



# **Ghana Education and Impact of Traditional Cultures on Students Learning**

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Thesis for BA degree  
Faculty of Education and Diversity



**UNIVERSITY OF ICELAND**  
**SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**





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June 2020



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Learning

This thesis satisfies 10 credits towards a B.A. in International Studies in  
Education in Faculty of Education and Diversity, School of Education,  
University of Iceland

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## **Abstract**

This paper draws on various previous academic research and focuses on Ghana's education and the impact of traditional cultures on students Learning in the country. This article uses the country Ghana as a case study. The main purpose of this paper is to explore both the positive and negative impact of culture on students learning in Ghana. Students in Ghana are likely to be influenced by cultural beliefs. There are several cultural beliefs which Ghanaians have trust or hope in them. This paper explores deeper into some of these cultures. I think the beliefs of certain groups of people could have a greater impact on the behaviours of such people. Such believes could be a positive or negative aspect. To make this clearer, in Ghana, supports parents may provide on their children's education in various communities are usually linked to parents' traditional cultures. There are over a hundred various cultural groups in Ghana. Not forgetting that, each culture has its own degree of trust in formal education. Some cultures believe formal education is very relevant other cultures may think the opposite. This implies that Ghana as a country has a very complex cultural lifestyle which all students in Ghana find themselves. Hence, there is a feeling that some cultures beliefs may be strong, rigid and therefore should be a liability when there is the need for adaptation. Some older traditions are still part of the current culture of Ghanaians and may have positive or negative effects, especially on students' education in various school in Ghana. The focus here is on students in Ghana. But it is important to state that, way of life of people in Ghana cannot be taken for granted. Because generally, this adds up in developing, forming attitudes and identity of Ghanaians.

*Keywords:* Cultural practices, Ghana, Mindset, Communities, Mental development, Religion, Indigenous Africans, Curriculum

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## Preface

This thesis paper could not be made possible without the support and help from various people. My first appreciation goes to the Almighty God for His guidance and loving mercies on me, throughout this thesis paper and this program. Secondly, I'm most grateful for my supervisor, Guðlaug Erlendsdóttir on her support, kindness and encouragement I had from her for my success and been able to complete this paper. I'm much grateful for all the lecturers who I studied under them throughout this three-year course, International Studies of Education program. All these lectures supported and encouraged me a lot throughout my learning here in Iceland under this program.

My next appreciation goes to my families back home in my country Ghana, Mr. Yaw Antwi, my mum Mrs. Rose Pokuah and my brothers and a sister, Natasha Antwi for their prayers and encouragement toward my stay and learning here in Iceland.

This thesis was written solely by me, the undersigned. I have read and understand the University of Iceland Code of Ethics ([https://english.hi.is/university/university\\_of\\_iceland\\_code\\_of\\_ethics](https://english.hi.is/university/university_of_iceland_code_of_ethics)) and have followed them to the best of my knowledge. I have correctly cited to all other works or previous work of my own, including, but not limited to, written works, figures, data or tables. I thank all who have worked with me and take full responsibility for any mistakes contained in this work.

Reykjavik, May 10th, 2020.

Samuel Antwi

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This thesis paper is to explore the positive and negative impact of culture on students in Ghana. The scope of this paper is to identify how culturally students in Ghana are likely influenced by cultural and religious beliefs in Ghana. This paper generally focused on all levels of students' education in Ghana. The fundamental feature of Ghana's social system, located in West Africa, is on its acceptance of customs, traditional cultures and practices on the interest of lifestyle are basically contemporary (Donkor, Issaka & Asante, 2013). According to this educational context, Ghanaians do not take their cultural practices for granted. They believe to live and continue the lifestyle of their ancestors which may be old and not a modern lifestyle. Not forgetting that, contemporary societies in Ghana are formed from traditional roots, even though relationships in terms of social traditions have currently been moderately reconstructed to adopt the needs of the modern life, they continue to endure (Donkor, Issaka & Asante, 2013). To make things clearer, relationships which are within traditional societies are established on inherited status, ancestral beliefs and family membership (Donkor, Issaka & Asante, 2013). According to these just stated academic contexts, Ghanaians are still believing and trusting in some traditions which may be old and could hinder the progress of the nation, education to be specific. I think education could be affected negatively or positively in terms of its progress. This is because, it is very important to note that, the purpose of education is for the development of people's mental, talents, physical abilities and personalities to the fullest potentials (Djietror, Okai and Kwapong 2010). From this academic context, I think education cannot be taken for granted. Even just looking at the importance of education in terms of mental development, is very necessary for humans. Mental development in people of a nation has a very broad advantage for every nation. Such advantages include how humans in communities in Ghana will live peacefully, have trust in each other and help develop the nation. Importantly, student's mental development in Ghana cannot be taken for granted too. It is very important to educate students effectively well in Ghana to help develop their communities or societies in general.

