

ARTICLE

Teacher Education in Ghana: the past, present and the future

Educação de professores em Gana: passado, presente e futuro.

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Abstract

Teacher education is recognized as a vital component for the socio economic development of every country. This is because the academic and professional standards of teachers constitute a critical component of the essential learning conditions for achieving the educational goals of a nation. Being aware of these, Ghana embraced teacher education and the sector has since evolved. However, the development in Ghana's teacher education sector has not been mapped, analysed, synthesised and shared with the scholarly community in a single paper. This paper critically reviews literature (reports, policy texts, working papers, government documents and statistical data from government agencies) on the most significant developments in Ghana's teacher education from past to the present and prescribe the desired teacher education for the future.

Keywords

Teacher Education. Trajectory. Ghana.

Resumen

La formación del profesorado está reconocida como un componente vital del desarrollo socioeconómico de todo país. Esto se debe a que el nivel académico y profesional de los profesores constituye un componente crítico de las condiciones de aprendizaje esenciales para alcanzar los objetivos educativos de una nación. Consciente de ello, Ghana adoptó la formación del profesorado y el sector ha evolucionado desde entonces. Sin embargo, la evolución del sector de la formación del profesorado en Ghana no ha sido cartografiada, analizada, sintetizada y compartida con la comunidad académica en un único artículo. Este artículo analiza críticamente la bibliografía (informes, textos políticos, documentos de trabajo, documentos gubernamentales y datos estadísticos de organismos gubernamentales) sobre los avances más significativos en la formación del profesorado en Ghana desde el pasado hasta el presente y prescribe la formación del profesorado deseada para el futuro.

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Introduction

Teacher education is recognized as a vital component for the socio economic development of every country because the academic and professional standards of teachers constitute a critical component of the essential learning conditions for achieving the educational goals of a nation (Abduljabbar, & Dauda, 2022; Sanyal, 2013). Teacher education is a program that is related to the development of teacher proficiency and competence that would enable and empower the teacher to meet the requirement of the profession and face the challenges there in (Kanayo, 2012). Sanyal (2013) on his part perceives teacher education as the policies and procedures designed to equip prospective teachers with the knowledge, attitude, behaviours and skills they require to perform their tasks in the classroom, school and wider community.

Even though the backgrounds (historical, political, cultural, linguistic, and economic) of nations normally impact the nature of teacher education offered in their jurisdictions resulting in some peculiarities specific to that jurisdiction, in general, Teacher education programmes focus on pedagogy, psychology and discipline content (Jamal, 2022). It is expected that the combination of pedagogy, psychology and discipline content would help equip teachers with the right knowledge attitude and skills which can lead to holistic development (Jamal, 2022).

There is no doubt that Teacher education is vital if nations are to achieve the quality of education they desire at all levels. This seems to imply that Teachers are the single most important education resource in any country (Rieckmann, 2020). Rieckmann, (2020) perceives teachers to be powerful change agents for delivering the educational response needed for achieving national development (Rieckmann, 2020). From early childhood, through primary to secondary school and tertiary institution, the presence of a qualified, well motivated teacher is vital for effective learning (Abduljabbar, & Dauda, 2022; Sanyal, 2013). These acknowledgments seem to motivate governments to be critical about teacher education. Apart from these, the heightened interest in teacher education is also motivated by nations' commitment to international and regional conventions and frameworks such as the Sustainable Development (SDG) Goal 4.

The SDG4c requires nations that have assented to that framework to substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers by 2030 (UNESCO, 2024). It is clear that this target can be achieved only if nations have well-developed teacher education programmes. The importance of teacher education manifest in reforms carried out in the sector to enable teacher education programmes to equip teachers with 21st century competencies and also for the nations to meet the SDG4c target by 2030 (UNESCO, 2024). For example, in Finland, the Ministry of Education and Culture created a Finnish Teacher Education Forum in 2016 (MEC 2016) to collaboratively prepare a development programme for teacher education (Levonen, 2020). The development programme included six concrete strategic action guidelines, which determined the direction for the development of teacher education in the country (Levonen, 2020). On the other hand, the German Teacher education reform focused on university-based initial teacher education (ITE) and secondly, content and the introduction of teacher education standards (Kuhlee, 2017).

