

*Full Length Research Paper*

# Comparative review of selected educational policies of 1st and 2nd cycle institutions in Ghana and Burkina Faso, and that of United Kingdom and United States

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This article examines some selected Educational Policies of First and Second Cycle Institutions in Ghana and Burkina Faso, in comparison with that of the UK and US. The purpose of the study is to itemise the commonalities and differences in Educational Policies of both developed (UK and US) and developing countries (Ghana and Burkina Faso) in order to learn from the developed countries where necessary, and to improve upon the Educational Policies and Practices in Africa. Data collection for the study includes documents studies that involve integrated literature review. Content analysis is used as the method for data analysis. The results show that several Educational Policies of the countries under review conform to the UN Educational Policy standards and could be adopted in similar context in Africa.

**Keywords:** Comparative review; Educational policies; developing countries; developed countries.

## INTRODUCTION

Prior to the arrival of the Europeans on African soil, several traditional educational systems were in existence and these included traditional educational systems, which were the norms preserved in Sub-Saharan Africa. Islamic imperialism had less presence in South-Saharan Africa and Koranic Education was not yet established in Burkina Faso.

Before the introduction of European systems of education in Africa, every ethnic group at that time was responsible for its own educational system thereby creating a diversity of practises and knowledge of education which marked the African traditional education system.

Lavoie (2008) in his arguments highlighted notable features of indigenous schools in Sub-Saharan countries before the arrival of the Europeans, which include economic activities such as farming, cattle breeding and weaving. The rest were development of a sense of community; participation of parents and the extended family; oral transmission of knowledge and the link between knowledge and community needs.

Kwapong (2008) said Ghana, a Sub-Saharan African country, also experienced triple heritage education, namely: African Tradition Education, Islamic or Arabic Education and Christian European Education. Addae-Mensa (2006) reiterates that the Colonial Government

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and the foreign missionaries introduced European education into Ghana.

By 1529, the Portuguese had established a school in Elmina Castle. The Dutch had also opened a school in Elmina in 1644, while the English founded a school in Cape Coast afterwards. Addae-Mensa (2006) maintains that in the early 19th century, the native people in Ghana were converted and educated by the Basel, Bremen Missionaries and the Wesleyan Methodists.

The Basel Missionaries established a boys' school at Akropong Akuapem, followed by a girls' school in 1847. Bremen also started its first school in Peki in 1847. In 1836, Wesleyan Methodist built the Wesley Girls School which became a secondary school in 1884. According to Kwapong (2008), from 1880 to 1881, there were 139 schools in the colony and only three were Colonial Government Schools. Beeko (2005) asserts that the Basel Missionaries had a policy for equal access to education, and after the European left the shores of Ghana, the government of Ghana continued to maintain the educational policies implemented in the country by the Europeans.

Rutkowski (2007) remarks that nearing the end of the twentieth century and the early part of the twenty-first century, governments in African countries through enactment of legislation and formulation of policies have carried out educational reforms in order to improve students' enrolment, participation and outcomes. The intuitions for these reforms are to ensure openness, proper management of the tax-payer's funds, accurate accountability of how expenditures were financed and achievement outcomes for all students. Inter-governmental organisations have played a notable role in educational policy-making at the national level.

Rutkowski (2007) states that these organisations encourage world change, and promote particular ideologies through a set of complex actions and policy recommendations that exploit growing world interconnectedness. Levin (1998) argues that the formulation of educational policies has permeated the global agenda. Formulating Education policies have been the function of the state government in its decision to manage, control and turn society around and, in particular, transform and improve educational provision.'

Osman (2002) maintains that policy refers to a detailed statement that demonstrate vision and aspirations, and provides guidelines for carrying out those vision. It is also seen as a standard decision rule, a regulation, or a set of prescriptions that apply in all similar situations. Osman (2002) on his part, views policy as the outcome of political influence, which determines and sets limits to what the state does. Policies churned out by governments of nations to deliver social goods to the populace are termed public policies. Rutkowski (2007) defines policy knowledge as 'the body of knowledge available to assist policy-makers in their understanding of the causes and consequences of the outputs of government and the subsequent society impact.

