ABOLITION OF SCHOOL FEES IN GHANAIAN BASIC SCHOOLS:

QUALITY ISSUES AT POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

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ABSTRACT

This study deals primarily with the subject of quality education at the basic level. It sets out to find out how the Ministry of Education in Ghana conceives quality education and policies and measures put in place in the Education Strategic Plan (ESP) to make sure that quality education is achieved following the abolition of school fees which led to increases in enrolment figures in basic schools. Two schools were selected in the Dangme West District (DWD) for the study.

The methodological paradigm used in this study is qualitative whiles case study is used as the research design. Interviews and relevant documents serve as methods of data collection. Purposive and convenient sampling were used to select participants of interest to this study who are MoE official, DEO official, teachers and pupils of two basic schools in the DWD in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana.

A thematic analysis of findings reveals a gap between policy and practice where most of the policies meant to ensure quality education are not being properly implemented. Based on the findings, some recommendations are made for policy and practice and for further research.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to three very important people for the roles they have played in my life.

- Mrs. Elinam Rockson-Ekpe (my wife)
- Miss Christine Abofra (my mother)
- Mr. Martin Y. Abofra (my guardian and uncle)

I would not have come this far if you had not allowed God to use you as instruments of blessing to me.

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''Except the LORD build the house, they labor in vain that build it…'' Ps. 127:1

Indeed I would not have come this far with my academic life without the help of God. He stood by me in difficult times and continues to make His strength perfect in my weaknesses. I am therefore very grateful to Him for the love, guidance and protection He has showered upon me.

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Isaac-Rockson Kwaku Ekpe

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADEA   Association for the Development of Education in Africa

AEW   Africa Education Watch

ASER   Assessment Survey Evaluation Research

BECE   Basic Education Certificate Examination

CG   Capitation Grant

CS   Circuit Supervisor

DEO   District Education Office

DoSE   Department of State for Education

DoLG   Department of State for Local Government

DWD   Dangme West District

EA RC   Educational Assessment and Research Centre

EPSSA   Education Policies for Sub-Sahara Africa

EFA   Education for All

ERNWACA   Educational Research Network for West and Central Africa

ESP   Education Strategic Plan

FAWE   Forum for African Women Educationalists

FCUBE   Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education

FIMS   First International Mathematics Study

FISS   First International Science Study

FTI   Fast Track Initiative

GES	Ghana Education Service
IEA	International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement
IFLA	International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions
IIEP	International Institute for Educational Planning
JHS	Junior High School
KG	Kindergarten
MoE	Ministry of Education
MOESS	Ministry of Education, Science and Sports
NEA	National Education Assessment
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PSDP	Primary School Development Project
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
SACMEQ	Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
SEA	School Education Assessment
SFP	School Feeding Programme
SHS	Senior High School
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
SNV	Netherlands Development Organization
TLMs	Teaching and Learning Materials
TVET	Technology and Technical and Vocational education
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNICEF	The United Nations Children's Fund
UNESCO-UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WAEC	West African Examination Council

1 CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Education is very important in the socio-economic development of every nation. It serves as a means of overcoming poverty, diseases, improving nutrition and health and empowering people to increase their income (Hopkins, 2001). It also equips the individual with the necessary knowledge and skills to make informed choices in life and raises their self-confidence and enriches the quality of their lives. It opens people's eyes and minds to the realities of the world, and awakens them to bring about a world of greater justice, equity and human rights for all (Maastricht, 2002). Economists also observed that education systems can provide pathways to economic advancement (OECD, 1989; Ross, Paviot, & Genevois, 2006b). A study by (Hanushek & Wo¨Xmann, 2007; World Bank Independent Evaluation Group, 2007) revealed that good quality education in terms of learning outcomes in literacy, numeracy, and life skills can contribute to increased work productivity, higher individual income levels, economic and social growth, improvement in health, and the generation of innovative ideas. It is therefore imperative that opportunity is created for all children to have access to quality education.

The world having realized the importance of education and the need to get all children to school drew delegates from 155 countries, as well as representatives from some 150 organizations and they agreed at the World Conference on Education for All (EFA) in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 to universalize primary education. They identified several goals, including universal access to primary education for every child, improved access to early childhood care and development programs and the reduction of adult illiteracy through access to education of good quality as stated in the EFA goals 2, 5 and 6 (UNESCO-UIS, 2000). However, it has been established that since the Jomtien conference, a lot of children still remained outside the classroom and 'of the 113 million children out-of-school in 1998, 42 million lived in sub-Saharan Africa' (UNESCO-UIS, 2000 p.9).

The World education forum held in Dakar in 2000, involving ministers of education from Africa and other development agencies, having realized the state of education in Africa almost a decade after the Jomtien conference, reaffirmed that education is a basic human right and therefore committed themselves to remove all barriers (social, cultural, economic, political and legal) that hinder African children, youth and adults from having access to quality education and the attainment of the goals of the Jomtien Declaration on Education for All (*ibid*).

In view of this, as reported by the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) in 2007, most sub- Saharan African countries including Kenya, Tanzania and Ethiopia have therefore taken various measures to remove all barriers to education in order to make access to education of good quality possible for every single child and the most significant measure taken to ensure this was the abolition of school fees at the basic school level (ADEA, 2007).

In 2004/2005, the Ministry of Education (MoE) in Ghana and the Ghana Education Service (GES) have also followed the footstep of other African countries by abolition school fees at the basic school level. This is known in Ghana as Capitation Grant (CG) scheme which is one of the means the MoE and GES have put in place to increase access to education of good quality as indicated in the *Education Strategic Plan (ESP), 2003-2015*. Whilst it seems that the implementation of the CG can be effective in promoting positive trends in access and reducing the barriers to access to education, quality improvement in education is yet to show positive trends (ADEA 2007). This study therefore examines how quality education is being offered in Ghanaian basic schools following the implementation of the CG.

1.2 The rationale for the conduct of the study

Although abolition of school fees had resulted in significant increases in enrolment figures such as 11% increment in Lesotho (2001), 12% in Mozambique (2005), 14% in Ghana (2006), 18% in Kenya (2004), 23% in Ethiopia (1996), 23% in Tanzania (2002), 26% in Cameroon (2000), 51% in Malawi (1995) and 68% in Uganda (1998) (ADEA,2007), a study conducted by Darko-Osei et al,(2009) in Ghana reveals that the issue of quality of education in the face of increase enrolment figures remain very elusive. It added that abolition of fees as a policy has not impacted positively on learning achievements.

In the light of this, my study in addition to looking at quality education in general, it is also an attempt to find out the policies put in place by the MoE in Ghana to ensure quality education following the abolition of fees which led to increase in enrolment figures.

Furthermore, although successive governments in Ghana have sought and continued to seek strategies for quality delivery of education, it has been recognized that locally research-based literature on issues related to quality in education is limited (Ankomah et al, 2005).This study therefore serves as source of knowledge on the topic and also adds to the limited literature available especially in the Dangme West District where this study was conducted.

Finally, the importance of regularly collecting information on the quality of education is increasingly recognized. This research is necessary to account for the massive investments in education and to better understand how to improve the quality of education especially in the Dangme West District.

1.3   Research Problem

It is abundantly clear from available literature that the subscription of sub-Saharan African countries to the EFA goals and the pledge of financial support from the donor community have emboldened their efforts at creating access to education. However, it must be noted that the EFA goals do not only talk about access to education but rather access to education of good quality. This is explicitly stated in the EFA goals 2, 5 and 6. What this tells us is that, in creating access to education, it is imperative for governments to take into consideration the kind of education being talked about or being provided.

Although the CG is known to have resulted in significant increases in enrolment figures in countries where it was implemented (Al-Sammarra et al., 2006, ADEA, 2007), a report by USAID indicated that, abolishing school fees, in spite of having positive effect on enrolment; it may have a negative effect on the quality of education (USAID, 2007). This can be the case since increases in enrolment figures following school fees abolition are more likely to overwhelm the available supply of schools, teachers, and education materials available within schools. It must also be noted that the current global consensus among educators and

stakeholders within the public and private sector is that quality exists when students demonstrate knowledge, an ingredient necessary for further education (ADEA, 2003). However, the international focus on quality rests on the knowledge that less than a third of the African children successfully complete the primary school cycle *(ibid)*. It is therefore necessary that any country desiring to implement the abolition of fees policy must put in place measures to ensure that quality of education is not affected negatively.

In this regard my research explores measures embedded in the national education policy of Ghana during the implementation of the CG to make sure that quality education is guaranteed. It is also to contribute some knowledge on the issue of quality education versus universal access in Ghana.

1.4   Research Objectives

The study aims at achieving the following specific objectives;

1. **to explore policy conception of quality education and strategies put in place to safeguard it.**

The World Declaration on Education for All, adopted by the Jomtien World Conference on Education for All in Monitoring the Quality of Education, 1990, noted the importance of educational quality and specifically the need to focus on learning acquisition and outcome. The concept of the quality of education was expanded on a decade later in the Dakar Framework for Action, adopted at the World Education Forum in Senegal. Quality was now recognized as being of fundamental importance, and specific requirements of successful education programmes were listed including well-trained teachers, adequate facilities and learning materials, a relevant curriculum, a good learning environment, and a clear definition and accurate assessment of learning outcomes. This being the case, it is very important to find out how the MoE perceives quality education and strategies embedded in the Ghana national education policy document to safeguard it. This will enable me to be focused and discuss the topic in the Ghanaian context.

2. to find out how these quality measures are being implemented in the selected schools.

Smith (1973,1985), Grindle (1980 cited in Aryee 2000) noted that the poor performance of most public policies in developing countries is due to poor implementation. They also opined that policy formulation is just one aspect of the whole process and that it cannot guarantee successful implementation of policies so formulated. In view of this, my second objective seeks to find out whether the quality measures embedded in the national policy document are being implemented as envisaged by the policy formulators.

1.5   Research Questions

The research attempts to answer the following questions;

1. How is quality conceived at the policy level and what are the measures to ensure quality education?

This question will help me examine what constitute quality education in Ghana. It also aims at examining the various measures to ensure quality education as conceived by the policy makers. This will be done largely through document analysis and interviews so as to get an in-depth understanding of each measures and how they will contribute to quality education.

2. How are the quality measures and strategies embedded in the national education policy document   being implemented following the introduction of the CG?

As noted early on under my objective, policy formulation and implementation are two different things. The MoE might have a well thought out plans and strategies in the national education policy document to ensure quality of education but not until these strategies are translated from policy stage to implementation, the desired effects will not be felt. I therefore want to find out the extent to which these strategies/ measures to ensure quality education are being implemented or addressed in the selected schools following the implementation of the CG.

1.6 Context of Study

It is very important to set studies like this both in the context of time and place. This will help the readers appreciate the work in the context in which it was written. This study is situated in the Ghanaian context in terms of its educational history

1.6.1 An overview of education in Ghana

Ghana has since independence made significant strides in its education system so as to conform to international declarations. Over the years, the country has shown commitment to achieving Universal Primary Education (UPE), which it initiated in the early 1960s. It has used various legislations and policy initiatives to encourage access and participation in primary education, including the Ten-year Plan for Educational Development (1946), Accelerated Development Plan of Education (1951), and the Education Act (1961). The education Act of 1961 provided for compulsory primary education but by 1983, access to basic education and other levels of education were at their lowest (World Bank, 2004). In 1987, Ghana undertook a major educational reform with support from the World Bank with the aim of expanding primary education but also introduce greater cost recovery for higher education. The policy also reduced pre-tertiary education from 17 to 12 years. Substantial government and donor funds were directed into funding the basic education sector (Akyeampong et al, 2007). This resulted in the opening of many new primary schools and Junior Secondary Schools throughout the country. The reforms also sought to improve teacher efficiency, student quality and enrolment levels, especially for girls. In 1988, Ghana National Action Plan on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1998) committed the state to achieving universal access to basic education and completion of primary school education for at least 80% of children aged 6 to 11 years (AEW, 2008).
The 1992 Fourth Republican Constitution under Article 38 emphasized the country's commitment to the EFA agenda to achieve universal primary education (UPE) by 2015.

However, some of the key challenges to achieving UPE - high poverty levels in the rural areas, inadequate funding for education investments and the low enrolment and retention of girls in school still exist (Aryeetey and Nimo, 2004;AEW, 2008). Determined to get more children into school therefore, the government (re-) launched the policy of free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (fCUBE) in 1995 supported by the World Bank Primary School Development Project (PSDP).The program aimed at achieving UPE by 2005 and to fix the weaknesses in the 1987 reforms. Additionally, it sought to improve girls' enrolment (MOESS, 2006). As a cost-sharing scheme, the fCUBE was designed to cover non-tuition fees. Parents were expected to bear limited educational expenses. More importantly, no child was

to be turned away from school for non-payment of fees. But the initiative did not work well as expected. Although Ghana's school enrolment rates were high compared to some other African countries, a persistent 40% of children between 6 and 11 years of age remained out of school as of 2003(UNICEF,2007).

One of the main reasons why these children did not attend school was that their parents could not afford to pay the levies charged by the schools. Despite the policy of fee-free tuition in basic schools, many district education directorates charged levies as a means of raising funds, for example, for school repairs, cultural and sporting activities. This had the effect of deterring many families, particularly the poorest, from sending their children, especially girls, to school. Various studies by the Ghana Education Services in 2004 identified about 76 different types of levies ranging from GH¢3.00 to GH¢12.00 [US$2.00 – US$8.00]. The level of fees/levies was highest in the urban areas. The implications of these unapproved additional costs meant that many parents could not afford to send their children to school. Again, 11% of children worked whilst in school; 9% irregular attendance in public basic schools, and 3% dropped-out in public basic schools (World Bank, 2009).

Management weaknesses including poor supervision at system and school level also undermined the impact of the fCUBE (Fobih et al., 1999). Despite the failures of the fCUBE, the Government of Ghana has tried in various ways to show commitment towards the achievement of Universal Primary Education for all children of school going age by 2015.

In 2003, the Government of Ghana designed an Education Strategic Plan (ESP) for the period 2003 to 2015, mainly aimed at accessing international support under the Education for All/Fast Track Initiative (EFA/FTI) to achieve education targets. The ESP is structured around four core areas: Equitable Access to Education, Quality of Education, Educational Management and Science, Technology and Technical and Vocational education (TVET) (USAID, 2007).

1.7 Organization of the study

The whole study is presented in seven chapters. The study started at chapter one with a brief background which gives an overview of the issue of quality education and proceeds to examine briefly the problem posed by making of education accessible without ensuring quality. The rationales for the study were stated and a set of research objectives of the study were also set out,

followed by the research questions of the study. It also includes an overview of basic education in Ghana.

This is followed closely by chapter two dealing with a review of empirical studies on my topic from international, regional and to national level. The next chapter discusses the conceptual framework for this study using the EFA framework for understanding quality education.

Chapter four which deals with methodological issues started with explanation of research strategy and designs used with their justification. The chapter then proceeds with description of the population of the study followed by the sample and the technique adopted to select the sample for the study with their justifications. The next sub-section is the description of the instrument used and the various sources of data. This is then followed by data collection procedure from seeking permission to the retrieval of the last questionnaire.

The fifth chapter deals with the analysis and presentation of findings out of the data collected. A discussion of the findings in relation to existing literature and theories on the subject follow in chapter Six. The final chapter outlines the summary of the whole study, the conclusions drawn based on the findings and recommendations. References for works cited come finally.

2 CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The issue of quality education at the basic school level is of a great concern to many countries especially the developing ones. Over the years various governments in developing countries have initiated policies to create access to education but the 'quality' element of education has been very elusive to them despite the massive investments in education (Saito&Cappelle, 2010).

The concept of the quality of education faces definitional problems which pose considerable challenges to those who wish to measure it (ibid, Ankomah et al, 2005). While it is difficult to vividly capture the notion of what quality means in absolute terms in education, the general practice however has been the use of assessment studies to define the quality of education in terms of (i) pupils' learning achievement and (ii) the nature of their learning environment (Rose et al., 2006b; Saito, 2008).