Similarly, the relevance of teacher education in Africa has been noted at the continental level. The first Strategic Objective of the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25) seeks to “Revitalize the teaching profession to ensure quality and relevance at all levels of education” (African Union, 2016). Additionally, other AU documents and instruments emphasize the need to create common referential frameworks for teacher qualification, professional standards, professionalization of teaching and teacher mobility across Africa. Currently, the AU can boast of the African Teacher Qualification Framework For Teacher Quality, Comparability and International Mobility (ATQF) which serves as a common reference for teacher qualification in Africa and promote the comparability of teacher qualifications in Africa with the rest of the world (African Union, 2019). Like her peers, Ghana is also a signatory to United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. As a member of AU, the country’s teacher education development is expected to be guided by the first objective of CESA enumerated above. Ghana’s 1992 constitution prioritizes education as a right for its citizens. These and other factors makes Ghana’s teacher education sector a subject of interest that needs to be unpacked.

1 The Context

Ghana the site of the focus of this paper is a country located in West Africa.

It shares borders with the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire on the west, Republic of Togo on the east, on the north with Republic of Burkina Faso and the South by the Gulf of Guinea in the Atlantic Ocean (World Bank, 2024). Ghana was colonised by Britain but gained independence on 6th March 1957 and obtained a republic status on 1st July, 1960 (World Bank, 2024). Currently, Ghana is managed by a democratically elected executive president with an elected parliament and independent judiciary (United Nations Development Programme, 2012). Ghana's parliament constitute 275 seats. Ghana is divided into 16 administrative regions and these regions are further subdivided into 261 districts (GhanaDistricts, 2024). Ghana's population is 33.5 million, thirty-three million, five hundred thousand, with females comprising more than half of the population.

Ghana is classified by the World Bank as a lower middle income country (World Bank, 2015) but intensifying financing and external pressures on the economy has resulted in the downgrading of its currency credit ratings by credit rating agencies such as Fitch, Moody's and "Standard & Poor" depicting a negative outlook of the country's economy in the future (Fitch Ratings, 2023; Ministry of Finance, 2022; Ministry of Finance, 2022). Ghana is bent on solving its economic woes through education. The country's education is divided into three phases. The first phase is called basic education and this comprises of kindergarten, primary school and junior high school. Secondary education constitute the second phase and this is made up of training in the senior high schools, and technical and vocational institutes. The third phase is tertiary education and covers universities, polytechnics and Colleges of Nursing, Colleges of Agriculture and Colleges of Education. Ghana operates a 6+3+3+4 school system meaning 6 years primary, 3 years junior high, 3 years secondary and 4 years university (Swanzy, 2016). Ghana's quest to sustain its economic growth and seek competitive advantage in the globalised knowledge economy requires her education institutions to be manned by quality teachers to enable the educational institutions to churn out the knowledgeable citizenry Ghana desires.

2 Historic Overview

Teacher education development in Ghana is not a recent phenomenon. It commenced during the colonial era when the Basel Mission established the first teacher training college in 1848 at Akropong-Akwapim to churn out teachers for the basic schools they had established (Acheampong & Furlong, 2000; McWilliams & Kwamena-Poh, 1975). A century after this endeavour by the Basel

Mission thus 1937, the number of colleges had increased to six (Acheampong & Furlong, 2000; McWilliams & Kwamena-Poh, 1975). Prominent amongst the missions that made major contributions towards the expansion of teacher education in Ghana include Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist and Anglican missions (Acheampong & Furlong, 2000; McWilliams & Kwamena-Poh, 1975). Ghana's quest for its citizenry to be literate and numerate and also have quality human resources to man the critical sectors of its economy resulted in the expansion of the school sector. This move resulted in the need for more teachers because demand for basic education had started increasing.