Possibly, I fully support that, Ghana as a country should focus on capacitating on its students or graduates to make a basically full impact on local and domestic communities

(Kuyini, 2013). No one can deny the fact that students or graduates in Ghana have a greater role to play in terms of national development. These same students and graduates will become leaders of the country. Relating my view to this, even though these students and graduates are in Ghana, they are clearly brought up in various schools and homes in accordance with beliefs and cultures around them. This makes them have some thinking or mentality in addition to the kind of formal education which may appear foreign to the learners. Formal education in Ghana was brought to the country by Europeans who colonized the country. Therefore, education is seen as foreign in the country, Ghana. Even though, during these last fifty years, there are several reforms on education in several Africa countries, which has shift philosophically from a point of Africanization to meet the domestic focus in terms of needs to meet the international trends (Kuyini, 2013). According to this academic context, has Africa has been able to meet these educational reforms which they are hoping for. In terms of Education, for some years now, successive governments in Ghana have carried out various reforms in desires to improve enrolment and quality in the field of education (Akowuah, Patnaik, & Kyei, 2018). Undeniably, in contributing to this shift is ratification from protocols which are international and a desire to get international investments and aid which are foreign in several ways to offset economic declining prospects on countries in Africa (Kuyini, 2013). This could even bring development in all educational institutions because education plays an important role in national developments. However, are there any hinders to the developments in education in Africa, which Ghana is not an exception. Hence, is there any problem associated with the cultural lifestyles on people in Ghana which may be likely to affect learners in any way in Ghana.

Clearly, Ghana as a country has cultures which may positively or negatively affect the country's progress in terms of education. Not forgetting that, culture generally has been known by people to describe a broad array of activities of humans (Donkor, Issaka & Asante, 2013). I strongly support that, culture shows how humans portray their biology and hence the environment which they live (Donkor, Issaka & Asante, 2013). According to this context, my view suggests that the way people in various communities are viewed are controlled by their cultures. Therefore, how does it affect education in the country of

Ghana? The national policy of Ghana in reducing poverty and to increase participation in governance democratically, generally relies on the system of education that is to enable children (all genders) with necessary skills for effective involvement in social, political and economic activities (Akowuah, Patnaik, & Kyei, 2018). In this paper, there are scenarios in several communities I have lived, which according to my personal experiences, I think education was influenced because of the cultural believes of people in such communities. Education cannot be affected negatively just because of cultural beliefs of Ghanaians. But Ghana has developed a bit in terms of its formal education when history is to be recorded. In term of formal education, Ghana has a broad history which can never be taken for granted. The next paragraph delves more into it.

## CHAPTER 2: GHANA EDUCATION HISTORY

Education in Ghana has a very long history. Even though the Portuguese had a greater impact on Ghana, which was called the Gold Coast, which still exist today (Graham, 2013). Portugal was among the first countries of Europe who made a greater effort on the educational and economic lifestyle in Ghana. The Portuguese made a relevant effort in helping my country Ghana through its economic life and helped the people of Ghana in planning its educational needs which I think was a greater effort on the side of the Portuguese. Growing up in Ghana, the Portuguese effort in Ghana history was mostly taught in schools. This made learners especially like me to have huge respect for the Portuguese people even from childhood. To make things broader, unsurprisingly, there was an aim of the Portuguese to make people of Elmina in Ghana to be converted into the Catholic faith, this made the Portuguese people one of the first people from Europe to build and open a school in Ghana (Graham, 2013). But according to this academic context, it is likely that the Portuguese did this achievement with the help of leaders in various communities. There were leaders in Ghana at the time. They were well-respected community leaders who the Portuguese seek permission before they were even able to build anything on the soil of Ghana.

The language which served as the medium of instruction was in Portuguese and hence teachers were given two hundred and forty grains of gold yearly as per pupil, to a maximum limit of 15 pupils (Graham, 2013). This means that at that time teachers spoke Portuguese to the learners in Ghana. From my schooling experiences in Ghana, we were taught that most words from our local languages sounded Portuguese. The Portuguese language was well respected at that time. Teachers really relied on how learners progress in their education. Teachers gave learners all the necessary support to success throughout learners' educational life. Even if enrolment of students exceeded the limit number, teachers did not receive an increase in salary, but if a student cut off or died when schooling, in this case, teachers received a reduction on their salary (Graham, 2013). My view suggests that learners were valued a lot in those days. Because it was the beginning of education in Ghana, learners were encouraged in a way so that, other parents around who were not schooling their children would also be motivated to bring their children to

schools. Perhaps, there were a few numbers of boys who were attending school (Graham, 2013). Relating my view to this academic context, comparing numbers of students who were schooling those years to today, I think the mentality of parents in sending their children to school has increased for now. Education to me is an essential aspect to humans. I fully support that, what Kuyini, 2013 made it clear that Ghana which is part of developing countries should generally focus in providing education to promote the potencies in students, because of its local communities and domestic levels.

