

**THE FAULTLINES OF REDUCTIONIST FALLACY IN GLOBAL EDUCATIONAL
POLICY DISCOURSE: THE HEIST OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION FINANCE
POLICY AND PUBLIC INVESTMENT IN TEACHER EDUCATION AT AKROKERI
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION IN GHANA**

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ABSTRACT: *Two fundamental assumptions have become dogma in reductionist educational policy analysis: that complex problems are solvable by dividing them into smaller, simpler, and more tractable units; and for this reason that public educational finance in global educational policy discourse is fallacious because it simply claims that the benefits of education are either illusory or epiphenomenal. Thus reductionist policies do not take into consideration the importance of the layered parts of the subjective local policy space, and hence fails to account adequately for thought, reason, and a full range of objects that are peculiar and proper to local conditions. Tracking the deep divide within the global policy analytic tradition, the paper brings a Ghanaian perspective to bear on reductionist educational policies of the World Bank which shows the reductionist educational finance agenda to be incapable of sustaining quality education for symptomatic reasons. This study was a cross sectional research that used the concurrent model of mixed method design, and specifically employed interviews, focus groups discussion and survey to collect data from students, tutors and the principal of Akrokeri College of Education. The study used a sample of 160 participants from a population of 1193. The paper takes a view that global educational policy discourse discounts local cultural and socioeconomic imperatives in policy prescriptions which results in a lot of politics and resistance because it compromises the quality of teacher education. These are insuperable limitations and dangers for any explanation that aspires to provide justification for the problems created by the fallacy of reductionism in educational policy analysis.*

KEYWORDS: Policy transfer; global education policy discourse; local academic space; space of flows; network society; spatial logic

INTRODUCTION

“I have come across men of letters who have written history without taking part in public affairs, and politicians who have concerned themselves with producing events without thinking about them. I have observed that the first are always inclined to find general causes, whereas the second, living in the midst of disconnected daily facts, are prone to imagine that everything is attributable to particular incidents, and that the wires they pull are the same as those that move the world. It is to be presumed that both are equally deceived” (de Tocqueville, 1896).

This is the 120th anniversary of Sadler’s legendary argument at the Guildford educational conference on Saturday 20th October 1900 when he cautioned against the transfer of educational policies and practices from one country to another with his argument:

We cannot wander at pleasure among the educational systems of the world, like a child strolling through a garden and pick off a flower from one bush and some leaves from another, and then expect that if we stick what we have gathered into the soil at home, we shall have a living plant (Sadler, 1979).

This proposition was as valid in Sadler’s era as it is today in the 21 century, and the children who wandered through the gardens of education at that time were mostly government appointed officials who sought to develop and improve upon systems of education in their own countries. The orientation of these officials was that if they studied other educational systems elsewhere, they may learn not to repeat the mistakes some other countries made when they sought to establish ideal educational systems by copying and integrating aspects of foreign educational systems at home. Practices such as described above portend educational policy transfer which is the *raison d’être* of this study and emphasize the importance of policy-oriented advice about which and how educational ideas, practices or institutions abroad could be transferred to solve urgent local educational problems. In contemporary global education policy discourse, this policy oriented approach to education has taken a distinct path in the analytical evaluation of the purpose of education.

This path can be described as ‘divide and conquer’, and it is rooted in the assumption that complex problems are solved by dividing them into smaller, simpler, and more tractable units (Lindberg, 1992). And because the processes are ‘reduced’ into more basic units, this approach has been termed ‘reductionism’ which has been the predominant paradigm of science over the past two centuries. Reductionism pervades policy science and affects the way social problems are diagnosed, treated, and sometimes prevented. However, while it has been responsible for tremendous successes in the sciences, there are limits to reductionism in policy analysis, and alternative explanations such as systems analysis must be sought to complement it (see Mittelstrass, 2014; Kaufman, 1993). In order for a systems perspective to be fully appreciated, however, it has to recognize first, the reductionist nature of most international educational policies and understand its limitations. For this

reason, this paper seeks to examine the reductionist approach that pervades public investment in Ghana's teacher education policy and explain the limitations that associate the approach. Secondly, the paper aims to use the experiences of the Akrokeri College of Education to provide a more practical discussion of how public de-investment in teacher education affects quality teacher training, and hope that these discussions can stimulate further inquiry into the best policy prescriptions for investment in teacher education.

This article proposes that 'reductionism' is a metaphysical issue that has serious consequences for human life because it gravely affects educational policy theory and practice. Reductionism can be understood as the claim that one whole set of things is or can be wholly explained in terms of another set. In the instance of this paper, reductionism operates with a stratified conception of public expenditure crisis (for example, national budget crisis, high public expenditure, teacher trainee allowance) and claims to be able to eliminate the higher levels of the crisis (for example, national budget crisis, high public expenditure) and rather explain them completely in terms of the lower (payment of teacher trainee allowance). Thus, governments' inability to maintain a balanced national budget for which reason government departments and agencies have difficulties in fulfilling their mandates can be entirely explained in terms of the payment of teacher trainee allowance which is a fallacy in policy analysis. In consonance with this fallacy, and to explain the dynamics of educational finance, Sanyal and Bruce (2011) have stated that, economic growth over the past two decades has been insufficient to sustain the rising costs of higher education resulting from massification in most countries across the globe. This situation has put increased pressure on public budgets, especially in those countries with a strong tradition of public financing of higher education (Sanyal & Bruce, 2011). And most nations, in their attempt to curb this situation and increase enrolment have introduced cost sharing mechanism which has been a favourable alternative educational funding to most countries including Ghana. This has made tertiary education funding in Ghana a burden for both government and students due to its high cost, To solve this problem, the Government adopted a policy to scrap trainee teacher allowances in order to significantly reduce public expenditure on teacher education which the World Bank argued, draws greatly (as much as 10% of basic education wage bill for estimated 27000 teacher trainees) on government budget (VIAM Africa, 2015).

