

Formal Education in Gold Coast-Ghana: An Overview of Colonial Policies and Curriculum from 1919 to 1927

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Introduction

The need for research in the area of educational policy, in general, has been suggested by several sources¹ because of its association with human resource and national development. Human resource developed through the educational system depends on the formulated educational policy expanding to maximize the capacity of the educational system to educate the human resource supply for national development.

The International Institute for Educational Planning, for example, met during the summer of 1964 to discuss research needs in educational planning for countries with colonial educational experiences.² One of their recommendations was that studies should be made regarding “administration and implementation”³ and should involve the study of countries with colonial educational planning experience with the goal of examining their procedures and institutional frameworks for the formulation of educational policy.

Research in educational policy formulation in Gold Coast-Ghana was also suggested by Gordon C. Ruscoe in *Dysfunctionality in Jamaican Education*,² and implied by E. Christian Anderson in *The Development of Government Policy for Education in Sierra Leon 1882 to 1961*.³ In both of these studies, it is apparent evaluations of or discussions on educational policy in former British colonial territories cannot be completely meaningful without referring to the British colonial education policy or the nature of its formulation and implementation. Further, research has indicated that Great Britain and her colonial empire offer a good case for the formulation of educational policy because they are unique among the nations of the world which pioneered in the field of cross-cultural educational planning.⁴ Even though Great Britain is not alone among nations for having faced the responsibility of providing education for its colonial people, their response to this responsibility was unique, and in part, the reason for the significance of this study.

This paper offers a historical overview of formal education in the Gold Coast through the lenses of British colonial educational policy and curriculum from 1919 to 1927.⁵ The research is confined to this time frame because it was during this period that the Gold Coast made a surge in education, a type which was never experienced in any part of the British colonies of West Africa. The foci also address what policies characterized British education in the Gold Coast and why the colonizer adopted them. It further examines the policy implications on the colonized during this time frame. The research is necessary and significant in that it provides the foundation from which to examine the imposed, colonized curriculum in future research.

Education in Gold Coast⁶ before the Arrival of Europeans

The word “formal” in this research emphasizes that there was education ongoing in the Gold Coast as opposed to the erroneous perception that before the arrival of the Europeans, Africa had

no form of education. Antwi words it better when he explained the term education was used specifically to communicate formal instruction in European-type schools.⁷ Those who attended schools were described as educated, and others, including those who learned some form of trade such as hairdressing or auto-mechanics, were considered uneducated restricting the use of the concept.

Before the arrival of Europeans in the 15th century, the people of the Gold Coast educated themselves. Traditional or informal education existed with the intention of introducing young people into society. This was considered a sacred trust for grandparents, parents, and kinsmen to teach children taboos, history, music, rhetoric, and most importantly, survival.⁸ This informal education Antwi identified was meant to make the child a part of the totality of social consciousness, hence the significance of traditional education in Ghana did and continues to play an important role in introducing all institutions, taboos, values, and functions to the society. This important cultural quality reflected in the traditional education, which was available to the younger generation and deemed highly important, with solemnity attached to the passing on of knowledge from one generation to another. Like in most of Africa, education in the Gold Coast was not done in isolation but involved a collection of individuals similar to age-grades.⁹

These groups of individuals were taught progressively as they grew in age and maturity, with their education emphasizing both the physical and metaphysical realities. Abdou Moumouni notes that, although parents took an active role in the education of their children, nuclear and extended family members considered it their primary responsibility to ensure their wards were well socialized according to the requirements of the society. Traditional education in Africa, for which the Gold Coast is no exception, relied extensively on community effort. The high importance attached to education reflects the popular African saying that it takes a village to raise a child.¹⁰ One thing this ensures is even children born to less privileged parents have as much opportunity to transcend their economic disadvantage by being taught by both the rich and the poor alike.¹¹

Even though Moumouni concedes community-oriented efforts gave the appearance of an unstructured system that leaves such an issue as important as education to the whims and caprices of individuals within society, he insists it was far from being undecided and incoherent. Moumouni insists education in Africa was so structured that from the time of birth until adulthood, the individual was subjected to a well-thought out plan of inculcation of values, discipline, education, and all that is needed to ensure an adult who will be useful to the overall growth and development of society.¹² This aligns with Antwi's emphasis that traditional education in the Gold Coast was an effective type of education because it is intertwined with life activities in the community.¹³ However, these cherished traditional ways of teaching and learning by the Gold Coasters were seen and described as primitive by the new settlers, the Europeans, who referred to the indigenes as not educated and thus not civilized. Hence, this was the rationale for their thoughts for the need and subsequent introduction of formal education.

Early Introduction to Formal Education

The introduction of Western formal education in the Gold Coast dates back to 1529 and took gradual turns, each with a different purpose. The Europeans established schools in the Elmina,

Cape Coast, and Christiansburg Castles with the primary purpose of Christianizing the local people and training them for employment as interpreters.¹⁴ Traders or merchants provided the education, which was designed to produce people who would help the merchants with administering foreign business or the business interests of the colonizer. However, such an education happened at a very low scale, and only a small percentage of the population received it.¹⁵ Merchants sometimes worked with the missionaries in shaping the curriculum to enhance their interest.¹⁶ This collaboration likely was to ensure the mission schools produced students who met the needs of the merchant such as basic arithmetic, bargaining skills, personal hygiene, and appropriate conduct for merchandising purposes.

The second half of the 19th century saw mission schools become the primary agent of spreading the gospel and Christian civilization. They saw education as useful for training indigenes to help the missionaries during worship times. As such, those who were selected¹⁷ were trained to become catechists and messengers, which they accomplished with an acknowledgment that education was an important means for mission evangelization. Notably among these missionaries are the Wesleyan, Basel, and Bremen. These missions significantly influenced the systematic educational development in the Gold Coast.