Around 1637 year, the Elmina Castle was seized by the Dutch and the school was re-established by them (Graham, 2013). This was the year the Dutch arrive in Ghana after the Portuguese. The mission of the Dutch people was similar to that of the Portuguese. The Dutch mostly provided help for children who had a qualification in learning and to prosper in their faith in Christian believes (Graham, 2013). 'Qualification' here was used to classify those children who already had formal education under the Portuguese ruling. Both Portuguese and the Dutch attached religious teachings to their educational plans. Hence the Dutch were just to continue what the Portuguese had ended in terms of educating Ghanaians in those years. I think both countries had good educational plans which included religion for the country of Ghana at that time. However, children who were schooling in Elmina were more becoming readily available for authorities who were Dutch and learnt their Dutch language and Christian faith (Graham, 2013). These were generally how Education in Ghana started before other countries came to Ghana. Especially the British arrived in Ghana lately around the early 19th century and they also started their own education. But, to date, Ghana still uses British education policies for the whole educational system in Ghana. Learners who also had the opportunity within the era the Europeans came to Ghana had the opportunity to travel overseas and were also encouraged to come back to the African continent to help their countries to develop. There were several students from African who studied in England, who were successful learners with African connections (Graham, 2013). However, most students who had their education outside Africa mostly came back to Africa to enlightened mindset (Graham, 2013). Truly, Africans benefited from Europeans who visited African countries in those years. By introducing several educational systems, especially Ghanaians benefited a lot

which is even used till now. But today, what are the educational systems which Ghana is using. The next paragraph explains more.

## **2.1 Current Ghana Educational System**

“The development objective of the Secondary Education Improvement Project for Ghana is to increase access to senior secondary education in underserved districts and improve quality in low-performing senior high schools (SHSs) in Ghana” (Ministry of Education, 2017). Currently, senior schooling is an area the government of Ghana is focusing on improvement. Because there is less infrastructure to hold students in entering Ghana secondary schools. Therefore, there was a project paper which hopes to develop secondary schools and seek the approval from Directors who are Executives in providing additional financing (AF) credit which was in the amount of SDR 28.9 million which is equivalent to 40 million US dollars from IDA given to Ghana to developing secondary school education (Ministry of Education, 2017). However, there have been unavoidable storms due to globalization which has affected Ghana and its educational reforms (Kuyini, 2013). There is a modernist theory which has affected education in general due to the global competition whereby nations are to hope to achieve universal ideals and values including numeracy, literacy, information and communication technology (ICT) for ensuring national and its growth of the economy (Kuyini, 2013). I think all these educational reforms are a good concept to help to develop education in Ghana. Ghana has a really good educational system. Support provided on Ghana’s education is great to fasten and strength how students in Ghana could learn effectively and in achieving their learning goals. The government of Ghana is surely working its best to help learners in their education throughout the country.

### **CHAPTER 3: IMPACT OF CULTURE ON STUDENTS LEARNING IN GHANA**

The culture was originated from a word from Latin which literary means to cultivate or inhabit (Amponsah, 2012). Culture could be classified in a collective manner as feelings, thinking and acting on people's mind which could differentiate members of a group of people from the other (Amponsah, 2012). I also fully support that; culture could also be a set of values and believes which are seen among groups of people who could guide members in groups behaviours (Kang & Chang, 2016). According to this definition, it is undeniable fact that individuals in group values and believes are clearly portrayed through the culture such individuals shares. Behaviours of such individuals will surely be common according to this definition given. However, there is prominent culture and history made by the country Ghana which see culture and its importance to the daily lives and its development in the future (Salm & Falola, 2002). According to Salm & Falola in 2002, culture comprises of worldview, philosophy, behaviours patterns, institutions and arts. Definitions for culture varies, broadly it shows the prestigious reflections in association with social status and civilization, its regulations with behaviours and attitudes, global growth and arguments concerning issues on tradition, postmodernity and modernity (Salm & Falola, 2002). Beliefs, motivation and values all portray themselves through culture according to the definitions above. Therefore I concur with Howard (2018) in believing that, practices which are cultural are generally tied with traditions which are old even though more contemporary traditions have developed in civic settings (Howard, 2018). Hence, some older traditions may still be part of the current culture on Ghanaians especially students in various school in Ghana. The focus here is on students in Ghana. However, cultural groups in Ghana are over a hundred, which includes Ga, Ewe, Hausa, Akan, etc. and there are several languages which are spoken by Ghanaians (Howard, 2018). This implies that Ghana as a country has a very complex cultural lifestyle which all students in Ghana find themselves.

According to my experience in schooling in Ghana, learners can find themselves schooling with a complex multicultural background of other students. Some learners from the Akan, Hausa, Ewe, and Ga. and other tribes of Ghana. Because these students or learners are from a different tribe, they have different cultures which are different from

others in the same class. All these learners are from Ghana but with different cultures and are likely to do things differently as their culture demands from them. This poses a lot of mixed cultures which sometimes can have an impact on students learning outcomes. Even today, some rural communities in Ghana still consider girl child education as unnecessary. Despite a great effort from the Ghanaian government and other organizations to combat these beliefs.