In line with this perspective, the Asian Development Bank (2009) has also stated that, though it sounds convincing that free higher education will increase enrollments and improve equity, it believes that international comparisons generally do not support these assertions. Views such as these have made many nations including Ghana to place great emphasis on public investment in basic and secondary education rather than tertiary education. This is manifested in policies such as the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE), Free Senior High School education and the removal of subsidies for tertiary education so as to expand enrollment at the tertiary level, especially in the Colleges of Education. However, these policies are made without equal concern for provision of quality education for national development. In Ghana's peculiar situation, this manifested in a World Bank's tacit support and ultimately policy prescription to remove the teacher

training allowance in order to cut down the high public expenditure and to create room for the expansion of enrollment in the Colleges of Education. The embedding idea is that the teacher training allowance draws hugely on the national budget and creates a ceiling for enrollment because the scheme comes with a fixed quota of allowance for disbursement to the Colleges of Education (VIAM Africa, 2015).

In reaction to this government policy, students of Akrokeri College of Education fiercely reacted and demonstrated against the scrapping of the teacher trainee allowance because the policy created a culture where students had to skip classes to do other jobs to earn money to pay their fees and other bills while on campus. These episodes took place against the backdrop and belief of Asare and Nti (2014) that, “education lays the foundation for the development of the human resource of every nation” and “central to the educational enterprise is the teacher”. This means that the role of the teacher is indispensable to national development. The argument is that “education is a condition for development and the teacher is the ultimate definer of its reality” (Asare & Nti, 2014). In line with this view, this paper believes that the centrality of the teacher’s role to national development requires teacher education to be of topmost quality. This is a goal that the teacher trainee subsidy is meant to achieve, which Gyasi (2014) has categorised as based on an egalitarian ideology and ensured that no individual student was financially restricted from accessing teacher training. However, this teacher trainee financial facility received a lot of bartering during the last couple of decades due to political ideological changes emanating from the capitalist economic management imperatives as reflected in global educational policy discourse. Per the views presented above, this is a type of policy-oriented approach to education, with an emphasis on transferring solutions for an education problem from one context to another that Beech (2006a) has argued to have continued from long time ago to present day. However, this article suggests that in the 21st century, there are new and increasingly more powerful actors in the educational field who are involved in the business of educational policy transfer (see Tanaka, 2005). This new wave of involvement has made it possible for processes through which education policies move between contexts to take specific forms that makes it impossible for any decisive challenge from the local context to be mounted.

Statement of the problem

The problem of the study is that, the teacher trainee allowance in Ghana was supplanted by an international education policy on tertiary education finance without any formidable challenge from the local academic space. Consequently, trainee teachers skipped teacher-learner contact hours to engage in economic and non-economic activities to earn money to pay their bills at college and this process dissipated quality teacher education at the Akrokeri College of Education..

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to investigate how the reductionist educational finance policy affected the quality of teacher education at the Akrokeri College of Education when the

teacher trainee allowance was removed and trainee teachers had to seek alternative sources of funding for fees and living expenses.

Objectives of the study

The two objectives that guided the study are to:

- a. explore how teacher trainee allowance promoted quality teacher education at Akrokeri College of Education
- b. investigate how the reductionist teacher trainee allowance withdrawal policy affected quality teacher education at Akrokeri College of Education

Research question

From the objectives stated above, the following research questions are derived:

- a. How did the teacher trainee allowance promote quality teacher training at Akrokeri College of Education?
- b. How did the reductionist teacher trainee allowance withdrawal policy affect quality teacher education at Akrokeri College of Education?

THEROETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework for this paper is established on the assumption that any policy to remove teacher trainee allowance to induce teacher trainees to look for alternative sources to fund their training in college is reductionist in nature and will have negative consequences for teacher education. The discussion hinges on the under-listed concepts that are derived from the research questions. These are: trainee allowance and `quality education; and the negative effects of the policy to remove teacher trainee allowance. The theoretical discussions being advanced are underpinned and interspersed with a discussion of aspects of Musgrave's theory of higher education funding which sheds light on whether or not government and or individuals should be involved in financing education (Musgrave, 1959), Deutsche's theory of distributive justice (Deutsch, 1985), and reductionism (Mittelstrass, 2014; Peacocke, 1985). Musgrave's theory argues that government should be responsible for tertiary education financing and it questions whether the beneficiaries of tertiary education should be responsible for the cost of their education within the context of whether education must be seen as a private good, public good, or merit good.

Teacher trainee allowance and quality education

The paper assumes that teacher trainee allowance promotes quality teacher education and examines how teacher trainee allowance promotes quality teacher education in Akrokeri College of Education. Adams et al. (2008) and Pius (2014) believe that financing of education has emerged as one of the most salient public policy issues in the 21st century as it plays a central role in higher education. They argue that most governments have a major stake in the funding of higher education. Zideman (2002) has stipulated four forms of funding for higher education institutions being: negotiated, input-based, output-based and student-based forms of funding (see also Zideman & Albrecht, 1995).

Dzokoto (2015) has said that the teacher trainee allowance assist trainees in the payment of feeding fees, examination fees, buying of text books, hand-outs, amongst others. Tsikata (2016) has also said that the allowance enable trainees on out-programmes to cater for their teaching and learning materials, payment of rent, and utility bills. This subject relates to tertiary education funding for students and its resultant effect in ensuring effective learning that promote quality education for all and these connote distributive justice. Dani (2007) believes that higher education plays an important role in reducing poverty, inequality and facilitating sustainable economic growth and development. However, in spite of its significance to national development, it comes with an enormous expenditure and challenges that most governments in both developed and developing countries continue to resolve. Consequently, the high cost of financing higher education has necessitated governments' introduction of alternative forms of funding such as cost-sharing policies which require parents and students to contribute to the cost of education (Armah, 2016).

