Chapter 17
Emerging Trends in Distance Education and Teachers' Education in Ghana

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ABSTRACT

In the past two decades, there has been rapid demand for higher education in Ghana. This has created continued pressure on the government to institute viable alternative solutions to curb the incidence where qualified applicants are often denied admission to higher education due to limited infrastructural facilities. Distance education has emerged as the best alternative means to help provide admission to qualified applicants, especially those in the field of teacher education. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze secondary data from two public universities that offered teacher education degree programs in distance education. Results indicate an increased progression of students in teacher education programs in distance education over the last ten years. This chapter offers background information on distance education with emphasis on teacher education in Ghana. In addition, the chapter discusses the results of secondary data, prospects, and challenges facing distance and teacher education in Ghana. Possible solutions, recommendations for future research, and conclusions follow.

INTRODUCTION

In sub-Saharan Africa, the consistent increase of student population in higher education has led to a crisis in students' admission to universities in the region (Nichol & Watson, 2003). For example, the United Nations Organization (UNO) estimates that about 3.8 million teachers need to be recruited and trained by 2015 to achieve universal primary educational goals (United Nations, 2011). The rapid growth of student population with limited space in the university systems in Ghana had led to calls for urgent measures to open up university admissions to accommodate qualified applicants who applied for admission. For example, the total number of students in public universities in Ghana has increased steadily over the last two decades (between 1990 to 2008 academic year). According to Effah (2003, 2005), student enrollment in universities increased from 11,857 in 1991/1992 to 31, 460 in 1998/1999 academic year while it increased from 69,968 in 2004/2005 to 93,285

in 2006/2007 (UNESCO, 2006). This was due to the high demand for higher education due to the introduction of the Educational Reforms in Ghana in 1987 (Effah, 2005). The total number of students in the public universities in the last five years (2008/2009) was 102,548 in 2008/2009; 107,640 in 2010; and 115,346 in 2011/12 academic year (Ghana Education Service Annual Report, 2008/2009; NCTE, 2012). However, considering the lack of resources in educational technology, staff, and training facilities, the World Bank posited that most sub-Saharan African countries might not be able to meet the demands of higher education for qualified applicants (World Bank, 2010). (see Tables 1 and 2)

Many efforts have been made to address the high demand for university education in Ghana. Among them are private sector involvements, expansion of university campuses, and introduction of distance education (NCTE, 2006, 2010). The Ministry of Education initiated a preliminary study to assess the benefits of distance education as an

Table 1. Summary of student's enrollment in public universities (total student population), 2008 – 2010

Name of Institution	2008/2009	2009/2010
University of Ghana, Legon (UG)	34,199	36,092
Kwame Nkrumah University of Science & Technology (KNUST)	23,659	24,116
University of Cape Coast (UCC)	16,404	15,492
University of Education, Winneba (UEW)	16,323	15,023
University for Development Studies (UDS)	10,712	15,023
University for Mines & Technology, Tarkwa (UMAT)	1,251	1,453
Total	102,548	107,640

Source: National Council for Tertiary Education

Table 2. Higher education institutions in Ghana, 2013

Type of Institutions	Universities	Polytechnics	Others	Total
Public	8	10	12	30
Private	47	0	28	75
Total	55	10	37	105

Source: National Accreditation Board

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