

# Educational Development Issues in Ghana in Light of Educational Policy and Planning

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## Abstract

The persistent educational reforms and interventions in Ghana's education system showcase the government's ambition to make Ghana Education Service a first-class institution that guarantees the right to education for millions of Ghanaians and engenders the attainment of quality education (Sustainable Development Goal 4). This article shows how the Ghanaian government has provided free senior high school education, capitation grants, free lunch, personal protective equipment for all schools as a precautionary measure against COVID-19, and a new curriculum that includes complementary education for a sustainable educational system. Yet, it is interesting to note that the Ghanaian government continuously implements educational interventions without consideration for policies and implementation strategies to sustain them. This study implements textual analysis of some reviewed literature including articles, academic papers, magazines, books, and reports. It discovered that many educational reforms face great obstacles that mar the attainment of the reforms' objectives because educational policies in Ghana are based on the incumbent president's manifesto, causing policymaking in Ghana to suffer compromises and negotiations at the parliamentary level. This study suggests that educational policymaking in Ghana should be left in the custody of educational philosophers who are policymakers to separate it from political relationships (the politics-administration dichotomy) because politics and administration are inherently different. Also, teachers' and principals' professional development should be encouraged, and educational facilities and equipment should be provided to sustain educational development in Ghana.



**Keywords:** Ghana education; policy planning; current educational developments; issues of educational development; quality education

## Introduction

Globally education has become footloose and readily available because of the dynamic nature of the world, global competition, increases in knowledge, advances in technology, the tendency of skills to become obsolete, and the awareness that the absence of knowledge causes a nation to perish. As a result, all governments across the world are asserting much effort to obtain quality education for their children, youth, and adults, and also to satisfy Sustainable Development Goal 4 (quality education). This global target has motivated the Ghanaian government to work tirelessly for over a decade to attain quality education, and this is evident in its persistent educational reforms and interventions to enable it to meet and exceed the international benchmark (Boakye 2019). Knaack (2017) asserts that education development ensures transformation in pedagogy and assists the educational sectors to perform robustly to attain academic success. The Belgian Development Cooperation (2011) report states that actors in educational development have a multitude of factors they need to take into account. These factors are seen in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD 2013) framework and module on the physical learning environment, which encompasses modern architectural buildings with sufficient space, ventilation, proper lighting, temperature, a serene atmosphere, and the availability and judicious use of resources. Saeid (2011) postulates that principals' professional training promotes educational development. Notable scholars have defined school planning as the act of systematically arranging future learning activities by targeting, implementing, mapping, and evaluating developmental objectives that are possible and aspired towards (Scheerens 2004; UNESCO and IIEP 2005). Akpan (2011) explains that educational planning involves the forecasting of future possibilities, implementation of rational systematic objectives, and conducting periodic progressive appraisals to ensure the attainment of educational development and assess its efficiency and effectiveness to foster the academic success of learners. According to Okoroma (2000, 190), educational policies entail initiatives by the government to control the educational system. The Ghanaian government, mindful of quality education for the citizens' capacity building and the nation's economic development, has created numerous educational policies that collectively drive Ghana's educational system. This effort by the government is in support of the USAID (2018) statement that the greatest investment a nation can make is granting quality education for posterity. Despite the multitude of educational reforms in Ghana, there are many setbacks concerning policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation. If Ghana seeks to make its education system first-class in line with global standards, then there is the need to identify some setbacks and bottlenecks to its educational development. It is because of this reason that this article aims to describe the educational development issues in Ghana, with some policy and planning perspectives.