The Basel Mission. The Basel missionaries arrived on the shores of the Gold Coast in 1828 and by 1835 had established their headquarters in Accra. The Basel Mission was a German society, with headquarters in Basel, Switzerland. Due to severe illness and loss of lives, the missionaries moved inland to Akropong, a place with high altitude, where they opened a boys' school in 1843, and by 1847 they established a girls' school.¹⁸ Both the boys' and girls' schools were later transferred to Aburi where the boys' school became a teacher training college. As soon as pupils with some education became available in 1848, the missionaries started a seminary for the training of catechists at Akropong and another one at Christiansburg two years later. It is worth noting that the Basel Missionaries, unlike the Wesleyans, emphasized the use of the local language. By 1875, they had translated the Bible into Twi, then developed Twi grammar and a dictionary in 1881. These translation efforts made it possible for the mission to have a steady stream of trained catechists and teachers to help spread Christianity in practically every part of the Akropong area. Even though the Basel missionaries encountered some opposition to girls' education, by 1918 their schools in Akropong had almost as many girls as boys.¹⁹ The mission's efforts in technical education were also unique. They opened a technical training school in Christiansburg, where courses like carpentry, bookbinding, blacksmithing, and shoe-making were taught.²⁰

The Wesleyan Mission. Before the arrival of the Wesleyans from England to Cape Coast in 1835, the Castle school was flourishing under the leadership of Wesleyan Reverend Joseph Dunwell, who conceived the idea of establishing a school as a means to spread Christianity, but died within a few months.²¹ His successor, Reverend T. B. Freeman, established a second school in Cape Coast. By 1841, the Wesleyan missionaries had established nine schools in the colony, three of which were for females.²² The missionaries opened schools further inland, and by 1880, the Wesleyan Mission had 83 schools. Instruction in the Colonial School and the Wesleyan Mission schools at Cape Coast Castle²³ was in English although Fanti was the language of the native people. Wesleyans worked on the Gold Coast for over 40 years before efforts were made toward developing literature in the mother tongue.²⁴

The Bremen Mission. The Bremen missionaries, who were mainly north Germans, concentrated much of their work among the Ewe people. Upon their arrival in 1847, they went directly inland to Peki on the invitation of the chief; the leader of these missionaries was Reverend Lorenz Wolf.²⁵ As a result of the tribal war in 1853 and the far distance from the coast, the mission abandoned its activities at Peki and moved to Keta, another Ewe-speaking area along the southeast coast. From then on, the missionaries made a steady advance toward the inland once again.²⁶ Like the Basel Mission, the Bremen mission also emphasized the use of the Ewe language as a medium of instruction in their school. The only European language allowed was German. They published the first Ewe grammar book in 1857, and in 1905, published an Ewe dictionary.²⁷ By 1890, they had established a seminary at Amedzofe, a hilltop town, to train catechists and teachers. By 1906, the Bremen mission had established a few schools with about 3,000 pupils.²⁸

Shifting Poles for Self-Gains

Just as missionaries and merchants had a vested interest in the education of the people of the Gold Coast, colonial governments also saw an advantage in educating a small section of the population, including the sons of chiefs who were to help in the administration of the colonies. Borrowing from Corby, the British "founded many schools throughout their African colonial empire to educate sons of chiefs for positions of inferiority."²⁹ It was not uncommon for the colonial administration to select the most callous of the chiefs' sons and train them to take jobs as servants of the empire.³⁰ Such sons, according to Corby, were identified while they were relatively young before they reached their teens.

Even though substantial educational progress had been made by the various European settlers, there was wide variation in educational policies and curriculum, which was based on their origin and missionary faith.³¹ Over time, neither the people of the Gold Coast nor the colonial agents (missionaries, merchants, and colonial governments) were happy with the quality of education as well as the result of colonial education. Noticing this, Guggisberg indicated "whenever one turns in the Gold Coast, one meets the same demand – a better education for Africans than our present schools are capable of providing."³² He added, "Apart from the fact that the people themselves are clamoring for better education, the future of the country demands it."³³ So after Britain took over properties of earlier European settlers, and finally assumed full territorial authority of the Gold Coast in 1874, she introduced various educational policies and curriculum to unify and direct education in the region.

Colonial Government in Education Expansion

To more clearly understand British educational policy, a summary of the idea birthing the need for an educational policy must be articulated and an overview of the policy-making body must be understood. This is important because it set the underlying factors for policy formulation and gives a better picture of the policy-making body, who made a value judgment about what they considered the "educational needs" of the Gold Coast colony were and what "educational development" should be done in the colony.

The Genesis of Educational Policy. The story of policy in British Africa, of which the Gold Coast colony is a part, emendated after discussing the educational situation in Africa. When Sir Michael Sadler and Dr. J.H. Oldham wrote to the parliament under Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Rt. Hon. William G.A. Ormsby-Gore asked for an opportunity to discuss with him the implications of cooperation between the government and missionary societies. The rationale was an effective corporation, which, “required a definite policy on the part of the Government with which we can cooperate.”³⁴ It followed from their meeting that Dr. Oldham prepared the memorandum entitled “Educational Policy in Africa” and with Ormsby-Gore's support as well as Sir Gordon Guggisberg, Sir E. D. Lugard and the Archbishop of Canterbury, presented the Memorandum at the Governor's Conference in June of 1923 to ensure the approval of the Memorandum, which called for the formation of an Advisory Committee to assist the Secretary of State for the colonies in formulating a British educational policy. As Dr. Oldham expressed in a letter to Dr. T. Jesse Jones, author of the famous Phelps-Stokes Commission reports on Education in Africa, he detailed:

You will realize that it is in these preliminary discussions at the Governors' Conference at the Colonial Office that policies take shape. Supposing at one or more round-table conferences the Governors of the three West African Colonies (Sir Gordon Guggisberg, Gold Coast, Sir Hugh Clifford, Nigeria, and Mr. A.R. Slater, Sierra Leone) form certain ideas which are mutually agreed upon and which, in consultation with us, they believe to be acceptable to the missionary societies, those are the ideas that will go through and the discussions at the Imperial Education Conference will not affect them.³⁵

Dr. Oldham's information was correct, for the Governor's Conference approved the idea of an Advisory Committee, and the Secretary of State for the Colonies appointed the full committee in November 1923. The committee held its first meeting on Wednesday, January 9, 1924, at 10:45 a.m. in Ormsby-Gore's office at the Colonial Office.³⁶