These assessment studies are very necessary in order to account for the massive investments in education and to better understand the measures to be taken to improve the quality of education. For instance in developed countries, such studies have been ongoing for the past 50 years. The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) piloted an international study which sought to measure the quality of education in 1958. This was followed by the First International Mathematics Study (FIMS), First International Science Study (FISS) etc in the 1960s and 1970s (Saito&Cappelle,2010).

In the same way the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 1997, launched the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) to assess the achievement of 15- year-olds in Reading Literacy, Mathematics and Science every three years beginning in the year 2000 (OECD,2007).

The developing countries are not left out in these assessment tests to measure the quality of education. For example, in 1991, a study was organized in Zimbabwe by the Zimbabwe Ministry of Education and UNESCO-IIEP which resulted into the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ). It has 15 member countries and

they have collected data on Reading literacy, Mathematics, HIV and AIDS, characteristics of schools, classrooms and teachers (Saito & Cappelle, 2010).

The above studies have demonstrated the great interest taken by stakeholders in issues regarding quality of education in various parts of the world. Some of these studies will therefore be examined in this study beginning from the international level, followed by the regional ones and finally, the national level.

2.1.1   The Quality of Primary Education: A Case study of Madurai and Villupuram Districts in Tamil Nadu, India.

This study was conducted in two districts in India and the qualitative research method was used in that 'it aims to generate theories and hypotheses from the data rather than test a pre-conceived hypothesis' (Grover S. & Singh N.H. 2002). The study, which lasted for three months, collected primary data from interviews (semi-structured, specific questions), observations (of participants, school and classroom settings) and reports from the district education offices, aimed at identifying and analyzing the processes that impact attendance, completion, and repetition. It focused on the learning environment which included the classroom, teacher-learner practices, teaching-learning materials, teachers and students. It also touched on issues related to school governance and management *(ibid)*.

I will briefly highlight the findings of the study starting from school management to activities in the classroom.

2.1.1.1 School Management

In case of school management, the study found out that, in most of the schools visited, the Headmaster (HM) had a teaching responsibility and his role in school management was limited to that of performing routine day-to-day administrative functions and routine maintenance of the school. They also perform administrative and record-keeping tasks and were also responsible for liaising with the community and parents. The study further indicates that due to the teaching responsibility they had, it was impossible for them to function effectively as managers. Another finding that came up was that, the HMs received no special training for the organizational work

that they do. They are rather selected from the rank of teachers based on seniority and without any pre or in-service training for them and they exercise little authority in decision making process at the district level. The study therefore described them as 'teachers not leaders; little authority; no training'' (Grover S. & Singh N.H. 2002 p. 11).

2.1.1.2 Accountability

The study also found out that, there was a weak system of supervision and that there was little or no accountability in the system – at the level of teachers, schools and districts. With no formal monitoring and evaluation of levels of student learning, the study reported that there was no way of knowing how well or poorly the system of education was achieving its ultimate goal in teaching a child how to read, write and contribute meaningfully to society. It was also found out that the officials interviewed identified poor quality of teachers who suffered from apathy towards their profession and an overall lack of commitment, as a major factor contributing to poor quality of primary education. This view of the officials was confirmed by the study when the researchers indicated that ''in most of the schools, which we visited without prior knowledge, we found little or no instruction taking place'' (Grover S. & Singh N.H. 2002 p. 15).

The issue of poor quality teachers is the bane of quality education in most developing countries. Ankomah et al, (2005) indicated that how well teachers are prepared for teaching is a critical indicator of quality education. This assertion is similar to that of (Darling-Hammond, 2000) who opined that, the level of teachers' knowledge of a subject is crucial and a good predictor of student achievement. It therefore suggests that the poor quality of teachers as indicated by the study in India will most definitely result into poor student learning achievement.

Although the study found out that teachers are well paid and often trained, they were most often absent from school and apathetic to their work. The study therefore observed that, salaries, often considered as an important source of incentive for teachers does not appear to be a strong motivator of performance in India and the poor performance teachers would be due to lack of efficiency in the system.

2.1.1.3 Classrooms and learning activities

Physical infrastructure and classroom learning inputs play important role in ensuring quality education. The study found out the while Tamil Nadu has made considerable inroads in providing school infrastructure, more needed to be done as some schools visited had classes outside due to lack of space. While most of the classrooms were dirty and had extremely poor ventilation, some lacked enough seating space for students. It was also observed that pupils were being asked to sweep the floors with their hands upon arrival to school.

Another revealing finding was that as many as 80% of most schools had multi-grade classrooms. In some cases, one teacher handled these classrooms whiles in some cases two teachers teach different grades in the same classroom. Teaching under such conditions is indeed problematic and no meaningful teaching and learning are likely to take place and quality education cannot be assured especially when teachers are not trained in multi-grade teaching.

2.1.1.4 Student Learning Achievements

One major way that quality education is measured is through learning achievements. According to the study conducted, it was found out through informal assessment that, the students were not actually learning.

> ''*Informal assessments of student were conducted in order to ascertain whether students were mastering basic literacy and numeracy skills as covered in the curriculum. In each visit we asked students to read and write text from lessons that they had completed throughout the year. Being that it was the end of the school year; the students should have completed their entire textbooks. However, many of the students that we spoke to lacked the ability to read and write words from the first several lessons in their Tamil, English, and EVS books. In several classrooms we asked students to write a word that they had learned. In many cases they were not able to write a word from hearing it, even if they had had it written correctly in their composition book (these words were simple words like "banana" in Tamil). Therefore they lacked functional reading and writing skills, while their composition*

books did show that they fulfilled the DPEP requirement'' (Grover S. & Singh N.H.
2002 p. 24)

From the findings of the study on the quality of primary education in Madurai and Villupuram districts in India, one could conclude that, despite the efforts of the authorities to create access to quality education, more needed to be done if the investment made in education is to bring returns to the nation in terms of laying a strong foundation for the human resource development of the country.

However, it noteworthy to say that, although the study found out that there was a weak supervision system in the school, it failed to tell us whose responsibility it was to supervise the schools and did not assign reason as to why supervision was poor. Was it the role of the HTs to supervise the schools or there is another body responsible for it and why were they not performing their duties well? I consider this as the major limitation of their study and my work fills the gap created in their work.

2.2   Related Studies from Africa

Since this study is situated in Africa, I will now like to focus on some other studies conducted in Africa. These studies are carefully selected in such a way that they relate to some of the themes that emerged from my data and the conceptual framework.

Studies on quality of basic education have gained a considerable attention in Africa just like in the developed world. Some of these studies could be seen in a document prepared by Educational Research Network for West And Central Africa (ERNWACA).It was done in collaboration with Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA).   The studies entail an overview of educational research conducted, with emphasis on basic education quality, within the period of 1992 through 2002. Eleven countries are included in the review and these are Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cote d' Ivoire, Ghana, the Gambia, Mali, Nigeria, Togo, Niger and Senegal (N'jie, Makarieh A. et al., 2002). The studies have been organized in thematic areas to follow the four main themes identified within a broad- based ADEA exercise on the quality of the education in Sub-Saharan Africa and these are:

- Pedagogical renewal and teacher development

- Decentralization and diversification of delivery systems

- Implementation of basic education reforms and innovations

- Relevance of Education: Adapting curricular and using African languages (ibid).

I will review the study conducted in Gambia. The reason being that, some of the segments of the study relate to mine as well

2.2.1 The Gambian Experience

N'jie et al., (2002) have conducted their research to find out the existing relationship among Parent- Teacher Association (PTA), school management and school performance in lower basic schools in the Gambia (see N'jie et al. 2002). I chose this segment of the study because it relates to human resource, supervision and parental support part of my work.

In this study, structured questionnaires, observation and interview guides were used as instruments of data collection from head teachers, teachers, parents and grade 6 pupils. Other respondents came from the Department of State for Local Government (DoLG) and Department of State for Local Education (DoSE). It was however reported that the study was limited by the small sample size which was influenced by limited financial and human resources available for the six education zones (ibid).

The findings of the study indicated that the PTA executive was male dominated and about 13 total members on the average, who are predominately illiterate or semi-illiterate have a 3- year mandate to serve. They were however hardly aware of their functions and at times do engage in activities that do not have any bearing on good school performance indicators. Aside this, they were engaged in self-help projects which brought them some income.

The study also found out that performance has improved in all the regions but added that, this improvement was boosted because of the lowering of achievement rates in all regions. However, what is missing in this study is that, it did not give reasons as to why achievements rates have been lowered in the regions. More so, the roles and or the effect of the PTA on this performance

were not indicated. My study once again provides some insight into the roles of parents without which quality can be compromised.

The researchers finally offer a policy implication recommendation to the DoSE. According to them, DoSE should encourage a workable decentralized partnership between PTA and schools. They also recommended a committee to give relevant advice on the partnership even as they may consider the illiteracy factor of the male-dominated PTA (ibid).

Another study worth considering in Gambia was the one conducted by Banjul Unit of the Research Division on rural-urban and gender analysis of the performance of the pupils at the first national primary school examination in The Gambia in 1990. This study took a different approach to the study on quality of education at the basic level. Their aim was to analyze the rural-urban and gender performance of the pupils in the examination (Banju Unit of the Research Division 1990). I will however review the rural-urban performance in this study because my study has such a dimension. I collected data in two schools- one in a rural area and the other in the urban area. In addition to this, my study is not about gender and quality in education.

The study was conducted in all the six education zones in the Gambia with a total sample of 3400 pupils; of which 1745 were urban-based pupils while 1659 were their rural counterparts. 1427 were girls and 1977 were boys (Ibid). Their findings indicated that the urban pupils excelled better in the examination than their rural counterparts (Ibid). Once again, although the result was expected no reason was given in the literature.

The study would have been more holistic if some reasons were given for the differences in the performance. Was it just because of the fact that those underperformed pupils were in rural schools or some other factors were responsible apart from lack of motivation for teachers? Were there some specific cases in which some individual pupils in the rural schools performed better than their counterparts in the urban schools?

The Research Division however made some recommendations on teachers' development and innovation for the teachers in the rural settings. It called for the need to increase motivation for the teachers in the rural areas. In-service training of the teachers in the rural setting was also

recommended and is to be complemented with intensified supervisory and monitoring activities (ibid).

2.2.2   Are our Children Learning? The Case of Tanzania (2010)

This was a study conducted by Uwezo in Tanzania. Uwezo which means 'Capability' in Swahili was a four year initiative to monitor the quality of learning in schools by assessing the basic literacy and numeracy skills of children aged 5-16 (Annual Learning Assessment Report Tanzania, 2010). The assessment was said to have been based on a proven methodology developed by the Assessment Survey Evaluation Research (ASER) Centre in India, and used scientific methods to obtain a random sampling of households.

The researchers assessed the mathematics and reading (Kiswahili) skills of each child using a short, Standard 2 level assessment. This is because according to both Tanzanian and international standards, by the end of the second year of primary education, children should have acquired basic skills in literacy and numeracy (ibid).

In all, a total of 42,033 children were assessed and six key findings emerged from the study. It was found out that one out of every five primary school leavers could not read Standard 2 level Kiswahili although Kiswahili is the national language widely spoken across the country. It was also found out that half the children who completed primary school could not read in English and that even though all children in Standard 3 should be able to read the Standard 2 level story, less than 1 in 10 could do so (ibid).

In Mathematics, it was found out that, only 7 in 10 primary school leavers could do Standard 2 level Mathematics whiles urban-based children performed better than rural-based children. Girls were also found to do slightly better than boys in all subjects tested and children with educated mothers also performed better.

The study finally observed that, in Tanzania and elsewhere, attention is on provision of educational inputs but it seems these inputs are not translating into learning outcome. This is a

very striking observation and it will be interesting to find out how this plays out in Ghana. (see http://www.twaweza.org/uploads/files/Uwezotz_Summary.pdf for details of the findings.).

2.3 Related Studies from Ghana

Ghana has over the years put in place some policies to ensure access to quality education and some studies have therefore been conducted to find the state of education in the country. Findings from a number of studies on quality related issues in education between 1987 and 2005 suggest that quality education is generally poor, especially in the deprived rural areas (Ankomah et al, 2005) A couple of these studies will be discussed in this section.

2.3.1 UNESCO's Sponsored Project on Review of Ghana's Education Sector Analysis (1987-1998)

This study as indicated above was sponsored by UNESCO and sought to evaluate various aspects of education quality under four main themes as indicated in the table below.

Table 2.1 Four main themes and focus areas of UNESCO's study in Ghana (1987-1989)

Study Theme	Focus
Improving management efficiency and management	Management efficiency, decentralization and sustainability, funding of education; partnership between Educational Ministry and development partners; staff development and reform implementation.
Improved access and equity	Access, participation and equity; Access to and efficiency of tertiary education; Girls" education; community participation.
Improved quality education	Educational quality; curriculum improvement; teacher education and efficiency; educational assessment
Others	Relevance of education to national needs; NGO participation; Education and health; Tertiary education; Functional literacy programme; Distance education.

Source: Ankomah et al. (2005) A Review of the Concept of Education: Perceptive from Ghana, p. 12

The summary of the findings indicated that quality of education is generally low, lower in rural schools than in urban ones. It was also lower in public schools than in private schools (Agyeman, et al. 2000 cited in Ankomah, et al. 2005). Another area identified was the absence of efficient and effective leadership and management, inadequate qualified teachers, and lack of teaching and professional competence of teachers. School curriculum was also found out to be irrelevant and poor enrolment of girls were some identified hindrances to achieving quality education (ibid).

Though these findings reflect in general terms the situation in Ghana, I am tempted to question the instrument used by the researchers to measure the curriculum and then to conclude that, it was irrelevant. Whose curriculum are we talking about here? Secondly, it is quite ambiguous to conclude that enrolment of girls contributes to quality education, in that; the absence of such enrolment becomes a hindrance to quality education. I see enrolment of girls as equity issues than that of quality since mere enrolment of girls itself cannot automatically result into quality education. Perhaps the authors needed to have explained the context in which they situated their findings.

2.3.2   USAID Commissioned Study into School Performance (2003)

This was a comparative study carried out by the Educational Assessment and Research Centre (EARC 2003) on behalf of USIAD. Its focus was on academic performance of public and private school pupils in the Southern Ghana (Ankomah, et al. 2005).

They found out that academic performance of pupils in private schools was higher than in public schools. It was also identified that quality of supervision of instruction in private schools accounted for the differences in the performance in the two schools. They observed that, supervision and monitoring of teachers' work was regular in private schools than in public schools and private schools also manage instructional time better than public schools (ibid).

One major limitation I see in this study is that it fails to say exactly where in southern Ghana the study was conducted. The conclusion reached that private schools performed better could be

misleading if the finding is generalized across the southern sector of Ghana. This is because there are some public schools in the southern sector that perform far better some private schools.

2.3.3   Dangme West District and Quality Education (2008)

This study was conducted by Netherlands Development Organization (SNV) in 2008 in collaboration of the Dangme West District (DWD) Educational Directorate. My choice of this study was informed by the fact that the DWD happens to be the research site for my study. Secondly, I will be able to compare my findings to theirs and find out if the problems identified in their study have been addressed four years after they presented their finding.

The purpose of their study was to describe the state of quality education in the DWD in 2008, ascertain the status of quality basic education and provide a basis for specific interventions to address particular issues identified (SNV GHANA, 2008). Field data was collected between September and October using administered questionnaires, structured interviews, site visits and document review. I will present their findings on issues that relate to my study.

On learning achievement, the study found out that the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) result for the district for the past fourteen years show that the percentage of pupils who attained the pass aggregate score (6-30) in six subjects have reduced from 85% in 1994 to 51% in 2007 which represents a 40% decrease in pupils who have attained the pass score needed to proceed to secondary school. It was also found out that whiles the national average pass rate for 2003 – 2007 was 61.92% that of the District was 51.75%. This shows a clear decline in learning achievement in the District.