The government of Ghana together with other religious missions responded by investing in teacher education by establishing more teacher education colleges. Currently, there are about 46 teacher education colleges spread across the country to improve equity in access (Ghana Tertiary Education Commission, 2024). The qualifications beneficiaries of teacher education obtain after successfully pursuing teacher education has also evolved overtime leading to the built up of teaching corps comprising different categories of teachers (Acheampong & Furlong, 2000). By 1930, the four-year teacher training course was established for the training of middle school leavers to teach in the primary and middle schools and awarded Certificate 'A' (Acheampong & Furlong, 2000). In order to cater for the growing demand for teachers at the primary sector due to the expansion of education system, a two-year Certificate 'B', post-middle school teacher training programme was introduced in 1937 (Acheampong & Furlong, 2000; Abukari, 2007).

Teacher education took another turn in 1951 with the introduction of the Accelerated Development Plan. The expansion of the education system linked to the Accelerated Development Plan led to the introduction of a two-year teacher education programme for Certificate 'B' holders which enabled them to upgrade to a Post-'B' Certificate 'A' after a period of teaching experience in the classroom (Acheampong & Furlong, 2000; Abukari, 2007). Similarly, the expansion of secondary education impacted teacher education. In 1950, a new two-year programme was introduced for graduates of secondary schools to undergo training to obtain Certificate 'A' (Post-Secondary) to qualify them to teach in middle and secondary schools in the country (Acheampong & Furlong, 2000; Abukari, 2007). The specialist teacher education training is also a key feature of teacher education development in Ghana. In the early post-independence era, thus 1962, a two-year specialist/three-year Diploma programme was introduced with the entry requirement being Certificate 'A' in addition to classroom experience (Acheampong & Furlong,

2000). An interesting development occurred in Ghana's teacher education sector in 1978. All the programmes mentioned above were phased out and replaced with a three-year Post-Secondary Teacher Training Programme leading to Certificate 'A' qualification (Acheampong & Furlong, 2000) with the aim of improving the professional competence of trained teachers.

Like her peers in other parts of the world, Ghana continued to be moved by the quest to deploy quality teachers in its schools to help facilitate its development agenda. In 1993, Ghana reformed its education including teacher education. As part of the reforms, the Education Commission on Teacher Education recommended the setting up of only two levels of teacher education (Acheampong & Furlong, 2000). These were a 4-year straight degree programme for graduates from senior secondary schools; and a 2-year post-diploma degree programmes for practising teachers. Even though it is claimed that this recommendation did not see the light of day (Acheampong & Furlong, 2000; Adegoke, 2003), one can conclude that the current teacher education offered in the country bear some DNA of the teacher education offered earlier in the country.

3 Teacher Education Programmes

Ghana's quest to deploy teachers with the 21st century teacher competencies continue to hunt government and motivates ad hoc policies making the sector a bit unstable with regards to the training being offered. Teacher education programmes which hitherto was the preserve of Colleges of Education are now offered in both public and private universities (Ghana Tertiary Education Commission, 2024). Even though public universities such as University of Cape Coast, and University of Education, Winneba were noted to offer teacher education programmes, their teacher education programmes targeted secondary education. Currently, teacher education programmes are also offered by Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, University for Development studies, University of Ghana, The Akenten Appiah-Menka University of Skills Training and Entrepreneurial Development, C.K Tedaam University for Technology and Applied Sciences, and Simon Diedong Dombo University of Business and Integrated Development Studies.

In addition to these, teacher education programmes are also offered by universities in the private sector such as Catholic University and Valley View and Jackson College of Education. What mostly differ between the teacher education

programmes offered at the universities and Colleges of Education is that, the Colleges of Education train teachers for the basic schools and offer a Four-Year Bachelor of Education programmes in Early Childhood, Primary and Junior High School Education. Similarly, some of the universities train teachers for the basic schools but they also offer discipline specific teacher education programmes (Bachelor of Education in Mathematics, Arts, Social Science, Agriculture science, physical science, Home Economics, Business Studies, Technical and Vocational, etc) that makes their graduates fit to teach in secondary schools. The teacher education programmes offered by the teacher training education institutions are diverse but unique somehow because the duration for the bachelors' programmes is four years. The students undergoing teacher training also take pedagogy courses every semester though out their four years training and lastly engage in Teaching Practice (Practicum/Supported Teaching in Schools) as a core component of their training (Transforming Teaching Education and Learning, 2024) .