Arguing in favour of this assertion, Anderson (1975) notes that public policy is when a government initiate a course of action in order to solve a social problem, and adopts a specific strategy for its planning and implementation. Thus all countries, whether developed or developing, design public policies to provide social services for their citizenry in the areas of education, health, housing, roads and transport, and food and nutrition among a host of others.

Education policy is the principles and government policy-making in educational spheres as well as the collection of laws and rules that govern the operation of educational systems. Education policy or public education policy also refers to government decision rules regarding education, schools, colleges, or related matters. Examples are government rules regarding school attendance, graduation, college entry, content for study, teachers, payment, etc. Government, sector Minister, Governors or Regional Ministers, Mayors, Municipal and District Chief Executives executive's orders as well as statutes and ordinances enacted by legislative bodies and judicial decisions issued by courts are some of the means by which educational policies emerge. It is expedient to put forward that there are equally bottom-up processes that might also influence educational policy. Also, there are several hints in the current literature that shows that actors on the bottom level have their own educational ideals.

In order to appreciate the educational policies of developed and developing countries, it is important to distinguish between a 'developed' and a 'developing' country. World Bank (2012) maintain that the criteria for appraising the degree of development from a socio-economic perspective are: Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the per capita income, level of industrialisation, amount of widespread infrastructure, literacy rate and general standard of living.

Developing countries are agrarian and less industrialized, have low educational level, poor employment, high infant mortality rate, unsafe and unreliable water supplies, poor housing conditions, poor nutrition, poor health care services, low to medium standard of living, limited technological capacity, unequal distribution of income and factors of production. Examples of developing countries are Albania, Algeria, Angola, Bangladesh, Chad, Code D'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Gabon, Benin (IMF Advanced Economies List 2003, p.173.)

A developed country is a well-developed postindustrial economy marked by high technology advancement and where the service sector contributes immensely to GDP than the industrial sector. It has higher education rates, better roads, stable governments, good health care, high level of per capita income per capita, high index for Human Development, increased life expectancy, good housing conditions, safe water supplies and abundant food supplies. Examples of such countries are UK, Japan, Canada and the United States. According to the

International Monetary Fund, advanced economies comprise 65.8% of global nominal GDP and 52.1% of global GDP (PPP) in 2010 (IMF, 2011). In 2011, the nine largest advanced economies by either nominal GDP or GDP (PPP) were Germany, France, United States, the United Kingdom Japan, Italy, Canada, Spain and South Korea (IMF, 2012).

From the field of Education, the definition of developing and developed countries is different from the meaning given in the field of Economics. In the field of Education, a developed country is the one whose citizens and other members in the country have the requisite knowledge, skills and disposition needed to enable them live a meaningful life. The products or outcome of this experience or state of development (high GDP, infrastructural development, high per capita income etc.) of these citizens or the nation is what Economists see as development.

Formal education is a global activity and a critical social issue that needs attention and effective management in that the degree to which citizens of a country are well educated determines the extent of the country's development. Educational policy programmes, structures and management have different policy implications for the developed and developing countries. This provokes intellectual research and academic discourses. This article is a comparative review of some education policy reforms in US and UK against Ghana and Burkina Faso. The study brings our attention to the need to expand our understanding of educational policy in developed and developing countries.

The key objectives of the article is to spell out the key similarities and differences in the education policy between Ghana and Burkina Faso matched against UK and US in terms of funding and educational development, performance improvement, free and compulsory basic and secondary education, accountability and standards expectations, government expenditure, budgetary allocation on education, increasing access, pedagogy, practicalised curriculum, quality of education and others.

Steiner-Khamsi (2004) said, within the remit of educational policy, it has been argued that globalisation is inspiring a global-scale convergence of national education systems, politics of educational borrowing and lending in relation to globalisation and education.

The comparison allows the identification of the strengths and weaknesses relating to various educational systems and policies in a particular system. The strengths could be improved and the weakness resolved. Adoption and adaptation of a particular educational policy in one country is then possible, if it suits the context of the other country. Bennet et al. (1975) also added that mutual learning, information sharing and improving educational systems are made very possible. Construction of a multilateral space to create and exchange policy knowledge is also a benefit. The comparison helps to explore the conformance to

international standards in educational reform.

