

Historical Reforms in the Development of Post-Colonial Social Studies Education in Ghana

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Abstract:

This article provides a chronological analysis of the historical development of social studies in Ghana with a focus on the impact of international donor agencies. The influence of donor agencies on the introduction and implementation of social studies in the Ghanaian general education curriculum shows that post-colonial countries struggle with developing curriculum that is independent of colonial powers and germane to national needs. This article delves into the introduction and implementation process of social studies education highlighting five influential reforms in Ghana that happened between 1951 and 2007. This study provides an overview of Ghana's key educational reforms and the most important factors that influenced those reforms. Studying the past and present social studies education curriculum and its historical context in Ghana offers educational leaders insights and cautions to guide and inform future reforms in social studies education, ideally to avoid similar problems.

Keywords: Ghana, education reform, history, post-colonial, social studies education, social studies curriculum and development

Introduction

In stating the importance of social studies, then U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan (2011) wrote that social studies, which includes history, geography, and civics, among other fields, is an integral part of a well-rounded education. In fact, many top-achieving nations around the world, like Finland, South Korea, and Japan, recognize the importance of social studies by implementing it within the K–12 curriculum (Duncan, 2011). According to Alleman and Brophy (1999), social studies has become more visible as a school subject. Post-colonial nations, like Ghana, face unique challenges that impact reforms designed to implement social studies education.

As posited by Nana Akufo-Addo, the current president of Ghana, in order to improve education in Ghana and other African nations, leaders must ensure that the curricula in schools are relevant to the skills needed in the 21st-century job market (Bokpe, 2017). Further, the curriculum must serve the purpose of developing political skills, understanding economic education, and becoming a responsible citizen who demonstrates a positive civic attitude, which in Ghana includes protecting government property, performing civic responsibilities such as voting, and joining civic associations to educate other citizens. In order to have an educated, engaged, and responsible citizenry, Ghana's government and other African governments, therefore, need to thoroughly investigate the purpose and implementation process of social studies curriculum.

The education system in Ghana has experienced numerous reforms, from the period of colonial rule through pre-independence to post-independence. Many scholars have conducted research about the development of social studies education in Ghana; however, most of these studies are focused on areas such as teaching methods and curriculum development (Asimeng-Boahene, 2004; Bekoe & Eshun, 2013; K. Boadu, 2016; Eshun, 2020; Merryfield & Muyanda-Mutebi, 1991; Quartey, 1990; Sefa-Nyarko & Afram, 2019; Tamakloe, 1988, 1994; Yalley, 2017). Previous studies focused on the history of general education in Ghana without focusing on the development of social studies education (Antwi, 1992; Awotwi, 2003; K. Boadu, 2016; Graham, 1971; Hayford, 1988; McWilliam, 1962; McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh, 1975; Nimako, 1976; Palmer, 2005; Quist, 2003). Unlike the previous studies, this historical study approached the chronological development of social studies education in Ghana, a subject primarily focusing on the teaching of history. Specifically, this study identified the source, philosophy, and context behind the introduction and duration of social studies education, especially high school social studies curriculum reforms. Furthermore, this study considers the role donor organizations played in the introduction of social studies education and examines how successive Ghanaian governments have impacted the implementation processes.

The study informing this article utilized historical research methods to analyze curriculum and reform documents in tandem with the educational policy borrowing to understand the development of social studies education in Ghanaian high schools, addressing the following research questions:

1. What is the philosophy behind social studies education in Ghana?

2. How have donor agencies influenced the development of social studies education in Ghana?
3. What role did political systems (i.e., changes in established political parties) play in the development of social studies education in Ghana?

Insights from the current and past social studies education curriculum in Ghana offer a guide for educational leaders and scholars to help adopt.