In the area of time on task-the actual contact hours teachers spend with pupils in the teaching and learning process, it was found out that whiles 50.8% of teachers interviewed indicated that they were able to use between 90-100% of instructional hours, pupils were with the view that only 36.7% of teachers were able to achieve what they indicated. The study indicated that from the analysis done on data collected; only 36.7% of teachers were able to use the expected contact hours with the pupils. The implication then is that, most part of the syllabus would not be covered and this will surely affect learning achievement of the pupils.

On Pupil-Teacher Ratio, it was found out that as at the time of the study, the level was 1:34 in the primary schools which was above the national average but within the maximum level of 1:46. But the ratio for both Kindergarten and Junior High Schools were below the national average. They concluded that, there are fairly adequate teachers in the District.

In terms of quality of teachers, the study found out that there are trained teachers of 51.5% and 89.3% in the KG and primary levels respectively than the corresponding national averages of 42.9% and 59.4% respectively. The study also found out that, In-Service Training (INSET) programmes were organized quite often in the District. This was confirmed by 88.1% teachers interviewed. It was however found out that a high percentage of untrained teachers are teaching at the Junior High School level.

Having come out with these findings among others, the study made some far reaching recommendations to the District Education Office.

- Research findings should be disseminated for the stake holders to know the state of quality education in the District and take steps to remedy them.

- District Assemblies should be allowed to exercise the authority given them to hire, fire and demand accountability from teachers without external interferences.

- A handbook on participatory and child centred methods of teaching for teachers.

- An improved remuneration system for teachers taking into consideration their economic demands can make the profession more lucrative and attractive (SNV GHANA, 2008).

The findings from this study underscore the fact that quality education in the DWD has taken a nosedive. It will therefore be interesting to find out how the problems identified in the study have been resolved since the findings were made known.

2.4 How this study relates with the previous studies reviewed

My study basically attempts to look at how quality measures are being implemented in two selected schools in order to improving quality education following the introduction of the

Capitation Grant in Ghana. Guided by the chosen conceptual framework, the study looks at quality indicators such as teaching and learning time, teaching and learning materials, physical infrastructure, class size, human resources, learning achievement and parental support.

The study conducted in India, examined the management of schools which falls under human resources of my study. The study under school management also looks at the role of school supervisors or inspectors and indicated that this was weak just as the findings of my study will show later. Issues of physical infrastructure, teaching and learning materials were also examined in the study conducted in India and these are also covered in my study.

Other studies reviewed from some African countries and from Ghana show that, issues of quality education is of a great concern to all as learning achievement of pupils are not encouraging. It is therefore imperative that efforts are made to invest more in education and design policies that will ensure quality education.

3 CHAPTER THREE: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the conceptual framework used for this study and its justifications. It begins with a look at the 'Concept of Quality Education' which focuses on the definition of quality in education as a subject. This is then followed by the conceptual framework for the study.

3.1.1 The Concept of Quality Education

''I think there is such a thing as quality but that as soon as you try to define it, something goes haywire. You can't do it (Pirsig, R. 1974).

The goal of achieving "quality education for all" is far from being realized in most countries in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). Although many children in the sub region enrolled into primary schools during the 1990s, many left school without attaining the minimum proficiency in literacy and numeracy (World Bank, 2004). This is as a result of low quality education which has become an endemic problem in these countries as international tests of student achievement consistently show that developing countries score at the bottom of the performance scale (Donald R. W. & Boon-Ling Y., 2007). However what constitutes high and or low quality education has been a subject of great debate among scholars in education. Is the concept of quality education limited to learning achievement? Can any education system be said to be of good quality if its products do not master the necessary competencies at each level of education? These and other questions give rise to the need to understand the concept of quality education and the framework in which it should be understood.

According to Mioko S. and Frank v. C (2010), the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) in the late 1960s had hosted a series of international conferences on the theme of educational quality where they reflected on different interpretations of the concept of quality education. They noted that the period was characterized by what they called ''philosophical debate'' on how to define the quality of education.

At this time, Beeby (1969), looked at the quality of education in terms of ''qualitative changes'' as opposed to ''quantitative changes''. He explained that these qualitative changes would have two elements: (i) the learning environment (what is taught and how) and (ii) student flows (who are taught where). His argument relates to planning the quality of education which is likely to result into improvement in the learning environment and also attract students.

In the 1970s, issues regarding qualitative educational planning were at their peak and the focus was on designing measures that are effective enough to improve learning outcomes. It was this period that saw economists paying attention to learning achievements. (Mioko et al, 2010). This was evident in the work of the World Bank Independent Evaluation Group,2007 cited in Mioko et al, 2010, when good quality education was seen in terms of ''learning outcomes in literacy, numeracy, and life skills…''(Mioko S. and Frank v. C, 2010 p.5). Though the two periods- the 1960s and 70s focused on qualitative educational planning, the latter seemed not to have considered the place of the pupils who will be the beneficiaries of the measures needed for improving learning achievements/outcomes. That was what Beeby (1969) called 'student flows' or in some cases, learner characteristics.

Many years later at the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal in 2000, issues of educational quality were seriously emphasized as captured by the EFA goal number 6 which states: ''improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills'' (UNESCO, 2000). The conference also listed specific requirements needed for successful educational programmes and these included well-trained teachers, adequate facilities and learning materials, a relevant curriculum, a good learning environment, and a clear definition and accurate assessment of learning outcomes (ibid).

Furthermore in their report of 2008, UNESCO emphasized that quality is at the heart of education and listed trained teachers [and qualified teachers], learning materials, instructional time and adequate school facilities as prerequisites to quality education. Therefore the term quality in education could be observed "in terms of learning outcomes, learning conditions and the teaching workforce" (UNESCO 2008 p.18).

According to another world agency, the World Bank, in its document (Education Policies for Sub-Sahara Africa – EPSSA) outlined three measures necessary to ensure quality education in Africa and these measures are more textbooks and instructional materials, a renewed commitment to academic standards, principally through strengthening examination systems and greater investment in the maintenance of physical facilities (see World Bank 1988a; cited in Brock-Utne 2000 p.48).

A critical look at the conception of quality education by the World Bank and UNESCO as shown in the literature presents us with some differences. The World Bank did not see teachers, at least not in the text, as necessary for ensuring quality education. UNESCO on the other hand did so. This sharp difference in their perspectives clearly shows that quality education means different thing to different people at a particular time. It must however be emphasized that the place of the teacher in ensuring quality education cannot be substituted for anything not even in our present world of technology. This view is backed by Brock-Utne when she argues that "even in highly industrialized countries I can see no professional argument for maintaining that a good supply of instructional material is better than a good teacher" (Brock-Utne 2000 p.49).

UNESCO and UNICEF also see quality education as a fundamental human right. From this perspective, the concept of quality education is not seen just like a list of elements (teachers, teaching learning materials etc) but rather a ''web of commitments'' in which ''education is placed and understood in terms of a larger context that reflects learning in relation to the learner as a individual, a family and community member, a citizen and as a part of a world society'' (Pigozzi, 2006 p. 42).

Based on this conceptualization of the quality of education, Pigozzi (2006) cited in Mioko et al, (2010) came out with a framework in which the various elements affecting educational quality are positioned at two levels; those that affect the level of the learner and those that affect the level of the education system supporting the learning experience. At the level of the learner, he argues that an important element in this model is what the learner brings, ranging from positive early childhood opportunities to illness or hunger. According to him, a high quality education system would need to be able to recognize and adequately respond to the diversity of learners and their particular experiences, characteristics, skills, and conditions. He mentioned that other

elements at this level are the content of education and access to relevant educational materials and the processes of education (requiring well-trained teachers).

At the education system level, he opines that the elements affecting the quality of education are the managerial and administrative system, implementation of ''good policies,'' a supportive legislative framework that can ensure equality of educational opportunity, human and material resources, and the means to measure learning outcomes.

A critical look at his framework will reveal some similarities between it and that of EFA framework for understanding quality education. The similarities between them are shown below.

Table 3.1: *Similarities between Piozzi's Framework for understanding education quality and that of EFA, 2004*

Pigozzi's Framework 2006	EFA Framework 2005
What the learner brings	Learner characteristics
Relevant educational materials	Textbooks and other teaching and learning materials
Process of education (requiring well-trained teachers)	Teaching and Learning, Learning time, teaching method, teachers, class size
Managerial and Administrative system	Inspectors, supervisors, administrators, school governance
Means to measure learning outcome	Assessment, feedback

Source: Author, 2012

In spite of these similarities, one can notice a few differences. Pigozzi mentioned 'content of education' which one may refer to as the curriculum or syllabus but this was not explicitly stated in the EFA framework. In like manner, the EFA framework also mentioned physical infrastructure and facilities which did not find place in Pigozzi's framework. Pigozzi did not also make room for the context in which teaching and learning take place but the EFA framework on the other hand, included the context which includes parental support (recognizing the important role of the home in the teaching and learning process), time available for schooling and homework, peer pressure, public resources available for education etc (UNESCO,2004)

Based on this similarities and differences analysis of the two frameworks, I find the EFA framework for understanding education quality more holistic and detailed for the purpose of my work and will therefore expand more on the reasons for choosing it in the paragraphs to come.

3.1.2 **The EFA framework for understanding education quality (Conceptual Framework)**

As indicated early on, this study adopts the EFA framework for understanding education quality. This framework attempts to demonstrate how various factors concerning education interrelate with each other to ensure quality. This framework is useful because of its rich theoretical bases having drawn upon humanistic, behaviorism and critical traditions on quality issues. It also builds on previous efforts at understanding quality such as Jomtien and Dakar conferences as well as the definition of quality by UNICEF. In addition to the above, the framework includes both qualitative and quantitative dimension of understanding education quality. It demonstrates that different variables interact with each other to produce the desired outcome-quality education. The framework was designed by UNESCO to capture the central dimensions influencing core processes of teaching and learning which results into education outcomes. The central dimensions as follow:

> - Learner characteristics dimensions,
> - Contextual dimension,
> - Enabling inputs dimension
> - Teaching and learning dimension
> - Outcomes dimension.

For the purposes of this work, all the dimensions will not be used due the space available for this work. It is also to enable me focus on those dimensions that are relevant to my work. In view of this, I will focus on enabling inputs, contextual and outcome dimensions. Enabling inputs because they directly affect what goes on in the classroom where the actual policy implementation of quality measures takes place. Without these enabling inputs such as textbooks, teachers and other learning materials, no meaningful teaching and learning could take place.

Regarding the contextual dimension, the EFA framework indicates that there is a link between education and society and this link is very strong. Under this dimension, I am interested in parental support which influences time available for schooling and homework. This is to enable me find out how the community in which the school is situated support teaching and learning. Finally, the outcome dimension in terms of learning achievement is also considered.

3.1.3 Inputs dimension

3.1.3.1 Teaching and learning

One important factor in ensuring quality education is teaching and learning. This has to do with process of teaching and learning in the classrooms. According to the EFA framework, the teaching and learning process is very pivotal in ensuring quality education because, it is the 'key arena for human development and change' (UNESCO 2004). This is to say that pupils at the basic level of education are at their formative ages and they tend to develop with whatever they pick up during these years. It is therefore believed that, when they are properly nurtured during this period, they will come out very prepared to face adult life.

The framework further posits that, it is during the teaching and learning process that the impact of the curriculum is felt, teacher methods work or not and that learners are motivated to participate and learn how to learn. It further indicates that the teaching and learning process encompasses student time spent on learning, assessment methods for monitoring student progress, style of teaching, medium of instruction and classroom organization strategies.

In their work, '*A Review on the Concept of Quality in Education: Perspective from Ghana,* Yaw A. Ankomah et al, (2005) also throw more light on the teaching and learning process. They opined that the teaching and learning process concerns such areas as teacher-pupil interaction, class management and control as well as daily teacher time-on – task with the class, in other wise, the actual time spent on the teaching and learning process. They also added that, the teaching and learning process includes the regularity and punctuality of the teacher in the school for instructional activities and the intensity of operation dealing with length of the school day and term and how many days are effectively available for school work in each term. From their work, it is evidently clear that they share the same view with the EFA framework.

3.1.3.2 Teaching and Learning Materials (TLMs)

Another input dimension of quality identified by the framework is teaching and learning materials. The framework identifies them as resources provided by both government and parents which include textbooks and other school facilities that facilitate and make teaching and learning more meaningful for learners.

The TLMs also include teachers' activity guide, flash cards and posters, audio and audiovisual materials which are capable of making lesson more real and practical for learners and for easy understanding. By using TLMs, lessons become more activity based and give the learners the opportunity to 'construct their own knowledge and understandings' (UNESCO, 2004). The use of TLMs is therefore very important in ensuring quality education.

3.1.3.3 Physical Infrastructure

Physical infrastructure such as school buildings, libraries, offices, teachers' common room and toilet facilities are very important in delivery of education of good quality. This also defines the general school environment which should be friendly and healthy for serious academic work. Indeed, both teachers and pupils are most likely to be motivated to work harder in healthy and neat classrooms where their safety is assured. School buildings, in otherwise, classrooms must be fitted with furniture, TLMs and must be properly lighted. Lighting in the classroom especially daylight has been found to impact positively on learning achievements of learners (Earthman, 2004; Heschong Mahone Group, 2003 cited in Higgins Steve et al, 2005). In the same vein, Jago and Tanner, (1999) cited in Steve Higgins et al, (2005) argue that 'the visual environment affects a learners' ability to produce visual stimuli and affects his/her mental attitude, and thus performance'. Toilet facilities in schools have also be found to have a positive effect on school attendance especially for girls. In sum, adequate and proper physical infrastructure is needed for effective teaching and learning.

3.1.3.4 Class size/ pupil-teacher-ratio

Class size or pupil-teacher-ratio is believed to impact either positively or negatively on quality education. When the ratio is very high, it is likely that the teacher will not be able to have enough time for individual learners but when the class size is small; there is the likelihood that the teacher will spend more time attending to individual needs.

Research findings have confirmed the fact that larger classes lead to more and bigger groups within the class and this could have an adverse effects on the amount and quality of teaching and quality of pupils' work whiles in small classes it is easier for teachers to spot problems and give feedback, identify specific needs and tailor their teachings to meet them (Blatchford, 2009). However, other studies in lower income countries did not confirm this (Esther et al, 2012). It was reported that small class size could not produced desired outcome due to lack of motivation for teachers. This being the case, if the teacher is not motivated or if he is demoralized, he can have small class size but may not function effectively. Small class sizes alone therefore cannot guarantee quality education.

3.1.3.5 Human Resources

Human resources play a very important role in ensuring quality of teaching and learning. The EFA framework indicated managers, administrators, other support staff, supervisors, inspectors and, most especially teachers under human resources. At basic school level, the role of head teachers and supervisors is vital in making sure that teaching and learning actually take place and instructional hours are used judiciously.

One very important group of people in this category is the teachers-those who transmit knowledge to the learners. It very necessary that they are properly trained in content knowledge and pedagogical skills needed for effective delivery of the content of the curriculum.

3.1.4 Contextual Dimension

3.1.4.1 Parental Support

Parents are one of the stakeholders in education and the success of their wards in school partly depends on how they support them at home and provide their school needs. In their study on parental support, Charles D. & Alberto A. (2003) noted that:

> *'Parental involvement takes many forms including good parenting in the home, including the provision of a secure and stable environment, intellectual stimulation, parent child discussion, good models of constructive social and educational values and high aspirations relating to personal fulfillment and good citizenship; contact with schools to share information; participation in school events; participation in the work of the school; and participation in school governance'(Charles D. & Alberto A, 2003 p.4).*

They also revealed that parental involvement in the form of good parenting at home has a significant positive effect on children's achievement. This clearly shows that parental support can influence quality education positively.

3.1.5 Outcome Dimension

The EFA framework has four core areas as outcomes of education and these are:

- Literacy, numeracy and life skills

- Creative and emotional skills

- Values

- Social Benefits

My interest as far as this study is concerned is in the first one: literacy, numeracy and life skills which I refer to as learning achievements as mentioned in the ESP document. (see 5.2)

4 CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The chapter accounts for the methods of data collection and the procedures employed in sampling the population in study. It presents the issues of measures, data analysis, validity, reliability, and ethical considerations. The chapter also argues for the rationales for the choice of the entire scientific processes and procedures to the study.