## Statement of the Problem

The Oxford Business Group (2021) opines that the majority of Ghanaians cherish education, which has resulted in a considerable debate on the current educational developments. The Ghanaian media, the Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition, teachers, and students persistently express their discontent with the education system. Some schools have poor learning environments, with some based in dilapidated structures, sheds, and under trees; many contend with the absence of teaching and learning materials and equipment, an overloaded curriculum, large class enrolments, and some children are unable to access basic education although it is free. The current educational reforms are based on planning done in the past, yet no policies support the adherence to these initiatives, evaluate the outcomes of their implementation, or check whether they pose any violations. The Education Strategic Plan (ESP) (2019, 5) acknowledges that management bodies for tertiary institutions such as the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, the National Inspectorate Board, and the National Teaching Council have failed in the performance of their duties, because no policies are evaluating their work output and there are inadequate funds to support them. In addition, it is clear from the ESP that there is no system checking and accounting for the work of educational managers and one wonders how the educational reforms put in place can be achieved when strategies to monitor and evaluate their outcomes are absent. According to the Ghana Education Strategic Plan (2019, 4), the most serious problems confronting the Ghana education system are teachers' absenteeism, teachers' limited time on the job, and teacher attrition. Obiero, Mwebi and Nyang'ara (2017) state that absenteeism at workplaces robs developing countries' resources and entail direct and indirect costs. Abadz (2007 cited in World Bank 2017) states that instructional time is mismanaged in the northern regions of the country and some rural areas. The education of children is left in the custody of teachers whose monthly remuneration comes from taxpayers, yet they are normally not at their posts; some engage in rent-seeking activities, and others find greener pastures elsewhere. This does not support educational development, yet till now there have not been any policies or measures to control teachers who leave their duty posts.

## The Study's Objectives

This study assesses the educational development issues in Ghana in light of educational policy and planning. The study is underpinned by the following objectives:

1. To determine the nature and extent of educational policy planning and policymaking by the Ghana Education Service;
2. To investigate the issues of educational development facing the Ghana Education Service; and
3. To find remedies to salvage the current educational development challenges using advanced countries' achievements and international frameworks.

## Research Questions

This study is guided by the above objectives to answer the research questions stated below.

1. What are the nature and extent of educational policy planning and policymaking in Ghana?
2. What are the issues confronting education development in the Ghana Education Service?
3. What strategies need to be adopted from advanced countries and international frameworks to help salvage the educational development, which is over time declining into a slumber?

## Methods

This study implements textual analysis of some reviewed literature on articles, academic papers, conferences, magazines, books, and reports.

## Theoretical Framework

### **The Politics-Administration Dichotomy**

Woodrow Wilson's (1886) politics-administration dichotomy theory states that politics and administration are inherently different and should be maintained as such. In Ghana, educational policies emerge from the incumbent president's manifesto, which gains approval from the parliament for implementation. This causes the management of educational policies to suffer compromises and negotiations as a result of political interference, causing the educational policies to lose credibility, hindering the attainment of educational policy objectives and thereby resulting in numerous setbacks and bottlenecks. Policymaking requires that educational philosophers who are policymakers plan educational policies, factoring in implementation strategies and evaluation mechanisms to ensure the sustainability of the policies. The structural and functional features of the politics-administration dichotomy theory entail neutral competence, planning ability, political guidance, and democratic accountability.

### **Neutral Competence**

This is the ability to do government work with due diligence that is not subject to interference by selfish interests or political scores. This requires that educational policymakers must be loyal, work according to objectives standards, be explicit, and not compromise because of political manipulations.

### **Planning Ability**

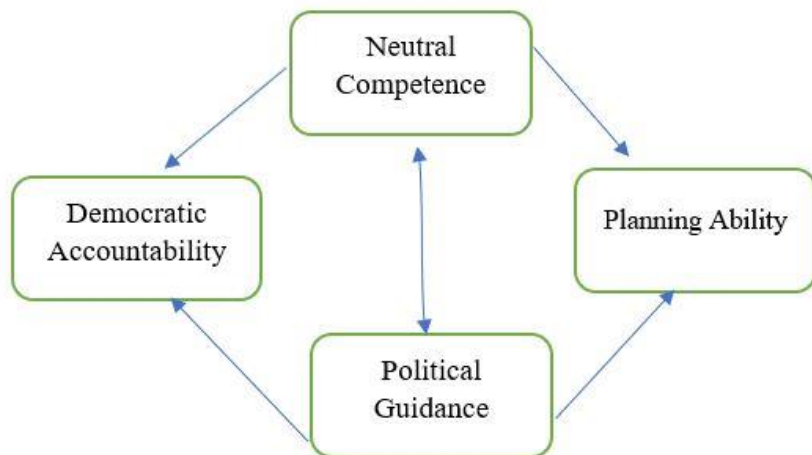
The dichotomy theory emphasises that planning is one of the crucial tasks for public administrators, and as professionals they need to be “autonomous, shielded from the rough and ramble of political life and free to apply principles of resource optimization neutrally in the management of the public sector” (Koven 1992). Educational policymakers, therefore, need to plan educational policies by themselves in adherence with what will be beneficial to society.