The Four Stages of Educational Policy Borrowing

Phillips and Ochs (2004) identify four stages in educational policy borrowing. The stages are: (a) cross-national attraction, (b) decision, (c) implementation, and (d) internalization/indigenization (p. 776). The stages are described as a composite process because the stages are related to one another. The process is cyclical, which means that it does not end, but continues from one stage to another (Phillips & Ochs, 2003, 2004). The four stages in educational policy borrowing served as an analytic lens for this historical study to show how Ghana as a nation introduced social studies into the national curriculum. The stages guided us in determining when and how Ghanaian stakeholders of education transferred social studies education from the wealthier and past colonizing countries, such the United States of America, to Ghana. The educational policy borrowing framework also helped us determine which stages were most prominent. The origins of policy “borrowing” in education are traced to the 19th century and consistently appear in educational comparative inquiry through modern times (Phillips, 2006, p. 551). Educational policy borrowing is defined as a practice where an innovation in education in a particular country could be traced to a model that already exists elsewhere (McDonald, 2012; Phillips, 2006; Phillips & Ochs, 2003; Steiner-Khamsi, 2004). Educational policy borrowing has now become a global transportable phenomenon (McDonald, 2012) and contributes to the spread of ideas, techniques, and forms of organization among different countries (Steiner-Khamsi, 2004). The concept of borrowing, however, is critiqued as a “fallacious assumption” that educational policy can simply be transplanted from one country to another without critically considering the implications (Steiner-Khamsi, 2004, p. 773). The concept of borrowing has varying descriptors, definitions, and critiques. A few examples of similar descriptors for borrowing are “coping,” “appropriation,” “assimilation,” “transfer,” and “importation” (Phillips & Ochs, 2003, p. 451). Since the introduction of the policy, ideas have been transferred from one country to another, especially from colonizing countries to post-colonial countries, with a different perception, “ranging from scornful dismissal to enthusiastic advocacy” (Phillips, 2006, p. 551). Despite the critiques, the premise of educational policy borrowing offered an instructive lens, recognizing that Ghana’s social studies model has origins in the United States (a colonizing country).

The first stage, cross-national attraction, involves “impulse” and externalizing potential of the originating country of borrowed policy. Impulse refers to the internal dissatisfaction with the education system in the borrowing country that uses external evaluations to compare the current system to other countries. Internal problems include inadequate policy structure or failed policies that compel a system to restructure. The stakeholders must identify a problem

of the existing structure and the need for the educational reform. The need to restructure an existing system is primarily instigated by parents, teachers, students, supervisors, and other stakeholders in education (Phillips & Ochs, 2003, p. 452). Stage two, decision making, consists of a wide variety of alternative decisions from which the government and other stakeholders in education attempt to choose from and decide when and how to start implementation. The third stage is where the actual policy is put into practice in the destination country. After the government and other agencies have chosen a particular educational policy and have decided to implement such policy, the parties then develop a modality to implement the policy. The final stage is the internalization or indigenization of the policy. At this stage, the policy has become part of the education system of the borrowing country, and it is possible to affect the existing education system (Phillips & Ochs, 2003, 2004).

Ghana embarked on different educational reforms as donor agencies intensified their effort to help post-colonial countries meet the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, which include universal primary education (Global Partnership for Education, 2015). Ghana implemented major educational reforms in the areas of curriculum and sources of financing, prompting challenges associated with the reform outcomes. In addition to numerous primary and secondary sources, we analyzed the practice of educational policy borrowing from 1951 to 2010, covering pre-independence through post-independence, for five educational reform documents as follows:

- The 1951 Accelerated Development Plan for Education report
- The Education Act 1961 report
- The 1974 Dzobo Education Advisory Committee report
- The 1987 Anfom Reform Commission report
- The 2007 Anamuah-Mensah Education Reform Review Committee report

The five documents contain a variety of proposals and recommendations for Ghana's educational curriculum and attracted both praises and criticisms from different political leaders and the Ghanaian general public. The differences in the reform proposals, recommendations, and reactions sometimes resulted in the establishment of another reform committee. As an example, during the implementation of the 1987 Ghana educational reform, the whole process started over with the adoption of foreign models as a potential intervention to remedy anticipated deficiencies (Steiner-Khamsi, 2004). To infer from the concept of the four stages in educational policy borrowing, then, what is missing in the Ghana's educational reform implementation is the aspect which deals with the integration of the new and the existing policies. We determined that the stakeholders should have examined how to infuse new features into the existing education system in order to achieve the policy objectives.