Mosteanu (2011) has categorized education as a merit good but also has potential benefits for the larger society. Hence the state has a full responsibility to provide it and this justifies the need for the state's financial investment. Mosteanu (2011) has argued that that there is the need for the state to invest in education because the positive externality of education (in the form of public benefits) affects the general standard of living. The discourse made so far has implications for quality education which Sanyal (2013) has argued as extending beyond school, classroom and teacher issues to embrace contextual issues like economic, social and political conditions that impact the delivery of education. To Sanyal (2013), definitions for quality education must include the economic and socio-cultural realities of learners. Zhang and An (2010) have also said that among all the factors for quality education such as learners, content (curriculum), processes, environments (facilities) and outcomes, the most important among these factors is the learner. Their view is that all the other factors compliment with the learner to bring forth quality in education. Colby (2000) has also said that quality education must include health, nourishment, safety and protection of students of which finance plays a good part. Colby (2000) and Sanyal (2013) have argued that quality teacher education is achieved when teacher trainees are able to concentrate on their education without financial or material restrictions. This is an important pre-requisite because the teacher is the most important input in the quality education process and should radiate quality" (Sanyal, 2013). From the purview of these broad spectrum of the importance of public investment in tertiary education, this paper takes a view that any policy that seeks to explain the national budget crisis in terms of the cost of government financial investment in education is fallacious within the context of reductionism because it is simply claiming that the benefits of education as discussed above are either illusory or epiphenomenal – that is, they either have no relevance or have no independent power to improve the economy of the country in a manner discussed by Peacocke (1985) who has distinguished three types of reductionism as:

- a. Methodological reductionism which involves breaking down presently unintelligible wholes into their component parts, which can be managed, finding their structures and functions, and working backwards to understand the whole.

- b. Epistemological reductionism that deals with the conceptions, theories and laws of one branch of science as accounting for and explaining (without a remainder) all the phenomena and processes studied by another without any distinctive conceptions, theories and laws of its own, and
- c. Ontological reductionism which argues that one level of reality is nothing but another and lower one, or that all events and processes upon it can be accounted for by reference to those of the latter.

The effects of the reductionist policy to remove teacher trainee allowance

The assumption under this concept is that, quality of teacher education will get affected when the teacher trainee allowance is withdrawn. Akwasi (2015) has argued that students who are supposed to be in classrooms are found at the market centers selling. His major concern is that if teacher trainees use their contact hours to look for money, what will become of these would-be teachers who are expected to groom children to develop the nation? He believes that the financial struggle and frustrations that teacher trainees went through when the allowance was withdrawn caused them to be stern on children who may actually need their love and care in education. This notwithstanding, Sanyal and Bruce (2011) have stated that contemporary economies have not been favourable globally to support the financial conditions of students. The argument has been that recent economic downturn makes it impossible for governments alone to successfully fund higher education for which reason an alternative source of funding is needed to promote quality tertiary education

Atuahene (2006) has said that whereas access to higher education poses a challenge to many institutions in developing countries, it is more of a challenge to people from penurious social and economic background than to those from the affluent class. Hence during the withdrawal of the teacher trainee allowance, teacher trainees did not escape financial difficulties and frustrations which affected their studies. Thus, these trainees had divided attention and could not focus on their studies (Tsikata, 2016).

METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

The study used mixed method research design with the mixed concurrent model to collect data and find answers to the research questions. The research methods used to conduct the study under this design were interviews, survey and focused group discussions. This was a cross-sectional study involving study of the effect of the reductionist policy to withdraw teacher-trainee allowance on quality teacher education at Akrokeri College of Education. This college was used for the study due to the urgency and fierce manner with which students of the College opposed the withdrawal of trainee allowance.

According to Ansah (2013), Akrokeri College of Education is a leader in training of teachers in basic education. The students, tutors and the principal constituted the subjects for this study.

The population for this study was 1193 which was made up of 442 first, 361 second and 390 third year students (in proportions of 37%, 30% and 33% respectively), then 50 tutors and the principal. Subsequently, a sample size of 160 participants made of 10 tutors, 149 students and the principal were used for the study. Proportional sampling and systematic random sampling were used to select 55 first year students, 45 second year students and 49 third year students based on zero decimal places approximation. Again, systematic sampling technique was also used to select 10 tutor participants (see Mugo, 2002; Schutt, 2009).

Instrumentation

The study used semi-structured interview guide (to interview the Principal and 6 tutors); focus group discussion interview schedule (to gather data from tutors and students); and questionnaires (to gather data from students). The qualitative instruments were pilot tested, and the questionnaire was pretested at the Accra College of Education.

The researchers used the SPSS to establish the internal consistency of the quantitative findings from the pre-test on the basis of Cronbach's alpha reliability co-efficient of 0.7 as the benchmark (see Field, 2006). The results from the test for the individual items ranged from 0.7 to 0.8. Hence the average of the Cronbach's alpha for the 50 items computed was 0.725 which was approximated to 0.73.

The qualitative data from the pilot tested instruments were evaluated against the objectives to establish their appropriateness. Their trustworthiness was also established based on Guba's model of trustworthiness which outlines dependability, credibility, transferability and confirmability as elements (see Shenton, 2004; Elo et al., 2014; Moon et al., 2016).

Data collection and analysis procedures

A total of seven interviews were conducted, all within 30 to 45 minutes. Two focus group discussions were also held and each lasted 90 minutes. The researchers collected the qualitative data via audio recording. Questionnaires were administered within a day and were returned within one week.

The researcher used the thematic analysis technique to analyse the qualitative data. The quantitative data was coded and the 50 items were put into themes according to the research questions. These items were entered into SPSS and analyzed using descriptive statistics. The output in the form of frequencies and percentages were presented in Tables and interpreted in corroboration with the qualitative data.

The Reductionist Policy Prescriptions for Teacher Education Finance

This part provides analysis and discussion of the data collected for the study. The discussions are presented under two key themes on how the teacher trainee allowance facility facilitates the delivery of quality education and secondly, how the reductionist trainee allowance policy withdrawal negatively affected education delivery.