The committee, which became known as the Advisory Committee on Education (A.C.E.), advised the Secretary of State, who was the minister of state for the colony on educational matters. The body acted as a debate forum for ideas on educational development and within its given authority attempted to formulate a policy to advance the stages of educational development within a given colony.³⁷ Even though the A.C.E. was mandated to define and evaluate the educational needs of the colony, there were other channels that often expressed what they considered to be peculiar educational needs. These channels originated within a given colony and consisted of colonial officials, missionary representatives, native councils (consisting of chiefs and community leaders), European settlers, and business interests. Therefore, a major function of the A.C.E. was to assess the educational needs envisioned by the various intra-colonial interests, consider these in the light of other educational experiences and the committee's ideas on educational needs, and then arrive at a statement that attempted to establish the guidelines for transforming educational needs into policy.³⁸

The established policy guidelines were supposed to be implemented by the Governor, who was appointed by the Sovereign as her representative in a particular territory. The executive power of the Crown was thus vested in the Governor. As an emphasis, although the A.C.E. was the advisory body to the Secretary of State and the forum for establishing guidelines that

transformed educational needs into policy, a Governor was not required by any written law to follow the advice of the colonial office, hence the A.C.E.³⁹ A visit would also be paid to Phelps-Stoke, the New York-based organization who invested massively in education after their visit in 1920 and some related educational committee reports.

Educational Policies from 1919 to 1927. Gordon Guggisberg was appointed governor of the Gold Coast in 1919. His era saw a proliferation of educational improvement policies and programs that were a critical ingredient in the development of the Gold Coast. Even though preceding governors realized the need for educational improvement and had committees to make recommendations, Guggisberg was the governor who implemented policies of the educational system.⁴⁰ Soon after assuming the governorship, Guggisberg declared education his priority. He insisted on allowing every Gold Coast child to morally and materially advance by equipping them with the knowledge to succeed. The governor emphasized that native children should not be denationalized, rather they should be trained in their national characteristics, which are the best attributes of civilization.⁴¹

To help him achieve his vision, in 1920 Governor Guggisberg established a committee charged with evaluating past educational efforts, the reasons for their success or failures, and to report on the entire educational policy governing education in the native nation of the Gold Coast.⁴² However, the committee made three recommendations for this study.

First, the committee recommended that English should be introduced as a subject in the early years of schooling. In the Governor's words, "the Gold Coast had no written literature of its own; its languages are diverse and numerous. For both reasons, a common language must be adopted and that language must be English."⁴³ However, he indicated the mother tongue should be the medium of instruction. To ensure the proper implementation of this recommendation, a publication officer was appointed to oversee the preparation and printing of vernacular textbooks.⁴⁴ One could argue this recommendation was based on the Basel Mission policy of teaching the African in his or her native language.

Second, the committee recommended the establishment of teacher training colleges to produce professional teachers for African children. This recommendation is linked to the Governor's comment that there was a universal demand of education by the people and "to comply hastily with this demand at the present moment would be fatal,"⁴⁵ for the simple reason that "we have not got an educational staff sufficiently trained to carry out the work efficiently."⁴⁶ To him, "To do it inefficiently would be to start on the wrong road," he emphasized, "to trust the future of the race to insufficiently trained leadership in education would be far worse than having no education at all."⁴⁷ Guggisberg summarizes the committee's recommendation even better when he said, "This then, is our immediate task – the provision of well-trained teachers, instructors, and professionals from among the African."⁴⁸

Finally, the committee recommended that the government should establish a secondary boarding school for boys. Reflecting the committee's recommendation, Guggisberg indicated in his book, "If secondary schools are to produce leaders, they must be residential thus boarding schools where character-training takes the first place in the curriculum."⁴⁹ This recommendation led to

the establishment of the Achimota School,⁵⁰ with the aim of giving the whole education locally, and where it is essential, an African should go to Europe for the final step to enter a profession.

American Support for British Advisory Committee

Another significant event in 1920, which also contributed to educational development in the Gold Coast, was the visit of the Phelps-Stokes' African Education Commission to West, South, and Equatorial Africa. This New York-based organization aimed to investigate educational conditions and needs and set up a million-dollar fund for the advancement of Negroes' education. Besides the chairman, Dr. Jesse Jones, the member who was most responsible for the success of the commission and an equally important person in its sequel, was Dr. J.E.K. Aggrey. A native-born Gold Coaster, Dr. Kwegiri Aggrey, spent 22 years studying and teaching in the United States,⁵¹ became the interpreter for the commission, and also served as the link between Black and White communities in Africa.

The commission's report criticized the existing educational system because it was "out of touch with the life of the community and that the curriculum was too bookish."⁵² So, they recommended bringing the entire community into line with what was being taught in schools.

The report also emphasized the need for girls' education,⁵³ character training, rural improvement, and secondary schools. Moreover, the commission recommended that education must train native people as leaders to serve their communities. Dr. Jones told Governor Guggisberg about the two primary educational needs of the Gold Coast Colony: "Expansion of the school system, and a curriculum with a more vocational bias."⁵⁴ Guggisberg echoed this when he said, higher education by itself will not solve the problem of the country. That it must be accompanied by a better system of training in handcraft, agriculture, and all those trades that go to provide the necessities of a community: "for although higher education may be the brain of a country, its productive capacity is its heart."⁵⁵

With regard to character training,⁵⁶ the leader of the Phelps-Stokes Fund, Jesse Jones, practically said, "there is no definite syllabus, but that whatever system is adopted, whether infants' schools, primary school, trade schools, or secondary schools, we must endeavor to graft the simple virtue of perseverance, thoroughness, order, cleanliness, punctuality, honesty, and respect for parents."⁵⁷ As Dr. Jesse Jones stated, these virtues cannot be taught out of books; they must be developed by sound habits resulting from days, weeks, and months of actual practice and repetition.⁵⁸ This is the implication of inferiority; people must be indoctrinated to the dominant culture.⁵⁹

The Phelps-Stokes Report fired up a new interest, and in 1923 the Colonial Office established a permanent advisory committee to work on educational problems. This committee, in 1925, produced an education memorandum that contained many of the Phelps-Stokes' recommendations and also urged the need for policy continuation and strong cooperation between the government and the missions.⁶⁰

Principles of Colonial Government Educational Policies

From this memorandum,⁶¹ Governor Guggisberg established and announced his “Sixteen Principles of Education” to the Legislative Council in 1925.