Methodology

Historical research is "the systemic collection and evaluation of data to describe, explain, and thereby understand actions or events that occurred sometimes in the past" (Fraenkel et al., 2015, p. 533). Historical research offers a systematic and objective location, evaluation, and synthesis of evidence in order to establish facts and draw conclusions about past events.

Historical research methodology, therefore, “represents a systematic enquiry into the past and an attempt to separate true from fictionalized accounts of historical events, based upon the examination of a range of relevant source material” (McDowell, 2002, p. 5).

Unlike other forms of research, historians do not create their own evidence but depend on other people’s observations to unravel past events; thus, historians depend on the available data (Duke & Mallette, 2011). We used both primary and secondary source materials in this study. Danto (2008) emphasizes that “today’s researcher is encouraged to cast the widest possible net, including Internet searches, oral history interviews, original document, and three-dimensional objects along with archival research to make the historical study fresh, democratic, and inviting” (p. 61). In historical research, the researcher studies documents and other sources that contain facts concerning the research theme with the objective of achieving better understanding of present policies, practices, and problems concerning institutions or societies. We used Fraenkel et al.’s (2015) four stages of historical research as a guide to analyze documents. The stages involved

- identifying a topic and defining the problem that the researcher intends to investigate,
- searching for a source of data and conducting a background literature review,
- evaluating the historical sources to determine the authenticity and accuracy of the source material, and
- analyzing and interpreting the data to draw a conclusion and make recommendations.

We used historical research to analyze the historical, political, social, and contextual factors that influenced the development of social studies education in Ghana. Herein, we focus on how these factors affected the change of the goal and purpose of social studies education, curriculum, and instruction methods, and duration of social studies education over the period of 1951 to 2020. Specifically, we examined primary and secondary sources of materials of social studies education, including archival documents from the Ghana Government (government white papers) and Ghana Education Service (GES) from 1951 to 2007. We began by gathering hundreds of primary sources such as colonial ordinances, the Constitution of Ghana, reports from the GES, annual reports from the West Africa Examination Council, and reports from universities. These official primary documents provided a starting point to locate useful secondary sources, including books on social studies education in Ghana.

Additionally, we examined educational reform reports and social studies syllabi from the Ministries of Education (MOE), as well as documents from the Education Sector Performance reports. Secondary documents that were evaluated for this article included publications from the World Bank (WB), non-governmental organizations, GES, MOE, Ghana, University of Cape Coast (UCC) library, University of Education, Winneba (UEW) library, Ghana News Agency, the website Ghanaweb, and other literature (social studies education) records like graduate theses, dissertations, books, articles, and online documents. These primary and secondary sources were used to trace the historical origins of social studies educational reform in Ghana. In addition, they proved a systematic understanding of the philosophical aspects, contextual

factors, and key reforms influencing social studies development in Ghana. Interpretation of data in historical research varies; while some researchers present data in chronological order, others organize data according to topics or theme (Gall et al., 2005). For the purpose of this study, the researcher reviewed the data thoroughly, categorized it according to the topics and subtopics, and constructed the results to respond to the research questions. The evidence was synthesized into a pattern that answers the research questions to serve as a guide for the interpretation (Duke & Mallette, 2011). By using the historical research methodology, we were able to foreground narratives related to the development of social studies education from sources that might have otherwise been buried, intentionally or unintentionally, to gain critical understanding.

Findings

Our analysis of the history of social studies education in Ghana shows that social studies education has gone through an evolution from the 1940s until the government finally adopted social studies into the general school curriculum as a core subject in 1987. The chronology of social studies education indicates Ghana implemented social studies education in the general school curriculum as a way of complying with donor agency requirements, especially the World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF). An overall analysis of the data revealed challenges that Ghana has faced in the implementation of social studies education in the general curriculum including: (a) a lack of understanding of the philosophy behind social studies education; (b) the role of donor agencies hastily imposing social studies education within various conditional educational reforms without adequate research on the implementation process; and (c) the political system, which hinders the adequate development of social studies education curriculum especially at the high school level. We describe the historical trajectory of social studies education in Ghana in relationship to the challenges from differing philosophical approaches to social studies, donor influences, and political party changes turmoil.