In order for teacher training to be harmonised, the government has recently standardized the teacher education training programme for basic school teachers by providing a curriculum which training institutions are expected to adhere to but this has been ignored by some universities. In addition to the bachelor's degrees being offered in the country, some of the public universities also offer a One Year Master of Education programme with or without thesis and Post-Graduate Diploma in Education for graduates who pursued non-education degree programmes and wants to pursue a career in teaching at basic and secondary schools. Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy are also offered in discipline specifics such as curriculum, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Leadership, Administration, Planning, Counselling, Psychology, Language and Literacy, Science, Mathematics etc) but these are research focused and span two years and four-years respectively. Graduates of the Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy programmes qualify to teach in Colleges of Education, universities and any analogous higher education institutions.

With the government working to enforce in the near future the implementation of the existing policy that requires a master of philosophy and doctoral degrees as prerequisite qualifications for College of Education and university teaching (Ansah, Swanzy, & Obeng, 2019), demand for these programmes has started increasing but the universities are challenged by limited staff capacity.

3 Teacher Education Programmes

Ghana acknowledges that the quality of teachers trained by higher education institutions offering teacher education programmes is very important for quality education delivery in the country. As a result, Ghana has instituted policies and mechanisms to enable it achieve the quality it desires. Colleges of Education and universities (both public and private) are required by the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission to institute internal quality assurance structures to enable them to deliver quality teacher education (Ansah & Swanzy, 2019). Hitherto, the Colleges of Education and the universities had means of ensuring quality of teacher education delivery, however, the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission directive has compelled them to formalise quality assurance by establishing Quality Assurance Directorate/Office/unit and appointed staff to be in-charge. The internal quality assurance mechanisms deployed by the Colleges of Education and the universities are expected to assist them to offer quality teacher education and also promote quality culture in the institutions.

In addition to this, the Colleges of Education and public universities are required to seek institutional and programme accreditation from the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission for a period of three years before they offer teacher education programmes (Ansah & Swanzy, 2019). Apart from these quality assurance criteria the Colleges of Education and universities have to meet, the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission has another quality assurance arrangement for Colleges of Education. Affiliation is used as a quality assurance strategy by Ghana Tertiary Education Commission to maintain standards and enhance the quality of teacher education programmes offered by Colleges of education. The Ghana Tertiary Education Commission requires Colleges of Education to affiliate to a public university in Ghana. Affiliation is perceived as a form of relationship when an institution relinquishes part of its authority in favour of some form of tutelage from another institution for the strengthening of institutional capacity of the institution that relinquished part of its authority (Ansah & Swanzy, 2019; Bernasconi, 2006). The affiliation protocols as advocated by the Ghana Tertiary Commission requires the public universities to maintain standards and enhancement of quality in the Colleges of Education. Specifically, the public universities are required to provide mentorship to the Colleges of Education on governance, teaching and learning, student management system, assessment and certification, promotion of the staff, etc).

The Ghana Tertiary Education Commission administers an instrument called “Affiliation Barometer” to both the Colleges of Education and the public uni-

versities periodically to ascertain the effectiveness of the affiliation relationship (Ghana Tertiary Education Commission, 2019). The affiliation regime in the country is not free but associated with some cost. The Colleges of Education have to pay affiliation fees to the public universities in order to be affiliated to them for a specific duration. Affiliation has been perceived to be expensive and one that drains the fiscal resources of Colleges of Education. Colleges of Education are expected to undergo this mentorship for a maximum of 10 years and seek charter but their current situation depicts that they are far away from the conditions that can facilitate their weaning from the universities (Ghana Tertiary Education Commission, 2019).