1. Primary education must be thorough and be from the bottom to the top.
2. The provision of secondary schools with an educational standard that will fit young men and women to enter a university.
3. The provision of a university.
4. Equal opportunities to those given to boys should be provided for the education of girls.
5. Co-education is desirable during certain stages of education.
6. The staff of teachers must be of the highest possible quality.
7. Character training must take an important place in education.
8. Religious teaching should form part of school life.
9. Organized games should form part of school life.
10. The course in every school should include special references to the health, welfare, and the industries of the locality.
11. A sufficient staff of efficient African inspectors of schools must be trained and maintained.
12. Whilst an English education must be given, it must be based solidly on the vernacular.
13. Education cannot be compulsory nor free.
14. There should be cooperation between the Government and the Missions, and the latter should be subsidized for educational purposes.
15. The Government must have the ultimate control of education throughout the Gold Coast.
16. The provision of trade schools with technical and literary education that will fit young men to become skilled craftsmen and useful citizens.

With the passage of the Education Ordinance in 1925, guidelines were established for the education of Gold Coast children. Although all the sixteen principles are important, four of them are most relevant to this research.

Primary Education Must Be thorough and Be from the Bottom to the Top. This first principle is what I consider to be the greatest of all those given in that it is the formative stage of children, and it is at this juncture character training has the most profound impact. From my interpretation according to the governor, only the best teachers should be employed in the first primary grades, since this period of schooling was the most valuable. Guggisberg believed primary education needed to be treated with all seriousness since it was a stepping stone to secondary education.

Equal Opportunities for Those Given to Boys Should Be Provided for the Education of Girls. This is the fourth principle, and it was likely influenced by Dr. Aggrey, who was a part of the Phelps-Stokes Commission of 1920 and an advocate for girls’ education. The saying, “If you educate a man you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman you educate a family (nation)” is attributed to him.⁶² Guggisberg observed that the people of the Gold Coast were at last alive to the fact that, if they wish to advance in civilization, the women must be as well educated as the men. The governor ensured that school expansion projects included facilities for girls.⁶³ He also encouraged boys’ secondary schools to allow girls to attend classes by making Achimota, a boys’ school, a co-education facility.

Religious Teaching Should Form Part of Life. As has been noted earlier, the spread of Christianity was a major part of the purpose of the Europeans in establishing schools across the Gold Coast. However, the idea of religious teaching espoused by Guggisberg as his eighth principle was different from that of the missionaries. He recognized the belief system of the people of the Gold Coast was distinct from that of the Europeans. But the governor believed religion had a role in character molding. Therefore, he insisted that religious lessons taught in government schools should not be a doctrine of a particular denomination. If parents were not satisfied with the generality of religious teaching in government schools, they always had the alternative of sending their children to the boarding schools run by their mission.⁶⁴

While an English Education Must Be Given, It Must Be Based Solidly on the Vernacular. Although the ultimate aim was to have English as a medium of instruction, it was hard to teach English to non-English-speaking Africans. Guggisberg was of the view that “language cannot be taught to a child by making him repeat by memory certain sounds, the meaning of which he does not understand.”⁶⁵ While it was essential for English to be studied in school, Guggisberg insisted that instruction in the early years of schooling would be given in the native language. He also emphasized during a Legislative Council meeting that, for all European teachers to understand the African teachers and pupils, they should endeavor to learn the local language. This principle confirms the governor’s intention of not letting the children of Gold Coast lose their national identity (i.e., denationalize).

Guggisberg brought high energy to his stewardship and influenced important Gold Coast leaders to share his belief that education was the bedrock of national development. His educational reform policies and programs ensured an increase in school enrollments and an improvement in the standard of education. With a new ordinance in 1927, teachers were required to register according to prescribed qualification. This led to having qualified teachers in schools.

Overall, Guggisberg’s educational plan was outstanding compared to his predecessors. In 1927, the Guggisberg governorship came to an end, but before leaving the colony, he gave his final education message to the Legislative Council. He encouraged the continuation of his plan: “I am convinced that the work which has been done in the past seven years, has resulted in solid foundations being laid for an education that will be surpassed in quality by no other country in the world; and that it is by building on these foundations that the African will be given what he desires.”⁶⁶

Policy Implication on the Gold Coast

The result of the collective efforts of the Christian missionaries and the British colonial government in the provision of education in the Gold Coast is the ideological domination of the Western culture on the educational system. Many researchers have concluded that the sole purpose of the Western Christian missionary educational effort among Africans was the promotion of British commercial interests and conversion to Christianity as a means of having them accept British cultural influence and political power. As highlighted earlier, even though the Basel and Bremen missionaries and the colonial government underscored the importance of educating the Gold Coast people through their native languages, they were no more sympathetic to the natives’ culture than the Wesleyan missionaries who emphasized the use of English as the

medium of instruction in their schools. The spread of the Christian faith was one of the original concepts of colonial education. As Guggisberg emphasized, religious teaching should form part of school life.⁶⁷ Pupils learned Christian religious topics that were different from their religion and faith. They were taught by their elders to believe that their traditional gods were in control of their lives. However, these students learned in the mission schools that these gods were evil and had no place in the kingdom of God.⁶⁸

All the missionaries considered the African religion, art, music, and cultural practices as paganism. They realized it would be difficult to convert local people to Christianity if they did not banish every social and cultural activity because of their sense of community. As a result, African music, dance, art, and religious practices were banned from the mission school's curriculum. The missionaries made a conscious attempt to create a separation between the native converts and their religion and culture. For example, the Basel missionaries created separate communities, popularly called "Salem" or "Kristom," within the villages and towns for their new converts so their new faith would not be contaminated by their pagan relatives. These negative attitudes of missionaries toward African traditional religious values were the beginning of segregation of new Christian converts from the pagan community, hence, the opening of boarding schools.⁶⁹