The Development of Social Studies Education in Ghanaian School Curriculum

Research shows that social studies education in post-colonial Ghana was first introduced in the 1940s into the school curriculum on an experimental basis at selected teacher training colleges (Tamakloe, 1994). However, these experiments were short-lived due to logistical problems, as teachers were not trained in the philosophy, methodology, aims, objectives, and techniques of teaching social studies. Indeed, teachers' knowledge and understanding of the discipline and its pedagogical representations are important considerations in teaching a particular subject (G. Boadu, 2020).

During the decolonization period in Ghana, there was the need for a more relevant education to teach people that the essence of humankind makes them more responsible and socially conscious (Akubue, 2006). Since social studies aims at producing responsible citizens with the needed competence, skills, and moral judgment to contribute to the society, social studies education was suggested as the best alternative (Okobia, 1984). The suggestion of

social studies was discussed at the initial meeting of African leaders at Queen’s College, Oxford, in 1967, a conference organized by the Educational Development Center, USA and Center for Curriculum Renewal and Educational Curriculum Overseas, England (Bisina, 2010). During the conference, the leaders agreed and resolved on the need to prioritize the development of social studies education in Africa (Bisina, 2010).

The following year, the first African Conference (Mombasa Conference) on social studies, which was made up of 25 educators from 11 Anglophone African countries, was held in Kenya in 1968. As a follow up to the conference, African Social Studies Program was formed, which addressed questions such as the following:

1. What is social studies?
2. What should be the objectives of social studies education?
3. What approach should be used in teaching social studies? (Merryfield, 1988, p. 2)

As a nation, Ghana is still finding it difficult, if not impossible, to develop answers to these questions, because, in part (discussed later), there are still differences between University of Cape Coast (UCC) and University of Education, Winneba (UEW), the two major teacher training universities in Ghana, regarding the definition and content of the subject (Bekoe & Eshun, 2013; Kyei & Liyab, 2022). Since social studies was introduced into Ghanaian curriculum, the philosophy behind the subject seems not to have been fully understood or agreed upon, and the practitioners perceived the objective differently, which has affected the achievement of social studies in Senior High Schools (SHS)¹ (Quartey, 1990). The differing approaches have caused confusion and challenges for students to fully benefit from an integrated social studies approach. For example, high school students failed national final exams because the teachers were not properly prepared. In particular, UCC views social studies as an amalgamation of subjects (e.g., economics, geography, history, etc.), whereas UEW calls for an integrated approach of social studies as a single subject. Thus, the two main universities that offer social studies methods do not agree on a definition or approach for teacher education, which ultimately prevents a common focus for Ghana (Kyei & Liyab, 2022).

History of Social Studies in Ghana

Like most African countries, social studies was generally adopted in Ghana’s school curriculum in 1969 by a follow up to the Educational Conference in Winneba. In 1972, social studies in Ghana became a part of the school curriculum in the primary schools as social/ environmental studies, and in 1976, it was added to the curriculum of the experimental Junior High Schools (JHS) in all the nine regional capitals (Tamakloe, 1988). Successive governments attempted to integrate social studies education, based on similar structures prevailing in the United States of America, Japan, and Nigeria, into the high school curriculum through the late 1970s and early 1980s but could not make any headway until 1987 (Quist, 2003). However, social studies education was abandoned at the teacher training colleges in the 1978–79

1. The 1987 reform used Junior Secondary School and Senior Secondary School. The 2000 reform renamed Senior Secondary Schools as Senior High Schools, and the Anamuah–Mensah Education Reforms Review Committee of 2007 changed the levels to Junior High School (JHS) and Senior High School (SHS), which will be used throughout.

academic year as the first three batches of trained teachers who graduated could not find positions at schools as social studies teachers.