### **Political Guidance**

Political guidance is the act of elected officials formulating and spelling out society’s preferences to public administrators with their political support. Politicians in this regard are to present the petition of the public to the educational policymakers and support them through legislative oversight and policy leadership, but not to do the work of policymakers.

### **Democratic Accountability**

The dichotomy theory demands that public administrators exempt themselves from political activities, and their work should be in line with legislative intentions and instructions. Educational policymakers are therefore obliged not to indulge in actions that will change the objectives of the prescribed policy. Their work is expected to be performed without instructions from politicians. This study puts forth that educational policymakers should not be mere passive instruments but rather vanguards of societal interests and societal will. In the current context of educational policymaking in Ghana, policymakers need to heed the public interest and hold good governance in high esteem. Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework of the politics-administration dichotomy theory.



**Figure 1:** The conceptual framework of the politics-administration dichotomy (Demir and Nyhan 2008)

## Educational Policymaking in Ghana

Ball (2013), Halpin and Troyna (1995) opine that educational policy encompasses policy effect, policy text, and policy discourses. Policy effect is the influence educational policies have on implementation and social justice, thus performances and the general outcomes (Ball 1993; 2008). Policy text constitutes the verbal messages and documents that spell out policy ideas (Ball 2013, 7). Policy discourse refers to the role performed by policy philosophers in the formulation of credible policies. Ball (2013) postulates that policy philosophers need to formulate educational policies and ensure their implementation and evaluation (Gunu 2019; Nudzor 2014). According to Gunu (2019), Ghanaian education policies are made based on the incumbent government's manifesto by a committee set up by the government. This means that educational policies are connected to the existing government and gain approval from the majority leaders in parliament, which have always been the ruling party. This system of policymaking in Ghana is greatly hampered by political stakeholders' manipulations and interference. Educational planning and policies need to be formulated by involving the beneficiaries in the policies, but this is not observed in Ghana. The World Development Report (2017) states that educational reforms are successfully adhered to when teachers together with policymakers partake in the planning process.

## The Current Educational System in Ghana

According to Avenue Ghana (n.d.), the educational system in Ghana currently combines kindergarten, primary school, junior high school and senior high school as basic schools, referring to JHS 1, 2, 3, and SHS 1 as BS 7, 8, 9, and 10 respectively. A common core programme has been designed for all JHS 1 to SHS 1 students. A new name arose from the new educational reform known as the National Standard Assessment Test, which

needs to be undertaken by Basic 2, 4, and 6 pupils and JHS 2 students. The old Basic Education Certificate Examination (B.E.C.E.) and West African Senior High School Certificate Examination (W.A.S.S.C.E.) have been replaced with placement examinations to enrol JHS 3 candidates in SHS 1 and University Entrance Examinations to enrol SHS 3 candidates in university respectively. Elective subjects commence at SHS 2 by selecting career-related courses such as vocational and technical programmes and high-school diploma programmes (arts, business, and science). The education system is now research, community participation, and project based. According to Avenue Ghana (n.d.), W.A.S.S.C.E. certificates awarded to SHS candidates have been changed presently to diploma certificates. After JHS, students continue school by either attending SHS, vocational, or technical schools, while SHS leavers also have the option of attending tertiary institutions (colleges, polytechnics, or universities). Although these reforms indicate progress, previous educational reforms never yielded their desired outcomes; these current reforms are equally showing symptoms of implementation difficulties such as an overloaded curriculum without any textbook accompanying it and consequently the content must be researched on the internet before it can be taught. Unfortunately, most teachers are not familiar with internet browsing, and textbooks which could have been resorted to as reference materials have not been provided. The overloaded curriculum brings about rote learning and examination-oriented teaching and learning, which does not equip learners with the skills and knowledge needed in the corporate world. This is in contrast with advanced countries that have shifted their educational system to provide interdisciplinary curriculums with teaching pedagogies that allow learners the opportunity to develop their innate abilities to make them resourceful and beneficial to the society and the nation. In addition, measures have not been put in place to check if these initiatives are enhancing students' learning. These educational reforms have neglected teachers' motivation, although the workload of teachers has been increased with large class enrolments. Currently, rural areas still lack teachers because teachers refuse to accept postings to such areas when the government has not been able to fulfil its promise of giving a 20% salary increase to those who accept placements in rural areas. The development of vocational and technical institutions has been left out of the educational reform, causing these institutions to have limited students' patronage despite being institutions that can enhance the technological development of the nation. Information and communication technology (ICT) is one of the major focuses of the common core programme, yet ICT facilities are lacking in Ghanaian educational institutions, and no trained teachers are readily available to teach the skills necessary to utilise it. Educational quality deficits persistently remain the most bizarre story about Ghana's education system.