The teacher trainee allowance and quality education

Regarding this subject, the data revealed that, teacher trainee allowance was useful for teacher training and its removal compromised effective training. This means that without teacher trainee allowance it was difficult for teacher trainees to do their teaching practice because the teacher trainees used the allowance to procure teaching and learning materials. Secondly, students were not be able to concentrate on their studies such that they were torn between focusing on learning and engaging in commercial activities as alternative sources of financing their education. Interview Respondent #7 for example said that, the teacher trainee allowance is “meant to remove the financial problems of students while in school so as to enable them to concentrate on their studies.” The quantitative data regarding this subject is presented in Table 1 below:

**Table 1: Teacher trainee allowance and quality education
n=149**

Subject	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Importance of the teacher trainee allowance	High	129	86.6
	Moderate	17	11.4
	Not important	3	2.0
Reasons for students' preference of College of Education	Career teacher	107	71.8
	Financial	9	6.0
	Stop gap	34	22.8
	Not sure	2	1.3
Cost of teacher education	High	131	87.9
	Moderate	16	10.7
	Not expensive	2	1.3
Benefits of College of Education to trainees	High	108	72.5
	Moderate	19	12.8
	Low	10	6.7
	No benefit	3	2.0
	Not sure	9	6.0
Benefits of College of Education to the nation	High	135	90.6
	Moderate	6	4.0
	Low	4	2.7
	No benefit	1	0.7
	Not sure	3	2.0
Effect of financial challenges on training	Yes	144	96.6
	No	5	3.4
Students need for government's financial support	Yes	139	93.3
	No	6	4.0
	Not sure	4	2.7
State of teacher education at the College	Good	125	83.9
	Bad	20	13.4
	Not sure	4	2.7
Justification of public investment in teacher education	Yes	143	96.0
	No	3	2.0
	Not sure	3	2.0
Financial support for students from low socio-economic background	Yes	38	25.5
	No	75	50.3
	Not sure	36	24.2
Government's capability to support teacher trainees financially	Yes	139	93.3
	No	6	4.0
	Not sure	4	2.7

Source: Fieldwork data (2020).

Note: Some of the figures in the Tables (above) do not tally with the sample size because the respondents were given room to select more than one response in some circumstances.

The data in Table 1 corroborates the view from the interview and reveals that 86.6% (129) of the respondents were of the view that teacher trainee allowance is highly important for teacher education in the sense that, teacher trainees will be unable to acquire teaching and learning materials and other essentials for learning unless they are supported with training allowance as explained by the interview data. The interview data further explained that, teacher trainees put part of their allowance into savings to give them a good platform to start life after graduation, and it also enables brilliant but needy students to have access to college of education. The data from the focus group discussion corroborates with this view and argues that the teacher trainee allowance was used among other things to attract students with good grades as well as those from poor families into College of Education. Interview respondent # 5 illustrates this view thus:

Basically, it is meant to give ... support to the trainees whiles they are undergoing their studies. There are so many parents who are not able to support their wards financially and therefore, if the trainee allowance is in place, it will ... ensure that those who are very brilliant but come from very poor homes also get the opportunity to attend training college.

Data from the interview further showed that, although the capacity for admission into the College of Education has increased and students find it difficult to enter because they cannot afford the cost of teacher training. The data confirm the assertion that, the introduction of the teacher trainee allowance was based on an egalitarian ideology which ensured that no individual was financially restricted from accessing training in pedagogy (Gyasi, 2014). He affirms that, the teacher trainee allowance supports student teachers on their 'out programmes' especially those that are posted to the remotest and deprived areas of the country.

Teacher trainees' preference for College of Education

The research investigated the notion that the teacher trainee allowance was the key reason for taking up the teaching profession and how this promoted quality teacher education. Table 1 indicates the motives of respondents and showed that, 71.8% (107) of the respondents said that they entered the College purposely to become teachers. Besides, the focus group discussion revealed that, apart from taking students through practical lessons and discipline in College of Education, students have the privilege of ready job after the training. Thus, they get posted to jobs after completion.

Cost of going through Akrokeri College of Education

The researchers also investigated the cost of education at the College of Education and how teacher trainees allowance supports students in this direction as well as the roles of government and parents in all of this. Table 1 shows that 87.9% (131) of the respondents

said that education at the College of Education is highly expensive. This data was corroborated by the qualitative data that:

the cost of going through college of education was expensive as students paid more than GH¢1700.00 per semester which was unaffordable to poor homes and prevented brilliant but needy students from gaining access. However, the allowance was a morale booster to both parents and students (Interview data, Respondent #5).

This data attributes the high cost of education at the College to such dynamics as: payment of school fees by students; withdrawal of students' subsidy (the teacher trainee allowance); Government's inability to fulfill its financial obligation; and inadequate financial support from parents. The data categorized the financial challenges for training at the College of Education into two broad forms, namely:

a. financial challenges for individual students during the course of training

The interview data indicated that, the financial difficulties students go through, especially those from poor homes, in feeding and procuring teaching and learning materials during the course of teaching practice compels them to engage in economic and immoral activities which adversely affect effective training of teachers. The interview respondent #2 said that:

the high school fees coupled with the cost involved in doing project work, utility bills, insufficient meals, accommodation fees during out programme is a challenge to most of the students and their parents.... This compels some of the students to indulge in selling at lorry stations, sewing, while others indulge in immoral conduct. These have negative influence on their class attendance.

The indications of financial hardship for individual students are expressed in lack of money to: hire workers for infrastructure maintenance; buy water (due to inadequate supply of drinking water); pay school fees; and purchase teaching and learning materials. The survey data indicated that the financial challenges that the College face are very severe, as 96.6% (144) of the respondents said financial challenges affect teacher trainees in the course of their education.

b. financial challenges for the production of quality teachers

The interview data revealed that government's inability to support the cost of teacher education leads to the destruction of the nation as a whole, as long as quality teachers for quality education are concerned because it is quality teachers who will embark on quality education for the nation's development. Dogbevi (2008) has argued that:

if most people cannot afford to pay for the full cost of tertiary education because of the obvious widening gap between the rich and the poor in the society, the society will not be able to replenish its dying work force. The human resource base of the country will dwindle and subsequently, it will affect all other aspects of the society.