One contemporary reform of note, which was very comprehensive, is the 1987 educational reform that led to the introduction of social studies education in the country's general education curriculum. During the implementation of the 1987 educational reform, social studies education was confined to the JHS and the teacher training institutions, where teachers were prepared to teach the subject in primary school through JHS (Bekoe & Eshun, 2013). The subject in primary school was called Environmental Studies. However, another subject, known as Life Skills, was introduced at both the JHS and SHS levels, which was designed to help students acquire social skills and attitudes necessary for their effective participation in the social and economic life of the country. In 1994, a greater percentage of the first batch of the SHS graduates failed the Life Skills subject during their final examination, which prompted the government of Ghana to set up a committee to review the failures.

Bekoe and Eshun (2013) assert that the government of Ghana through the GES set up a committee to investigate and find solutions to the factors that contributed to the "massive failure" (i.e., did not pass their final test) (p. 4) of the first batch of the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination candidates. The group of students who failed also happened to be the first batch of students of the 1987 Reforms to graduate from the SHS. The 1994 Educational Review Committee (ERC) recommended the introduction of social studies to replace life skills at the SHS level. The absence of continuity and linkage between social studies at the JHS level and life skills at the SHS level ultimately led to the majority of 1994 SHS students failing life skills. This issue was the main reason the committee recommended replacing life skills with social studies at the SHS level. The committee recommendation was accepted and adopted by the government and became the basis upon which a panel of experts was constituted in 1996 by the Curriculum Research and Development Division (CRDD) of the GES to oversee the implementation of this particular recommendation. Bekoe and Eshun (2013) report that the 1994 ERC recommendation led to the introduction of social studies education at both JHS and SHS levels in Ghana schools. The recommendation also transformed social studies from the amalgamation of traditional social science disciplines to an issue-centered subject with a focus on problem solving.

Institutional Differences

Even though subtle and not readily recognizable in the public domain in Ghana, the major positions held by UCC and UEW highlight national differences on how to institutionalize social studies. UCC advocated that the topics/content from the social science disciplines should be amalgamated or fused and taught as social studies, as stated in the social studies curriculum developed in 1987 (CRDD, 1987) and the social studies program at UCC. UEW, on the other hand, called for a fully integrated approach for social studies as a single subject, instead of teaching different social studies topics in various courses such as geography, economics, and history. For them, this practice would enable learners to deal with problems/issues of importance to humanity's survival as stated in the more contemporary social studies syllabi

for both the SHS and the JHS levels (CRDD, 1998, 2010) and the social studies program at UEW. The differences between the two major teacher training institutions indicates that even though social studies education has gone through many changes both curricular and instructional since Ghana implemented the subject, however, the philosophy behind the subject seems not to have been fully understood and its practitioners incorrectly interpreted it (Quartey, 1990). While the designers of the 1972 and 1978 syllabi interpreted social studies as “man and his relationship with the society,” the creators of the 1987 national social studies syllabus interpreted social studies as the amalgamation of history and social sciences (Quartey, 1990). In 1998, the subject went through another evolution upon recommendation from the 1994 ERC and replaced life skills with social studies at the high schools. These types of fluctuations in teacher training institutions in addition to curriculum reviewers’ expectations and interpretations for social studies education affected a discontinuity in approach. Furthermore, and perhaps unsurprisingly, such considerations also affected teaching materials, such as textbooks and teaching implementation.

According to the Government of Ghana (2002), the GES curriculum department is responsible for deciding social studies topics and textbooks and determining how teachers should teach the subject at the high school level. The government of Ghana’s textbook policy aimed at collaborating with publishing companies, some individual teachers, or a group of social studies teachers to write social studies textbooks either for a particular school or for high school social studies students nationwide. There are two forms of assessments, internal and external, of social studies students approved by GES (CRDD, 2010; West African Examinations Council, 2017). The high school social studies teachers administer internal examination at various high schools, and an external examining body, West African Examinations Council (WAEC), administers the external examination.

Educational Reforms in Ghana

Within the context of educational reforms and the ongoing discussions on how and when social studies is taught, we briefly review teaching expectations of high school social studies. Currently, there are two prevalent methods of teaching social studies at the high school level, either as a separate course or by infusion (Bekoe & Eshun, 2013; Kyei & Liyab, 2022). As a separate course, high school students study social studies as a core course throughout the program. As an infusion method, students learn selected social studies topics in a range of courses that have aspects of social studies content, such as geography, economics, history, integrated science, and government. In addition, the national social studies syllabus contains topics with an international perspective designed to help high school students understand and appreciate the contributions of international organizations (donor funding), such as the WB and the IMF, to Ghana’s economy. As stated in the CRDD (2010), which only had minor changes in 2020 in the absence of major reforms since 2007, the topics help students recognize and discuss areas of cooperation, forms of cooperation Ghana is involved in, and the benefits the country gets from the cooperation.