4.1.1 Research Strategy

Research work is a very intensive exercise which comes with its own challenges but can equally be very exciting when it is well done. It is like embarking on a mission to find a treasure hidden somewhere and although it will take a lot of efforts to get there, the worth of that treasure will definitely keep one moving on. What is important is that, one has to take the right road that leads to where the treasure is located. Therefore, for a researcher to have a successful research work he or she must be convinced of what he or she intends to do by looking at his or her objectives and research questions and find out the research strategies available to him or her and then choose the most appropriate one for the work.

It is well documented that three main strategies are used for doing research and these are Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed method. Research strategy according to Bryman, is ''a general orientation to the conduct of social research'' (Bryman, 2008 p. 22). It serves as the guide and determines the manner in which the research will be conducted. Whiles some researchers clearly distinguished between them, others described such distinction as no longer useful or even simply 'false' (Layder 1993 p 110 cited in Bryman, 2008). However, they still maintain that these strategies differ fundamentally in terms of their principal orientation to the role of theory in relation to research, epistemological and ontological orientations (ibid 22).

Quantitative research strategy primarily emphasizes quantification in collection and analysis of data and entails a deductive approach to the relationship between research and theory where theories are mostly tested. It deals with the practices and norms of the natural scientific model

and of positivism in particular and holds the view of social reality as an external and objective reality (ibid 22).

On the other hand, qualitative strategy primarily emphasizes words rather than quantification in collection and analysis of data and entails an inductive approach to the relationship between research and theory where theories are usually generated. It rejects the practices and norms of the natural scientific model and that of positivism and places emphasis on the ways in which individuals make sense of their social world. It also sees social reality as a creation of individuals. In other words, it adopts the emic perspective of social reality (ibid 22). However, Silverman (2000) has argued strongly that in more recent times, qualitative researchers have become increasingly interested in the testing of theories; a feature known for quantitative research strategy. He added that this current phenomenon is a reflection of the growing nature of the qualitative strategy. This is done by collection of further data to test theories or a particular theory.

The mixed method research strategy entails the use of the two research strategies discussed above. It stands for research that integrates quantitative and qualitative strategies and methods within a single project (ibid 23). Depending on the choice of the researcher these two strategies can be used equally or one plays a more prominent role.

This study utilizes the qualitative strategy based on the nature of the problem and the research questions to be answered. According to Catherine Hakim (1992),

> "qualitative research is concerned with individuals' own accounts of their attitudes, motivation and behaviour. It offers richly descriptive reports of individuals' perceptions, attitudes beliefs, views and feelings, the meanings and interpretations given to events and things…'' (Catherine H., 1992 p 26).

For Berg (2007), qualitative strategy gives the researcher the opportunity to share in the understandings and perceptions of others and as well explores how people structure and give meaning to their daily lives. Qualitative research strategy is therefore understood as a strategy that seeks to explore and give descriptive and detailed report of how individuals make sense of

their own social reality. It is about the kind of interpretations the individuals give to their own experiences and not that of the researcher.

The choice of qualitative research in this project is therefore justified on the following grounds. In the first place, the researcher considered the import of the work which is to explore quality issues in basic education in the Dangme West District (DWD) in Ghana. The first research question of this work attempts to find out how quality education is conceived by the policy makers in the education sector in Ghana.

This would be done by analyzing the national education policy document-*Ghana Education Strategic Plan (ESP)*.

The aim of using the ESP is to explore the understanding of quality education by the Ministry of Education (MoE) and other stakeholders. It is to find out how they make meaning of quality education and the measures embedded in the ESP to achieve quality education as they understood it. In other words, the research question seeks to understand quality education from the perspective of the people.

Secondly, the second research question attempts to look at how the measures embedded in the ESP to ensure quality education are being implemented in the selected schools in the DWD. The emphasis here is on the process of implementation of measures to ensure quality education. In other words, my primary focus is not on the statistical data related to the enrolment of the pupils at the basic education level but rather on the measures and strategies put in place by the MoE in improving the quality of education at the basic school level. This is in line with Grønmo (1984) who argues that ''methodological issues should be closely related to the specific research problem'' (Grønmo 1984 p. 2). A critical look at the research problem outlined at the beginning of this research work apparently showed that the needed data to satisfy it is more of qualitative rather than quantitative. In other words, qualitative rather than quantitative strategy will enable me have a deeper understanding of strategies put in place to improve quality of education and how these strategies and or measures are being implemented in the selected schools to attain quality of education. In this regards, the researcher considered qualitative research strategy as a better choice for this study

4.2   Research Design

Deciding to use either qualitative or quantitative research strategy to conduct a piece of research work is not enough to do justice to that research. Two other important issues must seriously be addressed and these are the research design and methods (Bryman, 2008). Whiles research design represents a structure that guides execution of a research method and the analysis of the subsequent data or a framework for collection and analysis of data, research method simply means a technique for collecting data (ibid p.31). According to Yin (2003), research design is the logical sequence that connects the empirical data to initial research questions of a study and its conclusion as well.

 Although research design is at times regarded as the total make up of a research work, it is however used in this work to refer to the framework that guides the collection and analysis of data.

In qualitative research strategy, one comes across the following research designs:

- Ethnography
- Phenomenology
- Grounded Theory
- Case study

Ethnography as a term comes from cultural anthropology and it is a study to describe a culture of a people. Its aim is to understand the way a group of people live by taking into account their own perspective. The study usually takes place in a natural setting for a long span of time as the researcher participates in the daily lives of the people and adopts the emic perspective.

Phenomenology on other hand, studies various types of experience such as perception, memory, thought, emotion, linguistic activity etc. It attempts to understand participants' lived experiences that reflect intentionality, awareness or consciousness. The researcher engages extensively with participants but ''brackets'' his or her own experience in order to understand that of the participants.

Using ethnography design for this study is impracticable since my study does not aim at describing the culture of the people but it is rather to examine issues dealing with quality

education in a specific geographical location. It is also not suitable because, it is normally used for extensive studies that expand a long period of time but this study was conducted within a limited period of time. Finally, a researcher using ethnography as a design will have to stay in the community where he or she conducts the study and participate in the daily lives of the people, however I do not need to participate in the daily life of the school in form of teaching, marking of exercises and conducting school assemblies before I get the information needed for my study.

Phenomenology is also not suitable for my study because my objectives are not to deal with emotions, memory and thoughts of my participants and the time available for this study will not allow for extensive engagement with my participant which is a feature of phenomenology. Having looked at the two designs and their unsuitability for my study, I consider 'Case Study' as the appropriate design.

4.2.1   Case Study

As indicated early on, this research work employs Case Study as a design. It emphasizes detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their relationships. According to Bryman, ''the most common use of the term 'case' associates the case study with a location, such as a community or organization. The emphasis tends to be upon an intensive examination of the setting'' (Bryman, 2008, p. 53). Yin defines the case study research method as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used (Yin, 2003). This definition has however been challenged by Woodside (2010) when he opines that case study research cannot be said to be limited to contemporary phenomenon or real-life context, especially when boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clear out. To him, what defines case study research lies in the supreme importance placed by the researcher on gathering data which will result into describing, understanding and or controlling the individual cases. It could be gleaned from the above that case studies are normally used to do in depth and extensive studies of specific issues in a particular setting.

A critical look at the objectives of this work reveals that the researcher is interested in a specific issue (quality) and in a specific setting (Dangme West District) which fits into Bryman and Yin's explanation of what case study is.

The study also adopts a case study approach since only a single district out of 170 districts in Ghana will be studied. The design is more appropriate considering the nature of the information required which is very in-depth and cannot allow for the allocation of data from a representative sample (districts) within a limited time.

4.3   Methods of data collection

The study uses both primary and secondary data. The primary data was by means of interviews while the secondary data was by means of document analysis.

4.3.1   Secondary Data

4.3.1.1 Document analysis

Documents were employed in this inquiry because it is impossible to conduct this investigation independent of what has been done and the existing plan on quality issues which are only captured in documents.

Bryman (2008, p.526) explains the use of documents as sources of data by citing other authors on documentary sources and explains further that "it is clearly tempting to assume that documents reveal something about an underlying reality, so that the documents that an organization generates...are viewed as representations of reality of that organization''(Bryman 2008 p.526). Rather than viewed as ways of gaining access, writers like Atkinson and Coffey (2004) cited in Bryman,(2008) argue that documents should be viewed as distinct level of reality in their own right. They again argue that documents which are being used as sources of data should be examined in terms of the context in which they are produced and their implied readership, that is they are written to convey an impression favourable to the authors and those they represent. (ibid p.527). It could be understood from the authors mentioned above that, all documents meant for sources of data for any research work, should be used carefully. Whiles

not prejudicing documents to be used for this work, the researcher is however mindful of the above statement in the analysis of documents for this research.

According to Bryman (2004), documents meant for sources of data must be authentic and credible. I therefore made sure that all documents used in this work were accessed from official sources in order to ensure their authenticity and credibility.

The main document utilized in this work is the education policy document of the Ministry of Education (MoE) which is the *Ghana Education Strategic Plan 2003-2015(ESP)* and other school records. Access to these documents came through the assistance of the teachers and an official at the MoE.

The ESP is the main document that provides an overview of education sector policies, targets and strategies. It includes policy objectives in terms of targeted outcomes linked to timeframes and institutional responsibilities. It was prepared by the MoE and the Ghana Education Service (GES) using the following documents,

Education sector papers:

- *Previous Education Sector Plans,(ESPs 1998 to 2002)*
- *Education Sector Policy Review Report (ESPRR, August,2002)*
- *Education Sector Review (ESR, October, 2002)*
- *Meeting the Challenges of Education in the 21st Century (The report of the President's Committee on the Review of Education Reforms in Ghana, October,2002)*

National documents:

- *Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (19th February, 2003)*
- *Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF 2002-2004*)

Regional proposals

- *New Partnerships for Africa's Development (NEPAD, October 2001)*
- *Education for All (EFA, April 2000)*

Being an important document to this study, it has been used to find out the conception of quality education by the MoE and the measures put in place to ensure that such quality education is achieved in the selected schools in the DWD. The document also serves as a source for the formulation of interview questions for the participants. This was done so as to find out if indeed the measures put in the ESP are being implemented in the schools in the view of the participants.

4.3.2   Primary data

4.3.2.1 Interviews

Interviews are part of methods used in collecting data for research work. It is defined by Ackroyd and Hughes (1983 as cited in Tim May, 1993) as

> ''encounters between a researcher and a respondent in which the latter is asked a series of questions relevant to the subject of the research. The respondent's answers constitute the raw data analyzed at a latter point in time by the researcher'' (Tim May, 1993 p.91).

Tim May (1993) further argues that interviews are able to yield rich sources of data on people's experiences, opinions, aspirations and their feelings as well. Other authors such as Blaxter et al (2001) and Grønmo (1984) also described interview as an instrument of data collection involving questioning or discussing issues between the researcher and his sampled participants. It is probably the most widely employed method in qualitative research (Bryman, 2008). This method was chosen instead of observation which will not aptly address my research question. For instance, the best way to find out whether the MoE had actually developed assessment schemes as captured by the EPS was to ask through interview than observation. Similarly, using interview and document analysis will be the best method in getting to know pupil-teacher ratio and pupil-textbook ratio than observation. The choice of document analysis and interviews for this study is therefore more appropriate.

There are basically four types of interviews used in social research and these are structured, semi-structured, focused and group interviews. For the purpose of this work, the first three types mentioned above will be considered.

Structured interview is mostly associated with survey research and makes use of questionnaire as the instrument of data collection. In this type of interview, each participant is asked questions the same way so that any differences arising from the responses given by the participants are assumed to be real and not as a result of the interview situation itself (May, 1993).

The semi-structured interview makes use of specified questions. The researcher has a list of questions or fairly specific topics to be covered often referred to as interview guide. However the interviewer is freer to probe beyond the answers given by the participants just as the participants also have a leeway in how to reply. The flexibility in this type of interview allows the interviewer to pick up on things said by the interviewee (Bryman, 2008).

Focus group on the hand, involves interviewing more than one individual. It usually involves at least four individuals in which the interviewer's interest is to find out the ways in which individuals discuss a certain issue as members of a group, rather than simply as individuals (ibid).

In my research work, a semi-structured interview was conducted using open ended questionnaire and interview guide. This type of interview was chosen over the structured one so as to enable me ask probing questions in order to get detailed information on the topic under study. It was also to enable me to engage in a very informal conversation with the participants in a friendly ambiance. At the MoE, I sought to have a face-to-face interview on the ESP with an official at Policy Planning and Inter-sectoral Collaboration, Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring and Evaluation (PBME) Division of the MoE, but he requested for open ended questionnaire as the first step of my interaction with him. I complied and sent him the questionnaire through electronic mail and after he had answered the questions and referred me to the ESP for some of the answers, he asked me to come to his office for face to face interview on some aspects of the ESP. This was done in a very cordial atmosphere and the process was recorded having obtained his consent to do so. The interview lasted for 35 minutes.

Prior to my movement to the schools, I took an introduction letter from the district education office after so many attempts failed due to the fact that, the officer in charge was not available to sign the letter. However, having got the letter, I went to the schools and was received well by the school heads and after I have explained my mission to their school to them, they willingly offered to grant me the interview.

Before I started the interview with them (individually), I made them aware that their voices would be recorded and they have consented to it. The interview was conducted in a very informal manner but very focused on the issues related to my topic. The participants were however allowed to express their views freely on the topic being studied since this was the basis for which this method was chosen. "This, in fact, is an assumption fundamental to qualitative research - the participant's perspective on the phenomenon of interest should unfold as the participant views it, not as the researcher views it"(Marshall & Rossman 1995 p. 80).

The participants answered questions based on the policy document and other research questions but it was very clear that most of them did not know about the policy document. The interviews took between 45 to 60 minutes to be done.

4.3.3   Focus group discussion

As indicated early on, focus group discussion was also used for my data collection. This was done with teachers and pupils separately. I constituted two focus groups by selecting two teachers and 2 pupils from each school for focus group discussion. The focus group discussion was done to find out if there are any differences in the opinion of the teachers on the issues raised. Furthermore, the use of this method would enable me confirm some issues raised during individual interviews, this is because, in a focus group discussions, the individuals will often argue with each other and challenge each other's views. Through this process the researcher will be able to get more realistic views of what they think on the issues being discussed, because the participants are likely to review their views through the arguments (Bryman 2008).

Pupils were also asked questions based on what the teachers said in the interview with them regarding the supply of resources i.e., textbooks, furniture etc. The focus group discussions lasted for 60 minutes.

4.4   Validity and Reliability

Validity refers to the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers (Hammersley 1995 as cited in Silverman, 2006). It means ''truthfulness" in qualitative research (Neuman, 2006).

 Reliability on the other hand refers to the consistency or stability of a measure of behaviour (Cozby 2007 p.92).   It deals with replicability: the question of whether or not in future researchers could repeat the research project and come up with the same results, interpretations and claims (Silverman 2006 p.282).

Bryman, (2008) pointed out that validity and reliability rest primarily in the domain of quantitative research and cited Lincoln and Guba (1985) who provide trustworthiness and authenticity as alternatives to reliability and validity respectively for assessing a qualitative study.

They further explain trustworthiness to mean:

- *Credibility*, which parallels internal validity,
- *Transferability*, which parallels external validity,
- *Dependability*, which parallels reliability,
- *Conformability*, which parallels objectivity.

Authenticity on the other hand means:

- *Fairness*. Does the research fairly represent different viewpoints among members of the social setting?
- *Ontological authenticity*. Does the research help members to arrive at a better understanding of the social milieu?
- *Educative authenticity*. Does the research help members to appreciate better the perspective of other members of the social setting?
- *Catalytic authenticity*. Has the research acted as an impetus to members to engage in the change of their circumstances?
- *Tactical authenticity*. Has the research empowered members to take steps necessary for engaging in action? (see Bryman 2008 pp.377-380)

To ensure reliability in other words trustworthiness, a few steps were taken. In the first place, the method of triangulation involving the use of data from multiple sources was employed in this

study (Denzin 1970 cited in Marvasti 2004). A consistency of the information of the policy document of the MoE and that of the participants on quality indicators and how they are being implemented will mean valid and reliable information. Furthermore, interviews were conducted and focused group discussions were held based on the ESP and other issues related to this study. This will make the work credible which parallels internal validity.