The data from Table 1 suggests that 93.3% (139) of the respondents believed that the government does not necessarily have financial challenges and therefore can afford to fend for teacher trainees on their education.

There is also a suggestion that the teacher trainee allowance has been of immense benefits to students in various ways. Table 1 describes how respondents rated the benefits of the allowance to students. It shows that 72.8% (108) of the respondents said College of Education is highly beneficial to teacher trainees. The interview data also indicated that the allowance has the propensity to make students responsible and competent teachers. This leads to reduction in unemployment. A respondent said that:

the students benefit in the sense that they are given jobs after going through the training and that enable them to earn a living and live independent lives. The nation also benefits from the training programme because they are able to fill the manpower needs of the country. Where vacancies are, students are posted there to go and support. (Interview data, Respondent # 4).

This indicates that the nation as a whole also benefits from training teachers. Table 1 also reveals that 90.6% (135) of the respondents said the nation highly benefits from Colleges of Education. Dogbevi (2008) supports this finding and argues that, “higher education creates benefits that transcend individual benefits in terms of growth, social cohesion and transmission of values” to the nation. The interview data corroborates this position and argues that teacher trainees are trained to become professional teachers with the requisite skills for teaching, and the pupils who are taught by them apply what they learn to the benefit of the nation.

Compromises of quality teacher education

The study suggests that the financial challenges of teacher training and their effects have compromised quality teacher education in many ways. The interview data reveals that, there is quality teacher education when student teachers acquire the skills to teach and impart knowledge. However, teachers’ ability to teach is known from the output of their teaching which depends on teaching resources. This data also revealed further that, there cannot be quality teacher education when trainees cheat in examinations, and even though such practices are checked and stopped, they constitute part of the effects of the financial challenges discussed previously because it has the tendency to trickle down to the pupils. Hence, for effective teaching and learning that promote quality teacher education to take place, the government has to play its role in financing teacher education.

Contrary to the data presented above, Table 1 shows that 83.9% (125) of respondents believe that quality teacher education is provided at the College. However, the interview data explains that all other forms of teaching and learning resources are meaningless if learners are unable to focus on their studies. Thus, the data indicated that students are unable to learn to meet up with their tutors' efforts due to the financial challenges they face. The above issues provide a justification for the state's investment in teacher education as affirmed by the survey data. Table 1 shows that 96% (143) of respondents believe that government must invest in quality teacher education. The three data sets indicated that government's inability to invest in teacher education will inhibit national development because development of the nation's manpower starts with teachers. From these exigencies, the study takes a view that students from low socio-economic backgrounds should be given teacher trainee allowance, but the survey data rejected the idea that student teachers from low socio-economic backgrounds alone should be given teacher trainee allowance as indicated by 50.3% (76) of respondents. The interview data explains that since every student has a need, it will be discriminatory to restore the allowance to students from low socioeconomic backgrounds alone. The perception is that government has the ability to provide this facility to all trainees. The survey data confirms that 93.3% (139) of respondents said that the government has the capacity to provide all trainees with teacher trainee allowance even with enrolment increases. The survey and interview data also show that, if political leaders are honest and seek to protect state coffers from pilfering and embezzlement, government should be able to provide all teacher trainees with teacher trainee allowance even as enrollment increases.

The negative effects of the reductionist trainee allowance withdrawal policy at the College

The data indicates that the withdrawal of teacher trainee allowance negatively affected quality teacher education. The interview data showed that without requisite inputs for teacher education and until stakeholders of teacher education play their roles as expected, quality teacher education will be difficult to attain. Interview Respondent #2 argued that, "not government alone, but all stakeholders like the people in the society, ...parents, tutors, chiefs, opinion leaders should all help by playing their roles well". Again, the interview data revealed that, without the provision and proper management of human and material resources, quality teacher education cannot be attained. Factors such as incentives to motivate tutors, well stocked libraries, laboratories and resource centers, provision of teaching and learning materials, availability of infrastructure, and good remuneration for tutors have all been inhibited by the implementation of the policy even though they are essential ingredients for quality teacher education. The survey data corroborated with the qualitative data on this subject as presented in Table 2:

Table 2: The negative effects of teacher trainee allowance withdrawal

n=149			
Subject	Response	Frequency	Percentage
On production of quality teachers	Yes	128	85.9
	No	12	8.41
	Not sure	9	6.0
On students' attitude towards studies	Yes	114	76.5
	No	11	7.4
	Not sure	24	16.1
On reduction of quality teacher education	Good	33	22.2
	Not good	85	55.7
	Not sure	31	22.1
On achieving quality teacher education	Severe	128	85.9
	No severe	11	7.4
	Not sure	10	6.7

Source: Fieldwork data (2020).

The survey data showed that 85.9% (128) of the respondents believe that the withdrawal of teacher trainee allowance affected quality teacher education. The data further showed that students' attitude towards studies also deteriorated in the College as indicated by 76.5% (114) of respondents. Other themes that emerged from the data on students' attitude towards training are: trainees engage in employment and non-economic activities to pay their bills; and the unclear procedures for student transition which inhibits discipline.

Quality teacher education provision and the teacher trainee allowance withdrawal

The study examined whether quality teacher education can be attained without teacher trainee allowance. Table 2 shows that 55.7% (83) of respondents argued that quality teacher education cannot be attained without the teacher trainee allowance. The interview data also indicated that without financial support, teacher education tutors were also unable to update their courses and at the same time the numerical strength of teacher trainees also dwindled. This view argued that unless brilliant and needy students are supported financially, quality teacher education will favour only those from rich homes, and quality teacher education will be affected when standards for admitting good students are lowered. The data indicates two typical occurrences in the College when the allowance was withdrawn: students lost concentration on their studies as they took up jobs to earn money to pay their bills; and standards for admitting good students were lowered. An interviewee said:

very little can be attained because we admit people who are not academically qualified as these students could not pass their exams very well at the WASSCE level. How then are they going to be good professionals? No. They cannot be.