To make things clearer, even in terms of enrolment, several rural communities in Ghana still do not believe in educating female children according to my personal experiences in Ghana. There is less attendance of females in some rural communities in Ghana. For example, after my university education in Ghana, I was posted to a community in the Ashanti region of Ghana. Postings of graduates are done as a form of graduates' service to the state of Ghana after completing tertiary education. During my posting as a teacher in a school in the Ashanti region of Ghana, I observed that each classroom had few female students and was outnumbered by male students. I used to talk to my colleague teachers on this issue, which some teachers told me, it was the belief of the community. That, the community believes female education was not important. Therefore, the community believes more in their male children education than females. One day I decided to talk to some of the community members about them not believing in female children education to verify what the teachers at school were telling me because I had difficulties in believing what they told me. It was shocking to hear what most illiterate parents who are members of the community told me. Most parents told me that, female child education was not necessary because they believe female become very disrespectful after been educated. Also, they believe females are likely to get pregnant in the middle of their education and likely to end their education career which in a way may make family money spent on female's education go as waste. That was the cultural beliefs in that community. They believe most in the abilities of males. Females just must rely on the males for help in future. According to my experience I just shared, I think such rural communities in Ghana such still hold cultural beliefs from old traditions. For the most part, this makes females become less educated and even those who go to school, are not able to enter tertiary education, especially coming from these rural areas. Most families in such rural areas push

male children further in their education financially than the female which, in my view, is a bad cultural mindset of these communities.

### **3.1 Parents and Society Support**

Parents do play an important part in their children education. Their efficacy from the perspective of parents on their children education and school relations, for instance supporting the learning of their children, enables the success in the children academically (Donkor, Issaka & Asante, 2013). Therefore, it is important for parents to develop good plans to support their children learning. Teachers play an important role, but parents need to be involved too. Donkor, Issaka & Asante, 2013 believe that for adequate processes in education to happen, teachers' effort cannot work fully and hence needs partnership with parents (Donkor, Issaka & Asante, 2013). At a very young stage in my education, my parent especially my dad mostly helped me in my home assignment given to me at school. My dad was able to guide my assignments and he often even went through a lesson I did in class with me after school, usually in the evening after he came back from work. My dad was an educated man and there were a lot of topics which I never understood in class, but he had a way of teaching me so that I would understand. I think parents do indeed have an important role to play in their children's education. Trotman 2001, as cited in Donkor, Issaka & Asante, 2013 concur that it is necessary for parents and teachers to have a behavioural and academic effect on their children and students respectively. Teachers generally provide good attitudes and teaching habits on students when they realise that parents are involved in the students learning (Donkor, Issaka & Asante, 2013).

According to the statements above, for students to learn at higher levels in their education, they truly need the support and guidance from families, teachers and community (Donkor, Issaka & Asante, 2013). The community here can also not be taken for granted. In most developing countries like Ghana, most parent, for example, may not be able to afford to pay for their children's education. Based on my own experience in Ghana, some children are financially supported by other community members for them to be able to go to school. Most schools which are considered by the people in communities in Ghana as best schools and really have higher schooling prices attached to them. Such

schools considered to be great are very expensive financially. It is normally the effort of most rich community members who provide financial support for children who are less fortunate in their schooling. Therefore, the community should not be taken for granted according to the example just given. Society truly plays an important role.

However, Ghana government dissolve more cost from schooling including books and uniforms in basic education around the year 2005, after even the elimination of fees on tuition in the year 1996 (Inoue & Oketch, 2008). But still, most families in Ghana live in poverty and cannot afford the educational cost of their children. In addition, most society members could serve as a role model for children while growing up and in their school life. Most children in Ghana are likely to be encouraged by their community members who are highly respected and educated individuals, such as, doctors, engineers, etc. It is my belief that most children are encouraged and would be happy if they grow to be like such educated individuals in their community. According to what I observed in Ghana, some parents even name their children after trusted and well-educated community members and mostly advice their children to further their education as much as they can in order to reach such level as these well-educated members around their communities. These are some of the roles which society members play in the educational life of students in Ghana. Family members and the community in general truly work in great accordance to help students in their educational life which is of great advantage for students' development. Teachers also have a great role to play in students' educational life in terms of their attitudes, which the next paragraph will discuss.

### **3.2 Teachers Attitudes**

To start here, I think good behaviours shown by teachers, could truly motivate students in Ghana in student educational life. For example, when I was teaching in Ghana, there were several encounters as a teacher I had with parents. Most of the time, parents helped me as a teacher to know the kind of support their children need in their educational life. Sometimes, most parents complain their children do not learn or even do their home assignments in the house. As a teacher, I really had to find out what was happening. I

observed that in my class most of the students did their assignments which were to be done in their various home in the early in the morning before lessons. Mostly, these students were done in a rush. Therefore, such students were scoring low marks in their home assignments. If I was not in contact with their parents, I would not have noticed it. Also, sometimes some parents may not even know the importance of education which teachers may try to educate such parents on the essence of education. And therefore, such parents may not be a concern when it comes to their children learning. For example, helping their children to do home assignment given to them from school, reading assignments, etc. With these examples given above, I fully support that, most parents educational level may be low in most communities in Ghana could affect such parents' knowledge on matters which leads to the children education (Donkor, Issaka & Asante, 2013). Therefore, in Ghana, it is best for teachers to interact with parents on the essence of education in the lives of children, especially parent who are illiterates (Donkor, Issaka & Asante, 2013). Also, teachers can frequently visit various communities in Ghana to talk to parents on several issues relating to school, especially the important for students to do their homework, a parent buying books for the children, parents paying their children school fees, etc. (Donkor, Issaka & Asante, 2013). I think teachers are doing their all best in helping parents and their young children through their education.