Another step taken in this regard was respondent validation during the interview sessions. According to (Reason and Rowam 1981 cited in Silverman, 2000), respondent validation suggests that researchers go back to the respondents with findings so they can judge the accuracy and credibility of the findings. To arrive at this, I summarized the main issues that came up during the interview process from time to time for the participants to verify if I have correctly captured their thoughts on the questions asked. This process really proved useful since the participants had the chance to cross check and confirm the information captured. This approach also makes the data dependable which parallels reliability. Finally, to ensure transferability and conformability of data, I made sure that, there were no variations in the interview guide. I kept my focus on the questions and re-direct my participants to the main issues when I found out that they were digressing into areas not related to my study. This was also done during the transcription stage where I made sure that only responses relevant to my study were transcribed.

On the issue of authenticity of my work, I as much as possible presented and analyzed my findings from the view point of my participants. As indicated earlier, summaries of findings were presented to the participants to authenticate after each interview sessions so as to make sure that their thoughts were accurately captured. This process ensured that findings of the study represent the different viewpoints of the participants.

Finally, findings from the data gathered showed that as far as the implementation policies in the ESP were concerned, a lot more needed to be done. It will therefore serve as an impetus for the policy makers to take actions that will effect some changes in the schools in order to ensure quality education.

4.5   Participants selection

Studying a whole population in studies most of the times is impossible. It is therefore imperative for a sample to be selected for research works. A sample is a subset of individuals/cases selected from a larger population (Bordens & Abbott 2005). The sample used in this study included 1 officer from MoE, 1 officer from the District education office (DEO), 8 teachers and 4 pupils from the selected basic schools. The officer from the MoE is male aged 38+ and the officer from the DEO is a female aged 48+ and she is an Assistant Director of education.

The table below shows the demographic information of the rest of my participants.

Table 4.1: *Participants demographic information*

	Participants	Gender	Age
SCHOOL A	A1	Male	50+
	A2	Male	35+
	A3	Female	42+
	A4	Female	43+
	A5	Male	15
	A6	Female	13
SCHOOL B	B1	Male	48+
	B2	Female	26+
	B3	Female	25+
	B4	Male	36+
	B5	Female	14
	B6	Male	13

Source: Field data, Oct., 2011

4.5.1   Sampling Techniques

This research uses the non-probability methods of purposive and convenience sampling to select the schools and the participants. According to Bryman (2008), purposive sampling is recommended in qualitative research based on interviews. He opines that such sampling is essentially strategic and entails an attempt to establish a good correspondence between research questions and sampling.

 In other words, the researcher samples on the basis of wanting to interview people who are relevant to the research questions. Therefore since the research questions demands answers from specific people, purposive sampling is found to be very appropriate for the research. For

instance, since the impact of the CG in terms of numbers is very strong at the primary level of the basic schools, one must be very careful in selecting the schools in order to have basic schools which have junior high attached to them and headed by a more qualified and experienced headmaster who is likely to have an in-depth knowledge about the topic as far as the policy document is concerned. Purposive Sampling was therefore used to select: 2 public basic schools and officials whiles 8 teachers and 4 pupils were selected by convenience sampling technique which involves sampling any available participant that is willing to partake in a study (Bryman, 2008).

4.6   Research Setting

4.6.1   Dangme West District

The Dangme West District (DWD) is located in the western part of the Greater Accra region of Ghana with a total land area being 1,442 square kilometres, the largest district in the Greater Accra region and has Dodowa as its capital. According to the 2010 population and housing census report by the Ghana Statistical Service the population of the district stands at 122, 836 with children of below 15 years (school going age) constituting 49%. Despite its location in the region of the national capital, it is one of the deprived districts in the country. The predominant economic activities of the people there are quarrying and farming even though they are closer to the national capital. Young boys are normally engaged in cracking stones and the girls selling in the market to support their families.

A report by the District directorate reveals that dropout rate has been high in the district especially before the introduction of the Capitation Grant (CG). It is therefore prudent to want to find out what the situation is after the introduction of the CG.

I also selected this district because of its proximity to Accra, the nation's capital city where the MoE is located. It makes economic sense for me shuffle easily between the district and the MoE. Furthermore, I have stayed in the district as a teacher for four years and therefore have some knowledge about the area and the issue of having access to the schools and my participants would not be a problem for me.

4.7   Data analysis

Qualitative data analysis according to Dey (1993) is seen as the process of reducing data into its constituent components, to the reveal its characteristic elements and structure. To Patton (2002), qualitative data analysis involves reducing the volume of raw information, sifting trivial from significant ones, identifying significant patterns and constructing a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveals. Oh his parts, Creswell (2007) points out that qualitative data analysis consists of preparing and organizing data for analysis, reducing it into themes through a process of coding and condensing the codes, and finally represents the data in figures and tables in such a way that, researchers can offer interpretation. In other words, certain steps must be taken by researchers to bring meaning into the volumes of raw data gathered.

In this study, the actual data analysis began with transcription of digitally recorded responses from the participants. Deductive approach was used to do the transcription with the view of cutting off irrelevant materials. This approach involves coding and analysis based largely on priorily set research questions and analytical or conceptual framework where only data related to questions are coded. Though this is a qualitative study which usually goes with an inductive approach to transcription, the use of deductive approach helps me to keep focus on the goal of the study. It was also preferred as to save time.

To do this, I played the recording several times and matched the responses with the interview guide and with the objectives, research questions and conceptual framework of my study in mind. Having familiarized myself with the recording, I went ahead to do the transcription of those sections that are related to my study.

Another important aspect of data analysis strategy applied in this inquiry was coding. "The idea in coding is to link what the respondent says in his or her interview to the concepts and categories that will appear in the report"(Weiss 1994 p.154). In other words, it is a way of "reducing the data into meaningful segments and assigning names for the segments" (Creswell 2007 p. 148).

The use of coding in my study is predominantly in connection with the data collected through interviews. Before the coding process, the transcribed version of the interview was read four times to enable me get the logic in it and to also get acquainted with the script.

The coding was then done by linking the responses of my participants to the concepts, categories and themes that emerged from the literature and the conceptual framework. This was done so as to make meanings out of the fragmented and unorganized data collated during the interview. The ideas that emerged from the interviews were associated with the themes related to the relevant objective of the study. Here again, the deductive approach was used as done at the transcription stage. During the process of coding, I kept asking myself as to what was going on and what the people were actually saying so as not lose focus. Concurrently, efforts were made to compare and contrast the varied emerging themes and categories so as to identify any that may require further investigation.

To enable me remain opened minded about the coding process and what could be coded or not, I used constant comparison. By this, every time I selected and coded a passage, I compared it with the already coded passages. This was to ensure that, my coding is consistent and allows me to consider the possibility of re-coding the earlier passages for some other themes or not. This was done until every objective set was fully satisfied. The coding subsequently resulted into organized data in form of themes and sub themes for analysis.

There are two main approaches to writing up the findings of qualitative research. The first is to simply report key findings under each main theme or category, using appropriate verbatim quotes to illustrate those findings. This is then accompanied by a linking, separate discussion chapter in which the findings are discussed in relation to existing research. The second is to do the same but to incorporate the discussion into the findings chapter. The first approach was used in this study that is the findings chapter is subsequently followed by a separate supporting discussion and conclusion section in which the findings are critically discussed and compared to the appropriate literature and existing empirical studies.

4.8   Comparative Dimension

Finally, there is a comparative dimension to this work which is done at the spatial or geographical level where the interest is to compare how educational phenomena operate in different geographical locations. In this study, the level of comparison will be the two schools visited- school A and B.

The comparison runs through the presentation of findings using policy and its implementation, pupils learning achievement, teacher recruitment and professional development and governance and management as the units of comparison.

4.9   Ethics, challenges and their handling

In collecting data for any research work, one must be guided by the ethical considerations that go with it. Before, I embarked on my work; I interacted with the minister of education in my country through a social network, facebook. The minister later gave me her personal email address where we interacted with each other on my research work. She was so much happy with my interest in quality education and asked me to see her whenever I was in Ghana.

Before I left for Ghana for my data collection, I took an introductory letter from the department of education at the University of Oslo which I presented to the office of the minister of education. She also gave me another letter introducing me to the director of education at Dangme west district where I would do my data collection. At the district, I was asked to put into writing a brief description of my work and the nature of data to be collected. After I had done this, I was permitted to go into the schools to conduct my interviews. I was received well at the schools after I had presented my letters of introduction from the ministry of education and the district education office.

All participants were informed of the objectives of the work which is purely academic and also of their right to withdraw from the interview process at any stage. The names of the respondents were not recorded in order to render all the data anonymous. In terms of usage of documents, I made sure that all of them are genuine and authentic having got them from reliable sources. In my analysis of these documents, conscious effort was made so as not to misrepresent or

misinterpret them. Furthermore, I have been diligent in transcription of the interviews doing away with any personal sentiments.

Challenges are bound to happen in any research work and this study is no exception. Being fully aware that one major challenges could be that having access to my research site, I was careful in selecting my site in order to have easy access having in mind that I was once a teacher in the district and have accepted posting to a deprived village to start a junior high school (JHS). However, just as it was in the case of the new Pharaoh in the Bible who did not know how useful one of the Israelites had been to Egypt and therefore begun to maltreat them, I was met with cold shoulders from the staff at the DEO who did not know me and I had to wait for more than three weeks to have access to the research sites after I had contacted the person who actually posted me to the deprived village as mentioned earlier.

Having been granted the permission to the schools, I was only allowed to conduct my interviews after instructional hours but the teachers were not willing to stay after school to speak to me. They however agreed to do so during break periods which last for about 30 minutes. The challenge here was that, the environment became noisy during break times which affected the quality of the recordings but I have been able to do transcription perfectly by listening to the tape several times and also called my participants for clarification in situations where I was unable to hear clearly what they said.   Despite these challenges, it has been an interesting fieldwork experience.

5   CHAPTER FIVE: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

5.1   Introduction

Qualitative study could be seen as a research strategy that often "emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data" (Bryman 2004 p.19). Analyzing data within the sphere of qualitative research begins with the preparation and organization of "data for analysis, then reducing the data into themes through a process of coding and a discussion" (Creswell 2007 p.148). It is significant to argue that the just aforementioned steps were observed while analyzing the data relevant to this study. The findings presented in this chapter which seeks to find out conceptualization of quality education at policy level and policies put in place to achieve such quality, derived their sources from the ESP document and interviews conducted with my participants.

5.2   Perception of Quality at policy level

The strategic framework of the Ghana Education Strategic Plan (ESP) generally focused on the areas of equitable access and quality education which is of interest to this study, educational management and science and technology with technical and vocational education. From policy perceptive as indicated in the ESP, perception of quality education is marked by several indicators such as learning materials, infrastructure, teacher preparation and effectiveness of teaching, teacher motivation, relevance of curriculum, assessment and testing, learning achievement, monitoring and accountability and health and sanitation including HIV/AIDS education. This reflects the input-process-outcome dimension of quality education. However, according to an official at the MoE, the focus of the ministry is on learning achievement as issues regarding health and sanitation do not receive much attention in terms of budgetary allocation. He added that government however works with some Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to deal with health issues in the schools. He opines that:

''As you can see on page 24 of ESP the document, the emphasis however is on learning achievement as captured in the following sentence: "to Improve the quality of teaching and learning for enhanced pupil/student achievement" which is the main policy goal concerning quality education. The ministry periodically conducts the following assessments to measure quality education, School Education Assessment (SEA) which is conducted in selected schools in a particular district, National Education Assessment (NEA) which is conducted throughout the country and Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) which is conducted at the end of 9 years of basic schooling. You can therefore see that quality education is largely perceived in terms of learning achievements which is measured by the assessments I have just mentioned.'' (An official at MoE)

It has also been noticed that there are many causes of poor achievements such as poor learning environment; many overcrowded classrooms in urban areas; the great majority of schools lacking the necessary teaching facilities to assist the teaching of even the most basic of subjects. There are however differences in how the causes stated above play out in urban and rural schools. Overcrowded classrooms are mostly found in urban towns whiles the rural areas in some cases record low enrolment. Yet in terms of learning achievement, some pupils in urban schools perform better than their counterpart in rural areas.

To ensure enhanced learning achievement throughout the country, it was noted that, there must be improvements in the learning environment which will be complemented by strengthening of the teaching staff by giving teachers targeted pedagogical training and decongesting the overcrowded classrooms. Efforts will also be made to motivate teachers to stay in the profession. Outputs such as examinations results and achievement tests will   be used to provide systematic feed-back to parents, teachers and schools.

Furthermore, attention was given to supervision as one of the sure ways to ensure accountability from both teachers and pupils. The school supervision system is therefore to be reviewed to make it more responsive to the needs of the schools and it is to focus on establishing educational

standards, monitoring the system and ensuring support for the professional development of teachers and the internal design and implementation of school improvement plans. (MoE, 2003 p.9-10)

In commenting on this aspect of the ESP, the official from the MoE, noted that, the ministry has begun implementing some of the interventions stated in the document and they believe the interventions will bring a dramatic change in learning achievement.

> '*'The Ministry realizes that more support should be given to initiatives that are already under way such as training of school inspectors to achieve some of the policy objectives. In addition there are plans to improve Library Services to enable the creation of a literate environment. To ensure quality therefore is to make the various resources available to the system (including teachers, teaching practices, learning conditions and facilities) more effective and more equitable and target educational outputs for improvement".(MoE official)*

5.3 What then are the policy objectives to reflect the perception of quality?

The preceding section addresses the first part of my first research question and examines perceptions of quality at policy level and some challenges facing delivery of quality education. This section looks at policies or measures embedded in the ESP to ensure quality education in the basic schools.

From the document, the first policy objective of the MoE to ensure quality education is to increase provision of and accessibility to textbooks and other teaching/ learning materials with a number of indicative targets as**:**

- Primary pupil textbook ratio to be 1:1 for all subjects by 2005
- Junior High School (JHS) Pupil textbook to be 1:1 by 2005
- All teachers have access to teaching support materials by 2008
- 50 Teacher Resource Centres established by 2015.

The second policy objective is to improve the effectiveness of teacher preparation, upgrading and deployment at all levels. The indicative targets include:

- Reduce % of untrained teachers from 21.2% at the primary level and 12.8% at JSS to not more than 5% in 2015 across the basic level.
- Teacher recruitment, especially females by 2004
- Provide motivational package to teachers in hardship areas by 2004.

Commenting on the second policy objective, the MoE official had this to say:

Teacher recruitment and development are given special consideration because, we can provide textbooks, TLM's and classrooms but without competent and well trained teachers our aim of enhancing learning achievement will remain a mirage. The MoE therefore is keen on recruiting trained teachers with highest qualifications ever. For now, all colleges of education are Diploma awarding institutions and this makes our teachers as Diploma holders instead of Certificate holders. There are a lot of teachers in our classrooms at the basic level with first degrees. The challenge now is how to retain them in the class since some of them look for more lucrative jobs after training (MoE official).

Furthermore, provision of school and public libraries by 2012 is one of the objectives stated in the document. All libraries are to be stocked with relevant books and computers to enhance teaching and learning. It was noted that absence of libraries in the schools and the community is hampering reading ability of pupils. This sentiment was reiterated by the MoE official when he told me that:

''One of the problems facing the ministry as far as quality education is concerned is the lack of reading culture in our pupils. As you know, all subjects are taught in English except the local languages and the examinations are equally conducted in English. When you take a look at some of the answer scripts of our pupils, you can see that they did not understand the questions and once they did not understand you can expect that they will give wrong answers and this has been the problem all this

while. The MoE is therefore placing emphasis on reading, creation of reading clubs in schools and the like. We believe that making interesting books available in school libraries for them will encourage them to develop the culture of reading''.(MoE official)

Another objective of quality (quality indicator) as perceived by policy is to develop a reliable pupil/ student/ learners testing and assessment system. The targets are;

- Minimum national standards (MNS) test agreed, standardised and validated by December 2004

- First cohort/sample of students (25%) tested for competency on single agreed MNS test by December 2005; sample rising to 30% by 2015.