The purpose of the colonial government's adoption of the boarding school system was the same as that of the missionaries: "To subjugate the African culture which the Europeans considered as pagan and primitive, and also to replace it with features of civilization."⁷⁰ The boarding schools were designed to help school authorities dismantle the bond between native students and their traditions.⁷¹ In boarding schools,⁷² students were not permitted to speak their local language, sing indigenous songs, observe any traditional events, and had little contact with their families. The colonizers imposed practices served to deculturize the native students and erase their native identity. With the idea of character training, students had to observe a strict code of conduct. For example, students had to sleep, wake up, and go to class at a particular time. Students could be expelled from school for not wearing an approved uniform or for leaving campus without a signed permit from the housemaster called an *exeat*.⁷³ This boarding school system still exists in contemporary Ghana.

One of the dysfunctional effects of boarding schools and the entire educational system was students' admiration of the English language as a sign of enlightenment. In essence, the ability to speak English was viewed as an educational achievement. Even today in contemporary Ghanaian society, a person who can articulate him or herself well in the English language is considered an intellectual or a scholar. Thiong'o pointed out, "Language carries culture, and culture carries, particularly through orature and literature, the entire body of values by which we come to perceive ourselves and our place in the world."⁷⁴ The hegemonic power of the English language continues to advance the perception that native Ghanaian languages are inferior, and academic success is dependent upon one's proficiency in the English language. The ultimate evidence of this is the adoption of English as the official language of the country and the medium of instruction from upper primary to higher levels of education, thereby undermining the majority who are not English language literate.⁷⁵

Colonial education succeeded in its aim of preparing Africans for subordinate positions available to natives within the structure of the colonial bureaucracy: interpreters, clerks, teachers, hospital workers, and other needs of the administration. The result was the production of civil servants who were dedicated to the service of the colonizing powers and indeed regarded themselves as the highly privileged few as compared to the majority of their brethren. Ngugi wa Thiong'o stresses that the "Berlin conference of 1884 was effected through the sword and the bullet. But the night of the sword and the bullet was followed by the morning of the chalk and the blackboard. The physical violence of the battlefield was followed by the psychological violence of the classroom."⁷⁶ Along with the magnitude of servility displayed to their White supervisors, the newly educated African elite also treated their fellow Africans with scorn and arrogance, thereby propagating White superiority and Black inferiority.

Also, traditional rites, beliefs, values, and celebration of many cultural fundamentals such as clothing that had no religious implications were misconstrued as heathen. The pupils who attended either mission or government schools were obligated to adapt to the European standards of dressing, culture, and values.⁷⁷ In the mission and public schools, pupils were required to adopt a Christian or European name before enrolling. It was the view that an African with a European name was more civilized and embraced the Western way of life. These examples demonstrate that the needs, values, beliefs, and rites of the native people were not part of colonial education. Simply put, the curriculum was aligned with the interest and values of the missionaries and colonial government rather than the indigenous people. The damaging effect of these practices was that they "undermined African identity and personality and brought about a new generation of Africans who saw themselves as having the 'mind' of Europeans and, consequently, repudiated the traditional African way of life."⁷⁸ With these practices, the Ghanaian child had no hope of acquiring and developing sociocultural skills relevant to his/her immediate community. Therefore, the sense of identity, connectedness, and understanding of the culture eluded pupils and sent a demeaning message that resulted in the students being ashamed of their culture, tradition, and language.⁷⁹

Conclusion

In this historical research, I provided a summary of the development of European formal education in the Gold Coast, now Ghana, from the pre-colonial period to the end of Governor Guggisberg's leadership in the colony. Prior to that, I looked at education in the Gold Coast before the arrival of the European and also touched on the implication of colonial educational policies on the colonized.

From my analysis, it is evident that the Western formal education introduced to the people of the Gold Coast by the Christian missionaries and the British Colonial government did not serve the indigenous population well. Rather, it denationalized and facilitated the indignity and loss of language, and cultural identity of the Ghanaian.⁸⁰ The missionary and colonial education aimed at character training and civilization resulted in cultural annihilation, religious, and linguistic hegemony.⁸¹ Furthermore, the spread of the Christian faith that was to bring salvation to heathen African souls became a medium for imperialism and the indoctrination of the Western culture.⁸²

Elements from this research about the deculturizing policies by the colonizers would help governments, policy makers, educators, administrators, teachers, and students to understand, appreciate, and critically analyze how past events have shaped the present educational policies and curriculum. This is equally fundamental to future policy research for a comparative analysis of past educational policies with current happenings, and how the former is reflective of the present or not. Such findings could be an empowerment for Ghanaians to fully participate in their own educational development and regain their lost identity.

¹ The International Institute for Educational Planning, for example, has been one of the major advocates in educational policy planning and formulation.

² Gordon C. Ruscoe, "Dysfunctionality in Jamaican Education." *University of Michigan School of Education*, (Ann Arbor, 1963), 121.

³ Christian, A. F., "The Development of Government Policy for Education in Sierra Leone." *Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation*, (University of Michigan, 1964), 235.

⁴ James, C. F., "The Formulation of British Colonial Education, 1929-1961." *U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare*. (Office of Education, Bureau of Research, 1965).

⁵ James, C. F., "The Formulation of British Colonial Education, 1929-1961." *U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare*. (Office of Education, Bureau of Research, 1969), 5.

⁶ Before March 6, 1957, present day Ghana was called Gold Coast, a name given to the area by the first European sailors from Portugal who arrived at the coast in 1471. This name was accepted and used by subsequent European settlers and natives until the independence leaders changed it to Ghana at the dawn of independence declaration. Geographically, the country is located to the south of the Sahara, encompasses approximately 239,460 square kilometers, and shares boundaries with three French-speaking nations: Cote d'Ivoire to the west, Burkina Faso to the north, and Togo to the east. The Greenwich Meridian, which passes through London, also traverses the eastern part of Ghana at Tema. The country is bordered to the south by the Gulf of Guinea. For emphasis, Gold Coast is often used in this paper instead of Ghana to represent the historical time period.