Subject-Matter Philosophy, Donor Agencies, and Political Party Changes Turmoil

Subject-Matter Philosophy

Findings show that the philosophy behind social studies seems not to have been fully understood and its practitioners incorrectly interpreted the subject, which affected the selection of its scope, methods, purpose, and mode of evaluation. For instance, there are conflicting perceptions of citizenship education and other objectives of social studies in the Ghanaian school system. The objective of citizenship education varies among educationists because of their areas of specialization and their perception of social studies concepts (Bekoe & Eshun, 2013). The current university situation in Ghana for social studies curriculum and instruction is that UCC still runs the course as an amalgam of history, geography, and economics, whereas UEW has social studies reflecting the issue-centered and problem-solving curriculum (Bekoe & Eshun, 2013; Kyei & Liyab, 2022). The above situation coupled with the differences between the nature of the social studies curriculum in the teacher training colleges, on one hand, and the JHSs and SHSs on the other, exposes the undercurrent of curriculum politics, controversies, disagreements, and different conceptions that have characterized the implementation of the subject since its introduction in the country. This is in line with Gideon Boadu (2020), who argued that Ghanaian SHS curriculum needs a disciplinary re-orientation and increased focus on a postmodern approach to the school subject.

Donor Agencies

The findings also showed that the donor support, especially the WB and IMF, heavily influenced the development of social studies education through various educational reforms, such as the 1987 reform, making social studies a core subject at the high school level. The WB (2004) report clearly details that donor agencies imposed key portions of Ghana's 1987 educational reform and that financing was unduly burdened by "arbitrary conditionality" (WB, 2004, p. 20). According to the WB report (2010), Ghana is one of the top recipients of education aid in Sub-Saharan Africa. Before 2008, donor support has played a significant role in the implementation of educational reform that was launched in 1987 (Thompson & Casely-Hayford, 2008). The donor agencies' objectives of imposing social studies education in Ghana are relevant to Steiner-Khamsi's (2004) argument that the concept of borrowing is attached to a "fallacious assumption" that educational policy can simply be transplanted from one country to another without critically considering the implications at the destination (p. 773).

Political Party Changes Turmoil

In addition to the above, the results showed that Ghana's two main political parties, the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and New Democratic Congress (NDC), with the help of donor agencies, experimented with school children—in terms of the duration of the high school social studies—to create political favor at the expense of a better education system. For instance, during the implementation of the 1987 educational reform, the high school students studied Life Skills, while the primary school students studied Environmental Studies (Bekoe & Eshun, 2013). It was, therefore, not a big surprise as in 1994, a greater percentage of the

first batch of the SHS graduates failed the Life Skills subject during their final examination. The final examination is the end-of-term test, which is a summative assessment consisting of the knowledge and skills students have acquired in the term. The life skills test assessed high school students' thinking, cognitive, social, and negotiation skills. It also examined students on their financial stability and standard of living, as well as the livelihood skills they need to deploy in their future jobs. The livelihood skills test covered agricultural science, animal husbandry, automobile mechanics, and building construction.

The reason for the final examination failure was that there was no continuity of social studies education expectations from JHS to SHS, prompting the government of Ghana to set up a committee to review the large percentage of failures. Evidence from analyzed reports also indicated the reform was politically motivated, as the NPP government stated in its manifesto during the 2000 electoral campaign that the party would overhaul the education system to address the issue of "chaotic education reform" in Ghana (NPP, 2000). This statement shows that the 2007 reform was politically instigated because there was not much change between the structure and content of the 2007 reform and the 1987 reform. Like the 1987 Anfor committee, the reform did not include how to train and adequately equip teachers to ensure effective implementation of the reform (Owusu et al., 2016). The issue of inconsistency on whether the SHS program should be a four-year program, as the NPP government proposed, or a three-year program, as initiated by the NDC government, remained mired in debate. Additional challenges for Ghana's education system included the duration of the high school program, excessive emphasis on academic aspects of education to the detriment of vocational skills, and curriculum challenges that fail to meet the cultural and economic needs of this post-colonial country (Dunne et al., 2005).