Because they are not academically good in the first place and yet because standards have been lowered, they were admitted. They were admitted to come and do what? Train them to go and teach what? So how many of them would be good enough to bring up our kids appropriately? (Interview data, Respondent #7).

The survey data affirms this view by showing that, 85.9% (128) of the respondents believe that the withdrawal of the allowance affected the production of quality teachers. The import of this data is that quality raw materials beget quality product. Hence it will be difficult for poor and dull students to be trained to become quality teachers. The nation's educational system will therefore suffer if measures are not put in place to admit quality students, and provide the required resources. Interview Respondent #3 argued that “attaining quality teacher education when the teacher trainee allowance was withdrawn was extremely difficult due to the lack of basic facilities for students”. This phenomenon may be juxtaposed with the experiences of Finland where teachers are the best and brightest and come from top 10% of any cohort (see Kansanen, 2014).

The data presented above are the effects of the reductionist international policy prescription with regards to educational finance which may be explained in terms of:

- i. the configuration of the global educational field, and
- ii. the analysis of the activities of the World Bank, and the way the Bank promotes certain policies and practices about education.

The kids strolling through the global garden: A 21st century configuration of the global educational field

The reductionist policy to withdraw the teacher trainee allowance in Ghana is an epitome of the movement of educational ideas, policies and practices from one place to another which is addressed in Policy Studies and Comparative Education through the concept of policy transfer. Interpretations of policy transfer have been mostly centered on relations between nation states (see Weingart & Koch, 2020; Hill, 2005; Beech, 2006b). However, under current exigencies of globalism, foreign and non-state actor influences have become more complex in the education field. Giddens (1994) calls this a ‘global society’ which he explains as a society of ‘indefinite space’ in which no state remains on the outside because within the pre-existing traditions of globalism, states cannot escape having contact with one another. In this context therefore, significant social relations exist not just between or outside states, but also on the basis of crosscut state divisions (Giddens, 1994).

In analysing foreign influences in Ghana’s educational finance, there is the need to explain the concept of space in broad terms. And in this context, the paper presents a theory that foreign influences in education policy see the state as a fundamental actor. However, this theory also brings into the equation other non-state actors that take active part in the processes of transferring policies, knowledge and ideas about education between environments. Such actors may include international agencies, consultants, universities, corporations, development agencies, regional blocks and NGOs. Underpinning this postulation is the deep conviction that when it comes to the global education discourse, the

World Bank (like other international agencies) is deeply involved in the transmission of educational policies. This theory is needed to explain our earlier position that Ghana's policy to withdraw the teacher trainee allowance is a policy prescribed by the World Bank in lieu of the Government of Ghana-World Bank fiscal programme. The idea is that the World Bank has taken on a new relevance to develop the world because their actual remit of the reconstruction of Europe after World War II has become defunct. This started in a period in which little theorizing occurred in comparative education, and also an era in which the theme of 'culture' was subordinated to discussions about scientific methods. This was also a time when studies of comparative education was dominated by an intellectual and political confidence that being a lender is a benign act, and that being a borrower is not too dangerous if money and good consultancy advice was available (Cowen, 1994). This unrealistic confidence was reinforced with the belief that defined the earlier efforts of international agencies towards scientifically legitimated comparative education as benign. As a result the 'transfer' of educational knowledge was considered to be one of the main roles of organisations like the World Bank. For example since its first loan for education in 1963, the World Bank has become the largest single source of external financing for education in developing countries (World Bank, 1995). However, the Bank acknowledges that its funding still represents only 0.5% of developing countries total spending on education. This data suggests that the World Bank's main contribution to education must be advice and it coincided with a new vision that the Bank has of its own role:

To become a Knowledge Bank that spurs the knowledge revolution in developing countries and acts as a global catalyst for creating, sharing, and applying the cutting-edge knowledge necessary for poverty reduction and economic development (World Bank, Web page, Cited September 2020).

The World Bank has since 1996 taken on this role and it disseminates knowledge globally through its lending programmes in which the Bank encourages governments to give a higher priority to certain reforms such as primary over higher education. The Bank-supported projects put greater emphasis on particular ideas, and they promote certain practices through emphasis on specific policies (World Bank, 1995). The World Bank has therefore declared for example that its fundamental objective in education is "helping borrowers reduce poverty and improve living standards" (World Bank, 1995). It is important to explain that the word, 'borrowers' refers to the borrowing of ideas apart from borrowing of funds. This suggests that when client countries receive a loan for educational purposes from the World Bank, the programme is not just the transfer of funds, but also an educational transfer. So as part of the financial programmes, client countries also receive particular ideas about education which has a strong relation with economic prescriptions. This makes it possible for educational reform to be oriented towards keeping pace with economic structures of the client country (World Bank, 1995).

Educational politics and the reductionist assumptions

There are series of underlying assumptions that are common to the policy proposals of the World Bank that reveals a general system of thought that makes most of their universal policies reductionist. As discussed above and as practice, the World Bank promotes educational principles that should be used by most educational systems around the world, and within the proposals of these principles, a single universal model of educational policy prescription is usually identified irrespective of the environmental (social, economic and cultural) differences. However, their model is usually offered as an ideal for different educational environments and it is used to solve most of the educational problems in the different environments. Thus, once the fault lines of the problems in the client country have been identified, the policies of the Bank are used as a model for reform. In this way, the Bank produces a global educational discourse that has education in the whole world as its centerpiece. This is a global discourse because it is a theory that in the name of some true knowledge, and some idea of what constitutes good education, offers a universal model of a policy to solve educational problem in most local contexts. In practice however, once these models are accepted by the client country they create conditions of possibility for certain educational ideas and practices to be accepted, while at the same time limiting the possibility for other ways of thinking about education (see Steiner-Khamsi, 2000).