Viral roles are been played in students' lives by teachers in the classroom. Teachers mostly play many roles in the classroom to educate students. For example, the tone of the classroom is been set by teachers, a warm environment is built by teachers, serve as a mentor, nurturing of students, students look at them as role models, look and listen from troubles students may be having. The classroom environment is very necessary because of the role it plays on students by teachers. In the classroom, several teachers' actions are been mimic by students. If teachers can prepare a happy environment, which is warm and therefore will bring happiness in students. Teachers roles they play in the environment could be negative or positive. Students could act negatively when teachers act angrily on them and hence students learning outcomes could be harmed. It is true and clear that, social behaviours which are found in the classroom are all the responsibilities of teachers. Such social behaviours are basically the reflection of teachers behaviours and the

environment these teachers set. Because students mostly spend more time with teachers, teachers are likely to set and act as role models for students. Teachers are to care and love for students but not only to teach students (Roles of a Teacher in the Classroom, n.d.). All these make it clear why teachers are mostly highly appreciated by community members (Roles of a Teacher in the Classroom, n.d.).

I truly agree that the attitude of teachers is very essential in student's education. Not forgetting that, in the most learning environment, teachers serve as a resource. Teachers serve as a walking resource centre who are generally ready and prepared to give assistance learners need (Nola, 2015). According to this statement, teachers should mostly make themselves available for learners all the time so that learners needs could be met. The teacher could guide learners in using resources, for example, internet, but teachers are not to spoon-feed students because it could make students too reliant on teachers and could bring the downfall of learners (Nola, 2015). But I think teachers could act as facilitators and motivators on students' self-studies and project works (Nola, 2015). In a way, teachers are to help and guide learners on clarifying tasks and ideas. This makes it easy for teachers to provide courses which will be easy in meeting the specific needs of certain learners (Nola, 2015). This means that, in a way, teachers could easily shape their classroom culture, influence habits, production and therefore improve learning outcomes in learners. The attitudes of teachers especially in Ghana cannot be taken for granted. Relating my views to this, I think teachers truly encourages students in their education and prepare students for future challenges.

### **3.3 Students Trust in Education**

Ghana Ministry of Education has the responsibility for given out all education policies, which includes the acquisition of wider skills and apprenticeships (Ministry of Education Ghana, n.d.). It is responsible to enable quality education for all Ghanaians of all grades to get relevant skills, which will help learners to flourish their full potentials, to be productive, promote culture in technology which in a way will reduce poverty, promote national development, economic and social growth (Ministry of Education Ghana, n.d.). Students

trust that they could broaden wider their skills through education which will be necessary for future mental development which will be beneficial for the nation. There is the hope that the Ghana Ministry of Education provides an education that exhibits opportunities which are equal for all Ghanaians, without considering their family circumstances and background (Ministry of Education Ghana, n.d.). Which means that education could be fair for all students. I think this is a great educational plan on the side of the Ghana Ministry of education.

Even though formal education in Ghana seems like a foreign culture is contrary to Ghanaian culture, I do believe the way forward for a country like Ghana in terms of culture together with education is for the people of Ghana to be ready for a change in certain areas in their culture. Culture for me should not be static. Even though culture is seen as an inseparable part of the existence of humans' environment, therefore a change in cultural practices should be connected to adaptations of humans on historical events (Donkor, Issaka & Asante, 2013). This context implies that, when there are any historical events which seem not to favour humans, humans should be ready to change and move forward. Not forgetting that even learning of foreign language in Ghana is also in a way to install changes in the attitude of learners towards their own culture (Nejabat, 2016). I strongly support this academic context, because in a way Ghanaian education is linked with foreign culture because English is even used throughout the classroom activities. Not forgetting that, English is generally a language which is official for commerce and administration in Ghana (Akowuah, Patnaik, & Kyei, 2018). I think students in Ghana can learn from foreign cultures and blend with the local culture and make changes where needed in their local culture.

## **CHAPTER 4: RELIGIOUS-CULTURAL BELIEVES IN GHANA AND STUDENTS**

Ghana religious-cultural believes in a way also affect students learning. Not forgetting that most Africans hardly do anything without seeking for spiritual guidance in their day to day activities, like during marriage ceremonies, examinations, naming babies, etc. (Asagba, 2013). This is a common practice by African. They believe that there are supreme beings who protect their lands. These supreme beings are to be worshipped. Even parents' advice their children to pray before they eat, drink, travel or do other every-day things. Whether it works or not nobody knows. Ghana is not an exception. Ghanaians do believe in all these things.