### Monitoring Bodies for the Ghana Education Service

In Ghana, the management of schools has been left in the custody of the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports (MOEYS) since 2001, with some other supporting bodies made up of the National Service Secretariat, the Ghana Library Board, the Ghana Book Development Council, the Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring, and Evaluation Division

(PBME), the Ghana Education Service, the National Commission for UNESCO, and the Bureau of Ghana Languages (MoE 2019). Local management bodies have also been formed including School Management Committees (SMCs), Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs), and District Teacher Support Teams (DTSTs), which manage under the auspices of the District Assembly. The formulation of these management bodies has accorded Ghana some international recognition from the *World Data on Education* (UNESCO 2007), which stated that highly qualified individuals have been positioned at the district and divisional levels of the Ghana Education Service for its management and administration. Unfortunately, the real deficiency has been the neglect of teachers' participation in these bodies as they can describe real-life situations in the classroom better than anyone. Instead, teachers with strong political affiliations who lack full knowledge of classroom challenges are chosen by government officials, hence obstacles in the schools are addressed based on how the "political teachers" present the issue. A real teacher will present a true picture of the situation on the ground, unlike the "political teachers" who politicise the problem for political scores and selfish interests. It is sad that these true teachers are not invited by government officials. Another deficiency is the limited monitoring and supervision provided by these education officials, which causes a lot of teacher absenteeism, limited time spent by teachers in school, and teachers breaching the code of ethics and conduct, for example using instructional hours for personal gain. Taxpayers' money is used to pay teachers and they are expected to render the services for which they are paid to contribute their quota for national development. Some members of the SMCs and the PTAs lack the knowledge and skills needed to perform their roles and so are mostly occupying the position on record but practically doing nothing.

## Ghana's Educational Developments

The Ghanaian government has made many educational interventions and reforms that have led its educational system to outwit the West African countries and exceed associated international benchmarks. This is due to the government of Ghana's commitment to the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals, which is currently the ultimate vision to be accomplished globally (UN 2015). The numerous educational interventions made in Ghana have won it the accolade of "a rising star" from global organisations and West African countries. Notable examples of educational development are examined below.

### **Transformation in the Current Educational System**

Currently, basic education in Ghana has been widened from Primary 1 to Senior High School (SHS) 1 with SHS 1 bearing the name BS 10. A common core programme is run for all pupils from Basic 1 to SHS 1. Pupils in Basic 2, 4, 6, and JHS 2 write a new examination known as the National Standard Assessment Test (NSAT). SHS 1 students, now called BS 10, will write a common core examination that will usher them into SHS 2, where a career-related course is pursued ranging from a vocational and technical to a high-school diploma. The examination taken to complete the SHS has changed from



the W.A.S.S.C.E. examination to the University Entrance Examination with a certificate titled Diploma Certificate (Avenue Ghana n.d.).

### **Development of the Ghanaian Curriculum**

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NaCCA 2021) has amended the Ghana Education Service curriculum to change the idea of simply passing an examination to building confidence, character traits, values, and literacy. The current curriculum has been made to subjugate previous anomalies and now places much emphasis on science and mathematics to help the future workforce and ensure the sustainability of the educational system and attainment of international benchmarks. To ensure educational stakeholders' familiarity with the new curriculum, a five-day training exercise was organised for all circuit supervisors, headteachers, and teachers of kindergarten to Basic 6 across all the regions in Ghana (Kale-Dery 2019).

### **Free Senior High School**

According to Abdul-Rahaman et al. (2018), free SHS was made available in Ghana in 2017, which has benefited most parents in rural and peri-rural areas by reducing the financial constraint of the payment of children's school fees. This initiative has granted many youths who would have ended their education after JHS the opportunity to further their education. Addo (2019) states that the attendance rate projected for the 2017/18 academic year was 396,951, showing a 32.2% increase compared with the year 2016/17 when the enrolment figure stood at 300,195. This can be associated with the free SHS policy. New school buildings (Figure 2) were created to address the double-track system following the implementation of the free SHS programme. The government of Ghana has promised to build over 900 of this type of building.