For example, (United Nations (1948, p5) Article 26 of the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted in 1948 provides that 'every person is entitled to free education at least in basic level. Rutkowski (2007) put forward that the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which needed acceptance and validation by signing by the General Assembly in 1967, and went into force in 1976 states that primary education, technical and vocational education shall be free and compulsory for all. This study does not just try to explore various educational policies in primary and secondary schools, but also illustrates the differences and similarities and the relevance for the comparisons. In our view, there is little work done in this area in Africa, especially in the West African Region and Ghana in particular.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Madsen et al. (2014) demonstrate that Educational Policy Decision aims at the ensuring effective management of schools to ensure increased learning for all students regardless of race, ethnicity, or economic status. Academics have alleged that the success of educational reforms rests on the headmaster's ability to execute accountability policies. The meaning of policy is sometimes taken as legislative policy texts or other nationally driven interventions applied to 'solve a problem.'

According to Ozga (2000), this approach sees policy as an activity earmarked and carried out as a state mechanism of policy-making'. In contrast, we conceive policy reforms as a process that is diversely and repeatedly contested or subject to 'interpretation' as it is enacted in original and creative ways within institutions and classrooms. Thus, inclusion in policy is the discursive processes (Ball, 1994).

A close look at the educational policies of developed countries reveals that policies on financial support to schools, especially basic and second cycle schools, are tied to improved performance of students. Schools are often held accountable for poor performance in standardised tests. Examples can be found in the UK and the US. In the UK, the market reform policy introduced in the 1988 Education Reform Act (Adnett and Davies, 2002) was aimed at raising standards by introducing testing and league tables for schools as well as improving the accountability of state- funded schools.

Similarly, the US Education Policy on free and compulsory education which was signed into law on January 8, 2002 also ties funding for schools directly to accountability and standards expectations. Under the policy, schools must ensure that all students learn the essential skills and knowledge defined by the state using grade-level standards and benchmarks.

Thus, the free Education Policy demands that states build assessment systems that track the achievement of all students against a common set of high instructional standards. Hence, states are required to assess third through eighth grade students, annually, in reading and mathematics. Jorgensen and Hoffmann (2003) assert that these tests are based on state standards that are challenging, and the results are made public so anyone can track the performance of any school in the country.

In developing countries, funding for educational development was also provided. For example, Ghana Educational Trust (GET) Fund in the GET fund Act 2000 (Act 581), raised from the 2.5% of the Value Added Tax, was established to provide funding for the various strata of education. For the purpose of attaining this objective, the monies from the Fund are to be expended as follows:

1. To sponsor Ghanaian students' education
2. To generate revenue to develop and repair of academic facilities
3. To grant scholarships to the intelligent but needy students to pursue their education.

The issue of accountability and social auditing standards from the managers of the fund were however, not defined (Ghanalegal.com) thus opposed to what pertains in the developed world.

In addition, government of Ghana capitation grant policy was meant to contribute to an increased access and participation in primary education. This is in tandem with the millennium development goal. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are the world's time-bound and quantified targets for addressing extreme poverty in its many dimensions- income poverty, hunger, disease, lack of adequate shelter, and exclusion- while promoting gender equality, education, and environmental sustainability.

The goal 2 is to achieve universal primary education. The introduction of capitation grants was meant to eradicate fees in basic schools in order to promote access to primary education. For the past 10 years, Burkina Faso: Ten-Year Basic Education Development Plan (2005) reveals that the World Bank, Netherlands, France, Canada, Sweden, Denmark, and Belgium provided a financial support to the first phase of literacy programme of increasing access to primary education through common financing procedures. Requirements for results reporting have been aligned with national systems, and harmonised between international donors, however, accounting for these donations have not been clearly prescribed.

An important difference between the Educational Policies of developed and developing countries is that, while in some developed countries basic and secondary education are free and compulsory, in developing countries only basic education is free and compulsory.

Developing countries are struggling to include the

secondary education group to benefit from free and compulsory education. The UK and US present typical cases of free compulsory basic and secondary Education Policy. Besides, the length of compulsory education in developed countries is longer than those in developing countries (Jin and Zhang, 2008). The input of compulsory education is determined by how much of the state's financial investment in education accounts for the national citizens' incomes or gross national product (GNP).