This chapter will explain the negative and positive aspect of Ghanaian religious-cultural believes. As a student in Ghana, before school examinations, most students spend much time in churches and other places like shrines to seek spiritual guidance. Time these students should have used to study their books are mostly gone wasted. Such students have cultural believes that their creator could help them in their school activities. But I believe such students wasting time to go for spiritual help, could use these times to learn and prepare themselves mentally and psychological. Not forgetting that, Africans generally do not spend time to even visit psychotherapists, which are very common among Western cultures (Asagba, 2013). Hence, if most schools in Ghana could have student's guidance counsellor to help learners to understand learning and trust in the strength of their minds that could have better results.

Not forgetting that, Ghana has religious education (RE) has a compulsory subject which is taught in primary schools (Addai-Mununkum, 2014). Which might be common in other countries educational systems. Students, various members in the community and teachers fully and easily show beliefs on the acceptance on RE without any worries on "political correctness" (Addai-Mununkum, 2014). However, besides Ghana's freedom in expressions, RE is generally learned as a subject which is independent (Addai-Mununkum, 2014). RME was a subject of which I was very happy to learn in my country Ghana. The subject teaches more about how to live peacefully on earth. It was a compulsory subject

as a student in junior high school in Ghana. RE is not just a compulsory subject, like other subjects when a student is given a good grade as a final basic education certificate examination (BECE) results, it basically enables a graduate the opportunity of gaining admission to senior high school (Addai-Mununkum, 2014). Students basically take the RE subject very seriously as they do on all subjects (Addai-Mununkum, 2014). I am a Christian by faith. RME was not only for Christian students. RME combines Islam, Indigenous African Religion and Christianity, which targets to enhance moral principles and sound religious believes in learners, by helping learners to grow well to develop their moral, religious and be responsible grown-ups and therefore make a good decision in this todays' world Addai-Mununkum, 2014).

RME was a very informative course for learners who are young. The RME course was generally important to enable that, “children are given some relevant information about the three religions mentioned so that they learn to tolerate, respect and appreciate the beliefs of their neighbor and become more convinced of their own faith” (Addai-Mununkum, 2014 p. 297). It is undeniable fact that the RME course was in a way shifted from teaching of education on the character to tolerance, respect and pluralism of various religions (Addai-Mununkum, 2014). In between the years of 1920 and 2002, RME course undergone six changes which were for the course to be omitted from the schooling curriculum or to be attached to other subjects (Addai-Mununkum, 2014). But while other subjects like language learning, science and mathematics have gone through various changes, RME structures have remained unchanged (Addai-Mununkum, 2014). RME course in schools in Ghana is part of the path to build cultural believes on students in Ghana. Every cultural background is learnt under this course. From my experience in learning RME course, its knowledge contains messages like, children loving their neighbors like themselves, children must obey parents, hatred should not be ceased with hatred, etc. which in a way helps to develop good characters in children. Hence, there is no doubt most people view RME subject as character building, formative and with knowledge which could help children in their adult life (Addai-Mununkum, 2014). I think truly, Ghana needs a course like RME in students learning lives.

#### **4.1 Religious Believes Against Each other**

But learning religious dominant believes that is, Christianity, Islam and Indigenous African Religion could bring several arguments and misunderstandings. Each religious study is totally different from the other in terms of faith, believes and culture they originated from. Relatedly teaching a subject like RME after Ghana attained independence was viewed as colonization extension (Addai-Mununkum, 2014). Most writers made arguments that RME in schools curriculum had domination of foreign doctrines which create impressions of foreign culture in learners' mindsets (Addai-Mununkum, 2014). Which means that Indigenous African Religion believes that their teachings are being suppressed by Christianity and Islam teachings. But it shouldn't have been a problem since religions believe in unity and to serve the same supreme being. Currently, most Ghanaians have believed that Christian values teachings are generally responsible for the downfall of indigenous values and hence any chance to move Christian RE from schools must come true (Addai-Mununkum, 2014). Relating my views to this, I think this creates a lot of controversies among these religious groups. That is Christianity, Indigenous African Religion and Islam. This could have physiological effects on students in Ghana. It creates division in the minds of students and the community in general. Each religion believes theirs are the best. Which goes contrary to what religious believe seek to achieve. Religious belief seeks for unity among individuals. Also, there is a failure of Christian RE to involve other religious believes which in a way makes Christian RE seen as intellectual colonization (Addai-Mununkum, 2014). Even Christian parents were not happy for their children to learn Islam in their schooling life (Addai-Mununkum, 2014). These parents desire for their children to learn only Christian RE excluding other religions (Addai-Mununkum, 2014). These parents believe that Indigenous African Religious studies included children practicing on invoking spirits, libation pouring which goes contrary to Christians and there their children could be possessed with demonic spirits (Addai-Mununkum, 2014).