Findings also showed that the Ghanaian government, the WB, IMF, and other donors assessed educational reforms to some degree. Most of the assessments reveal that the educational reform process achieved some significant objectives regarding enrollment and overall expansion of the public education system, improvement in education infrastructure, and quality aspects of schools, such as teachers, textbooks, and furniture, just to mention a few. However, it is important to note that these organizations typically conduct broad assessments of their projects, rather than focusing on specific initiatives like educational reform. Additionally, while donor assessments may take place shortly after policy implementation, it can take years for a nation to fully realize the impact of educational reform and the lack of donor coordination regarding the government's priorities has caused tension within the donor community. For instance, the WB aimed to support tertiary education to continue the basic level reforms, while most bilateral donors preferred to focus solely on general education. Major findings from this study show that Ghanaian educational policymakers did not clearly review or state the philosophy behind social studies education before its introduction. Additionally, donor agencies were highly involved in the implementation process. The conditional expectations the agencies set for implementation did not strengthen, in fact they undermined, social studies education. Furthermore, the two

major political parties in Ghana, NPP and NDC, have used social studies education to meet their political agenda rather than improve the quality of education for Ghana's citizenry.

Policy Borrowing and Donor Funding

As demonstrated through the educational policy borrowing stages, all four stages (cross-national attraction, decision, implementation, and internalization/indigenization) have proven significant to Ghana's social studies education challenges. The noted patterns and trends from 1951 to 2010 show how the philosophy, donor agencies, and political party changes turmoil have shaped consequential factors, for better or worse, in implementing colonial reforms in post-colonial nations. The role of cohesive philosophical understandings and alignment, conditional resourcing of donor funding agencies, and conflicting national politics in establishing national curriculum expectations has hampered the success of social studies implementation in Ghana. The resulting challenges, including the pace of implementation (too slow or too fast), teacher development (missing, not enough, or not aligned), and the (lack of) continuity of curriculum from grade level to grade level or university preparation all bear consideration for struggles that might be avoided. Relevant to the four stages of policy borrowing in Ghana, including social studies in the curriculum was viewed as important (decision stage); although, its introduction and implementation was a struggle (implementation stage), in particular, developing a curriculum independent of colonial powers and germane to national needs (cross-national attraction and internalization/indigenization stages). The role of donor agencies was a key factor in the lack of implementation success, potentially taking away from rather than strengthening the main goal of social studies education—to teach students to become responsible citizens (CRDD, 2010).

Previous research on donor funding found that post-colonial countries, such as Ghana, borrow education systems from donor countries (Asiedu & Feinberg, 2021). Foreign education systems are not necessarily suitable for post-colonial countries, so great caution is necessary when borrowing and implementing these education systems. Western ideology is implicitly and explicitly propagated through donor funding to post-colonial countries. A critical post-colonial discursive lens can help inform post-colonial citizens about the power dynamic that exists between donor organizations and Ghana's government (Asiedu & Feinberg, 2021).

The history of donor funding in Ghana's education is traced back to its colonial roots. The influence of western colonizers on the development of Ghana's education system date back to the 1750s, when Rev. Thompson, one of the early missionaries of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, taxed officers and servants who failed to attend church service to finance educational programs. Since the mid-18th century, donor funding has influenced various content areas and levels of education in Ghana, such as primary, pre-university, university education, and special education. Consequently, Ghana is still one of the top recipients of educational aid in Sub-Saharan Africa. Evidently, even in contemporary times, the colonial master continues to dictate to the colonized countries (Bhabha, 1994/2004; Ilieva & Odiemo-Munara, 2007). The findings of this study align with Said's (1978) research, which argues that although direct colonialism has largely ended, imperialism lingers in the form of

socioeconomic and political conditions imposed upon former colonies as seen in educational reform in Ghana.