Comparatively, the GNP of developed countries is higher than that of developing countries. Therefore, Jin and Zhang (2008) disclosed that the investment in compulsory education of developed countries is certainly higher than that in developing countries. In the US for example, education is compulsory over an age range beginning between five to eight years and ending between sixteen to eighteen years, depending on the state (infoplease.com). This means free compulsory education starts from kindergarten to secondary Ghana and Burkina Faso.

Furthermore, while expenditure on education is high in developed countries, it is very low in developing countries. For instance, Bolton (2012) put forward that the US and UK spend 6 and 5.6% respectively of their GDP on education. In Ghana, although the government spends 6.7% of GDP in education, it is still very low because of the low GDP figure.

UNESCO's recommendation suggests that developing nations should commit not less than 26% of their total annual budget to the education sector if they are to attain any form of sustainable development (Abdul-Rahooof, 2014). This proposition was meant to ensure that many have access to education, improved quality of education and a reduction in the cost of education so that many learners could gain skills, knowledge and attitude required for meaningful employment, which contributes not only to personal life improvement, but societal development. The little budget on education in Ghana, coupled with policy implementation constraints have created the problem of access to education, equity consideration, quality of education, cost and financing of education. Ghana, like many other developing countries, guided by international protocols such as the Education For All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), has initiated several interventions to transform its education system. The 'Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) is among the many initiatives that governments have introduced to address the many challenges confronting basic education delivery in these countries. These initiatives and interventions had sought, in many instances, to improve the education systems and to ensure that all school-going children have access to quality basic education. Ghana's Free Compulsory Education is for the basic schools only.

The Article 38 of the 1992 constitution of the republic of Ghana requires the government to provide free

compulsory basic education access; and depending on the availability of financial resources, apply same in senior secondary, technical schools, tertiary institutions and lifelong learning. This is based on the principle that to obtain a more equitable society, all individuals should, ideally, have access to equivalent learning opportunities, regardless of their socio-economic background, social origin, age or sex. Equity of access provides a strong base for developing social cohesion (Kwapong, 2010). Ministry of Education (1996) and Ghana Education Service (2004) argue that the establishment of FCUBE in the educational system of Ghana was meant to ensure the following objectives:

1. To boost teaching and learning quality; and to
2. To augment access and participation.

The policy aimed to support Education Policy and Management changes with main areas focused on more instructional time, lowering fees and levies, enhancing head teachers' management skills and motivation levels and streamlining school supervision and upgrading. The rest include: physical infrastructure and construction of additional classrooms and schools to accommodate increased access.

In practise, the policy meant that the government was supposed to finance free tuition, textbooks and teaching and learning materials, and subsidise the cost of exercise books. Parents are expected to provide for the nutrition, school uniforms, school bags, stationery and transport, if needed (Akyeampong, 2009). Key policy innovations to boost and re-energize the FCUBE policy execution process have not been successful.

Nordensvard (2014) demonstrates that although dropout rates are high, the disparity between the overall access of education to boys and girls remains unchanged. Committed to enhancing the educational opportunities and outcomes of the educationally disadvantaged, the FCUBE policy is perceived as a 'rights-based policy' grounded in-depth in social democratic values. However, Nudzor (2013) put forward that the influx of neo-liberal conceptual rhetoric of 'acumen for the world of work' has ignited the nullification of these progressive ideals.

Ghana's educational reforms and policies have been very much donor-driven, heavily sponsored by international organisations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) who have in turn shaped the discourse around education. These institutional organisations favour basic education as a more efficient investment. Another policy issue that several developing countries are pushing forward is that of special education for the physically challenged. This concern has steadily become part of the mainline discourses on global development and poverty alleviation.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which target the improvement of human conditions by 2015 unfortunately did not include in its first design, the

addressing of disability issues within targeting frameworks. Yet et al. (2015) maintain that it abounds in literature that these goals are unlikely to be attained unless more inclusive strategies for people with disabilities are integrated into existing plans. When Ghana became the first nation in Sub-Saharan Africa to declare independence, the government took full responsibility of providing for the educational needs of children with disabilities by passing the Educational Act of 1961.