In my view, it is clear from a Ghanaian point of view that, most parents don't really want their children to know other religious faith apart from what the family themselves believes in. Christians in Ghana don't want any connection among themselves and other religious that is Islam and Indigenous African Religion. Islam and Indigenous African

Religion also do likewise. This show there is a huge misunderstanding between religious beliefs. Minority religious groups in Ghana view Christianity as a religion which positions itself as the only true religion and view other religions as not relevant (Addai-Mununkum, 2014). Christian is seen as a neo-colonization tool which even fails to encourage other religions faiths (Addai-Mununkum, 2014).

In my view, religions can never live peacefully in Ghana. It is clear in the minds of students to keep hold of their individual faith. Students' parents could be the main cause of this mind build up in students in Ghana. My view suggests that there is no way students of one religion will live peacefully with other students of different religious background in the classroom or community in general. Even though these students are studying in the same classroom. Teachers do their best but, in a way, teaching three different religion to young learners cause more harm than good. Because to me, religious teachers are not interconnected. Each teaches differently and convincedly. Each religion does not want to lose its convinced members to the other too. Each religion is against the other. Even though religious teachings possess students to have good moral life, I think they should be well structured and rethought to create harmony with other religious beliefs. But it is important to note that, educators should find a way to make religious teachings easier and more unselfish in the classroom (Addai-Mununkum, 2014). There should be respect among religions in Ghana without just teaching religions just for the number of members to follow or just in a way to keep the religion alive for years. Because religious teachings are introduced to a learner in Ghana at an early stage of their learning, these religions should be well programmed to better develop and Ghana's current issues.

#### **4.2 Developing Positive Attitudes**

Even though schools teach learners religion in Ghana, which cannot be considered as unnecessary. Schools building the minds of young students in Ghana is essential. Hence young children are not only taught how to write and read in schools but should however lay religious foundations which are good for children (Addai-Mununkum, 2014). There ish small space for keeping religion in Ghanaian schools (Addai-Mununkum, 2014). Actors who

are anti-religious hope for no religion studies in schools which are public in countries like France and United States, therefore educators who are Christians should be thankful for its existence in public schools in Ghana (Addai-Mununkum, 2014). This statement implies how seriously some countries truly know the harm different religious believes could cause in the minds of people and students as well.

The way forward for a country like Ghana in terms of culture together with education is for the people of Ghana to be ready for a change in culture. Relating this context to my discussions, it is true that, there are several believes in Ghanaian culture which hinders the growth of education in Ghana. I think the people of Ghana should be ready to change their mindset and culture so that the effort of the Government of Ghana to develop education will be successful. Not forgetting that even learning a foreign language in Ghana is also in a way to install changes in the attitude of learners towards their own culture (Nejabat, 2016). I strongly support this academic context, because in a way education in Ghana is linked with foreign culture because English is even used throughout the classroom activities. Not forgetting that, English is generally the official language for commerce and administration in Ghana (Akowuah, Patnaik, & Kyei, 2018). I think educational authorities in Ghana can plan learning based on foreign cultures and blend with the local culture and make changes where needed in their local culture.

### **4.3 Religion or Development**

In Ghana, RE subject is taught in most schools by reverend ministers, catholic nuns and pastors who coexist roles as evangelizers influence greatly on the RE subject teaching (Addai-Mununkum, 2014). In my junior high school in Ghana, I was taught RE subject by pastors and reverend ministers. These are teachers who really know the Bible knowledge and are willing to share with students. West African Examinations Council (WAEC) has documented that there are various reports which suggest that, RE questions which students answer in final examinations reek of sermons, without students focusing on content as RE subject should be academic (Addai-Mununkum, 2014). This means that most students who go through the RE course in Ghana do not really take RE learning too serious.

There have been confirmed pedagogies on rude Christian RE teachers who raise mistrust in people on the educative nature of RE lessons taught in schools (Addai-Mununkum, 2014). These rude attitudes of some teachers, teaching RE subjects in various schools has increased public negative perceptions about what kind of lessons students such teachers under them teaches their learners (Addai-Mununkum, 2014). Relating my view to these statements, I think the religious-cultural education like Christianity, Islam and Indigenous African is in a way not too precious in the current life of students of these generations. However, not all stakeholders in education are satisfied and willing to keep RE education, because it is too controversial (Addai-Mununkum, 2014). Hence, it could be simple to be scrapped from the school curriculum than suffering various complaints with its enactment (Addai-Mununkum, 2014). Because enough desolation has been created due to religious combat, for example, Christian-Muslim skirmishes which were in Nigeria, Holocaust to strained Christian-Islam relations because of terrorism, African-Arab conflicts in Sudan and in other various West African countries (Addai-Mununkum, 2014). I think religious-cultural believes should be eliminated from the life of students in Ghana. There is a lot of more harm than it provides than good.