As indicated early on, the focus of the MoE is to ensure enhanced learning achievement as far as quality of basic education is concerned and since learning achievement is measured through assessment test, the MoE had developed testing and assessment system to help it monitor quality of teaching and learning and also to serve as a feedback system to the ministry, pupils and parents. The assessment systems were mentioned earlier in this work, have been administered in 2005 but the results were not so good according to the MoE official. The quote below captured his sentiment.

> *''We have designed and administered the test in 2005 but the results were not impressive telling us that we have more work to do. But the MoE believes that by the time all these policies would have been implemented the results would have also improved''. (MoE official)*

Finally, ensuring quality according to the policy will mean developing effective Accountability systems. The indicative targets are

- Criteria and roles of supervision and inspection revised and published by end 2003
- Supervisors and inspectors trained and in place by 2004
- Ensure 90% attendance of teachers in basic schools
- Review monitoring and inspection systems for management at ministry, agency, regional, district levels and at all school/institutional levels

- Improve the teacher supervision system to provide support for professional development and enhanced teacher performance
- Provide material support for supervisors and inspectors
- Develop and implement a system to effectively monitor and sanction teacher absenteeism and tardiness.

From the facts available as presented above, it can be seen that the MoE identifies the need to energize the education system by policy interventions so as to ensure quality education. The challenge will be to find out if these policies are seeing the light of day as seen in the next section.

5.4 How are these measures being implemented in the selected schools?

This section addresses my research question 2. It presents findings from my participants regarding the implementation of the measures embedded in the ESP in their schools. This will be done under the various categories that emerge from my conceptual framework such as inputs, context and outcome. Findings from the two schools (A&B) will be presented with comparative dimensions.

5.5 Inputs

5.5.1 Human Resource Availability

5.5.1.1 Staffing of schools in the district

Relevant findings from the data collected show that, there is equitable distribution of teachers posted to the district by the GES. The allocations are done based on student population and existing staff strength. In school A where they have double stream, all classrooms are filled with qualified teachers most of whom are diploma holders whiles some hold first degrees. There is also one female teacher with a master degree, a rare phenomenon in Ghanaian basic schools in the past. It was also found out that those teachers with the national minimum qualification which is known as Certificate 'A' and those with Diploma which is the new minimum requirement now are upgrading themselves to degree level through distance education. It must however be noted

that, although there are no classes without teachers in this school, pupil-teacher ratio is very high due to increases in enrolment following the introduction of the CG and the School Feeding Programme (SFP).

In school B, all classes are also filled with teachers and they also hold same qualifications as those in school A. Some of them are also upgrading themselves to first degree level through distance education however, there is no teacher with a master degree as it is in the case of school A. There is also untrained local language (Dangme) teacher employed under the National Youth Employment Programme (NYEP) in school B as opposed to school A. Furthermore, whiles enrolment figures in school A is high, that of school B is low and this was attributed to the fact that, there is no SFP and so pupils in the school's catchment area rather go to school A.

It must however be noted that the situation in these schools in terms of staffing seems not to be prevalent in the entire district as indicated below by an official at the District Education Office (DEO) who spoke to me.

> *''As you may know from your experience as a teacher, there is a new policy on teacher recruitment which requires that each District based on its needs sponsor those from the area wishing to be teachers to go to Colleges of Education so they could return and teach in the district. We have being doing that for some time now and so we have teachers in almost all the schools. But you see, you can get it all right and so we need more teachers especially for the remote village schools. There some schools in the deprived areas of the district where staffing is still a problem. However with the introduction of the teaching module under the National Youth Employment Programme (NYEP) the problem is being dealt with gradually. (DEO official)*

5.5.1.2 Teacher training and support

After recruiting teachers, there is the need to continue to give them refresher courses and expose them to new techniques of lesson delivery. This is normally done through in-serve training (INSET) so as to keep teachers abreast with time and sharpen their pedagogical skills.

Findings reveal that INSETs are compulsory part of the school calendar and are normally handled by either an officer from the education office, the circuit supervisor, headmaster or some selected teachers for at least two times a term (three months in a term).Teachers are mostly taken through issues regarding methodology and contents of selected topics. The period is also used to prepare TLMs.

According to most of the teachers, the INSETS have been very useful since it serves as a platform for knowledge sharing. One of my participants captured the views shared by teachers who spoke to me on the INSET as shown below.

> *Teaching and learning is dynamic. New ideas keep coming as to how to deal with some challenges we face after our initial teacher training. We therefore need further training to equip us to teach properly and INSETs have become one surest way of giving us the training we need. As you can see (pointing to the school calendar), there are places for INSET in each term- two times a term. Sometimes, a teacher is selected from among us to handle both the methods and content of a particular topic, especially in mathematics and science. It then becomes peer teaching which helps a lot. We also use these INSETs to teach ourselves how to make our own TLMs. (Participant A1)*

The general idea from the data reveals that, the authorities place emphasis on upgrading the skills of the teachers through INSETs and this has been institutionalized in the two schools and as indicated by Participant A, the INSETs have been very useful.

However, during my focus group discussions with teachers from the two schools, one of them expressed her reservations about the INSETs. According to her, they are left on their own and the officers from the DEO hardly visit and handle the INSETs. She also has a personally problem with delays in payment of her salaries having being teaching for a whole year and this seems to be her major concern than sitting for INSETs. She has this to say:

My brother, I completed University of Education a year ago and am not sure I need the INSET now. Nothing is new to me during the INSET. We are left to do everything ourselves. My concern now is how to get my first salary since I have begun teaching in this school a year ago'. (focus group discussion).

5.5.1.3 Pupil-teacher ratio and Contact

It has been widely argued that a considerable small pupil-teacher ratio enhances quality education as teachers are likely to pay attention to individual pupils (Blatchford, 2009). It also results in efficient management of contact hours, which is the actual time spent on teaching and learning.

My findings show that, school A runs a shift system due to the increase in enrolment whereby some pupils attend school in the morning and some in the afternoon. But despite the shift system, there is a high pupil-teacher ratio in the school. In Primary class 1, there about 70 pupils comprising Kindergarten (KG) children and class 1 pupils. In other classes in the primary school, the ratio stands at 1:40 and 1:45. The case at the JHS is normal with the ratio between 1:25 and 1:35.

In terms contact hours, it was found out that there has been a considerable reduction due to the shift system. Pupils in Ghanaian basic schools spend a maximum of seven hours at school but this has to be shared now between the morning and afternoon shifts resulting in reduction in contact hours.

The general view of the teachers is that, they are not happy with the situation since they are unable to finish their scheme of work in the term before school closes. According to one of them, the situation is such they are forced to rush pupils through lessons. She said:

''My brother (referring to me), we live in difficult times in this school. The teacher-pupil ratio is bad and we find it difficult to deliver our lessons as planned. If you go to Primary 1 classroom, there are about 70 pupils with different grades and this makes teaching a bit difficult. It also reduces the contact hours since the teacher has to share the time for pupils of different grades. At end of the day you will see that in reality only 50% of work is

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done. More so, the shift system is not helping us especially the afternoon session. Some of the classrooms were not properly designed to allow in enough day light and so by one and half hour into teaching in the afternoon, the classrooms get dark and teaching and learning becomes difficult''(Participant A2)

It could be seen from the quote above which reflect the general feeling of teachers that, though it is very positive to create access to education where a lot more children can be in school, it can equally turn negative if resources are not provided to match the increasing numbers.

In school B, the situation is however different in that there is low enrolment in the school. Although the school is situated in a small village three kilometers away from school A, enrolment figures could have been higher than it was at the time of my visit to the school. My participants attributed the situation to the lack of SFP in the school which compels children from the village to go to other schools with the SFP in the district capital where school A is located. Apart from this, it was also found out that, most of the children in the village are not staying with their biological parents but rather with relatives and other people who use them as farmhands and as such, schooling is a secondary matter. One of my participants captures the views of teachers as indicated below:

You see, this is a small village but enrolment could have been better than this. In some classes, the ratio stands at 1:18 and some 1:14. The highest in the primary schools is 1:33. The reason for this is mainly due to the fact that, there is no school feeding programme here. Some children here prefer to go to school feeding schools in Dodowa which is about 3 to 4 km away from here. Interestingly, they walk to Dodowa and you can see that they will get to school tired but that is the situation now. Apart from this, farming is the main occupation here and most of them follow their guardians to farm when the season comes. Our cry now is to have the school feeding programme here so we can retain those children in the school. (Participant B1)

One striking feature in school B as my data reveals is low enrolment of girls in the JHS as compared with the primary. I therefore became interested to find out what was the cause for this and one of my participants had this to say:

> *'hmmm, our parents are not helping us in making sure that the girls are in school. When I came to this school, I found out that one girl stopped coming to school and so I decided to follow up and only got know that she was impregnated by the chief's son. In fact, most of our brilliant girls have stopped coming to school due to pregnancy and if you ask them, they will tell you that, their parents asked them to look for money to cater for themselves and they had no choice than to pick boyfriends. (Participant B3)*

From the findings, effective use of contact hours is being hampered due to large class size in school A as compared with school B which has low enrolment figures. Absence of SFP and lack of parental support were cited for the low enrolment figures in school B.

5.5.1.4 Supervision

Supervision or inspection of schools is very necessary in enhancing quality education. My findings reveal that, this is not being done properly. The district has been divided into circuits comprising a number of schools within the range of 10-20 and at times 30+ .Officials, mostly senior teachers in the District are often appointed to be supervise the circuits. They are known as Circuit Supervisors (CS). They are tasked to effectively monitor the academic progress in their respective circuits and report to the Assistant Director in charge of supervision.

My participants tell me that, the CSs normally visit the school at the beginning of the term and at the end of the term. They normally check to find out if all teachers have reported to school after the vacations are over. They rarely visit classrooms and if they do, then it is because a particular teacher is to be promoted and so they come to supervise his or her work. It was also found out that, their presence in the schools make teachers work hard since one is likely to be sanctioned if not found doing his or her work. An officer at the DEO has this to say:

Supervision of schools cannot be said to be the best. Even though there are capable hands to carry out supervisions aside what the circuit supervisors are doing, there is a problem of mobility; there are only few vehicles which are used for supervision duties which even break down very often. The CSs are given motor bikes for this purpose. However it is not every school in the district that is so accessible. This means that some schools are visited only once in a term by the inspectorate team.(DEO official)

The problem of mobility of the CSs has been confirmed by teachers who spoke to me. According to them, the CSs do visit the school but not on a regular basis. They also indicated although their presence in the school brings some level of discipline in the work of teachers, such atmosphere does not last long. This view is seen below as indicated by one of my participants.

Well, the CSs do come around sometimes but he has not supervised me teach within the 3 years I have been in this school. I remember he came one day, stood at the window of my classroom whiles teaching for about a minute, waved me and left. I can say, momentarily, his presence in the school on that day, created some level of seriousness in the school. But once he was gone everyone was relaxed. It is like we fear him rather than see him as one of us.(Participant B4)

It was however found out that although school A&B have the same CS, school A receives more visits from the CS than school B. This is due to that fact the School A is located very close to the DEO where the CS has his office.

5.5.2 Material Resources

Under this sub heading, resources such as teaching and learning (TLMs), classrooms and libraries will be dealt with from the view point of the participants.

5.5.2.1 Teaching and Learning Materials (TLMs)

The supply of teaching and learning materials to the schools in the district cannot be said to be the best in the schools visited. Whereas chalk, teachers' lesson note books and syllabi are provided, the supply of textbooks is a major problem. Other educational materials like maps and charts, science equipment for the junior secondary schools have not been replaced over several years. According to an officer from the DEO, every child is entitled to one textbook in all subjects and they are to take them home but this has not been the case in the district. The reason for this unfortunate situation is simply the fact that, the supply of textbooks from the MoE is not enough to match the increasing numbers of pupils.

In school A, pupil-textbook ratio stands at 3:1 and 4:1 in some classes at the primary level. At the JSH level, the situation is very worrisome in some subjects. For instance, there is no English textbook for those in their second and third years at the JHS. This compelled the English teacher to borrow a copy from another school to help him in class.

The story is not different for other TLMs including charts, maps and teachers handbooks. One of my participants had this to say:

> *Hmmmm, to tell you the truth, the education office does not directly supply us with TLMs but there is a provision for that in the CG and so we do buy some TLMs but they are not enough for the school. We also buy materials to make our own TLMs. In terms of textbooks, I will say the ratio is about 1:3 and 1:4 in various subjects in the primary school but our greatest headache is at the JHS level. As I speak now, we don't have a single English text books for JHS 2 and 3. Same applies to Social Studies and Mathematics. We had to borrow some of these books from the other JHS in town.(Participant A1)*

In school B, the situation is not different from what pertains in school A. Both textbooks and other TLMs are in short supply. However, the pupil textbook ratio is 1:2 due to low enrolment figures. One of the participants speaking to me on the supply of TLMs said:

You said I should be frank and so am being frank. It is not like am reporting my head teacher but the fact is that, since I came to this school, I have not been provided with any TLMs. It's even difficult for us to get a common red pen to mark exercises. I remember the Science teacher was teaching the other time and mentioned vinegar but the pupils have not heard or seen it before and the school does not have it. I had to bring my vinegar from home the following day for the pupils to see what their teacher was talking about. (Participant B3)

5.5.2.2 Classrooms

Quality education is more likely to be ensured in a healthy school environment. Adequate classrooms fitted with furniture will surely make teachers and pupils comfortable and psychologically ready for teaching and learning.

However, findings from data collected show that school A is suffering from infrastructural deficit. It lacks enough classrooms to accommodate increased number of pupils following the introduction of the CG and SFP which resulted into the running of the shift system as mentioned earlier. This poses serious problem to quality education since contact hours have been reduced by almost one and half hours. It also affects attendance to school as some pupils take advantage of the situation by staying away from school and when they are asked in the morning as to why they are not in school, they will say they are in the afternoon shift and vice versa. Apart from limited number of classrooms, the available ones are also not in good conditions. Classes normally come to a halt when it rains due to leakages and some of them have very poor ventilation and visibility. It is also interesting to know that though this school is located not far away from the DEO, some classes are being held under trees and according to teachers, there is no sign of salvaging the situation any time soon. A DEO officer acknowledges the poor state of classrooms when she said:

'Indeed, we have problem with classrooms in the District. Some primary schools have only 3 classrooms instead of 6. We look up to the government to help us out and a lot is being done anyway. Some NGOs like World Vision are also helping us in this regard'. (DEO official)

What is clear from the above is that, the DEO itself does not have the wherewithal to provide classroom but rather depends on the central government and the benevolence of NGOs to help them out.

In school B, there are no classes being held under trees except that the KG children have their lessons in a makeshift structure. The primary school has a new school building and same applies to the JHS. However, according to one of my participants, the JHS building, though looks nice and strong, leaks badly when it rains and lessons normally comes to end in such circumstances. She stated that:

''Our school block is a white elephant. It looks nice and strong but it is allergic to rain. It leaks badly and the noise from the roofing sheet is deafening and classes automatically come to an abrupt end. You can't even stand the heat when the sun is up…hmmm, it's a problem.''(Participant B3)

The general idea from the quotes reveals that the schools have some problem with classrooms which is affecting teaching and learning but the situation in school B seems better than school A.

5.5.2.3 Library

The place of library in quality education delivery cannot be overemphasised. It serves as the nerve centre of all educational institutions and a crucial factor in the educational development of men at all levels especially in educational institutions (Kalawole et al,2011) and ''equip pupils and students' imagination, thereby enabling them to live as responsible citizens'' (IFLA/UNESCO, 2002).