The Ministry of Education (MoE) assumed control over the affairs of Special Education from the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare in the late 1960s (Anthony and Kwadade, 2006). Ametepee (2015) said in 1970, the Special Education Unit (currently known as the Special Education Division [SED]) assumed full responsibility for special schools. Education is seen as being paramount to leading a better life. The benefits of education, such as gaining self-sufficiency and assisting society, go beyond employment.

However, inequity in educational avenues underpins some of the reasons for the widening of differences between those with physically challenged and their non-physically challenged counterparts. For example, education perceived as important for gaining employment, is not the case in reality, as young people face difficulties due to both physical and attitudinal barriers limiting their opportunities for economic and social participation. As a result, shaping educational policy to cover all aspects of education is very important. The UK and US have workable and enduring policy on special education. There is no inequality in educational policy with regards to special education and that of mainstream education.

Another significant difference between education policies of developed and developing countries is tuition fees. Whereas, tuition fees are charged in institutions in developed countries like UK and US, it is free in some developing countries like Ghana especially the public institutions. According to Machin and Vignoles (2006), a means-tested tuition fee was introduced in UK educational institutions in 1998. This has not yet been introduced in Ghana and Burkina Faso. Developing countries focus on centralised educational policy and administration while developed countries decentralise their education system and allow states and local districts to introduce policies to adapt education to their social, cultural, economic and political needs and aspirations. A good example is the US Educational System which allows states and local districts to determine the curriculum for public elementary education. The school district selects curriculum guides and textbooks that reflect a state's learning standards and benchmarks for a given grade level (US Department of Education, 2003).

Education Policy decision-making in developing countries is centralized because the state assumes the key role in policy making. Gindle and Thomas (1991) rightly noted that the state actors in developing countries

are frequently the most important actors in placing issues on an agenda for government action assisting alternatives and superintending implementation. The Senior High School (SHS) system has not been stable for an evaluation of its quality in comparison with the five-year secondary school and the two-year sixth form education it has replaced. This situation is in contrast with the highly stable Senior High School duration in the UK and the US.

The banking form of education is still in practise in developing countries. Students or pupils are not given opportunity to criticise the view point of the teacher, who can punish the student for such an attempt. Students, as passive absorbers, then naturally sit to listen to didactic recitations from teachers. The educational system of developed countries employs dialogue and problem-solving techniques to create a rich learning experience for learners. This builds their critical thinking abilities and their self-confidence. Educational Policies in the developing countries are less responsive to the demand of the environment.

In addition, support from societies as input for decision making is less significant, although the US and the UK have policies which are practically responsive to the demand of the society. Policies used in the industrially developed countries are mostly forcefully and wrongly adopted and applied in the developing countries, which normally does not fit due to contextual variation.

On the issue of commonalities between the developed and developing countries, there are similar educational policies that aim specifically at increasing educational access. In Ghana, the Education Act of 1870 was promulgated due to the report written by Matiew Arnold, who worked as inspector of elementary schools from 1851 to 1856. This aimed at building more schools and providing some financial assistance for the poor children in order to increase enrolment. The Accelerated Development Plan for education in 1951 also contributed to the expansion of enrolment, but was seen as elitist and created the unemployment of school leavers.

In the case of Burkina Faso, the major decisions faced by the country were to develop its educational system, which was to begin with the expansion of primary education despite the budget constraints and strings. Its first policy after independence in 1960 was to devise the following options: use rural non-formal education to provide education for its rural people or continue the traditional primary school in the urban areas in order to ensure that everyone had access.

This was to be based on the French model: six years of primary schooling and seven years of secondary schooling. In 1970, the government chose to continue these parallel systems with some qualitative reforms of rural education. This was the second policy cycle (UNESCO, 1995). UNESCO and the World Bank evaluated the policy of rural non-formal education in Burkina Faso and found that:

1. Rural education had no influence on the country's

- economy;
2. There was still poor agriculture activity; and
3. Achievement levels were poor and primary education still suffered access.

The suggestion was to expand the primary educational sector and continue with the rural non-formal education (UNESCO, 1995). Two French educators also observed that the French colonial academic pattern of schooling was inappropriate to the kind of development necessary in most African countries, which were primarily based on agricultural economy (UNESCO, 1995).