## **CHAPTER 5: CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT IN GHANA**

Stutt in 2018, mentioned that development in the curriculum could be explained as gradual processes which are used to positively create enhancement in course in schools, universities and colleges. This chapter looks at how Ghana's curriculum affects students learning. Discoveries which are new are seen in today's growing world and must be brought in education curricula (Stutt, 2018). Strategies for example, blended and active learning are mostly needed in improving students' experiences in learning (Stutt, 2018). I think there should be institutions to make plans to available for these growing shifts and hence make implementation in the school curriculum. In a way, students learning outcomes could be improved. Curriculum development in Ghana schools is very necessary. The planning to be made in Ghana school curriculum includes developing various instructional strategies and methods which assesses students' optimal development and learning (Stutt, 2018).

Phases associated in curriculum planning needs teachers to have a good look at factors which may hinder or complement curriculum lessons (Stutt, 2018). I think these curriculum planning should be based on daily planning of lessons, knowing the specific lesson assignments for your learners and well-planned course works (Stutt, 2018). I think these are good activities teachers go through during the curriculum planning stage. The curriculum needs to be well planned to identify problems which could affect lessons. These are what institutions require to be able to function effectively. Students will benefit from the curriculum which will be given to them. Educators must make sure that planning of curriculum should be enough to meet the educational needs of students and therefore the educational materials needed should be comprehensible and current (Stutt, 2018). I fully agree that administrators in various schools especially colleges, universities, etc. should go for best principles, frameworks and guidelines which they the administrators will refer as they work on school curriculums (Stutt, 2018). The school curriculum should be planned very well to meet the needs of learners. I think it is necessary for learners to get full benefit the curriculum provides.

## **5.1 Cultural Influence on Curriculum**

Lack of understanding in culture could affect implementation in the curriculum as viewed by aid organizations and developers of a curriculum (Gervedink Nijhuis, Chantal, Jules, & Voogt 2013). Development in the curriculum is essential because it plays a drastic part in implementing changes in education (Gervedink Nijhuis et al., 2013). Hence, the curriculum cannot be played with because of its role in students' academic development. Several curriculum reforms in large-scale are proposed to enhance students learning and classroom practices (Gervedink Nijhuis et al., 2013). But, some well-designed and intentioned reforms in the curriculum most at times fall short (Gervedink Nijhuis et al., 2013). But local situations could affect the development in curriculum and may fail its development (Gervedink Nijhuis et al., 2013). Therefore, I believe that curriculum sometimes should take culturally sensitive approaches. For example, in Ghana, there has a subject which I did in junior high school. The subject was Life Skill (LS). The subject was based on personal education on learners. Learners were taught how to respect elders like even young ones leaving bus seats for elders, how to keep the environment clean, been patient, how to dress decently in public, etc. LS syllabus was fully affected by Ghanaian culture. I think it's a good subject which learners in Ghana are directly linked to their cultural beliefs. According to this example, the curriculum in schools could be easily be influenced by the cultural practices of a country. This makes it clear how, characteristics in culture could have an influence on curriculum developers' activities (Gervedink Nijhuis et al., 2013). Hence, culture cannot be taken for granted when it comes to developing a curriculum in school in Ghana.

## CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

To conclude, it is crystal clear that, beliefs which are accustomed by a group of people have influences on behaviours of such people (Donkor, Issaka & Asante, 2013). Supports from parents on their children's education in the community are usually linked to parents' traditional cultures (Donkor, Issaka & Asante, 2013). Hence, I fully believe that some cultures may be strong, rigid and therefore should be a liability when there is the need for adaptation (Donkor, Issaka & Asante, 2013). Truly education in Ghana is affected negatively and positive by the cultural practices of Ghanaians. Some cultures of a country could be rigid or strong and therefore should be ready if adaption is necessary. Indeed, culture is the idea and knowledge which gives definitions to actions and beliefs in societies and individuals (Gervedink Nijhuis, 2019). This means that actions which societies take are directly influenced by cultural practices of such people which educational planning is not an exception. Therefore, Ghana's education is affected by cultural believes and actions.

There are religious-cultural believes in Ghana which may have an impact on learners. Ghanaians truly believe in religious practices. Students in Ghana have their own religious believes in addition to their learning. Students in Ghana mostly pray in their schools' activities, especially during examinations. I think religion should have been viewed as a peaceful association with one common goal, but religions are basically not united. Each religion feels superior to the other. RE is a subject which teaches learners to live peacefully and having respect for the other. There is no way the RE subject should be left aside from education in Ghana. Even though most students may have difficulties in their learning, but I think students believing in spiritual help may not be of much importance. Schools in Ghana need to make students aware of students' guidance counsellors and make sure students seek their help when necessary. I believe that in a way students' will have hope in their abilities and know their weaknesses and strength in their learning.

However, since the curriculum of schools cannot stand on its own, there is a need for developers of the curriculum to consider societal conditions and culture (Gervedink Nijhuis, 2019). Not forgetting that, culturally, schools can differ in their way of learning and teaching (Gervedink Nijhuis, 2019). A culture truly has an impact on schools' curricula and

therefore students learning in a way would be affected. This paper has highlighted the positive and negative impact of culture on students learning in Ghana and ways to move forward in terms of progress as a nation.

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