**Figure 2:** Image of Free SHS project in Ghana (MoE 2019)

### **Complementary Education**

Complementary Education is a policy intervention by the Ghana Ministry of Education to close the gap of geographically disadvantaged people (northern dwellers) to achieve Education for All, because the giant strides to make education accessible to all have still not profited them since the introduction of Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (Carter et al. 2020). This programme offers literacy and numeracy tuition in their native language for out-of-school children by volunteers in local societies. Some development partners to the programme are USAID, the Department for International Development (DFID), Educate a Child, the United Nations Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF), and Plan International, who have donated a sum of 248,556 Ghana cedis from 2012–2017. Complimentary basic education in Ghana (Figure 3) is available in the northern region where children who do not have access to school are taught by volunteers in the local societies.



**Figure 3:** Image of complementary education (Crown Agents n.d.)

### **Prevention of COVID-19**

The nature of COVID-19 makes school a high-risk area to contract the disease. As a precautionary measure, the Ghanaian government has enforced the wearing of masks and also provided every school with personal protective equipment (PPE) such as nose masks, thermometer guns, water reservoirs, sanitisers, face shields, and liquid soap (Modern Ghana 2021b).

### **A Degree of Autonomy for the Polytechnic Institutions and the Teacher Colleges of Educational**

Mereku (2019) asserts that the educational system in Ghana is dynamic and there has been a recent transformation to enhance the quality of education for the citizenry. A

degree of autonomy has been granted to the polytechnic institutions in Ghana (Polytechnic Act, 2007, Act 745) (Agyefi-Mensah et al. 2014) as well as the colleges of education since 2018 (Kokutse 2018). There has also been an amendment in the teaching curriculum requiring teacher trainees to use the activity-oriented methods of teaching that will terminate rote learning. In addition, a teacher training stipend, which was boycotted by the previous government, was reinstated by the incumbent government in 2018 to attract people to the teaching profession and aims to solve the teacher attrition rate. Furthermore, the National Teaching Council was mandated in 2018 to examine teachers to give them the legal authority to remain in the profession (Fredua-Kwarteng 2019). The University of Education, Winneba and the University of Cape Coast have distance education packages for diploma-holding teachers who want to attain a degree. These interventions have brought about an overhaul in the teaching profession.

### **Nutrition and the School Feeding Programme**

According to Atta and Manu (2015), the government of Ghana recently introduced a nutrition and school feeding programme as a means to improve school enrolment, reduce poverty, and improve patronage of farm produce. Oduro-Ofori, Aboagye, and Acquaye (2014) researched the contribution of the school feeding programme to basic school and their findings indicate an increase in enrolment at pilot schools and retention of learners, which are factors in the attainment of Free and Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE). Figure 4 below illustrates the school feeding programme for basic school children in Ghana.



**Figure 4:** Image of the School Feeding Programme in Ghana (Ghana School Feeding Programme 2019)

### **Capitation Grant**

Ghana's government introduced a capitation grant in 2014 to reduce the cost citizens need to bear for education to help the achievement of universal basic education and also

achieve the targets for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (Center for Democratic Development 2010). According to Duodu-Antwi (2012), the government of Ghana formulated capitation grants to abolish school fees and support children at the basic level to complete school successfully as one of its strategies to address the greatest obstacle to the attainment of quality education and sustainable development (SDG 4).