⁷ Moses K. Antwi, *Education: Society and Development in Ghana*, (Unimax Publishers Limited, 1992), 23. The statement that Africa had no history has been proven untrue. Research indicates African history was not written because there was nothing like reading and writing. Oral traditions through music, narratives, Ananse story, proverbs, crafts, reference to a significant natural occurrence, and celebrations of events, etc. preserved her history. An example of her traditional way of learning was through an apprenticeship where family arts and occupation were taught and transferred to younger members. So today in Ghana, specific communities, tribes, and ethnic groups are noted for their specialty in various sectors. As a member of the Ghanaian community, we have come to accept that the Ewe tribe is noted for woodwork, the Fante tribe for creative arts, and the Kwahu people for business ventures. It is important to emphasize the indigenous people found and created their occupation and source of livelihood based on their community resource. As a result, people along the coast were fishermen who taught the act of fishing to members of their community.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁹ Moumouni Abdou, *Education in Africa*. (Praeger, New York, 1986), 15.

¹⁰ Caracciolo, D., & Mungai, A.M., "In the Spirit of Ubuntu: Stories of Teaching and Research." (Rotterdam, The Netherlands, 2009).

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 16. The sense of community and belongingness characterizing the Gold Coast community gave advantage to oneness. There was no segregation in socio-economic level hence, children from less privileged parents made friends with rich children and vice-versa. This gave opportunity for each class to learn from the other characteristics that were relevant for their betterment.

¹² *Ibid.*, 18. There is minimal emphasis on abstract learning or formalism as distinct from the day-to-day situations that individuals encounter. In this informal manner, the basic foundation of societal values, knowledge, and culture are transmitted to the child. The young girl, by assisting her mother with cooking certain dishes, and going to the market to buy and sell, soon learns how to be both a good home keeper and an astute trader, independent of her mother. The little boy who starts by assisting his father with farming the family plot of land, and who goes hunting for grasscutters and other smaller animals, soon learns how to farm a sizable plot of land all by himself and how to hunt for bigger game.

¹³ Moses K. Antwi, *Education: Society and Development in Ghana*, (Unimax Publishers Limited, 1992).

¹⁴ The literacy education imparted is, generally, only suitable for qualifying a boy who is leaving school to become a clerk, interpretation, or a storekeeper.

¹⁵ Selection of such individuals, I think, was based on one's ability to express themselves in the English and royalty to European Merchants.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* The first Europeans to arrive at the Shores of Gold Coast were the Portuguese in 1529, whose influence on the Gold coast is evidenced in the history of Ghana with the introduction of the Catholic faith. The Dutch also played a role in formal education at the Elmina Castle which became popular as Castle schools. The Dutch Charter of 1621 was significant with teaching church reforms and doctrines of the Dutch Church. The Danes and Swedes cannot be left out. These Castle schools provided education to a limited number of children which included, mulattoes (children born to a European father and a Gold Coast mother) as well as some selected children of chiefs.

¹⁷ Neketia, J. H. "Progress in Gold Coast education." *Transactions of the Gold Coast & Togoland Historical Society* 1, no. 3 (1953), 2. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41406560>. The problem of trained local preachers was very acute as the missionaries were unfamiliar with native vernacular. They felt trained locals could easily reach the indigenes as they spoke the same language. However, selection to receive training to become a catechist and messenger were on good morals, devotion, and recommendation from the church. The educational standard was a person who had completed six years in the primary school.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ BMA D-01. 38a.A-IV. "Minutes of Synods Held in Akwapim and Akyem" (1883). <https://www.bmarchives.org/items/show/100214441>.

²⁰ Graham, C. K. *The history of education in Ghana: "From the earliest times to the Declaration of independence."* (London, UK: Frank Cass 1971).

²¹ *Ibid.*, 1971.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Castle schools were the first formal education set up in the Gold Coast. Even though that was started by the Portuguese, there is ample proof that Dutch, Danish, and English companies also operated such schools to give instruction in reading, writing, and religious education, which took place within the Castle walls. The best-known Castle schools on the Gold Coast included the one operated by the Dutch at the former Portuguese fortress at Elmina, the British school at Cape Coast Castle, and the Danish school at Christiansburg, near Accra. In the late eighteenth century and throughout the nineteenth century, children of wealthy, African merchants on the coast and relatives of some of the important local chiefs were instructed at Castle schools. The historian C. K. Graham has, however, observed that the majority of students were mulatto children of the European Castle staff and their African women. See: Graham, C. K. *The history of education in Ghana: "From the earliest times to the Declaration of Independence."* (London, UK; Frank Cass, 1971).

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ McWilliam, H. O. A., & Kwamena-Poh, M. A., "The development of education in Ghana," (London: Longmans, 1975).

²⁶ Brydon, Lynne. "Mission Archives in Bremen." *History in Africa*, no. 11 (1984): 375-77. doi:10.2307/3171644. There are longer publications by the Bremen missionaries in the series *Bremen Missionsschriften* which concerns itself mostly with the development and assessment of missions and works with Trans Volta Togoland.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ McWilliam, H. O. A. "The development of education in Ghana." (London: Longmans, Green 1962).

²⁹ Corby, Richard. "Educating Africans for inferiority under British rule." *Comparative Education Review*, no. 34 (*Bo* school in Sierra Leon, 1990), 314-49. As I have mentioned earlier, both the missionaries and merchants educated selected few just so they could become interpreters, clerks, and messengers. Colonial governments were no exception as these inferior positions were meant to serve the interest of the colonizer, even though such individuals felt privileged and thus looked down on others.

³⁰ Armah, A. K. "Two Thousand Seasons." (Penguin: Per Ankh, 2000), 1972.

³¹ Macbeth, J. "Living with the colonial legacy: The Ghana story." *The Center for Commonwealth Education, CCE Report no. 3*, (Cambridge, U.K.: 2010).