Therefore, they carried a survey to collect data on the country's population, manpower and the state of the economy. They made intellectual guesses which recorded scanty data. Their findings were that there were high levels of illiteracy in the rural areas and that educational services were inadequate. They then proposed education policy that provides access to all, introduced streaming after third year of primary education and also suggested the alternative system of education—a shorter programme of study with more relevant curriculum (UNESCO, 1995).

Similarly, developed countries took systematic steps, over a long period, to provide and achieve high access basic education for their citizenry. For instance, after the American Revolution, from April 19, 1775 to September 3, 1783, the American government established and introduced free public schools for all, in an attempt to increase access to education.

In the 19th century, it expanded access to education, thus by 1870, all states had free elementary schools. As the 20th century drew nearer, states started passing laws to make schooling compulsory, in order to improve access. As a result, by 1910, 72 percent of children attended school (Illinois State Board of Education, 2010). At 99%, the reading literacy rate of the US population beyond the age of fifteen has, ultimately, been affected (U.S. Department of Education, 2003).

In developing countries, particularly in the Gold Coast, the First Education Ordinance of 1882 was established to promote and assist education. The aim was to train African to manage local administration at the lower level and staff the private capitalist firms owned by the Europeans.

Again, in 1908 some strides were made to better the educational system when the Europeans thought of establishing industrial, agricultural and technical training institutions. The country set up a committee in 2002 which settled on a philosophy of education that sought to create a well-balanced all-round people with adequate knowledge, skills and values, attitude and aptitude to become functional and productive citizens. Some efforts were made to ensure that students become enterprising and develop capacities to respond to the demand of a fast-changing world driven by science and technology.

Additionally, since 2001, several states in the US have published policy statements encouraging the expansion

of international education in public schools, particularly world-language study and student and teacher exchange programmes. As in Ohio, the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) is leading initiatives in international education, a project that has been on the IDOE's agenda for over 30 years. Recent efforts have included: encouraging the expansion of course offerings in the state's schools, increasing the depth and breadth of world languages taught in Indiana schools, and increasing cultural exchange opportunities for Indiana schools. Some of the early efforts included: indefinite approval for foreign exchange programmes for countries in good standing with the US Department of State in 1979, Fulbright-Hays study tours for teachers to other countries, and the establishment of memorandums of understanding with France, Taiwan, and Spain that have resulted in greater interaction between residents of Indiana and educators from these countries (Christopher and Whitehead, 2009).

The Dzobo report of 1973 in Ghana recommended the basic and Senior Secondary School concept. New structure educational curriculum was thus provided in the Ghana Education Service decree of 1974. As a result, the Ghana Commission Report on basic and secondary education 1987/1988 was written. The Review of Educational Reforms in Ghana in 2002 and White Paper Reforms on Education reforms reviewed in 2004 were also established to guide several dimensions of the educational practise in Ghana. In 2007/2008, educational reforms by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Science and Sports led to structural changes that affected the content, delivery and methods of education in the country. These included: a basic educational programme for Ghanaian language, an English programme for kindergarten and lower primary literacy, mathematics, creative arts and problem- solving. The three-year Junior High School and four-year Senior High School systems were also included (Kwapong, 2010).

Developed countries have introduced various curriculum reforms to improve the quality of education in their countries. A typical case is the UK government's introduction of two significant national curriculum policies, in the 1980s, to tackle the problem of poor literacy and numeracy, as well as to address general concerns about poor standards. Firstly, in the late 1980s, a standardised national curriculum was introduced for pupils aged between seven and sixteen. The purpose of the national curriculum was to raise standards by ensuring that all students study a prescribed set of subjects up to a minimum level until the age of sixteen. The second policy reform, in 1998, was the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. These strategies involved all primary schools allocating part of the daily curriculum to Literacy and Numeracy hours, with the specific aim of developing pupils' basic skills. The content of these daily Literacy and Numeracy lessons, and indeed how they should be taught, was tightly prescribed

by the central government. Students' understanding of the curriculum also began to be tested, via the use of national tests taken at ages seven, eleven, fourteen and sixteen (or Key Stage 1, 2, 3 and 4) (Machin and Vignoles, 2006).