Furthermore, this abstract universal model is offered as a norm against which the adequacy of existing educational practices in any given country is judged. The process ensures that the problems in a given educational environment are defined, and then the Bank sets the agenda for discussions about how to solve the problems. However, once the problems have been identified, there are only a limited number of related themes that can be discussed, and a limited number of policy options that can be used to solve these problems in line with the model (see Beech, 2006a). Consequently, this process is crafted in a way that the model promoted by the Bank narrows the discursive space of alternatives in the client country. This study on teacher trainee finance policy in Ghana affirms that the World Bank influence on national educational policies. However, it is not clear what the real goals of such influences are. And this begs the question as to whose agenda the Bank is perpetrating because the effects of the policies influence are usually counterproductive. In order to explore this question further, the Bank and their global educational discourse needs to be placed within a general theory of the dissemination of educational discourse among countries. Bernstein (1990) has divided the development of such a theory into three tasks:

- i. To identify different positions within the global educational field
- ii. To identify the relations between these different positions or, in other words, to understand how discourse moves between these positions
- iii. To understand how discourse is transformed as it moves between different positions.

First of all, Bernstein (1990) believes that five positions can practically be identified as: global academic space; international agencies; the state; local academic space; and educational institutions. The global academic space is the site in which new ideas are

selectively created and changed, and where specialized academic discourses are developed. This context is created by the positions, relations and practices arising out of the production of global academic discourse. The global academic space is constituted by the flow of ideas through social, academic and political networks. Thereafter comes the new spatial logic in the information age that is called space of flows. This spatial form is characteristic of social practices that dominate and shape what is called the network society (Castells, 2000). The concept of flows *sine qua non* to the purposeful, repetitive, programmable sequences of exchange and interaction between physically disjointed positions held by social actors in the economic, political and symbolic structures of societies (See Castells, 2000). The network of communications is the fundamental material support that defines this space. The space of flows is the dominant spatial logic of society because it is the spatial logic of the organizations and institutions which play a strategic role in shaping social practices and social consciousness in society at large. This is the space that is occupied by the technocratic, managerial, financial and academic elites. The flow of ideas that constitutes global academic space is then made possible with different kinds of material resources, such as: international academic journals and books; international conferences; the movement of university staff and students, and international research projects. The people who occupy this position are individuals from different cultures that participate in this exchange of ideas, but in order to participate, these people need to be bilingual. That is, they have to learn their own culture and a cosmopolitan global academic culture in order to be functional in this position. An even though different cultures function to craft this global academic culture, it does not mean that they are all equal partners in the dialogue. That is Western European and North American epistemologies are dominant in global academic space (see Bernstein, 1990).

The second position is occupied by the World Bank (and other international agencies) who have positioned themselves as experts that can interpret global academic discourse and translate it (through a reductionist process) into practical universal educational proposals. However, as the World Bank reproduces this discourse it bases its proposals on a similar set of assumptions and do not problematise the postulated educational issue within the local context. Their quest for pragmatism gets in their way of objectively analysing the kind of assumptions and notions of established and unexamined ways of thinking that their policy prescriptions are based. In this way, international agencies limit their own discursive space (Bernstein, 1990; Evans, 2015; Weingart & Koch, 2020).

The state occupies the third position and it is the site for the production of a specific type of discourse that is called 'policy discourse'. Under this schema, the state is able to translate the interpreted global discourses through a process of negotiation into educational policies. However, this role played by the state is a fundamental question that has different answers in different places at different historical periods. This makes the state (especially in developing countries) the stake for political battle for educational policies as evidenced by the teacher trainee allowance withdrawal policy in Ghana. The fourth position is the local academic space which is created by the positions, relations and practices that arise out of the production of 'local academic discourse', and partly through the interpretation and

translation of global academic discourse. However, this position also feeds global academic discourse with the local discourse in a cyclical relation. The fifth position is the educational institutions that are created by the positions, relations and practices arising out of the reproduction of discourses produced in all or some of the other four positions. In theory, and in most societies, it should be the policy discourse produced by the state that should have the strongest influence on this position. The identification of the individual positions leads the discussion to the consideration of the relations that are established between the different positions (or how discourses move between them); and to understand how discourse is transformed as it moves between different positions. In the context of this study, as noted earlier, the movement of global academic discourse to the World Bank has resulted in a transformation of such discourses through a process of oversimplification into global educational discourse that has been noted earlier to be reductionist in character. When the World Bank appropriates certain concepts or ideas it transforms them into an oversimplified generalization that is offered as an educational solution for most countries. This kind of advocacy is made without specifying context and therefore inevitably, ideas need to be simplified to make them malleable enough to adapt to every context, but at the same time able to retain certain stability. In this way, global educational discourse is produced. This discourse then becomes especially attractive for some states because of its simplicity as argued by Ball (1998) and Cowen (2000).

As part of the process, this discourse introduces a language, a way of classifying and thinking about education. These words and concepts construct social reality as much as they express it and mould the way in which education is understood and thought about. A typical example is the difficulty to break away from the concept of educational systems or the classification of primary, secondary and tertiary education. These notions have framed the way in which people think about education for many years as they were disseminated by international agencies (Cowen, 2000; Saltman, 2018). This process of oversimplification becomes inevitable given the way in which the World Bank defines social space, mainly dividing the world into developed and developing countries. This way of thinking about social space becomes helpful to the Bank in terms of how to distribute budgets and decide how much money to invest in each country or region. However, as this definition of space is used for educational policy diagnosis and for educational policy advocacy, it inevitably develops into very dangerous generalizations. And as the specific role of the Bank is to capture educational discourse and translate it into policy recommendations that can be applied in most contexts of the world (or a region), it becomes inevitable for this process to result in the oversimplification and over-generalization of the original ideas. This is a dangerous process because the effects of localizing global educational policy discourse in practice is dire, such as has been the effects of the policy to withdraw funding for teacher trainees in Ghana. Indeed, the ideas and practices that embed this type of global educational finance discourse imply a significant rupture with the kind of educational finance that had been offered in Ghana in the past, and which sustained quality teacher education as shown by the data.