5 Teacher Licensing

In Ghana, it is mandatory for teachers operating at the pre-tertiary level to be licensed to qualify to teach in schools. The teacher licensing has been bequeathed to the National Teaching Council (NTC), the official government agency (National Teaching Council, 2024). The mandate of NTC emanates from Ghana's Education Act, 2008 (Act 778). Section 9 of the Act 778 requires NTC to improve professional standing and status of teachers and to license and register teachers in Ghana (National Teaching Council, 2024). Applicants qualified to apply to be licensed as teachers are graduates possessing Diploma in Education and Bachelor's degree in Education. In addition, graduates holding Bachelor's degree in non-education discipline and have pursued a Postgraduate Diploma in Education also meet the application criteria. These category of graduates who apply to the NTC to be licensed are required to pass the Ghana Teacher Licensure Examination (GTLE) organised by the National Teaching Council to merit that status. Before, NTC open their portal for registration, higher education institutions who offer teacher education programmes are expected to submit the list of names of students who have graduated from their programmes to enable the NTC to index them. The GTLE covers the following courses: Essential Professional Skills, Literacy and Numeracy (National Teaching Council, 2024).

The NTC has announced that it is annulling the GTLE and that starting from 2024, it has replaced the GTLE with the Subject-Based Ghana Teacher Licensure Examination (SBGTLE). The NTC organises the licensing examination twice in a year at designated centres around the country. The examination fee charged by NTC is approximately USD\$ 45 in cedi equivalent.

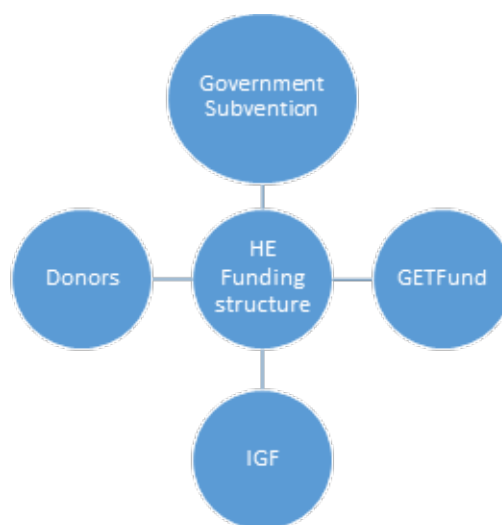
6 Funding of Teacher Education

In Ghana, Teacher education is mainly funded by the government. However, as Ghana began to experience an economic crisis in the 80s coupled with growth in student numbers, the funding model began to shiver and became unsustainable (Swanzy & Kwasi-Agyeman, 2023). Data on funds directly from government to support teacher education is limited. What was chanced on is outdated and this is what is used to start the discussion. Government's recurrent expenditure on teacher education as a percentage of total recurrent expenditure on education stood at 6.0% and 6.7% in 1998 and 1999 respectively (Abukari, 2007). It is also on record that in 2003, out of the total budget government allocated to education, teacher education received 4.0% (Abukari, 2007). The percentage increased to 4.5% in 2004 but plummeted to 3.5% in 2005 depicting an unstable funding policy for the sector (Government of Ghana, 2004a, 2005). The downward trend of funds flow from the government to the teacher education is not strange as this has been the case for other education sectors. Currently, teacher education is part of tertiary education and the financial state of the sector seems worrying. An analysis of the budget shows dips in budget allocation to the sector from 23% in 2019 to 16.2% in 2020 and 14.2% in 2021 (Republic of Ghana, 2022). On average the government seems to allocate about 15% of total government expenditure on education, however this is below the 17% average for Lower Middle-Income Countries (LMICs) (Republic of Ghana, 2022). What is even worrying is that an analysis of the Programme Based Budget (2022-2025) of the ministry of education portrays that the allocation to the education sector is projected to decrease further into the medium term up until 2025 (Republic of Ghana, 2022). This seems to have compelled teacher education training institutions to seek revenue from the Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFund); internally generated funds (IGF); and donors (Atuahene, 2014) to sustain their operations.