In 1975, the government of Burkina Faso passed an educational bill which was basically a programme policy to address how and where rural education should be provided qualitatively, but not for an expansion of the existing system. However, in the 1980s, international donors undertook a major assessment of the merits of rural non-formal education to refine its quality (UNESCO, 1995). In improving the quality of education, developed countries introduce very compelling quality policies such as the standards policies introduced in the US in the 1990s.

Beginning in 1992, the standard policies established content standards for student knowledge, performance standards regarding levels of student mastery, and opportunity-to-learn standards governing conditions of learning (UNESCO, 1995). States reinforced the new standards through equally new performance accountability systems composed variously of public reporting requirements and performance tests, some tied to school rewards, sanctions, or state interventions to assist failing schools. Standards-based reforms adopted a systemic perspective on education change, pursuing greater coherence across the gamut of learning goals, curriculum changes, professional development, accountability assessment, and governance arrangements (Jacob, 2013).

## METHODOLOGY

Data was collected through textual analysis of some policy documents and review of an integrated literature. An integrated literature review is a form of research that 'reviews, critiques, and synthesises representative literature on a topic in an integrated way such that new frameworks and perspectives on the topic are generated' (Torraco, 2005).

Relevant articles in peer reviewed Journals, textbooks and other academic papers were accessed and reviewed. The type of research is a Mini Comparative study with four countries as reference points. These are the UK, US, Ghana and Burkina Faso. Two countries in Africa namely: Ghana and Burkina Faso were used for the study in relation to developing countries. Ghana was chosen because that is where the researchers are based. It was also the first country to gain independence in Sub-Saharan Africa, thus issues about Ghana is worth studying. Burkina Faso was chosen because it is also in the Sub-Region of Africa and has gained the attention of the international community. For the developed countries, UK and US were chosen because they are popular examples of developed countries.

This work does not aim rigidly at pursuing historical development of educational policies in the stated countries. Rather, it is simply making efforts to outline and discuss some educational policies that are similar or different in these countries. One may argue that it does not make sense to compare the selected countries in Africa to the selected countries in the developed world because they are not on equal playing ground. That will be hasty generalisation because

we can look at the similarities and differences between the rich and the poor- what they have in common and where they differ- for knowledge purposes, and also as a means of motivation for the poor to strive for a gradual rise to becoming a developed country. Additionally, globalisation, developmental and technological advancement have hit every corner of the land, thus enabling cross fertilisation of ideas.

The research design is a comparative case study (Ragin, 1987). Ragin (1987) maintains that such methodology is suitable when researchers, as we do, want to have a grasp of 'cases because of their intrinsic value'. However, as Ragin (1987) further argue, matching such cases also allows researchers to draw limited generalisations that may be illustrative of greater trends, setting up possibilities for further research. Since the method for this research was reviewing existing data in the related areas, textual analysis was used as the method for analysis of data. Explications and interpretations of texts, constructs and statements within relevant literature were engaged in.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

In the developed countries, policies on financial support to basic and second cycle schools are tied to improved performance of students. Additionally, institutions are held responsible for failing to meet the demand of a standardized test. These are not issues emphasized in Africa countries. While in some developed countries basic and secondary education are free and compulsory, in developing countries only basic education is free and compulsory. Moreover, the length of compulsory education in developed countries is longer than those in developing countries.

The investment in compulsory education of developed countries is higher than that in developing countries due to differences in GDP levels. Expenditure on education is high in developed countries and low in developing countries. Africa' educational reforms and policies have been very much donor-driven and it is normally sponsored by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund with associated unbearable strings. Developing countries are able to finance their own educational budgets.

Developing countries focus on centralised educational policy and administration while developed countries decentralise their education system. Educational policies in the developing countries are less responsive to the demand of the environment compared to the developed countries. In terms of similarities, developed and developing countries adopt systematic steps, over a long spectrum to provide and achieve high access elementary education for their citizenry. Developed and developing countries have introduced various curriculum reforms to augment access and quality of education in their countries. Both developed and developing countries have workable and enduring policy on special education.