As part of educational reform, the implementation of emancipatory pedagogies may lead Ghana and other post-colonial countries to abandon the problematic influences of colonial pedagogy and ideology. Unfortunately, an entrenched and strong reliance on foreign donors to support the education system in Ghana has led to the adoption of educational policies that embody Western ideologies (Asiedu & Feinberg, 2021). Former colonies such as Ghana continue to use donor assistance at the expense of implementing oppressive pedagogy in their education system.

Discussion

Due to the importance of social studies education, including citizenship education, some scholars advocate that social studies education should be introduced in high school curriculum to enable students to have basic knowledge in different courses, especially courses that students will not study at the college level (Stern, 2010). These advocates attest to the fact that social studies education has an important influence on the students' lives even after school. Stern (2010) asserts that social studies not only encourages students to form opinions but also helps students support their opinions with evidence. Social studies helps students to develop ideas, fostering critical analysis, and enables them to understand the connections among facts, values, and judgements. The content of social studies provides many possibilities for rational discussion among students in the classroom. Stern continues that the development of rational discussion in classrooms serves as preparation grounds for students to contribute to national debate when such students will assume social position (social status) in the future in various organizations and associations. Rational discussion also helps students to learn content knowledge and to develop critical thinking skills (Parker, 2010).

Furthermore, according to National Council for the Social Studies (2023), the vision for social studies is a "world in which all students are educated and inspired for lifelong inquiry and informed civic action" while valuing diversity and promoting an integrated and "holistic understanding of humanity, cultures, and the world around us." Students learn skills through social studies that help them succeed in further education as well as in life, no matter what they do after graduation. Social studies education equips students with skills to enable them to interact with others from different cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. Students must study social studies and understand how people function in an interdependent society in order for it all to work once they fully enter society after graduation.

Considering the importance of social studies education, Ghana and other post-colonial countries have tried several ways to adopt the subject into their national curriculum. Ghana should restructure its education system to transform graduates who can effectively contribute to solving current societal challenges such as hunger, disease, and poverty within local communities. Any reform that is heavily influenced by donor agencies is unlikely to meet the unique cultural and educational needs of Ghana's citizens. Global education should highlight the struggles that post-colonial countries, such as Ghana, have faced when implementing

social studies curriculum. Ideally, global and indigenous education researchers could emulate this study in other post-colonial countries to draw attention to the consequences of donor funding and help guide their countries to create a just form of social studies that fits best for their society.

Although the imperial power of the Western nations officially ended after World War II, former colonies, such as Ghana, continue to use donor assistance at the expense of implementing oppressive pedagogy in their educational system. The oppressive pedagogy aligns with Fanon's (1952/2008) assertion that colonized people accept an "inferiority complex" by borrowing and adopting Western culture, language, and history. Borrowed language has influenced the colonized to the extent that the more they are educated, the more prejudiced their post-colonial culture and language become. As governments of post-colonial countries, such as Ghana, continue to rely on donor assistance, few choices exist beyond accepting the conditionalities that are laden with Western ideology.

Conclusion

Ghana's government and other post-colonial governments have implemented social studies through various educational reforms prescribed by donor agencies. Unfortunately, and perhaps also consequently, Ghana has failed to develop social studies education to a level that meets the needs of the citizens. After implementing five major educational reforms—the Accelerated Development Plan for Education of 1951, the Education Act of 1961, the Dzobo Education Advisory Committee of 1974, the Anfom Reform Commission of 1987, and the Anamuah-Mensah Education Reform Review Committee of 2007—the Ghanaian education system still has basic challenges, such as the origin, philosophy, and context behind the introduction of social studies education at all levels. Documents from GES, MOE, WAEC, WB, IMF, and other donor agencies did not show whether the government in Ghana assessed the benefits of social studies education before the government introduced the subject into general school curriculum in 1987. In view of the challenges of the implementation of social studies education in Ghana, it is imperative that, in the future, the Ghanaian government should conduct critical post-colonial discursive analysis of the adoption and implementation of new subject matter before it is introduced into the national school curriculum to avoid a repeat of the challenges of its implementation.

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