³² Guggisberg, Frederick Gordon. "The keystone; education is the keystone of progress: mix the materials badly, omit the most important, and the arch will collapse; omit character-training from education and progress will stop." (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co., 1924), 5. This frantic comment was made by Guggisberg in the first chapter of this book titled "Necessity for the Better Education of Africans."

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Letter from Dr. J.H. Oldham to Rt. Hon. W. G. A. Ormsby-Gore, March 13, 1923. The involvement of the Protestants Missionary Societies through their representative, Dr. Oldham, in the formulation of a colonial education

policy which called for cooperation was initiated for the purpose that the insufficient missionary resource would receive and gain government financial support in order not to lose their education system entirely to the government. They believed once the government accepted missionary cooperation, they would also be obligated to assist the educational activities of the missionary societies through financial support.

³⁵ Letter from Dr. J.H. Oldham to Dr. T. Jesse Jones, March 23, 1923.

³⁶ "Minutes of the Advisory Committee on Native Education in British Tropical Africa" 1st Meeting, January 9, 1924.

³⁷ Great Britain, Colonial Office, Advisory Committee on Native Education in British Tropical Africa, "Educational Policy in British Tropical Africa", cmd. 2374, (London: H.M.S.O., 1925).

³⁸ "Minutes of the Advisory Committee on Native Education in British Tropical Africa" 1st Meeting, January 9, 1924.

³⁹ James, C. F. "The Formulation of British Colonial Education, 1929-1961," *U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare*. (Office of Education, Bureau of Research, 1969), 5.

⁴⁰ Guggisberg, Frederick Gordon. "The keystone; education is the keystone of progress: mix the materials badly, omit the most important, and the arch will collapse; omit character-training from education and progress will stop." (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co., 1924), 19.

<https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc2.ark:/13960/t60605j93>. In his book, the Governor stated, the main policy of the Gold Coast Government is the general progress of the people toward a higher state of civilization. To him, education in the Gold Coast was the primary factor in the main policy with other factors all contributing to education.

⁴¹ McWilliam, H. O. A. "The development of education in Ghana." (London: Longmans, Green, 1962).

⁴² Great Britain, Colonial Office, Advisory Committee on Native Education in British Tropical Africa, 58. During his address at the legislative council on the 6th of March, 1924, Guggisberg indicated in his speech, "I cannot attempt to convey to Honorable Members the intense feeling of satisfaction which the formation of this committee gave to those who are deeply interested in the welfare of the African races when they realized that education is in future to be conducted on a permanent policy."

⁴³ Guggisberg, Frederick Gordon. "The keystone; education is the keystone of progress: mix the materials badly, omit the most important, and the arch will collapse; omit character-training from education and progress will stop." (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co., 1924), 20.

<https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc2.ark:/13960/t60605j93>

⁴⁴ Great Britain, Colonial Office. Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies. "A Preliminary Memorandum on the Aims and Methods of Language Teaching in the Colonies." London, 1930.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, Guggisberg, 6.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁴⁹ Guggisberg, Frederick Gordon, "The keystone; education is the keystone of progress: mix the materials badly, omit the most important, and the arch will collapse; omit character-training from education and progress will stop." (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co., 1924), 26.

<https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc2.ark:/13960/t60605j93>

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 30 "Our first step in filling this gap will be taken this year in the building of Achimota College. This will be the institution at which the African youth will receive, first and foremost, character-training of such nature that as will fit him to be a good citizen."

⁵¹ Dr. Kwegiri Aggrey is one of a few African scholars who had the opportunity to be sponsored for further studies in the United States in 1920 by Paul Monroe, a member of the Phelps-Stokes Fund. Dr. Aggrey purposed to return for a research expedition to Africa to determine which measure was necessary for the improvement of education in Africa. Dr. Aggrey's captivating speech persuaded Governor Guggisberg that Achimota College should be co-educational. In his words, he stated, "The surest way to keep people down is to educate the men and neglect the women. If you educate a man you simply educate an individual, but if you educate a woman, you educate a whole nation." *Education in Africa*. (New York: Phelps-Stokes Fund, 1922).

⁵² Jones, Thomas Jesse, "Education in Africa." (New York: Phelps-Stokes Fund, 1922). This criticism resonated with the Governor who believed that "More important still is the demand of the educated African of the existing literate classes for an education and training that will fit him to take a greater share in the development of his Land." Guggisberg, 1924. 15. *Ibid.*, 5. From my analysis, I can say Great Britain's colonial education policy within the period was a heuristic design for investment in human form resources formulated with an eye on preserving what was best in indigenous cultures and calling for the advancement of the whole community.

⁵³ Ibid., 38. The 1920 Educationists' Committee recommends the formation of a "Training College for Women Teachers to provide the staff for our Girls' schools and to replace the men at present in charge of infant classes." Also, the Church Missionary Society "Conference on the Education of African Women" in London echoed it during their international Missionary Conference in 1925.

⁵⁴ This type of education model promoted by the Phelps-Stokes Fund, an American philanthropist organization, was a type of vocational education originally designed for American Blacks. The emphasis on vocational training, which became popular in the late few decades of the nineteenth century, was originally linked to conceptions of racial differences between Whites and Blacks. However, when Black slaves in America were liberated and began expressing a strong desire for an education, the emphasis quickly shifted to agricultural and industrial education. This led to the incorporation of vocational training at the secondary level for Black primary schools. This model was first developed by Samuel Armstrong, the founder of Hampton Institute. Booker T. Washington, a graduate of Hampton established another agricultural and industrial institute for the Blacks in Tuskegee, Alabama. The names of these two institutes, Hampton and Tuskegee, were used frequently as a synonym for the associated secondary, and training in Agricultural and industrial, education Ibid., 39. See also: Watkins, W. H. "The White architects of Black education: Ideology and power in America 1865-1954" (New York, 2001).

⁵⁵ Guggisberg, Frederick Gordon, "The keystone; education is the keystone of progress: mix the materials badly, omit the most important, and the arch will collapse; omit character-training from education and progress will stop." (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co., 1924), 7. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc2.ark:/13960/t60605j93> The Gold Coast governor went on further to ask, "Of what use is the brain without the hand? Of what use is the brain if the heart ceases to beat?" Guggisberg, 1924. 8.