This study finds out that there is one community library at the District capital, Dodowa. However, most of the schools do not have libraries. There is a classroom reserved for library in school 'A' but is it not in use because the room is very dark and not conducive for reading but efforts are being made to extend electricity to the room. Most of the library books are not directly related to what is being taught in the classroom and therefore not that helpful to the pupils. Some of these books were donated by NGOs and they contain materials alien to the school curriculum. The quote below captures the view expressed by one of the teachers which is not different from what other teachers said.

> *Well, we have a classroom designated for library but it's not been used effectively. We don't have enough books that are related directly to the content of the curriculum. Recently, an NGO, Right to Play donated some books to us and they are all story books from abroad. Yes, it will expose our pupils to other cultures and improve their reading skills but we equally need books that are related to what we teach them in class.(Participant A2)*

School B however has new building for library stocked with books provided by a telecommunications company but at the time I was in the school, it was under key and lock. I was told that it was not been used at the time because there was no liberian to be in charge of it. The books provided were also said to have foreign contents.

From the findings, it seems clear that, nothing or very little is being done about the use of library in the schools due to the fact that the place is not conducive and that the most of the books do not serve the immediate needs of both pupils and teachers.

5.5.3   Context

5.5.3.1 Parental Support

Apart from pupils, teachers and officials from the DEO, there are other stakeholders in education in the area whose contributions have implications for delivery of quality education and they form a part of the wider context in which education takes place according to my conceptual

framework. One of such stakeholders is the parents of the pupils. This section therefore presents findings with respect to the support of parents to the teaching and learning of their wards.

Findings point to the fact that, most of the parents are not that supportive especially after the introduction of the CG and the SFP. Some parents do no longer provide basic schools needs like exercise books, pens and pencils for the wards. Others too do not attend PTA meetings so as to discuss issues concerning their wards. In my focus group discussions, it came out clear, that although the teachers are doing their best, some parents do not care about what goes on in the school. It was also found out some of the children are not staying with their biological parents and this accounted for their seemingly lukewarm attitude towards the education of the children. One of the participants in the focus group discussion had this to say:

''Our problem here is that most of our parents are not educated and so they don't inspire their children to come to school. They don't seem to play any active role in the education of their children especially when the CG was introduced. What surprises me is that, some of these parents have formed cultural troupes for the children in the community and they can take them away from school to other villages around to perform at festivals. When you call for PTA meeting, only a handful will attend''.(focus group discussion)

According to another participant, parents involvement in education in school A is nothing to write home about and but one of the participants who spoke to me after the focus group discussion painted a nice picture of her personal experience with some parents She said:

''Mr Ekpe (referring to me), although it is true that in general terms, we don't seem to have the needed support from the parents, I do receive some level of support from them. I normally visit some parents at home to discuss academic progress of their wards with them and they have always responded positively anytime I invited them to school. We are now relating as friends more than a teacher and parents'' (Participant A4)

From the experience of this participant, it seems that a little effort from teachers to get a bit personal with the parents will really result in positive support from them rather than calling for general parent-teacher association (PTA) meetings.

It was also found out in school B that, the level of support from parents is low also due to the fact that, most of them are uneducated and are also busy with their farming and other activities rather paying attention to the education of their wards. It was also discovered that, since the introduction of the CG parental involvement in running of the school has dwindled since parents are with the view that government is set to provide everything their children need in school. During my focus group discussion with the teachers, one of them described the situation as worrying.

Pupils themselves also shared the views of their teachers during my focus group this discussion with them as shown below.

> *''Sometimes, I don't come to school because I go to farm in the morning and when I come back late and tired I don't go to school.… I sell for my aunty on some of the market days and so I don't come to school.'' (focus group with pupils)*

From the responses from the two schools, it can be seen that parental support in education has dwindled over the years due to the introduction of the CG and other personal commitments such as farming and trading.

5.5.4   Outcome Dimension

According to my conceptual framework, the outcome dimension of education includes literacy, numeracy, life skills, creative and emotional skills, values and social benefits (UNESCO, 2004). From the ESP, the MoE is focused on enhancing learning achievement which is seen in literacy and numeracy. This section therefore presents findings regarding learning achievements.

5.5.4.1 Learning Achievement

As noted earlier, one of the ways of measuring quality education is through learning achievements.

From the data collected it was clear that the DEO normally measures quality education in the District through the performance of the pupils in the BECE. However, performance of the pupils had

taken a nose dive. This was also captured in a study conducted in 2008 by SNV-GHANA in the District. An official at the DEO had this to say:

''If we understand the word quality well then we should be concern with the final basic education examination results since it is the only direct measure of the success of the policy as captured by the Ghana education strategic plan document. The results are pointing to the fact that the concept of quality is missing.''(DEO official)

The BECE result for the 2010/2011 which was made available to me indicates that the pupils performed poorly as shown in the table below.

Table 5.1: Summary of 2011 BECE results.

Aggregates	School A	School B
6 – 17	-	-
18	1	0
19	-	-
20	-	1
21	1	-
22	-	-
23	2	1
24	-	-
25	2	0
26	3	0
27	-	-
28	1	1
29	1	1
30	3	-
31 – 35	12	1
36-45	-	6

Source: field data 2011

The BECE is the final national examination conducted by the West African Examination Council (WAEC) at the end of 9 years of basic education. The best grade a pupil can score in the BECE is aggregate '6'. This means that one scores grade 1 in 6 subjects. Although, the MoE says that anyone with aggregate '30' (grade 5 in six subjects) is qualified to continue to Senior High School(SHS), the situation on the ground is that those who normally get admission to high performing SHSs are those who scored between aggregate 6 and 10. The rest up to aggregate 30 normally find themselves in low class SHSs and some cases do not proceed to SHS at all.

From the table above, it can be seen that, both schools performed poorly in the BECE and none of them will have the chance to enter the high performing schools classified as 'Grade A' schools.

Another thing we can pick from the table is that, although both schools did not present the same number of pupils for the exam, more pupils in school A have scored better aggregate than those from school B and 12 students in all did not make the pass aggregate of 30.

Speaking to me in focus group discussion, the quote below captured the views of teachers on causes of poor performance in the BECE.

> ''Learning achievement which is the fruit of quality education is not the best as at now. Some reasons can be given for that. Firstly, we think some of us teachers are not doing our work well. This is partly due to the fact that some of us are upgrading ourselves through distance education and we are tempted to be focused on it than teaching. In fact, when our schools are in session, you can see that we are not effective in class. Secondly, the community is not helping us. Anytime they have their festival celebrations, parents do allow their children to stay away from school at times for a whole week. For several weeks, the girls are sometimes taken to their home towns to undergo the dipo rites (puberty rite) and this affects their attendance at school. Thirdly, lack of inputs such as textbooks, other TLMs and motivation of teachers could also be cited as causes of low learning achievement in the schools as seen in the recent BECE results. (Focus group discussion)

Another participant from school 'B' added that:

It is true that quality education is mostly measured by learning achievements in our parts of the world. And once students do not achieve high marks or pass the BECE then we all conclude that there is no quality education and teachers are normally blamed for it. But what people forget is that, we need facilities to deliver quality education and if we don't have such facilities, there is little we can do. We must also look at the kind of pupils we have in the school and the community in which the school is situated. We have the same qualifications as other teachers in the cities but their pupils to better than ours. Do we care to know why? We took our first BECE this year but the results are poor.(Participant B3)

From the quote above, the teachers themselves admit the fact that, quality education is low in their school and were frank enough to say among other things that, some of them were partly responsible for the situation. It is a laudable idea for the teachers to seek to upgrade them but it will be necessary for the DEO to find out how they can ensure a win-win situation for both teachers and pupils so that effective teaching and learning will not be affected.

6 CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

6.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the findings from my empirical study on issues dealing with quality of basic education in the DWD following the introduction of the CG in Ghana with the purpose of providing answers to my research questions and the overall research problem posed in the chapter one of this study. In doing so, the chapter begins by briefly revisiting the questions posed in the study. The discussion will be done in the light of the ESP policy document, related literature and the conceptual framework used for this study.

6.1.1 Perception of Quality at Policy level

As noted earlier in this work, quality is at the heart of education and the attainment of universal participation in education will fundamentally depend upon the quality of education available (UNESCO, 2004, 2008). However, low quality education has been an endemic problem in most developing countries like Ghana as international tests of students achievement show that developing countries score at the bottom of the performance scale (UNESCO-UIS, 2011)

The dilemma however has been the question of what actually constitutes quality education. In other words whose quality do we talk about when issues of quality education come up for discussion? No wonder it has over the years been an issue of debate among the various stakeholders (Mioko et al, 2010). This being the case, it is very imperative to measure and understand quality of education of an education system in a context and based on agreed goals and objectives (Ankomah et al 2005). Based on this assumption my first research question seeks to find out the perception of quality in the Ghanaian context.

Findings from the ESP revealed that the MoE sees quality education in the light of learning materials, infrastructure, teacher preparation and effectiveness of teaching, teacher motivation, relevance of curriculum, assessment and testing, learning achievement, monitoring and accountability and health and sanitation including HIV/AIDS education. However, it was found out that, the MoE is focused on learning achievement as indicated in the previous chapter. This perception of quality education based on learning achievement has been captured under quality

education in the ESP document. It must also be noted that the MoE's perception of quality is in line with the thinking of UNESCO when it noted that trained teachers, learning materials, instructional time and adequate school facilities have been identified as prerequisites to quality education and that the term quality in education could be observed "in terms of learning outcomes, learning conditions and the teaching workforce" (UNESCO 2008 p.18).

Although other areas such as sanitation and health and HIV and AIDS have been captured as dimensions of quality education, they receive little or no attention from the MoE due to lack of budgetary allocation. The MoE rather depends on NGOs and donor findings which are not always available to support activities related to health in the schools.

It can be seen that Ghana approaches quality from different perceptive such as inputs, process and outcomes which manifests in the measures put in place to achieve quality education. In terms of learning outcomes, the MoE however focuses on learning achievements more than other outcomes such as life skills, creative and emotional skills, values and social benefits (UNESCO, 2004). What we must not lose sight of is that provision of education is holistic and any attempt to ignore other areas may result into disequilibrium in the system. For instance, lack of provision of health facilities such as toilet and urinals can affect attendance to school especially the girl child who needs privacy to take care of herself. A study conducted in 30 African countries by Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), reveals that girls in schools without a latrine are likely to stay home when they had their menses ((FAWE, 2001). Furthermore, The Global Campaign for Education (2005) also states that ''failure to provide adequate physical facilities such as toilets and running water, are inconvenience for boys but a disaster for girls'' (p.41).

Furthermore, if emphasis on acquiring values such as self-discipline, endurance, hard work and others are ignored or do not receive the necessary attention, it can equally affect academic performance of both pupils and teachers and the education system as a whole. It is therefore paramount that the MoE takes a more holistic look at what constitute quality education and make necessary efforts at providing enough funds to support all areas of providing quality education.

6.2   Implementation of   measures to ensure quality education

As noted earlier in the literature, quality is at the heart of education and whether children will remain in school depends on the quality of education available. It was also pointed out that whiles creating access to education still remain a problem in Sub-Sahara African countries, it has also been recognized that children can stay in school and not learn very much which makes completion of primary school a hollow achievement (UNESCO-UIS, 2011).

This tells us that it is not enough to create access to education but such an access should be created to quality education. This is vividly captured in the EFA goal 2, 5 and 6. The idea that emerges from the EFA goals is that of creation of access to education of good quality. At the World Education Forum held in Dakar in 2000, participating African countries committed themselves to removing all barriers that serve as hindrances to education of good quality (UNESCO, 2000).

Furthermore, following the Dakar forum, Ghana launched a new education policy document in 2003 and abolished school fees which led to increases in enrollment figures. Evidence available shows that quality education was compromised in some countries where schools fees were abolished. It therefore important to find out what measures the MoE in Ghana has set out to ensure quality education.

Information available in the ESP indicated that indeed, the MoE spelt out measures or strategies to be pursued to ensure quality education and these are discussed below under inputs-process and outcome dimensions.

6.2.1   Inputs and Process Dimensions

6.2.1.1 Provision of textbooks and other teaching and learning materials
One of the measures put in place to ensure quality education at the basic level in Ghana is the provision of textbooks and other teaching and learning materials. The MoE indicated that by 2005, basic pupil textbook ratio will be 1:1 for all subjects. This was to make sure that each pupil has access to books to him or herself. All teachers were also to have access to teaching support materials by 2008.

The place for textbooks and TLMs in ensuring quality education cannot be over emphasized especially in situations where there are untrained teachers; textbooks become the important vehicle for the curriculum. They have a direct impact on what is taught in schools and how it is taught as well. Without them, skills, concepts and content required by the curriculum cannot be taught and in the absence of teachers' handbook, the textbook also becomes the most important and often the only source of content and pedagogic information for the teacher. [1]

According to my conceptual framework, TLMs enable pupils to construct their own knowledge and understanding and therefore to ensure quality education, they must be provided for use in the classroom. Although the MoE of Ghana has recognized the importance of textbook and other TLMs in promoting quality education and therefore planned to make them available to the pupils, findings revealed that the MoE has not achieved this aim in the schools visited. In some cases not even a single textbook was available for teachers and pupils for use in the JHS whiles the ratio in the primary schools in some cases stands at 1:3 and 1:4. It was also found out teachers do not have access to teaching support materials in all cases as was envisaged by the policy document as most of them had to make their own teaching materials.

Findings of a previous study conduct in the same district in 2008 (see 2.3.3) put the pupil textbook ratio at 1:3 just as my study has found out. One can therefore speculate that almost three years after the findings of the study were made available; nothing or little has been done about provision of TLMs. Or could it be that the textbooks are being provided but enrolment figures keep increasing due to the CG and SFP? This is a question that begs for answers.

In reviewing the policy of providing textbooks in the ratio of 1:1 in all basic schools by 2005 and matching it with the situations in the two schools, one can conclude that the policy faces implementation difficulties possibly due to lack of funds and increase in enrolment figures.

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[1] http://www.unesco.org/education/blm/blmintro_en.php

6.2.1.2 *Improvement of teacher preparation, upgrading and deployment at all levels*

Teachers undoubtedly are a force to reckon with when it comes to quality education. All other things being equal, a well trained and qualified teacher can deliver quality education. This assertion finds expression in how UNESCO (2008) views quality education as was indicated in the literature review. This view is also backed by Brock-Utne when she argues that "even in highly industrialized countries I can see no professional argument for maintaining that a good supply of instructional material is better than a good teacher" (Brock-Utne 2000 p.49). This goes a long way to buttress the fact that when it comes to education, teachers are indispensable.

Findings from data collected revealed that, the MoE has actually achieved their aim in this regard. In the two schools visited, all classes are filled with teachers with the minimum requirement for teachers in basic schools in Ghana. It was also found out that, those with the minimum requirement are upgrading themselves through distance education, a programme sanctioned by the MoE. Female teachers were not left out. In the two schools visited, it was observed that there are more female teachers than the male ones. School B is in a remote area and there was evidence to prove that one lady teacher was rewarded for being in the school for ten years. This feeds into the MoE's plan for providing motivational packages to teachers in hardship areas although this is not being done regularly.

Furthermore, findings from this study as far as deployment of teachers is concerned, differ from what was contained in a study reviewed earlier (see 2.3.3). In that study, it was reported that there were too many untrained teachers at the JHS level. However, as at the time my study was conducted, all teachers are the JHS levels are trained. This could mean that more teachers are being trained and are being deployed to the schools especially at the JHS level where pupils are basically prepared for the BECE.

However, as I have noted earlier, there should be a holistic approach to provision of quality education. Therefore, putting teachers in the classrooms without the necessary resources such as textbooks and teachers handbook as this study has found out will not provide the necessary and expected results. This is because; teachers will go to the classroom but will not have textbooks for teaching as it is the case of School A where there is no single English textbook for the JHS

pupils. It is therefore imperative that, deployment of teachers and supply of resources move simultaneously.

