they have a heavy workload and problems during implementation. Further, they think that the new textbooks and teachers' guides obviously meet students' needs and provide various classroom learning experiences. They seem to have good coordination with other teachers at schools and satisfaction in making decisions with regard to their assigned subject matter, teaching methods, teaching aids and classroom assessment. They also perceived that the new curriculum is more up-to-date with more interesting and richer content, and also provide better student learning, better classroom management, better courses for students' abilities and better judgments than the previous system. Following their high positive perceptions of cost-benefits analysis, practicality of new curriculum, participation in decision-making and their positive feelings compared to the previous one, and also the strong positive correlations between teachers' receptivity and these beliefs, fortunately the majority of teachers in this study seem to reveal their high positive receptivity toward implementing the KG+12 Curriculum.

Teachers in this study showed high concern on issues related to implementing the new curriculum ( $M = 4.13$ ), and they are concerned most about their insufficient content knowledge in specific subjects. They are also concerned about classroom management issues with regard to teaching resources and classroom disciplines, about the limited time-bound, and also about cooperation and communication among principals, teachers and parents. These findings were in line with teachers' extra suggestions obtained via open-ended questions. The following statements revealed teachers' concerns about new curriculum implementation:

I am not sure whether I am good at teaching all ten subjects, especially Art subject (music and paint), due to the insufficient subject matter knowledge. I am concerned that might affect students' understanding and achievement. Teaching materials are insufficient and also the availability of them in time is relatively late, particularly in schools with large size of classes and located in rural remote areas. The new curriculum stresses the student-centered approach with more practical activities, but I don't have enough time for students' open discussions, and for teaching specific subjects such as Science, Mathematics, Art, Physical Education and so on. I am also concerned about parents' weak cooperation and involvement at school due to their poor interest and limited knowledge of the new curriculum implementation, particularly in rural areas.

Despite the weak relationship between teachers' receptivity and their issues of concern in this study, that independent variable was found to be a significant and important predictor of teachers' receptivity toward implementing the new curriculum. In this sense, this finding implies that alleviation of teachers' concerns mentioned above could enhance teachers' receptivity toward implementing the KG+12 Curriculum in Myanmar. Additionally, the findings of this study also confirmed that the model of receptivity to change at implementation stage devised by Waugh and Godfrey (1993) is applicable to the context of system-wide curriculum change in its implementation stage in Myanmar which is one of the Southeast Asian countries, as well as in Western countries and East Asian countries.

### **Conclusion**

This study investigated primary teachers' receptivity toward the system-wide curriculum change at its implementation stage in Myanmar and the factors influencing it. The finding of this study showed teachers have a high positive receptivity toward implementing the new curriculum. Teachers strongly believed that the new curriculum implementation is necessary indeed, but still ineffective, unsatisfactory, or complicated for some teachers. Further, the majority of teachers in this study showed their supportive behavioral intentions toward implementing the new curriculum, but some intended to oppose it or resist it due to inadequate support, insufficient time and insufficient subject matter knowledge. The finding indicated that of all situational variables, only the number of primary teaching staff at schools shows a significant difference in the levels of teachers' receptivity toward implementing the new curriculum. Such finding was supported by teachers' open-ended responses in which teachers, from schools with insufficient teaching staff and also located in rural areas, reveal their current challenges such as teaching workload, ineffective classroom management and limited practice of child-centered approaches in their own classrooms and so on. The findings imply that the insufficient number of primary teaching staff in schools could reduce teachers' positive attitudes and behavioral intentions toward implementing the new curriculum.

The findings further explained that perceived non-monetary cost-benefits and issues of concern are the most powerful predictors of teachers' receptivity toward implementing the new curriculum. When they weigh up the balance between their personal costs and benefits of the new curriculum implementation, teachers thought that the new curriculum implementation is worthwhile due to better student classroom learning, better assessment, satisfaction with teaching and teaching styles and its total benefits for students. Teachers' such analyses positively affect teachers' receptivity toward the new curriculum implementation. Teachers' concerns about issues related to the new curriculum in its implementation stage negatively affect their attitudes and behavioral intentions toward it. They show their high concerns about subject matter knowledge on the upgraded contents and on additional major subjects, teacher shortage, inadequate teaching materials, insufficient time, parental involvement and their knowledge with regard to the new curriculum implementation, and so on. Nevertheless, teachers seem to show highly positive receptivity toward implementing the new curriculum because they strongly perceive the new curriculum implementation is cost beneficial and worthwhile to implement despite their heavy workload and high concerns. However, these findings implied that unless teachers' concerns on these issues are alleviated or reduced, they might show their negative attitudes and unsupportive behavioral intentions toward the curriculum change which could lead to the failure of KG+12 curriculum implementation in Myanmar's government schools.

Primary teachers' lower receptivity levels, that inhibit their successful implementation behavior of Myanmar's new curriculum, might result from the three main reasons: in-service training that is not long or frequently enough; external factors such as poor school infrastructure, insufficient teaching aids, language barrier (multi-lingual classes), parental resistance and large teacher-student ratios; and system constraints such as teacher shortage and lack of time (UNICEF, 2018).

In this sense, to alleviate teachers' concerns on subject matter knowledge, educational administrators might conduct further in-service teacher training that are longer than the previous ones and more frequent, and that focus on specific Grade levels or on specific subjects. Regular school meetings that focus on subject discussion among primary teachers with the head of each subject should be conducted. Opportunities to attend professional learning classes at the primary level that are organized in school clusters or in township levels, might be provided. Teacher mentors' regular school visits might be arranged more strongly in order to monitor teachers and to facilitate their needs for subject matter knowledge. School principals should establish good communication with educational administrators and central decision makers for the sake of allocating sufficient teachers and supporting teaching aids and instructional materials. As the efforts of teachers and school principals could solve some problems, they might establish opportunities to raise parents' awareness of the advantages and positive outcomes of the new curriculum implementation so as to enhance their involvement and support for successful implementation. In addition, it is recommended that next researchers might conduct further studies using the theoretical model to investigate teachers' receptivity toward any system-wide curriculum change in the implementation stage.

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