⁵⁶ The governor emphasized the need for this when he wrote in his book, "It is evident character-training must take a predominant place in our system of education, for the simple reason that no nation whatever can afford to omit it from the curriculum of its school. Especially in the phase when the influence of home life is generally retrogressive so far as modern civilization is a concern."

⁵⁷ Jones, Thomas Jesse, "Education in Africa." (New York: Phelps-Stokes Fund, 1922). 7.

⁵⁸ Guggisberg who saw lots of sense in what Dr. Jesse Jones mentioned of character training, felt that these were achievable and comparatively easy to develop the above virtue in students of a boarding school under the guidance of housemaster and instructors who themselves had their character developed. He acknowledged that it is far more difficult in a day school, especially when we consider the general backwardness in the civilization of the day student's home.

⁵⁹ Watkins, W. H. "The White architects of Black education: Ideology and Power in America 1865-1954" (New York, 2001). While educationists stressed the advantages of agricultural and industrial education, it was strictly governed by the concurrent conditions of life for Blacks in the White dominant society. This education, promoted in the American south, defined the "character development" of students as one of its goals. However, little emphasis was given to the development personal strength. It was to make Black students useful members of the larger society—that they should be well adapted to its values, recognize their position in it, and play the expected role. In sum, practical, society-oriented vocational education for Blacks reflected the collective will of the White population to preserve the status quo, or slow and minor change.

⁶⁰ Jones, Thomas Jesse. "Education in Africa." (New York: Phelps-Stokes Fund, 1922).

⁶¹ Memorandum on the Advisory Committee on Native Education in Tropical Africa. Africa Pamphlets, Vol. 2, No. 47. Colonial Office Library.

⁶² Aggrey Kwegiri in "Education in Africa." (New York: Phelps-Stokes Fund, 1922).

⁶³ "Report of Sub-Committee on the Education and Welfare of Women and Girls in Africa." (London, May 1930).

⁶⁴ Ibid., 18. Guggisberg expressed satisfaction with character-training by missionary boarding schools through the Boy Scouts and the Girls Guide, lines which contained a practical application of the principles of Christianity and citizenship that is invaluable.

⁶⁵ Great Britain, Colonial Office. Advisory Committee on Native Education in Tropical Africa. "British Tropical Africa: The Place of the Vernacular in Native Education." (London, May, 1927).

⁶⁶ McWilliam, H. O. A. "The development of education in Ghana." (London: Longmans, Green, 1962).

⁶⁷ Guggisberg, Frederick Gordon, "The keystone; education is the keystone of progress: mix the materials badly, omit the most important, and the arch will collapse; omit character-training from education and progress will stop." (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co., 1924).

⁶⁸ Ofori-Attah, K.D., "The British and curriculum development in West Africa": A historical discourse. *Int. Rev Educ.* 52, 409–423 (2006). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11159-006-9001-4>

⁶⁹ Ofori-Attah K. D. "Urbanization and schooling in Africa: Trends, issues, and challenges from Ghana during the colonial era." In Pink, W. T., Noblit, G. W., (Eds.), "International handbook of urban education," vol. 19.

(Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer, 2007), 23-48. DOI: [10.1007/978-1-4020-5199-9_2](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-5199-9_2). In a wider sense, "Salem" means harmlessness, safety, and protection from evil and faults.

⁷⁰ Guggisberg, Frederick Gordon. "The keystone; education is the keystone of progress: mix the materials badly, omit the most important, and the arch will collapse; omit character-training from education and progress will stop." (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co., 1924). <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc2.ark:/13960/t60605j93>

⁷¹ See: Spring, J. "The American School 1642-2004" *6th Edition* (McGraw Hill, 2005). As it was with the Phelps-Stokes recommendation, the boarding school proposed can be likened to the experience of Native children in America which began in 1860. The goal of the reformers was to use education as a tool to "assimilate" Indian tribes into the mainstream of the "American way of life." Like the British, reformers assumed that it was necessary to "civilize" the native people and make them accept White beliefs and values. Ibid.

⁷² This boarding schools' deculturalization paralleled what happened to Indigenous people in Native American boarding schools between the nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries in the United States. The same can be said about the impact of boarding school systems and the Aborigines in Australia.

⁷³ Ibid. This fell in Guggisberg's character training as recommended by the Phelps-Stoke Commission.

⁷⁴ wa Thiong'o, "Decolonizing the mind: the politics of language in African literature." *Heine-Mann*, (London, 1986), 15-16.

⁷⁵ Ibid., wa Thiong'o, 15-16.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 10-13. Ngugi wa Thiong'o explains even though colonial rule signaled the end of the "sword and bullet" and the commencement of the "chalk and blackboard" of the colonizers as a means of subjugation of Africa, it was through acculturation, achieved through the education process and the language of communication that the colonialists succeeded in controlling, not just the resources and state of Africa, but most frighteningly, his mind as well.

⁷⁷ Moumouni Abdou, *Education in Africa*. Praeger. (New York, 1986), 49.

⁷⁸ Ibid., Ofori-Attah, 420. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11159-006-9001-4>

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ wa Thiong'o N "Decolonizing the mind: the politics of language in African literature." *Heine-Mann*, (London 1987), 15-16. Thiong'o emphasized that the erosion of cultural pride makes Africans want to identify with other peoples' languages rather than their own, like the example where one spoke his mother tongue at home and in the fields, but at school, his language of education ceased to be the language of his culture and thoughts. The child who was caught speaking his heart language, within the school premises, was subjected to corporal punishment or fined money. Those who spoke English were admired as the intelligent ones, and English, according to wa Thiong'o, "became the main determinant of a child's progress up the ladder of the formal education" wa Thiong'o, 1987. 12.

⁸¹ Pinto, Ransford. "The Effect of Western Formal Education on the Ghanaian Educational System and Cultural Identity." *The Journal of Negro Education* 88, no. 1 (2019): 5-16. DOI: [10.7709/jnegroeducation.88.1.0005](https://doi.org/10.7709/jnegroeducation.88.1.0005)

⁸² Ibid.

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