However due to the specific position of the World Bank within the educational field, this universal model of educational finance policy that they promoted did not consider the specific Ghanaian circumstances that affect the way in which policies are interpreted and put into practice. This shows that the practical effects of the appropriation of global educational discourse in an educational system cannot be simply read-off neither from the proposals of the Bank nor from the policy discourse. On the contrary, Beech (2005) has shown that there are significant problems in the translation of the abstract simplicities of the universal model of education policies promoted by the Bank into country specific practices. This is due to the fact that although the model is universal, it does not consider the specificities of individual context to which it moves, and the way in which the model is adopted and adapted depends on the characteristics of the specific country. So the main problem is not so much that the anticipated effects of the policy are not attained, but rather the unexpected effects that global educational discourse produces as it is localized (see Weingart & Koch, 2020). As typified by the context of Akrokeri College of Education, the educational finance policy resulted in the compromise of quality teacher training which an unexpected effect was.

Concluding with the limits of reductionism – the faultlines in the relation between the state and the World Bank

Classical science and engineering have used successfully a reductionist methodology, i.e. separate and simplify phenomena in order to predict their future, and this approach has been applied in a variety of domains. Nevertheless, in recent decades the limits of reductionism have become evident in phenomena where interactions are relevant. The fundamental argument here is that reductionism separates and therefore it has to ignore interactions. However if interactions are relevant in studying complex phenomenon such as educational finance from the purview of different cultural and socioeconomic circumstances, then reductionism is not suitable to be used for policy prescriptions. This argument can be extended to explain the relation between the Bank and the state, and for that matter all of the relations considered in the global education discourse model in terms of policy prescriptions, and argue that global educational policies should not be prescribed to and accepted by nation states in such abstract terms. Consequently, the current study of the Akrokeri College of Education provides an empirical analysis of this argument. The case provides an example of the question about which discourse is the state suppose to use to produce its education policies. This leads to an examination of the question: what happened with local academic space in Ghana that made this reductionist educational finance policy to be carried through?

The fundamental issue has to do with how the local academic discourse relates to the state in Ghana. An immediate answer would suggest that there is a blockage between the state and local academic space.

Apparently, global educational discourse pervades the Ghanaian state, leaving almost no space for local academic discourse. But the uniformity of themes that permeates the academic discourse in Ghana and the global discourse suggests that there is also a very

strong connection between global educational discourse and local academic discourse, and this is created by two major problems with the Ghanaian (local) academic space, namely: the extent to which Ghana's academic space is developed; and the extent to which Ghana's academic space is independent from both the state and from international agencies (including the World Bank). The paper takes a position that there are no real distinctions between the three different positions i.e. international agencies, the state and local academic space in Ghana. The explanation is that the elite academics in Ghana as they ascend in the academic hierarchy are hired by international agencies (particularly, the Bank) and or by the state. Furthermore, international agencies (and to a certain extent the state) are fundamental sources of educational research funds and they set the agenda for policy when offering these funds. This implies that these academics occupy the three different positions and the result has been that a class of educational policy gatekeepers is developed and the process closes the discursive space in these three positions. This class of gatekeepers then assumes controls of the relation between Ghana's educational system and the global academic space. Consequently, they also control the production of educational policies and, generally the dynamics of the educational system. This makes it possible for international agencies including the Bank to close the discursive space in the Ghanaian state, and in the local academic space. This practice makes it very difficult for alternative ways of thinking about educational policies to develop. Thus in theory, the local academic space should produce an alternative to global educational discourse, compete with international agencies, and try to occupy the discursive space of the state but unfortunately this has not happened in Ghana and such has been the dynamics of the World Bank policy prescriptions, hence the ease of implementation of the teacher trainee allowance withdrawal policy. Finally, the application of the global educational finance model to Ghana shows a significant disconnection between global educational policy discourse and educational institutions. At this level, the global educational policy discourse discounted local cultural and socioeconomic imperatives significantly and compromised the quality of education. This explains why the policy resulted in a lot of politics, resistance, and several unexpected effects – and these epitomize the limits and dangers of reductionism in policy analysis. These limits and dangers associated with reductionist educational policies are explicated by the new policy direction to reverse the teacher trainee allowance withdrawal policy in Ghana.

This study has shown that reductionism has the tendency to limit and endanger educational policies in that among other things, it requires educational policies to be impersonal. This means that reductionism calls for policy to be detached and impersonal in the same way as it holds sway in chemistry and physics. This view is justified by Allen (1991) who has argued that the metaphysics erected upon the new science eliminated humans from the world and, thus, scientists from their science. Consequently if the universe is only matter in motion or electrons and molecules, then the minds that know it have disappeared. And Descartes reinforces this with his philosophy in which the mind retreats to a corner of the brain and the world is divided into 'Thought' and 'Extension' (see Burt, 1964). However, these tendencies are not tenable in educational policy analysis and are at variance with the characteristics of policy making. In this study, the reductionist educational policy has

affected the administration of education negatively, and especially in a demand for quality teacher education as it has tended to ignore all the cultural and socioeconomic realities on which teacher education funding policy should be based. The reductionist approach to policy making has therefore led to the compromise of quality of teacher education, of what is taught and how deeply or superficially it is taught and assimilated, and in concentration on good teaching - numbers of good teachers; hours spent on courses; the number of books and pages read by teacher trainees; money expended; and educational logistics. In view of these effects of reductionism on education which are undesirable, and as a conclusion to this discussion, the paper suggests a solution on two levels:

- i. the need for a definite effort at a non-reductionist and even an anti-reductionist future educational policies to avoid those wider and dangerous effects upon education and students lives, and
- ii. efforts for a constructive task of articulating and taking over the ontology and then the epistemology which allow for a stratified world that takes cognisance of how its levels and parts are interrelated for future policy making.

Such efforts will enjoin the World Bank (and other international agencies) to revise their approach to public policies that promote global abstract strategies to ones that solve local specific problems.

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