GETFund was established by Ghana's Parliament through the Ghana Education Trust Fund Act 2000, Act 581 in 2000 (Government of Ghana, 2000; Swanzy, & Kwasi-Agyeman, 2023). The mandate of GETFund is to provide additional funds for the development of physical and academic infrastructure at all levels of education including institutions offering teacher education (Government of Ghana, 2000). Additionally, GETFund offers funding to support academic staff to acquire higher degrees, undertake research and participate in conferences and seminars (Government of Ghana, 2000). GETFund is funded through Ghana's Value-Added

Tax (VAT) which stands at 12.5% (Government of Ghana, 2000). The GET Fund is financed with 2.5% points (Effah et al., 2009). Equally, donor agencies contribute greatly to the fiscal well-being of Ghana's higher education sector (Swanzy & Kwasi-Agyemang, 2023). Prominent among them is the Transforming Teacher Education and Learning (T-TEL). T-TEL was launched following a successful completion of a six year (2014-2020) USD\$34 million programme with financial support from UKAid and implemented by Cambridge Education to improve the quality of pre-service teacher education (Transforming Teaching Education and Learning, 2024). Similarly, Internally Generated Funds (IGF) provides additional financial support for teacher education institutions. These are revenues that are derived from the regular activities or operations of teacher education institutions (Swanzy & Kwasi-Agyeman, 2023). The sources include but not limited to revenue from book sales, and user fees. Ever since IGF became a funding stream it has experienced significant growth (Swanzy & Kwasi-Agyeman, 2023). Figure 1 depicts funding sources for Teacher Education.

Figure 1- Funding sources for Teacher Education.



Source: (Swanzy & Kwasi-Agyeman, 2023).

7 Teacher deployment

Graduates either from universities or Colleges of Education of teacher training programmes undertake one year National Service after their training. National Service is mandatory for all Ghanaians graduating from tertiary educational institutions who are not less than eighteen years old (Ghana National Ser-

vice Scheme, 2024). After the National Service, the graduates of Colleges of Education are automatically recruited by the government and posted to their duty post whilst the graduates from universities have to search for job opportunities either from the government or the private sector. The deployment of the newly trained teachers from the Colleges of Education and those from the universities recruited by the government is executed by the Ghana Education Service (GES) and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Service, the official government agencies responsible for regular pre-tertiary education and pre-tertiary TVET respectively (Amofah, 2022).

The deployment of the newly trained teachers is centralised and is based on data on existing vacancies obtained from school heads and submitted to the GES/TVET service headquarters via the district and regional directorates. The centralisation of the teacher deployment seems to have created disequilibrium in staff strengths between urban schools and schools located in rural communities and this seems to have affected the quality of education offered by rural schools (Amofah, 2022). The centralisation of teacher deployment seems to challenge the National Pre-Tertiary Education Act 2020 (Act 1049) because it seeks to decentralise Basic Education in the country (Amofah, 2022).

8 The way forward

Ghana's teacher education has undergone reforms in recent times, but the sector still needs more attention to enable it instil in graduates competencies that will enable them to operate in schools effectively in the future. This includes adding courses such as school safety and surveillance, school hygiene, education law and pedagogies for persons on the move (refugees, migrants, displaced persons) to the number of courses already being taken by the teacher trainees. The reason is that the threat posed by terrorist in the sub-region and their continuous target of schools suggests an urgent need for teachers to be equipped with knowledge on safety and surveillance during their training. Additionally, the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic required the deployment of hygiene artefacts to enable schools curb the ramifications of the pandemic. Even though some schools executed this well, the directives on hygiene protocols were spearheaded by national agencies and the hygiene artefacts in some schools have been decommissioned post-Covid.

To enable schools curb the consequences of a pandemic of similar natu-

re, it is incumbent that teacher training programmes consider school hygiene in their curriculum. The complex nature of education demands that teacher education programmes include education law in their curriculum. Equipping teacher trainees with knowledge in education law will assist them to navigate the complexities in providing education to their students. Lastly, people are willingly or unwillingly moving from one geographical location to the other as migrants, refugees or displaced persons. Persons belonging to such groups need to be taught by teachers using innovative pedagogies but the current teacher education programmes lack these. It is incumbent that teacher education programmes factor pedagogies for persons on the move in their curriculum to enable teachers they churn out cater for such persons in their classrooms effectively.

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