## Issues of Educational Development in Ghana

According to the Suaka and Kuranchie (2018), a lot of circuit supervisors and headteachers do not receive any training on their role before assuming their position, lack managerial skills and often lack the authority to check teachers' work output and discipline recalcitrant teachers. This causes flexibility in the profession that gives rise to numerous breaches of codes of ethics and conduct without any sanctions for the culprit, thereby increasing the threat posed to the teaching profession. According to Matey (2020), the inception of the free SHS policy was made without the consultation of stakeholders and this has resulted in many implementation setbacks. Notable examples are the double-track system, delays in the release of funds for nutrition, overcrowding, and a lack of teaching aids. This research finding corroborates the findings of Botchway (2019) who states that the conception of free SHS seems to satisfy attendance and school curriculum issues, but its practical implementation has been a failure. This has given rise to many questions, such as: Does the free SHS possess the qualities needed to prepare the youth as future leaders? Similarly, Modern Ghana (2021a) posits that the Ministry of Education has received backlashes and has been labelled "incompetent" by the Director of the Institute of Education Studies, Peter Anti, because there was a delay in the supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) to schools causing some schools to experience record cases of COVID-19 when this situation could have been prevented if the supply of PPE had come earlier. Research findings have testified that poor use of resources, no bookkeeping and corruption are the great obstacles to the attainment of capitation grant objectives (Ampratwum and Armah-Attoh 2010). In addition, the CDD (2010) discovered that there is no stipulated time for the release of the capitation grant, so there is irregular release on the part of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning or the District Director of Education to the beneficiaries, compelling most educational stakeholders (SMCs, PTAs, headteachers, and teachers) to collect fees or levies for the management of the schools. Atta and Manu's (2015) study similarly reported that the school feeding policy intervention is confronted with several setbacks that pose threats to its sustainability. Some of the challenges include the delay in the release of funds to support the programme, the interference of food sharing with instructional hours, teachers' workloads being increased as they need to devote time to monitor and supervise the sharing of food, and lastly an increase in enrolment has not led to an increase in the number of textbooks, classrooms, the supply of food, or desks (Buhl 2010; Lopatka, Topel, and Vasconcellos 2008; Sulemana, Ngah, and Majid 2013). This has placed undue pressure on the available resources of schools and overpopulation in the classrooms, which causes high teacher burnout and eventually results in a reduction in the quality of teaching. The

complementary education programme testifies that educational development is geared towards the capital city but neglects rural dwellers. International organisations such as the United Nations has suggested the use of equity in the distribution of resources to attain education for all, so the geographical location of some people should not deny them their human right to education.

## Discussion of Findings and Results

The evidence supports the fact that immense educational developments have been made in the Ghana Education Service and highly qualified intellectuals have also been placed at key positions in the educational sectors for the proper management and attainment of educational quality. Unfortunately, policy planning deviated from the formal process and is usually implemented when there are ill preparations to sustain the policies. An example is the free SHS policy that has currently caused a double-track system, which has continuously raised a lot of debates about whether it is effective or not. Also, a lot of teachers have drifted from the teaching profession in search of greener pasture, and as a result free SHS has increased the workload of the remaining teachers. The overpopulated class sizes hinder effective teaching and the attainment of learning outcomes. This gives credence to the belief that the incumbent President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufu-Addo implemented the free SHS policy in fulfilment of his 2016 campaign message to make SHS free and consideration was not given to the absence of facilities to host the students. The Ghana school feeding programme did not target areas with food crises or poor communities, but rather favoured the southern regions (Kedze 2013). The study found that there is a lack of funds for the free SHS project, the school feeding programme, and capitation grants to enable their sustainability and the achievement of their goals. The school feeding programme needs to be relocated to communities with food crises and that face economic hardship to satisfy the rule of equity in the distribution of resources. Educational policymaking is not the preserve of educational philosophers of policymaking who ensure proper policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation that is motivated by compliance with policy formation principles. Instead, there is political interference that makes it difficult for the new government to continue previous governments' educational policies, and for this reason decisions are made to adopt new educational policies to conform with the current government's ideology. However, the politics-administration dichotomy theory disbands political interferences in policymaking. Teacher absenteeism is rampant in the educational system because of the absences of proper monitoring and supervision. The essential remedies to ensure due diligence in the area of work are keen monitoring and supervision, but their neglect causes lackadaisical behaviours that mar the attainment of goals. As postulated by James Madison (1788) in his writing about proper checks and balances, "if men were angels, no government would be necessary." From this statement it can be deduced that absenteeism in the Ghana education system is due to the absence of supervision, which results in the lackadaisical behaviour of teachers who violate rules and thereby results in low productivity. James suggested a blend of supervision and punishment to remedy this situation. Circuit supervisors and headteachers were found

to assume their positions based on merit, but without any professional training. Their lack of job training, professional skills and knowledge cause them to lack command and authority to check teachers' work output and discipline them when necessary. School buildings are another major issue of concern as some schools in Ghana are forced to hold classes in unsustainable buildings, under trees, sheds, and in generally ill-equipped environments. The policy of free basic education was seen not to have profited some citizens in the northern part of Ghana, and brought about complementary education.