6.2.1.3 Provision of schools and public libraries by 2012

The ESP document also indicates the provision of schools and public libraries as another way of ensuring quality education and this is to be done by 2012. A school library is said to be a repository of knowledge with specific emphasis on the school curriculum as it ''provides information and ideas that are fundamental to functioning successfully in today's information and knowledge-based society. The school library equips students with life-long learning skills and develops their imagination, enabling them to live as responsible citizens (UNESCO/IFLA).[2]

Omolayole (2001) stresses the fact that libraries form a vital part of the world's system of education as they provide through books, films, computers/internet, CD-ROMs and other media knowledge that have been accumulated throughout the ages. Herbert (1997 as cited in Kalawole et al, 2011) also pointed out that young children's literacy develops and emerges as they explore and participate in a literacy rich environment. At the centre of such an environment are books and other resources with contents that are familiar and fascinating for children. It is quite clear from literature as shown above that, libraries play very important role in quality education hence the decision of the MoE in Ghana to provide school libraries is in place. My findings reveal however that, the MoE did not build any structure to be used as libraries in the two schools visited. In school A, a classroom designated as a library is non-functional. It was dark with poor ventilation which is not conducive for any serious academic work. As cited in the discussion of my framework,(see 3.2.1.3) lighting in the classroom especially daylight has been found to impact positively on learning achievements of learners (Earthman, 2004; Heschong Mahone Group, 2003 cited in Steve Higgins et al, (2005). Therefore absence of adequate lighting can serve as a setback in provision of quality education. Apart from the library not being conducive enough for academic works, most of the books in the library were donated by NGOs and are not

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[2] http://www.unesco.org/webworld/libraries/manifestos/school_manifesto.html

directly linked to the school curriculum. The situation in school B is almost the same where there is a new building for the library but was not in use.

From the data gathered, it is clear that the provision and use of school libraries are not the best in the schools visited suggesting that the MoE is unlikely to achieve its target in the provision of libraries since the time I went to the schools was a few months away from 2012 where all schools were to be provided with libraries and the implication is that, as long as this library project tarries, the reading culture of the pupils will still be lagging behind and this will reflect in their performance in the BECE. The MoE must therefore make conscious effort within their means to provide adequate library facilities stocked with relevant books for the pupils as teachers encourage their pupils to use the library.

6.2.1.4 Effective Accountability systems

The final measure to ensure quality as indicated in the ESP as far as inputs and process are concerned is the development of an effective accountability system. This has to do with inspection and supervision in the schools to ensure that, teachers are in school as expected and do their work very well by using the instructional hours judiciously. Weak accountability system can affect quality education as was seen the work of Grover S. & Singh N.H. (2002) in India and that USAID in Ghana as reviewed under empirical studies in chapter 2 of this work.

In the study conducted in India, it was found out that, there was a weak supervision system and there was no formal way of ensuring that teachers and pupils do their work well. Indeed, during their visit to the schools, they found out that no instruction was taking place. It is therefore not surprising that pupils could not do simple assignments given them.

Finding from my study revealed that although, there are CSs for the schools; they seldom visit the schools due to large number of schools they have to cover. It also came to light that, the CSs hardly supervise teachers as they teach in the classroom. They rather normally visit the schools at beginning of each term and take enrolment figures and find out if all teachers have reported to school. In cases that they supervise teachers to teach, it means such teachers are due for promotion. The work of HTs is almost limited to administrative work and they do not normally

supervise their teachers to teach apart from checking their lesson notes. Whiles there was no formal monitoring of the work of teachers in the study conducted in India, there is some evidence to prove that there is a formal means of monitoring the work of teachers in Ghana but seems to be limited to attendance rather than classroom activities of teachers.

What this means is that, when it comes to supervision of schools, the concern of the CSs seems to be more on attendance at school than what actually goes on in the classroom. There are also no structures for supervising the work of teachers regularly except they are due for promotion. This definitely is not an effective accountability system as perceived by the ESP document and the framework used for this study. Teachers under this system of supervision are likely to approach their work sluggishly as evident from the two schools visited when the teachers admit that they become ineffective in class due to their own academic work aimed at upgrading themselves. An effective and efficient supervision system would have found a better way of dealing with the situation so that both pupils and teachers benefit from the system. It can be seen from the data gathered that, a lot more needed to be done in the area of supervision if quality education is to be achieved.

6.2.2   Outcome dimension

6.2.2.1 Development of a reliable pupil/ student/ learners testing and assessment system

Another measure of quality as perceived by policy is to develop a reliable pupil/ student/ learners testing and assessment system. As pointed out in the literature review, assessment tests are normally used to measure learning achievements. The studies conducted in Gambia, Tanzania and Ghana as reviewed in chapter 2 of this study show that quality education is low.

From the data gathered, the MoE had actually developed the assessment schemes and had administered them. The GES conducted another test throughout the country in 2011 and the report indicated that 60% of basic school pupils in Ghana could not read and write. The report

further shows that it is only pupils in primary six who could demonstrate adequate knowledge in English and Mathematics.[3]

This situation at the national level had found expression in the schools visited as the BECE results as presented in chapter 5 show a very poor performance by pupils in these two schools.

The picture coming out from the data suggests that the assessment systems developed by the MoE are providing a very good feedback for them and the indication is that the quest for achieving an enhanced pupils learning achievement is a mirage taking into consideration the fact that, there are not enough TLMs available the schools and lack of effective supervision system.

Judging from the foregoing discussions, one can conveniently speculate that although, the MoE is aware of steps to take to improve upon quality education, there is a wide gap between policy and practice and the implication is that, quality education is unlikely to be achieved and the little resources made available to the system may not after all yield the expected results.

6.3 A reflection of findings on the notion of quality education/ conceptual framework

This section seeks to make some general reflections on the conceptual framework employed in the study in the light of the findings generated in this study. This study as shown in chapter 3 employed the UNESCO's EFA framework for understanding educational quality. In the first place, the framework remains useful due to its broader conceptualization of the dimensions of what constitute quality education by drawing upon humanistic, behaviorism and critical traditions on quality issues. It also builds on previous efforts at understanding quality such as Jomtien and Dakar conferences as well as the definition of quality by UNICEF as indicated earlier in chapter 2 of this work.

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[3] http://www.modernghana.com/news/17383/1/60-of-pupils-in-primary-schools-cant-read.html

The framework avers that for quality education to be insured, attention must be paid to enabling inputs, the context, learner characteristics and the outcomes dimension. For the purpose of this study, the enabling inputs/process, contextual and outcome dimensions were used. (Please refer to chapter 3 for details.)

Analysis of the ESP shows that, the MoE is mindful of the role of the enabling inputs in ensuring quality education. This is seen in ESP as it indicates provision of textbooks and other TLMs, library facilities to enhance reading culture in the school, development of assessment system to serve as means of feedback to the ministry and training of inspectors/supervisors to ensure accountability and proper management in the schools. These measures in the ESP are well captured by the conceptual framework used by this study. What is however lacking in the ESP but captured in my framework is the role of other stakeholders such as parents in delivery of quality education. As seen in the literature on parental support, Charles Desforges & Alberto Abouchaar, (2003) argues that parental involvement in education includes good parenting at home, intellectual stimulation, parent-child discussions, contact with schools to share information and participate in school work which help in children's learning achievements.

Apart from this, the study when placed in the domain of the EFA framework suggest that, though the various dimensions have been captured in the ESP as a policy document, it is seriously challenged with implementation problems in some areas. For instance the policy document states that by 2005, textbook ratio in all schools should be 1:1. However, this is not the case in the schools visited as the ratio stands at 1:3 and 1:4 and some subjects at the JHS do not have any textbook at all. Effort at giving opportunity to teachers to upgrade themselves is also becoming a hindrance to quality teaching and learning as it was revealed that most of the teachers in this category spend more time on their academic activities than teaching in their respective classrooms. Furthermore, schools also face infrastructure problem as indicated by inadequate classroom blocks thus resulting into classes being held under trees in School A.

In sum, although the conceptual framework is apt for this study, it is found out from the finding that EPS and its implementation fall short of the requirement of the framework.

7 CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

This chapter gives a brief summary of the study; identify its shortcomings and makes recommendations for policy and practice and for further research.

7.2 Summary

This study has sought to understand the perception of quality education at policy level by the MoE in Ghana as captured by the ESP, explore measures put in place to ensure such quality education as perceived by the MoE and finally find out how these measures are being implemented. The study was conducted in Dangme West District in the Greater Accra region of Ghana.

The study found out that Ghana approaches quality education through input, process and outcome dimensions with focus on enhanced pupils learning achievements. It was also discovered that policies were put in place to ensure quality education in basic schools in the country but the implementation of such policies faces some challenges where most of the target set have not been achieved.

The study also found out based on the BECE results that quality education has being going down especially after the implementation of the CG.

In terms of comparison between the two school studied, there has not been any sharp difference as far as the implementation of the policies in the ESP was concerned. This might be due to the fact that the two schools are located within the same geographical area and operate under the same authority.

7.3 Shortcomings of study

There is no human enterprise without difficulties and this work is no exception. It had faced issues dealing with access to the specific research sites (School A&B) due to the fact that the officer to sign a letter of introductions for me to the schools had travelled and this delayed the data collection process. Another key participant for this study at the DEO was also attending some seminars and was not available. When we finally met, she was not ready to have me conduct interview with her due to what she called her 'heavy schedules'. I had no choice than to give her open – ended questionnaires which she could not work on until I left for Norway. I had to travel back to Ghana to get her response which was not in-depth enough. This situation affected my findings.

In the first place, the DEO which is responsible for the schools has no inputs into the findings from the two schools. This study would have been more holistic if the DEO were to give explanation to some of the facts on the ground. For instance in school A, there is an uncompleted school building which has been there for 3 years whiles pupils study under trees. However, my inability to meet that key participant denied this study such information as to why the school building has not been completed.

Secondly, the study failed to incorporate the views of the MoE on the findings since its document-the ESP was the main policy document used for the study. For instance, it was stated in the document that, textbook ratio should be 1:1 by 2005. This study was conducted in 2011 but as the findings indicate, the target set was not achieved. It would be proper to have some responses from the MoE as to why the gap in the policy and practice. Is it that the schools surveyed have special cases? Has it got to with lack of resources to support the policies? Answers to these questions and others would have contributed more to this study.

Finally, the study originally intended to analyze the BECE results of pupils from the two schools since the inception of the ESP document. However, this was not done due to the fact that one of the schools took their first ever BECE in 2011. This means that the school in the past had no JHS attached it until 2009. This being the case, there was no previous results to be used for comparison and this compelled me to use the only result available. The implication is that, it

does not give me any a clearer picture of performance of the pupils in the BECE since the inception of the ESP document.

7.4   Implications for policy and practice

It was evidently clear that there is some discordance between policy formulation and implementation. The measures listed in the ESP are very vital for ensuring quality education and if they are well implemented, the result could be amazing. There is therefore the need for policies to be translated from the formulation or planning stage to implementation stage. This definitely will require the political will and commitment from the government. Policies should state clearly timelines and dates for implementation and the various actors responsible for the implementation. This should go with laid down rules and regulations that will guide the implementation so that even if there is a change in administration, it will not affect the implementation of policies.

Based on the findings of this study, the following specific recommendations are suggested

- Although, the study did not assign any reason for the lack of adequate textbooks in the schools, one will not be too exaggerative to suggest that it has something to do with resource allocation and distribution. This being the case, government should reconsider its budgetary allocation to the MoE if it is to provide quality basic education for all.

- The mechanism put in place for teachers to upgrade themselves should be restructured so that it will not been done at the expense of the pupils. Arranging with universities of education to offer such programmes for teachers during holidays will be appropriate.

- The inspectorate team of the DEO should be strengthened. There will be the need for more hands so that the inspectors can a have a fewer school to supervise. Supervision should not be only limited to checking on enrolment figures but also attention should be on what goes on in the classroom. It should be focused on the quality of education provided by the school, the educational standard achieved by the school, whether the financial resources made available to the school are being managed effectively and the

moral and cultural development of pupils in the school (OFTSTED,1995 cited in UNESCO,2000)

- It was evident that both teachers and head teachers do not have any knowledge about the ESP document. It is therefore recommended that the DEO organises some seminar for teachers on the document and this will enable them share in the vision of the MoE.

- Finally, the DEO should consider school B for the School Feeding Programme so as to boost enrolment there which will result into decongesting of classrooms in school A.

7.5 Suggestions for further research

Given the findings and the shortcomings of this study, I suggest the following recommendations for further research:

- This study was conducted only in two schools and the findings cannot be generalized to the entire district. I therefore suggest that another research be carried out in all the schools using the mixed method approach to find out if the findings from these two schools are representative of the state of quality education in the district or they are special cases.

- Secondly, it is evident that this study lacks the opinion of some key actors in the provision of quality education as far as the implementation of the ESP document is concerned. I therefore recommend another research which will incorporate the views of the MoE and the DEO on the findings of the study.

- Thirdly, since teachers are very important people in provision of quality, it will be in place for another study to be conducted that will use 'observation' as one of methods of the data collection. This will enable the authorities to know how efficiently teachers use their contact hours and the various teaching methods they use in class.

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Publications

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

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UNIVERSITY OF OSLO, NORWAY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Questionnaire for Ministry of Education

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This questionnaire is designed to collect your views on the quality of education as captured by the national education policy. This forms part of my field work on the topic 'The *Abolition of School fees in Ghanaian basic schools: Quality issues at policy and implementation level*. I solicit your consent and cooperation to participate in the study. As one of the respondents, your contribution will be very significant in drawing conclusions for this study. It is however assured that, information collected will be handled with utmost confidentiality.

SECTION A: Biographical Data

1. Gender   male [male]   female   [   ]
2. Position Policy Planning and Inter-sectoral Collaboration….
3. Rank: Planning Officer………………………………….

SECTION B: THE CONCEPT OF EDUCATIONAL QUALITY

1. How does the ministry of education perceive educational quality at the basic level of education?
2. What does the ministry of education consider as quality indicators?

3. What is the rationale for the choice of such quality indicators?

4. Will you say the ministry is giving   priority to any of the quality indicators mentioned? Why?

5. Which measures/strategies are in place to achieve each of the quality indicators mentioned?

6. Who are the stakeholders in the implementation of the strategies?

7. How do you measure the success of these indicators?

8. What will be your level of assessment on the set targets from the inception of the policy till date?

9. What is your view on quality education in basic schools?

10. What will you say has been the impact of abolition of school fees (Capitation Grant) on quality education in basic schools?

11. Any other comments?

APPENDIX B

Interview guide for teachers and pupils

This questionnaire is designed to collect your views on the quality of education as captured by national education policy. This forms part of field work on the topic 'The *Abolition of School fees in Ghanaian basic schools: Quality issues at policy and implementation level*. I solicit your consent and cooperation to participate in the study. As one of the respondents, your contribution will be very significant in drawing conclusions for this study. It is however assured that, information collected will be handled with utmost confidentiality.

SECTION A: Biographical Data

1. Gender   male [ ]   female   [   ]
2. Position………………………….
3. Rank …………………………………….

SECTION B: THE CONCEPT OF EDUCATIONAL QUALITY

4. What is your knowledge of educational quality as perceived by the ministry of education in Ghanaian basic schools?

   What is being done in your district to achieve the quality indicators put forward by the ministry of education?

5. What is your level of assessment on the set targets from the inception of the policy till date?

 A. **LEARNING ACHIEVEMENTS**
1. Are all classrooms filled with teachers
2. Are all the teachers trained in this school?

3. What category of teachers in terms of qualification do you have in this school?

4. Are there any other forms of training for teachers?

5. What is currently the state of pupil-teacher ratio in your schools after the abolition of school fees?

6. Will you say this ratio is conducive for maximum academic achievement?

7. Does the curriculum and the time tabling system in your   schools allow for maximum pupil-teacher contact on the various subjects?

8. Does the school make available enough teaching and learning materials to you?

9. Will you say your pupils are learning in decent classrooms?

10. Is there any library in the school and in the community?

11. How will you describe the state of supervision in your school?

12. What is the level of involvement of other stakeholders, example parents in implementing the academic agenda planned for the school?

13. How will you describe quality of education in your school?

14. How will you describe the state of the physical environment of your school?