## DISCUSSIONS

Against the backdrop of the need to promote equitable

access to education for all, at all levels, Burkina Faso and Ghana's educational policies have focused on making education equitably distributed across regions, sex, income and religion.

The Ministry of Education plays the role to provide relevant education to all Ghanaians, at all levels, to enable them acquire skills that will assist them to develop their potential, be productive, facilitate poverty reduction and promote socio-economic growth and national development (Kwapong, 2010).

However, practically, there have been several challenges confronting the full realisation of the goals of this policy. For example, Local policies are formulated to augment access and quality of basic and secondary education, yet several children are still at home not enrolled. The dropout rates are also very high.

Among the crippling factors confronting the implementation of the capitation grant policy in Ghana is the delay in the release of the grant, misuse of funds by some heads of institutions, increased workload on implementers, lack of transparency and poor book-keeping skills and knowledge in financial accounting. The extent to which capitation grants are unfairly allocated is also a problem. In building the financing policies in schools, accountability, in terms of judicious use of the funds, and performance of students through standardised tests found in the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) educational policy of the United States, must be emulated by the developing countries.

The banking education practice in Africa, adopts instructional methods which are teacher-centred at the expense of learner participation. As a result, class notes are soon forgotten after examinations, since learning is by rote memory (Mattei, 1996). All these outcomes are based on the prevailing educational policies derived from the colonial masters. The banking education practise must be relegated to the background in order to adopt learner- centred pedagogy adopted by the developed countries. This enhances creativity and innovation and enables personal and social knowledge construction through discussions and discourses among learners.

Developing countries should learn from developed countries to build accountability strategies into their policy implementation programmes, in order to monitor and detect implementing institutions and agencies who are deviating from the set objectives so that appropriate sanctions can be applied to them. The accountability strategies, if well incorporated into policy implementation programmes, will increase the commitment levels of policy implementers, which will consequently lead to successful implementation of educational policies and programmes to achieve the desired benefits of those policies.

To ensure quality in the education sector, there should be regular checks on heads of institutions. In addition, the government needs to increase the grant, and set up adult teams to put administrators on their toes so that they are well monitored to produce required results.

The researchers contend that while the educational policy systems of the four countries are increasingly divergent, there are still many similarities. This is borne out in the evidence on educational outcomes, which show many similarities between the four countries. Due to these similarities, the positive impacts of many of the policies and programmes adopted in England and US may have relevance for Ghana and Burkina Faso.

Evidence is found that increasing school resources improves results, and also, that more targeted spending benefits pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds to have access to education. Policies shape educational situations, but there are also policies that are divergent from reality, an observation which is not helpful and therefore must be corrected.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Education policies should be formulated on serious diagnosis on the sector itself and contextual analysis of economic, political, socio-cultural and educational situations; including an assessment of relevant interest groups, the rationale and roles of educational change and the process through which trade-offs are accomplished. Popular support is also important to enable education policies work. Sensitivity analysis proving the various scenarios of policy options must also be constructed and the best option pursued.

Educational policy must enhance personal learning and thinking skills (PLTS), together with functional English, mathematics and ICT. These cover the areas of competence that are most demanded by employers. Integrating these skills into the curriculum and qualifications will enable learners to be more employable as well as provide them the opportunity for further learning. PLTS are: team working, independent enquiry, self-management, reflective learning, effective participation and creative thinking (DCSF, 2009).

Governments of developed countries ensure regular and prompt release of funds to schools for their efficient and effective running. This must be emulated by the developing countries where government subventions delay to the extreme, crippling activities as a result. Educational policies in Africa need to be decentralised while implementation must be monitored rigidly and enforced by a superior body. This will help translate policy into practise in a timely manner. It is also expedient that Africa's educational policy be practically responsive to the demand of the society.

## LIMITATIONS

This is purely literature review research. The sample cases are also small. Future studies must involve some empirical perspectives through interviews with educationists and educational policy makers. The sample

size must increase by factoring more developed and developing countries. Nevertheless, we can boldly state that this information contains a lot of facts that could be reliably deployed for policy development and implementation by educational planners, policy makers and the governments of Ghana and Burkina Faso. Those attractive policies in the developed countries could be employed if found suitable in African context.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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