### **Ghana's Educational Development, Advanced Countries, and International Benchmarking**

According to Humphries (2021), as of 2020, the countries with the best educational systems in the world were South Korea, Finland, and Denmark in terms of their educational development in areas such as early childhood development, performances in mathematics, literacy, and science, adult literacy rates, and completion rates. The World Bank (2017) postulated that the recent progress made in Ghana's educational system provides hope for additional progress. It is crucial to compare the current educational development achievement in Ghana with that of advanced countries to assess its progress and pinpoint opportunities for improvement. Colagrossi (2018) opines that teachers in Finland are mandated to possess a master's degree before they can enter the teaching profession and the school principal has to help underperforming teachers. By contrast, in Ghana it was recently mandated that entry into the teaching profession requires the minimum of a degree, and the mechanism to assess teachers' work performance is the regular writing of lesson notes and the number of exercises given to pupils. A free meal is given to all students in Finland, but Ghana has selected schools that benefit from the school feeding programme. Also, the class population in Finnish schools is within the capacity of the teachers, which creates room for teachers to attend to each student's needs. On the contrary, in Ghana classrooms have a minimum size of 50 pupils and a maximum of 80, with only one teacher, creating high teacher burnout rates. Finland is concerned about the education environment, which should conform to the OECD (2013) school environment's framework that requires schools to have a modern building with enough teaching and learning materials, space, good ventilation, proper lighting, a good temperature, an area free from noise to enhance good teaching and learning (physical learning environment), the use of modern equipment and technology, and ensure school principals' professional development. Unfortunately, most educational structures in Ghana are not in the best condition; indeed, some lessons are held in dilapidated structures that serve as a death trap for the inhabitants and some schools hold lessons under trees (Ghana News Agency 2020). This reduces teaching effectiveness and has a detrimental impact on the teachers and learners. The headteachers and circuit supervisors of the school attain their positions through merit, but do not undergo any professional training, which causes inefficiency in the discharge of their duties (World Bank 2017). Information and communication technology in Ghana is a major problem because there are insufficient teachers for ICT teaching. In addition, the government's supply of computers to schools is minimal and there are no computer laboratories to keep existing computers. The indigenous method of teaching

still exists (blackboard with chalk) in the Ghana Education Service as well as teaching without the help of teaching and learning materials. When Ghana's educational system is compared with those of advanced countries it becomes clear that there is room for improvement in terms of modern architectural school buildings, principals' and teachers' professional development, teaching and learning resources, and modern facilities. Quah (2016) states that policies are easy to formulate, but strategies to ensure their implementation and assessment are neglected. Mingat, Tan and Sosale (2003) posit that implementation strategies need to be included in the development of educational policies by the policymakers to ensure that policies formulated are implemented as planned. Aside from the fact that educational policymaking in Ghana does not conform to the policy formation processes to attain educational development, Ghana's Education Service also lacks modern facilities and equipment and other crucial resources to enhance educational development to achieve quality education. These setbacks have caused the struggle to attain quality education in Ghana to continue to deteriorate, leaving many disillusioned.

## Conclusion

This study presents a description of the current state of educational development in Ghana with some policy perspectives. It indicates that the Ghanaian government has done well in its persistent implementation of educational reforms to attain quality education and exceed the international benchmark. Although these developments have gained Ghana some compliments from international and West African countries, there are shortcomings in the policy formation and planning processes. These include that educational policies emerge from the incumbent government's manifesto and a committee set by the government to formulate educational policies and a lack of modern facilities and essential resources to support the educational development to achieve quality education. These are the major barriers to the sustainability and attainment of the objectives of the reforms and present room for improvement. The research findings indicated that education policymakers should be given the mandate to formulate, implement, and evaluate educational policies to ensure that the policies yield the expected outcome. The involvement of beneficiaries in the policymaking process was also a matter of great concern because it binds them to the policy and motivates their compliance. Some international countries have been adjudged to have good educational systems, such as South Korea, Finland and Denmark, based on their performances in mathematics, literacy, and science, their educational facilities and resources, the improvement in their early childhood education, their completion rates, and their adult literacy rates. This implies that there is a wide gap to be closed by the Ghanaian government.

## Recommendation

Laws supporting educational philosophers' formulation of educational policies should be adhered to in order to enhance credible educational policies that yield expected outcomes. Also, there is a need for the Ghanaian government to measure its

development against standards set by international organisations such as the OECD (2013) to identify areas for improvement. The tentacles of basic education need to be extended to all and sundry regardless of their challenges and this can be made possible through the equitable sharing of resources. To achieve the goals of educational development requires a collaborative effort that integrates educational stakeholders and government to provide enough impetus to jointly shoulder the responsibility of bringing light to our educational institutions.

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